

# **The Speech Act of Apology**

***A linguistic Exploration of Politeness Orientation in British  
and Jordanian Culture***

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***The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate  
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*To my late parents and brother*

*Apology is a lovely perfume; it can transform the  
clumsiest moment into a gracious gift*

(Margaret Lee Runbeck)

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## Abstract

Through an investigation of the realisation patterns of apologies in British English and Jordanian Arabic, this study presents an account of politeness phenomena in Jordanian culture as compared to British culture. A comparison is thus made between the British conceptualisation of the pragmatic notions of face and politeness and their Jordanian equivalents. In order to arrive at better understanding of how politeness operates in each of the cultures under study, it was decided to linguistically examine the act of apologising within the theoretical framework of Brown & Levinson's (1978, 1987) model of politeness in which a distinction is made between two main constituents of face: negative face and positive face. The adoption of Brown & Levinson's theory of politeness also meets the need to study this particular speech act in connection with explanatory variables, such as social power, social distance, and the absolute ranking of imposition, which all provide more insights into how politeness is conceived of in the two cultures. The intercultural and intracultural analyses carried out in this study uncover the similarities and differences in the two cultures' linguistic behaviour, as exhibited in the performance of this act. The study argues that Brown & Levinson's claim for the universality of their theory, in which apologies and deference are viewed as being intrinsically negative politeness strategies, is not supported on the ground that Jordanian apologies are found to be positive politeness strategies. The study's main contribution to the field of politeness research is to reinforce the findings of previous researchers (Locher & Watts 2005; Spencer-Oatey 2005; Arundale 2006) who argue that Brown & Levinson's (1987) model of politeness can still be valid if politeness strategies they have proposed are viewed as possible realisations of relational work. The study also reaffirms the findings of Davies et al (2007) and Koutsantoni (2007) in which apologies are found to be of benefit for both the apologiser and the apologisee and likely to maintain "equity" between them. Seen in this way, apologies could be viewed as "relational" and "interactional" phenomena.

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# Phonetic Symbols

## 1- Consonants used in the study

	Bilabial	Labiodental	Dental	Alveolar	Post alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	Pharyngeal	Glottal
Plosive	b		t d				k g	q		ʔ
Nasal	m		n							
Fricative		f	θ ð	s z	ʃ ʒ		x ɣ		ħ ʕ	h
Affricate					tʃ dʒ					
Trill				r						
Approximant						j	w			
Lateral approximant					l					

Pharyngealised consonants are marked with ʕ: tʕ, dʕ, sʕ, ðʕ, lʕ.

## 2- Vowels and diphthongs used in the study

	front		central		Back	
	long	short	long	short	long	short
High	ii ai	i			uu au	u
Mid.	ee				oo	
Low			aa	a		

(Adopted from Suleiman, S. 1985:30)

## List of abbreviations used in examples

Abbreviation	Full word/phrase	Abbreviation	Full word/phrase
1	first person	GEN	genitive
2	second person	INC	inclusive
3	third person	INFIN	infinitive
ACC	accusative	JA	Jordanian Arabic
AUX	auxiliary	MASC	masculine
BE	British English	OBJ	object
DEF	definite	PAST	past tense
DEF ART	definite article	PL	plural
DEM	demonstrative	PRES	present tense
DET	determiner	PROG	progressive
EXC	exclusive	SG	singular
FEM	feminine	SU	subject
FUT	future tense		

(Adopted from Tallerman 1998: xiv)

## Introduction

One of the main concerns of pragmatics, as a relatively new and fast-growing subject, is to account for the inseparability of language and culture. Under the aegis of pragmatics, a lot of work has been carried out to examine the interdependence of language and socio-cultural context. That is, research has been concerned with investigating the extent to which the socio-cultural rules operative in societies can monitor the production and use of language and with demonstrating that language is associated with the function of linguistically encoding the social norms adopted by cultures. Yet, to determine the universality of the social rules that play a significant role in moulding language constitutes a great concern for research in the field of pragmatics. More specifically, research has aimed to substantiate whether or not the rules that shape language are identical cross-culturally and cross-linguistically. To this end, pragmatics has adopted a variety of cross-cultural research aimed at unveiling the pragmatic rules of language use that, if acquired by members of different cultures, will enable successful cross-cultural communication.

But we still need to know what pragmatics is. The answer to this question has been discussed by many scholars who have attempted to provide an accurate definition that can describe pragmatics properly. Yule (1996: 3) proposes four definitions in terms of the areas that pragmatics is concerned with. Because one of the main tasks of pragmatics is to study meaning as produced by the speaker and interpreted by the listener, this leads Yule to define pragmatics firstly as the study of speaker meaning. Stemming from the importance of context in the interpretation of what is said, Yule also defines pragmatics as the study of contextual meaning. And because listeners can make inferences about what is said in order to recognise what is unsaid, Yule views pragmatics as the study of how more gets communicated than is said. Finally, because the speaker's choice between the said and the unsaid is determined by how physically and socially distant the listener is, Yule further defines pragmatics as the study of the expression of relative distance. Stressing how language functions in the lives of human beings, Verschueren's (1999: 7) definition encompasses all these aspects when he defines pragmatics as "a general

cognitive, social, and cultural perspective on linguistic phenomena in relation to their usage in forms of behaviour”.

Because semantics and pragmatics are two areas of linguistics that are concerned with recovering the meaning in what we hear or read, a number of scholars define pragmatics in comparison with semantics (Levinson 1983; Leech 1983; Lyons 1987, Bach 1999; Peccei 1999; Mey 2001; Griffiths 2006; Huang 2007). The distinction has been explained in terms of meaning versus use, conventional versus non-conventional meaning, context independence versus context dependence, literal versus non-literal meaning, sentence versus utterance, rule versus principle, saying versus implicating and intention independence versus intention dependence.

Building on the above and in agreement with Yule (1996), we contend that pragmatics refers to the speakers’ ability to communicate more than what is explicitly stated and to the listeners’ ability to work out the speakers’ intended meaning, which is termed pragmatic competence. This places the focus of pragmatics on meaning that cannot be calculated by linguistic knowledge only, but by knowledge about the social and physical context.

As comprising a major part of pragmatics, politeness phenomena have been extensively researched with the aim of uncovering the motivations, realisations, and underlying rules of their occurrence, both inter- and intra-culturally. Apart from Goffman’s (1967, 1971) notion of face and Lakoff’s (1973, 1975) theory of politeness, Brown & Levinson’s (1978, 1987) model is often claimed to mark the onset of research into this particular area of pragmatics. Their theory could be said to be the starting point for the proliferation of other theories on the same subject, such as the ones proposed by Fraser & Nolen (1981), Leech (1983), and Watts (1989, 2003, 2005). Nevertheless, all these theories endeavoured to account for politeness phenomena from an Anglo-Saxon perspective, describing linguistic behaviour as moulded by the social norms operative in either American or Western cultures, and ignoring the potential compatibility of their frameworks with non Anglo-Saxon cultures like those of the Middle East. The exclusion of the non-western context, accordingly, leads researchers to define politeness in a way

that mirrors American and Western social norms, where politeness is conceived of as conflict avoidance technique (Wierzbicka 1985, Mao 1994). Theories like that of Brown & Levinson attempt to impose incontestably defined concepts like *face* and *deference*, leaving aside the fact that the connotations and pragmatic meanings of such notions vary from language to language and from one culture to another. They go on to label speech acts as being intrinsically negative or positive politeness strategies – a classification which reflects their assumption that what does/does not constitute a threat to a speaker or hearer's face is identical across cultures. The way Brown & Levinson (1978, 1987) account for politeness phenomena has led researchers like Matsumoto (1988), Ide (1989), Gu (1990) and Hiraga & Turner (1996) to question Brown & Levinson's claim for the universality of their theory, on the basis that societies are not identical in their perceptions of, for example, notions like face and deference (see chapter 6).

In the field of cross-cultural pragmatics, many comparative studies have been carried out, focusing on politeness phenomena through analysing the realisation patterns of the apology speech act in a number of languages. However, there is not yet a comparative analysis of politeness phenomena as realised in Jordanian Arabic and British English. By comparing the realisation patterns of apologies in these two languages, we will gain more insights into the differences and/or similarities in linguistic behaviour as shown through the performance of this speech act. In doing so, we will be able to compare the function of politeness as realised by the performance of apologies in British English and Jordanian Arabic cross-culturally and socio-pragmatically. To this end, the realisation of the speech act of apology was examined in Jordanian cities that are located in either the southern or northern parts of Jordan, since the Jordanian capital, Amman – situated in the middle – is a cosmopolitan city and would not therefore be representative of the Jordanian style of apologising and would be also less reliable to convey a clear picture of linguistic politeness and politeness direction<sup>1</sup> operative in Jordanian culture. Additionally, the present study has been motivated by the fact that I am a native speaker of Jordanian Arabic. This as such should be advantageous to the present study in that, as a member of

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<sup>1</sup> Politeness direction refers to Brown & Levinson's (1987) classification of cultures as being prone to use negative politeness devices or positive politeness devices.

the culture, it will be easier for me to interpret Jordanian people's perceptions and intuitions on politeness.

The aim of the present study is three-fold: it first endeavours to account for the way the speech act of apology is realised in British English and Jordanian Arabic, pointing to any differences/similarities that the two groups might display in their responses to situations calling for apology and explaining the motives that cause differences/ similarities. Answers to this question will be of particular importance in that it constitutes a fertile ground upon which the other questions that underlie this study can be examined. Wood (2000: 207), supporting the different-culture hypothesis, claims that men and women communicate differently. Although this hypothesis has been refuted by many scholars on the basis that such a theory overstates the notion of gender differences (Thorne 1993, Kyratzis 2001), the second part of the present study is concerned with exploring the nexus of gender differences and apology in the Jordanian Arabic context only. The rationale behind confining discussion to Jordanian culture is based on the fact that Jordan is a tribal society, especially in the cities from which the data for this study have been collected. This is to say that males and females socially interact with one another in accordance with a set of social and religious rules which places some constraints on cross-gender conversations as a way to regulate the overall pattern of social interaction. It could be argued that male or female compliance with the social norms adopted in the Jordanian culture is likely to mould the language exchanged between the two genders in two or multi-party conversation. This is not to anticipate differences between the two genders in the way they apologise; yet due to the social demarcation process which draws clear, albeit different, lines of behaviour to be equally adopted by men and women, and based on my intuitions and experience as a Jordanian person, I have been motivated to explore this particular area. In the case of British English, I have chosen not to tackle the effect of gender differences on the act of apologising, since a number of studies demonstrate that gender is unlikely to affect people's apologetic behaviour (Fraser 1981, Schlenker & Darby 1981, Aijmer 1995, Reiter 2000, and Deutschmann (2003).

Finally, based on the intercultural analysis yielded by the first research question and the intracultural findings (the effect of gender differences on the act of apologising in



Jordanian culture), we can move to the final part of the thesis where we can shed further light on the direction of politeness operative in each of the cultures under study and the principles that underlie interaction in cross-cultural contexts. Building on respondents' strategy selection, frequency of semantic formulas of apology, consideration of Brown & Levinson's explanatory variables (social power, social distance, and the total ranking of imposition), and perceptions of notions such as face and deference, we attain more insight into the direction of politeness to which each of the cultures orient. The theoretical framework of analysis is based on Brown & Levinson's (1978, 1987) differentiation between the two main constituents of face: negative politeness and positive politeness. In spite of being hugely critiqued, this theory is still the most comprehensive and empirical to examine linguistic politeness cross-culturally.

To ensure the success of a cross-cultural comparison of apologies, there is a need to compare similar situations regarding the types of participants, their social status, and familiarity (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984, Olshtain 1983). Comparing apologies cross-culturally would also be of use in identifying behaviours that result in violations across cultures and those that are culture specific. To this end, this study will be concerned with classifying the utterances used by speakers of the two languages and identifying the semantic formulas involved in each utterance. Because this is a contrastive study between two cultures, it would not be physically feasible to collect naturally occurring apologies due to time and financial constraints. In addition, some problems could emerge from recording naturally occurring apologies as this would not guarantee collecting enough data needed for the study purposes because of the low frequency of their occurrence. Moreover, in naturally-occurring data it is extremely difficult to control variables, such as social power, social distance and ranking of the imposition, because of the lack of knowledge about the informants. In the light of this, the realisation of the speech act of apology is explored, following Blum-Kulka et al (1989), through the use of discourse completion tests and conducting interviews. The choice of open questionnaires as a data elicitation technique for the present study, in addition to carrying out interviews, is motivated by the need to have well-described situations that are likely to produce controlled responses sufficient to allow cross-cultural comparison. It could be taken as axiomatic that to find the right data collection technique is still debatable, yet to raise the

significance of one method and downplay the value of others is not always permissible. In support of this view, Labov (1972: 119) calls for a diversity of research methods and claims that it is not a must for researchers to use identical approaches. This view is also shared by Brown & Yule (1983: 270), who contend that to give support for one approach as the only one that could bring about the right data at the expense of other research methods constitutes a dangerous predisposition among scholars and students, and that “it is very easy to make claims which are too general and too strong” (ibid.: 270). By the same token, Greene et al (2005: 275) assert that the multiple-method approach is likely to enhance the validity and credibility of the research. Wolfson (1976: 202) and Stubbs (1983: 225) similarly point to the difficulty of defining “natural speech.” This in fact leads Wolfson to argue that there is no decisive answer to the question of what natural speech is. Likewise, Stubbs goes on to compare the collection of authentic data to a “chimera.” This indeed comprises a convincing reason for the above-mentioned scholars to re-voice Labov’s call for the adoption of a poly-data-elicitation technique. This point will be debated further in chapter 3.

In light of what has been stated above, the present study, too, employed a combination of method approach. We therefore endeavoured to collect data via both open-type questionnaire and semi structured interviews. Since the calculation of the frequency of occurrence of apology strategies is of utmost importance, in that it provides further insights into cross-cultural variability, quantitative data (through quantifying the qualitative data) have been obtained in order to satisfy this need. Semi-structured interviews were used to obtain more in-depth data relating to the respondents’ perception of apology, appropriate linguistic politeness strategies, variables that are likely to influence the selection and frequency of their apologies, and differences in the ways men and women apologise (with the latter being investigated in the Jordanian context only). The adoption of the interview as an extra data elicitation approach is also motivated by the doubt that people’s perception of socio-cultural rules might be different from the way they operationalise them in their daily usage; we thus find that interviewing some of the questionnaire respondents would be of use in explaining the responses they provide, and therefore making it easier to validate the findings yielded by the quantitative analysis, and to consolidate our opinion about the phenomenon under study. It is hoped that such

data have given a clear picture of the differences and/or similarities in the repertoire of the two groups' linguistic behaviour, as indicated clearly in the performance of the speech act of apology.

The open-type questionnaire used in this study is adopted from Cohen & Olshtain (1981), Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984) and Reiter (2000), though some situations have been slightly modified. It consists of twelve socially-differentiated apology situations, each of which describes the setting and the nature of the participants, followed by an incomplete dialogue to be filled in by the informants of both languages. The English and Arabic versions of the questionnaire had been pilot-tested with five informants before being distributed as final versions. The apology situations were chosen and modified in order to allow for cross-cultural comparison, and thus to get a clear idea about the two cultures' perceptions of such social variables as social power, social distance, and the total ranking of imposition.

Chapter 1 will provide a brief review of the traditional speech act framework, the focus of which is Austin's (1962) theory of speech acts, Searle's (1969, 1979) theory, and Grice's (1975) conversational implicatures. It will also lay the foundations for the second part of the same chapter where we will review the literature on the form and function of apologies. In this chapter we will also provide an overall picture of the previous studies on the speech act of apology, narrowing the focus to inter-language and cross-cultural studies. Having reviewed the literature on the speech act of apology, we need to go beyond this particular speech act and widen the scope of the study by reviewing the literature and discussing the main outlines of seven politeness theories. Chapter 2 will therefore cast further light on Goffman's (1967, 1971) notion of face, Lakoff's (1973, 1975, 1990) politeness theory, Brown & Levinson's (1978, 1987) model of politeness, Fraser & Nolen's (1981) conversational-contract view, Leech's (1983) theory of interaction, Watts' (1989, 2003, 2005) politeness verbal behaviour, and the notion of relational work as proposed by Locher & Watts (2005), Spencer-Oatey (2005) and Arundale (2006).

In chapter 3, we will discuss some data elicitation techniques that enable us to study and understand the politeness phenomenon. It will also discuss the structure of the study and the coding scheme adopted for data analysis. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 comprise the main contribution of this study. Chapter 4 presents the findings in relation to the existing theoretical frameworks of politeness. It includes an analysis of apologies by situation and by strategy. It also discusses the differences the two cultures exhibited in their perceptions of the influence of social variables on the way people apologise. The intracultural analysis carried out in chapter 5 aims to discuss gender differences and apology in Jordanian Arabic. It therefore examines the disparity the two genders exhibited in terms of strategy selection and frequency, and their perception of social variables, the weightiness of the offence, and the type of offence that elicits more elaborated apologies. In chapter 6, following Brown and Levinson's (1978, 1987) differentiation between negative and positive politeness, we will compare the politeness strategies used by Jordanian Arabic and British English speakers as a step towards tracking the politeness orientation that operates in each of the two cultures. The basic claim made is that politeness is conceived of and expressed differently in the two cultures, with the British employing negative politeness strategies and Jordanians being prone to use positive politeness strategies. Chapter 7 presents the conclusions of the study summarising its main findings, and discusses some of its implications for Jordanian views of politeness, for language teaching and learning, and for future research. It also discusses the study's main contribution to the field of politeness research and its limitations.

# Chapter 1: Overview of speech act theory and the speech act of apology

## 1.1 Classical work on speech acts

It is axiomatic that Austin's (1962) theory of speech acts, Searle's (1979) revised taxonomy of Austin's categorisation system of speech acts and Gricean (1975) pragmatic theory of conversational implicature constitute the classical contributions to the study of speech acts within the realm of philosophy, and subsequently that of pragmatics. A discussion of these theories in this chapter will lay the foundation for reviewing the literature relevant to the speech act of apology.

### 1.1.1 Austin's theory of speech acts.

Most philosophers of language were, and still are, interested in how language represents the world. Austin (1962), for example, states that people perform all sorts of speech acts (which have been defined by Yule (1999) as actions performed by the use of utterances to communicate) in addition to making statements, and that there is a variety of ways for them to be wrong or infelicitous. Austin was among the first to present a systematic description of the use of language. He makes it clear that performative utterances are a kind of action, thus when saying: *I promise I will come*, the speaker is not merely describing a promise, but making one. Performative utterances perform the action named by the first verb in the sentence, and it is possible to insert the adverb *hereby* to stress this function, e.g. *I hereby request that you be on time*.

What Austin is concerned with is not whether performative utterances are true or false. Rather, he is concerned with whether they work or not; that is to say, Austin directs his attention to the question of whether performative utterances could constitute successful promises, warnings, requests, bets, etc. Austin states that successful performative utterances are those that work, and he terms them *felicitous*, whereas those that do not work are termed *infelicitous*. The success of performatives is mainly connected with pre-conditions to be satisfied in order to ensure that performatives work. Such conditions

include the fact that performatives have to satisfy the social conventions for every act: the giving of promises, orders or warnings are all controlled by social conventions. Austin terms these conditions for performatives “felicity conditions”. Performatives, as described by Austin, are characterised by certain features, which could be summarised as follows:

- A- Performative utterances start with a first person verb in a simple present form: *I warn, I promise, etc.*
- B- This verb belongs to a special class describing verbal activities such as: *warn, bet, pronounce.*
- C- The performative nature of performative utterances can be emphasised by the insertion of the adverb *hereby*.

Austin (1962: 100-101) points out that a linguistic act<sup>2</sup> is composed of three main components. First, the *locutionary act*, “the act of saying something”; second, the *illocutionary act*<sup>3</sup>, “the performance of an act in saying something as opposed to the performance of an act of saying something”; and third, the *perlocutionary act*<sup>4</sup>, by which “saying something will produce some consequential effects upon the feeling, thoughts of the audience, speaker, or other persons”. The locutionary act is the actual form of words used by the speaker. The illocutionary act or force is what the speaker is doing by uttering those words: promising, threatening, commanding etc.

In an attempt to come up with a suitable taxonomy of speech acts, Austin (1962: 150-163) distinguishes five general classes of speech act. He advances his taxonomy very precisely, classifying the speech acts according to their illocutionary force:

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<sup>2</sup> Austin (1962) pointed out that it is potentially problematic to consider the speech act as consisting of different acts. It is only one act that should be looked at from different points of view.

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that Schiffer (1972) claims – in his famous book, *Meaning* – that the illocutionary act is represented as just the act of meaning something. Bach & Harnish (1979), on the other hand, contend that an illocutionary act should be looked at as an attempt to communicate and express attitudes.

<sup>4</sup> For more discussion on Austin’s locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts, see Levinson (1983), Blakemore (1992), Grundy (2000), Doerge (2006), Huang (2007).

- A- **Verdictives:** These are represented by the giving of a verdict by a jury or umpire. Verbs that belong to this class include: *acquit, hold, calculate, describe, analyse, estimate, date, rank, assess,* and *characterise*.
- B- **Exercitives:** These are related to the exercise of rights or powers in favour of or against a certain course of action. Examples of this class are: *order, command, direct, plead, beg, recommend, entreat,* and *advise*.
- C- **Commissives:** These are marked by promising or undertaking; they commit the speaker to do something. They involve declarations or announcements of intention. Verbs belonging to this class include: *promise, vow, pledge, covenant, contract, guarantee, embrace,* and *swear*.
- D- **Behabitives:** These involve the idea of reaction to other people's behaviour or attitudes, and expressions of attitudes to others' conduct. Examples are: *apologise, thank, deplore, commiserate, congratulate, felicitate, welcome, applaud, criticise, bless, curse, toast,* and *drink*.
- E- **Expositives:** This category involves verbs that make utterances fit into the course of argument or conversation. These include: *affirm, deny, emphasise, illustrate, answer, report, accept, object to, concede, describe, class, identify,* and *call*.  
(Austin 1962: 150-163)

### 1.1.2 Searle's theory of speech acts

Searle's theory of speech acts, which followed Austin's work, came to systematise Austin's approach to the speech act theory. Searle (1979: 12-20) proposes a revised taxonomy of speech acts as follows:

- A- **Declarations:** These affect immediate changes in the institutional state of affairs. Examples are *declaring war, excommunicating, christening, marrying, firing from employment,* etc.
- B- **Representatives:** These commit the speaker to the truth of an expressed proposition. Examples are: *asserting, concluding,* etc.

**C- Expressives:** These express a psychological state. Examples are: *thanking, apologising, welcoming, congratulating, etc.*

**D- Comissives:** These commit the speaker to some future course of action. Examples are: *threatening, offering, promising, etc.*

**E- Directives:** These are attempts by the speaker to get the addressee to do something. Examples are *questioning and requesting.*

In his attempts to establish the aforementioned speech acts, Searle uses different criteria such as the use of the *illocutionary point* of the act, which is defined as the purpose of the act, thus the illocutionary point of directives is to get the hearer to do something. The *fit* of the illocutionary point is concerned with the direction of the relationship between language and the world. Thus, speakers using directives are seeking to get the world to fit their words, whereas speakers using representatives are seeking to get their words to fit the world. The *psychological state* of the speaker is related to the speaker's state of mind, thus expressives, like apologies, express the speaker's attitude to events. Finally, the *content* of the act is related to the restrictions placed on speech acts. Thus, one can not promise or predict things that have already happened. Below is a table quoted from Peccei (1999: 53) which shows the similarities and differences between Searle's speech act categories.

**Table 1. The relation between 'words' and 'the world'**

Speech-act category	Relation between the 'words' and 'the world'	Who is responsible for the relation
Declarations	the words change the world	speaker
Representatives	the words fit the world ( 'outside' world)	speaker
Expressives	the words fit the world ( 'psychological' world)	speaker
Rogatives	the words fit the world	hearer
Commissives	the world will fit the words	speaker
Directives	the world will fit the words	hearer

Adopted from Peccei (1999: 53)

For the purpose of categorising successful speech acts, Searle (1969: 54-71) develops Austin's felicity conditions. He distinguishes between preparatory, propositional, sincerity, and essential conditions, which are likely to ensure a successful speech act.



Searle does not provide a full description of the rules of apologies, but for the purpose of clarification of his approach, his felicity conditions for the speech acts of advice and questions are quoted below.

Conditions for advice (Searle: 1969: 66) [Where S = speaker, H = hearer, A = the future action.]

- 1- Preparatory 1: S has some reason to believe A will benefit H.
- 2- Preparatory 2: It is not obvious to both S and H that H will do A in the normal course of events.
- 3- Propositional: Future act A of H.
- 4- Sincerity: S believes A will benefit H.
- 5- Essential: counts as an undertaking to the effect that A is in H's best interest.

Conditions for questions (Searle 1969: 66) [Where S = speaker, H = hearer, P = the proposition expressed in the speech act.]

- 1- Preparatory 1: S does not know the answer, i.e. does not know the proposition is true, or, in the case of propositional function, does not know the information needed to complete the proposition truly.
- 2- Preparatory 2: It is not obvious to both S and H that H will provide the information at that time without being asked.
- 3- Propositional: Any proposition or propositional function.
- 4- Sincerity: S wants this information.
- 5- Essential: The act counts as an attempt to elicit this information from H.

Searle (1979: 30-57) distinguishes between two types of speech acts: he makes a distinction between direct speech acts and indirect speech acts. In the former, there is a direct relationship between their linguistic structure and the function they are fulfilling, whereas in the latter, the speech act is performed indirectly through the performance of another speech act. The hearer is able to know the real illocutionary force of the act when being performed by indirect speech act by observing that one or more of the felicity conditions of the act have been violated, a fact which gives the hearer a hint to the true

illocutionary force. In relation to this, Searle (1979: 30) points out that in hints, irony, and metaphor the speaker's utterance meaning and sentence meaning are different. He clarifies this distinction using the example of "Can you reach the salt?" in which the speaker intends it to be understood as a request to pass the salt, though it takes the form of a question. The problem raised by indirect speech acts is how it is possible for the hearer to understand the indirect speech act when the sentence he<sup>5</sup> hears means something other than what is being stated literally. The problem becomes more complicated when some sentences are used conventionally as indirect requests as in the example, "Can you reach the salt?" Searle (1979: 32) suggests that in indirect speech acts, the speaker utters utterances that have further illocutionary forces based on the fact that both the speaker and the hearer have shared background information<sup>6</sup>. This, with the inference on the part of the hearer, enables the hearer to capture the intended meaning of the utterance or the true illocutionary force it bears.

In an attempt to explain the difference between primary illocutionary act which is non-literal and secondary illocutionary act which is literal, Searle (1979: 33) introduces the following example quoted as (1)

- (1) A- Student X: Let us go to the movies tonight.  
B- Student Y: I have to study for an exam.

In relation to the example mentioned above, Searle comments that utterance (B) comes to constitute a rejection of the proposal given by student X. Such rejection is expressed not in virtue of the sentence meaning, since in virtue of the sentence meaning it is simply a statement. The primary illocutionary act performed in Y's utterance is the rejection of the proposal made by X. Student Y does this by performing a secondary illocutionary act of making a statement. Inferential strategy enables the hearer to differentiate between primary illocutionary force and secondary illocutionary force. In addition, it makes clear what the primary illocutionary point is.

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<sup>5</sup> In this study, the speaker is referred to as female and the addressee as male.

<sup>6</sup> Of particular importance here are the principles of cooperative conversation suggested by Grice (1975) which will be discussed in the next section.

While explaining the concept of indirect illocutionary acts, Searle (1979: 36) tends to rely on directives, since most conversations require the presence of politeness rather than the issuing of flat imperative sentences. Searle (1979: 36-39) comes up with six-sentence categories that are conventionally used in the performance of indirect directives. These are listed below with one example that clarifies each category:

Group 1: Sentences concerning H's ability to perform A:

(Can you reach the salt?)

Group 2: Sentences concerning S's wish or want that H will do A:

(I would like you to go now.)

Group 3: Sentences concerning H's doing A:

(Won't you stop making that noise soon?)

Group 4: Sentences concerning H's desire or willingness to do A:

(Would you be willing to write a letter of recommendation for me?)

Group 5: Sentences concerning reasons for doing A:

(You ought to be more polite to your mother.)

Group 6: Sentences embedding one of these elements inside another; also, sentences embedding an explicit directive illocutionary verb inside one of these contexts:

(Would it be too much if I suggested that you could possibly make a little less noise?)

In relation to the aforementioned categories, Searle (1979: 39-43) states that the imperative force expressed in these sentences is not part of their meaning. In addition, the sentences in question are not ambiguous, that is, they clearly reveal the imperative illocutionary force. Moreover, the sentences are not idioms. Searle proves this by reference to an ordinary example of an idiom "kicked the bucket;" thus when translating "John kicked the bucket" word for word into other languages, the result will not be a sentence meaning "John died." However, when the illocutionary force is translated, the sentences in question will produce sentences with the same indirect illocutionary acts as the English examples. However, all the sentences mentioned above are idiomatically used as requests.

### 1.1.3 Grice's conversational implicatures and speech acts

The inference principles provided by Grice's theory of conversational implicatures enable the hearer to derive the suitable indirect force of the speech acts. Coulthard (1985: 30-32) comments on the contribution of Grice's theory's on indirect speech acts, that participants orient to the co-operative principle<sup>7</sup> (CP). Grice's cooperative principle is intended to describe how people interact with one another and how they normally behave in conversation. That is, people who obey the cooperative principle in their language use are trying to make sure that what they say in a conversation satisfies the purpose of that conversation. This principle implies that – in order to produce appropriate conversational behaviour – participants have to make decisions in four main areas: relation, quality, quantity and manner. They are all, as Grice (1975: 45-47) proposes, spelled out by maxims, which are:

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 1- quantity | a) make your contribution as informative as is required.<br>b) do not make your contribution more informative than is required. |
| 2- quality  | a) don't say what you believe to be false.<br>b) don't say that for which you lack adequate evidence                            |
| 3- relation | be relevant.  |
| 4- manner   | a) avoid obscurity of expression.<br>b) avoid ambiguity.<br>c) be brief.<br>d) be orderly                                       |

Speakers may violate one or two maxims<sup>8</sup> by, for example, telling lies, not giving the required relevant information, or by giving utterances that are ambiguous. Moreover, there are instances when the speaker decides to flout a maxim. In such cases the conversational maxims enable the listener to infer what is being conversationally implicated. This indicates that Grice's (1975: 49-55) theory of inference is the only way by which speakers derive meaning from indirect utterances. A few of Grice's examples illustrate indirect

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<sup>7</sup> Eelen (2001) argues that Grice's theory is based on the assumption that people are inherently cooperative and aim to be as informative as possible in communication.

<sup>8</sup> Grice (1975) claims that the first three maxims relate to what is said, whereas the fourth maxim relates to how something is said.

speech acts, e.g., “*There is a garage around the corner*” is used to tell someone where to get petrol. “*He was a little intoxicated,*” is used to explain why a man smashed some furniture. It is worth noting here that Grice (1975) implicitly indicates that the maxims of cooperative conversation are universal, in that people are intrinsically cooperative and on the presumption that these maxims stem from rational behaviour<sup>9</sup>. Grice indicates that people’s observance of the cooperative principle and its maxims is the foundation of rational behaviour. Although at one level the CP is helpful to the hearer, it can also be said to make his task more difficult (Davies 2000: 3). This is because speakers can produce hard-to-interpret utterances expecting the hearers to derive other propositions, which are not related in any systematic way to the meaning of the words uttered. This indicates that it is not the CP, but the assumption that it is based on, which allows speakers to operate in this way.

It would seem from this that the CP is not about making the task of the Hearer straightforward; potentially, it is quite the reverse. It allows the speaker to make their utterance harder, rather than easier, to interpret: we can omit information or present a non-literal utterance, and expect the Hearer to do the extra work necessary to interpret it. (Davies 2000: 3)

Levinson (1983: 269-276) introduces the inference theory as an alternative to the idiom theory presented by Searle. The inference theory claims that in order for the hearer to arrive at the indirect speech act meant by the speaker, he has to work out the literal speech act that the expression carries by convention, and then the indirect speech act can be derived by the hearer by inference. Grice (1957) argues that all speech is non-natural, in the sense that there is a relationship between the conventional meaning of an utterance and any implicit meaning it might have. The assumption that all speech is non-natural could also be due to the fact that words have no causal link between their form and their meaning.

Having discussed the different traditional frameworks for speech acts in general, we will now proceed to look in particular at the speech act of apology. In the next section, we start

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<sup>9</sup> Hymes (1986) refutes Grice’s claim of the universality of the cooperative principle and its subsequent maxims saying that these maxims could be claimed as universal providing that they are re-explained as dimensions of behaviour.

our discussion by reviewing the literature on apology. We enrich our discussion by highlighting the available empirical research on apologies, including inter-language and cross-cultural studies.

## **1.2 Literature Review of apologies**

### **1.2.1 Theoretical background on apologies**

Apologies are semantic strategies used to fulfil people's communicative goals (Aijmer 1996: 81). Therefore, part two of this chapter is concerned with casting some light on the form and function of remedial interchanges of which apologies form an essential part. This will include a review of what is suggested by researchers within the realm of pragmatics, such as Owen (1983), Olshtain & Cohen (1983) and Aijmer (1996), regarding available strategies that could realise the speech act of apology, and factors that might affect the choice of apology strategies. The second part of this chapter is also designed to provide an overall picture of previous inter-language and cross-cultural studies on the speech act of apology, the focus of which will be on works by Borkin and Reinhart (1978), Coulmas (1981), Cohen & Olshtain (1981), Cohen & Olshtain (1985), Garcia (1989), Suszczyńska (1999), Lipson (1994), Reiter (2000), Wouk (2006) and Kasanga & Lwanga-Lumu (2007). We conclude the discussion at the end of this chapter by summarising the similarities and/or differences between these studies.

### **1.2.2 On defining apologies**

Apology is a speech act that has received attention from a number of researchers from various disciplines. It has been viewed by Goffman (1971) as “remedial exchange” and as “[...] a gesture through which an individual splits himself into two parts, the part that is guilty of an offence and the part that dissociates itself from the delict and affirms a belief in the offended rule” (ibid.: 113). In this view, apologies are seen as constituting two processes: taking responsibility for an offensive act, and expression of regret for the offence committed (Fraser 1981: 262), or as an act of redress used when social norms have been violated by a real or potential offence (Olshtain & Cohen 1983: 20). Holmes (1990: 159) argues that apologising is a speech act addressed to the offended person's

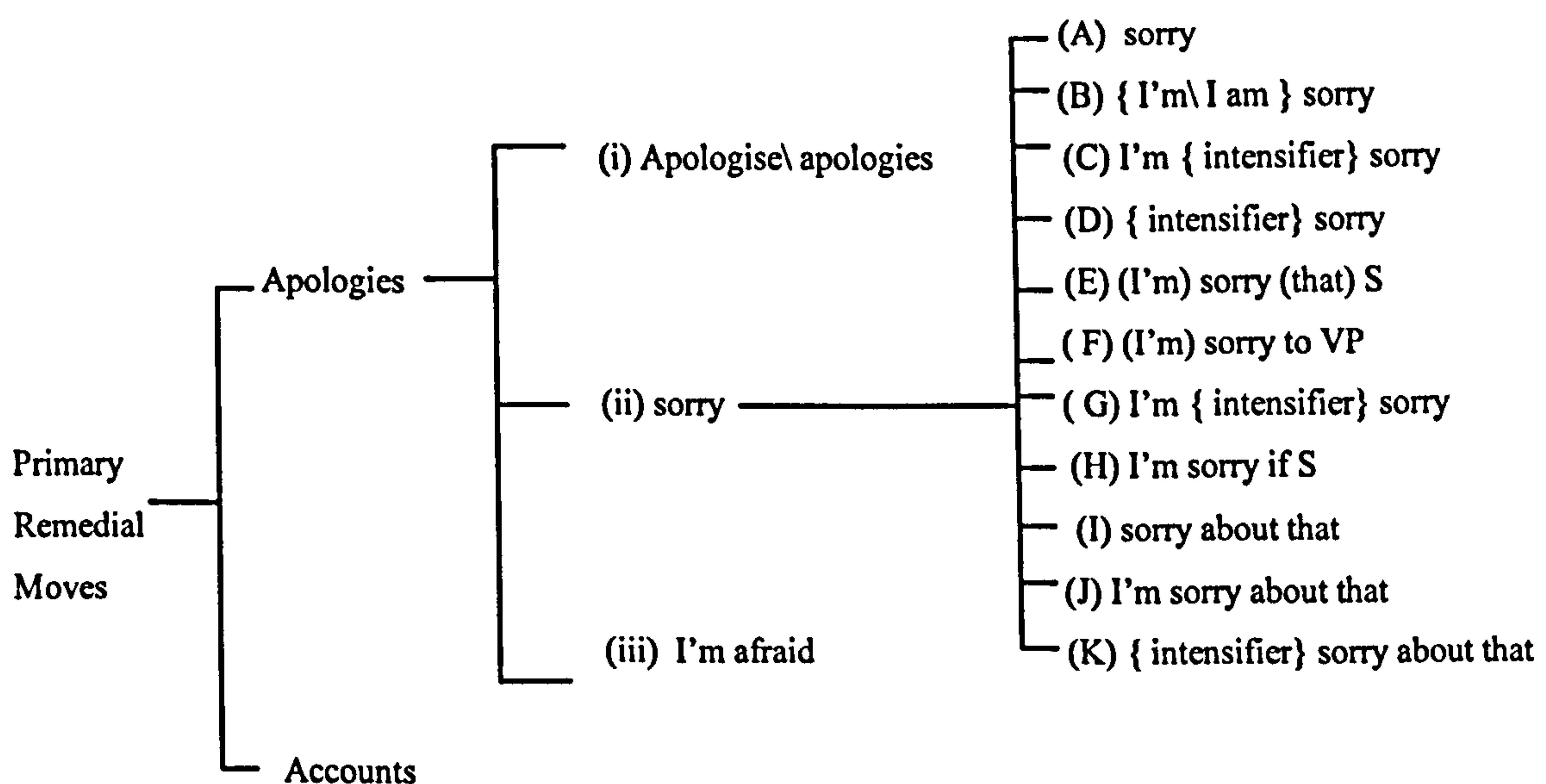
face-needs and designed to rectify the offence that the offender is responsible for, and therefore to bring the relationship back into balance again. Edmondson & House (1981: 47) claim that apologies conform to Leech's (1983: 133) hearer supportive maxim (Support the hearer's costs and benefits and suppress your own!). Likewise, Gu (1990: 241) suggests that apologies are "face-caring". Defining apologies as offered in response to a breach of moral standards, Gill (2000: 24) contends that apologies are tools for holding offenders accountable to community, and that they give some guarantee that the offender will refrain from violations in the future, and may lead to the community being strengthened. Ohbuchi, Kameda, & Agarie (1989) hold that apologies imply that the offender feels guilty, and that he has suffered and already served part of the penalty. Similarly, Weiner (1995) views apologies as being indicative of the transgressor's rehabilitation and as a commitment on the part of the offender not to repeat the transgression. This indeed demonstrates the crucial social and psychological significance of apologies, triggered by the need to establish and maintain social harmony (Grainger & Harris 2007). Unlike Olshtain (1989), Fraser (1981), and Brown & Levinson (1987), whose definitions of apologies focus on the benefit of the apologisee, Davies et al (2007: 41) claim that apologies strengthen the offender's membership of the community and are likely to enhance her "social standing", as apologies reflect the apologisee's understanding and acceptance of the rule breached by the offence and "pay face to the addressee, thus paying back 'the debt' of any infringement (or potentially gaining credit for the future)" (2007: 40). It could be said that, like the apologisee, the apologisee is a beneficiary of the whole remedial process, in that apologies are highly likely to put an end to conflict inside the offender's mind, of which severe self-reprimand could be a part.

### **1.2.3 Form and function of apology**

Authors such as Edmondson (1981), Fraser (1981), Olshtain & Cohen (1983), Owen (1983) and Aijmer (1996) are all concerned with investigating the form and function of remedial interchanges, of which apologising forms an essential part. Apologising has been recently explored thoroughly by many researchers who, in turn, have expanded the area of research in order to investigate the phenomenon within its sociolinguistic context. Thus,

many studies have been conducted to show the influence of social variables – such as relative power, social distance, and ranking of imposition – on the way people apologise. Also, a large number of studies have been carried out on non-native speakers’ use of language and on cross-cultural issues. As to the former, researchers such as Borkin & Reinhart (1978), Coulmas (1981), Cohen & Olshtain (1981) Cohen & Olshtain (1985) and Garcia (1989) have conducted studies that aim to measure non-native speakers’ performance of apology in their second language. Cross-cultural studies, to which our present study belongs, are concerned with measuring norms – the socio-cultural rules that monitor apologising across languages and cultures. Examples of such studies include those by Blum-Kulka et al (1989), Suszczyńska (1999), Lipson (1994), Trosborg (1995) Reiter (2000), Wouk (2006) and Kasanga & Lwanga-Lumu (2007). Before reviewing previous studies on apologising in the next section of this chapter, it is necessary that we first look at the form and function of apologies.

Based on Goffman’s work on remedial interchanges, Owen (1983: 62) shows that primary remedial moves form an integral part of remedial interchanges. She develops her argument by illuminating the differences between primary remedial moves (PRMs) and other moves that are positioned after them. She indicates that, unlike PRMs, other moves that follow them cannot occur independently; they need to be connected with PRMs so that remedial interchange can be guaranteed. Primary remedial moves, Owen claims, are placed along a scale extending from ritual to substantive. Apologies are placed at the ritual end of the scale. She clarifies the types of remedial moves available in English, including both apologies and accounts, using the following chart:



*Types of Primary Remedial Moves in English (Owen, 1983: 64)*



In the case of apologies, Owen (1983: 63) believes that the use of this act is restricted in English to the utterances that involve the following:

- 1- apology, apologies, or apologise
- 2- sorry
- 3- I'm afraid + sentence pro-form

Owen suggests that the use of these key words renders the move remedial, just as the use of 'thank' comprises thanking. The first type, Owen asserts, is of rare use since it has a restricted range in spoken English, figuring mostly in more formal situations or in the opening of lectures. Apologies of this type are one-party conversation in the sense that forms of speech by the addressee are not expected to occur. According to Owen, the second type – which incorporates the use of 'sorry' – is said to be the most popular way of performing a primary remedial move in English. In addition to the semantic content, Owen (1983: 66) explains this essential component of PRM showing the different syntactic patterns that accompany 'sorry', which could be represented as in the following:

( [ I'm / I am ] ) ( intensifier ) sorry ( [ ( that ) S / To VP / If S / about that ] )

Unlike the use of 'apologise' and 'sorry', which appear to have full remedial function, 'I'm afraid' is used to partially convey the same function. This use is distinct from the use of "I'm afraid" to express a speaker's mental condition of fear. The syntactic structure distinguishes these two functions. To express a speaker's mental condition of fear, *I'm afraid* appears in the following syntactic structures:

I'm afraid of NP and

I'm afraid to VP

On the other hand, remedial use of "I'm afraid" as an apology key word occurs in the following structures:

I'm afraid (that) S and

I'm afraid + sentence pro-form (e.g. so, not, I will, etc.)

Owen contends that in addition to the syntactic structure, the semantic content of the complement and some information about the situation also need to be taken into consideration to identify whether *I'm afraid* is used for remedial purposes. Thus a sentence like *I'm afraid he's going to fall* is not remedial although syntactically similar to remedial sentences with *I'm afraid*. This means that in order for such types of moves to be classified as remedial, an understanding of their syntactic-semantic context will be necessary.

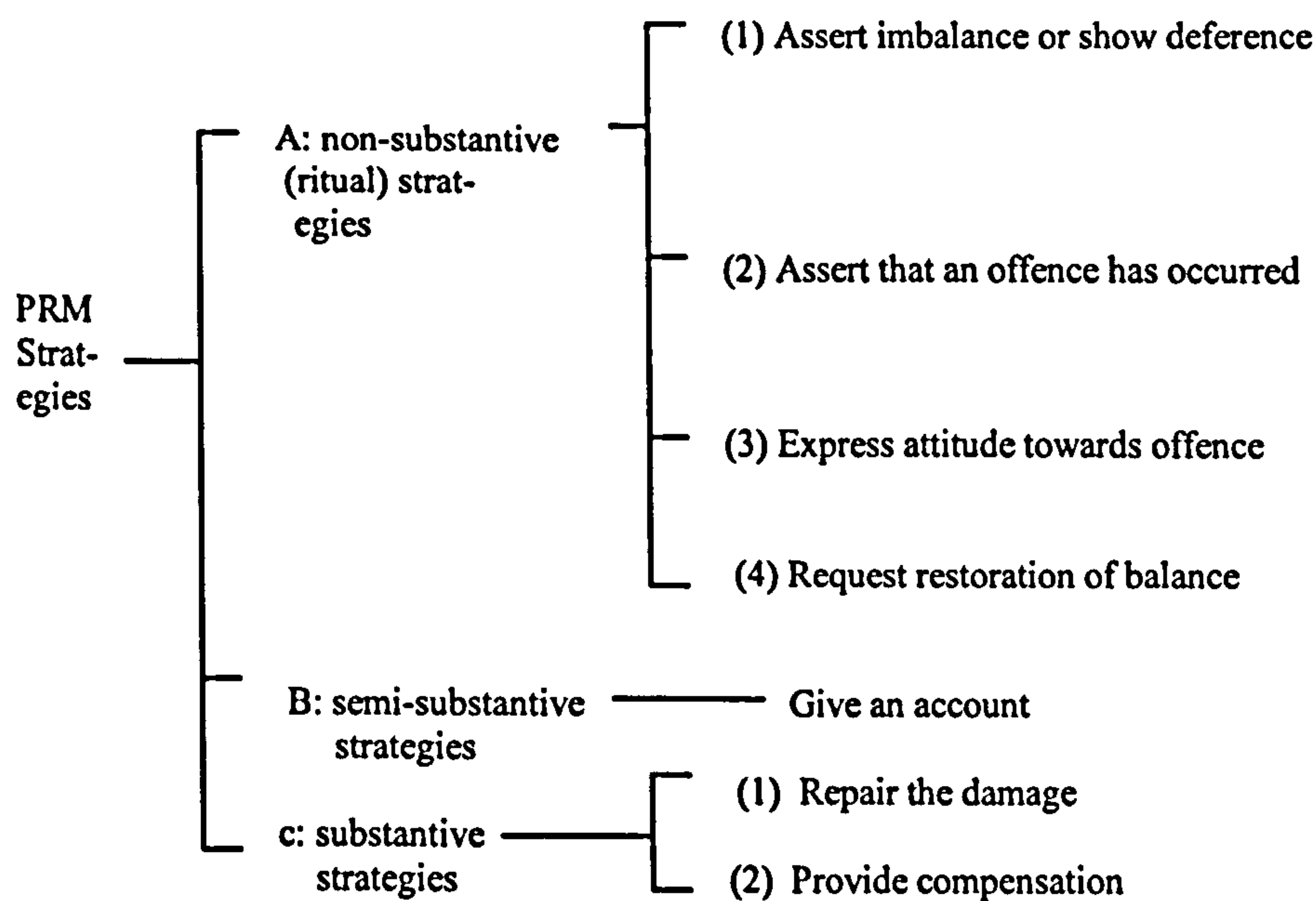
Before outlining her model, Owen (1983: 163) examines some issues that arise when studying remedial interchanges across cultures and languages. For example, she holds that although some individuals and groups have the same language, there might be differences between their cultures that could give rise to differences in usage. Identifying the same interchange in a different culture, Owen asserts, is another problem experienced when trying to compare remedial interchanges across cultures, especially when the form and the context of use are different.

Owen (1983: 166) pays much attention to '*imbalance*' as a core concept associated with remedial interchanges. In this case, she limits her discussions to the temporary and restorable imbalance which arises from the dissimilarity between people. Owen further elaborates her argument by distinguishing between imbalances arising from "negatively-valued acts" and those arising from "positively-valued acts;" she found that in the first, remedial work is needed, whereas in the second, thanks would be more appropriate.

Owen's (1983: 166) concept of '*imbalance*' is similar to that of indebtedness proposed by Coulmas (1981). The imbalance principle is mainly concerned with the state that exists between individuals, with little attention paid to the source of the problem. The imbalance principle is also similar to Brown & Levinson's (1978: 241) "balance principle", in the sense that remedial interchange, according to Brown & Levinson, could be "recycled" if the first remedy is perceived by the offended person to be not enough, thus producing a sequence reaction of imbalance and "overcorrection", until balance is fulfilled. Owen

(1983: 168) claims that although her concept of ‘*imbalance*’ and Brown & Levinson’s “balance principle” are very similar, they are different in emphasis.

Owen’s adoption of the imbalance principle has enabled her to predict strategies which are of great help to the offender. Such strategies are not perceived in terms of restitution. Rather, they are seen as ritual strategies. In all cultures, Owen (1983: 168) theorises, primary remedial moves could be accomplished via one or other of these strategies, which are summarised in the table below:



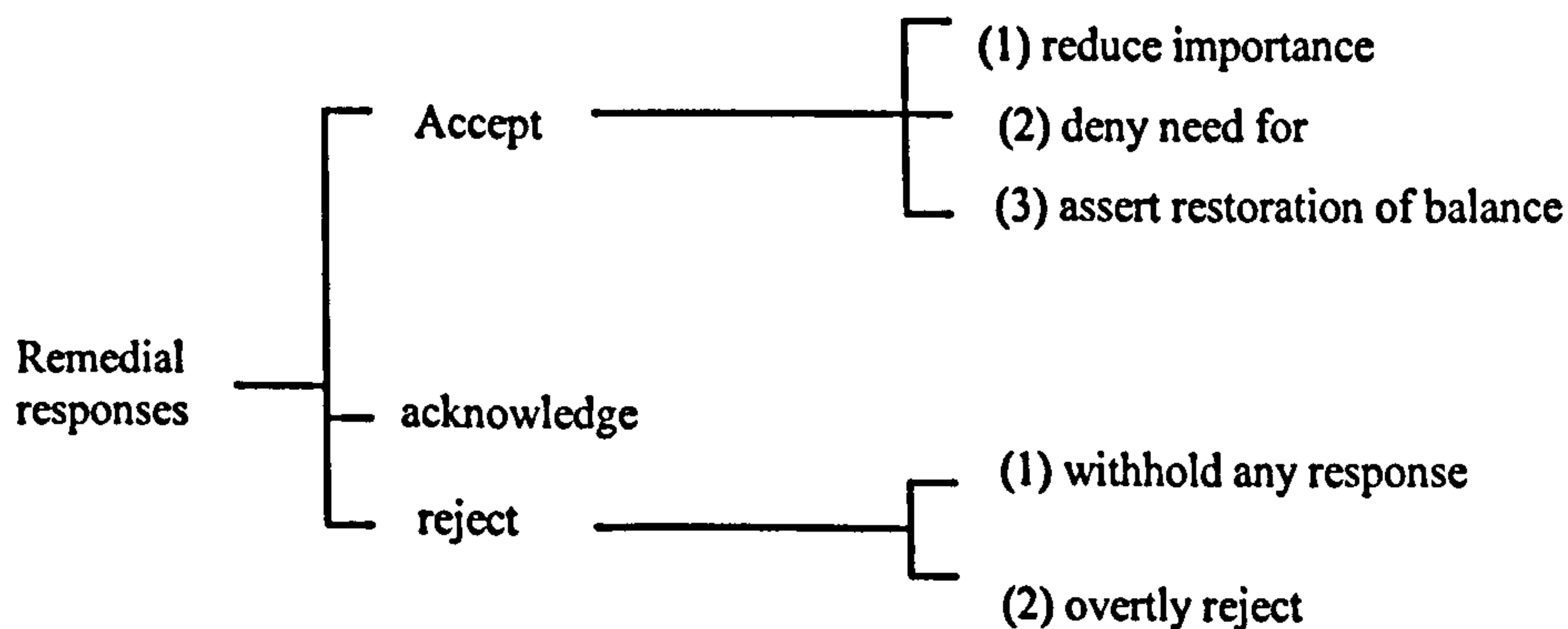
*Strategies for primary remedial moves (Owen, 1983: 169)*

As outlined in the table above, these strategies are placed on a scale extending from non-substantive (ritual), such as showing deference, to substantive, such as providing restitution. Within each category, a number of sub-categories are recognised. In the case of non-substantive strategies, Owen (1983) argues that the offender has plenty of options to use, to mitigate the offence created. In strategy (1), *assert imbalance to show deference*, the offender recognises that the offence is likely to create imbalance and tries to restore social harmony by, for example, acknowledging the “superiority” of the apologisee, or by expressing deference to the offended person in the hope of being forgiven. In Owen’s view, strategy (2) – *assert that an offence has occurred* – is similar to strategy (1), but instead of paying attention to the maleffects of the offence, the offender centres attention on the offence itself, not trying to run away from blame.

Owen (1983: 170) holds that strategy 3, *express attitudes towards offence*, is somewhat different from strategies (1) and (2), in that the offender – by means of expressing regret and suffering due to committing the offence – is asking the victim to reinstate equilibrium. By using strategy (4), *requesting restoration of balance* by a direct request to the offended to forgive the offender, the offender runs the risk of refusal, which is highly likely to threaten the offender’s face. Owen (1983: 171) assumes that this strategy is hardly used in cultures whose members refuse to accept face loss, such as the Japanese.

The semi-substantive strategy of giving accounts is ranked between entirely ritual and totally material strategies. Owen holds that by using the strategy of giving accounts, the offender tries to reinstate a degree of balance through providing interpretation of her act. The use of accounts, Owen contends, is not a replacement of ritual remedial work, as apologies and accounts frequently occur together in English. According to Owen, the offender resorts to the substantive option when the ritual account is not felt to be enough to get the offence forgiven. Substantive strategies, which include repairing the damage or providing restitution, are considered by Owen to be completely non-linguistic, and as such they are not handled in her study.

Building on the notion of imbalance and the available remedial strategies demonstrated above, Owen (1983: 172-73) proposes a set of response strategies that consists of three main categories. These categories, along with their sub-categories, are shown clearly in the table below:



*Remedial response strategies (Owen, 1983: 172)*

Owen focuses on the sub-types of acceptance strategy with little attention paid to acknowledgement or rejection strategy. In relation to the subdivisions of acceptance

strategy, she found that the first, *reduce the importance of the offence*, is very much related to the offence itself and its consequences and has nothing to do with the offender's "state of mind." The second, *deny the need for apology*, should be explained, Owen claims, in terms of the concept of "imbalance", and not by notions like "debt" or "indebtedness". The third, *asserting restoration of balance*, constitutes a clear revelation of forgiveness, and is developed from the primary remedial move strategy A (4) *request restoration of balance*.

Edmondson (1981: 273) views everyday conversations as "routinal" or "conventionalized". He believes that within a situational context, social members can strongly predict the types of conversation that may occur, in addition to how social members could start the conversation. Edmondson explains conversational behaviour as characterised as being conventionalised and predictable; thus, joining a queue in front of a box-office limits the number of conversational behaviour options one has with the ticket-seller.

In order to illuminate some different types of routine in discourse, Edmondson (1981: 274) makes two relevant distinctions: firstly, between what conversationalists "know" and what they "do," which he links with a distinction between communicative and social competence; and secondly, between what is "said" and what is "done" in an ongoing conversation. Taking these distinctions as a point of departure, he sketches a discourse framework within which the use of apologies in everyday conversation is investigated.

In relation to the first distinction, between communicative and social competence, Edmondson (1981: 274) claims that everyday conversational behaviour reflects the social competence of individual social members:

Communicative competence may be represented as a series of rules concerning the encoding, decoding and sequencing of central communicative acts. In the actual business of conversation, such rules are used or manipulated by members in order to achieve communicative goals and maintain or restore social harmony. The use to which communicative competence is put therefore reflects an individual's social competence (Edmondson 1981: 274).

In an attempt to distinguish what is "done" from what is "said" in a discourse, Edmondson (1981: 275) further distinguishes three perspectives that are relevant to the

communicative acts of which apologies are an essential part: *the locutionary act*, which is the act of saying something; *the illocutionary act*, which communicates the speaker's attitudes and feelings; and *the interactional act*, which is related to the importance of the utterance as a contribution to the ongoing discourse of which it forms a structural part. The communicative act is perceived by Edmondson as an illocutionary act, which fills a 'slot' in the interactional structure.

Taking his discussion on conversational routines as a point of departure, Edmondson (1981: 278) investigates in detail the nature of apologetic illocutions. He compares it to other types of illocution that belong to the same class of "expressives", as Searle (1976) terms them. Apologies are compared to thanks and complaints. Edmondson analyses the situations where these illocutions take place and comes out with the following:

APOLOGISE	S did P, P bad for H
THANK	H did P, P good for S
COMPLAIN	H did P, P bad for S

Edmondson holds that apologies and complaints are similar, in the sense that what constitutes a ground for a complaint also constitutes a ground for an apology, but unlike complaints, apologies and thanks have overt performatives or illocutions. Edmondson's only explanation for this is that 'indirectness' is more appropriate and conventional with regard to complaining illocutions, while with thanks and apologies explicit performatives in English are preferred, since they involve social norms of politeness.

Based on the assumption that apologies are illocutions, Edmondson (1981: 280) goes on to investigate what speakers actually do with such illocutions during interactions, namely the functions of apology during the conversations. He assumes that apologies are an attempt on the part of the speaker to restore social harmony. Once the apology is accepted, Edmondson claims, "the complaint is no longer a valid focus for talk". Apologies, moreover, appear in what Edmondson terms "ritual firming exchanges, and serve to confirm the outcome of them" (ibid.: 280).

Central to this, Fraser (1981: 259) defines the speech act of apology – following Goffman (1971) – as a kind of remedial work, or an action taken on the part of the apologiser to restore relationships and “to change what might be seen as an offensive act into an acceptable one.” In relation to the factors that may create offence, Fraser (1981: 259) points out that an offence may arise from the apologiser’s violation of social norms, such as arriving late to a doctor’s office, or from the apologiser’s failure to fulfil a personal expectation held by the apologisee, such as “when the offended person anticipates a call on his birthday”.

Fraser (1981: 261) defines apology speech acts according to the necessary conditions that should be true on the part of the apologiser in addition to the conditions that enable the apology speech act to be realised successfully. He suggests four assumptions that should be true of the apologiser: first, that the apologiser believes that some act happened prior to the time of apologising; second, that the apologiser believes that the act offended the hearer; third, that the apologiser must hold herself responsible for the offence; and finally, that the apologiser feels sorry for the offence she has committed. Although the apologiser’s four beliefs are assumed to be held by the person who apologises, the absence or violation of one of these conditions is not to render the act of apologising unsuccessful. Thus, “I might, for example, apologise for breaking your valuable vase which, in fact is still whole. A strange apology, but an apology nevertheless.”(Fraser 1981: 261). Regardless of whether or not the apologiser abides by the previously explained conditions, Fraser points out that in order for an apology to be successfully remedial, two essential conditions should be met: the apologiser’s acknowledgement of responsibility for the offence she has caused, and the apologiser’s regret for the offence.

Investigating the conditions that establish the success of the speech act of apology, Fraser (1981: 262-263) introduces the possible strategies that an apologiser may use to fulfil the act of apologising. Unlike Goffman (1971: 117), who limits the means for apologising to the semantic strategy which expresses regret on the part of the speaker, Fraser believes that there are a number of other strategies for apologising:

**Strategy 1:** Announcing that you are apologising.

“I (hereby) apologize for.... .”

**Strategy 2:** Stating one’s obligation to apologise.

**“I must apologise for....”**

**Strategy 3: Offering to apologise.**

**“I (hereby) offer my apology for....”**

**Strategy 4: Requesting the hearer to accept an apology.**

**“Please accept my apology for....”**

**Strategy 5: Expressing regret for the offence.**

**“I (truly/very much/so....) regret that I....”**

**Strategy 6: Requesting forgiveness for the offence.**

**“Please excuse me for....”**

**“Pardon me for....”**

**Strategy 7: Acknowledging responsibility for the offending act.**

**“That was my fault.”**

**Strategy 8: Promising forbearance from a similar offending act.**

**“I promise you that that will never happen again.”**

**Strategy 9: Offering redress.**

**“Please let me pay for the damage I’ve done.” (Fraser 1981: 263)**

Fraser believes that the first four strategies are direct in the sense that in each one, the apologiser states “that an apology is at issue”. In addition, Fraser (1981: 264) notes that in the first four strategies, the apologiser does not explicitly hold herself responsible for the offence, nor does she express regret for the offence, although these two points are pre-conditions for apology to work well. With respect to the next five strategies, they are much more indirect than the first four. Fraser notes that these strategies are also used combined, depending on the situation of apology. Fraser (1981: 265) points out that in addition to the strategies used to fulfill the speech act of apology, there are strategies for responding to apology. These are: rejecting the need for apologising, denying the offence, expressing appreciation for the concern of the speaker, and rejecting the speaker’s responsibility for the action.

Fraser (1981: 266-269) points out that the nature of offence, the severity of the offence, the situation of the interaction, and the familiarity of the individuals involved are all factors that play a significant role in the choice of the apology strategy. The nature of the offence may be of two types: social and personal. In this respect, Fraser’s findings are in harmony with those of Borkin and Reinhart (1978) – explained in detail later in this chapter – who distinguish in British English between the two forms, “Excuse me” and “I’m sorry”, showing that in cases



where a social rule has been broken, “Excuse me” is more appropriate, while in the case of personal injury, “I’m sorry” is more appropriate. Regarding the second factor, Fraser (1981: 267) recognises two types: very serious injury and significant injury. He finds that very serious injury requires apologies followed by an account, whereas for the cases where there is some significant injury, there is a need for an apology followed by an offer of redress. Fraser’s hypothesis is consistent with that of Goffman (1971), who believes that minor offences elicit a brief apology, whereas much more elaborated apologies are required when the offence is perceived as serious. With respect to the third factor, which relates to the situation in which the offence occurred, Fraser claims that situations could range from the most formal to the most intimate, a fact that affects the choice of apology strategy. Thus it is more appropriate in formal situations to use apology expressions such as “Excuse me, I’m sorry for interrupting you”, while it is more appropriate in less formal situations, where the relation between the participants is intimate, to use expressions such as “Oops,” and “I’m an idiot”. The relative familiarity between the interactants is similar to the factor of situational formality; familiarity could range from two persons who have never met one another previously, to those who live in the same place. As for the gender of apologiser, Fraser (1981: 269) claims that this has nothing to do with the choice of apology strategy. Holmes (1995: 160-64), on the other hand, suggests that men and women perceive apologies differently: whereas men tend to adopt different strategies according to their status relationship with the other, women tend to use strategies which maintain their relationship with the offended person. Holmes (1995: 163) terms such strategies as ‘other-oriented.’<sup>10</sup>

On the basis of Fraser’s work on apologies, Olshtain & Cohen (1983: 20) hold that apologising as a speech act is usually called for when some behaviour has caused a violation of the social norms. They claim that apologising embodies two parts: an apologiser and a recipient. However, they hold that the apologiser’s perception of the offence is not enough to fulfill the act of apologising, because the act of apologising requires an action or an utterance designed to “set things right.” Olshtain & Cohen’s argument conforms to that of Schmidt & Richards (1980), in that speech acts such as apologies cannot be confined to a sentence or an utterance. This hypothesis is justified by the fact that apologising, like all other speech acts, is an act and not only a unit of speech.

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<sup>10</sup> For extensive discussion on this particular point, see section 5.8 of chapter five.

As previously mentioned, Olshtain & Cohen (1983: 21), while describing the apology speech act set, assume that apologising is a two-party act, in the sense that there are two participants: one perceiving himself as deserving an apology and the other perceived as responsible for causing the infraction. This process entails that there is a circle of interaction between the recipient and the apologiser. From this, Olshtain & Cohen go on to describe the apology speech act set from a number of different dimensions:

- 1- The recipient's expectations determined by his evaluation of the degree of severity of the offence.
- 2- The offender's apology determined by her perception of the degree of severity of the offence.
- 3- The offender's apology controlled by the extent of compunction expected from the recipient.
- 4- The interactive nature of both the initial apology and the recipient's response.
- 5- The social status of the two participants.
- 6- The way the tone of voice may function to convey meaning.

Olshtain & Cohen claim that these points of view are integral aspects of discourse and influence the apologiser's choice of semantic formulas. In relation to this, they confine their discussion to two dimensions: the severity of infraction and the social status of the apologisee. They believe that more serious insults cause the offender to offer highly intensified apologies, such as "I'm terribly sorry," whereas offences of low severity bring about less intensified apologies, such as "I'm sorry." Their argument is in line with that of Goffman (1971) and Fraser (1981), who hold that greater harms need greater remedial actions. Correspondingly, apologies of high intensity are usually offered to recipients of a higher status.

Taking Fraser's list of semantic formulas (1979, 1981) – mainly associated with the speech act of apologising – as a point of departure, Cohen & Olshtain (1981: 119) and Olshtain & Cohen (1983: 22-23) modify Fraser's list and come up with five semantic formulas. When discussing the semantic formulas of the apology speech act, Olshtain & Cohen (1983: 22) state that there is a need to make a distinction between two cases: the case where the offender feels she needs to apologise and the case where she does not

accept responsibility. According to this, the semantic formulas range from acknowledging responsibility of the offence to rejecting it completely. When the offender positively apologises, five semantic formulas would be in use:

- 1- An expression of an apology.
- 2- An explanation or account of the situation.
- 3- An acknowledgement of responsibility.
- 4- An offer of repair.
- 5- A promise of forbearance.

The first formula *an expression of apology* consists of a number of sub-formulas:

- a- An expression of regret, e.g., "I'm sorry."
- b- An offer of apology, e.g., "I apologise."
- c- A request for forgiveness, e.g., "Excuse me." "Please forgive me." or "Pardon me."

Olshtain & Cohen (1983: 22) observed that these sub-formulas involve direct apologies, which becomes evident when apology expressions include performative verbs like *apologise, be sorry, forgive, excuse* and *pardon*. They go on to say (p 22) that these main semantic formulas are non-language specific and that each language has its own direct expressions of apology through the use of one or more performative verbs of apology.

As for the second formula, *an explanation or account of the situation*, Olshtain & Cohen believe that this formula is an indirect form of apology<sup>11</sup>. It could, moreover, be used in combination with the first formula. This would indicate that apologising, like all other speech acts, could be fulfilled indirectly by resorting to indirect semantic formulas. Olshtain & Cohen's notion of indirectness while performing apologies could be argued to be an extension of work developed by Searle (1975), Labov & Fanshel (1977) and Blum-Kulka (1982), who all stress the notion of indirectness in speech act theory in general. The third formula *accepting responsibility* is also non-language specific and is often resorted to

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<sup>11</sup> It should be noted that Cohen & Olshtain's (1983) classification of "explanations" or "accounts" as part of indirect semantic formulas of apology contradicts Owen's (1983) claim that such a strategy and the strategy of offer of repair are part of the primary remedial moves (PRMs).

by an offender when acknowledging responsibility for the offence. Under this formula, a number of sub-formulas could exist:

- a- Accepting the blame, e.g., "It is my fault."
- b- Expressing self-deficiency, e.g., "I was confused."
- c- Recognising the other person as deserving apology, e.g., "You are right!"
- d- Expressing lack of intent, e.g., "I didn't mean to."

As for the fourth and fifth formulas, Olshtain & Cohen (1983: 23) suggest they are situation-specific, in the sense that an offer of repair would be resorted to as a strategy only if physical offence or damage is involved, whereas promise of forbearance would be most appropriate in a case "where the offender could have avoided the offence but didn't do so."

As for cases where the offender doesn't accept the need to apologise, Olshtain & Cohen (1983: 23) suggest further semantic formulas to fulfill this need:

- 1- A denial of the need to apologise, e.g., "There was no need for you to feel insulted."
- 2- A denial of responsibility
  - a- Not accepting the blame, e.g., "It wasn't my fault."
  - b- Blaming the other participant for bringing the offence upon herself, e.g., "It's your own fault."

Having investigated the form and function of apology, Olshtain & Cohen (1983: 28) go on to describe their empirical study of apologies as produced by non-native speakers, including speakers of Russian and English learning Hebrew, speakers of Spanish learning English, a speaker of Korean learning English and speakers of Chinese learning English. Their study sets out to investigate whether apology is language-specific or a language universal. Analysing the data collected, they note (p 28) that the English native speakers apologised less in Hebrew than in English, perceiving spoken Hebrew as a language that calls for fewer apologies. The speakers of Russian, on the other hand, apologised more in Hebrew than in their native language. The findings showed that the Russian native speakers had a much more "universal perception" in that they claimed that people should apologise regardless of the language they were speaking.

As previously mentioned (section 1.1.2), Searle (1969) analyses speech acts, describing them in terms of felicity conditions. However, Searle's taxonomy of speech acts does not provide a full description of the rules of apologising, and this could be taken as a shortcoming of Searle's classification system. This being so, other researchers have proposed sets of felicity conditions for apologising, starting with the apologiser committing an infraction which upsets the apologisee, followed by the offender's regret about the offence, and ending with the apologiser's acknowledgement of responsibility for the act committed ( Bach and Harnish 1979: 5; Holmes 1990: 161; Aijmer 1996: 81).

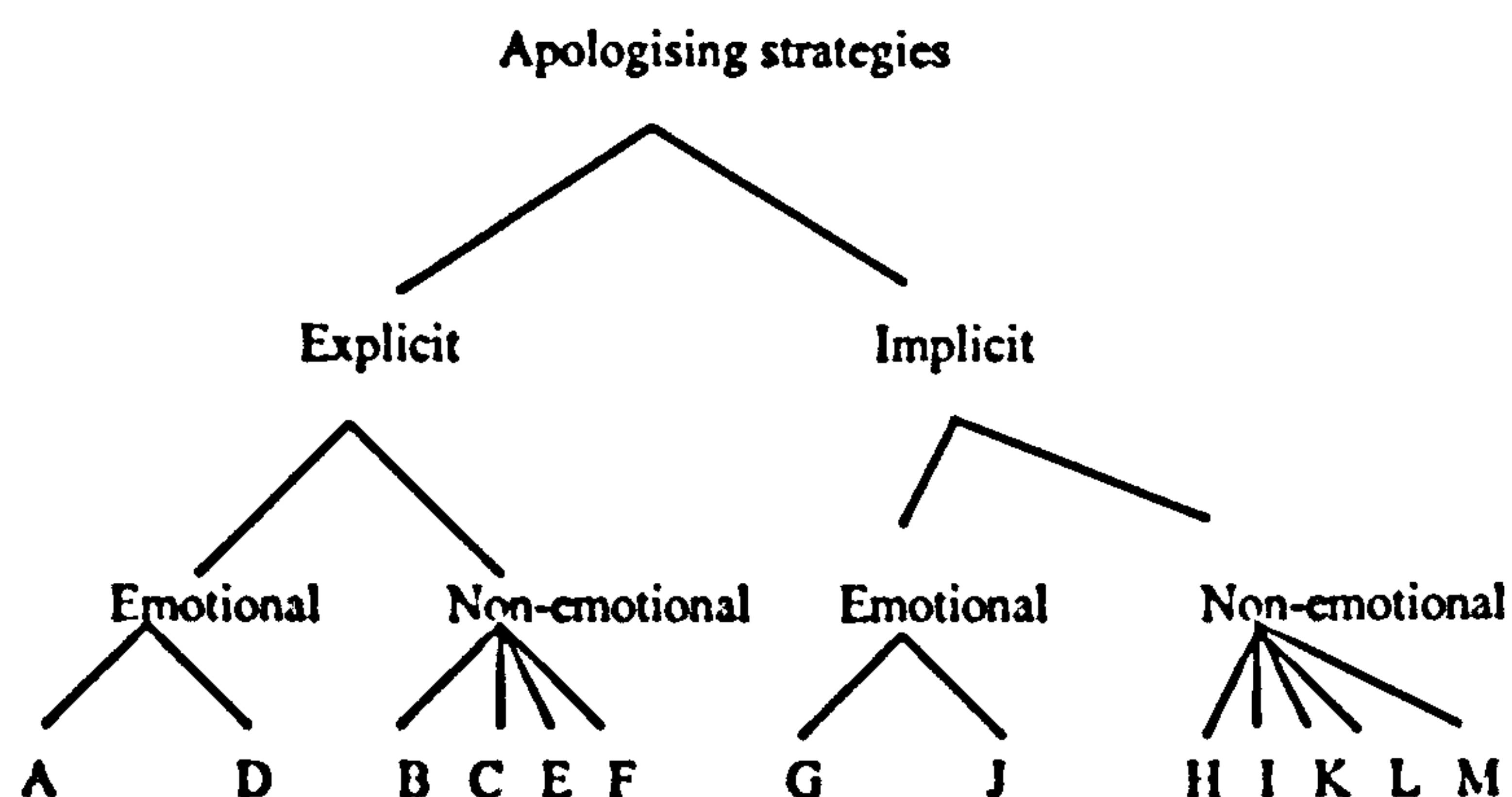
Describing the social function of apologies, Aijmer<sup>12</sup> (1996: 81) follows a sociolinguistic approach, showing that an apology is a speech act designed to support the addressee's face-wants. Aijmer's argument is in harmony with that of Holmes<sup>13</sup> (1990: 159) who holds that an apology is a social act aimed at supporting the apologisee's face-needs and getting the social equilibrium restored between the apologiser and the apologisee. Other functions associated with apologies, Aijmer suggests, include showing concern towards the apologisee's well being. Similarly, Gu (1990: 241) describes apologies as 'face-caring,' and Edmondson and House (1981: 47f) note that apologies are to support the addressee's benefits and costs, and down-play those of the speaker.

Aijmer (1996: 82-83) develops a revised taxonomy of apologies, including an extended range of possible strategies. What distinguishes Aijmer's taxonomy from Fraser's (1981: 263) and that of Olshtain & Cohen (1983) is that the number of apologising strategies has been expanded to cover a total of 13 strategies. Moreover, apologising strategies in Aijmer's taxonomy are further sub-classified into explicit and implicit strategies, in addition to whether they are emotional or not. The figure below explains the way the apologising strategies are classified:

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<sup>12</sup> It should be pointed out that Aijmer (1996) explored conversational routines in English of which apologies constitute a main part. She studied apologies based on examples taken from the London-Lund Corpus.

<sup>13</sup> Holmes (1990) examines some features of apologies based on a New Zealand corpus. It is a multi-dimensional study in that it covers many aspects relating to the speech act of apology, like the functions of apologies, the strategies used to realise the act of apologising, the semantic and syntactic structure of apologies, and some aspects of sociolinguistic distribution of apologies.



**Code to strategies:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| (A) explicitly apologising                             | e.g. <i>I apologise (for)</i>   |
| (B) offering (giving, presenting) one's apologies      | e.g. <i>I present my apologies</i>  |
| (C) acknowledging a debt of apology                    | e.g. <i>I owe you an apology</i>  |
| (D) expressing regret                                  | e.g. <i>I'm sorry, I'm afraid that</i>  |
| (E) demanding forgiveness                              | e.g. <i>pardon me, excuse me</i>  |
| (F) explicitly requesting the hearer's forgiveness     | e.g. <i>I beg your pardon</i>   |
| (G) giving an explanation or account                   | e.g. <i>(I'm sorry) it's so unusual</i>   |
| (H) self-denigration or self-reproach                  | e.g. <i>how stupid of me, how awful, I ought to know this</i>                       |
| (I) minimizing responsibility                          | e.g. <i>I didn't mean to ..., I thought this was ..., I was thinking it was ...</i> |
| (J) expressing emotion                                 | e.g. <i>oh (I'm so sorry)</i>   |
| (K) acknowledging responsibility for the offending act | e.g. <i>that was my fault (Fraser 1981: 263)</i>                                    |
| (L) promising forbearance from a similar offending act | e.g. <i>I promise you that that will never happen again (Fraser 1981: 263)</i>      |
| (M) offering redress                                   | e.g. <i>please let me pay for the damage I've done (Fraser 1981: 263)</i>           |

*Apologising strategies (Aijmer 1996: 83)*

Aijmer (1996: 98-101) further classifies apologies in terms of whether they occur prior to the offence or whether they anticipate an offence. In relation to this, she distinguishes between retrospective apologies which are remedial or in Owen's terms (1983) 'face-saving', and anticipatory apologies functioning as 'disarming' or 'softening' strategies. Thus, *sorry*, for example, could function as retrospective when used as a response to an offence, and could serve as a disarming or softening strategy when preceding the event. This distinction is closely related to the one Borkin and Reinhart (1978: 59-62) introduce between *excuse me* and *I am sorry*, which will be discussed thoroughly later. The researchers claim that the former has an anticipatory function in the sense that it could be used more appropriately than the form *I am sorry* before an offence, as for example, before someone pushes their way through a crowd of people.

Aijmer (1996: 100) assumes that retrospective apologies could be easily recognised by the presence of additional moves, or by using a combination of apology strategies. Moreover, retrospective apologies are usually followed by a response which could be either accepting or denying the apology. Although apologies are viewed within the speech-act theory as retrospective, there are instances where forms like *sorry* have an anticipatory function. In this case, it is used as a 'polite preface' or 'discourse marker.' (Aijmer1996: 100). Anticipatory *sorry* could precede speech acts which are less likely to be cooperative or supporting to the hearer (Edmondson 1981: 282). The anticipatory or disarming apology, Aijmer suggests, is of great use, especially when the speaker asks the hearer to repeat or explain something. It is helpful in mitigating and softening face-threatening acts.

In relation to the type of offence, Aijmer (1996: 108-118) – building on Holmes (1990: 177) – recognises different types of offences. Talk offences include, for instance, interrupting someone while speaking. Time offences are likely to happen, for example, when coming late to a meeting. Space offences, on the other hand, usually happen when, for example, disturbing another person. Hiccupping and coughing are examples of social gaffe offences. Inconvenience offences are likely to happen when, for instance, mistaking somebody's identity. Finally, there are offences that include damaging a person's possessions and these are termed possession offences.

#### **1.2.4 Previous studies on apologies**

Most studies on apologies have tended to follow a socio-pragmatic approach and the field of research has expanded to explore the influence of social variables such as social power and social distance on the way people apologise. We organise our discussion to cover both inter-language and cross-cultural studies, before setting out to analyse apologies cross-culturally as realised in British and Jordanian culture.

##### **1.2.4.1 Inter-language studies**

Most studies that are conducted within interlanguage pragmatics are concerned with whether some uses of second language are universal, or specific to particular target and native languages. The only way to measure the influence of the learner's first language is to compare the second language learner's performance with that of the language's native speakers. Our

discussion will focus on the work of researchers whose contribution to inter-language pragmatics is valuable in shedding further light on the main reasons that cause non-native speakers' pragmatic failure while performing apologies in the target language.

Related to the above is the distinction Borkin & Reinhart (1978: 57) make between *I'm sorry* and *excuse me*<sup>14</sup>. The researchers hold that *I'm sorry* is used as an expression of regret at an infraction caused to the speaker or the addressee, whereas *excuse me* is an expression planned "to remedy a past or immediately forthcoming breach of etiquette or other minor offense on the part of the speaker"<sup>15</sup>. Although expressions like *I'm sorry*, and *excuse me* are functionally similar, the researchers are concerned with the inappropriate uses of them in different situations, pointing out that it becomes more difficult for non-native speakers to use the aforementioned expressions appropriately. In relation to this, Borkin & Reinhart (1978: 57) present an example of a non-native speaker student rejecting an invitation to the movies. The student's response is quoted as (2):

(2) Excuse me. I'd like to go but I don't have time.

Native speakers of English agree with the researchers that *I am sorry* is more appropriate than *excuse me* in this particular context. For the researchers, this example of the inappropriate use of *excuse me* and *I am sorry* indicates that the appropriate use of these expressions creates a problem for non-native speakers.

Borkin & Reinhart (1978: 59-62) offer some generalisations about the use of *excuse me* and *I am sorry*, showing that the two expressions, using Goffman's term "remedial interchanges,"

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<sup>14</sup> Robinson (2004: 321) states that *Pardon* and *excuse me* could be used and understood in some contexts as realising the act of apologising, and he points to three qualifications that lead the remedial expressions mentioned above to be treated so. He first points to research that has investigated the act of apologising in conjunction with other "offense-remedial-related actions" like accounting, admitting guilt and requesting forgiveness. Second, he believes that communication partners are likely to direct to differences between "offense-remedial-related actions. Finally, he claims that because of their offense relevance, "non-apology" actions like excuses and thanking can be viewed and answered in ways similar to apologies.

<sup>15</sup> It should be pointed out, however, that Borkin & Reinhart (1978: 61) argue that in certain circumstances – such as when approaching a stranger in order to request information – the use of *excuse me* doesn't necessarily anticipate a forthcoming breach of a social rule. They believe that people's use of this remedial expression in such situations is indicative of their compliance with social rules and social expectations, as the use of *excuse me* in these circumstances is likely to constitute polite behaviour.



are used as “remedies”. They go on to define “remedy” as the first step<sup>16</sup> in a remedial process where the offender accepts the responsibility of the infraction and tries to lessen the degree of its severity through expressing apology for it, or by giving a detailed explanation designed to alleviate the effect of her behaviour. The researchers assume that there are some situations where the two expressions could be used alternatively with little difference, like, for example, “when two people accidentally bump into each other in the aisle of a supermarket.” However, there are other situations where there is a difference – especially between strangers – in the appropriate use of the two expressions. The form *excuse me*, for example, could be the most appropriate choice before the offence occurs, such as when someone – while being in a hurry – tries to make his way through a crowd of people. However, these expressions alternate freely after, for example, interrupting someone’s way. The researchers (1978: 60-61) summarise their observations about *I’m sorry* and *excuse me* by saying that *I’m sorry* is used as an expression of regret about something perceived as an infraction by the speaker, but *excuse me* is used as an expression of remedy. The most appropriate use of *excuse me*, as viewed by the researchers, is when there is a breach of a social rule.

Similar to Borkin & Reinhart’s distinction is the one Coulmas (1981: 69) makes between two routinised speech acts. She investigates the similarities between *thanks* and *apologies*, showing that it is the role of social values and norms of a certain speech community that determine whether or not thanks and apologies are related acts. Coulmas believes that recognising the relation between form and function in a certain language constitutes one of the main problems in the field of contrastive analysis. Thus, apologisers may tend to use forms neglecting the functional limitations of their use. Coulmas hypothesises that functional breakdowns committed by foreign language users relate to the transfer of pragmatic rules from one language to another. This is evidenced by the foreign language users’ adherence to the functional rules controlling the use of apologies in their mother tongue. Coulmas (1981: 70) states that different cultures employ different interactional routines. Consequently, non-native speakers – when committing social breakdowns – do not know how to match a particular form

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<sup>16</sup> It is worth noting that Robinson (2004) – adopting Schegloff’s (1988) argument – contends that apologies could be taken as an example of how culture moulds sequence organisation. Analysing the sequential organisation of explicit apologies in naturally occurring English, he (p 319) points out that apologies can occupy a number of different sequential positions; yet his emphasis was on turns in which the act of apologising occupies the first unit in a sequence of action. This leads him to view apologies as formulating the first parts of adjacency pair sequences. Robinson adds that having a “paired-type response” entails having one type preferred and the other not.

to its equivalent function. What Coulmas is trying to say is that one can resort to the semantic equivalence of these linguistic expressions and their communicative functions in the two languages.

To reveal the areas of similarities between apologies and thanks, Coulmas (1981: 70) suggests that both speech acts are widely used in everyday conversation, showing that each speech community, as forming a socio-cultural group, has its own values and rules in relation to what actions elicit apologies and thanks – a fact that indicates that apologies and thanks are culture-specific. Moreover, Coulmas's hypothesis is consistent with that of Goffman (1971), in that apologies and thanks form an essential part of polite behaviour of different societies. In relation to the appropriate positioning of the speech acts of apology and thanks in daily encounters, Coulmas (1981: 71) claims that apologies and thanks, as being reactive speech acts, come after an event or action that requests acknowledgement.

The second aim of Coulmas' (1981: 82-85) paper is to investigate the common features of apologies as employed in Japan. Her findings show that there is a difference between the apology forms and the functions they fulfill; thus apology expressions could be used as greetings, offers, and thanks. Related to this is what Hymes (1971) observes about the use and function of *thank you* in American English and British English. He finds that in American English, *thank you* comes to fulfil the function of gratitude, whereas "British 'thank you' seems on its way to marking formally the segments of certain interactions, with only residual attachment to 'thanking' in some cases" (1971: 69). Consequently, Coulmas finds that non-native speakers of Japanese are likely to have functional failure while performing the speech act of apology, which she links to the non-native speaker's little knowledge of the values and norms of Japanese culture. This in fact demonstrates the validity of Coulmas' hypothesis that cultures are different in their conceptions of the interactional routines of which apology is a part.

Interlanguage pragmatic research on apologies is thus concerned with measuring the non-native speakers' performance in the target language. In addition, there is a tendency to identify second language utterances that are both culturally and stylistically inappropriate (Cohen & Olshtain 1981; Olshtain 1983; Cohen & Olshtain 1985; Trosborg 1987; Garcia 1989 and Suszczyńska 1999).

In relation to what has been mentioned above, Cohen & Olshtain (1981) conducted a study on a group of native Hebrew speakers who serve as informants for apologies in English language. The researchers are mainly concerned with tracing the learners' ability to use the suitable sociocultural rules in an acceptable way while performing apologies in English. Cohen & Olshtain (1981: 114) note that "developing a measure of sociocultural competence in a second language is not an easy task." For this purpose, they select eight apology situations planned to evaluate both the cultural and stylistic competence of Hebrew speakers (p 116). In addition, the researchers modify Fraser's list of semantic formulas in order to measure the non-native deviations from the native patterns (p 119).

Cohen & Olshtain (1981: 120-124) suggest that the main reasons that stand behind the non-native speakers' deviation from the cultural norms of native English speakers are related to the non-native speakers' limited grammatical competence in the target language. Hebrew learners, as indicated by the researchers, are highly likely to transfer the socio-cultural patterns employed in their first language while performing apology in the target language. In spite of the disparity the two cultures display in terms of socio-cultural norms, the researchers find that Hebrew speakers in some cases do not deviate. Cohen & Olshtain (1981) interpret this in terms of the speakers' inclination not to transfer the rules employed in their first language. Poor mastery in English language is viewed by the researchers to be the main reason behind the non-native speakers' deviation in the degree of intensity while performing apology. It could also be argued that such deviation is largely imputed to the non-native speakers' lack of socio-cultural awareness.

In another piece of research, Cohen & Olshtain (1985) conducted a new study designed to measure the apology performance of Hebrew speakers learning English as a second language. The researchers (1985: 175) assume that the socio-cultural rules of appropriateness that monitor the apology speech act vary across cultures; thus in order to ensure effective communication in the second language, they believe that learners need to be aware of the appropriate rules in addition to having acquired the linguistic knowledge. This indicates that non-native speakers' familiarity with the socio-cultural rules of the target language, or having a well-developed "communicative competence" – using Hymes' (1964) term – helps them have knowledge about how to behave or apologise in line with the socio-cultural rules employed in the second language.

Cohen & Olshtain (1985) believe that selecting similar situations, including participants with similar social status, is a pre-condition for comparing apologies cross-culturally. In addition, a knowledge as to which conduct may bring about an offence or a breach of the social rules should also be obtained. In doing so, it will be easy to identify the offences that are language-specific and those that are cross-cultural.

On the basis of data analysis, Cohen & Olshtain (1985: 177) argue that Hebrew speakers' apology responses are very much influenced by their native language. The researchers' view is evidenced by their observation of the way Hebrew speakers intensify apologies in which the intensifier "very" is repeated. The researchers' data include frequent instances where intensity is fulfilled through the repetition of the adverb "very". Examples of this type are like 'Oh, I'm very, very sorry.' Conversely, English native speakers intensify "very" by resorting to another modifying adverb, like "really very", rather than by repetition.

In the course of defining the transfer of speech act behaviour across languages, Cohen & Olshtain (1985: 177) state that transfer is a strategy followed by the learners of the second language, through which they employ their first language patterns in their second language behaviour. In relation to this, Kellerman (1977) describes transfer as the expectations held by the language learners about the second language. Such expectations are usually based on the learners' native language. Learners are thus likely to transfer their first language expressions into the second language when they feel that such patterns can be fruitfully employed. Transfer is, moreover, ascribed to a case where the learners' competence in the target language lacks some language patterns, a factor that causes them to look for their equivalence in the first language.

Investigating the factors that stand behind the non-native speakers' failure to perform the apology speech act in the second language, Cohen & Olshtain (1985: 178) link this failure to several factors, these being the situation, grammatical and lexical factors. Regarding situation, the researchers assume that non-native speakers, while apologising in a non-native language situation, depend largely on their perception as to how to act in the same situation in their first language. As for the grammatical and lexical factors, the researchers believe that this is the result of the non-native speakers' limited linguistic knowledge. The grammatical factor is further subdivided into overt and non-overt errors. The researchers, while commenting on the

overt errors, point out that although the non-native speakers' tendency to apologise is evident in their speech, the grammatical and lexical errors committed cause the hearer to "disregard" this tendency (Cohen & Olshtain 1985: 180). To clarify this point, they refer to one of the non-native speakers' responses in the situation of bumping into a lady in the way. The response is quoted as (3)

(3) "I'm very sorry but what can I do? It can't be stopped." (Cohen & Olshtain 1985: 180)

Cohen & Olshtain (1985) link the use of "stopped" instead of "avoided" to the learners' poor mastery of language. Non-overt errors, on the other hand, occur when the non-native speakers produce expressions that are linguistically correct, but functionally inappropriate. One of the responses produced by Hebrew speakers learning English, to the situation of a speaker who forgot a meeting with a friend is quoted as (4)

(4) "I really very sorry. I just forgot. I fell asleep. Understand?"

Cohen & Olshtain (1985) make it clear that the use of the word "understand" in the Hebrew speaker's response is caused by language transfer. In Hebrew culture, the use of "understand" usually signals cooperation between the speaker and the hearer. Conversely, the use of "understand" in English sounds arrogant. This and other examples demonstrate that cultures exhibit differences in the semantic formulas used to realise the act of apologising. Additionally, this indicates that in any language there is a set of conventional forms that could be resorted to to realise the act of apology. Unlike Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984) who confine such forms of conventionality to the realisation of IFIDs (illocutionary force indicating devices) only, we see that languages may have commonly used classic forms to realise, for example, explanations, repairs, etc. in addition to the IFIDs. The presence of "understand" in Hebrew and its absence in English substantiate that the connotations and pragmatic meanings of this particular word are culturally variable.

Investigating politeness strategies as used by native and non-native speakers of English language, Garcia (1989: 3) examines Americans' performance as compared to Venezuelans in an English language situation when apologising to a friend for missing his party. The

researcher believes that miscommunication and disharmony, or in Thomas' terms (1983) 'sociopragmatic failure,' are very much attributed to differences in the conversational style.

This research is mainly concerned with the linguistic choices made by the two groups, as this enabled Garcia to correlate the different responses received by the two groups with their selection of different politeness strategies. What Garcia is attempting to prove is that the linguistic choices made by the speakers are fully bound by their cultural background. For this purpose, twenty participants were involved in role-play situations. Ten of them were adult, female native Spanish speakers. The other were ten adult, female native English speakers. All participants were engaged in a role-play situation with an American English native speaker male playing the role of the host. The conversations were videotaped, and then transcribed. They were analysed in terms of the apology strategies used and the different politeness strategies selected.

Based on the data collected, Garcia (1989: 6) claims that native and non-native speakers displayed differences regarding the selection of linguistic expressions. Whereas native speakers resort to negative politeness strategies, symbolised by the frequent use of expressions of deference and showing respect, non-native speakers are inclined to adopt positive politeness strategies; such a tendency is evidenced by their use of expressions that reflect familiarity and cooperation. Non-native speakers' apologetic behaviour is built on the assumption that there is common ground with the host. The Americans' adoption of negative politeness ends up with a harmony between them and the host since they are both happy with the outcome. Conversely, Venezuelan responses are highly likely to bring about disharmony, thus leading to communicative breakdown and misunderstanding of the intended message. The researcher sums up his finding showing that the socio-pragmatic failure between the host and non-native speakers is not imputed to Venezuelans being impolite, or because they have poor mastery of linguistic competence in English to express respect. Rather, Venezuelans are apologising in line with their own socio-cultural rules of language use, which call for establishing camaraderie in the conversational circle.

Having shed light upon some inter-language studies of apologies in section 1.2.4.2, we shall discuss cross-cultural studies, the main aim of which is to study the different expectations

among different communities regarding people's evaluation of the degree of severity of the offence and the extent to which the offender feels responsible for causing the offence.

#### **1.2.4.2 Cross-cultural studies**

Culturally differentiated interactional styles can create cross-cultural differences in interpreting strategies and may lead to intercultural communicative failure. Most cross-cultural studies conducted within the realm of pragmatics, having adopted an empirical approach, are devoted to casting some light on linguistic competence, showing how its performance is distinct from language to language and from one culture to another.

As previously explained, most researchers who work on speech acts have recently tended to handle this area of pragmatics in conjunction with the relevant social parameters that might influence the choice of certain linguistic expressions. This trend conforms to the distinction that Leech (1983: 11) has drawn between “pragmalinguistics” and “sociopragmatics”. The former refers to “the particular resources that a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions”, whereas the latter is concerned with the sociological interface of pragmatics, which examines how the pragmatically performed utterances are influenced by the social and situational variables – which in turn result in variations in the use of speech acts. In this section, we will look at some cross-cultural studies on apologies, pointing to the way the act of apologising is realised cross-culturally and cross-linguistically, and to the role of explanatory variables that might, to some extent, affect the choice of realising linguistic expressions. Our discussion will cover studies such as Lipson (1994), Suszczyńska (1999), Reiter (2000), Wouk (2006) and Kasanga & Lwanga-Lumu (2007).

Lipson's study (1994: 19) analyses and contrasts apology strategies in American English and Italian, using Owen's remedial strategies (Owen 1983) and Olshtain & Cohen's semantic formulas (Olshtain & Cohen 1983).

Unlike other studies, Lipson's study adopts an unusual instrument for data collection; this instrument is based on television, in which 10 Italian students are given the chance to watch a series of American sitcoms and are asked to rewrite (in Italian) the apology episode in each sitcom. In other words, Lipson focuses on the differences between apologies in the students'

imaginary dialogues and the original script. In doing so, Lipson is able to investigate any differences between the original script and the students' version, which allow him to compare apology speech acts and remedial strategies in both cultures.

Lipson's instrument is of particular importance in the sense that television is a main educational resource in classrooms, where spontaneous language can be observed and analysed. Furthermore, verbal expressions are analysed in conjunction with prosodic features such as intonation, and paralinguistic or non-verbal acts such as smiles or gestures. It could also be argued that television is a mirror reflecting the socio-cultural norms that lie beneath the surface of any society.

Having analysed the remedial interchanges, Lipson (1994: 21-27) – mainly concerned with the frequency of use of Owen's remedial strategies and Olshtain & Cohen's semantic formulas in the apology speech act set – indicates that Italian students favour Owen's primary remedial move strategy 4, *requesting restoration of balance*. Italian students' frequent use of this strategy supports Owen's argument that it is the most widespread strategy.

According to Owen's response remedial strategies, Lipson (1994: 24) argues that Italian students are positively inclined towards strategy 3, *assert restoration of balance*. Lipson says that although Owen does not find examples of acceptance of apology in English in the form of "I forgive you," there are few examples in the Italian students' version. This leads the researcher to conclude that remedial response strategies in Italian are not very different from those in English.

Tracing the differences between Italian and English, the researcher (1994: 25) observes that such differences are found in the use of apology sub-formulas. More specifically, whereas the sub-formula "I'm sorry" is the most common in English, Italian students are likely to ask for forgiveness using the sub-formula "excuse me." Such argument is evidenced by the presence of "I'm sorry" in 9 of 10 explicit remedial interchanges in the original scripts and with "excuse me" being present in 6 of 10 episodes written by Italian students. As for the sub-formula of an expression of regret, the researcher (1994: 25) makes it clear that this strategy is employed in English and used for offences regardless of the degree of severity. Contrary to this is its frequent use in Italian only when the offence is perceived as very severe by the apologiser.



This strategy is often used with another apology sub-formula. This combination of strategies could be taken as an indication of more intensified apology needed for what are viewed as more severe offences.

Lipson (1994:35) sums up his findings showing that Owen's PRM strategy 4, *requesting the restoration of balance*, apology sub-formulas like *asking forgiveness* and joking, which are all designed to alleviate the severity of the offence, are predominant in Italian remedial interchanges. Data analysis, moreover, provides the researcher with insights into how the differences between apology strategies used by Americans and Italians are imputed to socio-cultural differences. Data analysis is full of instances, which show that Italian students' perception of status, role, and authority influence, to a great extent, the speaker's choice of apology strategies.

In another related study, which is also intended to explore the effect of cultural differences on the choice of linguistic expressions while apologising, Suszczyńska (1999: 1059) carried out a study designed to highlight the differences between English, Hungarian, and Polish in terms of the realisation strategies of apology. The researcher, building on Cohen & Olshtain (1981), Olshtain & Cohen (1983), and Blum-Kulka et al (1989), distributed a discourse completion test of eight apology situations among 14 American, 20 Hungarian, and 76 Polish students. Suszczyńska (1999) lays much emphasis on the situation of bumping into an elderly lady in a supermarket, because it is universal in the subjects' experience. It moreover has nothing to do with social variables, such as status or profession.

Data analysis shows that all the three languages have *Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices* (IFIDs) ranging from expressing regret to asking forgiveness. Suszczyńska (1999: 1059), like Holmes (1990) and Owen (1983), believes that the expression of regret *I'm sorry* is frequent in English with few instances left to *excuse me*, *forgive me* and *I apologise*. However, in Hungarian and Polish data the expression of regret is viewed as less relevant and less language universal. Such differences lead the researcher to conclude that the speech act of apology is culture-specific.

Explaining the differences in terms of the politeness strategies or according to the threat to the speakers' face, the researcher's findings show that English native speakers' frequent use of

the expression of regret is interpreted to be less face-threatening for both the speaker and the hearer. Hungarian and Polish responses are marked with a strong tendency on the part of the apologisee to resort to directive requests for the offended person to hold anger or offer forgiveness.

In another cross-cultural study, Reiter (2000) explores politeness phenomena in British English as compared to that in Uruguayan Spanish. Two speech acts – requests and apologies – are chosen as the focus of the study, which is intended to establish the similarities and differences in the realisation of these speech acts as performed by female and male native speakers of both languages. Since our study is mainly concerned with apologies, we will confine our discussion of Reiter's results and findings to apologies, as the work on requests is not strictly relevant in this context. Reiter's data were collected from open role-play in Uruguay and Great Britain. The instrument consists of 12 combined situations resulting in triggering 12 requests and 12 apologies. The open role-play was constructed in both languages and performed by 61 native speakers of British English and 64 native speakers of Uruguayan Spanish. The informants were all university students; none of them studied languages or Linguistics.

For the purpose of analysing the apology data, Reiter (2000: 144) follows Olshtain & Cohen's (1983) taxonomy. This classification, as previously mentioned in section 1.2.3 of this chapter, consists of five main strategies: an *explicit expression of apology*, an *explanation or account of the violation*, an *expression of responsibility*, an *offer of repair* and a *promise of forbearance*, and together with the sub-strategies, they comprise eleven strategies in total.

Analysing the apology data, Reiter (2000: 148-59) argues that the most frequently used semantic formulas are the *Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)* and '*expression of responsibility*' which are used across the whole range of situations in both languages, whereas the other apologising semantic formulas prove to be situation dependent. These findings seem to conform to those of Blum-Kulka et al (1989) who claim that *IFIDs* and *expression of responsibility* are language universal and situation independent. The results of Reiter's study highlight the differences between British English and Uruguayan Spanish in terms of the use of intensified apologies. It is found that whereas British English speakers are highly likely to intensify *I'm sorry* by resorting to adverbs such as *really*, *so*, *terribly*, *awfully* and *dreadfully*,

Uruguayan speakers are inclined to apologise without intensifying apology expressions. Such findings lead the researcher (2000: 167) to conclude that the use of intensified expressions of apology is perceived as inappropriate in Spanish. The analysis of data also shows that there is a general agreement in both cultures in terms of adopting *the admission of facts* as a way to acknowledge responsibility.

Analysing the data in terms of the situational parameters and the explanatory variables that influence the speaker's choice of strategy, Reiter (2000: 159) claims that the situations of the open role-play vary according to the social variables introduced by Brown and Levinson (1987), namely social power, social distance and the severity of the offence. Reiter (2000: 160) observes that Uruguayans and Britons are the same regarding their perception of the seriousness of the offences involved in the role-play, with the British apologising more than the Uruguayans. Also, the researcher believes that where the offence is perceived to be more severe, more apologies are needed in both languages. Finally, the researcher points out that the interaction between the seriousness of the offence and social power is the overriding combination that determines the frequency of apologies. This indicates that social distance as a social factor appears to be secondary to the presence of social power and seriousness of the offence. Reiter's findings are not in line with those of Fraser (1981) and Holmes (1995) who claim that social distance is found to be statistically significant with respect to apologies. The Uruguayan and British apologies, moreover, are not consistent with Brown & Levinson's (1987) model of politeness, in which apologies are deemed to be hugely "sensitive" to increased social distance and the seriousness of the offence.

Analysing apologies in terms of the differences and similarities in same and cross-gender interactions in both cultures, Reiter (2000: 165-67) points out that the major differences in the linguistic behaviour of males and females are no more than differences between languages. This seems to indicate that no significant differences in the apology responses of Uruguayan males or females are observed. For Reiter, significant differences are imputed to cross-cultural differences. This is evidenced by, for example, the fact that there is a preference for intensifying expressions of apology in English and not in Spanish. Reiter's findings in this regard thus conform to those of Fraser (1981), who claims that women do not produce more apologies than men.

In another intercultural study, Wouk (2006), using a discourse completion test of six apology situations, explored the pragmalinguistic patterns of apologising in Lombok Indonesia in comparison with findings in studies in other cultures. Wouk (2006) used Trosborg (1995) and Blum-Kulka et al's (1989) coding categories to classify the apology data. Wouk (2006: 293) finds that, in agreement with Olshtain (1989), apology direct expressions figured in almost all situations, with little variation in the frequency of their occurrence from situation to situation. Unlike English speakers, who have a strong preference to use expressions of regret (Holmes 1990 and Suszczyńska 1999), Indonesians were found to be using requests for forgiveness more frequently than expressions of regret. Wouk (2006: 293) links this preference to the fact that in Indonesian there is no lexis that is equivalent in meaning to *apologise*. The author finds that her findings are consistent with that of Olshtain (1989) in that the variation in the frequency occurrence of explicit apology is determined by the status of participants. As for the strategy of *responsibility*, Wouk (2006:296) argues that her findings are in contrast with those of other studies (Trosborg 1995 and Olshtain 1989), in the sense that Indonesians tended to realise responsibility via weak statements such as the verbalisation of offence and lack of intent, which is ascribed to the Indonesians' disinclination to strongly express responsibility for the offences incurred, as compared to English native speakers. Examining the role of gender in choice and frequency of apology strategies, Wouk (206: 304) finds, like Fraser (1981), that no significant gender differences in strategy selection were observed.

Adopting the cross-cultural level of analysis, Kasanga & Lwanga-Lumu (2007) attempted to analyse contrastively the realisation of the speech act of apology in the South African language of Setswana (Se) and a "nativised" variety of English (SeE) on the one hand and a native variety of English (EL1) spoken as a first language by white South Africans on the other hand. The study integrates both quantitative and qualitative analysis. The former is used to uncover the "pragmalinguistic" and sociopragmatic patterns of apologising in Setswana and the other two varieties of English, whereas the latter is aimed at providing a description of the expression of deference and politeness in apologies in Se and SeE. Inspired by the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project (CCSARP) (Blum-Kulka et al 1989), quantitative data were collected through means of discourse completion tasks (DCT). Qualitative data, on the other hand, were collected by means of video-taped role plays. To ensure comparability with the CCSARP project, the researchers used university students as respondents for their

study. Though the researchers adopted Cohen et al's (1986) five-strategy classification system of the linguistic realisation of apologising, they confine their discussion to the strategies of *IFIDs* (illocutionary force indicating devices) and *expression of responsibility*, seen as non-situation-specific and general strategies, realising apologies in any situation (Olshtain 1989).

There are two main hypotheses that underlie Kasanga & Lwanga-Lumu's (2007:74) study. They first predict a significant variation of the distribution of *IFID* and *responsibility* (as taken together across apology situations) between Se and EL1, and between SeE and EL1, but not between Se and SeE. Second, they foresee that the differences in the distribution of both strategies (taken separately across apology situations) will be significant between Se and EL1, or SeE and EL1, but not between Se and SeE regarding the norms of behaviour.

Building on data analysis, Kasanga & Lwanga-Lumu (2007: 75-77) find their first prediction confirmed, in that the statistical differences in the use of *IFID* and *responsibility* together between Se and EL1 and SeE and EL1 are significant. Because the *IFID* (as taken separately) has been found to occur in the same way (without statistically significant differences) across the three languages, this leads to partially invalidating the researchers' second hypothesis. This is because *responsibility* (also as taken separately), and as constituting the second part of the second hypothesis, was used differently in that EL1 produced significantly more responsibility strategies for the same situations than Se and SeE. This is also supported by the fact that no significant differences were observed in the occurrence of this strategy in Se and SeE. The fact that EL1 are higher users of *responsibility* than Se and SeE is imputed by Kasanga & Lwanga-Lumu (2007:77) to the assumption that EL1's underlying culture attaches more importance to the *expression of responsibility* than the Setswana culture, and to the speculation that Se and SeE speakers avoid employing explicit expressions of responsibility. Se and SeE speakers are, however, found to be using offer of repair profusely; this strategy, according to the researchers, comprises an integral part of Setswana apology.

On the basis of qualitative analysis, Kasanga & Lwanga-Lumu (2007:78-80) explore the role of face in the realisation of the act of apologising. Following Gu (1990), Mao (1994) and Matsumoto (1988), the authors disagree with Brown & Levinson's (1987) claim of the universality of the "dualistic" notion of face, i.e., positive face and negative face. They concur,

rather, with the view that “group-based socio-cultural norms” emphasise “group face” over “individual face”. Described as strongly integrated, the Setswana society, the authors claim, belongs to the “collectivist” type and is hierarchical on the basis of age, social status and gender. Kasanga & Lwanga-Lumu (2007:79) contend that the Setswana’s preference for public face could also be linked to the fact that Setswana is a “shame culture”.

In their qualitative analysis, Kasanga & Lwanga-Lumu (2007: 78-80) focus only on non-verbal politeness. This indeed led them to draw a distinction between two types of non-vocal behaviour, namely: the restricted and non-restricted non-verbal forms of politeness. In order to explain the difference between these two patterns of non-verbal behaviour, they used the situation of a professor (seen as having non-restricted form of non-verbal politeness) who apologises to a student (viewed as having a restricted form of non-verbal politeness) for not completing the marking of an assignment, as an example that represents the asymmetrical relations that hold two parties; one is superior (professor) and the other is subordinate (student). The authors claim that polite/impolite behaviour in Setswana is determined by polite/impolite posture, eye-gaze, proxemics (distance), and prosody. As an example of how eye-gaze could be an important marker of (im)politeness in Setswana culture, the authors found that unlike the student, who used restricted gestures to express humility and deference, the professor was giving attention to paperwork while addressing the student. This example indeed clarifies the interdependence of pragmalinguistics and paralinguistics in realising the act of apologising and (im)politeness in general.

### **1.3 Concluding remarks**

Our review of some previous studies on the speech act of apology reveals some important issues. Many of these studies show that there are similarities and differences in the realisation of patterns of apology cross-culturally. In addition, the types of apology strategies the apologisers resort to when apologising are controlled by social and situational factors. That is to say, apologisers manipulate their strategies according to the person addressed and the situations involved. Moreover, non-native speakers of a certain language tend to perform the apology speech act in line with the sociopragmatic rules used in their first language. In other words, they transfer the socio-cultural rules used in their native language while performing

apologies in the target language. Finally, non-native speakers of a certain language apologise differently in the target language. This could relate to their poor mastery of linguistic as well as sociopragmatic competence in the second language. Also, their perception of the severity of the offence and the situation may be completely different from that in their native language.

Having reviewed the literature on apologies, including their form and function and previous empirical studies, we will move to the next chapter where we can discuss the relevant politeness theories, showing how the notion of face is conceived of, and explaining the overriding view which sees politeness as a link between language and the social world. This overview of politeness theories is of help in that it will enable us to select the most appropriate theory to be taken as the foundation upon which the present study could be based.

## Chapter 2: Politeness theories

### 2.1 Introduction

The act of apologising – contrary to Brown & Levinson’s (1987) conception of it as a face-threatening act to the speaker’s positive face and a face-supporting act for the addressee’s negative face – may benefit both the apologiser and the apologisee (Davies et al 2007:53): it may be used to “[...] save the face of the other or that of the self as well as to threaten them” (Kampf & Blum-Kulka 2007: 13). This chapter will accordingly discuss theories relating to face and politeness phenomena arising within the aegis of either linguistic pragmatics or sociolinguistics. Politeness theories within these fields are to some extent consistent, in the sense that they explicitly or implicitly highlight the role of politeness as a link between language and the social world. They are, however, different in the way they define politeness. The discussion in the present chapter will pivot around Goffman’s (1967, 1971) notion of face, Lakoff’s (1973, 1975, 1990) theory of politeness, Brown & Levinson’s (1978, 1987) model of politeness, Fraser & Nolen’s (1981) conversational contract view, Leech’s (1983) principles and maxims of interaction, Watt’s (1989, 2003, 2005) politic verbal behaviour, and the notion of relational work as introduced by Locher & Watts (2005), Spencer-Oatey (2005), and Arundale (2006). It is worth noting that Goffman’s theory of social interaction is included in the discussion because of its relevance to the notion of face. Also, a discussion of Watts et al’s (1992) distinction between first-order politeness (politeness 1) and second-order politeness (politeness 2) will lead to a discussion of how Eelen (2001) further develops such distinction by outlining what politeness 1 and politeness 2 consist of and by spelling out the main characteristics of each. The present chapter will shed more light on politeness theories stated above, exploring their main outlines and distinctive features and the way politeness is defined in each.



## **2.2 Overview of politeness theories**

### **2.2.1 Goffman's work on face**

Apologising is a common speech act that has received much attention from sociologists, psychologists, and linguists. In relation to this, Goffman (1971:109) explains that the function of remedial or ritual work, of which apologies form an essential part, is concerned with transforming what could be conceived of as unpleasant into what might be viewed as suitable. His discussion of remedial work encompasses both accounts and apologies. Of these acts, the one to receive the most attention is apology.

In an attempt to define apology, Goffman (1971: 113) suggests that an apology is a gesture through which an individual divides herself into two main parts: the part that is guilty of the offence and “the part that dissociates itself from the delict and affirms a belief in the offended rule.” Goffman (1971: 116) believes that remedial work embodies two different, independently occurring processes, one is ritualistic and the other is restitutive. In the former, the virtual offender projects her current relationship to rules which her actions seem to have violated, and to the audience present whose territories should have been protected by these rules. In the latter, the offended person receives some compensation for what has been done to both himself and to the rules that are assumed to protect him. In relation to the weightiness of apologies, greater insults – Goffman suggests – require greater restitution. This is evidenced by the fact that minor offences elicit a brief apology, whereas much more elaborated apologies are required when the offence is perceived as serious.

Goffman (1967: 5) deems apologies to form an integral part of remedial interchange; they are thus a main component of social interaction in general, and as such, the apology speech act should be handled in conjunction with “face” or “face wants.” He claims (p 5) that within social encounters each participant is assumed to adopt a “line” of behaviour which functions as a social identity by which she expresses her views, and through which other participants' behaviours are assessed by her:

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. 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. (Goffman 1967: 5)

Goffman's notion of face is explained in terms of rituals. That is to say, participants in social interaction are bound by moral rules that monitor the flow of events. The importance of these rules, when followed by participants, stems from their ability to give a person the power to evaluate herself and fellow-participants in social interchanges. This means that the person's contribution to the social circle and the practices she will employ are designed in accordance with the line she has initiated for herself since the beginning of the social interaction. When doing so, the person involved in a social encounter will achieve a good level of "ritual equilibrium." There are, however, according to (Goffman 1967:8), other occasions where the person appears to be "in wrong face," or "out of face". In the former, the person – whilst interacting with others – follows a line that is different from the one she has adopted for herself, whereas in the latter the person gets herself engaged in an interaction without having a line similar to the one other participants are expected to take. Contrary to the two aforementioned cases, a person – having sustained a non-changeable line or face during the social encounter – will behave confidently, and proudly present herself to the others.

Face-saving acts, Goffman (1967: 12-14) states, largely depend on the "traffic rules" of social encounters. These rules are derived from the main repertoire of face-saving rules that each person or society seems to have. In relation to this, Goffman distinguishes between two types of points of view that a person will have: "a defensive orientation" and "a protective orientation." In the former, the person is mainly concerned with saving his own face, while in the latter the person's efforts are devoted to saving others' face. A further distinction was made by Goffman to clarify three types of offence. First, he talks about unintended offences where the offender is perceived as innocent by others. Second, intended offences are marked with the offender's intention to cause insult. Finally, there are offences that could be anticipated although they are not planned. These offences may be of different directions; initiated by herself or others:

From the point of view of a particular participant, these three types of threat can be introduced by the participant himself against his own face, by himself against the face of others, by the others against their own face, or by the others against himself. Thus the person may find himself in many different relations to a threat to face. If he is to handle himself and others well in all contingencies, he will have to have a repertoire of face-saving practices for each of these possible relations to threat. (Goffman 1967: 15)

Goffman (1967: 15-20) argues that face-work embodies two main processes: “the avoidance process” and “the corrective process.” The avoidance strategy is usually followed by a person who avoids being involved in social encounters as a way not to receive face threats. Contrary to this, the corrective process implies the person’s contribution to social encounter where she is vulnerable to committing events that are inconsistent with the social line maintained by other members of the social circle. At this point, the person in question tries to correct such unacceptable events as a way to establish “ritual equilibrium”. In order for the face of others to be saved and maintained, Goffman (1967:20) suggests that “corrective interchange” needs to pass through a circle involving different primary moves. This corrective circle starts with the offender’s acknowledgement of responsibility for the insult caused by her, followed by the offer of repair, which is viewed as an attempt on the part of the offender to correct the offence and restore the broken social equilibrium. The third move is concerned with the offended party, who will be in a position to accept or reject the offering. Finally, in the last phase of corrective interchange, the offending person – if forgiven – expresses a sign of gratefulness to those who have forgiven her.

### **2.2.2 Lakoff’s theory of politeness**

Lakoff is often claimed to be the founder of modern politeness theory, as she was the first to explore it within the realm of pragmatics (Eelen 2001: 2). Lakoff (1990: 34) defines politeness as a set of “interpersonal relations” aimed at making communication smooth through keeping the possibility of conflict and confrontation, which are innate in human communication, to the minimum. Lakoff’s theory of politeness stems from Grice’s cooperative principle, which lays down a set of principles of conversation and proposes a framework for language use. As previously explained in section 1.1.3, Grice’s principle is associated with four maxims: *quantity*, *quality*, *relation*, and *manner*. These postulates lead to appropriate conversational behaviour, as when conversation participants abide by these maxims, this will lead to “the effective exchange of

information” (Grice 1989: 28). It has been demonstrated in the previous chapter that Grice’s conversational principles are subject to being violated or flouted. For instance, the speaker may mean more than is said. This in fact leads to a difference between sentence meaning and utterance meaning. Lakoff (1973) claims that grammatical rules are not enough to explain speaker’s deviation and flouting of conversation’s main principles. She contends that pragmatic rules<sup>17</sup> should be considered, as they will be of help in detecting deviant utterances.

Integrating Grice’s conversational postulates with her own rules of politeness, Lakoff (1973) comes out with two rules of pragmatic competence: *be clear* and *be polite*. Lakoff considers that the first rule should apply if the conversation participants place emphasis on getting the message communicated. However, the second rule *be polite* may be prioritised over the first *be clear* when communication partners are attaching importance to social issues, such as the status of interactants. Lakoff (1973: 297) states that Grice’s conversational maxims may be subsumed under her first rule *be clear* as they all invite communication partners to be clear in conversation. Lakoff further divides her second rule into three sub-rules:

- 1- Don’t impose.
- 2- Give options.
- 3- Make A feel good – be friendly.

Lakoff subsequently (1975: 65) renamed her rules of politeness as follows:

- 1- Formality: Keep aloof.
- 2- Deference: give options.
- 3- Camaraderie: show sympathy.

Although the first sub-rule is synonymous with distance, the second with difference, and the third with making the addressee feel approved of, they centre on one main issue – the issue of not impinging on the private territories of others and giving the addressee a

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<sup>17</sup> For more information about how Lakoff tackles the notion of politeness within the realm of pragmatics, see Lakoff (1989).

chance to take decisions by himself. Lakoff's rules of politeness are assumed to be integrated in any social interchange, but cultures are inclined to prioritise one or two over the others, hence an intercultural disparity arises as to how politeness is perceived (Eelen 2001: 3).

Lakoff's theory of politeness has been contested by a number of scholars. Brown (1976: 246) states that the main problem with Lakoff's theory is that "she offers no integrating theory which places these rules of politeness in a framework that makes them non-arbitrary, that explains their form in terms of social relationships and expectations about humans as interactants." Tannen (1984: 13) argues that the weakness of Lakoff's model resides in the fact that she talks about points placed on a scale of "stylistic preferences", rather than rules of communication. Elsewhere, Tannen (1986: 36) claims that Lakoff's postulates are not rules, but are "senses" which people own in order to speak in a natural way. Sifianou's (1992: 22-26) critique of Lakoff's politeness theory has two parts. She points to Lakoff's weakness in defining the terms she uses, and considers that this undermines Lakoff's claim to her rules being universal. Sifianou believes that formality, for example, is not necessarily equivalent to politeness, a view shared by Tannen (1986: 37), who claims that American people try to be friendly without the need to impose, and to allow suitable distance without seeming to be aloof. Sifianou, moreover, contends that deference is not always associated with giving options. As for Lakoff's claim of universality for her rules, Sifianou (1992: 24) points out that if the connotations and pragmatic meanings of terms like *aloof* are not identical across cultures, then Lakoff's theory cannot be claimed to be universal.

### **2.2.3 Brown and Levinson's model of politeness**

Taking Goffman's notion of face as a point of departure, Brown & Levinson (1978) propose the deepest as well as the most comprehensive account of politeness. They consider (p 100) that politeness is a universal phenomenon; such a claim is evidenced by their observation of similarities in the linguistic strategies employed by speakers of different languages. For the purpose of having a good account of the linguistic similarities in language use, they refer (1987: 58) to a Model Person (MP) who, as they describe, is a fluent speaker of a natural language that is provided with some special

features, of which the most important are rationality and face. They go on to define these features, showing that rationality refers to the Model Person's ability of reasoning from ends to the means that will fulfil those ends. With regard to face, they mainly mean that the same Model Person is equipped with two specific needs: the want to be unimpeded and the want to be liked by others.

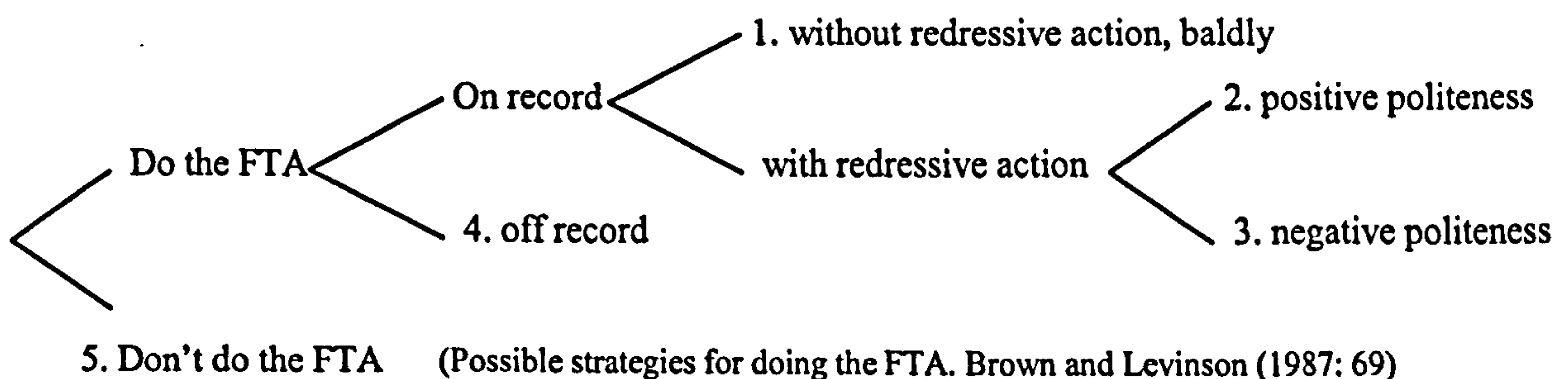
As related to 'face,' Brown & Levinson (1987: 61) consider that every "competent adult member" of society attaches some importance to 'face,' the self-image presented to other members of the society. In this case, a distinction is made between the two main constituents of face that represent the person's desire in any social interaction: 'negative face' and 'positive face.' Negative face refers to the person's desire to be free from imposition and not to be impeded by others. Positive face, on the other hand, refers to the person's wish to be desirable to others and that the self-image be appreciated and approved of. Brown & Levinson consider that face is "something that is emotionally invested, and that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to in interaction." (1987: 61). This in fact indicates that preserving face constitutes a major concern for all conversation participants – a point already raised by Goffman (1972: 323) who considers that the rule of "self-respect" and the rule of "considerateness" implies that any person in any social encounter will act in a way that saves both his face and the face of the other communication partners. In addition to self-image, competent adult members of a society are assumed to be endowed with some rational capacities, epitomised by selecting, on their part, appropriate means to have their goals fulfilled successfully.

Brown & Levinson (1987: 65) consider that some kinds of acts inherently threaten face, especially those that by their nature go against the face wants of the addressee and the speaker. In this case, a distinction is made between acts that threaten negative face and those that threaten positive face. Orders, requests, suggestions, advice, threats, and warnings are all samples of acts that threaten the negative face, in the sense that the speaker tries to influence the addressee to do or not to do some act. Offers and promises also fall into the category of face-threatening acts directed towards the speaker's negative face, as the speaker, in doing these acts, puts some pressure on the hearer to accept or reject them (1987: 66).

Apologies and acceptance of compliments are assumed to be face-threatening acts to the speaker's positive face in that in the first case, the speaker indicates regret doing the threatening act. Consequently, this will incur a face loss to some degree on the part of the speaker. In the second case, the speaker may feel compelled to compliment the hearer in turn (ibid.: 68). Brown & Levinson assume that any social encounter involves communicative acts that could be threatening to the face of the speaker or the addressee.

Brown & Levinson (1987:74), like Leech (1983), propose a scale that is concerned with assessing the degree of politeness needed in a certain situation. They point to three socio-cultural variables that contribute to the assessment of the seriousness of face-threatening acts. The first factor is social distance (D), which represents a symmetric social dimension of similarity or difference within which the speaker and the hearer stand for the purpose of this act. The second factor is power (P), which forms an asymmetric social dimension of relative power. Power is defined as the extent to which the hearer can impose his own plans and his face at the cost of the speaker's plans and face (Brown & Levinson 1987: 15). The third factor is the absolute ranking (R) of impositions in a particular culture. This variable, Brown & Levinson claim, is culturally and situationally-dependent, in the sense that cultures classify acts according to their degree of imposition, and as such, there will be differences in this regard from one culture to another.

In addition to avoiding face-threatening acts, any rational speaker will employ certain strategies to lessen the degree of threat. Brown & Levinson place these strategies on a continuum of doing or refraining from doing the face threatening act, as shown in the figure below:



They claim that it is the degree of face-threat that determines the use of these strategies. Climbing the scale from 1 to 5 increases the degree of politeness; more polite strategies are employed when the risk is greater.

The first strategy, *without redressive action, baldly*, is employed when the speaker doesn't expect to receive face loss from the addressee or to impose face-loss on the addressee. As such, this strategy is consistent with the specifications of Grice's maxims supporting the cooperative principle. Brown & Levinson (1987: 69) claim that this strategy is usually adopted when the act performed does not constitute a danger to the hearer's face or when the relationship holding the conversation participants is asymmetrically upward with one acting as a superior and the other is subordinate. The second and third strategies, *positive politeness* and *negative politeness*, include redressive action in the sense that the speaker tries to alleviate the potential threat of the act, and endeavours to save her face as well. Related to this, Brown & Levinson (1987: 70) suggest that negative politeness is satisfied when 'conventionalised indirectness' is employed; for example, many indirect requests are conventionalised in English and they are on record ( e.g. Can you pass the salt?). The fourth strategy, *off record*, is followed when the speaker anticipates great face loss. When the speaker goes off record in doing the act, she is leaving the implied message to be interpreted by the addressee. Off-record strategies could be linguistically realised through the use of metaphor and irony, rhetorical questions, understatement, tautologies, and all kinds of hints and non-conventional indirectness. This strategy is related to the flouting of Grice's maxims in that the speaker wants to communicate in an indirect way, and thus the meaning is to some degree still open to discussion. The fifth strategy, *Don't do the FTA*, is employed when the risk of the face loss is potentially so great, that no linguistic strategy is sufficient to manage the face threat. Thus, the speaker decides not to do the act.

Brown & Levinson highlight the importance of negative and positive politeness. Positive politeness expresses appreciation of the addressee's personality through making him feel part of the in-group. Negative politeness focuses on the addressee's face wants which are represented by his wish not to be imposed upon by others. Positive politeness, Brown & Levinson claim, could take the form of expressing care to the addressee, use of in-group



identity markers, and showing sympathy. Negative politeness, on the other hand, could take the form of showing respect and deference, etiquette, use of indirect requests, etc.

On defining apologies, Brown & Levinson (1987: 187-188) state that apologies are used to communicate regret or reluctance to do an FTA. They believe that there are four ways through which the apology speech act can be fulfilled: first, by admitting the intrusion by which the speaker admits that she is infringing upon the hearer's face using certain expressions, like "I am sure you must be very busy, but..." (ibid.: 188). Second, by indicating reluctance which could be seen as an attempt on the part of the speaker to demonstrate her unwillingness to impinge on the hearer with the use of expressions, like "I normally wouldn't ask you this, but ...." (ibid.: 188). Third, by giving overwhelming reasons. In this case, the speaker claims that she has unavoidable reasons for doing the face-threatening act, therefore indicating that normally she wouldn't impose on the hearer's negative face. Possible expressions are like "I simply can't manage to ...." (ibid.:189). Finally, by beseeching forgiveness through which the speaker seeks the hearer's forgiveness using expressions like "excuse me, but...." (ibid.: 189).

Brown & Levinson's perception of apologies as communicating regret or reluctance to do face-threatening acts appears to be consistent with that proposed by Owen (1983). However, some areas of differences appear: whereas Brown & Levinson perceive apologies themselves as strategies for performing other acts, Owen (1983: 163) views primary remedial moves of which apologies are an essential part, as acts in their own right. Owen accordingly proposes a new model that represents the possible strategies for primary remedial moves<sup>18</sup>.

Despite the fact that Brown & Levinson's model has proved to be useful in exploring the underlying universals of politeness in data from different languages, it has received many critiques from various researchers and scholars, e.g. Fraser & Nolen (1981), Wierzbicka (1985), Lavandera (1988), Matsumoto (1988), 1989), Ide (1989) Sifianou (1989, 1992), Gu<sup>19</sup> (1990), Janney and Arndt (1993), Mao (1994), Mills (2003a) and Watts (2003). These critiques are multi-dimensional, covering issues such as the universality of face, and raising

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<sup>18</sup> For extensive discussion on Owen's (1983) primary remedial moves, see section 1.2.2.

<sup>19</sup> Gu (1990) explored politeness phenomena in Modern Chinese and critiqued Brown & Levinson's (1987) view of the universality of politeness phenomena.

questions regarding the absence of discourse and context. In the rest of this section, we shall look at some of the critiques directed to Brown & Levinson's (1978, 1987) model of politeness.

Although Brown & Levinson's distinction between negative politeness and positive politeness<sup>20</sup> seems to conform to that of Goffman (1967: 15-20) between avoidance processes and corrective processes, they have different conceptualisations about what face is. Whereas Brown & Levinson define face as the self-oriented image – a definition, which it has been argued, suits the Western interactional system and is incompatible with the non-western context (Wierzbicka 1985) – Goffman perceives face to be a public or interpersonal image. Although the distinction between negative and positive politeness has been extensively used by researchers to study politeness norms in different languages, the validity of its universal applicability has not been agreed upon by many researchers and scholars. Brown & Levinson's claim, for example, that China and Japan are categorised as negative politeness cultures has been refuted by Gu (1990), Mao (1994), Matsumoto<sup>21</sup> (1989), and Ide<sup>22</sup> (1989) who all go against Brown & Levinson's model and argue its irrelevance to Chinese and Japanese cultures. Gu (1990: 241) claims that Chinese perception of negative politeness is completely different from that proposed by Brown & Levinson, evidenced by the fact that speech acts like *inviting*

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<sup>20</sup> Scollon & Scollon (1981, 1983) term the positive politeness system “solidarity politeness”, because of its emphasis on the common ground between the participants, and term the negative politeness system “deference politeness” because of its emphasis on deference and formality.

<sup>21</sup> Matsumoto (1988) explains the incompatibility between Brown & Levinson's notion and the Japanese notion of face, showing that Brown & Levinson's theory provides an incorrect account for Japanese politeness phenomena. She argues that the notion of individualism, upon which Brown & Levinson's theory is based, cannot be taken to be the basis for social interaction in Japanese culture and society. Rather, she points to the fact that Japanese is a collective society in the sense that an individual has to acknowledge her dependence on others. To demonstrate the validity of her hypothesis, Matsumoto (1988: 406) gives the example of the structure of the Japanese house and the relationship that holds together the family members, who usually move together from one room to another depending on the type of the activity they are involved in.

<sup>22</sup> It should be noted that Matsumoto and Ide's critique of Brown & Levinson's universality of politeness phenomena has been hugely challenged by Pizziconi (2003). It is a multi-dimensional critique directed at some aspects of the Japanese scholars' critique of Brown & Levinson's model of politeness. Pizziconi contends that the rules that control the use of honorific strategies in English and Japanese are, contrary to what Matsumoto and Ide suggest, similar in that they are both “strategic”. Pizziconi (2003: 1493) also argues that the presence of honorifics and the principles of their strategic use in Japanese do not substantiate the view that acknowledging “social ranks” takes precedence over “redressing impositions”. The Japanese scholars' emphasis on social norms over individual motives, which implies that there is definite division between behaviours that are promoted by social norms and those that are motivated by the individuals' needs, is rejected by Pizziconi on the basis that it is difficult to recognise the dividing lines between the two types of behaviour. She instead proposes that socially and individually motivated behaviours are likely to temporarily work together in discourse. The other charge raised by Pizziconi (2003: 1473) against the Japanese scholars' argument resides in their failure to provide an adequate account of the role of positive politeness in human social conversation.

do not comprise a threat to the hearer's negative face in Chinese, even in cases where the invitee rejects the invitation. By the same token, Matsumoto (1988:405) argues that the Japanese perception of face is based on emphasising interpersonal relationships. In this case, it becomes apparent that both Chinese and Japanese cultures stress the need for the individual to have a strongly tied relationship with other members of the same community. Both of these cultures place great importance on social relationships and less on individual freedom. This and other examples lay much doubt on the universal applicability of Brown & Levinson's theory of politeness and simultaneously suggest that such a theory is not appropriate to collective societies (Watts 2003), and represents only Western individualistic interactional behaviour (Wierzbicka 1985; Mao 1994).

Adopting the same line of critique of Matsumoto and Ide, Nwoye (1989) also claims that Brown & Levinson's theory is universally inapplicable. He points out that in Igbo culture, "face" is defined as "group face." The Igbo concept of face highlights the collective self-image of the group and downplays that of the individual. Based on the views outlined above, it could be argued that Chinese, Japanese, and Igbo view face as "other-oriented" whereas Brown & Levinson's conceptualisation of face is "self-oriented".

In addition to critiquing the principle of universality, Mills (2003a) points to other problems such as the principle of rationality which embodies the notion of Model Person and the ineffectiveness of the model due to the entire reliance on speech act theory to account for politeness phenomena. Mills (2003a: 89-91) largely critiques the notion of Model Speaker as adopted by Brown & Levinson to describe the speaker and the hearer. This model, she claims, is devoted to analysing the speaker alone and nothing is said about the hearer except when acting as a speaker. Moreover, Mills is sceptical of Brown & Levinson's assumption that it is easy "to know what polite or impolite action means." Such assumption stems from their reliance on the notion of Model Person, whose intentions are assumed to be calculable and easily decodable by the hearer. Adopting the Model Speaker, she adds, presupposes that both the speaker and the hearer share the same background – something that does not apply at all times.

As part of contesting Brown & Levinson's methodology, Mills (2003a: 100-104) lays much doubt on the way they classify social variables<sup>23</sup>, namely social power, social distance, and the ranking of impositions. As regards the first factor, social power, she believes that one's power should not be evaluated in terms of the position one occupies in a certain institution, but as something that should be traced through the whole conversation. Cherry (1988) argues that the explanatory variables proposed by Brown & Levinson (1978) do play a significant role in social encounters, yet disagrees with their assumption that the absence of power entails greater apologies.

Within Brown & Levinson's model, the second variable, social distance, is defined as something stable. This leads them to classify participants as either familiar or distant, leaving aside the fact that relationships among interactants are dynamic, or, as Mills suggests, a variable that is perceived differently by members of social interaction. She adds that the instability of these variables might be connected with the dynamics of the mood of interactants.

The absence of age as a social factor is also a matter for negotiation. In the interviews she conducted, Mills (2003a: 103) discovers that older and younger people have different perceptions about what politeness is. Whereas older people stress the importance of politeness and simultaneously view young people as being less polite when compared to how they used to be, younger people regard politeness as much less important.

The absolute reliance by Brown & Levinson on speech act theory and the absence of discourse and context in their theory are also subject to further critique. Mills claims that the importance of context is crucial, especially in cases where routinised or conventional politeness is employed. More precisely, Mills argues that situational context is vital when the illocutionary force of an utterance is totally different from its proposition – a distinction that is widely employed in pragmatics and variously termed, e.g. locution vs. illocution, sentence vs. utterance, or sense vs. force in semantics. Sifianou (1992) points to the fact that requests to in-group participants in Greek are not perceived as an imposition because Greeks deem it is their task to help others, and thus use positive politeness strategies and not negative politeness strategies. In addition to the cultural context, Fraser & Nolen

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<sup>23</sup> For more discussion on social variables, see Brown & Gilman (1989) and Kasper (1990).

(1981) stress the importance of linguistic context as they claim that politeness cannot be evaluated under the exclusion of linguistic context. This is supported by the fact, as Watts (2003) holds, that if different linguistic expressions – that are classified as polite – are taken out of their original context and put in different linguistic context, they might be considered impolite.

In spite of this critique regarding the universality of the two main face wants, Brown & Levinson's contribution to the theory of politeness is still invaluable, as it lays the foundations for comparing politeness cross-culturally. Brown & Levinson's (1978) distinction between positive and negative politeness strategies and the way they classify cultures as positive or negative politeness societies are of help in carrying out further research into the perceptions of politeness phenomena in different cultures.

#### **2.2.4 Fraser & Nolen's Conversational-Contract View**

In an attempt to account for politeness phenomena, Fraser & Nolen (1981) introduce the “conversational-contract view”. The proposed framework is based on the notion that when communication partners get involved in conversations, they need to act in accordance with a set of rights and obligations which are established by social institutions and determined by prior encounters. It could be argued that Fraser & Nolen's hypothesis, which requests conversation participants to observe the terms and conditions of conversation, constitutes an invitation for people to produce socially appropriate behaviour that meets the social expectation of the addressees. Viewed in this way, being polite, Fraser & Nolen (1981: 96) argue, is associated with the extent to which the person abides by the terms of conversation. Likewise, failure to observe these conditions and terms renders the linguistic act impolite. Fraser & Nolen's interpretation of politeness in terms of the conversation participants' compliance with the terms and conditions of conversations is to stress the notion that face is not the basis of interactions. Defining politeness in terms of rules and conditions, as Fraser & Nolen do, strongly conforms to Goffman's (1967) “traffic rules” of social encounters, in which participants are seen as bound with moral rules that control the flow of events. Fraser & Nolen (1981) highlight the role of the addressee in evaluating the act as being polite or impolite. They assume that, regardless of whether or not the speaker tries to be polite or impolite, it is the hearer who will judge the speaker as being (im)polite.

In relation to the rules of the interaction, Fraser & Nolen (1981) distinguish four types of terms: *conventional*, *institutional*, *situational* and *historical* terms. Conventional terms are general rules that might exist in all types of social interaction, examples of which are rules of turn-taking and rules of loudness and softness of speaking. Institutional rules pertain to terms placed by social institutions, like those that control conversation in courts. Situational rules refer to the participants' reciprocal evaluation and awareness of the status and power of the addresser and the addressee. Historical terms imply that previous encounters serve as a basis and a starting point for current social interactions. Unlike all other terms, conventional rules are not debatable, in that they represent the basics of interaction. It might be argued that Fraser & Nolen's (1981) conversation rules are categorised under the social norms that aim to regulate social interaction and spur people to produce linguistically appropriate acts.

### **2.2.5 Leech's theory of interaction**

Like many other researchers, Leech (1983: 7) adopts Grice's conversational principles, taking these as a starting point to develop a pragmatic framework within which politeness, viewed as a regulative factor in social interaction, is analysed in terms of principles and maxims. Because of the inadequacy of Grice's cooperative principle to account for the relation between sense and force, Leech introduces his politeness principle. Leech is mainly concerned with the pragmatic phenomenon of indirectness; he claims that it is politeness that causes people to deviate from the cooperative principle. Leech's argument is an extension of Grice's conversational implicatures, a means by which speakers often mean more than they say.

Leech's approach to pragmatics is characterised as being 'rhetorical,' a term which refers to the effective use of language in communication, and how to use language skilfully for persuasion. However, Leech employs this term 'rhetoric' to focus on the effects it places on 'a goal-oriented speech situation,' in which the speaker uses language skilfully to produce some effect in the mind of the hearer.

Building on Halliday's work (1970, 1973), Leech (1983: 15) develops a pragmatic framework which consists of two types of rhetoric: the interpersonal and the textual. Each

of these two types of rhetoric is constituted by a set of principles, the cooperative principle and the politeness principle. As for politeness, it lies within the interpersonal rhetoric which consists of the cooperative principle (CP), on which much of Leech's work is based, Leech's politeness principle (PP), and finally his Irony principle (IP). Leech (1983: 142) treats the IP as a 'second-order principle' that enables a speaker to be impolite while seeming to be polite. The speaker becomes ironic when he superficially breaks the CP. The irony principle is of particular importance, since it enables the hearer to recover the conveyed message of the utterance indirectly or, in Grice's terms, by conversational implicatures. However, the irony principle clashes with the politeness principle. Leech (1983: 17) further elaborates his theory of politeness through the distinction he makes between the speaker's illocutionary goals and social goals, such a distinction is equivalent to the one between the illocutionary form of the utterance and its rhetorical force. Leech, when referring to the rhetorical force, means the position the speaker adopts as being truthful, polite, or ironic. Pragmatic force of utterance, Leech claims, consists of both the illocutionary force and rhetorical force.

Leech's politeness principle is constructed in a way similar to the cooperative principle, but it consists of different maxims such as *tact*, *generosity*, *approbation*, *modesty*, *agreement* and *sympathy*. Leech (1983: 123) links these maxims to a number of pragmatic scales that are relevant to politeness:

- 1- The "cost/benefit" scale which specifies how much the proposed action is evaluated by the speaker to be of cost or benefit to the speaker or to the addressee.
- 2- The "optionality" scale which shows the degree to which the proposed action is at the choice of the hearer.
- 3- The "indirectness" scale which indicates the amount of inference required by the addressee to understand what is involved in the proposed action.

Leech (1983: 79) claims that in social encounters the cooperative principle and the politeness principle interact with each other. The cooperative principle is helpful in the sense that, together with its maxims, it enables the hearers to recover the indirect message of the utterance, whereas the politeness principle and its maxims explain the reasons that underlie the use of indirectness. Leech (1983: 82) points out that in some situations, the

politeness principle and the cooperative principle conflict. In this case, the speaker will sacrifice one principle in favour of the other, Leech notes that speakers tend to sacrifice the cooperative principle, as the politeness principle is of particular importance in maintaining social equilibrium and friendly relations:

It could be argued, however, that the PP has a higher regulative role than this: to maintain the social equilibrium and the friendly relations which enable us to assume that our interlocutors are being cooperative in the first place. To put matters at their most basic: unless you are polite to your neighbour, the channel of communication between you will break down, and you will no longer be able to borrow his mower. (Leech 1983: 82)

Leech (1983: 83-84) makes a distinction between two types of politeness: absolute and relative politeness. As to the former, Leech states that absolute politeness is a set of scales that embodies a negative and a positive pole in the sense that some illocutions – such as orders – are inherently impolite, and others – such as offers – are intrinsically polite. This being so, negative politeness, according to Leech, is concerned with minimising the impoliteness of impolite speech acts, whereas positive politeness is concerned with maximising the politeness of polite speech acts. Relative politeness, on the other hand, Leech suggests, is bound with different variables such as context and situations, as each culture employs the cooperative principle and politeness principle in a way that is different from others.

No good work is free from problems. Being so, Leech's theory has been subject to critique from various scholars. Fraser (1990) and Spencer-Oatey & Jiang (2003), for example, argue that there is a problem with Leech's theory in his classification of illocutionary acts as being inherently polite or impolite. The point that Fraser raises is that illocutionary acts can be assessed as being polite or impolite, but the same evaluation cannot be held true about the speech act itself. In Fraser's view, Leech's problem resides in his neglect of cultural and situational variables when he classifies acts as inherently polite or impolite. Ordering, for example, cannot be evaluated as impolite when used in a classroom. A further problem raised by scholars such as Dillons et al (1985), Lavandera (1988), Fraser (1990) and Turner (1996) is the fact that Leech's argument is not decisive,



in the sense that he does not say how many principles are needed to explain politeness phenomena.

### 2.2.6 Watts' Politic behaviour

Building on data collected from social activities in British and Swiss-German family gatherings, Watts (1989) introduces the notion of politic verbal behaviour. He considers that the marked reduction of explicit politeness strategies in “closed communication systems” such as family gatherings constitutes an invitation to re-examine polite verbal behaviour within a general framework of politic verbal behaviour. In an attempt to define politic behaviour, Watts (1989: 135), and later Watts (2003, 2005), claims that it is a socio-culturally planned behaviour designed to establish and perpetuate social equilibrium and relationships between individuals of either open or closed communication systems in any on-going social encounter. Watts' approach to linguistic politeness thus views it as part of politic behaviour that helps accomplish smooth communicative interaction and explains the production of socially organised discourse by conversation participants within open communication systems. This could be fulfilled, Watts argues, through the employment of “ritualised” behaviour, indirect speech acts, and conventional linguistic strategies aimed at saving face. In Watts' model, politeness is viewed both as a form of politic behaviour and as a positive deviation from politic behaviour; the only difference between the two is that politeness is looked at as marked behaviour, whereas politic behaviour is unmarked. Watts' politic behaviour is defined in terms of appropriateness, or of what is to be expected in a given situation; when politeness becomes salient and noticed, it is then beyond what is appropriate. Watts' distinction between the two forms of behaviour indicates that what has been classified in other politeness theories as politeness is viewed as politic behaviour in his approach. Brown & Levinson's (1987) strategies and forms of politeness, for example, are regarded in Watts' theory as part of politic behaviour. Watts (1989: 137) also contends that politic verbal behaviour, of which polite verbal behaviour constitutes a part, amounts to relational work, in that it is directed to make sure that the “fabric of interpersonal relationships in the social group” is preserved. This leads Locher & Watts (2005: 10) to argue that “Brown and Levinson's framework can still be used, however, if we look at the strategies they have proposed to be possible realisations of what we call *relational work*”. Going beyond the notion of polite and appropriate behaviour, Watts (2003, 2005) and Locher & Watts (2005) propose the notion of relational work as a way to explain social

interaction. For them, relational work refers to the interactional nature of face and that it embodies different aspects of social interaction such as (in)direct, (im)polite, or (in)appropriate behaviour ( see chapter 6). In order to evaluate the nature and degree of politic behaviour in any discourse, Watts (1989) points to a set of factors that should be taken into consideration:

- 1- The nature of the social activity in which communication partners are engaged.
- 2- The sort of the speech event the interlocutors are involved in within the social activity.
- 3- The extent to which conversation participants have common cultural beliefs that are relevant to the speech event and social activity.
- 4- The common shared assumptions that pertain to “the information state of the discourse” within which each speech event could be modified.
- 5- The social variables like social distance and the status of the conversation interactants.

The proposed notions mentioned above demonstrate that politic behaviour is responsible for adjusting the discourse as a step towards perpetuating the “fabric of the interpersonal relationships” between members of the social group.

Because Watts (1989) conducted his study using the social activity of a family gathering viewed as a closed social group, this led him to link his work to that of Bernstein (1971) who makes a distinction between restricted and elaborated codes, which is comparable to that between closed and open communication systems. In closed communication systems, or closed groups as termed by Watts (1989), the concern of the group is prioritised over the individual, that is, to emphasise the importance of *we* over *I*; whereas in open communication systems or open groups the interest of the individual takes precedence over that of group. Related to this distinction is the one Hill et al (1986) draw between Discernment and Volition<sup>24</sup>. Watts holds that cultures that raise the significance of

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<sup>24</sup> It should be noted that volition strategies include a conscious choice made by the speaker and are therefore likely to prioritise the individual over the group. However, in discernment cultures, the group is privileged over the individual. Ide (1989: 232) further explains the distinction between “discernment” and “volition” showing that the former is realised by formal linguistic forms, such as honorifics, pronouns, address terms, speech levels, speech formulas, etc. The later is realised by means of verbal strategies, such as seeking agreement, joking, questioning, being pessimistic, minimising the impositions, etc.

Discernment could be assessed as being closed communication systems while Volition cultures are open communication systems. Watts (1989: 134) holds that verbal politeness in Volition cultures should be viewed as a marked form of politeness in which the individual supersedes the group. As already explained, Watts chose the family gathering, seen as a closed group, to collect his data. This in fact led him to say that social groups in Volition cultures can have closed communication systems. This also demonstrates that classifying cultures as open or closed communication systems is not always correct. As previously stated, Watts contends that verbal interaction in social groups labelled as closed communication systems is oriented to establishing and sustaining the interpersonal relationship and “in-group identity.”

Classifying cultures according to whether they employ Discernment or Volition strategies implies differences between cultures in terms of their conceptualisations of what politeness is. Such a cultural disparity also indicates that face should not always be looked at as the basis for defining and assessing polite verbal behaviour.

Of particular importance here is the distinction Watts et al (1992: 3 republished in 2005) – and later Watts (2003) – draw between first-order and second-order politeness. First-order politeness (politeness1) is defined as polite behaviour as understood by members of the social group, embodying “commonsense notions of politeness”. Second-order politeness (politeness2), on the other hand, is a scientific term “within a theory of social behaviour and language usage” (2005: 3). In relation to this, Locher & Watts (2005: 15) note the potential negative consequences of linguists’ focusing on politeness2 only, pointing out that what is viewed as polite/impolite behaviour in politeness2 might not count as such in politeness1 ( see section 6.5 for further discussion).

Eelen (2001) further develops Watts et al’s (1992) distinction between politeness1 and politeness2. He first argues (2001: 32) that politeness1 is a double-sided notion, in that it embodies two main aspects: an “action-related” aspect and a conceptual aspect. The former is defined as referring to the way politeness is actually used in, and seen as an aspect of, communicative interaction. The latter, however, refers to “commonsense ideologies of politeness” reflecting people’s opinions about what politeness is all about. Eelen’s definition of politeness1 is derived from Vygotsky’s (1986) conceptualisation of everyday

concepts as “psychological tools”. For Vygotskian, everyday concepts act as a linkage device between consciousness and the external world. Building on this, Eelen (2001: 34) argues that because politeness comprises social and interactional phenomena, it also plays the same role and acts as mediation between consciousness and the external world. In this case politeness<sup>1</sup> is seen as a two-direction process in the sense that, as everyday concepts (social world) are likely to affect one’s perception of that world, one’s interpretation of the world could also influence one’s action in that world. Eelen holds that people’s judgements and opinions about politeness influence the way they behave politely/impolitely, and this indicates that “[...] not only action is influenced by cognition, but also cognition by action” (ibid.: 34).

Because politeness<sup>1</sup> is very much concerned with the practice of politeness in everyday interaction, this leads Eelen (2001: 35) to term it the “practice of politeness”, or “politeness-as-practice”. Viewing politeness as an action-centered phenomenon also leads Eelen to ignore his first distinction between the “action-related” and conceptual aspects of politeness<sup>1</sup>, and instead to reconsider politeness<sup>1</sup> as encompassing three aspects: expressive, classificatory, and metapragmatic politeness. Eelen (2001: 35) holds that expressive politeness<sup>1</sup> refers to politeness as conveyed by the use of, for example, honorifics, terms of address, or speech acts; Classificatory politeness is used as a categorising device to describe one’s assessment of people’s communicative behaviour as being polite/impolite; and metapragmatic politeness refers to people’s opinions and talk about politeness itself as a phenomenon.

Outlining what politeness<sup>1</sup> is, Eelen (2001: 35-43) goes on to describe its main features as involving evaluativity, argumentativity, ‘polite’-ness, normativity, modality and reflexivity. By evaluativity, Eelen (2001: 35) means that politeness and impoliteness, as monitored by social norms, are used to assess people’s interactional behaviour. Argumentativity means that politeness<sup>1</sup> “occurs in situations that involve social stakes, situations in which there is something to lose or gain” (ibid.: 38). ‘Polite’-ness refers to instances when each individual considers themselves and their social group as polite and others as otherwise; the normative nature of politeness means that politeness is driven by social norms. Finally, by modality and reflexivity, Eelen (2001: 43) means that the actor has options of polite interactional strategies.

As for politeness<sub>2</sub>, Eelen (2001: 43-44) claims that politeness<sub>2</sub> is the scientific description of politeness<sub>1</sub> (as a social interactional phenomenon) and that, as such, it describes how politeness<sub>1</sub> works. Eelen (2001: 47) adds that “[...] unlike politeness<sub>1</sub>, which is restricted to the polite end of the polite-impolite continuum, politeness<sub>2</sub> should cover the whole range of the continuum”.

### 2.2.7 Re-theorising face as part of relational work

Seen as a discursive concept, politeness phenomena have been revisited (Locher & Watts 2005; Spencer-Oatey 2005; Arundale 2006) with the aim of renewing our understanding of its exact nature. The discursive nature of politeness stressed by the scholars mentioned above implies that politeness is not associated with the function of only mitigating face loss incurred by face-threatening acts, and that, instead, it encompasses various aspects of both politeness and impoliteness as a way to realise appropriate behaviour. Locher & Watts (2005: 9) redefine politeness as being part of relational work employed by individuals for the purpose of establishing and maintaining relationships with others. For this reason, the authors, as explained above, contend that a definition of polite/impolite behaviour should not be based on the analysts’ predictions and assessments (politeness<sub>2</sub>), but it should reflect the “interactants’ perceptions and judgements of their own and others’ verbal behaviour” (politeness<sub>1</sub>). Because appropriate behaviour can be realised via cooperative and non-cooperative communication, Locher & Watts (2005: 28) argue that politeness should be re-viewed as part of relational work rather than “facework”, whose key function is to mitigate face-threatening acts. Spencer-Oatey (2005: 96) stresses the same point through using terms like *rapport* and *rapport management*. The former is used to describe the harmonious and smooth relations between people, whereas the latter includes “[...] not only behaviour that enhances or maintains smooth relations, but any kind of behaviour that has an impact on rapport, whether positive, negative, or neutral” (2005: 96). Similarly, Arundale (2006: 193) defines face as “[...] a relational and an interactional, rather than an individual phenomenon, in that the social self is interactionally achieved in relationships with others”. This indeed echoes Bargiela-Chiappini’s (2003: 1463) suggestion that investigating “conceptualisations of the social self and its relationship to others” is likely to provide new approaches to face and facework. Such theories cast further doubt on Brown & Levinson’s (1987) classification of speech acts as intrinsically

face-saving/face-threatening acts or as inherently polite/impolite behaviour, and simultaneously foreground the dynamic nature of face as a relational and interactional phenomenon (for further discussion on this notion, see section 6.5).

## 2.3 Gender and Politeness

Tracing the literature that deals with the gender effects on language reveals two contradictory views. Whereas the different-culture approach claims that men and women speak different languages due to the fact that they are members of different cultures (Maltz and Borker 1982; Tannen 1990; Troemel-Plotz 1991; Gray 1992; Johnson 2000; DeVito 2002, Wood 1997, 2000, 2003 and Basow & Rubenfeld 2003), the dominance theory, on the other hand, claims that men and women behave in similar ways since they come from the same culture.

As proponents of the different-culture theory, Maltz & Borker (1982: 202-203) claim that men and women have different cultural assumptions about talk and friendly conversation. They go on to say that whereas girls learn words to establish and maintain relationships of closeness; boys perceive talk as a tool for conveying information and getting things accomplished. Maltz & Borker's explanation for this difference is based on the idea that adults, when starting to interact socially and publicly with each other, possess different rules for running a friendly conversation. These rules were learned from peers approximately at the age of 5 to 15, at a time when boys and girls interact socially with members of the same sex. Tannen (1991; 1994; 1995), supporting the different-culture theory, claims that men's and women's methods of communication are very different. She (1991: 18) perceives conversation between men and women to be "a cross-cultural communication" as they belong to different linguistic communities. Michaud & Warner (1997: 537) and Basow & Rubenfeld (2003: 186), following Tannen's argument (1990), provide support for the different-culture approach, showing that men and women communicate in different ways and that they should be looked at as members of different "speech communities" (Wood 2000, 2002). In relation to this, (Johnson 2000: 112) considers that the idea of "gender cultures" will long continue to be observed in future.

Supporting the same-culture view, MacGeorge et al (2004: 171) argue that more similarities than differences in women's and men's behaviours are observed. They believe that although women and men possess different skills with respect to the use of language, they should not be

regarded as members of different communication cultures. Critiquing Maltz and Borker's study (1982), Thorne (1993: 96) claims that the different-culture approach is no longer valid and that it overemphasises the notion of gender differences, neglecting "within-gender variation" such as social class and ethnicity. In an attempt to investigate the effects of helper and recipient gender on the experience of comforting messages, Jones & Burleson (2003) point out that men and women have similar emotional responses to comforting messages. Also, Kyratzis (2001) and Thorne (1993) downplay the significance of the different culture theory, on the basis that the data used by proponents of this theory to validate their hypothesis have been derived from case studies, films, or television, which are not sufficiently adequate methods to examine how men and women behave.

Unlike the Second Wave feminist approach, which assumes that men's and women's language is different and analyses the language of women and men as homogeneous groups (Lakoff 1975; Spender 1980; Tannen 1991), the Third Wave feminist approach challenges the notion that women constitute a homogeneous group (Eckert 2000, Bucholtz 1996). "In this way, Third Wave feminist analysis makes it possible to analyse the language use of women and men, without assuming that all women are powerless, all males are powerful, or that gender always makes a difference" (Mills 2003b: 1). The Third Wave approach stresses the role of context and social factors in evaluating an individual's behaviour as being competent or otherwise. In relation to this, Mills (2003b: 1) also argues that "Third Wave feminist linguistics is therefore concerned with moving the analysis of gender and language away from the individual alone towards an analysis of the individual in relation to social groups who judge their linguistic behaviour and also in relation to hypothesised gendered stereotypes". Because the Third Wave feminist approach attaches importance to context, it therefore analyses women's linguistic behaviour at a local level, not at a global one, as adopted by the Second Wave feminist approach. Though Mills (2003b: 7) finds the focus on the local level is one of the advantages of this approach, she argues that it will be difficult to discuss the influence of the values of the wider society (not only those of the community of practice). For this reason, Mills (2003b: 10) suggests that there is a need to consider "[...] a form of analysis which combines the global concerns of Second Wave feminist analysis with the local concerns of the Third Wave feminism [...]".

Tracing gender differences in apology responses also yields controversial results. Only a few studies have shown that women are likely to apologise more than men are. However, Mattson & Johnstone (1994) point to the fact that in their data men apologise more than women do during telephone interviews. Exploring the effect of gender differences on apologetic responses, Holmes (1989, 1995) and Tannen (1994) claim that women tend to apologise more than men. Building on Maltz & Borker (1982), Holmes claims that men are concerned with the referential functions of language use, whereas women focus much more on the affective uses of language. In the former, language is seen to be a vehicle for conveying information, whereas the latter refers to the use of language as a tool to convey feelings and maintain intimacy. Investigating apologies in young Israeli peer discourse, Kampf & Blum-Kulka (2007: 34) find that Israeli children exhibited some gender differences in the types of offences that trigger apologies. The authors find that whereas boys apologise more frequently than girls to violent conflict (accident), girls are found to apologise more to talk and lack of consideration offences.

Holme's work has been widely critiqued. Christie (2000: 161-168), for example, is sceptical of Holme's argument that men and women orient towards different goals of communication, as this contradicts the claim that politeness phenomenon forms a universal set of principles that explain the reason behind linguistic choices. Mills (2003a: 222-225) argues that Holme's analysis is not convincing in the sense that it does not prove that women are generally more polite than men. Mills claims that although women may appear to be more polite than men, they, under certain circumstances, seem to behave as impolitely as men. Mills is also doubtful of Holme's hypothesis, which states that women are offered apologies more than men. Mills (2003a: 222) argues that people who are viewed as juniors tend to apologise more, and because women usually occupy such positions when compared to men, women are then expected to offer more apologies to men because of their powerless position.

Like Holmes and Tannen, Gonzales et al (1990) and Rothman & Gandossy (1982) point out that women apologise more than men and are more likely than men to use expressions of regret, such as "I'm so embarrassed". Moreover, women's apologies are marked with their tendency to offer more explicit apologies, such as "I'm sorry." Such findings lead these researchers to conclude that women are more polite than men. Investigating apologetic behaviours during court cases, Rothman & Gandossy (1982) argue that women apologise more



than men. Such an argument is evidenced by the fact that women express remorse more than men.

Contrary to what has been stated above, other studies show that gender differences have no significant effect on apologetic behaviours. Fraser (1981), examining apology responses in American English, claims that the frequency occurrence of apology strategies is not influenced by gender differences. Aijmer (1995), exploring apologies in the London Lund Corpus, finds no significant differences in apologies given by males and females. By the same token, Schlenker & Darby<sup>25</sup> (1981), Reiter (2000) and Wouk (2006) find that the gender of the apologiser does not affect apology responses in any consistent way.

In the light of what has been discussed, this study aims to see whether there are any differences in the use of apologies by men and women in the Jordanian context. This aspect of the research is highly motivated by the fact that when women and men in conservative societies, such as the Jordanian community, interact socially with each other, they usually act in line with the religious and social rules, which place some restrictions on cross-gender interactions. It might also be argued that physical segregation symbolised by gender segregation could lead to segregation by language in general and the way people apologise in particular. Gender-based differences are thus more likely to be apparent in societies whose members' conduct is closely monitored by rules as a way to regulate social interaction.

Based on the brief review of the literature on politeness phenomena in this chapter, we find that Brown & Levinson's model will be the most appropriate to satisfy the present study's purposes. That is, the theoretical framework of data analysis in this study will be based on Brown & Levinson's (1978, 1987) distinction between negative and positive politeness. This theory has been found to be the most effective in empirically evaluating politeness across cultures. To this, Locher & Watts (2005) add:

Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness (1978, 1987) has given scholars an enormous amount of research mileage. Without it we would not be in a position to consider the phenomenon of politeness as a fundamental aspect of human socio-communicative verbal interaction in quite the depth and variety that is now available to us. The Brown and Levinson theory has towered above most others and has served as a

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<sup>25</sup> Schlenker & Darby (1981) examine the use of apologies in social predicaments.

guiding beacon for scholars interested in teasing out politeness phenomena from examples of human interaction. It provides a breadth of insights into human behaviour which no other theory has yet offered, and it has served as a touchstone for researchers who have felt the need to go beyond it. (Locher & Watts 2005: 9-10)

In her paper on relevance theory and politeness, Christie (2007: 269) contends that Brown & Levinson's approach is of use to many students and scholars from different disciplines, cultures and languages, and she links this to "its overt linking of the pragmatic with the social [...]". By the same token, Lindblom (2001: 1620) argues that Brown & Levinson's (1987) model is "[...] the most productively complex explication of the Cooperative Principle to date because it is a bi-perspectival account that uses the CP to describe discourse as utterance and as social interaction". The theory's analysis of politeness in connection with sociolinguistics (social parameters) is likely to provide a context that allows the recovery of the intended conveyed messages of conventional utterances, and makes the conversational implicatures of (im)politeness messages easily calculable.

Having reviewed the literature on politeness theories, we will move to the next chapter where we shall take into account various methodological approaches to the study of apologies. As already explained, the language of apologies is hugely influenced by the cultural values of each speech community and is assumed to be handled in connection with a number of social variables, such as social power, social distance and the total ranking of imposition. The different perceptions of these social variables by members of different cultures cause apologies to vary from one culture to another. As such, there is a need to have a research methodology that can successfully account for how the cultural values employed in the cultures under study are linguistically encoded when apologising. A thorough discussion of the advantages and potential limitations of the instruments devised for the collection of apologies will also be considered.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology and the structure of the study**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In this study, we present empirical research aimed at analysing the expressions of apology and forms of participation in two different languages, British English and Jordanian Arabic, as an attempt to establish the similarities and/or differences between its realisations by native speakers of the two languages.

One of the primary research concerns in any field of applied linguistics in general, and in cross-cultural and inter-language pragmatics in particular, is the validation of the data collection instrument. This means that in order to achieve our goals in the present study, we need an empirical design that will allow us to account for any cross-cultural variability in the realisation of the apology speech act. The rationale behind the choice of the speech act of apology as a tool to explore the politeness phenomena in the two cultures resides in its reliability in evaluating how politeness works in cultures. Because apologising implies the apologiser's breach of a certain social norm (hence being responsible and accountable for the offence caused), it was decided to adopt this particular speech act as a vehicle to mirror people's perception of the extent to which remedial action was needed. We thus need a data collection procedure that helps us understand people's perception of whether or not it is appropriate to apologise in a particular situation. This will constitute a step towards exploring people's linguistic preferences – if they choose to apologise – for realising the act of apologising. A cross-linguistic comparison of the strategies employed by informants of both languages will be of use in uncovering differences and/or similarities the two groups display in the selection and frequency of apology strategies and in their consideration of social and contextual variables. On the basis of the approach outlined above, it will be possible to explore how linguistic politeness operates in the two cultures. In section 2 of this chapter we discuss three different data collection methods: observation of authentic speech, discourse completion tests (DCTs), and interviewing. Our discussion is aimed at

investigating each methodology's relative strengths and weaknesses, as this will justify the adoption of the research method for the present study.

## **3.2 Methodological Considerations.**

### **3.2.1 Observation of Authentic Speech**

There is a general disagreement among researchers about what 'natural language' is. Wolfson (1976: 202), for example, argues that it is not easy to define what natural speech is and that any speech could be viewed as natural in any context with the proviso that it is deemed to be appropriate in that particular context for accomplishing a specific goal. Wolfson also contends that unnatural speech is likely to occur in cases where there are breach and uncertainty as to the norms of speaking. This argument seems to conform to Stubbs' (1983: 225) belief that "the hunt for pure, natural, or authentic data is chimera," this is justified by the fact that speakers manipulate their language and linguistic structures to suit the situation where language is used. The way people adjust their language to be appropriate to a certain situation minimises the likelihood of finding completely "natural" speech. Wolfson argues that collecting data ethnographically – where naturally occurring apologies are observed and recorded – is unreliable. She supports her argument by saying that if the researcher's main task is to observe many examples of a speech act in the same situational and interpersonal context, then it is rarely possible to have full control of the contextual variables that should apply when the same context happens again.

The method of observing participants, as already mentioned, is a controversial issue. While its importance has been emphasised by many scholars on the basis that it is more reliable than any other data collection process to represent social reality, it has been challenged by many on the basis of being inadequate to provide a detailed account of the social world. This point will be discussed at length later in this section. Walsh (1998: 221) points out that ethnography may be distinguished from other research methods in three ways. First, it is a stage-free process, in that there are no specific phases for

theorising, constructing hypothesis, gathering data, and testing hypothesis. The research process is instead viewed as an integration of devising the research problem, collecting data, and data analysis. Second, the participant observation method embodies a multiplicity of processes, including observing things that happen, listening to what people say, and asking questions, if necessary, whilst the investigation is ongoing. Finally, the ethnography process is considered to be entirely dependent on the observer, who is viewed as the main research instrument, associated with the functions of conducting observation, writing notes, using audio and visual recordings, recording and transcribing data, and finally writing the research.

Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias (2000: 190-191) highlight the importance of the participant observation method as being the most direct method for collecting data, in addition to the fact that the researcher need not ask people about their behaviour. This point has been also stressed by Burns (2000: 411), who contends that the kind of data yielded by the observational process directly represents human behaviour. In addition to its effectiveness in describing social phenomena as they occur in natural settings, Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias (2000: 190-191) hold that ethnography is the most convenient method when individuals do not like to express themselves verbally. They argue that ethnography is the most appropriate method for observing children's behaviour, and they link this to children's inability to verbalise their attitudes or endure long periods of research investigation. Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias (2000: 196) recognise two types of observation: controlled and non-controlled. In the former, the researcher has clear-cut decisions as to what, how, and when to observe, whereas in the latter the researcher has less explicit and clear research decisions as to what to do. They describe non-controlled observational methods as more flexible and less systematic than controlled ones. It is, they add, the research questions and research design that determine which of the two methods is the more appropriate to serve the purposes of the study.

In an attempt to describe the main features of ethnography as a method, Hammersley (1992, 1998, and 2004) and Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) explain a number of attributes that distinguish this method from others. Hammersley (1998: 2) asserts that

collecting naturally occurring data entails studying people's behaviour in natural contexts that are not invented by the researcher, with observation being the main data source. This point has also been ratified by Punch (2005: 152) who states that the fact that the observer becomes part of the natural setting gives him more opportunities to understand the group being investigated and to become familiar with the "shared cultural meanings" that are of help in comprehending the social behaviour of that group. Similarly, May (2001: 159) believes that the participant observation method has the advantage of being flexible, in that it allows the researcher to watch people in natural situations and ask them questions relevant to their motivations, beliefs and actions. Moreover, the approach adopted to data collection is "unstructured", in that the researcher need not prepare a detailed plan in advance before setting out to collect data. Ethnography is also characterised by a focus on a limited number of cases or a small group of people. Finally, Hammersley (1998) points to the fact that the data analysis is based on interpreting the meanings and functions of human actions, and that it adopts the form of explanations.

Although the unstructured nature of ethnography has been contested by Hammersley (1998), its significance has been highlighted by Bryman (1989: 143) on the ground that it allows the researcher to gather data from many areas of investigation that are not predicted in advance. Bryman also claims that it is the participant observation method that allows the gaining of "first-hand knowledge" in a particular context. He recognises three types of ethnography, making a distinction between covert, full and indirect participant observation (1989: 143-147). Covert participant observation happens when the researcher is allowed access to a certain organisation and is given the chance to observe with her identity being concealed as a researcher. In full participant observation as in covert participant observation, the researcher has a work position in the organisation, yet with the difference that he becomes known to others as a researcher. In indirect participant observation, the researcher does not hold a work position in the organisation, but takes part in events such as parties and lunches. Bryman likens the position of indirect observer to the role of anthropologist who visits a tribe for a certain period of time for the purpose of carrying out fieldwork.

Bryman (1989: 143) argues that the covert method is helpful to the researcher in the sense that he need not ask the organisation for access, as negotiating with an organisation for the purpose of gaining entry is often time-consuming and may be unsuccessful. Additionally, the fact that the researcher's identity is concealed means that the researcher's presence should not affect the flow of events. Nonetheless, the limitation of this method resides in its breach of ethics, in that the privacy of the people studied is intruded upon and that the researcher carries out the data collection process without obtaining prior consent from those studied. Problems arising from a violation of ethics could also affect the publication of the research, and political implications coming out of the research could be detrimental, in that they might negatively affect the lives of people being investigated (Walsh 1998: 232). Also, the fact that the researcher's role is hidden entails the unfeasibility of the integration of other methods, such as the use of interviews. Gomm (2004: 223) says that one of the charges directed against covert participant observation is that it hinders researchers from asking questions they would like to ask, due to their fear of having their identity uncovered. The veiled identity of a covert observer is likely to impede her from writing down notes as quickly as possible and thus notes would have to be written later. This in fact has a potential for data loss, as data might be forgotten or inaccurately recorded. Full and indirect participant observers rarely encounter these problems, yet they face the difficulty of gaining access; moreover, the presence of the researcher might affect the behaviour of the subjects being studied.

### **3.2.2 Discourse Completion Tests (DCTs)**

Questionnaires, like other research methods, are normally used to measure and understand opinions, attitudes, and actions of a group of respondents, as a step towards making generalisations about the whole population of the community. Such generalisation of course depends on the nature of the questionnaire, its aims, and the number of people who complete it. May (2001: 91) argues that because a questionnaire is designed to measure facts, attitudes and the behaviour of people, it is then crucial that the research hypotheses can be "operationalised into measures". That is, the hypotheses should be flexible in that they can be turned into understandable questions that can be

answered by respondents. Also, the answers to these questions are assumed to be categorisable and thus quantifiable, as this helps the researcher decide whether the theory tested has been proved or not. In favour of the use of questionnaires, Lewin (2005: 219) points out that questionnaires can provide the researcher with a way of gathering structured and unstructured data, and that the data collected can be presented numerically and thus can be analysed using statistical techniques. Unlike the ethnographic approach, questionnaires are replicable, in that the questionnaire form could be used by other researchers to test different groups at different times. May (2001) also contends that if the researcher intends to make generalisations about the population, then the sample chosen by the researcher should be representative of that population. In addition, the language of the questionnaire should be simple and clear, and the researcher should avoid being vague or ambiguous. If a question includes an ambiguous word, this could mean that different people will interpret the question in different ways and provide unpredictable and unanalysable answers (Moser & Kalton 2004: 76-77).

As regards the types of questionnaires, Oppenheim (2003: 102-103) recognises three types: mail questionnaires, self-administered questionnaires, and group-administered questionnaires. Mail questionnaires are sent to respondents via post, while self-administered and group-administered questionnaires are presented to the respondents by the researcher or by someone in an official position. The only difference between self-administered questionnaires and group-administered questionnaires is that in the former the questionnaire is distributed to single respondents, whereas in the latter the questionnaire is distributed to groups of respondents gathered together. In spite of being relatively less expensive, mail questionnaires have been discredited for the low response rate and lack of opportunity to correct misconceptions (May 2001: 98). In support of self-administered questionnaires, Bryman (1989: 42) suggests that they are cheaper and quicker than interviews, particularly when the number of participants is large or when the respondents are geographically scattered. However, he critiques self-administered questionnaires on the basis that questionnaire respondents might read the whole questionnaire before setting out to answer the first question. This could lead respondents to answer the early questions while being influenced by their knowledge of the later



questions in the questionnaire. He also believes that self-administered questionnaires yield low response rates when compared to interviews. It could be said that the questionnaire's deficiencies – like the ones incurred by mail questionnaire – could be overcome if the researcher considers the integration of other research methods such as interviews, which are likely to allow a higher response rate and give the researcher the chance to correct any misunderstandings. In response to the ethnographic critique of questionnaires, that what respondents might write is different from what they really do, May (2001: 112) suggests that a multiple-method approach, such as the use of interviews alongside questionnaires, permits the researcher to question respondents about their conceptions of certain social behaviours in particular contexts. Interviews, moreover, are more convenient than questionnaires when respondents are experiencing reading or language difficulties (Oppenheim 2003: 102).

The use of discourse completion tests (DCTs) in the field of cross-cultural pragmatics is very common. Blum-Kulka (1982), building on Levenston (1975), developed a discourse completion test designed to compare the speech act performance of native and non-native speakers of Hebrew. Discourse completion tests like the ones adopted by (Cohen & Olshtain 1981; Olshtain 1983; Olshtain and Cohen 1983) consist of scripted dialogues that represent socially differentiated situations. The descriptions of the dialogues give the respondents full understanding of the social power and social distance between the interlocutors. The respondents, having read the descriptions, play the role of the speaker in completing the incomplete dialogue, providing the appropriate speech act. There is a need to distinguish between DCTs that include the hearer's response and those that do not. Below are two examples that clarify the difference between the two types:

**A) An example of the hearer's response being included**

Policeman: Is that your car there?

Driver : Yes. I left it there only for a few minutes

Policeman : .....

Driver: O.K. O.K. I'm sorry. I'll move it at once.

(Blum-Kulka 1982: 56)

**B) An example of the hearer's response being excluded.**

You are at meeting and you say something that one of the participants interprets as a personal insult to him

He: "I feel that your last remark was directed at me and I take offence."

You:

.....

(Olshtain 1983: 247)

Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993) compare two versions of DCTs: the open questionnaire which provides a discourse without the interlocutor's initiation, and the dialogue completion task in which the hearer's response is provided. The author's main aim is to compare the influence of these two forms of discourse completion tasks on the elicitation of rejections of advice. The informants in this study were both native and non-native speakers. Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford (1993: 143) find that in many cases non-native speaker responses are similar to those of native speakers on the dialogue completion task. Such findings lead the authors to conclude that the inclusion of the hearer's response is the preferred format for the elicitation of reactive speech acts like rejections. These findings are not in line with those of Rose (1992), who finds out that the inclusion of the conversational turn in the discourse completion task makes little difference. However, this clash is easily explained when taking into account that the speech acts handled in Rose's study are requests, which could stand alone as they are initiating speech acts.

DCTs allow researchers to elicit data from a large sample of subjects easily, and simultaneously control the explanatory variables that are vital to the study. This technique has been employed widely by many researchers (Cohen & Olshtain 1981; Olshtain 1983; Olshtain & Cohen 1983; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984; Wouk 2006 and Kasanga & Lwanga-Lumu 2007) to compare apology strategies in different languages and for the comparison of strategies used by native speakers and learners of the same language. However, this method is not without problems. More precisely, although this method has been praised for providing a controlled context for the speech acts and

supplying the researcher with a large amount of data quickly (Rose 1992), it has been critiqued for not providing speech acts performed in a full discourse context (Rintell & Mitchell 1989). They also assume that respondents might also produce more formal responses than they would do in actual, natural conversation. Rintell & Mitchell (1989) link this to the fact that most subjects perceive writing as a more formal activity than speaking, and consequently produce responses that are more formal when responding to a questionnaire.

Beebe and Cummings (1996, originally presented in 1985) conducted a study planned to compare discourse completion tests with naturalistic data. The speech acts studied were refusals. The authors compared the responses elicited from DCTs with those performed in telephone conversations. The participants in these interactions were native speakers of American English. The authors (1996), and as cited in Kasper and Dahl (1991: 242-43), conclude that discourse completion questionnaires are a highly effective means of:

- gathering a large amount of data quickly;
- creating an initial classification of semantic formulas and strategies that will occur in natural speech;
- studying the stereotypical, perceived requirements for a socially appropriate response;
- gaining insight into social and psychological factors that are likely to affect speech and performance, and
- ascertaining the canonical shape of refusals, apologies and others in the minds of the speakers of that language.

They find, however, that discourse completion responses do not adequately represent

- the actual wording used in real interaction;
- the range of formulas and strategies used;
- the length of response or the number of turns it takes to fulfil the function;

- the depth of emotion that in turn affects the tone, content, and form of linguistic performance;
- the number of repetitions and elaborations that occur; or
- the actual rate of occurrence of a speech act, e.g. whether or not someone would naturalistically refuse at all in a given situation.

(Beebe & Cummings. 1985: 14)

In another study, Rintell and Mitchell (1989) explore whether using a closed role-play technique to elicit speech act data would reveal different responses from those elicited employing a written discourse completion test and, find that both elicitation techniques provide similar data (p 271). They argue that there are differences in the two methodologies but they are not apparent. In the comparisons they have made in their study, the differences emerge as interactions between method and a subject variable (learner). However, other comparisons, such as the one between the length of oral and written responses of native speakers, show no significant differences.

It has been pointed out by Johnston et al (1998: 157) that discourse completion tests are a widely used method of data collection in cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics. They argue this is simply because they enable researchers to collect huge amounts of data quickly and to collect comparable data from members of different speech communities. Johnston et al (1998: 157-58) claim that in comparison with conversational data, DCTs are easier to code, as they usually require written responses and there is therefore no need for transcription. However, they are sceptical (p 158) as to whether or not DCTs responses are usually valid representations of naturally occurring speech. They claim that DCTs do not elicit the supportive moves and other external factors that usually accompany speech acts in natural authentic interactions.

Another study which is concerned with comparing responses elicited from DCTs with the authentic data derived from natural interactions was conducted by Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1992). What marks this study out from Beebe and Cumming's is its inclusion of non-native speakers as informants and its presentation of unequal power

encounters. The authors compare rejections as performed by native speakers and non-native speaker graduate students. They find that DCTs, compared to natural data elicitation techniques, are less likely to produce a wide range of semantic formulas. However, they claim that DCTs are reliable as an instrument to test hypotheses derived from authentic interactions.

### **3.2.3 Interviewing**

The adoption of face-to-face conversational interviews as a qualitative research method is beneficial when compared to the method of participant observation and questionnaires, as it provides data that exactly describe the informants' conception of their behaviour and of social reality in general. In an attempt to account for the validity and reliability of interviews, Burns (2000: 424-426) first draws a distinction between structured closed-ended interviewing and semi-structured open-ended interviewing. He points out that in structured interviews, the interviewees receive the same questions in the same order and this will be advantageous in that the interviewer can make comparison between specific groups of informants. The data can also be representative of the population and are reliable to make generalisation (May 2001: 122). The fact that the questions are specific and closed-ended implies that the informants will provide specific answers. Nonetheless, this type of interview is challenged on the basis of being inflexible. Specifically, due to the fact that the interviewer has a list of pre-planned questions, this is likely to impede the interviewer from going beyond the already prepared questions to inquire about the informants' beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions. This is also likely to minimise the degree of trust between the interviewer and the interviewee.

Compared to structured interviews, the open-ended interview – or “ethnographic interview” in Puch’s (2005: 172) terms – is viewed as being more flexible and thus more reliable in the provision of valid responses about the informants' perceptions of their experiences and reality. Burns (2000: 425) emphasises the significance of this type of interviewing, saying that it enables the interviewer to spend a great portion of time with the interviewee, and this of course entails high response rates. Furthermore, answers to questions will be provided from the interviewee's point of view and not shaped and

affected by the interviewer's perspective. The absence of specific questions means that informants use natural language rather than trying to find specific lexis and expressions which they think would be regarded as an appropriate answer. In support of this argument, Gomm (2004: 220) points out that some researchers view this approach to interviews to be naturalistic on the ground that these interviews are similar to conversations or chats, and that the relationship that holds the interviewer and the interviewee is almost built on a friendship basis. The only problem with open-ended interviews, says Burns, stems from the fear of respondents providing inaccurate interpretations and conceptions of reality. The fear of not gaining an accurate description of reality is also shared by Hyman et al (2004: 89), though they differ from Burns (2000) in that they contend that it is the interviewer, not the interviewee, who should be held responsible for any inaccuracy of the data collected. They suggest that an interviewer who is fully equipped with good social skills and is careful to phrase questions in an appropriate manner should be able to get respondents to answer questions fully and truthfully.

### **3.2.4 Discussion**

Our review of the three different research methods indicates that the use of the participant observation method would not be the right choice for this study, because of its incapability to provide sufficient data that could meet our current purposes. In addition, observation of authentic speech is not guaranteed to give a clear picture of potential explanatory variables, including social power, social distance and the ranking of imposition, and thus ends up with having an uncontrolled context where the social variables cannot be manipulated.

Although it appears to be a preference in the field of Pragmatics and Sociolinguistics to collect spontaneous data, it is, as explained before, often not feasible to attain this goal. Such limitation resides in the fact that all languages and language users adapt their speech to be perceived as appropriate to any social situation. Moreover, collecting natural or spontaneous cross-cultural data entails having languages that have many more similarities than differences in common regarding the spontaneous responses to the same

phenomenon. Although there is still disagreement about what natural language is, we believe, following Wolfson (1976) and Stubbs (1983), that if speech is seen to be appropriate to a situation and the goal, then it is natural in that context. If adopted, the method of participant observation would not guarantee triggering similar semantic formulas in both cultures under the same combination of the social variables. The random choice of subjects, moreover, would be likely to render it infeasible to have a homogeneous sample of population, and this would raise questions as to how representative the data were.

Due to the above-mentioned imperfections of the ethnographic method, our study has adopted Discourse Completion Tests. DCTs are the most widely used method of data collection in interlanguage and cross-cultural pragmatics, as they allow researchers to collect a large amount of data quickly and to collect comparable data from members of different speech communities. DCTs are useful in the sense that, when compared with conversational data, they are easier to code. Moreover, there is no need for transcription as only written responses are usually required. However, due to the restrictions of DCTs, other data also need to be collected in order to ensure the validity of the study. We concluded that conducting interviews would make up for the DCTs' shortcomings. The significance of interviews has been raised by Neuman (2003: 290) who points to the advantages of face-to-face interviews, showing that skilful interviewers can ask a range of questions, including complex ones which might not be possible via the method of DCTs. Furthermore, Holland & Campbell (2005: 59) point out that the more the interviewer carries out interviews, the more she gets useful data. Burns (2000: 582-83), as explained before, claims that interviews are flexible, as they allow the interviewer to observe the whole situation in which the interviewees are responding. Interviews, moreover, allow the interviewer to ask back-questions when the response received in the questionnaire seems irrelevant or incomplete. Burns also points to the notion that most people prefer to talk verbally rather than fill in a questionnaire, and this results in having a high response rate, which, in turn, leads to having more representative data when compared to that obtained through questionnaires alone. Like Burns (2000) and Patton (2002: 340), Todd et al (2004: 196) claim that qualitative interviews provide the

interviewer with information which cannot be obtained from quantitative data, and that interviews are useful especially in cases where participants are not observed directly (Creswell 2003: 186).

Clearly then, the integration of more than one research method, by using an open-type questionnaire (where the questions do not limit the respondents' answers to the survey but encourage them to answer and react to apology situations in an eleven-sentence paragraph provided for each situation) and semi-structured interviews, is advantageous to the study as it will yield a more comprehensive research design. Combining these research methodologies strengthens the research, serves to broaden our understanding of the social phenomenon under study, and results in more valid and reliable findings. The importance of a multiple-method approach has been stressed by many scholars such as Labov (1972), Wolfson (1976), and Stubbs (1983), who all call for the adoption of varying methodologies in the investigation of language. Labov (1972: 119) contends that it would be better if researchers do not adhere to one research method. By the same token, Brown & Yule (1983: 270) point out that it is not useful to highlight the significance of one research method at the expense of criticising all others. Praising the mixed-method approach, Greene et al (2005: 275) argue that the adoption of various research methods implies a stronger validity and credibility in the research being conducted. The multiple-method approach, they contend, is more likely than others to provide the researcher with better understanding and more new ideas, new perspectives, and meanings. Nonetheless, Mason (2002: 60) believes that researchers should think carefully before getting to integrate two methods, because if they are not carefully planned, the findings may not be as useful as expected.

In this study, conducting interviews minimises the inadequacies of the questionnaire, where the speech act of apology was collected under controlled conditions. Interviewees, who also served as the questionnaire respondents, provided the researcher with justifications for the responses they had given in the questionnaire, which mirror their perceptions of when and how to apologise. Gomm (2004: 219) claims that the combination of research methods leads to better understanding of the social world. He



also believes that the adoption of interviews besides other research methods enables the researcher to discover “why.” That is, interviews are the most appropriate to answer *why* questions, as a way to know what has been in the mind of respondents when they complete, for example, a questionnaire. As for the present study, interviews are also of great use in the sense that they furnish the study with insights, for instance, as to which combination of the social variables determines the frequency of apologies, and thus when to intensify apologies. Moreover, the interviews conducted enrich and deepen our understanding of the role of gender in the way people apologise. The selection of informal open-ended interviews in this study is also motivated by the comfortable atmosphere it creates, which results in enhancing interviewees’ enthusiasm to get involved, increasing their willingness to actively take part in the ongoing conversation, hence smoothly expressing their own opinions, perceptions and judgements of the social phenomenon investigated.

### **3.3 The structure of the study**

#### **3.3.1 Instrument**

The instrument designed for this study consists of the adoption of some apology situations from Cohen & Olshtain (1981), Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984) and Reiter (2000). The new discourse completion test designed for the present study comprises 12 apology situations (see Appendix I). The test consists of incomplete discourse sequences representing socially differentiated situations and covering offences of different types – time, space, possession damage and talk. Each discourse sequence presents a short description of the situation, clearly specifying the setting, the social distance between the participants and their status relative to each other, followed by an incomplete dialogue, thus providing a context which may be expected to give rise to particular apology strategies. The situations are thus aimed at eliciting apologetic responses, and designed to represent, as already mentioned, socially differentiated situations that are expected to be familiar to both British English and Jordanian Arabic respondents. As for the Arabic version of the questionnaire, I added a question at the end of each situation inquiring as

to whether the apologiser would apologise differently if the apologisee were of the opposite gender, hence the Arabic version of the survey is somewhat longer than the English one.

Stemming from Brown & Levinson's model of politeness (1978, 1987), the apology situations vary according to a number of social variables, such as social distance between participants, the social power of the speakers, and the severity of offence. It will thus become evident which combination of these factors has a role in the performance of apologies in both cultures. Because it is vital to have a full understanding of the situation, all respondents received a description of each situation, clearly specifying the social power and social distance between the participants. Since it is a cross-cultural study, an Arabic version of the discourse completion test was distributed to Jordanian Arabic informants as this enabled them to better understand the situations, hence providing a considerable amount of data needed for the study's purposes.

**Table 2. Classification of apology situations according to the social power and social distance between the apologiser and the apologisee, and the type and severity of the offence. (A= the apologiser, O = the offended)**

SITUATION	SOCIAL POWER	SOCIAL DISTANCE	TYPE OF OFFENCE	SEVERITY OF THE OFFENCE
1- University professor not returning student's term paper	A > O	+ SD	TIME	LOW
2- Student not returning professor's book	A < O	+ SD	TIME	LOW
3- Forgetting a meeting with boss	A < O	+ SD	TIME	LOW
4- Forgetting a meeting with friend	A = O	- SD	TIME	LOW
5- Forgetting to take son shopping	A < O	- SD	TIME	LOW
6- Bumping into another car	A = O	+ SD	POSSESSION DAMAGE	HIGH
7- Having an accident with the manager's car	A < O	- SD	POSSESSION DAMAGE	HIGH
8- spilling oil on neighbour's car seat	A = O	- SD	POSSESSION DAMAGE	HIGH
9- changing order at a restaurant	A > O	+ SD	POSSESSION DAMAGE	HIGH
10- Bumping into a passenger and stepping on his toes	A = O	+ SD	SPACE	HIGH
11- Bumping into a passenger and disturbing him	A = O	+ SD	SPACE	LOW
12- Insult	A = O	- SD	TALK	LOW

The interviews are semi-structured and are designed to put the interviewees in a less controlled environment and in a more comfortable atmosphere, because conducting interviews with a pre-organised list of specific questions would not be appropriate to elicit the data needed; it would lead interviewees to provide short answers that would be insufficient to account for the politeness phenomena in the two cultures. The interviews were based on the same twelve apology situations as in the DCT questionnaire. As explained before, the main purpose of the interviews is to give an opportunity for the interviewees to go over and justify the responses they have put in the questionnaire. Interviews offered a more complete picture of the apologisers' underlying social interpretations of the speech act and the variables regulating appropriate behaviour. This indeed was also of use in getting an idea about the motives behind the respondents' choice to apologise or refrain from apologising. Going over the questionnaire data situation by situation with the interviewees is likely to implicitly and/or explicitly reflect, as mentioned above, the respondents' consideration of the seriousness of the offence, the relative status of participants and the level of familiarity between the speaker and the hearer involved in each situation.

### **3.3.2 The pilot test**

Of primary importance was to assess the appropriateness of the DCT as a data elicitation technique. Although the validity of Cohen & Olshtain (1981) and Reiter's (2000) apology situations had already undergone testing, the English and Arabic versions of the discourse completion test were pilot-tested with a group of five Jordanian Arabic speakers and five British English speakers as a way to check the validity and reliability of the slightly modified apology situations, that is, the effectiveness of the instrument in eliciting the speech act in question. It was also aimed at identifying any unforeseen difficulties, such as the wording and the format of the situations yielding non-utilizable data. The pilot test was furthermore meant to check that the DCT instructions were understandable by all informants and that there was no ambiguity as to what the informants should do. No modifications were made, as the response rate was seen to be satisfactory; the responses provided revealed no evidence of respondents' confusion or

misinterpretation of the questionnaire situations or unfamiliarity with the task of completing them.

One of our major concerns was to have the DCT pilot-tested by undergraduate university students parallel to the actual population of this study. Though this goal was attainable for the English version of the DCT which was piloted with five English students at the University of Leeds, this was not feasible for the Arabic version of the DCT, as it was difficult to find undergraduate Jordanian students in England. However, the Arabic version of the questionnaire was pilot-tested with five postgraduate Jordanian students doing their PhDs in medicine, law, IT, and engineering at the University of Leeds and Leeds Metropolitan University.

### **3.4 Data collection: Subjects and Procedure**

The discourse completion test was constructed in English and Arabic and completed by 80 native speakers of British English and 80 native speakers of Jordanian Arabic, bearing in mind that having an equal number of male and female participants in Jordanian Arabic was vital to compare both genders' behaviour. The informants were university students. As to the Jordanian subjects, they were enrolled in Arabic language classes in three different universities: Mu'tah University, Al-Hussein Bin Talal University and Yarmouk University<sup>26</sup>. After I introduced myself to the heads of Arabic language departments and class lecturers in these universities and explained the purpose of my research, they expressed a strong desire to help, and suggested that it would be convenient to visit some of their classes over the summer term 2005 with the aim of recruiting unpaid volunteers. They also allocated special rooms where the data collection activity of interviews took place. Due to the length of the questionnaire and the limited time of these classes – as all Jordanian universities courses offered over the summer term are one-hour classes – I requested the students to kindly take the questionnaires home with them and to return the completed questionnaires the following day, which I collected personally. Although I

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<sup>26</sup> It should be noted that because the Jordanian capital, Amman, is a cosmopolitan city, it is excluded from the current discussion. It is also worth mentioning that the Jordanian data, instead, were collected from cities – situated in the southern and northern part of Jordan – that could be representative of the social norms operative in Jordanian culture.

gave out 120 questionnaires, 80 informants (37 males and 43 females) returned them completed, with a response rate of 66.6 %. The interviews were of particular importance as participants justified the responses they had written in the questionnaire in addition to providing the interviewer with other information useful to the study. In a completely informal style and in a stress-free environment, they were asked questions – ranging from demographic questions, such as age and education, to opinion questions designed to investigate their perception of various issues relevant to the apology situations in the questionnaire, and knowledge questions aimed at eliciting some specific information concerning their perceptions of the socio-cultural rules and their effect on the way they apologise. The data collection activity took place at the Departments of Arabic Language at Mu'tah University, Al-Hussein Bin Talal University and Yarmouk University. Most of the students were between 19 and 23 years of age. They were studying History, Geography, Sports, Mathematics, English Language and Islamic Studies but attended an Arabic Language session as a compulsory university module.

As to the British respondents, the Department of Linguistics and Phonetics at the University of Leeds, my own department, kindly allowed me to use the undergraduate linguistics students as questionnaire and interview respondents, and permitted me to use one of the department rooms for the purpose of carrying out interviews. I made a short announcement in one of the linguistics classes, explaining my need to have the apology questionnaire completed by British English native speakers, and to have British volunteers serving as interview informants. It was agreed that I would send them the survey via email. The rationale behind this was two-fold: if the questionnaire had been completed in the linguistics classes, this would have been at the expense of teaching time in lectures, and it gave the students the chance to have more time to completely answer the questionnaire and not to do it in a few minutes of class time. Driven by the normal expectation of not having all the email-distributed questionnaires returned completed, I came to a decision to contact friends at Sheffield, Huddersfield, and Manchester universities who, in turn, undertook to help and recruit a number of their friends among British undergraduate students. Out of 110 distributed English questionnaires, 80 were returned completed comprising a response rate of 72.7 %.

The instrument was administered to all the subjects, describing briefly the purpose of the study yet without the obvious revelation that I was doing research on politeness, as this would have the potential of invalidating the findings and results. Having read the instructions (see appendix I) out loud, the investigator asked the students to silently read the twelve apology situations, which were typed onto five separate pieces of paper.

Twenty Jordanian students (12 females and 8 males) who were not timetabled participated in the second stage of data collection as interviewees, whereas in British English only 6 of the questionnaire respondents (2 females and 4 males) were willing to act as interviewees. Two of these were students from the Department of Linguistics and Phonetics and the others were from outside the university, with the interviews for the latter taking place in my home.

Once in the interview, the interviewer started by asking each respondent some background questions, including age and education, as the answers to these questions helped the interviewer identify each respondent in comparison with the others. The interviewer then moved to the second part of the interview which was aimed at getting the respondents' justification for the answers they had just given in the questionnaire. This included questions which inquired about their evaluation of the severity of the offence in each situation and how this affected the way they apologised or opted out, the extent to which the responses provided were influenced by the social dominance and social distance of the offender and the offended, and about the way they designed their apologetic behaviour when dealing with the opposite gender. Knowledge questions included inquiring about respondents' awareness of the religious and socio-cultural rules that monitor this speech act in their society. All interviews were digitally recorded using a built-in microphone recording device, with the prior consent of respondents.

It has been mentioned (see section 3.2.4) that the choice to use interviews is justified by our need to have a better understanding about the respondents' perceptions as to whether they should or should not apologise and about the underlying social rules that monitor their production of apologies in each of the twelve apology situations. This being so, a

huge amount of data has been collected in both languages, as respondents provided lengthy accounts justifying their choice of apology strategies in each of the DCT apology situations. The digitally recorded interviews were transcribed in full. In the case of the Jordanian interviews, as an Arabic speaking person, I transcribed them myself and translated some portions of them into English. Transcription is not an easy process; a twenty-five minute interview is likely to take between four and six hours to transcribe. In the case of the six British interviews, I had all of them transcribed by a professional transcriber. Representative expressions of opinion in the interview data, including all those to which special reference is made, are included at appendix II and III.

### **3.5 Data analysis: procedure**

The data analysis in the present study is based on an adoption of the coding scheme used by Cohen & Olshtain (1981: 119) and Olshtain & Cohen (1983: 22-23). It is also based on the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Patterns (CCSARP) model (Blum-Kulka et al 1989), which was used widely to study the realisation of the speech act of apology in a number of languages through using a discourse completion test. Within this model, there are a limited number of semantic formulas. The analysis of the data will also be based upon Brown and Levinson's distinction between positive and negative politeness as discussed in chapter 2.

The linguistic realisation of the speech act of apologising can take one, or any combination, of the strategies below:

- 1- Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID)
- 2- Explanation or account
- 3- Taking on responsibility
- 4- Concern for the hearer
- 5- Offer of repair/restitution
- 6- Promise of forbearance

(Cohen & Olshtain 1981: 119, Olshtain & Cohen 1983: 22-23, and Blum Kulka et al 1989)

As previously mentioned, these coding categories are based on the scheme devised by the CCSARP group. All categories are illustrated below by examples from English and Arabic. Examples of apology semantic formulas in Arabic were selected from the Jordanian data. While the main categories can be said to be applicable in all languages, the sub-categories may differ in availability cross-culturally.

The first semantic formula, *IFID* (illocutionary force indicating device), consists of direct and explicit apology. It always results from the speaker's use of a word or expression that contains a performative verb, such as *apologise, forgive, excuse, or be sorry*. This formula consists of a number of sub-formulas:

a- An expression of regret

- I'm sorry

- أنا اسف/متأسف  
*Ana asif/ muta?ssif*  
 I sorry  
 'I'm sorry'

b- An offer of apology

- I apologise

- انا اعتذر  
*Ana aʕtaðer*  
 I 1SG.apologise.PRES  
 'I apologise'

c- A request for forgiveness

- Excuse me, Please forgive me or Pardon me

- عفواً/أرجو أن تسامحني  
*ʕfwan/ Arju an tusami ħni*  
 Excuse me/ please forgive.PRES.SU.OBJ  
 'Excuse me/ Please forgive me'



The second semantic formula, *account*, is resorted to by the offender to alleviate the severity of the offence.

- The bus was delayed

- اسف لقد ذهبت الى المستشفى

*Asiflaqad ḍahbt ila al mustaffa*  
 Sorry 1SG.GO.PAST.SUB to DEF ART-hospital  
 'I'm sorry I went to the hospital'

The third semantic formula, *taking on responsibility*, is used when the apologiser recognises her responsibility for the offence. This formula is further divided into different sub-formulas:

a- Accepting the blame:

- It is my fault/mistake

- الحق عليّ

*El hag ḥai*  
 DEF ART-fault on me  
 'It is my fault'

b- Expressing self-deficiency:

- I was confused/ I wasn't thinking

- والله الواحد مش امفتح

*Wallah el wahid muf emfattiḥ*  
 By God DEF ART-ONE.MASC not watch.PRES.PROG  
 'By God, I was not watching you'

c- Expressing lack of intent:

- It was an accident

- والله مش قاصدة

*Wallah muf gaasʿideh*  
 By God not 1SG.intend.PAST.FEM  
 'By God, I didn't mean to...'

d- Recognising the other person as deserving apology:

- You are right!

- كلامك صحيح

*Kalaamak sʕahiih*

Speech.GEN right.MASC

Your speech is right

'You are right'

e- Expressing embarrassment:

- I feel awful about it

- أنا مستاء من نفسي

*Ana mustʕ*

*men nafsii*

I displease.PASSIVE.PRES from myself

'I'm embarrassed'

f- Refusal to acknowledge guilt:

- It wasn't my fault

- مش ذنبي

*Muf ʕanbii*

Not fault.GEN

'It wasn't my fault'

The fourth semantic formula, *concern for the hearer*, is also resorted to by the offender to lessen the degree of the severity of the offence and get her guilt excused.

- Are you all right?

- هل حدث لك مكروة؟

*Hal hadaθa laka sayʕ*

AUX happen.PAST for you thing?

'Are you okay?'

The fifth semantic formula, *offer of repair*, is employed when the apologiser will carry out an action or provide payment for some damage resulting from her infraction.

-I will pay for the broken glass

- سوف أدفع لك ما تريد -

*Sawfa adfʕ laka ma turiid*  
Will 1SG.pay for you what 2SG.WANT.PRES  
'I will pay you what you need'

The last semantic formula, *promise of forbearance*, implies that the offender will take responsibility and promises it will not happen again.

- I promise it won't happen again

- لن تتكرر مرة أخرى -

*Lan tatakarrar mrrah auxra*  
Not happen.SUB.FEM time another.FEM  
'It won't happen again'

The CCSARP coding scheme shown above provides the main units of analysis in this study, as a way to organise the huge number of apology strategies into manageable categories. Such organisation is of particular importance in the sense that it enables us to compare the distribution of strategies used in different situations cross-culturally. The analysis of apologies used here is thus based on identifying utterances that contain an IFID, an account, the offender's responsibility for the infraction, concern for the hearer, offer of repair or speaker's promise of forbearance; and additionally a category of "new strategy" (any new strategy appearing in the data, outside the coding scheme). Such identification is followed by assigning each utterance to the appropriate category and classifying it according to a list of sub-classifications. As regards the intensification of apology, following the CCSARP coding manual and Vollmer & Olshtain (1989), we investigated the use of internal intensifiers embedded within the IFID, such as *I'm very/terribly/ so/ really/ awfully sorry*, and the use of external modification, which could be

realised by the addition of a supportive move to the main strategy, such as *Ya Allah ana asif*/Oh God, I'm sorry.

So far, we have specified the way in which the data collected from the questionnaire were coded, categorised and prepared for analysis. However, there is still a need to have an appropriate way to manage the data collected from interviews. Reviewing the literature on research methodologies provides insights as to how to successfully deal with qualitative data. We find that, for example, Strauss and Corbin (2004: 303) highly recommend open coding as a unique process to organise the 'raw' data into meaningful categories. This process is based on dividing the data into different parts that could be named, examined and compared. This is usually followed by grouping concepts to be subsumed under the relevant categories as a way to reduce the number of units with which we have to work.

In a previous study, Strauss (1987) describes three ways of coding qualitative data: open coding, axial coding and selective coding. The way Strauss defines these methods emphasises that they are three stages in a single process of coding and categorising data. As for the open coding which forms the first phase of breaking down data into distinct parts, the researcher's task is to track down concepts, identify categories and get them labelled as an attempt to reduce the huge amount of data into controllable categories. Unlike some researchers who believe that a researcher should have a table of categories before setting out to code data (Miles & Huberman, 1994:58), we believe it is better to create coding concepts after reviewing data as this increases the potential of locating more concepts that might appear from examination of the data.

Once data is coded and labelled, the researcher, according to Strauss (1987), starts looking for linkages between the categories, and this constitutes the function of the researcher during the axial coding stage. Strauss states that during this stage the researcher focuses on the initial coding he has created during the open-coding phase and starts to think about causes and conditions. Moreover, the researcher can combine interrelated concepts into one theme or split some concepts into sub-categories.

Selective coding comes to stand on the higher rung of the data-coding ladder. During this stage the researcher scans the data selectively to find cases that allow comparisons between two or more categories. Strauss (1987) points out that selective coding helps researchers come to certain conclusions. This might be fulfilled through reviewing the initial themes to be elaborated into one major theme. This kind of coding will allow us to detect any differences in politeness orientation (negative vs. positive) and helps us trace, if found, any differences in how men and women apologise in Jordanian Arabic.

As already demonstrated, the main purpose of the interviews is to obtain more insights into respondents' feelings, attitudes and conceptions of when, why, and how to apologise. Interviews were used to give the respondents a chance to justify the answers they had given in the questionnaires, so the data collected from the interviews were to some extent automatically labelled and categorised, in the sense that they are arranged in the order of apology situations in the questionnaire. The interview data need not strictly pass through the three-stage process mentioned above, as they are viewed as a means of explaining the answers the respondents had already given in the questionnaire. As regards the qualitative data collected from the open-ended questionnaire, these were categorised, labelled, quantified, and analysed through the use of the SPSS programme. In addition to calculating the frequency occurrence of the apology semantic formulas by situation in the two languages – which explains the respondents' preference as to which apology strategies to use according to situation – the data analysis includes comparison of the distribution of IFIDs (explicit expression of apology) in English and Arabic according to the three main sub-formulas: *expression of regret*, *request for forgiveness*, and *offer of apology*. The data analysis also compares percentages of responsibility sub-strategies by situation in the two languages, and the use of internal and external intensifiers in connection with an IFID in English and Arabic. In order to have a better understanding of the apologetic behaviour of men and women in the Jordanian culture, there will also be a comparison of the frequency distribution of apology strategies and the intensity of apology as used by men and women across the twelve apology situations.

### **3.6 Concluding remarks**

In this chapter, we discussed the advantages and shortcomings of three data elicitation techniques: participant observation method (naturally occurring data), discourse completion tests (DCTs), and interviewing. We found that the adoption of the first research method (authentic speech) is less likely to serve the purposes of this study, for it is not feasible to set up naturally occurring apology situations. Also, this method is not guaranteed to provide data sufficient to allow cross-cultural comparability, and is less reliable to provide a clear idea of social parameters, the main role of which is to help us understand how apologies and politeness are perceived in the two cultures. Driven by the need to have a data collection method that would make it easy to explain any cross-cultural variability in the perception of apologies in particular and politeness in general, we concluded that the integration of questionnaires and interviews as research methods would be the most appropriate for this study. Whereas the former (questionnaires) would allow the collection of large and comparable data from members of the two cultures under study, the latter (interviews) are likely to provide more in-depth data regarding people's perceptions of politeness. In the remainder of the chapter, we have described the instrument and the subjects of the study, and the data collection and data analysis procedures.

# **Chapter 4: Results and Findings**

## **4.1 Introduction**

The main aim of this chapter is to discuss the realisation patterns of apology resulting from the twelve apology situations of the questionnaire across the two cultures. The first part of the data analysis consists of calculating the frequencies and percentages with which both British English respondents and their Jordanian Arabic counterparts employ one or more of the semantic formulas that comprise the apology strategies assemblage presented in chapter 3 in the form of a coding scheme. In section 4.2, we shall discuss the most frequently employed apology strategies by situation, as a first step towards exploring the form and function of these strategies in British English and Jordanian Arabic. Analysis of the data in terms of the semantic formulas or strategies adopted will be presented in section 4.3. Section 4.4 will discuss the extent to which the choice and frequency of apology strategies are influenced by social parameters. Finally, the concluding remarks of this chapter will be presented in section 4.5.

## **4.2 Apology data analysis by situation**

The analysis of apology data collected from 80 British English speaking students and 80 Jordanian Arabic speaking students will be presented in tables to indicate the percentage of apology strategies in each situation. The results presented in each table across the twelve situations refer to the percentage of choices used out of the total number of respondents. Results were compared between British and Jordanian speakers in each situation, using Chi-square to determine statistical significance (See Appendix IV).

#### 4.2.1 Situation 1: University professor not returning a student's term paper.

Examining the data presented in table 3 (see page 120), we found that only four semantic formulas were relatively frequently employed to perform apology in this situation across the two languages. *IFIDs*, *responsibility*, *account*, and *offer of repair* appear to be the four overriding strategies to be used by subjects of both languages.

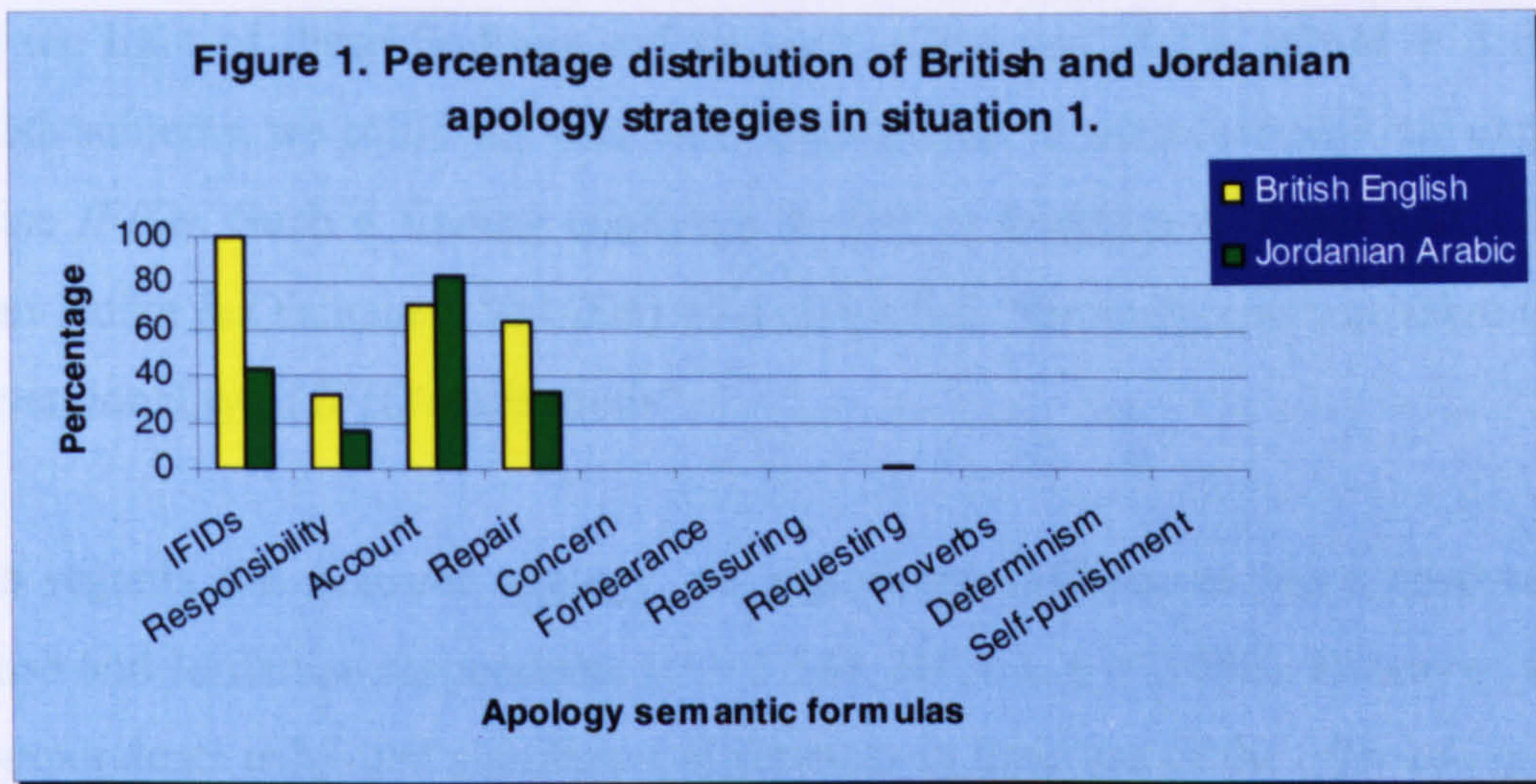


Figure 1. Percentage distribution of British and Jordanian apology strategies in situation 1

In the data analysis for this situation, we found, as indicated in the figure above and in table 3, that British and Jordanian respondents exhibited significant differences in the use of some apology strategies. Jordanian subjects, for example, did not turn to *IFIDs* as frequently as the British subjects did ( $x^2 = 64.56$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). Looking within the sub-divisions of *IFIDs* strategy, we also found that subjects of both languages were likely to resort to *the expression of regret* subcategory, with the British subjects maintaining a high frequency (BE 71% vs. JA 31%). However, Jordanian subjects used *an offer of apology*<sup>27</sup> and *request for forgiveness* sub-categories slightly more than the British subjects (JA 8% vs. BE 4%), (JA 4% vs. BE 0%).

<sup>27</sup> For more information on percentages of *IFIDs* and responsibility sub-formulas across the whole situations, see tables 3 and 4.



From the data analysis presented, it could be argued that the use of the sub-strategy *I am afraid + sentence* seems to be language-specific. Such argument is evidenced by the fact that this sub-category forms 25% of the British total usage of *IFIDs* at a time when none of the Jordanian subjects resorted to it at all. Stemming from Owen's (1983) classification of apology strategies, and due to the fact that British people use this sub-formula and *I'm sorry* interchangeably and that they alternate freely, we find it would be appropriate to subsume this sub-formula under the *IFIDs* category.

In the light of these findings and because of the use of *I'm afraid + S* only by the British subjects, we could say that each language has its own conventional expressions to realise *IFIDs*. Such a finding conforms to that of Olshtain & Blum-Kulka (1983) and Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984:206) who claim that "for each language there is a scale of conventionality of *IFID* realisations".

As regards the *account* strategy, no significant differences were observed between British and Jordanian respondents ( $x^2 = 3.584$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.058$ ). However, the two sets of respondents exhibited significant differences in their use of the *offer of repair* strategy ( $x^2 = 14.40$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). Although the *offer of repair* is assumed to be resorted to only when a physical damage is involved (Blum-Kulka et al 1989), we found, based on the findings detailed in table 3 and figure 1, that both groups used this strategy in this situation, but employed different realisations of it to acknowledge their wrongdoing (BE 64% vs. JA 34%). We might interpret the subjects' recourse to this strategy, particularly in this formal situation and where no actual damage is involved as a deliberate attempt to avoid the use of the *expression of regret*, which is relatively more likely to cause face loss on the part of the apologiser. However, when interviewed, the majority of British subjects stressed the importance of apology in this situation and that the apologiser should employ the *offer of repair* strategy, which could take the form of a promise to return the student's term paper shortly or in an agreed time, to deliberately show respect for the offended party.

For other British subjects, the professor's apology is crucial in the sense it would assuage the annoyance of the students. Additionally, employing a wide range of apology

strategies in this situation, including the *offer of repair*, demonstrates the professor's care for the students' feeling and academic progress, a need that should constitute the professor's main concerns, they suggested. Some British respondents attached an importance to the strategy of *account* as it allows the students to know the reason behind the professor not returning the term paper, and it simultaneously – as explained above – absolves the professor of being less caring about the students. They also contend, stemming from the assumption that students are nowadays looked on as clients, that it would be more polite for professors to make good excuses rather than obviously revealing that they have simply forgotten. Providing an *account* is viewed as more polite than linking the failure to bring the term paper on time to forgetfulness.

The importance of apology in this context is also stressed by Jordanian subjects who claimed that apology is needed regardless of the position of the apologiser, and that in spite of the high academic rank and unique social position they occupy, university professors should behave in line with the socio-cultural rules which invite people to prioritise humbleness over pride; and that professors should, therefore, initiate and perpetuate a friendly relationship with students and work past their pride to deliver a worthwhile apology. However, some said that *account*, and *offer of repair* are more appropriate in this context than the use of explicit *expressions of regret IFIDs*. The rationale behind this strategy preference is based on their conceptualisation that as part of acknowledging the social differences between interaction participants, university professors should not use explicit apologies like *IFIDs*, especially *I'm sorry*, as they have the potential of jeopardising the hard-won position university professors usually occupy.

#### **4.2.2. Situation 2: A student forgetting to return the professor's book**

Based on the data presented in table 3, we found that four semantic formulas were extensively used in this situation by subjects of both groups to realise apology; *IFIDs*, *account*, *taking on responsibility* and *offer of repair* were the predominant strategies used. The occurrence of these strategies was, compared to situation 1, very frequent across the two languages.

Both groups exhibited similarities in the way they realised the *IFIDs*. Such argument is evidenced by the subjects' extensive reliance on the *expression of regret* to perform the most direct realisation of apology (BE 88% vs. JA 86%). Other subcategories of *IFIDs* were of low incidence. This infrequent use of these sub-formulas can be imputed to the subjects' belief that the *expression of regret* is relatively influential in this context and more likely than any other strategies to minimise the offended party's annoyance. Central to this argument for most Jordanian interviewees was their perception that *request for forgiveness*, for example, is out of the question due to the humiliation it incurs on the part of the apologiser. They suggested, moreover, that it might consolidate the apologisee's inclination to refrain from forgiving, hence the apologiser's failure to rectify the wrong doing.

The next most frequently used strategy after *IFIDs* was the strategy of *taking on responsibility*. It was found that there was a significant similarity between British and Jordanian respondents in their use of this strategy ( $x^2 = 14.62, DF = 1, p = 0.001$ ). Despite its different manifestations, *taking on responsibility* was performed very often via the *self-deficiency* sub-formula. It might be said that expressing *self-deficiency* was

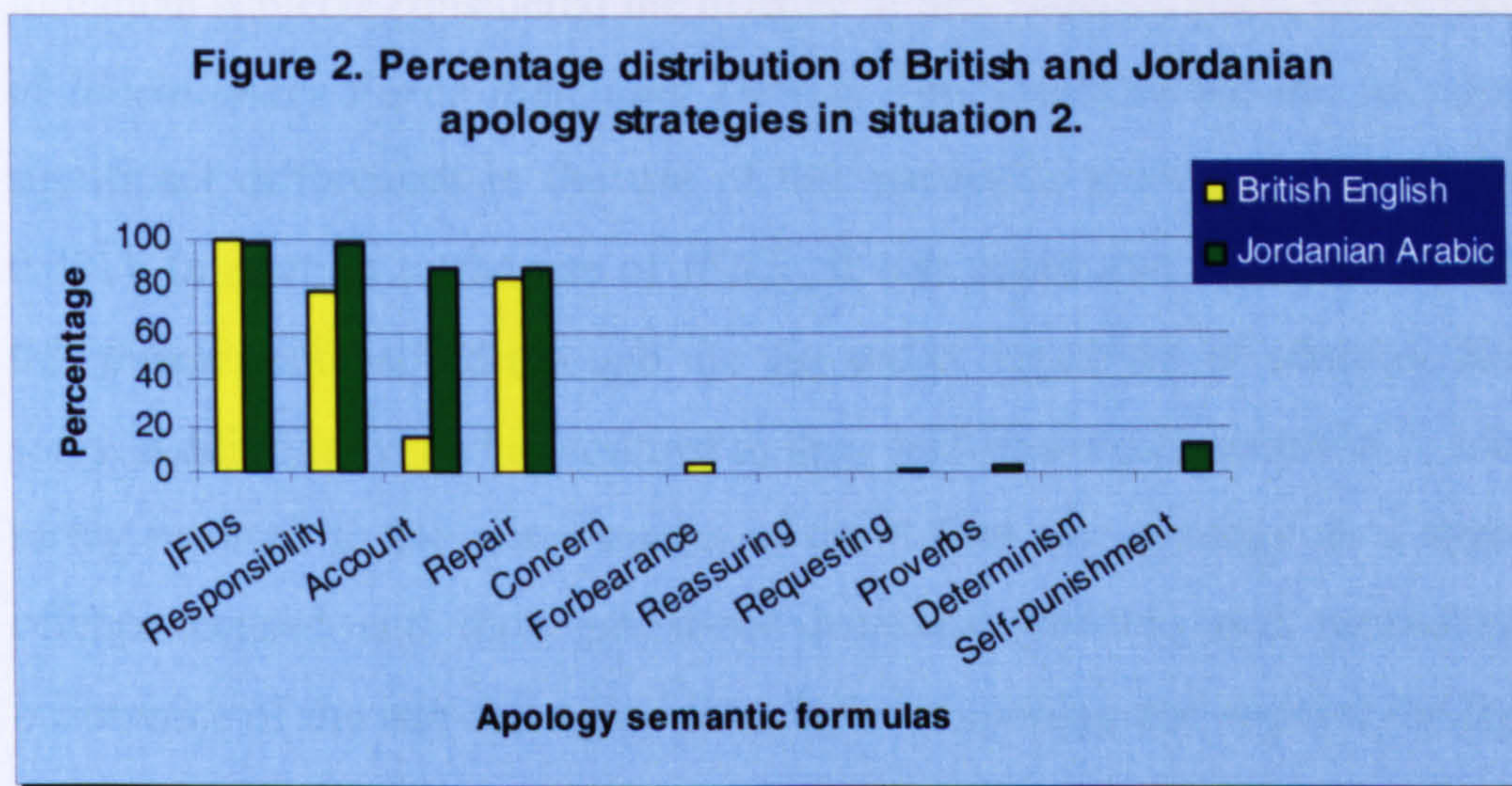


Figure 2. .Percentage distribution of British and Jordanian apology strategies in situation 2

projected by both groups to be the most effective in decreasing the severity of the offence. In regard to the *account* strategy, British and Jordanian subjects exhibited

significant differences ( $x^2 = 84.15$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). In spite of these differences, the two groups provided responses that are semantically equivalent. British subjects claimed that to take on responsibility for the offence is to instil respect for the apologiser in the heart and eyes of the offended and is likely to increase the apologiser's self-confidence. Jordanian subjects, on the other hand, asserted that in addition to the fact that when you apologise you become psychologically less worried<sup>28</sup>, one must employ as many strategies as one can in this situation, in order to avoid the academic penalty inflicted by the professor. This interpretation could also explain the two groups' tendency to frequently offer repair: to bring the book back in the shortest possible time (BE 83% vs. JA 88%). As regards newly employed strategies (those that are outside the coding scheme adopted in this study), Jordanian subjects used *proverbs* and *self-punishment* to widen the range of the possible strategies in the hope of recreating harmony with the professor. A full discussion of these new strategies will be raised in section 4.3.7.2.

### 4.2.3 Situation 3: Forgetting a meeting with the boss

Despite the fact that this situation was perceived by British English respondents as being severely offensive and therefore warranting highly apologetic expressions, Jordanian subjects considered the offence in this situation mild, hence the low frequency of *Illocutionary Force Indicating Device*. This therefore led the two groups to display significant differences in the use of this particular strategy ( $x^2 = 43.53$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). In relation to the use of *IFIDs*, it was noted that Jordanian subjects rarely used this formula intensified through the use and/or repetition of adverbs, like *I'm very very sorry*. Additionally, and in contrast to their performance in situation 2, Jordanian subjects rarely resorted to the combination of more than one strategy as a way to remedy the offence caused and thus get social harmony restored and re-established. The low occurrence of the sub-strategies of *an offer of apology* and *request for forgiveness* might be attributed to the fact that the *expression of regret*, *I'm sorry*, is the most expressive

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<sup>28</sup> This seems to be in agreement with what Blackman & Stubbs (2001) claim, that apologies might be taken to be a mirror reflecting the real psychological status of the apologiser.

Table 3. Percentage of apology strategies in British English and Jordanian Arabic across the first six situations

Strategy	Situation 1		Situation 2		Situation 3		Situation 4		Situation 5		Situation 6	
	BE	JA	BE	JA	BE	JA	BE	JA	BE	JA	BE	JA
A- IFID												
Expression of regret	71	31	88	86	87	44	74	37	91	83	97	47
An offer of apology	4	8	1	10	0	3	6	3	0	1	2	4
Request for forgiveness	0	4	3	2	4	3	0	1	2	5	1	6
I'm afraid	25	0	8	0	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBTOTAL ('A's)</b>	100	43	100	98	96	50	81	41	93	89	100	57
IFID intensified	25	9	80	30	95	20	70	4	38	7	100	55
B- Taking on responsibility												
Accepting the blame	7	1	2	5	4	6	0	0	2	5	30	36
Expressing self-deficiency	5	3	74	81	75	31	69	15	10	13	49	41
Expressing the lack of intent	0	0	1	4	3	2	3	8	0	4	15	20
Justifying the hearer	20	9	0	0	0	0	1	0	6	0	4	0
Expressing embarrassment	0	3	1	8	0	5	0	4	0	5	1	0
Refusal to acknowledge the guilt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBTOTAL ('B's)</b>	32	16	78	98	82	44	73	27	18	27	100	97
C- Explanation	71	84	15	88	45	38	55	63	46	39	50	11
D- Offer of repair	64	34	83	88	54	9	76	32	95	86	80	95
E- Concern for hearer	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	5
F- Promise of forbearance	0	0	4	0	38	15	15	5	3	2	0	0
G- Reassuring the offended party	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	3	54	49
H- Requesting the offended not to get angry	1	0	0	1	0	3	0	2	0	15	20	44
I- Proverbs	0	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	18
J- Attributing the offence to external causes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	69
K- Self-punishment	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31
L- Minimising the severity of the offence	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	5	0	4

BE = British English, JA = Jordanian Arabic

Table 4. Percentage of apology strategies in British English and Jordanian Arabic across the last six situations

Strategy	Situation 7		Situation 8		Situation 9		Situation 10		Situation 11		Situation 12	
	BE	JA	BE	JA	BE	JA	BE	JA	BE	JA	BE	JA
A- IFID												
Expression of regret	83	29	93	57	88	28	91	62	77	73	93	43
An offer of apology	0	5	2	3	2	3	5	2	3	2	2	5
Request for forgiveness	4	6	0	2	0	0	4	34	1	15	2	3
I'm afraid	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBTOTAL ('A's)</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>51</b>
IFID intensified	85	15	50	8	60	2	96	25	66	10	56	8
B- Taking on responsibility												
Accepting the blame	19	13	5	7	5	2	3	8	2	0	0	0
Expressing self-deficiency	22	15	28	19	3	3	28	35	19	22	5	4
Expressing the lack of intent	9	8	4	20	7	2	10	3	7	4	90	55
Justifying the hearer	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	4	0	0	0
Expressing embarrassment	0	5	2	12	0	2	1	3	0	0	0	0
Refusal to acknowledge the guilt	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	4
<b>SUBTOTAL ('B's)</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>63</b>
C- Explanation	79	85	30	12	88	85	10	6	30	20	38	83
D- Offer of repair	78	87	85	50	60	45	100	100	22	16	0	0
E- Concern for hearer	0	0	0	0	0	0	43	8	23	1	0	0
F- Promise of forbearance	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	5	5	0	0	0
G- Reassuring the offended party	3	4	48	6	0	0	1	4	0	3	16	0
H- Requesting the offended not to get angry	15	20	9	11	2	0	0	0	0	0	4	3
I- Proverbs	0	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25
J- Attributing the offence to external causes	0	39	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
K- Self-punishment	0	14	0	0	0	0	0	25	0	0	0	0
L- Minimising the severity of the offence	0	57	0	5	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3

BE = British English, JA = Jordanian Arabic

device to set things right and have the offence rectified. Besides, Jordanian subjects, in line with the socio-cultural perception portrayed by many, said that such sub-categories should never be attempted because of the pride loss they bring upon the apologiser. This sub-strategy avoidance could also demonstrate the lower degree of severity of offence Jordanian subjects assigned to this situation. The rarely employed sub-strategies could, moreover, be taken to be traceable to the preference not to formalise the situation – a point that will be explained in detail in chapter 6, which will be devoted to examining politeness orientation in the two cultures.

The other significant differences between British and Jordanian respondents were found in their use of *taking on responsibility* ( $x^2 = 25.80, DF = 1, p = 0.001$ ), *offer of repair* ( $x^2 = 37.70, DF = 1, p = 0.001$ ), and *promise of forbearance* ( $x^2 = 10.46, DF = 1, p = 0.001$ ). The fact that these main strategies were more frequently used in combination by British subjects than by Jordanians in this situation comes to stress the implicitly presupposed notion that British subjects attached a higher degree of offence to this situation, hence the emergence of areas of difference in the cultural perception of the two groups towards this situation. In the interviews, we received opinions that ranged widely from extreme enthusiasm and commitment to apology on the part of British subjects, to the disinclination to offer apologies on the part of the Jordanians'. British subjects placed great emphasis on the need to apologise, whereas their Jordanian counterparts minimised the importance of apology in this situation – a tendency that is clearly mirrored in the relatively few remedial moves they employ.

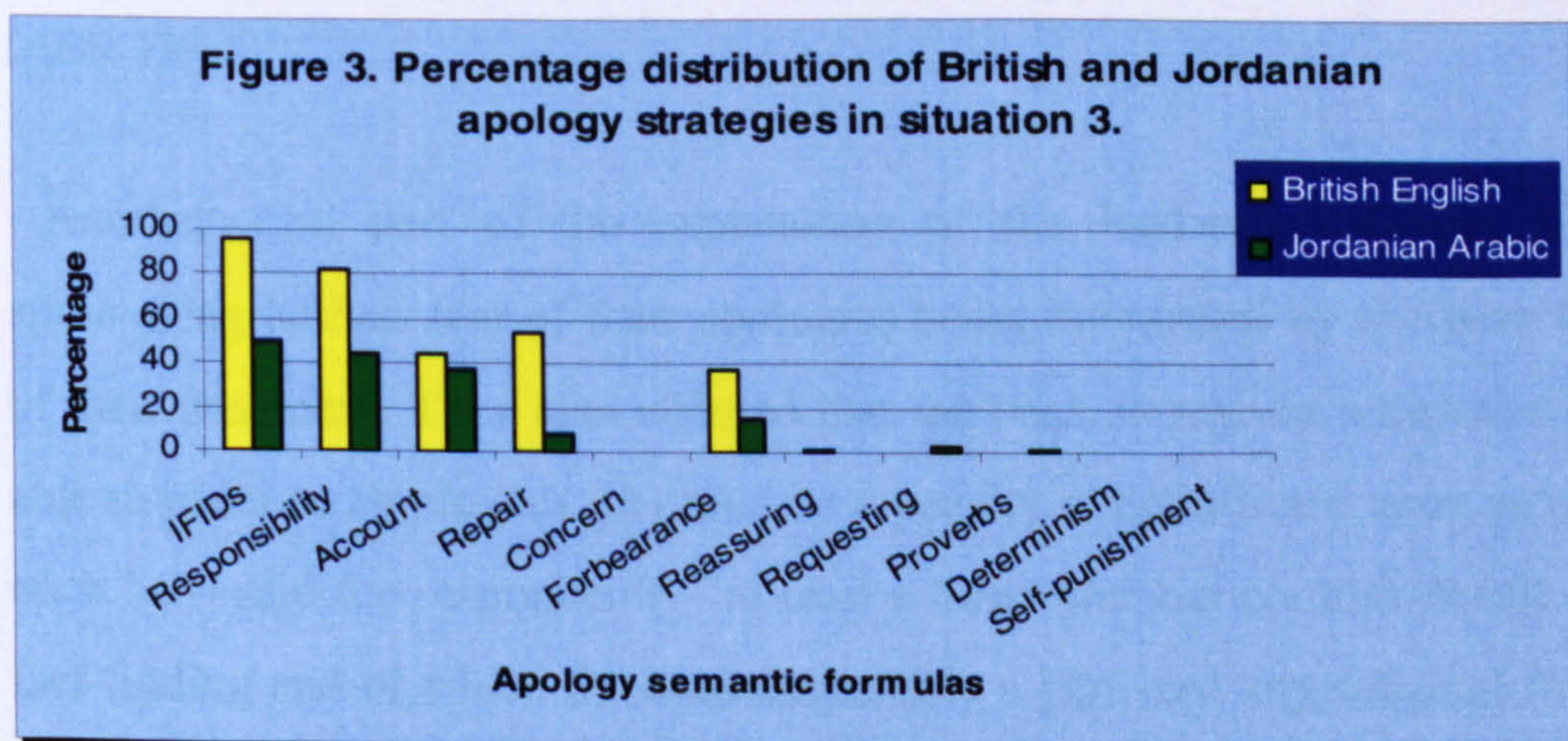


Figure 3. Percentage distribution of British and Jordanian apology strategies in situation 3

To forget a meeting or be late by, for example, 10 minutes, constitutes for the British subjects an offence that is likely to trigger a well-organised apology. Conversely, Jordanian respondents suggested that being late by 10 minutes, or forgetting a meeting with a boss, while perceived as offence, is still far from being a serious breach of social norms. Such differences in the perception of the importance of time entirely conform to the distinction Hall (1976:17) draws between two opposing types of culture in terms of their perception of promptness and adherence to schedules – a distinction between monochronic time (M-time) system and polychronic time (P-time) system. In the former, to which Anglo-Saxon countries belong, schedules and promptness are emphasised over other priorities, whereas in the latter – which includes Latin America and the Middle East – involvement of people and completion of transactions tend to be prioritised over promptness and punctuality. Missing or overrunning a deadline or an appointment in Jordanian culture is not perceived as being offensive in the way the British subjects conceptualise it. Coming to a meeting 30 minutes earlier or later than scheduled is still seen to be within the realm of non-highly severe offences. This difference in promptness orientation is thoroughly explored by GudyKunst and Ting-Toomy (1988) who claim:

Beyond M-time and P-time, Hall (1959) also differentiates five time intervals for arriving late for appointments: (1) mumble something time, (2) slight apology time, (3) mildly insulting time, (4) rude time, and (5) downright insulting time. For people who follow M-time schedules, if they are five minutes late for an appointment, they mumble something. If they are 10 to 15 minutes late, they would probably make a slight apology. For people who follow P-time schedules, it is not unusual for a person to be 45 or 60 minutes late and not even “mumble something,” or to express a slight apology. (1988: 129)

Another vital part of the explanation of the Jordanian subjects abstaining from apologising is their fear of their apologies being interpreted by the boss as an indication of their weakness. They also claimed that the boss, though in a superior position, is not able to penalise employees. In order for a penalty to be inflicted upon an employee, there must be – said the respondents – at least a three-member committee whose main role is fact-finding and of which the boss forms only a part, and any decision for or against the employee should be taken unanimously. This, in fact, brings us back to the distinction



that Mills (2003a: 100-101) – in the course of critiquing Brown & Levinson's notion of social power – draws between “institutional power” and “interactional power”, or in Diamond's ( 1996: 10) terms: "institutional status" and "local rank". The essence of both distinctions is based on the notion that one's power should not be defined in terms of the position one occupies in a certain institution, but rather, a number of factors should be present to ensure the establishment of one's power, or – as Mills claims – power should be communicated and tracked down through conversations. This indicates that to be installed in a higher position or having an institutional rank does not necessarily entitle one to power status:

We might also consider, for example, the way that in many institutions those who are officially assigned the role of making the decisions about the forward planning of the company are not necessarily the same as those who actually make the decisions. Thus, someone may have a “powerful” position in the company, but employees soon learn that if they want to get something done, they need to approach someone else who holds the real power in the company. (Mills 2003a: 100-101)

An interesting point regarding the Jordanian subjects' hesitation to employ a wide range of strategies is the presupposition that the majority of employers do not like to be formally addressed and apologised to. Generally speaking, those in a high position tend to maintain a conflict-free communication channel with employees – a trend that could be fulfilled via the avoidance of formalising the relationships, as this ensures having a friendly work environment and hence a high level of work productivity. Some would believe that in such a case, verbal apology should never be sought. They claimed, instead – and in line with the common saying that actions speak louder than words – that to successfully, assiduously, and enthusiastically carry out the work duties allocated, trying not to commit the offence again, is the best way to make amends to the offended and thus get the offence remedied. Most bosses, therefore, do not expect to receive a great number of verbal apologies, but implicitly understand that non-verbal ones will, though late, be delivered.

#### 4.2.4 Situation 4: Forgetting a meeting with a friend

In the analysis of the data yielded for this situation, it was found that Jordanian subjects did not apologise as frequently as British respondents, as evidenced by the statistically significant differences which emerged between the two groups regarding the use of *IFIDs* ( $x^2 = 26.96$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), *taking on responsibility* ( $x^2 = 32.40$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), and *offer of repair* ( $x^2 = 30.86$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ).

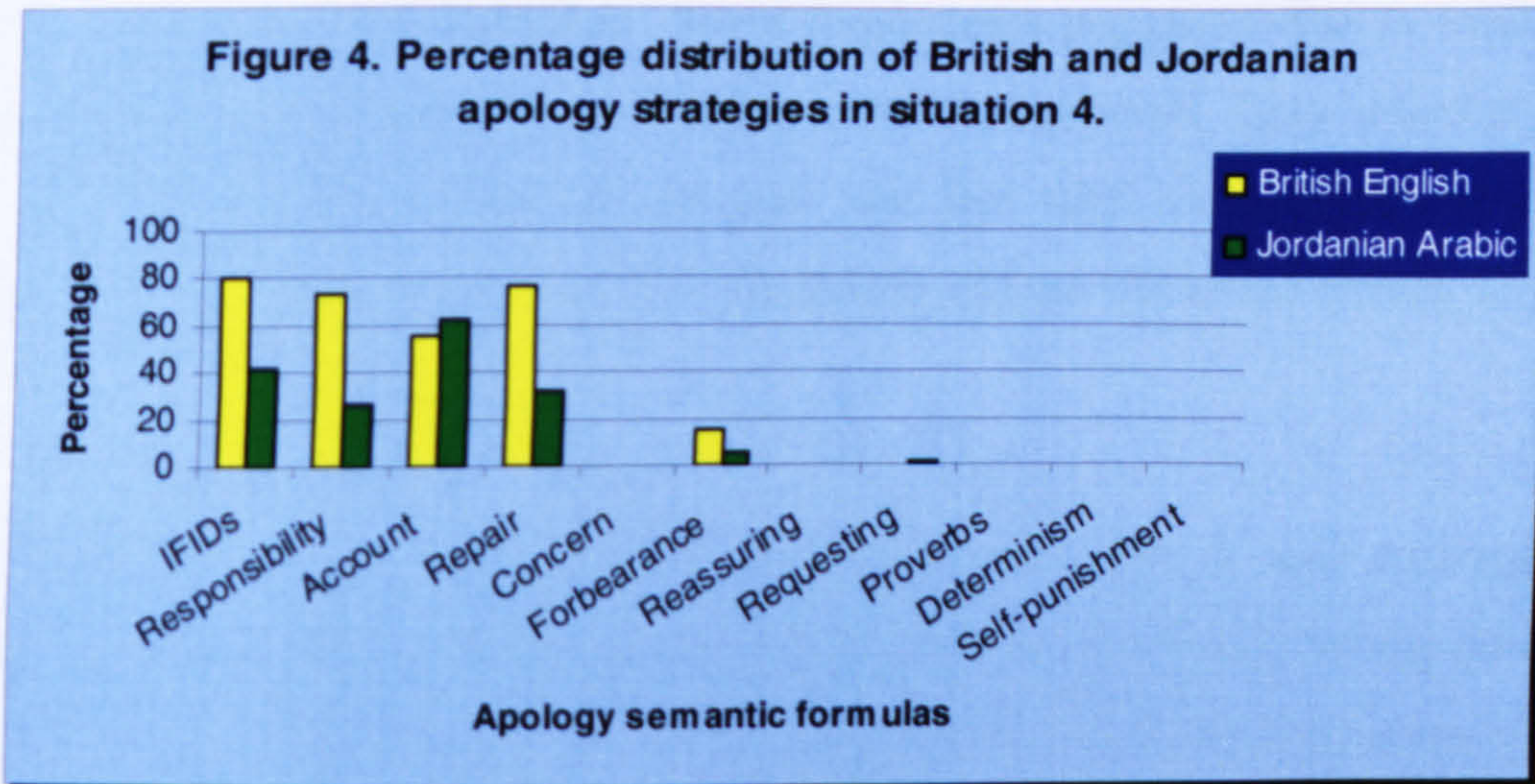


Figure 4. Percentage distribution of British and Jordanian apology strategies in situation 4

The disparity in the frequency occurrence of these strategies between the two groups needs to be explained. It might be said that such variation is linked to the differences in the ways British and Jordanian subjects assess the degree of severity of offence in this situation. Returning to the same distinction we explained between M-time and P-time in section 4.2.3, we can say that British subjects stressed the need of not missing an appointment or going beyond schedule. Conversely, Jordanian subjects' perception of forgetting a meeting with a friend as a less serious infraction led them to maintain a low frequency of most strategies. For the majority of Jordanian subjects and in line with the social stereotypes employed in Jordanian culture, apologies should never be extensively exchanged between friends. Apologies between friends are perceived as less important, as to deliver apology for each minor offence would be seen to be jeopardising the friendship. The sedimentation of needless apologetic behaviour over time is likely to end up with friendship loss, a reason that precludes many from perpetuating apologetic

behaviour or asking for apology. Three of the Jordanian subjects opted out, commenting that this situation does not require apology. Refraining from apologising in this context could be taken as a friendship-save move, and therefore could be interpreted as an indicator of the strongly-tied relationships that, like glue, hold both parties together. Even when delivered, apologies are presented in a humorous way that guarantees the apologiser's face being kept. This argument leads us to conclude that there are instances when apology is conceived of as inappropriate, and perceived as having a potential to spoil a long-standing friendship. Some respondents suggested that to receive apologies for minor injuries from a close friend is an offence in itself. They said that close friends should not remain focused on the past and that they, instead, should look forward, leaving the past in the past. This perception entails the employment of few apology strategies.

At the other end of the spectrum came the British subjects who apologised profusely, maintaining a high frequency. Respondents stressed the need of having abject apology in this situation. This tendency was quite apparent in their responses in which one respondent said: "I should ask the friend to forgive me and overlook my thoughtlessness, and tell them I would not be surprised if they think twice before arranging anything again with me." This indicates that British subjects perceived the severity of the offence here differently. Some claimed that despite being friends, one should acknowledge one's wrongdoing and exert every effort to ameliorate the affront, and that apology should be aimed at getting friends to forgive the apologiser. They contend that the apologiser should place blame on self whilst addressing the need to be more organised, and that apology in this context is "a cry for help". They stressed the importance to be considerate of the offended party's need to be apologised to, delivering apologies via channels of respect and deference.

#### **4.2.5 Situation 5: Forgetting to take son shopping**

This situation and the previous ones were designed to create a scale of formal to less formal apology. In the data analysis for this situation, it was found that both groups employed a number of apology strategies, without exhibiting statistically significant

differences. As detailed in table 3 and figure 5, both groups exhibited similarities with respect to the *IFIDs* strategy (BE 93% vs. JA 89%), *taking on responsibility* (BE 18% vs. JA 27%), *account* (BE 46% vs. JA 39%), and *offer of repair* (BE 95% vs. JA 86%). However, British and Jordanian subjects exhibited a rather different usage with respect to the semantic formula of *requesting the offended not to get angry* (BE 0% vs. JA 15%). This strategy is, in fact, part of the new strategies that emerged in the course of collecting this data, most of which were used by the Jordanian subjects (See section 4.3.7.1.2).

As regards the *IFIDs*, examining the results presented in table 3, we found that both groups preferred to realise this strategy via the *expression of regret* sub-category, with few instances, if any, of either group resorting to the other sub-formulas. *An offer of apology* figured only once in the Jordanian data at a time when none of the British respondents turned to it at all. The same might be said about the sub-formula of *request for forgiveness* which was of a very low incidence in both sets of data. It would be safe to assume that subjects' recourse to the sub-formula of *the expression of regret* resides in their strong belief that *I'm sorry* is the most expressive device, via which apology can be realised successfully. Taking the results detailed in table 3 as a point of departure, we could also say that both groups exhibited a considerably higher degree of *IFIDs* and *offer of repair* than *explanation* or *taking on responsibility*. This strategy preference by both

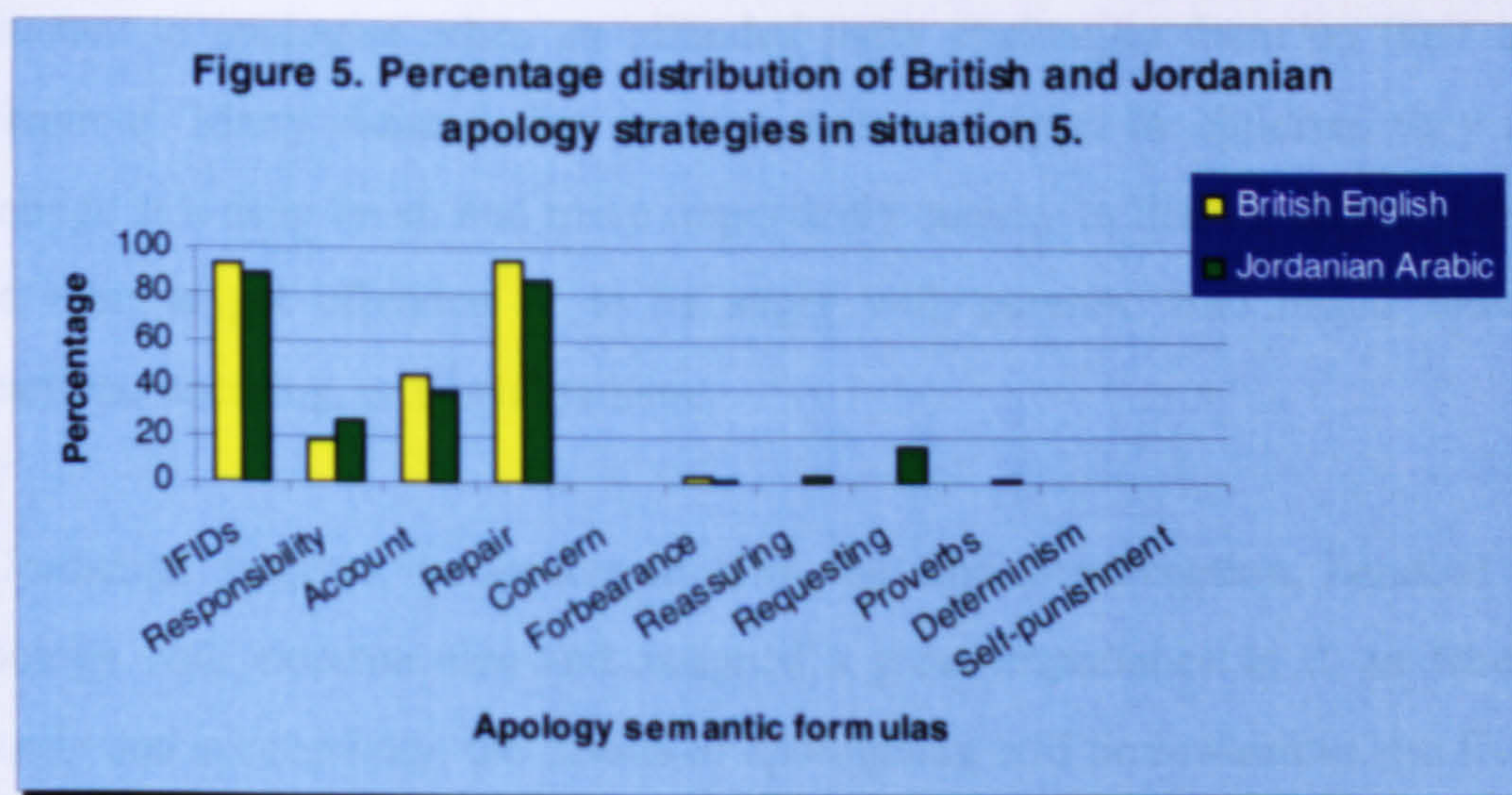


Figure 5. Percentage distribution of British and Jordanian apology strategies in situation 5

groups might be interpreted by the subjects' awareness of *the expression of apology* and *offer of repair* as the most efficacious to be used and the most likely to convince the son of the outcome. Once apology is delivered and ritual, mostly restitutive, repair is given, then the offended party has no choice but to swallow the annoyance and accept the apology given.

In agreement with Olshtain (1983: 243), and based on the informal interviews conducted, it seems that British people tend to be respectful of their children. British people highlight the importance of apologies delivered to their children as this will be of use in teaching them how to respect the rights and needs of others. Some said that when parents apologise to their children, they not only aim to offer an apology and thus have the offence remediated, but they deliberately do it to demonstrate the significance of apology. It appears that, by keeping on apologising to their children, parents are attempting to spur their children to apologise to others when committing a mistake, and, moreover, teaching them to be responsible for their behaviour and the offence they are held responsible for.

Psychologically speaking, children who are recipients of parents' apologies learn to apologise freely themselves, and this in turn lessens the degree of blame they lay upon themselves when they make mistakes. Additionally, apologising instructs them to be less reluctant to apologise when an offended party challenges them on their inappropriate behaviour. Many claimed that when parents apologise to children, they respect their feelings at a deep level, and more importantly convey to them a message that they have the right to get offended or to be angry with parents, who might sometimes seem heartless, uncaring, or unsympathetic.

Jordanian subjects, in agreement with the British perception, handled this kind of apology with extreme care and assigned a great importance to it, as when performed wisely and successfully, the results of apologising will be rewarding and fruitful. One of the main reasons that parents apologise to their children is the fact that they know that they are looked at as models, and that they – unlike schools, friends, and peers – have a

strong influence on their children. When parents initiate and maintain a well-constructed line of behaviour with children based on many important values like, for example, admitting their wrongdoings and thus presenting apologies, they invite their children to take on the same behaviour and to apologise if they have offended others. Used strategically, parent-child apology is of use for long-term goals, as it formulates a reliable foundation for child-parent respect and will help to regulate the nature of the future relation that holds the two parties. Because the way parents respect and treat children will be the same as used by children later when dealing with relatively powerless elderly parents, many behave in accordance with the belief that you should treat and respect as you want to be treated and respected. Additionally, apology is likely to make parents look kind and generous in the eyes of their children – a privilege that gives birth to a never-ending respect of parents.

However, a few claimed that parents should never apologise recurrently for all their faults or for every minor mistake they make, as this is likely to be interpreted by sons as a sign of parents' weakness, and could therefore result in children being disobedient to parents. For some, direct apology should never be attempted if parents are going to compensate sons for not taking them shopping. Culturally speaking, the presence of mutual understanding between family members often saves them time and effort. That said, many parents confine their apologies to be only restitutive, deeply touching the child's need, perceiving that what is important to a child is not an apology in itself, but the actual compensation. Not surprisingly, many children agree, albeit reluctantly, to listen to their parents' apologies but they often – out of respect – interrupt parents, as for them, parents are parents and they should not apologise even when they are at fault.

Suffice it to say, these examples of cultural perception of parent-child apology substantiate the importance that both cultures attach to this kind of apology, and clearly indicate that cultural similarities outweigh differences in this particular situation. This could also help in explaining the similarities both groups exhibited with respect to the selection of apology strategies.

#### 4.2.6 Situation 6: Backing into someone's car and causing damage

This situation and situations 7 and 8, where a physical damage is involved, were particularly chosen to provide an appropriate context for the strategy of *offer of repair*. Nonetheless, the data analysis of this situation shows that subjects of both languages resorted to different strategies other than the offer of repair, including *IFIDs*, *taking on responsibility*, *reassuring the offended party*, *requiring the offended not to get angry*; additionally, *proverbs*, *attributing the offence to external causes (determinism)*, and *self-punishment* were used as new strategies only by Jordanian subjects. This seems to point to subjects' perception of offences triggered by physical damage as severe.

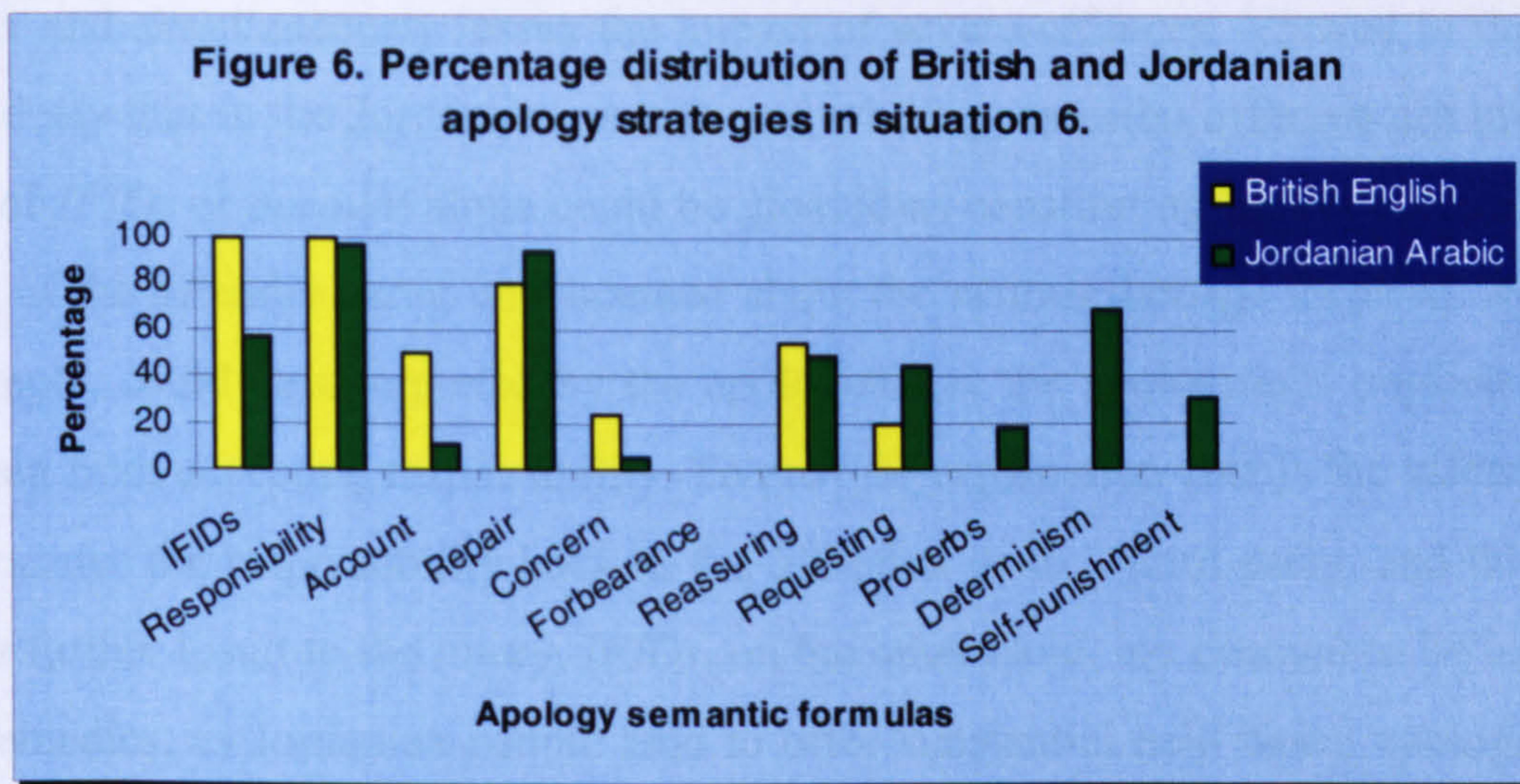


Figure 6. Percentage distribution of British and Jordanian apology strategies in situation 6

Looking at the findings presented above, we can say that the two groups showed differences and similarities in the choice and frequency of apology strategies. This is evidenced by, for example, the statistically significant differences the groups exhibited with respect to the *IFIDs* ( $x^2 = 43.175$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), taking into account that all subjects of the two languages used this strategy intensified through adverbs, or by a combination of other strategies. This significant difference also applies to *account* strategy ( $x^2 = 28.27$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), *concern for the hearer* ( $x^2 = 10.32$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), and *offer of repair* ( $x^2 = 8.22$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ). On the other hand, the two

groups exhibited insignificant differences concerning the strategy of *taking on responsibility* ( $\chi^2 = 2.025, DF = 1, p = 0.155$ ).

In light of the findings stated above, it could be pointed out that this situation was similarly perceived by both groups as being a high severity of offence that required the subjects to use well-organised apologetic expressions. However, the fact that some strategies were frequent in one language but rare in the other may be traceable to the cultural and contextual differences that affect the decision to apologise, the strategy selection, and, to some extent, the semantic content of the apology strategies. More precisely, Jordanian people are culturally and contextually conditioned to employ a number of specific semantic formulas that are likely to moderate the offended party's anger and simultaneously lessen the impact of severe offences. Viewed in this way, we could say that in the Jordanian context, and where possession offences are involved, the use of *IFIDs* or *account* alone could be glossed as constituting impolite behaviour and a sign of the offender being unconcerned about the serious damage incurred. *Account*, for example, could be interpreted by the apologisee as the apologisee's implicit attempt to refrain from accepting responsibility. To provide explanation entails the offender's intent to transfer the responsibility back to the offended or to a third party, and this therefore adds further insult to the injury. *IFIDs*, on the other hand, are deemed to be less efficient as remedies, as Jordanian people tend to offer substantial help based apologies that are likely to impinge on the apologisee's freedom (I will take you to the hospital) rather than offering mitigating expressions, such as the *expression of regret* and *request for forgiveness*.

This culturally and contextually conditioned trend is fostered by the Jordanians preferring other strategies, such as *taking on responsibility* and *offer of repair*, which together form the foundation of a more fruitful and contextually appropriate apology. Taking into consideration the severity of the offence involved in this situation, Jordanians deliberately employed a wide range of strategies. It appears that Jordanian people's wish to fulfill a successful pragmatic act leads to the apology strategy proliferation. *Proverbs* and *attributing the offence to external causes (determinism)* are strategically used to



remind the offended that the offence is out of anyone's control. Stemming from the fact that people entirely believe in determinism and that every single event is predestined to occur, offenders keep using such strategy in such a context as an endeavour to appease the offended. Equivalent to the strength of this strategy is the use of *proverbs*, which are not usually sought to trivialise the damage incurred by the wrongdoing, but as an intentional attempt to curb the apologisee's anger and thus bring the situation under control. Crucially too, the offender, after cooling the apologisee down, moves to another stage of apology based on inviting the apologisee to deepen his sympathy with the offender. This is normally accomplished via the strategy of what we term *self-punishment*, through which the apologiser intentionally imprecates herself and articulates expressions of self-reproach and self-reprimand. These newly employed strategies, which will be debated at length in section 4.3.7.2, epitomise the apologiser's unquestionably pure intent to set things right. They also seem to be situation-specific and culture-specific.

British respondents' perception of the severity of the offence was also evident in the high frequency of *IFIDs*, *taking on responsibility*, and *offer of repair*. Unlike Jordanians, British respondents started their apologies with the *IFIDs* (100%) as the most expressive apology device, followed by *taking on responsibility* (100%) and often ending with *offer of repair*. They moreover used *concern for the hearer* more frequently than Jordanians. Additionally, British subjects and Jordanians alike tended to follow both implicit and explicit ways to request the apologisee to calm down. Implicit requests were accomplished through the use of *reassuring the offended party* (BE 54% vs. JA 49%), whereas the explicit requests were performed straightforwardly *via requesting the offended not to get angry* (BE 20% vs. JA 44%). British subjects, based on the informal interviews, stressed the need of apology editing. This is to say that the kind of apology delivered should be appropriate in this particular context, as when not carefully designed, apologies might bring about unexpected and undesirable results that could end with the apologisee rejecting the whole remedial process. This line of thinking seems synonymous with Lazore (1995:78) who claims that apology itself might be perceived offensive if the apology is not adequately planned to successfully remedy the offence. British subjects

emphasised the importance of apology in this situation regardless of any factor like social power, or social distance: even when the offended was inferior to the offender, they exerted every effort to extinguish his anger and restore the physical and social damage caused. These findings are in conformity with Owen's (1983) in the sense that apology proves to encompass two main pillars: the ritual and restitutive process. It becomes apparent in this situation that apology is a scale of ritual to restitutive moves, with the apologiser moving back and forth between the two ends to develop a socio-culturally appropriate pragmatic act.

#### 4.2.7 Situation 7: Having an accident with the manager's car

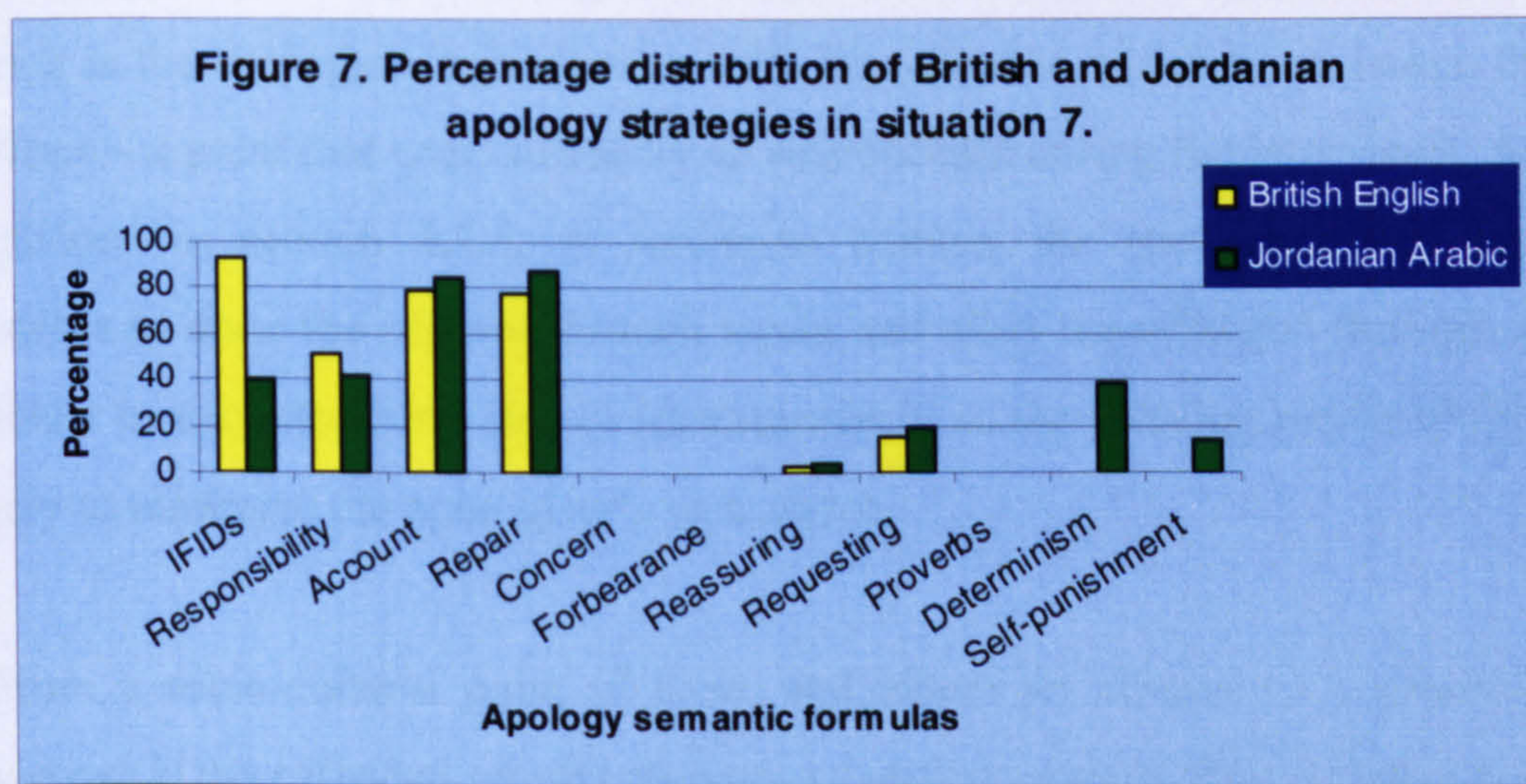


Figure 7. Percentage distribution of British and Jordanian apology strategies in situation 7

Examining the data outlined in table 4 and figure 7, we found that subjects of the two languages employed the same strategies they used in situation 6 yet in variable proportions. Although British and Jordanian respondents exhibited statistically remarkable differences in their usage of *IFIDs* ( $x^2 = 49.30$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), both groups maintained insignificant differences regarding the use of *account* ( $x^2 = 1.05$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.305$ ), *taking on responsibility* ( $x^2 = 1.60$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.205$ ) and *offer of repair* ( $x^2 = 2.77$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.096$ ). Figuring only in the Jordanian data across this situation and situation 6, strategies of *attributing the offence to external causes (determinism)* 39% and *self-punishment* 14% are evidently situation and culture-specific.

A significant observation about the way the subjects apologised here is the fact that the majority started the remedial process with *account*. Unlike their performance in situation 6, respondents of both languages commenced apologies with *account* as a pre-requisite strategy for saying *I'm sorry* or *offering repair*. Such apology scaffolding might be linked to the timing of the offence and the apologisee's entire ignorance of the offence. The apologisee's first task is thus to inform the offended of the offence incurred through *account*, and then present the appropriate apology via direct or indirect expressions.

Having a glance again at the findings outlined in table 4, we also found that subjects of both languages did not use apology strategies as frequently as they did in situation six. This frequency divergence might be imputed to many factors, the most overriding of which is the apologisee's familiarity with the offended which helps lessen the impact of offence – a point that was ratified by all respondents during the interviews. As previously explained in section 4.2.6, in Jordanian culture, the apologisee will do everything possible to erase the offence through repair and allay the offended through ascribing the offence to uncontrollable factors (determinism), as the seeming responsibility transfer is likely to minimise the apologisee's annoyance.

From a socio-cultural point of view, and where an offence of a physical damage is involved, if the offended rebuffs all types of apology except the restitutive one, he will be socially discredited and become vulnerable to people's disrespect and inconsideration, and more importantly he will be accused of detachability from cultural norms and customs which invite people to be lenient when offended and not to be inventive in terms of penalty they inflict upon others. This line of thinking and behaviour is also deeply rooted in the assumption that everyone is expected to err and thus offend others. So, one should not be reluctant to forgive, as one might one day beg others for forgiveness.

British subjects assigned a considerable severity of offence to this situation, but they ranked it less than situation six in terms of the offence weight incurred. In spite of the relatively less severity they attached to the offence in this situation, they insisted on providing sufficient apologies to remedy the offence. The fact that the offender and the

offended know each other should not lead to the offender trivialising the offence and to not dealing with the situation seriously. Rather, this should be a reason to provide a perfectly acceptable apology built on the employment of the appropriate apology strategies necessary for the success of the remedial process.

#### 4.2.8 Situation 8: Spilling a bottle of oil over a neighbour's car seat

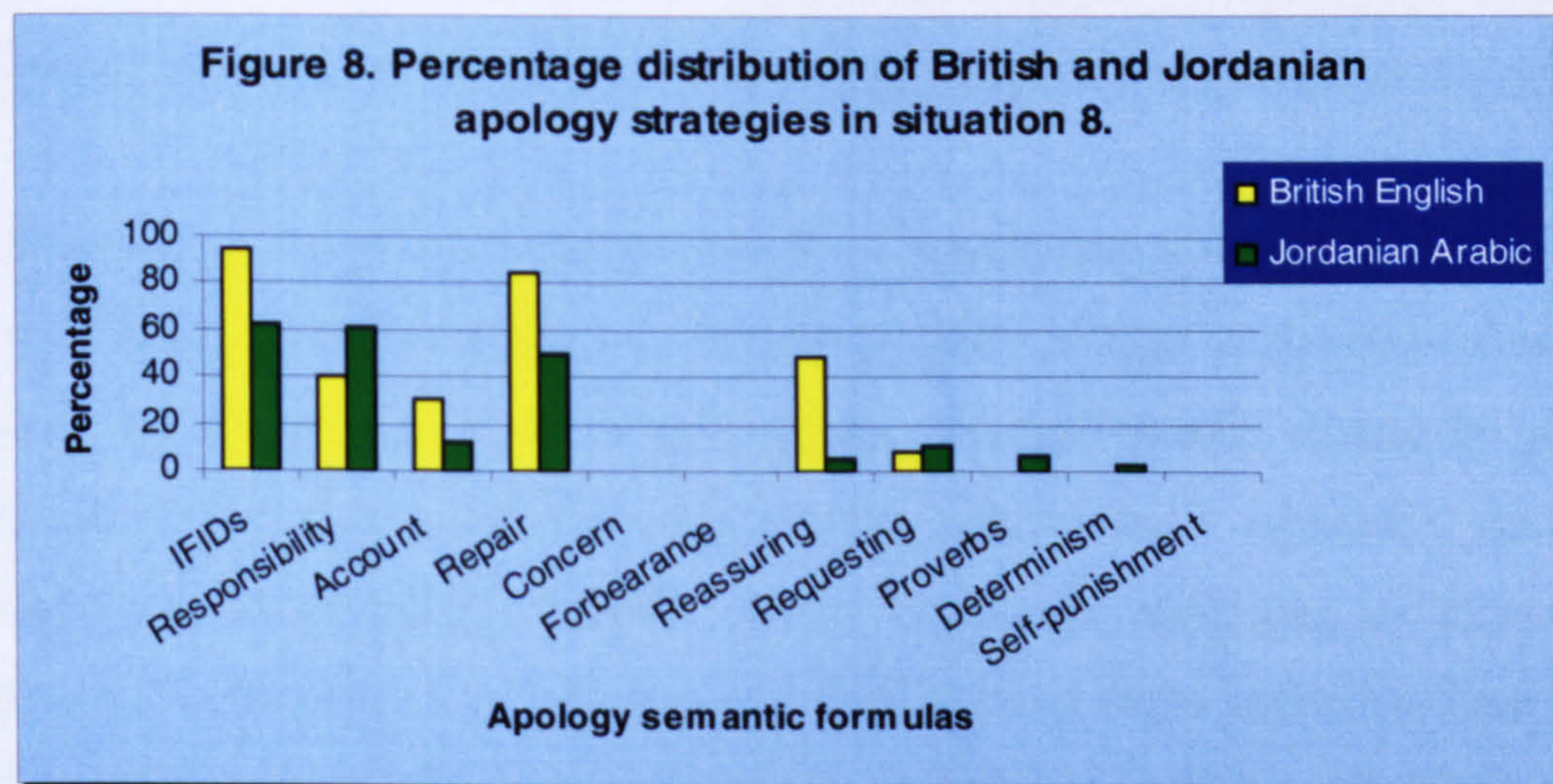


Figure 8. Percentage distribution of British and Jordanian apology strategies in situation 8

Based on the data presented in table 4 and figure 8, compared to other strategies used in this situation, *IFIDs* (BE 95% vs. JA 62%), *taking on responsibility* (BE 40 % vs. JA 61%), and *offer of repair* (BE 85% vs. JA 50%) appear in a high percentage. Such a finding substantiates that apology in this situation, like the case in the previously explained situation, is very meaningful in the sense it communicates the three fundamentals apology should encompass, namely regret, responsibility, and remedy. However, the two groups exhibited, as detailed above, remarkable differences in the use of *IFIDs* ( $x^2 = 25.24$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) and *offer of repair* ( $x^2 = 22.33$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) with the British subjects maintaining a higher percentage in both. However, insignificant differences were observed in the use of *taking on responsibility* ( $x^2 = 7.22$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ) and *account* ( $x^2 = 7.32$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ).

British subjects claimed they should apologise extensively and profusely in return for the favour the neighbour has done. They said the *expression of regret* alone is not sufficient to realise a meaningful and genuine apology. They claimed that along with

regret, the remedial process should further embody the apologiser's acknowledgement of guilt, and preparedness to make reparation to the offended, as this is likely to communicate the apologiser's serious intent to make good the accidentally incurred damage. This step-by-step apology, they suggested, will not only give the apologiser an ample opportunity to be excused, but be effective in soothing the offended. The importance of 'neighbourliness' is great and is built on reciprocal esteem that is apparently indicated in the remedial moves they employed to remediate the offence back.

The image of neighbourliness projected by Jordanians is as strong as the one British subjects portray. In the Jordanian context, neighbourliness is thought of as something special; for its continuity, all aspects of ego and self-esteem should be relinquished. Jordanian subjects claimed that, like friends, neighbours – especially those having a strongly-tied relationship – should never reciprocate apologies as this is likely to formalise the relationships. Others view apologies as more offensive than the offence itself in this context, in the sense that it will be understood by the offended as an implicit accusation of being less generous than the offender. In support of this view, some suggested that neighbours really get offended when being apologised to. Instead, they believe that what is between neighbours is bigger than delivering an apology for each offence. To repeatedly apologise for every single offence could also be interpreted by the offended as an indirect attempt on the part of the apologiser to bring the relationship to an end. Some people are, out of respect, often admonished for their apology and usually asked not to do it again. The apologisee usually forewarns the apologiser that he will get offended by an apology and will not accept an apology if the offender does it again and apologises. The majority of Jordanian subjects agreed that *offer of repair* strategy is not appropriate in this context as it will be an insult to the offended, who will consider it as part of the unpardonable and indelible offences, and who is happy to sacrifice anything in favour of perpetuating good relationship with neighbours. This is to argue that for the sake of perpetuating relationship with neighbours, some choose not to apologise, and there are instances when apology is viewed equivalent to a serious injury to the relationship.

#### 4.2.9 Situation 9: Changing the order at a restaurant

The analysis of the data for this situation points to the fact that subjects of both languages had recourse, at different rates, to four semantic formulas to perform apology. Respondents of the two languages displayed remarkable differences in their use of *IFIDs* ( $x^2 = 57.83$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) and *intensity of apology* ( $x^2 = 14.41$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). Such differences may be accredited to the degree of severity the two groups assigned to this offence. The fact that British subjects across the two semantic formulas exhibited a considerably higher degree of use than their Jordanian counterparts might be taken as a sign of the seriousness and high degree of severity they assigned to this offence. This is quite evident in the British subjects' inclination to intensify apologies through different means that will be tackled later in section 4.4.

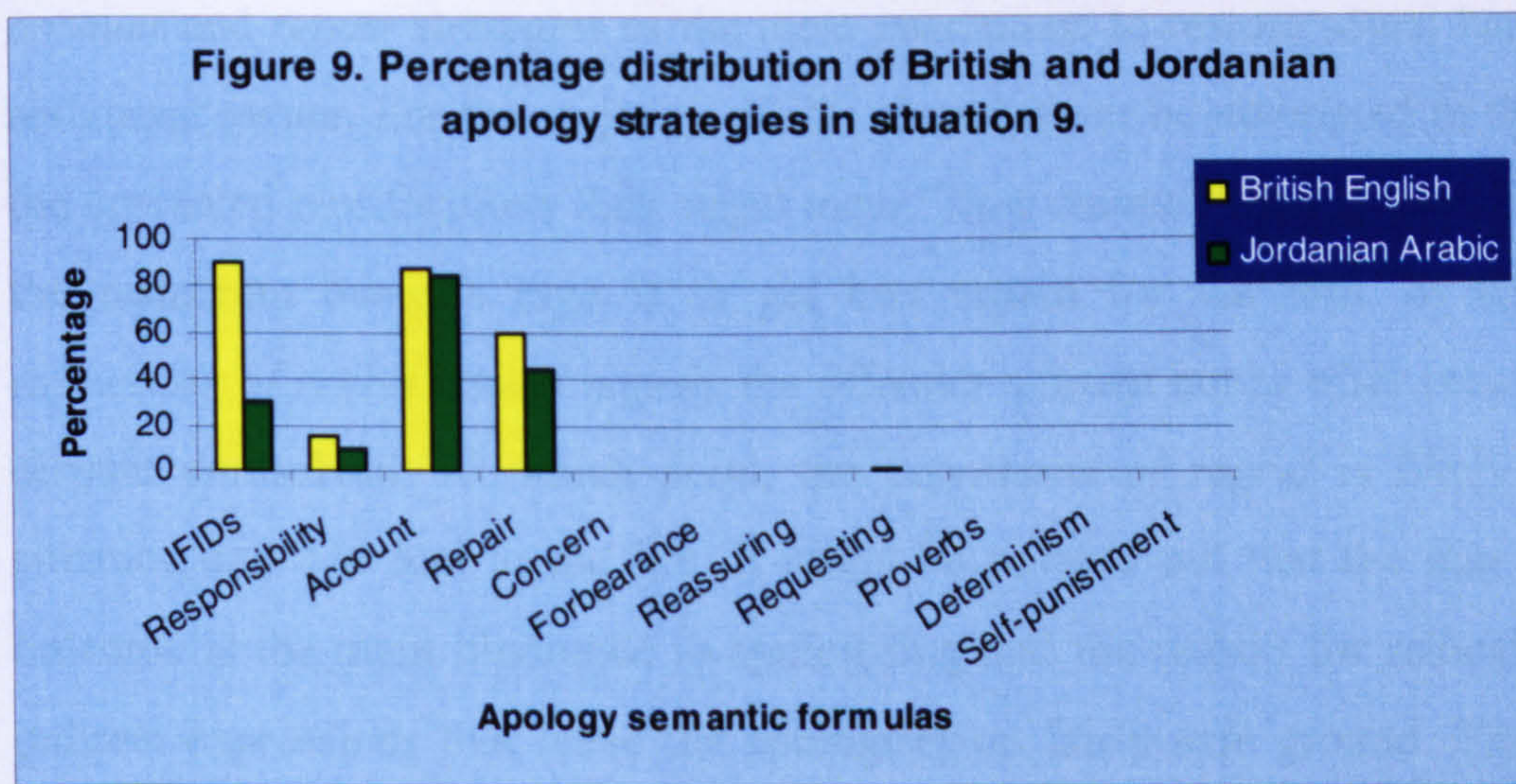


Figure 9. Percentage distribution of British and Jordanian apology strategies in situation 9

British subjects said it is rarely possible to change the order after the food has already been served. To change an order means to pay for both meals. Three British respondents opted out, claiming that it is very unlikely to be possible to change the order, as they categorised this offence as being completely non-acceptable behaviour. As for those who chose to apologise, they insisted on apologising profusely with special emphasis being paid to the *account* as an effective means to diminish the severity of the offence incurred, to assuage the offended party's annoyance, and finally get the offender's socially

inappropriate behaviour pardoned. Some assume that the main motive of apology could be linked to the apologiser's expectation of the restaurant providing a good quality food, and that apology in this context is determined by the reasons for declining the food. To this, one British respondent adds:

"The apology given depends on the reason the food is rejected – on the one hand it could be because you don't think you will like it, on the other hand it could be because the food is of poor quality. Given that the reason for the apology is that the food looks disgusting the apology is not an apology at all but an opportunity to blame the restaurant for serving poor quality food. The apology is effectively a statement that the food served is below your expectations. The basis of this apology is that you expect the restaurant to do better."

Jordanian subjects exhibited a diversity of opinions regarding this situation, most of which pivot around not apologising profusely and confining the remedial process to the *account* and *repair* strategies as the most guaranteed to restore social harmony with the restaurant owner. For the majority, *IFIDs* should never be attempted in this situation for the unwanted ramifications they might incur. They claimed what is most likely to quench the restaurant owner's rage is to get him repaid for the loss. In this context, the *expression of regret* almost signals the offender's intent not to offer repair and leave the dispute unresolved. At which point, the *expression of regret* is likely to worsen the situation and add fuel to the fire. It might be pointed out that the fear of the apology outcome is the main hindrance to apologising and the reason for relocating, instead, to indirect expressions that leave the apologiser on fairly safe ground. Three respondents said that apologising in this situation might ruin the apologiser's reputation. Their fear of apology rests in the restaurant owner who might keep telling everyone what the apologiser has done, a risk that might end with the apologiser losing respect from others. The fear of potential fame damage urges many to pay the extra cost incurred and amicably settle the dispute.

Part of the explanation for refraining from apologising might reside in the fact that the served food might not be perfectly acceptable, hence turning the apologiser into the person deserving apology. The low incidence of *expression of regret* and the frequent use

of *explanation* and *repair* again emphasise the notion that the linguistic expressions selected and the subject's adherence to the socio-cultural rules are entirely interdependent.

#### 4.2.10 Situations 10 +11: Bumping into a passenger and hurting him/ Bumping into a passenger and disturbing him

These situations were designed to provide an appropriate environment for the *expression of regret*. The assumption that situation 10 is more severe than 11 is expected to establish a scale of more to less intensified apologies. This will also be of use in demonstrating whether or not the severity of the offence influences the way the apologisers shape their responses. Specifically, we aim to examine the extent to which the severity of the offence affects the selection and frequency of apology strategies.

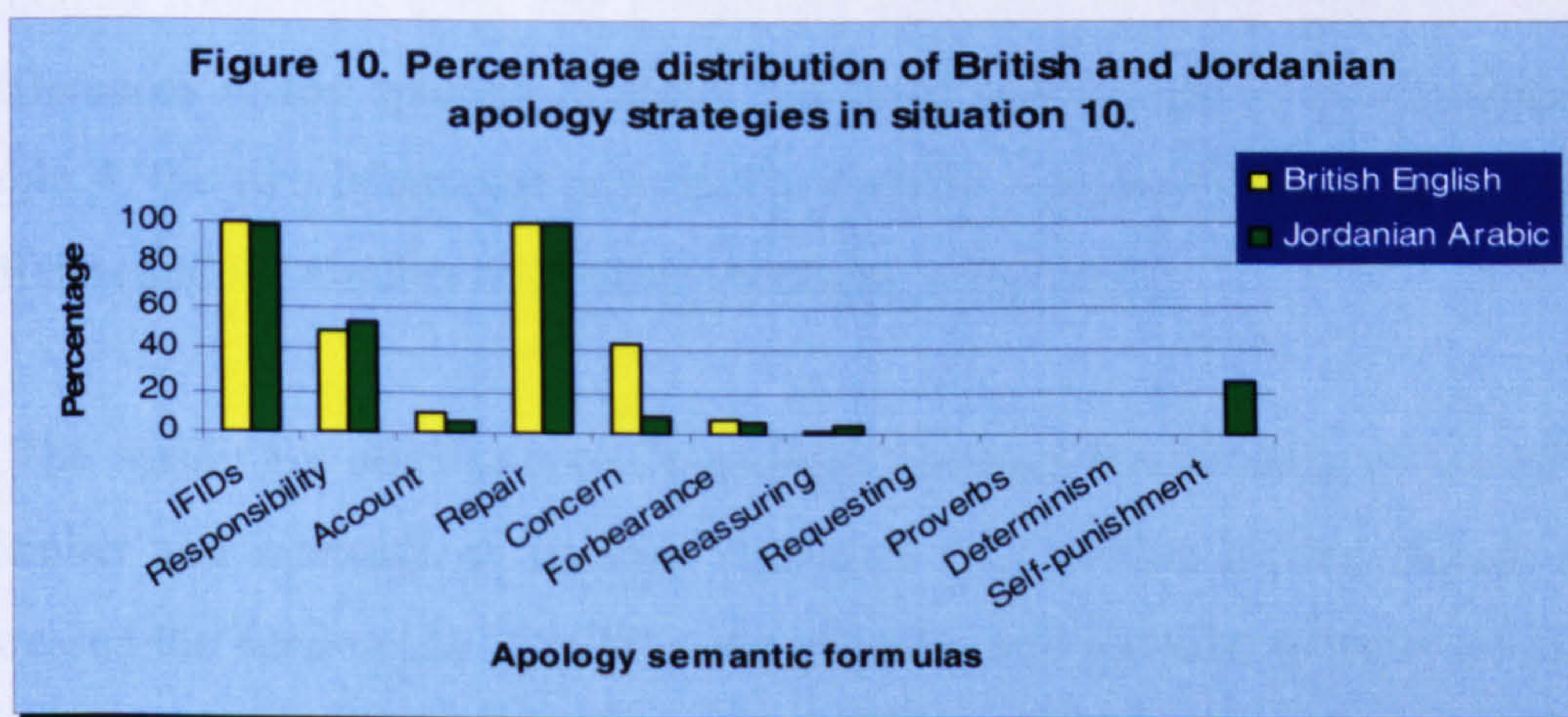


Figure 10. Percentage distribution of British and Jordanian apology strategies in situation 10

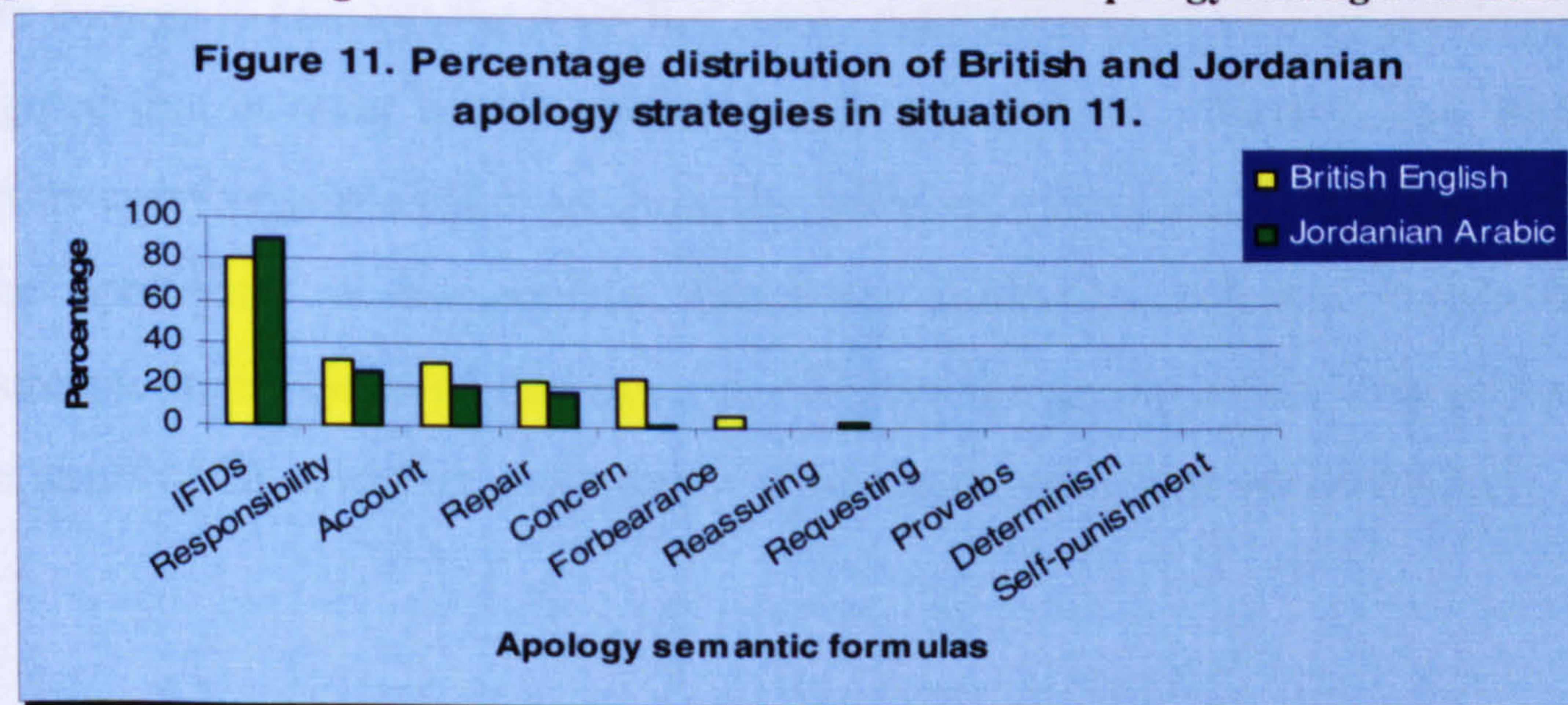


Figure 11. Percentage distribution of British and Jordanian apology strategies in situation 11



Examining the data presented in table 4 and the figures above, we found that both languages employed very similar strategies but with different percentages for some across the two situations. As outlined in table 4, subjects of British English and Jordanian Arabic tended to maintain similar within-situation behaviour. Such a finding is evidenced by the two languages exhibiting a similar degree of *IFIDs*, *account*, *responsibility*, and *offer of repair* in each situation. The two languages also exhibited the same line of behaviour on a cross-situational level. More precisely, respondents of both languages exhibited a higher frequency of *IFIDs* and *offer of repair* in situation 10 than in situation 11. In spite of the similar linguistic behaviour which subjects of the two languages exhibited in terms of strategy selection and percentage, we found that such resemblance vanishes when it comes to the way they intensified their *IFIDs*: situation 10 ( $x^2 = 32.40$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) and situation 11 ( $x^2 = 43.53$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). That said, we may note that British subjects tended to intensify their apologies across the two situations, whereas Jordanians used less intensified apologies in such situations. Apart from the differences in the apology intensity exhibited and in light of the findings indicated in table 4, the two languages projected a positive correlation between the severity of the offence and the number of apology strategies employed.

The seemingly obvious interdependence between the severity of the offence and the number and intensity of apology strategies was ratified by the British subjects, who stressed the need not to intrude on the physical and spiritual territory of others. It seems to indicate that severe space offences are likely to warrant more elaborate apologies that are enough to comfort the disturbed party. Additionally, British respondents unanimously agreed that in order for the apology to be genuine and effective, the apologiser should exert every possible effort to show the offended real intent to ease sufferings for which the apologiser is responsible. Likewise, Jordanian subjects maintained the same perception, but believed that in space offences the gender of the offended party is crucial in terms of the selection and number of strategies used (See section 5.2.1).

#### 4.2.11 Situation 12: Insulting someone at a meeting

In this situation, three main apology strategies were employed by the subjects of both languages. Significant differences were observed in their use of *IFIDs* ( $x^2 = 44.89$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), *account* ( $x^2 = 33.75$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), and *responsibility* ( $x^2 = 30.62$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). These strategies took precedence over the rest of the semantic formulas. In opposition to Jordanian subjects, British respondents sustained the highest level of *IFIDs* (BE 98% vs. JA 51%), and *taking on responsibility* (BE 97% vs. JA 63%). The opposite could be true for *account* where Jordanians provided explanations more profusely than British counterparts (BE 38% vs. JA 83%). It is also worth noting that Jordanians resorted to *proverbs* in this situation as a remedial move. Notwithstanding, *proverbs* were used as a double-edged weapon to either accept or refuse to accept responsibility. A rigorous discussion of this is available in section 4.3.7.2.1.

In relation to the findings stated above, British subjects prioritised explicit apology *I'm sorry* as an effective device to rectify conversation problems over other formulas, with the proviso that it is accompanied by *responsibility* to ensure its remedial efficiency. Regardless of the offence being intended or not, the apologiser should apologise profusely to set things right, they suggested. Some said that apologies in this context

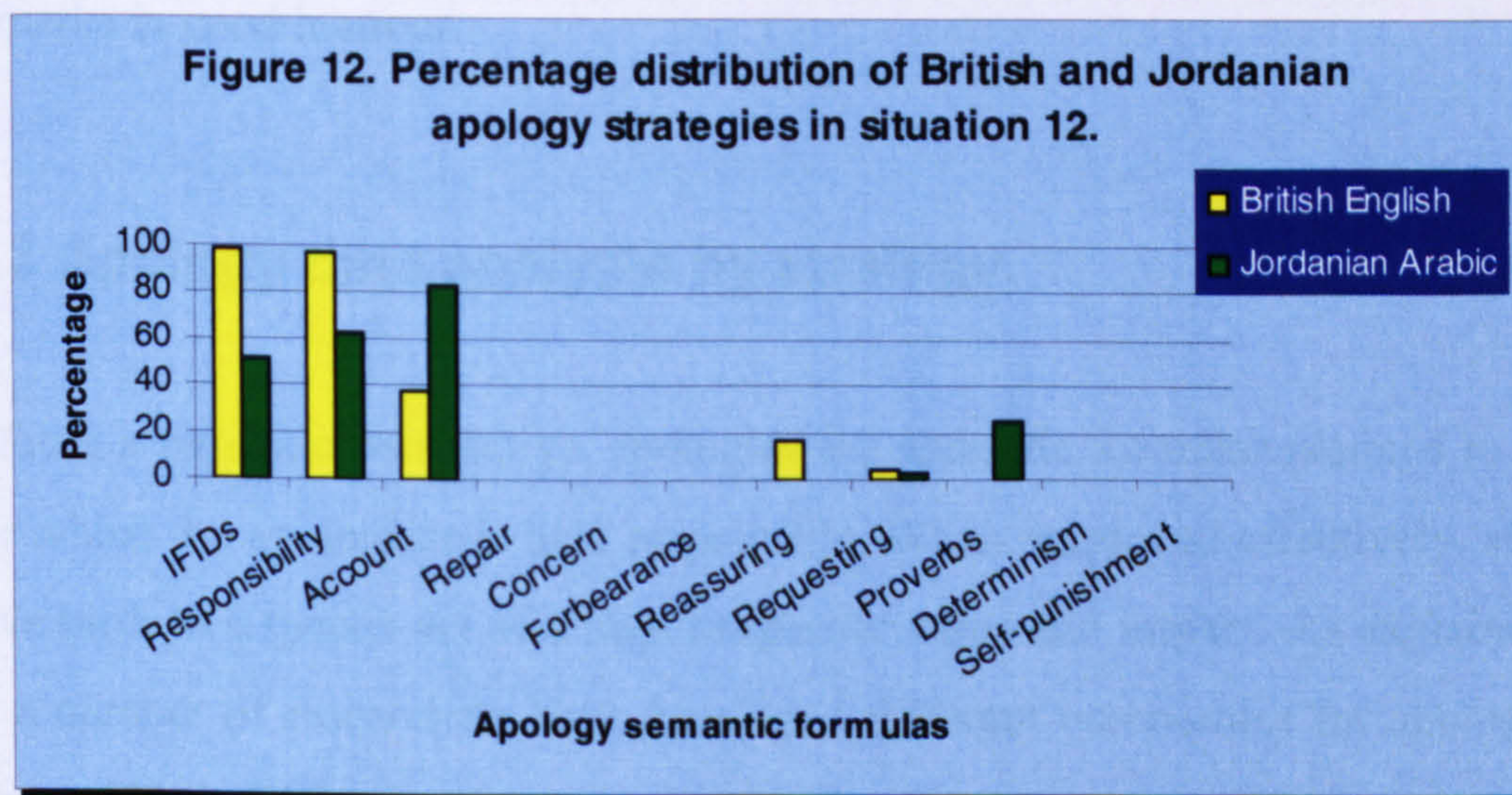


Figure 12. Percentage distribution of British and Jordanian apology strategies in situation 12

are psychologically rewarding in the sense that the apologisee feels she has the courage to admit her wrongdoing – a feeling that would mature into bringing the apologisee closer to the offended and minimise the about-to-emerge distance between the two parties<sup>29</sup>.

In contradistinction with the aforesaid, Jordanians had a rather different perception. They believed that work-communication problems should not be labelled offences, as most work disputes centre around the betterment of work and should therefore be welcomed as a constructive criticism. Moreover, if the offender's behaviour or remarks are lawful and still abide by the rules and regulations of that institution at the micro level and the community standards at the macro level, then the offended should not be in a hurry to hardheartedly misjudge others and thus escalate the conflict. For a better work environment, the relationship that holds the employees together should be based on mutual consideration and respect, and work transgressions should not be allowed to expand into their outside-work relationships. Some believed one should do all one can to maintain a cooperative work environment that guarantees the continuity of work, and that people should not linger for long on issues that have the potential of arousing hostility and alienation. Respondents agreed that work conflicts should not set one against the other, as this would result in damaging the relationship. Instead, each one is expected to see the other through the lens of love and compassion, and thus receive the other's remarks in good humour.

### **4.3 Apology data analysis by strategy.**

From a semantic perspective, apologies are semantic formulas planned to amend harm for which the apologisee is held responsible. When employed effectively, such formulas give birth to a speech act of a high pragmatic value and impact. As explained in chapter 1, a number of researchers have developed different taxonomies for apology strategies. Fraser (1981: 263), for example, develops a nine-strategy categorisation system. Cohen

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<sup>29</sup> Takaku (2001) points to the efficiency of apologies in resolving interpersonal disputes. This point has already been raised by Hale (1987), who asserts that non-well-organised apologies, like those that do not include excuses or justifications, are far from being sufficient accounts for some personal offences.

& Olshtain (1981: 113-134), and Olshtain & Cohen (1983: 22-23) produce a classification system of five main categories, with a large number of sub-categories. Aijmer (1996) recognises thirteen apology strategies and classifies them as explicit or implicit, emotional or non-emotional. As also stated in chapter 1, the present study is based on Olshtain & Cohen's (1983) classification system and the CCSARP coding scheme (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989). In addition to the aforesaid, a limited number of new strategies have emerged in the course of data collection, a discussion of which will be in section 4.3.7.

### **4.3.1 IFIDs (Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices)**

Upon a closer examination of the findings in tables 3 and 4, one can notice that *IFIDs* were used across all the situations in both languages, with the British maintaining the highest percentage. The Jordanian use of *IFIDs*, on the other hand, ranges from a high percentage of 98% in situation 2 ( forgetting the professor's book) and situation 10 ( bumping into a passenger and hurting him) to only 31% in situation 9 ( changing order at restaurant). The four situations which received a high percentage of *IFIDs* by Jordanians are situation 2 (forgetting a professor's book), situation 5 (forgetting to take son shopping), situation 10 (bumping into passenger and hurting him), and situation 11 (bumping into passenger and shaking him a bit), where the offence was perceived as severe in comparison with the rest of the offences across the other situations. The lowest usage of *IFIDs* occurred in situation 9 (changing the order at restaurant) where the use of explicit expressions of apology was deemed inappropriate and likely to incur further offences.

#### **4.3.1.1 The structure of IFIDs in British and Jordanian apologies**

The realisation of direct apologies in the two languages was fulfilled via the use of *IFIDs*, which consist of fixed syntactic expressions, such as the use of verbs (BE: *apologise, excuse, pardon*. JA: *aṣtaḍer, samehni, ataʔassaf*), adjectives (BE: *sorry, afraid*. JA: *mutaʔassif, asif*), and nouns (BE: *pardon, apologies*. JA: *almaṣḍirah, alṣuḍer*

*wassamuħah*). These expressions were used either elliptically or expanded and modified within a stretch of discourse.

Looking deeply beneath the structure of *IFIDs* in English, it can be noticed that the majority of apology expressions are different forms of *sorry*. However, and in agreement with Owen (1983: 86), there are cases when *sorry* may not be used to establish genuine apology. Specifically, when *sorry* is used followed by the distant pronoun *that* to convey that the offence is in the past, then the offender is trying to link the offence to a third party and that the offence is beyond the control of the offender. Notwithstanding, this does not necessarily mean the offender is attempting to free herself from responsibility. Examples of *sorry about that* took place in situations 2, 4, 5, and 7. The use of the proximal pronoun *this*, on the other hand, seems to communicate sincere and explicit apologies, and simultaneously substantiate that Owen's (1983) argument that *sorry about this is* used with continuing offences only is not pertinent in this context. The following example is of use to demonstrate the validity of the aforesaid:

1- I'm really very sorry about this ( Situation 10)

In the British data, especially in situation 7, we came across some instances where *I'm sorry + (that) clause* was not used to express genuine apology, but as an expression to introduce bad news<sup>30</sup>, implicitly indicating that the situation is out of personal control. The same point is raised by Reiter (2000:150) who claims that the use of *sorry* in this particular context is equivalent in purpose to *I'm afraid + clause*, or to some adverbs such as *unfortunately*<sup>31</sup>, or *regrettably*. As mentioned before, examples of this special type of apology infrequently figured only in situation 7 (having an accident with the manager's car).

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<sup>30</sup> For more discussion on how *sorry* could forecast bad news, see Maynard (2003).

<sup>31</sup> It is worth noting that Davies et al (2007: 42), building on data collected from student e-mail apologies to academic staff, find instances when "I'm afraid" fulfils the role of IFID and is seen as equivalent in function to "I'm sorry" or "I apologise". In their study, the authors regard formulaic expressions like "unfortunately" and "I'm afraid" as part of IFIDs in that they, like the use of *sorry*, might not always operate as an IFID.

2- I'm sorry I had a small accident in your car. (situation 7)

3- I'm afraid I have to tell you I have had an accident in your car. (situation 7)

By the same token, Kasanga & Lwanga-Lumu (2007: 66) argue that – in opposition to Owen's (1983) limitation of the speech act of apology to expressions like *I am/we are sorry* and *I/we apologise*, and in support of Olshtain & Cohen's (1989: 53) argument that *I'm sorry* might be viewed as less sufficient to express apology – there are instances when *I'm sorry* is not used to communicate apology. In support of this, they used the example of *I'm sorry, but I find your argument unattractive* which is used as a “prefatory gambit for disagreeing” and a way to tone down the degree of criticism and not as an expression of apology to an offence that has already been done. Though *I'm sorry* in the above example is a post-event expression, it cannot be seen as part of Aijmer's (1996) retrospective apologies (see section 1.2.3) in the sense that *I'm sorry* is not remedial in this context. In relation to this, Davies et al (2007: 47-48) view apologies, contrary to what has been assumed about apologies as being only post-event acts, as being both post- and pre-event acts. The authors argue that there are instances when people apologise for events that have not yet happened, and that it would be, for example, more polite to apologise in advance, rather than retrospectively, for inability to attend a meeting. Because viewing apologies in this way is likely to violate the “pre-conditions for successful apology” (that the offence apologised for should have already happened and that sincere apology is assumed to convey regret and promise of forbearance against the act), Davies et al (2007:47-48) explain the sincerity of pre-event apologies in terms of the notion of the non-avoidability. The authors claim that if the apologiser can prove that the act is not avoidable, apologies, therefore, “[...] can be made with due sincerity”. Viewing apologies in this way, Davies et al (2007:48) stress the importance of accounts in demonstrating the unavailability of the envisaged action.

*Offer of apology* and *request for forgiveness* were not used as frequently in either the British or Jordanian data as the *expression of regret*. In relation to this point, it could be argued that the use of an *offer of apology* and *request for forgiveness* might be perceived as more intense apology than the *expression of regret*.

Table 5. Relative frequencies of direct apology expressions in British English

<i>Sub-formula</i>	<i>Potential realisation</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
<b>A- Expression of regret</b>	1- Sorry	42
	2- I'm/ I am sorry	120
	3- I'm { intensifier } + sorry	531
	4- {I'm} + { intensifier + intensifier } + sorry	65
	5- Intensifier + sorry	35
	6- { I'm } + {intensifier} + sorry about + {pronoun}	12
	7- { I'm } + sorry + {that} + S	13
	8- {I'm} + {intensifier} + sorry to + VP	3
	9- I'm sorry if + S	5
<b>SUBTOTAL (A) B- An offer of apology</b>	1- I + apologise	826
	2- I owe + pronoun + apology	15
	3- I present + {pronoun} + apology/apologies	2
	4- { Adjective } + apologies	3
<b>SUBTOTAL (B) C- Request for forgiveness</b>	1- {Please} + excuse me	5
	2- {Please} + forgive me	2
	3- { I beg your } + pardon	4
	4- {S} + forgive me	17
<b>SUBTOTAL (C) D- Other patterns</b>	1- I am afraid + S	35
	2- Unfortunately/ regrettably	35
<b>SUBTOTAL (D) TOTAL</b>		899

**Table 6. Relative frequencies of direct apology expressions in Jordanian Arabic**

Sub-formula	Syntactic structure	Potential realisation	Frequency
<b>A- Expression of regret</b>			
	<b>ADJECTIVE</b>		
	1- Asif + (intensifier) = (sorry + intensifier)	1- Asif jiddan = very sorry	120
	2- (Intensifier) + asif = ( intensifier + sorry)	2- Jiddan asifah = very sorry	
	3- Muta `assif + ( intensifier) = ( sorry + intensifier)	3- Muta `assif kathiran = So sorry	95
	4- (Intensifier) + muta `assif = (Intensifier + sorry)	4- Jiddan muta `assif = Very sorry	
	5- Noun + muta `assif/asif + (intensifier) = ( Noun + sorry + intensifier)	5- Anna muta `assif jiddan = I'm very sorry	89
	6- Noun + asef + PP = ( Noun + sorry + pp)	6- Ana asef ala ma hadath = I am regretful about what happened	24
	7- {Noun} + asif/ muta `assif + pp = ({Noun} + sorry + pp)	7- Muta `assif alama jara = Sorry for what happened.	42
	<b>VERB</b>		
	1- Atta `assaf + (intensifier) = (Be {intensifier} + sorry)	1- Atta `assaf bishiddah = Be so sorry.	26
	<b>NOUN</b>		
	1- Al asaf + {intensifier} = ( Intensifier + sorrow/regret)	1- Al-asaf al-shadeed = Great sorrow/regret.	99
	<b>VERB</b>		
	1- {Noun} + a `atather + pp/adv = (Subject + apologise + pp/adv)	1- Ana a `atather bishiddah = I apologise profusely.	495
	<b>NOUN</b>		
	1- Verb + e `tithari { intensifier} = ( verb + apology/apologies + intensifier)	1- Ana a `tithari al-shadeed = I present my sincere/deep apology.	27
	<b>VERB</b>		
	1- Samihni = (forgive me)	1- Samihni = Forgive me.	9
	<b>NOUN</b>		
	1- Afwan = ( Pardon)	2- Afwan = Pardon	36
	2- Auther & samuhah = (Pardon & forgiveness)	3- Al-auther & samuhah ya jar = Pardon & forgiveness, neighbour.	4
	<b>CLAUSE</b>		
	1- {Arju an } + tusamihn + vocative + vocative = ( {please} forgive me	1- Arju an tusamihni ya bunai = Please forgive me, son.	
	2- { Arju an} + ti `thernii + Please excuse me	2- Arju an ti `thernii ya dactour = Please excuse me, doctor.	
	3- {Arju an} + taqbal {e `tithari/authri} + {vocative} = Please accept my apology	3- Arju an taqbal e `tithari = Please accept my apology	10
	<b>SUBTOTAL (A)</b>		60
<b>B- An offer of apology</b>			
	<b>VERB</b>		
	1- Samihni = (forgive me)	1- Samihni = Forgive me.	591
	<b>NOUN</b>		
	1- Afwan = ( Pardon)	2- Afwan = Pardon	
	2- Auther & samuhah = (Pardon & forgiveness)	3- Al-auther & samuhah ya jar = Pardon & forgiveness, neighbour.	7
	<b>CLAUSE</b>		
	1- {Arju an } + tusamihn + vocative + vocative = ( {please} forgive me	1- Arju an tusamihni ya bunai = Please forgive me, son.	
	2- { Arju an} + ti `thernii + Please excuse me	2- Arju an ti `thernii ya dactour = Please excuse me, doctor.	
	3- {Arju an} + taqbal {e `tithari/authri} + {vocative} = Please accept my apology	3- Arju an taqbal e `tithari = Please accept my apology	10
	<b>SUBTOTAL (B)</b>		60
<b>C- Request for forgiveness</b>			
	<b>VERB</b>		
	1- Samihni = (forgive me)	1- Samihni = Forgive me.	591
	<b>NOUN</b>		
	1- Afwan = ( Pardon)	2- Afwan = Pardon	
	2- Auther & samuhah = (Pardon & forgiveness)	3- Al-auther & samuhah ya jar = Pardon & forgiveness, neighbour.	7
	<b>CLAUSE</b>		
	1- {Arju an } + tusamihn + vocative + vocative = ( {please} forgive me	1- Arju an tusamihni ya bunai = Please forgive me, son.	
	2- { Arju an} + ti `thernii + Please excuse me	2- Arju an ti `thernii ya dactour = Please excuse me, doctor.	
	3- {Arju an} + taqbal {e `tithari/authri} + {vocative} = Please accept my apology	3- Arju an taqbal e `tithari = Please accept my apology	10
	<b>SUBTOTAL (C)</b>		60
	<b>TOTAL</b>		591



In Jordanian Arabic, *IFIDs* can be realised via a wide range of adjectives: *asif*, *mutaʔassif*, *asef* (sorry), verbs: *attaʔassaf* (sorry), *aʔtaḍer* (apologise), *samehni* (forgive me), and nouns: *ʔafwan* (pardon), *almaʔḍirah*, and *alʔuḍer* (apology). It should be pointed out that, like the British subjects, Jordanians tended to realise their apologies more frequently through *expression of regret* rather than via *offer of apology* and *request for forgiveness*. This could be due to the high level of formality which performative verbs, like *aʔtaḍer* (apologise), might bring about, or to the great potential of face loss *request for forgiveness* might incur.

Although the *expression of regret* is a vessel for different lexis that could be used interchangeably to perform explicit and real apologies, *subject + asef + pp* is not employed to right a real offence. Rather, it is used to mirror the offender's sorrow about the offence, but without having any potentially remedial function. This is the main reason why this expression was of low incidence in the Jordanian data. The use of *asef* in the Arabic context is in this case exactly equivalent in function to the British *sorry*, when the latter is equivalent to *unfortunately or regrettably*.

It should also be pointed out that *ʔafwan* has several functions in Jordanian Arabic. It can be used to constitute genuine apology, or as an appropriate answer for the speech act of thanking, exactly equivalent in meaning to *you are welcome*. In such cases, the role of social and physical context is absolutely crucial in unveiling the difference between the two uses.

It is worth noting that within the *request for forgiveness* sub-category, the most frequent was *alʔuḍer wassamuḥah* (pardon and forgiveness). This is because such expression is likely to be accepted by the offended party, and more likely than any other *request for forgiveness* expressions to constitute real and genuine apology. More importantly, because *alʔuḍer wassamuḥah* entails a high level of familiarity between interactants, hence the acceptance of apology, it could be used between strangers for its

likely efficiency in healing the offence caused. *alḥuḍer wassamuḥah* could be said to have maximum remedial effects with minimum face threat.

Table 7. Distribution of IFIDs frequency in British English according to the four semantic sub-formulas

Sub-formula	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11	S12	Total
Regret	57	71	70	59	73	78	66	74	70	73	61	74	826
Apology	3	1	0	5	0	2	0	1	1	4	2	2	21
Request	0	2	3	0	1	1	3	0	0	3	2	2	17
I'm afraid	20	6	3	1	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	35
Total	80	80	76	65	74	81	74	75	71	80	65	78	899

Table 8. Distribution of IFIDs frequency in Jordanian Arabic according to the three semantic sub-formulas

Sub-formula	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11	S12	Total
Regret	25	69	35	30	66	38	23	46	22	49	58	34	495
Apology	6	8	2	2	1	3	4	2	2	1	1	4	36
Request	3	1	3	1	4	5	5	1	0	27	12	2	64
Total	34	78	40	33	71	46	32	49	24	77	71	40	595

### 4.3.2 Taking on responsibility

This strategy is often resorted to when the offender recognises responsibility for the insult. The offender declares responsibility through selecting from a number of sub-formulas: *accepting the blame*, *expressing self-deficiency*, *lack of intent*, *justifying the hearer*, *expressing embarrassment*, and *refusal to acknowledge guilt*. These sub-formulas, as seen, are placed on a scale extending from a high level of responsibility to a complete denial of responsibility. The selection of one or two of these sub-formulas determines the level of responsibility the offender intends to take.

#### 4.3.2.1 Accepting the blame

When selecting *accepting the blame*, the apologiser explicitly admits fault. Although this self-humbling on the apologiser's part might threaten her positive face, it could help

appease the offended, as the apologiser avoids being in disagreement with the offended and at the same time invites the offended to be compassionate towards her. This sub-strategy was used by the British and Jordanian subjects with a very low incidence except in situation 6 where the offence is highly severe. It was never used by the British in situations 4 and 12 or by the Jordanians in situations 4, 11, and 12.

4- That was entirely my fault. (Situation 6, BE)

5- It was completely my fault. (Situation 9, BE)

6- انا غلطان تماما" يا سيدي

*Ana yaltʕan tamamen ya sayyidii.*

I.NOM 1SG.at fault completely sir.voc

"I'm completely at fault, Sir." (Situation 3, JA)

7- الحق و الله راكبني

*Elħag wallah rakibnii.*

Fault.NOM by God 3SG.ride.PRES.PROG.

Fault, by God, is riding me.

"It is, by God, my fault." (Situation 6, JA)

#### 4.3.2.2 Expressing self-deficiency

This sub-formula was the most widely used by both groups to acknowledge responsibility. This might be linked to the fact that it is an implicit acknowledgment of responsibility, and thus is less likely than any others to incur loss to the apologiser's positive face. In Jordanian data, this sub-strategy was almost always used accompanied by swearing as a way to intensify apology and substantiate the apologiser's pure intent to restore social equilibrium.

8- It completely slipped my mind. (Situation 2, BE)

9- I'm like a bull in a China shop today. (Situation 11, BE)

10- How stupid of me. (Situation 6, BE)

11- والله لم انتبه لسيارتك

*Wallah lam antabih lisyartak.*

By God not 1SG.watch.PAST.PROG your car

"By God, I wasn't paying attention to your car." (Situation 6, JA)

12- والله يا بابا راح عن بالي

*Wallah ya baba rah san balii.*

By God dad.voc go.PAST away from my memory

“By God son, it slipped my mind.” (Situation 5, JA)

#### 4.3.2.3 Lack of intent

Lack of intent was used by subjects of both groups except in situation 1 by British subjects and situations 1 and 5 by Jordanians. This might be due to the nature of the situations and the social status of the interlocutors, which do not require the offender to explicitly express that the offence is non-intentional. However, this sub-formula was relatively profusely used in situation 12, where the nature of the offence warrants the apologiser to employ such expression to mitigate the offence. As in the case of the previously explained sub-formula (expressing self-deficiency), lack of intent was used intensified through swearing by Jordanians.

13- I didn't mean for you to take an offence, really. (situation 12, BE)

14- I didn't mean to cause so much chaos when you were helping me. (situation 10, BE)

15- لم أقصد الاساءة

*Lam aqsʔud al isaʔh.*

Not 1SG.intend-PAST.SUB DEF ART.offence.ACC.

“I didn't mean it as an insult to you.” (Situation 12, JA)

#### 4.3.2.4 Justifying the hearer

When compared to other sub-formulas, *justifying the hearer* is usually used to acknowledge a low level of responsibility. Even so, it is still of help as a hoped-for insult-alleviation balm. *Justifying the hearer* was not used in all situations by subjects of both languages. The sporadic use of this sub-formula could be related to the relatively weak impact and healing effects it has on the offended party.

16- You are right. (Situation 4, BE)

17- أنا أقدر غضبك

*Ana auqadder yadʕabak.*

I.NOM 1SG.understand.PRES your anger.

“I understand how angry you are.” (Situation 6, JA)

18- معك حق

*Maʕak haq.*

With you right.NOM.

“You are right.” (Situation 6, JA)

#### 4.3.2.5 Expressing embarrassment

The fifth sub-formula, *expressing embarrassment*, was used sporadically by subjects of the two languages, with the Jordanians maintaining a higher percentage than the British. The fact that *expressing embarrassment* was used in some situations and disappeared in others demonstrates that it is a situation-specific sub-formula.

19-I'm so embarrassed. (Situation 8, BE)

20- أنا مش عارف شو أحكيك

*Ana muʕ ʕaref ʃu aħkiilak.*

I.NOM not 1SG.know.PRES what 1SG.say.PRES.OBJ.

“I don't know what to say.” (Situation 7, JA)

21- أنا ما بعرف أوذي وجهي منك وين

*Ma baʕref awaddi wiðhii minnak ween.*

Not 1SG.know.PRES 1SG.turn.PRES my face from you where.

“I don't know where to turn my face to.” (Situation 7, JA)

22- أنا محرج منك لدرجة كبيرة

*Ana muħrað minnak lidaraðah kabiirah.*

I.NOM 1SG.embarrass.PASSIVE.PRES.MASC from you for degree big.FEM

“I'm so embarrassed.” (Situation 10, JA)

#### 4.3.2.6 Refusal to acknowledge guilt

Refusal to acknowledge guilt was of low incidence in both Jordanian and British data. By refusing to acknowledge guilt, the offender denies her involvement in the offence, and rebuffs accepting responsibility. In spite of the low occurrence of this sub-formula,

British subjects and Jordanian counterparts realised it through either denying responsibility or blaming the apologisee.

23- It wasn't my fault. (Situations 7, 8, BE)

24- أنا لم أخطئ في حقك

*Ana lam auxtʔ fi haggak.*

I.NOM not at fault in your right.MASC.

“I'm not at fault.” (Situation 12, JA)

25- لم أطلب هذا الطلب. أنت سمعت بالخطأ

*Lam atʔlub haða atʔabaq, anta samʔta bilxatʔaʔ.*

Not 1SG.order.PAST DEM.SG meal.ACC YOU.MASC 2SG.hear.PAST by mistake.

“I didn't order this meal. You misheard.” (Situation 9, JA)

Starting from the examples listed above, one can say that refusal to acknowledge guilt is excluded from any remedial function, and thus should not be categorised as an apology strategy as it does not constitute genuine apology and therefore does not address the offended's negative face. Nonetheless, and in light of the aforementioned examples, it is still quite apparent that though the offender abstains from accepting the blame, she is still implicitly holding herself, to a certain extent, responsible for the offence caused.

### 4.3.3 Account

Account was employed by subjects of both languages across all the situations, yet with variable percentages. Account is of great use, in that apologisers resorting to this particular strategy are attempting to minimise the blame assigned to them through the use of implicit and explicit reasons that might minimise the severity of the offence and help get them excused. Although this strategy could be said to be non-language specific because neither English nor Arabic has routinised expressions to linguistically realise it, there appears to be a gap in usage between the two groups in situation 6. The relatively low incidence of this strategy in this particular situation in Jordanian Arabic, as previously explained in section 4.2.6, is due to the potential remedial failure it might bring about, as to give more accounts, where physical damage is involved, usually

signals the offender's aim to shift responsibility and attach it to another party. This responsibility-relocation process is futile in this context and less likely to get the offence remediated. In all, subjects of both languages provided justifications for their behaviour in all situations in order to rebuild social equilibrium. Examples are:

26- I didn't realise the lid wasn't on the oil properly. (Situation 8, BE)

27- I was so wrapped up in work that I completely lost track of time. (Situation 3, BE)

28- لقد اتاني هاتف يقول أنه صديق عزيز علي دخل المستشفى, و صدمت بالخبر و خرجت على عجل و نسيت الموعد

*Laqad atani hatif yaqool annahoo s'adiiq ŷiiz*  
 DET come.PAST phone.NOM say.PRES DET friend.NOM.MASC close.MASC  
*ŷayy daxal almustaŷfa wa s'udimtuu belxabar*  
 on me enter.PAST.MASC.SG DEF ART.hospital and ISG.shock.PASSIVE.PAST by news  
*wa xaraŷtuu ŷa ŷaŷal wa nasiit almaw ŷid.*  
 and ISG.leave.PAST on hurry and ISG.forget.PAST DEF ART meeting

“I got a phone call confirming a close friend of mine had been admitted to hospital, and I therefore got shocked, left home in a hurry, and finally forgot the meeting.” (Situation 3, JA)

29- لكن يجب ان لاتفسر كلامي على هذا النحو. ما قلته كان بسورة عامة وليس موجة لأي شخص

*Laken yaŷzib an la tufasser kalamii ŷa haŷa alnaħw*  
 But must DET not 2SG.interpret.PAST my speech on DEM.SG way  
*.Ma qultuhuu kan biŷ'uurah ŷammah walaysa*  
 what ISG.say.PAST be.PAST.SG By picture general.FEM and not  
*muwaŷŷah li?ay ŷaxs.*  
 ISG.direct.PASSIVE.PAST.MASC to any person

“You shouldn't have interpreted my words this way. What I said was general and not directed towards anybody in particular.” (Situation 12, JA)

#### 4.3.4 Offer of repair

Although *offer of repair* is assumed to be situation-specific and it is often resorted to when a physical damage is involved (Blum-Kulka et al 1989), we found that subjects of both languages employed this semantic formula in all situations, except in situation 12, at different percentages. This seems to suggest that “damage” should not be defined only in terms of the physically inflicted abuse. Rather, the word “damage” encompasses both

physical and emotional offences. This interpretation is motivated by all subjects of both languages referring to this strategy in situation 10 where no actual physical damage is imposed and where there is no need to make reparation to the offended. The same argument applies to situation 2 (forgetting the professor's book). As mentioned in section 4.2.6, situation 6 was selected to constitute a suitable context for *offer of repair* strategy where the damage is deemed severe and thus likely to warrant more offers of repair. In light of what has been stated so far, one can say that there is a relationship between the severity of the damage (physical or emotional) incurred and the likelihood of offer of repair occurrence.

30 I have a free period in an hour, so I will return home and get it for you. (Situation 2, BE)

31-Let me try and clean it up, I will pay for it to be cleaned. I am more than willing to cover the cost of all damage. (Situation 6, BE)

32- سأقوم بتنظيف السيارة بنفسي لتعود كما كانت

<i>Saʔqoom</i>	<i>bitandʕif</i>	<i>al-sayyarah</i>	<i>binafsi.</i>
1SG.undertake.FUT	1SG.clean.FUT	DEF ART car	by self
<i>litaʕuud</i>	<i>kama</i>	<i>kanat</i>	
1SG.return.INFIN.FEM	as	3SG.be.PAST.FEM	

“I myself will get the car cleaned up to be spotless as it was.” (Situation 8, JA)

33- بكرة والله لأجيبه

*Bukrah wallah laʔdʕiibuh.*  
 Tomorrow by God 1SG.bring.FUT.OBJ

“I, by God, will bring it tomorrow.” (Situation 2. JA)

#### 4.3.5 Concern for hearer

*Concern for hearer* was of low incidence in both British and Jordanian data. It figured only in situations 6, 10, and 11. This clearly indicates it is a situation-specific strategy that is resorted to only when a space offence is involved. It should also be pointed out that British subjects maintained a higher percentage of concern for hearer than Jordanians.



34- Did I hurt your toes? (Situation 10, BE)

35- Is it badly damaged? (Situation 6, BE)

36- هل أنت على ما يرام؟

*Hal anta ʔa ma yuram?*

AUX you on okay

“Are you okay?” (Situation 10, JA)

37- هل حصل لك مكروه؟

*Hal hasʔala laka makruuh?*

AUX happen.PAST for you harm.NOM

“Have you got hurt?” (Situation 10, JA)

#### 4.3.6 Promise of forbearance

This strategy, like others, is resorted to in order to save the apologiser’s positive face and redress the offended party’s negative face. Notwithstanding, a promise of forbearance was also of a low incidence in both languages and was not employed across all the situations. Situation 3 triggered the most frequent use of a promise of forbearance; this might be linked to the assumption that the employee will continue to have meetings with his boss.

38- I promise I won’t stand you up again. (Situation 3, BE)

39- I promise I won’t be late. (Situation 4, BE)

40- لن أخلف بميعادي مرة أخرى

*Lan auxlif bimiʔadii marrah auxra.*

Not 1SG.miss.FUT my appointment time another.FEM

“I won’t miss any meeting again.” (Situation 4, JA)

41- سأبذل ما في وسعي لأتجنب ذلك المرة القادمة

*Saʔbduḷ mafi wisʔii liʔaḏzannab*

1SG.make.FUT efforts what in my capacity 1SG.avoid.INFIN

*ḏalika ʔmarrah al-qadimah.*

DEM.SG time.SG DEF ART-NEXT.SG.FEM

“I will do all I can to avoid this next time.” (Situation 3, JA)

### 4.3.7 Newly employed apology strategies

In addition to Cohen & Olshtain's (1983) categorisation system of apology strategies upon which this work is based, we found that a number of new strategies were used by informants of both languages. Two of these newly emerging strategies were used by subjects of both languages, whereas the rest, totalling three, figured only in the Jordanian data. It could be said that subjects resorting to these formulas are attempting to intensify their apologies, endeavouring to receive the offended party's sympathy and compassion, and getting the social equilibrium back in balance.

#### 4.3.7.1 New strategies emerging in both British and Jordanian Data

##### 4.3.7.1.1 Reassuring the offended party

This strategy was used by both groups in some situations, but had a particularly high incidence in situations 6 and 8 where physical damage is involved. By reassuring the offended, the apologiser does two things: she accepts responsibility for the offence, and most importantly quietens down the apologisee's annoyance, leaving no choice for the offended but to accept the apology. This strategy could be said to be taken as an extension, or another form, of the *offer of repair* in the sense that the offender provides the offended with enough personal details that are likely to put the apologisee's mind at rest. *Reassuring the offended party* could also be said to be the first step in the whole restitutive process in that it only expresses the offender's intent to get the offence repaired without having explicit expressions of *offer of repair*. Both groups realised this strategy through employing expressions that implicitly demonstrate the offender's intent to settle the apologisee's doubts, e.g. about getting the car repaired; British subjects additionally realised this strategy by using performatives, e.g. *assure*.

42- I will give you my mobile number and insurer's details. (Situation 6, BE)

43- توكل على الله. "أنا من أيديك هاي لايدك هاي"

*Tawakal ʔa allah, ana men iidak hai la iidak hai.*

2SG trust on God 1ACC from your hand DEM.SG to your hand DEM.SG

"Trust in God, I will be at your disposal "from one hand to another"." (Situation 6, JA)

44- يا بوي مين ليكي غيري بوذيكي؟

*Ya booy miin lekki ʔeirii biwaddiiki?!*

Dad.voc who for you not me take.PRES.OBJ

"O, father<sup>32</sup> who do you have other than me to take you shopping?!" (Situation 5, JA)

#### 4.3.7.1.2 Requiring the offended not to get angry

Although all the aforementioned strategies and sub-strategies are aimed at appeasing the offended and quieten his annoyance down, this strategy is different in that it plainly calls for the offended to hold anger as a step towards sorting out things amicably. This strategy was of a relative high incidence in situations 6, 7, and 8, where the physical damage involved is likely to make the offended angry.

45- Please don't get so angry with me. (Situation 6, BE)

46- على مهلك يا رجل

*ʔa mahlak ʔa raʔul.*

On slowness man.voc

"Don't get angry, man." (Situation 6, JA)

47- هذي من روعك!

*Haddi min rawʔak!*

2SG Slow down from your fear

"Calm down!" (Situation 6, JA)

#### 4.3.7.2 New apology strategies occurring only in the Jordanian data

Like all other cultures, Jordanian Arabic, besides the aforementioned strategies, has a wide spectrum of apology strategies and conventional expressions that serve as extra

<sup>32</sup> It should be noted that it is very common for fathers in the Jordanian culture to employ the vocative and endearment form *O, father* when addressing their sons and daughters as a way to emphasise the highest level of intimacy and solidarity. For a detailed discussion on this point, see section 6.3.

devices to have the remedial move culminate with the wished-for success. The use of these routinised forms serves as a reminder to the offended not to rebuff the apologisee and simultaneously invites the offended to forgive.

#### 4.3.7.2.1 Proverbs

The use of proverbs in Jordanian culture is two-fold: while they might be resorted to as an effective tool to redress the addressee's negative face, and thus lessen the severe impact of the infraction, some proverbs could also be used to signal the offender's clear intent to refrain from accepting responsibility. In the data collected, we found that instances of infraction-healing proverbs figured only in situations 2, 3, 5, and 6, where time and space offences are involved. Conversely, non-accepting responsibility proverbs were used in situation 12 where a talk offence is involved (for further details see section 5.7). When fruitfully employed, commonly-used proverbs are powerful to remedy the harm incurred and put the offended at ease. The effectiveness of the proverbs as a healing tool stems from the people's strong belief in them as idiomatic expressions that summarise the long-term experience of the elderly – something that is greatly appreciated by the members of Jordanian society. Below are examples of proverbs employed by subjects to mirror the offender's genuine apology:

48- كل عقدة ولها حل

*Kul suqdeh wa laha hal.*

Every knot and DEM.SG.FEM solution.SG

“Every knot has someone to undo it.” (Situation 6)

49- مزح الرجال جد وكلامهم ملازم

*Mazeh arrdjal dadd wa kalamhum malazim.*

Joke man.PLGEN seriousness and 1SG.speech.PLNOM.MASC vice.PL

Men's joke is earnestness and their serious words are vices.

“Men are committed to keep promises and not to go back on their words.”  
(Situation 6)

50- المكتوب على الجبين بتشوفة العين

*elmaktoob ala aldzabiin bit suufuh elseen.*

Write.PASSIVE.PRES.MASC ON DEF ART-forehead 3SG.see.PRES.FEM DEF ART-eye

“Whatever is written on the forehead is always seen.”

All forms of harm and benefit are predestined. (Situation 6)

51- القلم بزل-

*Elgalam bizell.* (Situation 2)

DEF ART-pen.NOM 3SG.ERR.PRES

The pen errs.

“Everyone is subject to commit mistakes.”

The proverbs stated above are all remedial; (48) is, for example, intended to reassure the offended and express the offender’s readiness to have the infraction sorted out. The language of metaphor in (49) is also designed to express the offender’s absolute commitment to get the offended repaired. (50), on the other hand, is related to the issue discussed in the next section, reminding the offended that all forms of harm and benefit are predestined and that they are out of the offender’s control. In (51), the apologiser is attempting to get herself pardoned through alerting the professor that everyone is expected to forget and err because of being only human.

However, there were two occurrences of refusal-to-acknowledge responsibility proverbs in situation 12. These are:

52- اللي في بطنه لحم ني بتحرك

*Illi fi batʕnoh lahim nayy bitharrak.*

He who in belly.SG.MASC meat raw 3SG.MOVE.PRES.MASC

Having uncooked meat in one’s stomach causes colic.

“The one who is at fault is sensitive to others’ comments.” (Situation 12)

53- اللي تحت باطة مسلة تنخزة

*Illi taht batʕooh massallah tinxazuh.*

He who under armpit.SG.MASC pack needle prick.PRES.SG.MASC.OBJ

He who has a pack needle underneath his armpit is highly likely to get pricked.

“The one who is at fault is sensitive to others’ comments.” (Situation 12)

The proverbs mentioned above free the offender from being involved in the offensive act and simultaneously return the blame to the offended. They demonstrate that the offended is at fault and is, therefore, likely to feel vulnerable to others’ comments even though it is not intended that he should feel insulted.

#### 4.3.7.2.2 Attributing the offence to external causes (Determinism)

As indicated in tables 3 and 4, this strategy was used only in situations 6, 7, and 8 where physical damage is involved. Because of being pervasive in the Muslim worldview, determinism, as an apology strategy, is often resorted to to provide excuse for offences through stressing the incontestably agreed notion that people are caused to commit wrongdoings, and that events will take place the way God intends them to go, as he is the one who has full mastery of harms and benefits. People's entire belief in God as the only one who has foreordained every single event and has fully determined the future has serious implications for how they behave and interact with each other. There is, consequently, a reduced emphasis on blaming or getting the offender penalised, as every incident or offence one might be part of is out of the individual's control. However, people are aware that belief in determinism should not be sought as a strategic tactic to find a way out of troubles and free one from being responsible and accountable for one's behaviour. Rather, attributing the offence, for example, to secondary causes serves as a mitigating device that lessens the severity of the offence and assuages the annoyance of the offended, but without freeing offenders from responsibility due to the fact that things are completely controlled and preordained by God. The following examples figured in the Jordanian data:

54- ليس بيدي حيلة لأنه قضاء الله وقدره

*Laysa biyadi hiilah liʔnnuh qadʔaʔ allah wa qadaruh.*

Not in hand power because determinism

“It was out of control because it had been predetermined.” (Situation 6)

55- انت بتعرف انه هذا ممكن يحدث حتى لو كنت انت السائق

*Int ibtʔrif innuh haða mumken yaħduθ*

DEM.SG.MASC KNOW.PRES.SG.MASC DET DEM.SG may happen.PRES

*ħatta law kunt int ilssayig.*

Even if be.PAST.SG.MASC DEM.SG.MASC DEF ART-driver.SG.MASC

“You know this was planned to happen even if you had been the driver.”  
(Situation 7)

56- المكتوب سوف يحصل معي أو مع غيري

*Elmaktuub sawfa yaḥsul maḥii ʔw*  
DEF ART-write.PASSIVE.PAST.MASC will happen.MASC with me or  
*maʔ yeeri.*

with not me

“The predestined (accident) is to happen even if I or someone else was the driver.” (Situation 7)

All the examples stated above, especially (56), indicate that, as a matter of fact, the accident was preordained regardless of who was the driver. In example (55), the apologiser strengthens apology by reminding the offended that the accident was meant to occur even if the offended had been driving. We might argue that imputing the offence to predestined causes is pragmatically effective in that the intended perlocutionary effect, which always pivots around appeasing the offended, is often guaranteed to be understood as an attempt to rectify offences and leave the apologisee satisfied with the difficult-to-rebuff outcome.

#### 4.3.7.2.3 Self-punishment

This strategy, which centres on the offender verbally imprecating herself for the offence, is also used in order to deepen the apologisee’s sympathy with the offender and reduce the level of disagreement and resentment between the two parties. Strategically, the offender, by employing severe self-reproach words to express extreme discontent about what happened, is attempting to minimise the options before the offended and leave him no choice but to easily and without reluctance accept the presented apologies. This strategy figured in situations 2, 6, 7, 10, and 12 where the nature of the offence justifies the subjects’ recourse to this formula.

57- الله يقطعني!

*Allah yegtʔaḥni.* (Situation 6)

God.VOC cut.PRES.SG.MASC

“May God forget me!”

58- يا ريت لساني انقطع

*Ya reet elsani ingatʔaʕ.*

Wish.PRES my tongue cut.PASSIVE.PAST

“I wish I had my tongue cut before articulating those comments.” (Situation 12)

59- الله لا يعطيني العافية

*Allah la yʕʕinii elʕafyah.*

God.VOC not 3SG.give.PRES.OBJ DEF ART-health

“May Allah not reward me good health?!” (Situation 10)

When read non-literally, the examples above could be taken as forms of supplication to God requesting a negative action as a response to the offence. They demonstrate the offender’s serious intent to set the harm right and take back the offence. It could be argued that Jordanians, when employing such a strategy, are seriously attempting to deliver a worthwhile apology. More precisely, Jordanians intentionally employ *self-punishment* because of its expected healing effects, and because they know that the offended who has heard the offender imprecating herself will not return her apology with refusal.

#### 4.3.7.2.4 Minimising the severity of the offence

Part of the offender’s serious attempts to soothe the offence is to reduce the degree of the severity of the offence in the eyes of the offended, turning him to view the infraction through the lens of satisfaction. Respondents claimed that this semantic formula is not used to trivialise the offence and detach the offender from being responsible, but should be understood as a conventional expression designed to absorb the offended party’s anger and mitigate the severity of the offence.

60- ما صار شئ

*Ma sʕar ʕai.*

Not happen.PAST thing.SG

“Nothing serious happened.” (Situation 10)



61- معلىش!

*Maʕaleʃ!*

No problem

“It is okay.” (Situation 8)

62- كلها ارتطامة بسيطة. لم يحدث شيء لنتفعل

*Kullha ertitʕamah basʕiitʕah, lam yahduθ.*

All.FEM bump.FEM simple.FEM not happen.PAST

*fai linanfaʕel*

thing.SG 1SG.upset.INFIN

“It is only a small bump. Nothing serious happened, so we (inclusive ‘we’) should not get angry.” (Situation 10)

It should be noted that when the above examples are contextually employed, contrary to what they appear to be, they are effectively remedial and mark the offender’s real intent to apologise.

#### 4.4 Intensifying the apology

Returning to tables 3 and 4 and examining the data presented, we found that in addition to the presence of *account*, *taking on responsibility*, and *offer of repair*, subjects of both languages tended to intensify their *IFIDs* in all situations (except offer of repair in situation 12) through the use of adverbials and/or emotional expressions. However, whereas the British subjects exhibited a clear preference to intensify their *IFIDs* frequently in all situations, with the highest incidence in situations 2, 3, 6, 7, and 10, the Jordanians, on the other hand, intensified their *IFIDs* frequently only in situations 2, 6, and 10, although still relatively infrequently compared to the British usage. It is noticeable that the British subjects tended to intensify their apologies more when the apologisee was of a lower status than the apologisee, as is the case in situations 2, 3, and 7, or when the offence was relatively serious, as in situations 6 and 10. The same holds true to some extent for the Jordanians, who also intensified their apologies in situations 2, 6, and 10, but not in situations 3 and 7, where the apologisee is of a lower status than the apologisee, where – for special considerations revealed through the interviews – Jordanians chose not to intensify. A low incidence of intensifiers occurred in both languages in situations 1 and 5 where the apologisee is of a higher status than the

apologisee; and in situations 4, 8, 9, 11, and 12 where the interactants are of equal status and the offence is relatively less serious, especially in situations 4, 11, and 12.

Intensification of the *IFIDs* was fulfilled by subjects of both languages via a number of means. The use or repetition of adverbials was the most overriding intensification device used by informants of both languages, with the Jordanians sometimes intensifying their *IFIDs* through the repetition of the performative verb *a'atather* (apologise) or the key word *asif* (sorry). British subjects employed a wide range of adverbs, like *so*, *very*, *really*, *terribly*, *dreadfully*, *awfully* and *incredibly*. Correspondingly, Jordanians resorted to a set of conventional adverbs to strengthen their apologies, such as *jidan* = *very*, *haqqan* = *really*, *ktheer* = *very much*. In addition to this, Jordanians used *abadan* = *absolutely not*, but only alongside the *lack of intent* sub-strategy.

63- I'm so sorry. (Situation 10, BE)

64- I'm really, really sorry. (Situation 2, BE)

65- اسف جدا " جدا " جدا "

*Asif ʕjiddan ʕjiddan ʕjiddan.* (Situation 10, JA)

Sorry very very very

"Very very very sorry."

66- اسف اسف اسف

*Asif asif asif.* (Situation 2, JA)

"Sorry sorry sorry."

67- عفوا " عفوا "

*Safwan Safwan.* (Situation 11, JA)

"Pardon pardon."

68- ابدأ " ابدأ " مش انت المقصود

*Abadan, abadan muʃ inta elmaqsʕuud.*

Never never not DEM.2SG DEF ART-intend.PASSIVE.PRES.MASC

"Absolutely not, you are not the intended." (Situation 12, JA)

Both British and Jordanian subjects also tended to intensify their *IFIDs* through the use of emotional exclamatory words/phrases to express unintentionality of the offence

caused. British respondents were more likely than Jordanians to use this intensification tool, choosing from such as: *Oh, Oh my God, Oh gosh, goodness me, Oh honey, Oooh, Oooops, Ow, Ah no, and Oh my goodness*. By the same token, Jordanians employed a number of emotional phrases and words to achieve the same effect: *Ya illahi/ ya sattar = Oh my God, Ah, Oh, Lah lah lah, and ya lelmusʕibah! = what a disaster!* Examples are:

69- Ooooh! I'm so sorry. (Situation 11, BE)

70- Oh gosh! I'm really sorry. (Situation 10, BE)

71- يا الهي! لقد ارتكبت عملا "فظيحا"

*Ya illahi laqad ertakabtu samalan fadʕisan.*

God.voc 1SG.COMMITT.PAST WORK.ACC terrible.MASC

"Oh my God! I have committed a terrible act." (Situation 6, JA)

Additionally, both British and Jordanians intensified their apology through the use of two sub-formulas of *IFIDs* or by repeating the same *IFID*. Although rare, the following double *IFIDs* examples figured in our data.

72- I'm really sorry. Forgive me sweetheart. (Situation 5, BE)

73- متأسف جدا "جدا". سامحني يا أخي

*Muttʕssif ʕziddan ʕziddan. Samehni ya axi.*

Sorry.1SG.MASC very very forgive.MASC brother.voc

"Very very sorry. Forgive me, brother." (Situation 10, BE)

Especially interesting are the cases in Jordanian data when speakers used *maf'oul mutlaq = cognate accusative* as an effective intensification device. The cognate accusative is very common in Arabic, where much of the vocabulary is developed from verbal roots. The following example illustrates the aforementioned:

74- أعتذر اعتذارا "شديدا"

*a ʕtaḍer e ʕtiḍaran fadiidan.*

1SG.pologise.PRES apology.COGNATE ACC strong.MASC

"I apologise a great deal of apology." (Literal gloss) (Situation 2. JA)

A stylistically acceptable Arabic-English translation is:

I apologise a great deal.

I apologise deeply for this.

In English, there are some restrictions on the repetition of a verb and a noun of the same derivation adjacent to each other as this might lead to the addressee being confused. Contrary to this is the fact that in Arabic the repetition of a verb and a noun (that is derived from the same verbal root) is grammatically appropriate. The repetition of a verbal noun after the verb makes the sentence more emphatic, hence the Jordanian subjects' frequent use of cognate accusative in intensifying the apologies. The following example is also illustrative:

75- أتأسف تأسفاً شديداً

Ataʔssaf taʔssufan jadiidan.

1SG.regret.PRES regret.COGNATE ACC strong.MASC

I regret a great deal of regret. (Literal gloss) (Situation 2: JA)

“I regret this a great deal.” (Stylistically palatable)

Added to the previously explained, Jordanians intensified their apologies very much through the act of swearing. Generally speaking, swearing in Arabic context in general and in Jordanian Arabic in particular is a common conversation feature that often prefaces most types of speech acts. The significance of swearing in the social life of Arabs lies in its power to confirm truth. Although people are requested to swear only by God, there are instances when they swear by, for example, prophets and messengers. Abd el-Jawad (2000) explores the socio-pragmatic effects of swearing in Jordanian Arabic, showing that swearing not only mirrors the effects of religion on speech act behaviour, but also that of socio-cultural factors. This might explain why people, in addition to swearing by God, are inclined to swear by, for example, family members – especially the dead, the life or honour of close relatives, or to swear by body parts such as the moustache, which is deemed to be a symbol of manhood. Religious swearing expressions are realised via the mention of the word of Allah (God). The most commonly used expressions are the prototypical forms: *wallah al- ʕaðʕim* = *by God Almighty*, or *uqsumu/qasaman billah il ʕaðʕim* = *I swear/swearing by the Almighty God*. Social-

cultural swearing could be fulfilled through conventional forms like *warahmet walidati* = *by the soul of my mother*, *wahayat el- yalyiin* = *by the life of those who are dear to me*. When it comes to apologising, Jordanians tend to preface their apologies with a swearing form to express their commitment and their serious intent to get the hurt remedied. It should also be pointed out that swearing may be used in combination with all apology strategies except with the *IFIDs*, where swearing appears stylistically odd. The following examples figure in the Jordanian data:

76- والله ما كنت منتبة

*Wallah ma kunt mentabih.*

By God not 1SG.be.PAST.MASC watch.PROG

“By God, I wasn’t watching you.” (Situation 10)

77- ورحمة أبوي نسييت الكتاب يا دكتور

*wa rahmet abooy nasiit el-kitab ya dactoor.*

And mercy father.GEN 1SG.forget.PAST DEF ART-book doctor.VOC

“By the soul of my father, I forgot the book, doctor.” (Situation2. JA)

78- وحياء عيونك الا أخذك الليلة

*Wa hayaat e syuunak ella auxdak elleeleh.*

And life your eye.PL.MASC take.MASC.OBJ DEF ART-tonight

“By the life of your eyes, I will take you (shopping) tonight.” (Situation 5, JA)

#### 4.5 Social parameters and apology

As previously explained, the twelve apology situations were selected and designed to differ in terms of Brown & Levinson’s explanatory variables, namely social power, social distance, and the severity of the offence. Building on our discussions on intensified *IFIDs* at the beginning of section 4.4, it becomes obvious that the severity of the offence is the predominant factor that decides the selection and frequency of apologies, taking into consideration that an overall assessment of the seriousness with which the offence is viewed across the twelve situations in both languages was made during the interviews, through asking respondents about their relative evaluation of the severity of offence in each situation. Returning to tables 3 and 4 and observing the percentage of intensified *IFIDs* in each situation, we found that there is a relationship between the severity of the

offence and apology intensity. Severe offences in both cultures are likely to trigger more intensified apologies, and this observation is quite evident in situations 6 and 10. It could also be said that apology intensity correlates positively with social power, in that although the offence in situation 2 (forgetting the professor's book) is less serious, British subjects exhibited a preference to intensify IFIDs, and this is the result of the apologiser being of a lower status than the apologisee. The same does not seem to apply to Jordanian subjects, who intensified their apologies in this situation only to avoid the academic penalty inflicted by the professor and not because of their recognition of the high social status of the apologisee. Such argument is evidenced by the Jordanians' tendency not to intensify apologies in situation 7 (having an accident with the manager's car) though the apologiser is similarly of a lower status than the apologisee.

Upon an examination of the British findings in tables 3 and 4, we might say that where the apologiser and the apologisee are equal in status and the offence is severe, the apologiser is more likely to intensify apology than when the offence is less serious. Such a finding is quite clear in situation 10 (bumping into passenger and hurting him) compared to situation 4 (forgetting a meeting with friend). Also, where the apologiser is of a lower status than the apologisee and the offence is serious, the apologiser is more likely to apologise than if the two parties are of equal status, as clearly evident in the percentage of intensified *IFIDs* in situation 7 (having an accident with the manager's car) when compared to situation 8 (spilling a bottle of oil over the neighbour's car's seat). Additionally, a comparison of situation 7 with situation 2 (forgetting the professor's book) indicates that when the apologiser is of a lower status than the apologisee and the offence is serious, she is more likely to apologise than if the offence is less serious. Finally, if the apologiser and the apologisee have equal social power and the offence is severe, the apologiser is more likely to apologise than if the offence is less serious, as is the case with situation 6 (backing into someone's car and causing damage) compared to situation 4 (forgetting a meeting with a friend).

In addition to the efficacious role of the seriousness of the offence, Jordanian apologies, on the other hand, seem to be influenced by the social distance between interlocutors, as is quite evident in the relatively low percentage of intensified *IFIDs* in situation 7 (15%),

where the offence is serious and the social distance is low, and the relatively high intensity in situation 10 (25%) where the offence is also serious, but the social distance is high.

So far, it has become obvious that the seriousness of the offence is the primary factor that determines the degree of apology intensity. However, we need to take account of the cultural differences in the assessment of the seriousness of the offence, which are quite evident in situation 3 (forgetting a meeting with a boss), and situation 4 (forgetting a meeting with a friend), a point that has been discussed in detail in sections 4.2.3 and 4.2.4.

In light of this, and despite the similarity between respondents of both languages in terms of the seriousness of the offence being the major factor that determines the intensity of apologies, we found that respondents of the two cultures exhibited disparity with respect to social distance. In situations 4 (forgetting a meeting with friend), 5 (forgetting to take son shopping), and 8 (spilling a bottle of oil over the neighbour's car's seat) where the interactants involved are either friends or neighbours, it is noticeable that the British subjects tended to intensify their apologies, whereas Jordanians did so less: situation 4 ( BE 70% vs. JA 4%), situation 5 ( BE 38% vs. JA 7%), and situation 8 (BE 50% vs. JA 8%). This substantiates that the Jordanian apologetic behaviour between acquaintances and casual friends is less frequent and less intensified.

Building on the above, we may claim that the findings of this study only partially conform to those of Fraser (1981), Brown & Levinson (1987), and Holmes (1995), who claim that the interdependence between the seriousness of the offence and the social distance determines the frequency and intensity of apology. Fraser (1981) and Holmes (1995) point out that the lesser degree of social distance between interlocutors is likely to minimise the need to apologise; similarly, Brown & Levinson (1987) claim, as noted, that apologies are "sensitive" to the increased social distance and the seriousness of the offence. In the present study's findings, however, although the Jordanian linguistic behaviour appears to be sensitive to the seriousness of the offence and social distance, the British apologies appear to be dependent rather on the interaction between the

seriousness of the offence and social power. Indeed the British findings appear to be in line with those of Reiter (2000) which suggest that the severity of the offence and social power are the only variables that shape the language of apologies; and also those of Wolfson on compliments (1988), that most compliments take place between participants who are acquaintances and casual friends and not between interlocutors who are complete strangers or intimates.

#### 4.6 Concluding remarks

The present chapter, employing the apology *speech act set*, is aimed at exploring apology from a cross-cultural angle, looking at its realisations in British English and Jordanian Arabic. The findings of this study swim with the stream of those of Blum-Kulka et al (1989), in that *IFIDs* and *taking on responsibility* figured in all situations across the two languages, whereas the other apology strategies appear to be situation-specific. Looking into the structure of the *IFIDs* in both languages has been one of the major concerns of this chapter. The results show that in spite of the numerous possibilities for realisation of *IFIDs*, both British subjects and Jordanians tended to resort to the most commonly used remedial expressions, namely *I'm sorry*, and the interchangeably used *asif/muta?assif*. The results partly point to the divergence the two languages exhibited concerning apology intensity. British subjects showed a preference to strengthen their apologies through means of adverbs, such as *so, really, terribly.....* etc, or emotional expressions, while Jordanians were less likely to intensify the formulaic remedies used.

Because apology, like all other speech acts, is affected by social parameters in that the latter exert some influence on the decision to apologise, strategy preference, and apology intensity, the study also investigates this area to discover which interaction of these variables is responsible for the use of apology. The results obtained show that whereas the seriousness of the offence together with social power were found to be integral to the decision and choice of apology strategy in British English, the interaction of the seriousness of the offence and social distance is the one that controls the whole remedial process in Jordanian Arabic.



# Chapter 5: Gender differences and apology in Jordanian Arabic

## 5.1 Introduction

The major aim of the present chapter is to examine the way Jordanian men and women apologise and explore whether they exhibit differences in terms of the apologetic behaviour they adopt. The discussion will be confined to the Jordanian context only, as a number of studies already strongly confirm that gender differences have no significant effect on apologetic behaviours in British English. As explained in section 2.4, many researchers have failed to trace any gender differences in the use of this speech act in British culture. Aijmer (1995), for example, when examining a limited part of London Lund Corpus, did not find significant differences in the way male and female apologise. Likewise Deutschmann<sup>33</sup> (2003), on the act of apologising in British English, and Schlenker & Darby (1981), investigating the use of apologies in social predicaments, found that the gender of the speaker does not affect apology responses. By the same token, Reiter (2000), whose study centres on investigating the way British and Uruguayan speakers apologise, found that there were no gender differences in the frequency and way of apologising. This being so, we limit our discussion to explore the notion of gender differences in Jordanian culture only.

The fact that Jordanian society is a tribal society places some constraints on male-female and female-male conversation. That is to say, when socially interacting with each other, people attach utmost importance to the social rules that regulate the way they should behave. So our task in this chapter is to discover whether these social constraints affect the way the two genders apologise.

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<sup>33</sup> Deutschmann's study explores the speech act of apology in British English of the 1990s. This study examines the forms and functions of apologies in the spoken part of British National Corpus where apologies were yielded by dialogues produced by over 1700 speakers.

Table 9. Analysis of Apology Strategies in Jordanian Arabic According to the Gender of the Apologiser and the Apologisee across the First Four Situations

Situation	Situation 1				Situation 2				Situation 3				Situation 4			
	F-F	F-M	M-M	M-F	F-F	F-M	M-M	M-F	F-F	F-M	M-M	M-F	F-F	F-M	M-M	M-F
Strategy																
A-IFID	50	46	35	59	100	61	96	99	73	45	27	43	62	30	20	25
IFID intensified	13	17	5	33	44	10	20	60	33	15	7	13	8	-	-	-
B-Taking on responsibility	18	20	15	28	100	92	96	98	62	43	25	58	35	18	8	23
C-Explanation	97	92	71	88	95	87	81	95	43	43	33	38	70	45	55	43
D- Offer of repair	50	55	22	58	90	85	86	88	10	5	8	13	48	19	15	25
E- Concern for hearer	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
F- Promise for forbearance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	24	5	6	3	10	3	-	-
G- Reassuring the offended party	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
H- Requesting the offended not to get angry	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	4	-	-	-
I- Proverbs	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	3	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-
J- Attributing the offence to external causes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
K- Self-punishment	-	-	-	-	16	-	10	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
L- Minimising the severity of the offence	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	6	-	-	-

F-F = female speaker addressing a female, F-M = female speaker addressing a male, M-M = male speaker addressing a male, M-F = male speaker addressing a female.

**Table 10. Analysis of Apology Strategies in Jordanian Arabic According to the Gender of the Apologiser and the Apologisee across the Second Four Situations**

Situation Strategy	Situation 5				Situation 6				Situation 7				Situation 8			
	F-F	F-M	M-M	M-F	F-F	F-M	M-M	M-F	F-F	F-M	M-M	M-F	F-F	F-M	M-M	M-F
A-IFID	88	98	90	85	40	17	73	88	60	48	20	15	90	63	33	23
IFID intensified	8	20	5	18	32	40	78	93	23	18	8	5	15	10	-	-
B-Taking on responsibility	20	38	23	26	98	95	100	100	45	50	35	28	83	55	40	38
C-Explanation	35	67	43	45	8	5	13	40	90	88	80	85	13	10	10	3
D- Offer of repair	88	93	83	88	90	66	100	100	88	80	85	93	75	43	26	20
E- Concern for hearer	-	-	-	-	3	3	8	50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
F- Promise for forbearance	5	30	-	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
G- Reassuring the offended party	-	10	5	8	38	40	60	68	5	3	-	3	12	5	-	-
H- Requesting the offended not to get angry	15	25	13	10	58	53	30	20	30	3	10	-	22	25	-	-
I- Proverbs	-	-	5	-	-	-	35	38	-	-	-	3	-	-	14	5
J- Attributing the offence to external causes	-	-	-	-	48	19	90	85	18	8	60	53	-	-	6	-
K- Self-punishment	-	-	-	-	45	38	16	-	28	4	-	-	-	-	-	-
L- Minimising the severity of the offence	5	18	3	8	5	-	3	8	68	43	45	50	8	-	3	-

F-F = female speaker addressing a female, F-M = female speaker addressing a male, M-M = male speaker addressing a male, M-F = male speaker addressing a female.

Table 11. Analysis of Apology Strategies in Jordanian Arabic According to the Gender of the Apologiser and the Apologisee across the Last Four Situations

Situation	Situation 9					Situation 10					Situation 11					Situation 12					
	F-F	F-M	M-M	M-F	F-F	F-M	M-M	M-F	F-F	F-M	M-M	M-F	F-F	F-M	M-M	M-F	F-F	F-M	M-M	M-F	
Strategy																					
A-IFID	48	55	15	15	100	95	100	100	93	95	100	93	93	95	78	85	72	73	28	100	
IFID intensified	4	10	-	-	45	78	93	93	15	5	93	78	43	5	30	30	13	40	3	95	
B-Taking on responsibility	13	23	8	10	75	73	78	78	43	30	78	43	43	10	35	95	90	30	83		
C- Explanation	93	93	78	83	8	32	38	38	33	3	38	33	33	8	20	85	85	80	93		
D- Offer of repair	58	65	33	40	100	100	100	100	18	100	100	100	18	23	50	-	-	-	-		
E- Concern for hearer	-	-	-	-	14	15	2	65	3	2	65	3	3	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	
F- Promise for forbearance	-	-	-	-	10	25	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
G- Reassuring the offended party	-	-	-	-	5	5	3	-	5	3	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
H- Requesting the offended not to get angry	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	5	13	-	-	
I- Proverbs	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	3	45	-	
J- Attributing the offence to external causes	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
K- Self-punishment	-	-	-	-	45	68	5	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
L- Minimising the severity of the offence	-	-	-	-	3	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	8	-	-	-	

F-F = female speaker addressing a female, F-M = female speaker addressing a male, M-M = male speaker addressing a male, M-F = male speaker addressing a female.

## 5.2 Whose apologies are most frequent?

Although – based on the findings presented in tables 9, 10, and 11 – women appear to apologise more than men across most of the situations, there is no decisive answer to the question of who apologises most, as this depends on a number of factors. The gender of the apology recipient seems to be crucial in determining the manner and frequency of apology. In addition to this, the status of the apology recipient, the degree of familiarity between the apologiser and the apologisee, and the offence weight also contribute to the differences the two genders exhibit when performing the act of apologising. We will first start by analysing Jordanian apologies in terms of the gender of the apologiser and recipient as the gateway to explore issues of social power, social distance, and the offence type and weight<sup>34</sup>.

### 5.2.1 The sex of the apologiser and recipient

In order to have a full understanding of any differences the two genders might display when apologising, we again need to, as in chapter 4, analyse apologies situation by situation. Added to this is the need to distinguish between within-gender and cross-gender apologetic behaviour, at which point, we might have a clearer idea about who is more likely than the other to use and sometimes intensify apologies.

Examining the findings of situation 1 (University professor not returning a student's term paper) presented in table 9, we found that, with only slight differences, females were consistent in the way they apologised both at within-gender and cross-gender level. However, apologies between men appear to be less frequent than from men to women. Although female respondents believed that male and female students should be evenly apologised to, male subjects intensified the need to apologise more to females than males. The male respondents interviewed expressed the belief that male university professors tend to be more formal with females than with males. Subjects added that this

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<sup>34</sup> Most of the studies conducted under the CCSARP project (Cross Cultural Speech Act Realisation Project) take these social factors into account. Moreover, researchers like Holmes (1989), Aijmer (1995) and Tannen (1994) examined the influence of these factors and the effect of gender on remedial acts.

could be explained as a precautionary procedure taken on the male lecturer's part, in order to avoid any potential male-female conflict. This conflict-avoidance technique symbolised by the employment of a relatively high frequency and intensity of apology strategies may be seen as a strategic tactic designed to demarcate the proper limits to which the two-party conversation should go. It might also express the male professor's fear of being misinterpreted by female students.

In situation 2 (Student forgetting to return the professor's book), apologies by both genders to female professors were more frequent than those to males. Respondents of both genders highlighted the importance of apologising to female professors and simultaneously minimised the need to intensify apologies to male professors. The respondents unanimously agreed that women in this particular context should be apologised to more often than male professors. In support of the responses provided in the questionnaire, respondents commented that male professors are more cooperative and more lenient than female ones, who are less likely than males to take students' mitigating circumstances into consideration. Some respondents claimed that in order to minimise the degree of the offence, some students might resort to making up accounts that help moderate the female professor's annoyance. It may be that women's enthusiasm to keep to the basic rules and regulations of the institutions they work in is the main motive that causes them to be less lenient with students than male professors, who are more likely than females to bend the rules. This interpretation could also explain why women were apologised to more frequently than men.

In the data analysis for situation 3 (Forgetting a meeting with a boss), we found that women tended to apologise more than men. As detailed in table 9, apologies were found to be most frequent between women and relatively rare between men. It is also worth noting that while female offenders apologised less to bosses of the opposite gender, male offenders apologised more to female bosses than to male. This line of behaviour on the part of men is quite apparent in the way they doubled the percentage of apologies using *taking responsibility* when women bosses are the recipient of their apology. These findings indicate that men and women behave similarly only when the person deserving

apology is a woman. However, whereas female respondents explained the need to apologise more to a female boss in order to restore and maintain a good relationship with her, male respondents stated that they would apologise profoundly to a female boss in order to avoid any potential confrontation with her, and not because female bosses hold a particularly powerful position. Female respondents stated that they need not apologise to men in the same way they do to women. Like the men, they perceived male bosses as being easier to deal with than women, and this minimised the need to intensify apologies to them. Male respondents claimed that only action is needed to put things right. To this, one added:

“Because men and women have different ways of thinking, I, as an employee, have to take these differences into account if I want to have my apology accepted. It is right that men and women perceive things differently, yet I think it is much more than being differences in men’s and women’s conceptualisation of things as being more or less offensive. We have to admit that we sometimes apologise to women to prove we are not ignoring them besides our realisation that we have offended them. Apologies directed to women are so sensitive for we have to think well before articulating any word that might bear unintended extra hidden offence. Men, however, rarely demand apology, but if it happens we can do it without thinking of what would be most appropriate to say.”

Culturally speaking, the sociocultural rules that regulate cross-gender interaction appear to permeate the work environment and affect the human interaction circle, as seen in apology disparity the two genders exhibited at a cross-gender level. It could be argued that both men and women adopt two different lines of linguistic behaviour – a divergence that might be accredited to the rules of society that still exert their influence on workplaces.

Like their behaviour in situation 3, women in situation 4 (forgetting a meeting with a friend) were found to apologise more than men, though less to men than to women. Men, on the other hand, tended to downgrade the importance of apology in this context even when the person deserving apology is a woman. The significant difference in the performance of the two genders is apparent in the use of *IFIDs* ( $x^2 = 12.80$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). In relation to these findings, female respondents tended to present a well-

organised apology to female friends which they explained as an attempt to substantiate that the offence is not intentional, and thus perpetuate the friendly relationship they have already established. The fact that female-male apologies were relatively infrequent in this situation is linked to men's unwillingness to listen to women apologising, out of respect; part of men's respect for female friends is not to ask for apology. Such tendency on the part of male friends has been conventionalised by time to mature into a basis on which cross-gender communication is organised. Some female respondents explained that they do not usually apologise to male friends, as their apologies are often met with sharp rebuff. In contrast, male respondents stated their views that apologies should not be heavily exchanged between friends, as this is likely to formalise the relationship<sup>35</sup>.

In situation 5 (forgetting to take son shopping), no statistically significant differences have been traced between male and female apologies. The slight differences observed might refer to the parents' care to treat children equally. This concern is clear even in the amount of apology parents deliver to daughters and sons. In spite of this, some believed that fathers are inclined to apologise more to daughters than sons, as daughters are more obedient to fathers than sons, and daughters are more able and skilful than sons to manipulate fathers and thus generate a large number of apologies. Respondents claimed, however, that women tend to apologise more to sons than daughters, because sons are less likely than daughters to accept a mother's apology. From a cultural perspective, sons do not have the courage to show fathers their annoyance, but find it easy to straightforwardly express their displeasure before mothers. This norm leads mothers to apologise more to sons, with the daughters being more frequent recipients of fathers' apologies. contradict

In situation 6 (backing into someone's car and causing damage), where physical damage is involved, men were found to apologise more than women, and they apologised to women more than to men. Women also apologised more frequently to women than to men. In spite of their divergence in the frequency of apologies, both men and women

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<sup>35</sup> It should be noted that extensive employment of apologies between male friends is not welcomed as it amounts to overpoliteness, which is not in line with the common norms that spur friends to deal with each other in a very natural and informal way.



agreed that the use of explicit apologies – *IFIDs* – alone is too feeble to minimise the severity of the offence and that, as mentioned in section 4.2.6 of chapter 4, *IFIDs* could be glossed as impolite behaviour and a sign of the offender’s indifference if not followed by an offer of repair. The fact that women apologised less to men in this situation could be linked to the assumption that women are often excused from apologising (in such cases), since it will be shameful for a man if he expects a woman to apologise. On the contrary, men apologise more to women than to men, which some respondents attributed to a desire to avoid any potential conflict and confrontation.

In contrast with their behaviour in situation 6, men and women exhibited rather different apologetic responses in situation 7 (having an accident with the manager’s car). Women apologised more than men did and their apologies were more frequent between women, while men were less inclined to apologise, and apologies were relatively less frequent between men. These significant differences are quite clear in the use of *IFIDs* ( $x^2 = 13.33$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). Considering the level of familiarity between the offender and the offended party, it appears that men rather than women give weight to the level of familiarity with the apologisee when performing apology. This tendency has been observed in the significant differences the two genders exhibited in situation 8 where women apologised more than men for spilling a bottle of oil over the neighbour’s car seat – *IFIDs* ( $x^2 = 27.86$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), *responsibility* ( $x^2 = 15.22$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), and *repair* ( $x^2 = 20.000$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). In support of these findings, female respondents deemed that apology is crucial in this context to maintain a good relationship with neighbours. In opposition to this view, male respondents believed that apologies in this context are more offensive than the offence itself and that they need not apologise profoundly even to the opposite gender.

The disparity men and women displayed in terms of strategy selection and frequency was also noted in situation 9 where women tended to apologise more than men. Returning to the points raised in section 4.2.9, which pertain to subjects’ reluctance to apologise explicitly, and promptness to offer repair and provide explanation, we might expect that women are more likely than men to sacrifice money in favour of perpetuating

reputation. As also demonstrated in section 4.2.9, subjects in this situation chose to offer repair, and were less likely to employ *IFIDs* that have the potential of spoiling the remedial process if used alone in this context. We found that whereas women tended to use *IFIDs* in conjunction with *account* and *repair*, men were less likely to resort to *IFIDs* and, instead, they limited the remedial process to *account* and *offer of repair*. It is interesting to note that women's perception of *IFIDs* in this context is totally different from men's, hence the significant difference between the two genders in the use of this strategy ( $\chi^2 = 9.83$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ). Women respondents viewed *IFIDs*, along with other apology strategies and sub-strategies, as a way to minimise the severity of the offence and placate the restaurant owner. Men, however, perceived *IFIDs* as a weak way to right the offence – a reason that caused them to use *account* and *offer of repair* to end the dispute. Additionally, male respondents stated that only repair is needed in this situation to leave the offended party satisfied. This leads us to suggest that women more than men care about protecting reputation. More significant is the employment of as many strategies as they can to finally have the dispute completely resolved. In so doing, women's apologetic behaviour in this context is in agreement with Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1980), who claim that some speakers tend to use more words and strategies in order to accomplish a strong pragmatic act whose perlocutionary effect is guaranteed to be understood by the addressees. Women, it would seem, try to ensure that the perlocutionary effect – which centres on having the apologisee happy and satisfied with the apology outcome – is successful. In support of this, we found that women's apology encompasses, using Owen's (1983) terms, both ritual and substantive moves as an attempt to secure the success and efficiency of the whole remedial interchange. Men's apologies, on the other hand, are placed at the substantive end of Owen's primary remedial moves scale.

Looking at the data in table 11, we found that women in situation 10 (bumping into a passenger and hurting him) apologised more than men for intruding on the space of others, and they were also apologised to more frequently than men were. Cross-gender analysis indicates that both men and women were predisposed to intensify their apologies, especially when the person deserving apology was of the opposite gender,

bearing in mind, as already shown, that women were apologised to more than men. On the basis of these findings, it becomes obvious that both men and women were aware of the severity of the offence incurred, which led them to profoundly apologise to each other.

The data analysis for this situation shows that at within-gender level, female-female apologies were more frequent than male-male apologies, yet at cross-gender level, male-female apologies outnumbered female-male apologies. Respondents commented that because women are perceived as being more vulnerable to sexual harassment and more sensitive to physical intrusion than men, they receive more cross-gender apologies than men; men intensified the need to apologise to women and thus show that the bumping is unintentional. Women also intensified their apologies to men in this situation, although it would be highly unusual for a man to get molested by a woman.

On examining the findings of situation 11 ( bumping into a passenger and disturbing him), we realise that both men and women behaved in much the same way as they did in situation 10, yet with the variation that the apology strategies employed by the two genders were not as frequent as the ones used in situation 10. The relatively few incidences of apology strategies in this situation demonstrates that both men and women perceived the offence involved as being less severe than in situation 10. However, they agreed that a more elaborate apology should be presented when it is the private territory of the opposite gender apologisee that is invaded.

In situation 12 (insulting someone at a meeting) where verbal offence is involved, both men and women maintained the same line of behaviour they adopted in situation 10 and 11 where a physical intrusion is incurred: we find that female-female apologies were more frequent than male-male apologies. However, at a cross-gender level, it is found that women apologised more to men than to women, and men intensely apologised to women. This led to male-female apologies being the most frequent in this situation.

Based on the above discussion, it appears that men and women tended to distance themselves from being misinterpreted when dealing with the opposite gender through apologising more – an inclination that is particularly noticeable in male-female apologies. In support of this view, male respondents claimed that men should apologise as much as they can to take back the offence, as if not dealt with wisely and promptly, the consequences will be completely unfavourable. In a tribal society like Jordan, verbal offences are given more weight than physical ones and are classified as being more detrimental than any other offences. The remedial process becomes more sophisticated when the offended party is a woman, as this requires men to do all they can to prove the offence is not intentional. As explained in section 3.4.1, in addition to their adherence to the written law, people in tribal societies like Jordan abide by the unwritten tribal statutes which impose certain constraints on offensive behaviour. These rules are exemplified by the social customs and traditions that monitor human interaction, and account for the tendency for men to apologise more to women and thus try to rectify the offence immediately. If appropriate apology is not delivered promptly, the problem might expand and go beyond the work environment and the control of the two contested parties. In which case, the remedial process becomes more complex, because to settle the dispute, the offender's tribe needs to ask for the help of a neutral third tribe, who, represented by its leader, undertakes to negotiate with the offended party's family or tribe leader and apologise on behalf of the offender's family to reach an agreement by friendly discussions. It is worth noting that this tribe leader-brokered compromise embodies both ritual and restitutive apology. Restitutive apology, though it is not relatively frequently asked for by the offended party's family, is meant to impose a deterring sanction on the offender. The offended party's tribe is often reconcilable, and the apology presented via the tribe leader is also often met with acceptance as a mark of respect for his harmony-restoration efforts. This long and sophisticated remedial move might explain why men, and sometimes women, tend to apologise promptly, ensure the offended party has accepted the apology, and make considerable effort to not let the offence exceed workplace boundaries.

So far, we have explored apologies in terms of the gender of the apologiser and the apologisee, as this, as previously explained at the beginning of this chapter, lays the groundwork to explore other issues such as the two genders' perception of the seriousness of the offence, social power, and social distance. The above discussion will also be of help to explain which type of offence men and women give more weight to. Additionally, it will be of use to shed further light on strategy selection. That is to say, we will examine each gender's preferred apology strategies.

### **5.3 Type of offence**

Analysing apologies in terms of the type of the offence is vital to cast further light on gender-based differences, as this explains which kind of offence each gender is inclined to apologise for more. Taking over the categories Holmes (1989: 371) uses to classify the types of offence, we have recognised four different categories of offence in this study, namely time, space, possession, and talk offences. However, Holmes' categories of inconvenience and social gaffe offences are not dealt with in this study.

Men and women exhibited differences in terms of which type of offence incurs greater apologies, yet while some situations contributed to significant differences, others did not. Building on situations 1, 2, 3, and 4 – all categorised as time offences – it might be pointed out that women apologised more than men for forgetting a meeting or failing to do things at the agreed time. The differences between females and males in this particular type of offence appear most obviously in situation 3 (forgetting a meeting with a boss), and situation 4 (forgetting a meeting with a friend). Whilst men minimised the need to apologise for time offences, women attached a great importance to apologising when missing the time for a meeting. These findings are not in agreement with Holmes (1989: 371), who claims that it is men who apologise more than women for time offences. Returning to the distinction Hall (1976: 17) draws between M-time system and P-time system – as discussed in section 4.2.3 – in which P-Time system cultures like those of the Middle East emphasise completion of transactions over punctuality, we might say that P-Time line of behaviour is quite evident in men's apology. In the Jordanian data, as outlined in table 9, it is clear that time offences give rise to more convincing apologies

between women than men. However, assessing the two genders' performance from a cross-gender perspective, we find that men and women deviated from the normal line of behaviour and apologised differently. While women apologised relatively less to women than to men, men apologised more to women than to men, with the exception of situation 4 in which men and women were nearly equally apologised to by men.

The same argument holds true for space offences, as in situations 10 and 11. More specifically, women were more likely to apologise for accidentally impinging on the physical and private territory of others. The fact that women are more sensitive to space offences than men might be linked to the fact that they are, more than men, subjected to socially and morally unacceptable behaviour – a perception that is not adopted by men who classified space offences as part of non-offensive behaviour. At a cross-gender level, men apologised more often than women in situation 10, yet in situation 11 women-men apologies were more frequent than men-women apology. This might be because men perceived the offence in situation 10 as being more severe than women did in a cross-gender situation, hence the high frequency of male-female apology in this particular situation.

Contrary to their apologetic performance in space and time offences, men seem to apologise more often than women for offences that involve possession damage, as is quite evident in the findings of situation 6 ( backing into someone's car and causing damage), where men were found to apologise more frequently than women at both within-gender and cross-gender level. This could be attributed to the supposition that men are usually held responsible for financial losses, and that they are thus more likely than women to apologise and offer repair. Although situation 7 (having an accident with the manager's car), and situation 8 (spilling a bottle of oil over the neighbour's car's seat) involve offences in the possession-damage category, men's apologies were outnumbered by women's at both within-gender and cross-gender level. The inconsistency of men's and women's behaviour across these three situations – 6, 7, and 8 – indicates that there are factors other than the type of offence that affect the whole remedial process. That is to say, new factors, such as social power and social distance which will be discussed later

in this chapter have emerged in situations 7 and 8, and have led to both men and women diverting from the linguistic behaviour they adopted in situation 6. Viewed in this way, we might expect that the type of offence is not always significant in relation to apologies and that it becomes minor under the presence of other factors that will be discussed later.

Looking at the findings of situation 12 as a whole (insulting someone at a meeting), we noted that women apologised more than men for talk offences, and this indicates, as illustrated elsewhere (chapter 4), their wish to maintain a friendly relationship with others, especially workmates. However, at a cross-gender level, men turned out to be the higher users of apologies in this particular situation which could be imputed to other factors which have been explained in the previous section of this chapter.

Suffice it to say, our discussion above suggests that the way men and women perceive the kind of offence that should trigger apology is somewhat different, hence the differences in men's and women's linguistic behaviour. What is seen as an offence by women, does not necessarily count as such by men. That said, women in Jordanian culture seem to be more concerned about time, space, and talk offences, while men are more inclined to apologise when possession-damage offences occur.

#### **5.4 Seriousness of the offence**

The severity of offence, discussed in section 4.5 of the previous chapter, was found to be the predominant variable that determines the selection and frequency of apologies. Nonetheless, the offence weight does not appear to decide the frequency of apology independently of other social variables. Stemming from this interdependence, the seriousness of the offence was discussed in the previous chapter in conjunction with social power and social distance. Because these explanatory variables were discussed cross-culturally and were analysed in comparison with how they are perceived in British English, we find it important to revisit these factors to examine them from a within-culture perspective. The purpose is to shed further light on any differences the two genders might exhibit in terms of their perception of the role these factors play when apologising. This is not to predict gender differences, but to make it clear that if any

differences are discovered regarding the two genders' understanding of the role of offence weight and they run counter to what was discussed in the previous chapter, this should not be looked at as a contradiction of the intercultural findings. Rather, it should be viewed as part of the further analysis designed to thoroughly explore the linguistic behaviour of men and women intraculturally.

Because of being closely related to the type of the offence, the seriousness of the offence has been selected as the next variable to discuss. Returning to table 2 in chapter 3, where apology situations were classified according to the social distance between the apologiser and the apologisee, social power of the apologisee, and type and severity of the offence, we find that only situations 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 were classified as containing offences of high severity. However, intracultural analysis detailed in tables 9, 10, and 11 indicates that it is women who perceived offences across these situations as being severe, with the exception of situation 6 in which men apologised and intensified their *IFIDs* twice as much as women. This being so, based on the discussion in the previous section, men's and women's perception of the severity of the offence is based on the type of the offence involved. In other words, men and women judge the severity of the offence in terms of the category to which the offence belongs. This interpretation helps explain why women kept apologising more frequently than men across situations of time, space, and talk offences. In situation 9, we find that women also conceptualised the offence as being severe, as changing the order at a restaurant is likely to damage one's reputation, and it is women who give precedence to this kind of offence over any other. However, we find that other factors, such as social power and social distance also contribute to formulating the apologetic tendencies, and hence the differences in linguistic behaviour. Because of the effective role they have, we proceed in the next sections to examine how social power and social distance are perceived by men and women to affect the remedial process.

## **5.5 Social power**

Equal in importance to the seriousness of the offence is the social status of interactants. It is then essentially important to take a look at this particular area to find out whether the social power of the apologisee contributes to any differences in the way the two genders



apologise. In relation to this point, Holmes (1988: 374) uses three main categories to recognise the relative status of participants:

- 1) U – upwards, that is, apology to a person with more P
- 2) E – equal, that is, apology to a person of equal P
- 3) D – downwards, that is, apology to a person with less P

(Holmes 1988: 374)

This indicates that the relationship between the two participants in Holmes' criterion is defined in terms of the dominance (upwards, downwards), or lack of dominance (equals) of one interactant over another. Building on Holmes' three-category criterion, we set out in this study to classify the apology situations in terms of the relationship that holds the apologiser and the apologisee. In doing so, it becomes more straightforward to trace the effect of this factor on the performance of the two genders.

Starting with the situation of upwards-relation, we find that only situations 2, 3, and 7 belong to this category. That is, the person deserving apology across these situations holds a more powerful status than the apologiser. Yet, we need to recall – as explained in chapter 4 – that the majority of Jordanian respondents interviewed chose to apologise in situation 2 only to avoid the academic penalty and not because of their recognition of the powerful status of the apologisee. Based on the data presented in situations 3 and 7, it seems that women are more likely than men to use apologies upwards.

Upon examining the findings of situations 1, 5, and 9, in which the apologisee is in a lower status than the apologiser, we find that apologies were not as frequent as those employed in situations 2, 3, and 7 where the apologisee is in a more powerful position than the apologiser. Two points should be made clear in this regard: firstly, situation 5 (forgetting to take son shopping) should be excluded from the present discussion as parents attach more importance to apologising to children as an endeavour to teach them how to respect others – a point that has been discussed in chapter 4. Secondly, before we explain who apologises more, there is a need to clarify the nature and relative status of

the participants in situation 9 (changing the order at a restaurant). Central to this, it might be taken for granted that in Jordanian culture customers are dealt with as being in a more powerful status than the restaurant owner or the one who serves them. Taking situations 1 and 9 as a point of departure, we note that it is also women who apologised more than men, yet, as said before, their apologies were less frequent than in situations 3 and 7 where the apologisee is more powerful than the apologisee. It is also noteworthy that there are factors other than the status of the apologisee that led women to apologise in a way that differs from men in these situations (See section 5.2.1).

In other situations with participants of equal relations, as in situations 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, and 12, women – with the exception of their performance in situation 6 – apologised more than men and were apologised to more often than men as is the case in situations 10, 11, and 12. The fact that men apologised more than women in situation 6 and less than women in situations 4, 8, 10, 11, and 12 leads us to argue that this tendency on the part of men indicates an inclination to use apologies for more heavily-weighted offences.

Women seem to apologise more than men do to those with both equal and unequal power. This substantiates the view that women consider the importance of apology more seriously than men. In addition to this, men seem to be aware of women's need for apology, as is clear in situations 1, 2, 3, 6, 10, 11, and 12, where women were apologised to more often than men, and this is supported by the findings of situation 3 where men were more likely to apologise to females in more powerful positions than they were to more powerful males. Added to this is the women's tendency to emphasise the importance of apologies to females regardless of their status, as evidenced in situations 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8. This analysis is in agreement with Holmes (1988: 375), whose findings are consistent with the view that "the society as a whole recognises the high priority which women place on politeness strategies as interactive tokens".

## **5.6 Social distance**

The third factor in Brown & Levinson's (1987) explanatory variables, social distance, refers to the degree of familiarity that identifies the relationship between participants. To

do so, we have classified the twelve apology situations, as demonstrated in table 8, in terms of how well the participants know each other, and this results in having two categories: intimates and strangers, or – using Holmes’ (1990:185) terms – the “least distant addressees” vs. the “most distant addressees”. In this case, situations 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, 10, and 11 were classified as having participants who are strangers, whereas situations 4, 5, 7, 8, and 12 were categorised as involving participants who are intimates, friends, or colleagues.

Returning to tables 9, 10, and 11 and comparing the findings across all the situations, we find that men and women exhibited differences in terms of their perception of social distance. In situations 4, 7, 8, and 12, where a close relationship holds the interlocutors, we note that whereas women tended to profusely apologise, men were less likely to. Thus, it appears that in men’s apology there is a relationship between the degree of social distance between interactants and the apology strategies used in the remedial interchange, while the reverse appears to be true for women’s apology. As demonstrated in sections 4.2.4 and 4.2.8, men were found to apologise more to strangers than to friends or intimates, because to apologise to a friend is conceived of as being more offensive than the offence itself. Besides, male friends tended to interact with each other on an informal basis; for the continuity of their friendliness, they avoid all acts and behaviour that have the potential of formalising the relationship, hence the low frequency of apologies between friends. Conversely, in order to perpetuate a good link with friends and intimates, particularly those of the same gender, women chose to apologise and sometimes intensify their apologies. In view of these findings, one might suggest that men’s apologetic behaviour is in harmony with Brown & Levinson’s (1978, 1987) argument, in that there is a positive correlation between the social distance and the weighting of face-threatening acts. Specifically, the more distant the offended party is, the more likely men are to apologise.

Cross-gender analysis shows that the gender of the apologisee is vital in formulating men’s and women’s apologetic tendencies. That said, women were inclined to apologise more to women friends than to men friends, as is apparent in situations 4, 7, and 8. Men,

on the other hand, tended to apologise less to women friends than to women strangers. This is to say that while women perceive offences as being more heavily weighted when the offended party is a friend, men perceive offences to women strangers as being more severe and more heavily weighted.

To sum up the discussion, we can say that whilst women tended to apologise more than men to both unfamiliar and familiar women, men were found to apologise more to unfamiliar females and less to female friends. In all, men and women seem to regard social distance differently, in the sense that women conceptualised offending a friend as weighted more heavily than insulting a stranger. Men, conversely, conceptualised offending a stranger as weighing more heavily than hurting a friend. The present findings are not in a strong conformity to Holmes' (1988); in Holmes' study men and women were found to apologise more to females than to males with whom they have a close relationship. The present findings also point to the fact that it is men's apologetic behaviour that is consistent with Brown & Levinson's (1987) model, in that Jordanian men's apologies are "sensitive" to the social distance between interactants. So far, we have seen that men's heavily ranked and politer strategies are used with the "most distant" apologisees and less heavily weighted with those who are "least distant". To conclude our discussion about men's and women's perception of both social power and social distance, we can say that although the interconnection between the seriousness of the offence and social power shapes the language of women's apology, men's apologies are sensitive to the interdependence of the seriousness of the offence and social distance.

## **5.7 Strategy selection**

The discussion in the previous sections, adopting a binary analysis, has made it clear that Jordanian men and women showed differences in terms of their perception of the explanatory variables. Such differences may account for the fact that men and women apologise in a quite different way. This leads us to claim that each gender tends to map out its apologetic identity through opposition to the other, and this might be accredited to factors like social demarcations that draw clear lines of segregation between men and women. Driven by the findings in the previous sections, we then set out to discover

whether the differences the two genders exhibited in the way they perceived the explanatory variables are realised in their choice of apology strategies.

Building on what has been detailed in tables 9, 10, and 11, we find that in the Jordanian data women tended to be higher users of *IFIDs*, *responsibility*, *accounts*, and *offer of repair* than men. Women, moreover, were inclined to intensify their *IFIDs* more often than men. The same argument, however, does not hold true for situations 5 and 6, where women's apology strategies were outnumbered by men's.

Significant differences between the genders concerning strategy selection are much more apparent in their use of the new strategies, namely *proverbs*, *attributing the offence to external causes (determinism)*, and *self-punishment* (See appendix). While men tended to be the main users of *proverbs* and *attributing the offence to external causes*, women were more likely than men to employ *self-punishment*. It might be said that because proverbs are double-edged, in that they could be used either as an offence-restoring device or as a tool to signal the apologiser's reluctance to acknowledge guilt, women chose not to use them. That is, because the apology recipient is not always guaranteed to be familiar with the underlying meaning of a proverb, even sometimes with the most commonly used, and thus may be unable to work out the intended illocutionary force of the message, women might find it appropriate not to use proverbs as an apology strategy. This demonstrates that women are less likely than men to resort to apology strategies that have the potential of spoiling the whole remedial process. At the other end of the spectrum came men who used proverbs in situations 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 12. The highest proportions were in situations 6 (35%) and 12 (45%).

Men were also found to use *attributing the offence to external causes* more often than women, as is the case in situation 6 with a statistical significance of ( $x^2 = 19.28$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ), and ( $x^2 = 15.22$ ,  $DF = 1$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ) in situation 7. This category includes reminding the offended party that things are predetermined to happen. However, women used self-punishment more recurrently than men as a strategic tool to calm the offended party. This is clear in situation 2 (F 16% vs. M 10%), situation 6 (F 45% vs. M 16%),

situation 7 (F 28% vs. M 0%), and situation 10 (F 45% vs. M 5%). In relation to this, many male respondents commented that whatever the severity of the offence, it will not be convincing to stringently imprecate oneself. This demonstrates that the strategy selection is also influenced by men's and women's perception of how humiliating apology strategies are.

## 5.8 Concluding Remarks

The present chapter explored the differences the Jordanian male and female subjects displayed in their perception of when and how to apologise. The discussion made it clear that men and women adopted two different lines of linguistic behaviour – a fact that reflects the disparity between the two genders in terms of their evaluation of the seriousness of the offence, social power, and social distance. The differences men and women exhibited at both within-gender and cross-gender levels indicate that the gender of the apology recipient is fundamental in organising men's and women's apology. In support of this argument, we found – as demonstrated in section 5.6 – that women chose to apologise more to females (both stranger and familiar), whereas men tended to apologise more to unfamiliar females and less to female and male friends. Overall analysis also shows that women apologised and used *IFIDs* more frequently than men.

Apologies, as claimed by Brown & Levinson (1978: 73), damage the apologisee's face and simultaneously support the apologisee's negative face, and this, as pointed out by Holmes (1988: 379), might explain why men's and women's perception of apology is different. While we agree with Holmes that apologies are perceived by women as "other-oriented" speech acts designed to establish and perpetuate social harmony, and hence they are higher users of apologies, we find that Holmes' argument does not apply to men, whom Holmes describes as perceiving apologies as "self-oriented FTAs," that is, that apologies damage the speaker's face, and thus they should be avoided. Rather, it has been explained in this chapter that a number of reasons contribute to men being low users of apologies when compared to women, none of which is related to men's fear of having face threatened. It should be clear that in Jordanian culture, men are as keen as women to set things right and restore social equilibrium, and it does not mean they are less polite

than women, yet they exhibited a belief that explicit apology, including the use of *IFIDs*, is not the only or main vehicle through which an offence is remediated. We found that there are instances when apology is perceived by men as more offensive than the offence itself, and for the sake of maintaining the friendly relationship, they choose not to apologise. We indeed do not support Holmes' claim that it is the fear of having face damaged which hinders men from apologising as frequently as women. As shown in section 2.3, Holmes' analysis has indeed already been critiqued by Mills (2003a: 225), who claims that Holmes' argument is not persuasive, as it does not prove that women are more polite than men.

Thus, whilst showing clearly that politeness is associated with women at a stereotypical level, I would argue that Holmes' analysis does not show that women in general are more formally polite than are men, as she asserts, but merely illustrates the difficulties of a methodology which focuses on the intentions of speakers and assumes that politeness can be recognised objectively by the analysis of formal features. Her analysis also demonstrates the difficulties of a model of gender which assumes that men and women are necessarily different and that they conform in their linguistic behaviour to gender stereotypes. (Mills 2003a: 225-226)

Holmes' hypothesis has also been subject to other researchers' critique, such as Christie (2000: 163), who argues that the existence of inherent differences between men's and women's conversation is still debatable. Also, while commenting on a quote taken from Cameron, McAlinden and O'Leary (1988: 85), she describes studies that focus on tendencies as weak, and holds that they should instead be directed to exploring the relationship between language use, the language user, and the context of use (Christie 2000: 168). In support of this view, I would suggest that there are instances when people act or apologise in a way that totally runs counter to the way in which they believe they should linguistically act. We need to keep in mind that there are also instances when people feel compelled to apologise although they are not convinced that an apology is needed. This could be explained in terms of some people's wish to prioritise having a good relationship with others over choosing not to apologise and thus ending friendliness. We therefore chose in the present study to interview respondents who had already completed the questionnaire and asked them to clarify certain points about the

answers they had provided, as to how, when, and why they should or should not apologise.

Analysing Jordanian apologies in terms of Brown & Levinson's social variables, we also found that only men's apologetic behaviour – based on the findings of situations 4, 7, and 8 – is in line with Brown & Levinson's hypothesis, in that Jordanian men's apologies are the result of incorporating social distance and the offence weight. The findings on Jordanian women's apologies, on the other hand, are in agreement with Wolfson's (1988) findings on women's compliments, that most compliments occur between participants who are acquaintances and casual friends and not between interlocutors who are total strangers or intimates. Furthermore, women's apologies, based on the findings of situations 2, 3, and 7 seem to be sensitive to the interdependence of social power and seriousness of the offence.

The findings of this chapter show that apologies function differently for men and women – a point that has been noted by Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984), Coulmas (1981), Owen (1983), Trosberg (1987) and Kampf & Blum-Kulka (2007). The findings as a whole also conform to the hypothesis of Maltz and Borker (1982), Tannen (1990), Troemel-Plotz (1991), Gray (1992), Basow & Rubenfeld (2003), and Wood (2000, 2002), who claim that men and women have different cultural assumptions about talk and friendly conversation. However, our findings do not conform to those of Aijmer (1995), Sclenker & Darby (1981), Reiter<sup>36</sup> (2000) and Deutschmann (2003) who found that the gender of the apologiser does not affect the remedial move. The discussion in the present chapter also points to the importance of carrying out within-culture analysis before setting out to analyse apologies cross-culturally. Intracultural analysis could be said to be a prerequisite for exploring speech acts cross-culturally, as within one culture we may find different streams of thinking and behaviour between its members.

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<sup>36</sup> It should be noted that the findings of Reiter's study are not clear-cut, as she initially suggests that no gender differences are observed, and later she states that her findings are not consistent with that of Fraser (1981) who claims that women do not offer more apologies than males.



Having discussed apologies cross-culturally –in chapter 4 – and intraculturally –in this chapter – we now move to chapter 6 to explore how politeness is conceived of in Jordan. This is to say that the speech act of apology will be the foundation upon which Jordan may be classified as a negative or a positive politeness culture.

## Chapter 6: Politeness Orientation<sup>37</sup>

### 6.1 Introduction

Based on the observations made throughout the previous chapters, this chapter sets out to explore in depth the politeness direction that operates in each of the cultures under study. The intercultural comparison carried out in chapter 4, followed by the intracultural analysis of Jordanian apologies in chapter 5, seems to validate our assumption that the two societies differ in relation to the way in which each perceives face, a divergence that leads to different politeness orientations. As a non-native speaker of English, whatever account I may give regarding politeness in British culture will not be as accurate as one given from a native speaker's perspective; that is, to understand politeness in a given culture, one needs to be part of that culture. I have, however, attempted in chapter 4 to provide useful insights and make valid claims about how apologies are conceived of in British and Jordanian cultures, an analysis which will be of help in classifying these disparate cultures as being positively or negatively oriented. To this end, I have also drawn on other studies, such as Sifianou (1992), Reiter (2000), and Stewart (2005) – which explore linguistic politeness in either British culture alone (Stewart's) or in British English as compared to other cultures (Sifianou's<sup>38</sup> and Reiter's<sup>39</sup>) – to enrich our discussions and gain more insights into politeness in British English; indeed politeness in British English has been thoroughly explored by a number of researchers (Sifianou 1992; Watts 2003; Stewart 2005) who all endorse the view that Britain is a negative politeness culture<sup>40</sup>. This being so, we shall focus attention more on Jordanian Arabic, to thoroughly explore the notion of face and politeness within the domain of pragmatics, as an area that has not been tackled before.

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<sup>37</sup> By politeness orientation or politeness direction, we mean that politeness is conceptualised differently and, thus, employed differently in the two societies; more specifically that Jordanians tend to use more positive politeness devices than the English, who prefer more negative politeness devices.

<sup>38</sup> It should be noted that Sifianou (1992) studied politeness in England in comparison with that adopted in Greece.

<sup>39</sup> Reiter (2000), as demonstrated earlier in chapter 1, explored linguistic politeness in Britain and Uruguay via the study of requests and apologies.

<sup>40</sup> Negative politeness is concerned with other people's need not to be intruded or imposed upon. Positive politeness, on the other hand, is concerned with people's need for inclusion and social approval.

In order to have better understanding of how politeness operates in each culture, we need to again look at apology strategies, as the linguistic choices made by the subjects are likely to indicate which direction of politeness is adopted in the cultures under study. Terms of address will also be subject to analysis in the third section of this chapter. We can then move on in section 4 to discuss the notion of face in Jordanian culture in comparison with that proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987).

## 6.2 Strategy selection

It is clear, based on the findings in chapter 4, that the linguistic choices made by the British and Jordanian subjects are not the same and that the differing responses provided by the two sets of subjects could be linked to their preference for different politeness strategies<sup>41</sup>. Quantitative descriptive analysis revealed that the two groups displayed differences in terms of how frequently they used apology strategies. This is supported by the findings of tables 7 and 8 (chapter 4) in which the British *IFIDs* frequency totalled 899 compared to 595 in the Jordanian data.

Qualitative analysis, moreover, ratifies the differences the two groups displayed quantitatively. In other words, whereas British subjects tended not to impinge on the private territory of the offended – through the expression of difference, showing respect, and maintenance of distance – Jordanians tended to claim common ground with the offended through the employment of expressions of familiarity, cooperation, and in-group identity markers. In reference to the findings of chapter 4, the British subjects' apologies proved to be "sensitive" to the interconnection of the seriousness of the offence and social power, while the Jordanians' were based on the interconnection of the seriousness of offence and social distance. This demonstrates the British subjects' tendency to produce profound apologies even with people deemed to be "least distant." As regards Jordanian apologies, one might say that the findings are contradictory, as men and women behaved differently in that men tended to consider the level of distance between the apologiser and the apologisee when performing the act of apologising,

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<sup>41</sup> Politeness strategies as presented, defined, and illustrated by Brown & Levinson (1978: 56-310) include bald on-record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record and do-nothing.

whereas women did not appear to differentiate. At this point we need to make it clear that there is a difference between the surface and the underlying message of apologies – a point that will be discussed thoroughly in section 4 of this chapter.

The differences the two groups exhibited are quite evident in the way they provided explanations. It has been noted that Jordanian subjects tended to provide overstated accounts for forgetting a meeting or a book and tried to transfer the responsibility for the offence to sources beyond the control of the offender, such as forgetfulness and illness. What is more is the fact the accounts provided entail a common ground with the offended, seen through the use of cajolers, like *ent ebt sref*<sup>42</sup> = *you know*. This and other examples demonstrate the Jordanians' preference for positive over negative politeness. This does not mean the British subjects did not at times provide exaggerated reasons for committing the offence or did not transfer responsibility to another party, but these strategies were employed much more frequently by Jordanian than by British respondents.

Added to this is the disparity the two sets of subjects showed in relation to the way they offered repair. It has been noted that the nature of British repairs is more deferential and clearer about how the repair would happen. More importantly, the forms of offer of repair were not obligatory in that they left the offended party with plenty of options to accept or reject the offer. This is entirely opposed to the approach used by Jordanians in which the addressee is left with no alternative but to accept the offer. In such cases, the private autonomy of the offended is often invaded. There are instances when offenders refrain from verbalising their apologies and find instead action more convenient to make amends<sup>43</sup>. Having said that, we might point out that the approach adopted by Jordanians, which is based on leaving the offended with only one option – the option to accept the offer – falls under the rubric of positive politeness. Conversely, the way the British respondents offered to redress the offence is more compatible with negative politeness. In

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<sup>42</sup> This formulaic expression is also used in Jordanian culture as a device to efface self and raise the status of others and as a way to ensure the perpetuity of relationships.

<sup>43</sup> It is worth noting that Jordanians tend to prioritise action over verbalising apology in order not to be accused, by the apologisee, of being slow to put things right.

addition to classifying cultures as being positively or negatively polite, Brown & Levinson (1987:245) contend that “ [...] in complex societies, dominated groups (and sometimes also majority groups) have positive-politeness cultures; dominating groups have negative-politeness cultures”.

The Jordanian subjects' predisposition to prioritise positive over negative politeness is quite obvious in the newly employed apology strategies namely, *proverbs*, *determinism*, and *self-punishment*. Such strategies imply a good level of familiarity with the offended and are likely to minimise the distance even when the apologisee is seen as “most distant”. As explained in section 4.3.7.2, *proverbs* and *determinism* were more frequently used by men, whereas women were found to be relatively higher users of self-punishment. This is not to indicate differences in terms of politeness direction, but to substantiate that men and women adopted different linguistic choices to achieve the same end – apologising through the establishment of common ground and emphasising camaraderie with the offended.

It is noteworthy that Jordanians' use of mitigating conventional and religious expressions indicates that they choose strategies of politeness according to the cultural expectation which privileges group harmony over individual freedom. Praising God for the safety of others, cursing Satan, associating the strategy of offer of repair with God's will, and blaming one's fortune<sup>44</sup> come to stress the same notion that Jordanian people value harmony in social relationship. When, for example, cursing Satan or admonishing one's fortune, the apologiser is trying to transfer the responsibility to a third party in an attempt not to jeopardise interpersonal relationships. Such formulaic expressions, moreover, substantiate the apologiser's wish to be accepted and approved of by the apologisee. The following examples illustrate what is delineated above:

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<sup>44</sup> It should be noted that the use of these routinised expressions could be either marked or unmarked. They could be used subconsciously by communication partners as being part of the normal and conventional Jordanian communication style. However, when an offence is committed, they are used purposefully as part of the offender's serious intent to minimise the offended party's resentment and get the insult remedied.

1- خلص. بكرة يكون عندك ان شاء الله

*xalasʔ bukraḥ bikoon sendak in faʔ allah.*

No tomorrow be.FUT.MASC with you if 3SG.WANT.PRES God

“No need to worry, it (book) will be in your hands tomorrow *if God wills.*” (S 2)

2- أولا", الحمد لله على سلامتك . لقد خرج الأمر عن ارادتي

*Awwalan, elhamdu lellah ʔa salamatak. Laqad xaradza*

First praise to God on your safety GO OUT.PAST.MASC

*alʔmer. ʔan iradatii*

DEF ART.MATTER.SG.MASC on my will

“First, *praise be to God for your safety.* It was out of my control.” (S 6)

3- لقد نسيت أن أحضره معي و قد أنسانيه الشيطان

*Laqad nasiit an auḥdʔirahu ma ʔii, waqad.*

1SG.forget.PAST 1SG.bring.MASC.OBJ with me and

*ansaniyahu al faitʔan*

(cause to forget).PAST.OBJ DEF ART-Satan

“I forget to bring it (book) with me, and *it is Satan that caused me to forget to bring it.*” (S 2)

4- ول على هالحظ! لعنة الله على الشيطان. لقد حصل بالخطأ

*Wal ʔa halḥaḍʔ! Laʔnat allah ʔala eʔaitʔan. Laqad ḥasala bilxatʔ?*

Blame on fortune curse Gode on Satan happen.PAST.SG by mistake

“*What a bad fortune! The curse of God is on Satan.* It happened by mistake.” (S 8)

It should be noted that *khalas*, as shown in example 1, is often used in association with the offer of repair strategy and is committing for both parties. This, as explained before, shows that the nature of Jordanian offer is based on leaving the apologisee with no choice but to accept the apology and is likely to invade the private territory of the offended.

### 6.3 Jordanian face and Brown & Levinson's face

On the basis of the intracultural analysis carried out in chapter 5, it has been claimed that Jordanian men's apology is “sensitive” to the interconnection between seriousness of offence and social distance while women's apologetic behaviour proved to be the result of interdependence of seriousness of offence and social power. Having said that, one

might say that women tend to not consider social distance while apologising and that they apologise approximately in much the same way to those who are least and most distant; women's linguistic behaviour is then seen as an indicator of their adoption of negative politeness. In spite of having the same politeness direction, members of societies are not expected to display identical preferences as to strategies (Sifianou 1992: 211). This view seems to be synonymous with that of Eelen (2001: 165) who claims that in spite of the internal differences members of societies might display in their behaviour, cultures are still "inherently homogeneous." To this Eelen (2001: 165) adds:

Regardless of their actual delimitation, cultures are by definition internally homogeneous – at least as far as politeness is concerned – because they are the level on which the politeness system is shared. If behaviour can be explained through cultural scripts in the heads of speakers, or rules learned effortlessly in infancy, then all members of a culture can be supposed to exhibit the same or at least similar behaviour. Note that this is not contradicted by the existence of systematic variability, as this kind of variability is system-internal. No matter how complex the system may be, it is still assumed to be shared throughout the culture. (Eelen 2001: 165)

The notion of homogeneous culture has to do with the socio-cultural norms that invite people of a culture to abide by cultural expectations and therefore produce socially appropriate behaviour. To this end, members of the society can employ different strategies yet aim to fulfil socio-culturally appropriate behaviour. Ide (1989: 225) points out that speakers' linguistic choices should be designed to be in line with the conventional norms operative in society. Although Kasper (1990) minimises the role of social norms on the basis that politeness is marked behaviour, Watts' (2005) definition of politeness as marked behaviour – and that such behaviour is assumed to be socially and culturally appropriate – non-explicitly indicates that politeness is a mirror that reflects socio-cultural norms. It is then the social norms that cause men and women to adopt varying strategies to achieve the same end. Also, in order to meet cultural expectations and comply with the social norms operative in Jordanian society, doctors at clinics, for example, choose to produce marked (non-politic) behaviour and address the elderly with the most intimate terms, like *father* and *mother*. This indicates that the conception of politeness is connected with the social norms adopted in cultures. Eelen (2001: 127-140)

explores the notion of social norms thoroughly and suggests that norms are made of four components: appropriateness, sharedness, normality, and expectations. Eelen claims that in order to act politely, one needs to act appropriately in accordance with the addressee's expectations, and because social norms control appropriateness and belong to cultures and not to individuals, then the speaker will find it easy to know the expectations of the hearer. By sharedness, he means that language speakers are assumed to have shared knowledge, a point that has been raised by Lakoff (1990), who claims that all members of society behave subconsciously due to the fact that socio-cultural rules are internalised in each member's mind. Eelen believes that Brown & Levinson's (1987) Model Person is the best example to explain sharedness, in that if notions such as *face*, *power*, *distance*, and *ranking* are not shared, then speakers of one language would not be able to know which strategy would be successful or appropriate in a particular situation, and this would certainly render politeness phenomena non-predictable. The concept of sharedness is mainly connected with normality, because if social rules are shared, then any normal person is presupposed to be familiar with them. It is also sharedness, Eelen adds, that enables the speaker to predict the hearer's expectations and thus act appropriately and politely. These factors, it would seem, contribute to people being polite to each other in any social interchange.

It is thus not surprising that men and women adopt different strategies in Jordanian culture if we take into account that social norms have drawn different lines of behaviour for men and women to follow. The differences the two genders exhibited in terms of strategy selection and consideration of social variables are seen to be linked to the social expectation each gender holds towards the other. That is, in order for the communicative act to be polite and successful and have some effect on the hearer, the hearer's expectations should be taken into consideration by the speaker. It becomes obvious, then, that the expected social norms spur people to be considerate of each others' need. This indicates that treating others with consideration depends on the shared and expected norms of behaviour that communication partners hold. Part of this consideration of other needs is to express deference and respect for others. Yet we need to know the connotations and pragmatic meanings associated with deference, as different cultures



have different ways to express respect. Goffman (1956: 493-4) claims that multi-conceptions of deference are likely to incur difficulties in intercultural communications especially when members of different cultures and varied backgrounds come into contact. This in fact gives rise to the question as to whether deference is perceived as a device to emphasise harmonious interpersonal relations or as a way to protect others' territories from impingement.

Deference is seen by Brown & Levinson (1987) to be a strategy of negative politeness directed to redress the negative face desires of the addressee that are represented by his wish of having his privacy respected and his "personal world" kept free from intrusion. Conversely, deference in Jordanian culture is an intrusive form of social interaction, in the sense that it always conveys familiarity with the other person as a way to harmonise the relationship between interlocutors. The strategies adopted – *proverbs*, *determinism*, and *self-punishment* – along with the use of conventional and ritual expressions seek to establish that the speaker and hearer have much in common. Additionally, these strategies are speech-initiating acts, in that they elicit not only reactive speech acts like rejection or acceptance of apology, but an engagement in a lengthy conversation. This means that such strategies are less likely to give the hearer a way to avoid imposition or a way out of speaking with the apologiser. Addressed and apologised to with these expressions, the Jordanian apologisee has no option to resist imposition and remain silent. These strategies, along with women's relatively extensive use of the *IFIDs* strategy, should not be seen as a form of negative politeness. Rather, placing self in a lower position before the addressee is likely to be interpreted as a sign of deferential behaviour aimed at reducing, besides acknowledging, status differences. The differences men and women respondents exhibited in Jordanian culture in terms of strategy selection and perception of distance do not necessarily imply differences in their conception of deference: as demonstrated by Eelen (2001), observed internal differences are not to disqualify a culture from being homogeneous. That said, the low use of *IFIDs* by Jordanian men and their inclination not to apologise to those who are socially intimate, and Jordanian women's predisposition to be relatively higher users of *IFIDs* even with intimates are both to be looked at as a marked attempt to sustain the interpersonal

relationship, rather than a tool to minimise the imposition on the addressee. The differences men and women displayed in this regard can be better interpreted in terms of Locher & Watts' (2005) interpretation of relational work – contrary to Brown & Levinson's (1987) – as embodying both politeness and impoliteness, in that relational work could be realised via either “cooperative communication” or “displays of aggression” and “negotiation of conflict”. This is not to imply that in Jordanian culture one gender is more or less polite than the other, but to substantiate that “[...] it is necessary to focus on the entire range of relational work, much of which will consist of forms of verbal behavior produced by the participants in accordance with what they feel – individually – to be appropriate to the social interaction in which they are involved” (Locher & Watts 2005: 16).

It could also be said that the extended usage of kinship terms by superiors (doctors) when addressing subordinates such as elderly patients, and the respect inferiors show to those who are seniors are all indicative of social interdependence and a marker of their compliance with the social expectations of Jordanian culture, which are based on enhancing “in-groupness.” And this of course could be seen as a positive politeness strategy.

Jordanians' inclination to highlight the importance of “group face” is likely to pose a challenge for Brown & Levinson's (1978, 1987) theory in which the individualistic image (face) is emphasised over the collective one. In Jordanian culture, self is seen in terms of others. This is to say, Jordanian face is decided by the participation of others. This argument seems to be in agreement with what Mao<sup>45</sup> (1994: 460) suggests, that “Chinese face emphasises not the accommodation of individual ‘wants’ or ‘desires’ but the harmony of individual conduct with the views and judgement of the community.” This norm of behaviour has also been emphasised by Sifianou (1992: 41) who claims that, unlike the British who emphasise privacy and individuality, Greeks stress

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<sup>45</sup> Mao (1994) analyses in detail the Chinese concept of face and shows how it is different from Brown & Levinson's (1987) negative and positive face.

involvement and in-group-relation. These theories seem to reflect Goffman's (1967: 10) hypothesis in which face is seen to be assigned to individuals from society.

There are many examples in Jordanian culture which clearly demonstrate the individual's wish to define the position of self in terms of being part of others in the community. Having meals and visiting others epitomise the individualist image not being the basis of interaction. Specifically, when an individual, for example, decides to visit another person who has fallen ill and wish him a quick recovery, he will do all he can to have as many people as possible to be his companions during the visit. People like to go in groups to visit patients or to present condolences to families that have lost one of their members. An individual views himself as nothing without having another person being with him. It is worth noting that if an individual decides to go alone, this might be seen as an indicator of the person being an introvert, a quality which is negatively valued by most Jordanians. If, on the other hand, an individual performs these social activities accompanied by others, he will be seen as a sociable person, hence a normal person. The same holds true for the way people think about having meals. Some refrain from eating lunch or dinner if left alone and people sometimes justify this behaviour adopting the common Jordanian proverb: *el dʒanneh bala nass ma btndas*<sup>46</sup> = *No paradise can be enjoyed without having companions*. This and other examples substantiate that the individual is not seen as the basic unit of society as Brown & Levinson (1987) claim, instead, the individual's dependence on others. Jordanian face, it seems, echoes that defined by Goffman (1967), who describes face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact" (1967: 5). Although Brown & Levinson's (1987) distinction between negative politeness and positive politeness seems to be consistent with that of Goffman between an avoidance process and a corrective process, they are not the same in terms of their perception of the notion of face. While Goffman (1967) conceives of face as being given to an individual from society – "In any case, while his social face can be his most personal possession and the center of his security and pleasure, it is only on loan to him from society; it will be withdrawn unless he conducts himself in a way that is worthy of

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<sup>46</sup> This proverb is also used by Jordanians justifying their refusal to live in a non-populated area.

it” (Goffman 1967: 10) – Brown & Levinson perceive face as “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself” (1987: 61).

This indicates that for Goffman face is not an intrinsic property of an individual, as conceived of by Brown & Levinson (1987), but something that can be established with other members of the group, consistent with the line that each individual has chosen. For this reason, Bargiela-Chiappini (2003: 1467) argues for a replacement of Brown & Levinson’s (1987) notion of face with that of Goffman. However, she stresses “[...] the need to understand and compare cultural conceptualizations of the social self and its relationship to others as an alternative and possibly more fruitful way of studying the relevance and dynamics of ‘face’ and ‘face-work’ in interpersonal contacts” (Bargiela-Chiappini 2003: 1463).

In chapter 5, it was established that men are low users of *IFIDs* when compared to women, and that this low use is not motivated by men’s fear of face loss, and further that Jordanian women’s use of *IFIDs* is indicative of their wish to be deferential and to acknowledge social differences. It is thus clear that the way deference is conceived of by Jordanians is different from that proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987). It may be that face is not a crucial notion in societies that enhance “in-groupness” like Jordan. Ide (1989: 241) believes that face should not be considered to be the basis of interaction in Japanese culture, as the society is defined in terms of “in-groupness” and “social hierarchy”. Mao (1994: 470) believes that Fraser and Nolen’s (1981) hypothesis of conversational-contract view implicitly lays little emphasis on the notion of face, as politeness is determined by the conversation participants’ compliance with their understanding of the rights and obligations spelled out by the social expectations and previous social interchanges.

Overall analysis indicates that *IFIDs* and some other strategies were used more frequently by British subjects than by Jordanian counterparts. This does not necessarily mean that Jordanians are less polite, but it may well indicate that politeness, for them, is not a phenomenon that is restricted to language. Eelen (2001), in the introduction to his

book, points to the fact that politeness can take any form of behaviour and that “the absence of behaviour” is one of these forms. Viewed in this way, politeness as a phenomenon can include verbal/linguistic and non-verbal/non-linguistic behaviour (Kasanga & Lwanga-Lumu 2007: 79). In positive politeness cultures like Jordan, the adoption of – using Scollon & Scollon’s (1981) terms – “solidarity politeness” entails informality. This being so, we can also argue that in order for members of the same community to behave informally, they sometimes need to act non-verbally. This line of behaviour seems to apply to Jordanian culture, in which members of the same “in-group” sometimes conceive of the verbalisation of apology as offensive, as they believe it is their duty to help and support each other (see section 4.2.8). It has been demonstrated in chapters 4 and 5 that many Jordanians refrain from apologising, saying there is no obvious reason for apologising and that members of the same community should apologise only when the offence is considered serious. Conversely, verbalising apology in England is “imperative” even for less serious offences and even among people belonging to the same “in-group” (Sifianou 1992: 42), a view supported by the data from the British English in this study. This in fact reflects different conceptions of the functions of apology in the two cultures; it also demonstrates that the norms which provide people with further insights into when and how to apologise differ from one society to another. Coulmas (1981) points to the fact that in some parts of South Asia, verbalising gratitude or indebtedness between members of the same family is perceived as inappropriate and insulting, as serving each other is seen part of one’s fulfilment of one’s duty. Based on the present study, the British subjects seem to appreciate the accomplishment of apology in particular and politeness strategies in general via the use of explicit politeness markers, while the reverse might be true for Jordanians.

## **6.4 Concluding remarks**

In Brown & Levinson’s (1987) model, Britain is classified as a society that places high value on social distance. Negative politeness is, therefore, seen to be the predominant feature that prevails in social interactions. This point has been ratified by Stewart (2005) who describes British English as “an avoidance-based, negatively-oriented culture” (2005: 117), and contends that British English is inclined more towards negative

politeness and favours off-record strategies in the fulfillment of certain face-threatening acts. Stewart (2005: 124-125) claims that British English speakers' tendency to use hedges in the past tense could be taken as an example of conventional indirectness and as an overt marker of negative politeness strategies. This could be explained in terms of the speaker's wish to distance herself from the acts that have the potential of face loss. The use of the past tense, e.g. *I was wondering.....*, or *I thought.....* (Stewart 2005: 124-125) is very common in British English, but never employed in Jordanian culture. Fukushima (2000), comparing British English with Japanese, finds that British English speakers avoid bald-on-record strategies, even in cases where threat is viewed to be low.

In contrast to the above, the empirical data and supporting interviews suggest that Jordan is a society that places low emphasis on social distance. Solidarity and intimacy are prioritised over distance in social encounters that involve members of the same group and even sometimes members who are looked on as socially distant. Accordingly, positive politeness strategies – and sometimes bald-on-record politeness strategies – are expected to be the prevailing feature in social encounters among people who marginalise distance and emphasise solidarity. With this in mind, it becomes apparent that Brown & Levinson's (1987) classification of speech acts as being intrinsically face-threatening or face-saving acts, or as inherently negative or positive politeness strategies is not always correct. More precisely, our discussion in this chapter and the previous ones demonstrates that apologies, viewed as not constituting a threat to the speaker's positive face, can function as positive politeness strategies and can serve as a device to express solidarity and intimacy among members of the same "in-group". Koutsantoni (2007: 118), whose study examines apologies in Greek reality TV, argues that when distance and power are low, apologies are enhanced by the need to re-establish the relationship and are as such considered sincere. The use of imperatives, informal requests and solidarity markers, the author argues, is likely to make the language of sincere apologies informal, which is what comprises expected polite behaviour among members of the same group. Koutsantoni (2007: 118) also claims that people's preference for this particular linguistic behaviour serves to indicate that linguistic expressions like

interruptions and imperatives, which are viewed as face-threatening in imposition-based societies, can enhance solidarity in the Greek society.

On the basis of data collected from student e-mail apologies to academic staff, Davies et al (2007) argue that apologies could be viewed – on the part of student – as a way to improve the image of “good student” in the eyes of the lecturer, and not as incurring a threat to the apologiser’s positive face. Building on data of “situated apologies” (apologies that occur alongside other speech acts), Davies et al (2007:53) find that the speech act most frequently co-occurring with apologies is the speech act of request; 79% of the emails have the speech act of request acting as a head act. The authors contend that though apologies in this context might be meant to minimise the degree of intrusion of the request act, they are used to fulfill another function. In order to explain this, Davies et al (2007: 54) use Clark’s (1996: 289) notion of equity, in which speakers are assumed to find a way for sustaining equity with the addressee. The authors point out that because requests are of benefit to the one who makes the request and costly to the one who fulfills them, the use of apology in this case is of use to maintain equilibrium between the participants.

We suggest that apologies are being used in just this way: they pay equity to the apologizee in order to increase the likelihood that any cost incurred by the main function of the e-mail is either cancelled out, or at least diminished by the benefit of apology.

To use the financial metaphor more explicitly, making requests of someone can potentially send you into the red and using apologies or other remedial behavior earns you credit which you can use to get back into the black (Davies et al 2007: 54).

As for e-mails which include apologies as head acts constituting the main business of the e-mails, Davies et al (2007: 55) also explain this in terms of the importance students attach to sustaining equity with the lecturer. Analysed in this way, these apologies cannot be taken to be face-threatening acts for “what the individual is building here is their overall standing in society (at the macro-level), and their addressee’s perception of them in that society (at the micro-level). Apologies can therefore be an important resource for identity construction” (ibid.: 61). Davies et al further contend that the fact that the

apologiser (student) ranks below the apologisee (lecturer) in terms of power makes it less important to view apologies as face-threatening than if the apologiser is in a position of power. Looked at as a way of “self-enhancement” and identity construction, such apologies could be seen to be part of Watts’s (1989, 2003, 2005) politeness (marked) rather than politic (unmarked) behaviour.

To classify speech acts as intrinsically negative or positive politeness strategies or as inherently polite or impolite is thus not tenable. Viewed in this way, both polite and impolite behaviour should be re-considered as realising relational work (e.g., Gu 1990; Holmes 1995; Holmes & Schnurr 2005; Mills 2003; Watts 2003; Locher 2004; Locher & Watts 2005; Spencer-Oatey 2005; Arundale 2006), as different cultures exhibit different conceptions of what constitutes a threat to face. Gu (1990: 241-242), for example, observes that speech acts like inviting, promising, and offering, which are assumed by Brown & Levinson (1987) to be threatening to the hearer’s negative face, do not bear any threat to the addressee’s face in Chinese culture. Building on Eelen (2001), Locher (2004: 85-86) is also opposed to categorising linguistic strategies as inherently more or less polite. She explains her hypothesis using Eelen’s (2001) notion of norms. She claims that since norms and social rules are not static but can be shaped and changed by members of the same group, and since it is impossible to draw clear boundaries between marked and unmarked behaviour, it is then impossible to say that speech acts are inherently more or less polite. More precisely, Locher holds that each individual has his/her own perception of what is appropriate and what is inappropriate, and although the conception of appropriateness is controlled by the norms operative in cultures and sub-cultures, the understanding of appropriateness could vary from one individual to another. This makes it difficult to judge either “[..] whether an utterance was *meant* as polite by the speaker or *perceived* as polite by the hearer” (Locher 2004: 86, italics in original).

Likewise, Watts (2003: 140) points out that classifying linguistic structures as inherently polite is not a straightforward matter. He links this to the politic behaviour of social interactions in which facework is not only designed to maintain the face of participants in social interactions. That is, facework is not viewed as being equivalent to



politeness. Rather, any utterance categorised as linguistically polite or impolite can be used to fulfil facework. Watts (2003), moreover, stresses the role of context, because if different linguistic expressions – that are classified as polite – are taken out of their original context and put in different context, they might be considered impolite. Watts concludes his argument by saying that “ultimately, what is or is not taken to be a polite utterance depends entirely on the moment of utterance in linguistic practice and relies on the participants’ habits in the verbal interaction” (2003: 200).

Elsewhere, Locher & Watts (2005) stress the notion that no linguistic expression can be classified as inherently polite. They contend (2005: 15-16) that the weakness of classifying speech acts as intrinsically polite/impolite is the result of the equation of indirectness with politeness<sup>2</sup>. In order to explain the danger of laying emphasis on politeness<sup>2</sup> at the expense of politeness<sup>1</sup>, the authors draw on the examples of:

- 1- Lend me your pen.
- 2- Could you lend me your pen?

Locher & Watts (2005: 15) argue that as far as politeness<sup>2</sup> is concerned, the second expression would be conceived of by native speakers as being more polite than the first one. The authors claim that any change in the social context of interaction is likely to change these perceptions of politeness. They point out that utterance<sup>2</sup> might be viewed as being merely appropriate but not polite in certain social contexts, and that though utterance 1 is seen by many people to be too direct, it might not be conceived of as being impolite. Building on this, Locher & Watts (2005: 16) conclude that people’s perception (politeness<sup>1</sup>) of what is viewed by linguists/analysts (politeness<sup>2</sup>) as politeness might be different within relational work. For this reason, Locher & Watts (2005: 10) redefine politeness as being “[...] a discursive concept arising out of interactants’ perceptions and judgement of their own and others’ verbal behaviour”. They hold that “politeness is only a relatively small part of relational work and must be seen in relation to other types of interpersonal meaning”. The same point has been stressed by Spencer-Oatey (2005: 96), in that politeness is defined as being “[...] associated in some way with

harmonious/conflictual interpersonal relations". Relational work as such encompasses both polite and impolite behaviour, in that "impolite behavior is thus just as significant in defining relationships as appropriate/politic or polite behavior" (Locher & Watts 2005: 11). This indicates that Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies together with Leech's (1983) maxims do not apply in all cultures or speech contexts (Spencer-Oatey & Jiang 2003, Spencer-Oatey 2005). Seen as a way to realise relational work and friendly relationships, apologies cannot always be viewed only as face-threatening acts or as part of negative politeness strategies designed to protect the apologisee's private territory from invasion.

Picking up the same line of thought of Locher & Watts (2005) and building on Bargiela-Chiappini's (2003) re-examination of face as related to politeness, Arundale (2006: 193) argues that "[...] face is a relational and an interactional, rather than an individual phenomenon, in that the social self is interactionally achieved in relationships with others". Viewing face as a "relational" and "interactional" phenomenon, Arundale (2006: 208-209) contends that no utterance can be classified as a face-threatening act. As part of the implications of defining face as a "relational" and "interactional", rather than as an individual phenomenon, the author suggests that social variables like distance and power are "relational" phenomena as well, in that "[...] if distance is conceptualised as separateness between persons, it remains entirely undefined apart from some basis for relational connectedness". The same applies to power, contends Arundale, in that if power is shaped as a tool to maintain disconnectedness, it is not then effective until it is interactionally employed in a certain relationship. Arundale's argument reflects that of Christie (2004) and Mills (2003) in that the former defines interpersonal power as an interactional notion, and the latter describes it as something that should be worked out through the whole conversation.

It is widely held that the politeness orientation adopted in any culture is determined by the conception of the level of distance between interactants in any social encounter. And since the connotations of distance are culturally variable, cultures are then classified as negatively or positively oriented. Morain (1986: 72) points out, for instance, that in

cultures like many Arab countries, Latin America and Greece, people tend to leave shorter physical distance when interacting with each other. Conversely, people from cultures like America and Northern Europe maintain a greater physical distance when interacting with each other. The difference in the conception of distance between British English and Jordanian Arabic may indicate that the two cultures adopt different politeness directions. This again demonstrates that the rules of appropriateness and polite speech act are culturally variable. The multi-conceptions of face, face-threats, and redressive action across cultures are likely to challenge the universality of Brown & Levinson's (1987) view of politeness.

In spite of what has been stated so far, and in order not to be accused of providing an exaggerated account of how politeness functions in Jordanian culture, we have to say that instances of negative politeness strategies do exist, yet they are relatively rare. Bearing in mind that the data used in the present study were collected from cities located in the northern and southern part of Jordan, where the basic form of social structure is tribal (especially the south), and that the fabric of social relationships between members of semi-nomadic tribes is strongly bound, it is not surprising to find that positive politeness is the most prevailing feature in social interactions. In tribally organised communities like these, it is also not uncommon for an individual to sacrifice self in the interest of establishing or reestablishing social harmony and maintaining relations with others. Moreover, some people, though this is rare, seem to adopt – using Goffman's terms – two different lines of behaviour, in that they insist on not having their freedom invaded by others and simultaneously want to be socially accepted. Though the integration of the two main constituents of face into one line of behaviour appears novel and may be viewed as a marker of inconsistency of behaviour, it has been seen by many, such as Miller (2005: 301) to be part of normal behaviour: negative and positive politeness “are not necessarily in opposition to each other”; interdependence and dependence “[...] can very often be interconnected” (Spencer-Oatey 2005: 107).

It should be further noted that although Jordanian people organise their behaviour in line with a set of social norms (as emphasising group face) that regulate social

interaction, this is not to imply the automatic and full abandonment of the individual's need to, on occasion, initiate and perpetuate channels of communication with other members of society without reference to social norms. To emphasise the significance of social norms at the expense of individual needs would be inappropriate, were there really sharp differences between socially motivated and individually enhanced behaviour. However, since social norms are pervasive in people's life from early childhood and they grow up with them constituting a key component of their individual behaviour, we may say that individual behaviour is a reflection of the social norms. Moreover, since social norms centre on inviting people to behave with each other on the basis of the social expectations which each individual holds towards others, it is then other people who would take care of the individual's needs, as a reward of his/her consideration of their needs.

The finding that Jordanian apologies are in general face-saving acts and therefore advantageous to both the apologiser and the apologisee is not to minimise the significance of Brown & Levinson's (1987) model of politeness, in which the act of apologising has been classified as a face-threatening act for the speaker. Without the insights into human behaviour in different communities of practice provided by their theory, it would not have been feasible to explore the politeness phenomenon as an important aspect of human interaction in Jordanian culture. This is to conclude that Brown & Levinson's (1987) model of politeness "[...] provides a breadth of insights into human behaviour which no other theory has yet offered" (Locher & Watts 2005: 9), and that it "[...] has a great deal of analytical mileage in that it provides a framework for understanding social behaviour: even when that behavior goes against their predictions" (Christie 2005: 6).

## **Chapter 7: Conclusions and Further Work**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Over the previous three chapters of this study, we have discussed the findings of the cross-cultural analysis of the act of apologising as realised in British and Jordanian culture. In the final chapter of this thesis, we provide a summary of these main findings. The study's main contributions and its implications for Jordanian and British view of politeness, for language learning and teaching, and for future research will be presented. The limitations of the study along with suggestions for follow-up work will also be discussed.

### **7.2 A summary of the study's main findings**

In this work, an attempt has been made to determine the similarities and differences in the realisation patterns of the speech act of apology in British English and Jordanian Arabic as a way to track the politeness orientation operative in each culture under study. It is clear, as indicated by Brown & Levinson (1987), that the realisation of speech acts in general and the speech act of apology in particular differs according to a number of variables, namely social distance, social power, and the total ranking of imposition. Because the conception of these variables varies from language to language and from one culture to another, we have tried in this work to show how, for example, social power or social distance are conceived of in each culture and how differences in understanding of these variables affects the way people apologise.

The findings of chapter 4 pointed to the fact that the social variables play a significant role in the performance of the speech act of apology. In this study, the two cultures exhibited differences as to which combination of these variables determines the choice and frequency of apologies. The data analysis in chapter 4 demonstrated that the key motive behind the act of apologising in British English is the seriousness of offence in connection with the recognition of the social power of the addressee. Conversely, the interaction between the seriousness of the offence and social distance seems to be the

main motivation behind this speech act in Jordanian Arabic. This indicates that while in British English the role of social distance is minor compared with that of social power, it seems to be a crucial factor in Jordanian Arabic, as people's consideration of the level of social distance between interlocutors is likely to influence the way they apologise. This observation is endorsed by the Jordanian respondents' responses, which minimise the need for apology between friends or neighbours with the justification that they are least distant and most socially intimate. The fact that Jordanian apologies are sensitive to the seriousness of the offence and increased social distance between communication partners was evident in the low percentage of intensified *IFIDs* in situation 7 (having an accident with the manager's car) (15%) compared to the relatively high percentage in situation 10 (bumping into a passenger and hurting him) (25%). In both situations the offence is perceived as serious, but in the former the social distance is low, whereas in the latter the social distance is seen as high. The incorporation of social power and seriousness of offence in British English is such that when the apologiser and the apologisee are equal in power, the apologiser was found to apologise and intensify apology more when the offence is serious than when the offence is less serious. Additionally, it was found that in asymmetrical social power relationships, if the apologiser is in a lower position than the apologisee and the offence is severe, the apologiser is more likely to apologise than if the two parties are equal in status and also the offence is less serious. These examples demonstrate that people's linguistic behaviour in the two cultures seem to be the product of their consideration of the social variables proposed by Brown & Levinson (1987).

The findings of chapter 4 also indicate that British respondents used more *IFIDs* than Jordanians. The British, moreover, exhibited a marked preference to intensify their apologies through the use of adverbs like *so*, *really*, *terribly*.... etc. or by means of emotional expressions, while Jordanians were less likely to strengthen the remedial expressions they employed. In relation to the realisation of *IFIDs* in both languages, it was found that both the British and Jordanians were prone to employ frequently and commonly used expressions, with the British extensively using *I'm sorry* and the Jordanians *asif/ mutaʔassif*. The findings of the study are in agreement with that of Blum-Kulka et al (1989) in the sense that *IFIDs* and the strategy of *responsibility* were

employed in all situations across the two languages, while the other apology strategies appear to be situation-specific and language-specific. A number of new strategies, other than those proposed by Cohen & Olshtain (1983) upon which this work is based, emerged in both the British and Jordanian data. It is clear that the use of these strategies as extra remedial devices reflect the offender's real intent to set things right. *Reassuring the offended party*, and *requesting the offended not to get angry* were employed by both British and Jordanians, while *proverbs*, *determinism*, and *self-punishment* were used only in the Jordanian context. This again indicates that they are language-specific and situation-specific.

The intracultural analysis carried out in chapter 5 indicated that Jordanian women are relatively higher users of apology than men. The differences men and women exhibited were imputed to the different conceptualisations they hold about social variables. It was found that men's apologies were the product of interdependence of seriousness of offence and social distance. That is, men apologised more to strangers and less to intimates and friends; for men, extensive apologies are associated with formality, and since they like to interact with each other and express themselves in terms of friendliness and solidarity, male friends choose not to profusely apologise. Women, on the other hand, tended not to consider the level of distance when apologising, even with interlocutors with whom they have a close relationship. The rationale behind this behaviour is to perpetuate good and friendly relationships with others. It is also motivated by women's wish to be deferential – a merit which, they believe, can be accomplished through the employment and intensification of *IFIDs*. The findings as to differences in strategy selection indicated that men and women exhibited differences in the use of the newly employed strategies, with the men being higher users of *proverbs*, and *attributing the offence to external causes*, and women being relatively frequent users of *self-punishment*.

The main claim made in chapter 6 is that Brown & Levinson's (1987) constituents of face – negative and positive face – are dependent on the culture. Jordanians define themselves as group members and stress the need to have certain relations to others,

while the self image adopted by the British seems to be based on individualism and that each individual has certain rights, such as the right of not having the private territory invaded. This is to claim that people in any culture choose strategies of politeness in accordance with the social norms and cultural expectations, which may emphasise either interdependence or dependence. The findings of chapter 5, which pertain to Jordanian male and female apologetic behaviour, do not contradict our general claim. More precisely, since women proved to be using *IFIDs* more frequently than men, this substantiates their marked tendency to be deferential. However, and as outlined in chapter 6, the pragmatic meaning of deference in Jordanian culture is entirely opposed to that portrayed by the British. For Jordanians, deference is a strategic tool to acknowledge social differences between communication partners and is used between female equals to perpetuate a friendly relationship. Viewing deference as a relational phenomenon and as a tool to harmonise the relationship between interlocutors – and hence a positive politeness strategy – constitutes a great challenge to Brown & Levinson's (1987) theory in which deference is looked at as a strategy of negative politeness designed to redress the negative face of the addressee. This in fact implies that Brown & Levinson's claim of the universality of the notion of face with its two main constituents is not always right.

The differences the two cultures displayed in terms of strategy selection reinforce our hypothesis that they have a different politeness orientation. We noted that the British subjects used *IFIDs* and intensified apologies more frequently than the Jordanians. Moreover, the nature of the exaggerated accounts provided by Jordanian subjects and the offer of repair which leaves the offended no choice but to accept apology substantiate the Jordanians' marked preference for positive politeness. Added to this, the Jordanians' employment of politeness strategies – *proverbs*, *determinism*, and *self-punishment* – along with the use of mitigating conventional and religious expressions is indicative of their preference to establish and/or maintain solidarity with the addressee. All this clearly indicates that the strategies preferred in the two cultures reflect the different politeness orientations of the two societies.



It seems, then, that differences noted in the two cultures stem from differences in the conceptualisation of politeness. Because people tend to socially interact with each other and be polite, they resort to employing linguistic expressions that are likely to suit the addressee's social expectations. So it is social norms and social expectations against which an act is evaluated as being more or less polite; and since social expectations vary cross-culturally, it is not unusual for an act to be assessed as polite in one culture and impolite in another. What is perceived as socially appropriate in one language does not necessarily count as such in another. It is then unreasonable to classify one culture as being more polite than the other. In other words, because the British culture is classified as a negatively polite culture emphasising formality, and Jordanian culture is looked at as a positively polite culture which highlights solidarity and closeness and downplays formality and distancing oneself from the addressee, this should not lead to the assumption that one culture is more polite than the other. This should indicate that – in support of Locher & Watts (2005), Spencer-Oatey (2005) and Arundale (2006) – politeness should be defined as part of relational work in which appropriate behaviour can be realised via a wide range of polite/impolite strategies. This should also be taken as evidence that cultures differ in the way they realise and encode linguistic politeness. What seems to emerge from this study is the fact that to understand politeness in a certain culture, necessitates understanding of the socio-cultural norms that control the social interaction system in that culture.

### **7.3 The implications of the study for Jordanian and British views of politeness**

The findings of the study have implicitly and explicitly made it clear that apologies are relational phenomena in that they are employed to sustain relationships with others (Watts 2005; Spencer-Oatey 2005; Arundale 2006), and sometimes to “improve the standing of the speaker in the eyes of the addressee” (Davies et al 2007: 57). Viewed in this way, apologies are no longer seen as inherently face-threatening acts as claimed by Brown & Levinson (1987), but should instead be viewed as having a relational and interactional function. The discursive and relational nature of apologies is not derived from the assumption that they realise politeness in one culture and impoliteness in

another. Rather, it necessitates a re-theorisation of the act of apologising based on people's perceptions and judgements of its appropriateness and the social function it has (politeness1).

It has been pointed out many times throughout this study that whereas apologies are used in British English to emphasise formality, they are employed by Jordanians to highlight solidarity. This being so, we can say that relational work is achieved through claiming closeness in relationship as in Jordanian Arabic, or through stressing formality as in British English. The overall aim of these two different, albeit relational, types of behaviour is to maintain "equity" with others. The point that should be stressed here is that we need to be aware of such cross-cultural differences in the perceptions of the nature and function of apologies. The fact that England is the main destination for a large number of Jordanian students looking to pursue their undergraduate and postgraduate studies emphasises the need to raise their awareness of the intercultural differences in realising politeness. By the same token, the fact that Jordan is a main destination for tourists from all over the world, including many British people, also highlights the importance of cross-cultural awareness of politeness norms, driven by the need for intercultural harmony in today's international encounters. What we should like to reaffirm is that people of both cultures should not regard their own behaviour and social norms as universal (Wolfson 1989), as this could lead to a "great potential for miscommunication and misperceptions based upon differencing norms of interactions across societies and speech communities" (Boxer 2002: 150). In what follows, we talk about the implications of the study for language learning and teaching as a source for raising people's awareness of cross-cultural differences in this regard.

#### **7.4 Implications for language learning and teaching**

In any culture, it is taken as axiomatic that grammatical and lexical competence enables language learners to articulate linguistically accurate expressions and understand explicitly produced utterances. Yet, in order to understand implicitly conveyed information, one needs to go beyond the literal meaning and calculate the possible interpretations that any particular utterance might bear. For this reason, developing

communicative and pragmatic competence is crucial, in that it qualifies language learners to interpret non-explicitly stated messages and enables them to produce socially appropriate utterances that are in accordance with social expectations of members of the society. If communicative competence is important to ensure the success of intracultural communication, then it becomes even more important in intercultural communication. Cross-cultural communication failure could be due to either poor linguistic or poor communicative knowledge on the part of the language learner. The learners' grammatical and lexical knowledge may be insufficient to allow smooth communication, and/or his lack of awareness of cultural assumptions and expectations may give rise to socially and linguistically inappropriate behaviour. Although linguistic competence seems to be a prerequisite for establishing and developing sociolinguistic competence, the latter appears to be crucial in enhancing cross-cultural communication, as failure to recognise the social norms operative in the target language may make the language learner appear impolite. Part of the reasons for intercultural communication breakdown could be linked to the learners evaluating the target language standards by their own, hence apologising, for example, in line with the socio-cultural norms operative in one's first language. Most learners tend to apologise without considering the pragmatic differences in the way apology is realised in each culture. This ignorance of the intercultural pragmatic meanings of speech acts in general and the speech act of apology in particular is likely to cause learners to communicate inappropriately in the second language.

Second language teachers should, therefore, enable second language learners to acquire linguistic and communicative competence which will qualify learners to produce grammatically acceptable expressions and socially appropriate behaviour. Part of achieving communicative competence is the teaching of cross-cultural differences. Learners need to know not only the way the speech acts are realised in the target language, but also the variables that affect the way in which they are realised. Specifically, learners need to be aware of the evaluation of power, distance, and imposition in the target language, as part of any cross-cultural communication failure is linked to different evaluations of these variables between interlocutors. Additionally, learners need to know the appropriate use of titles in the target language so as to render

the communication smooth. Jordanians, for example, find it difficult to address university teachers by their first name, as teachers are seen as occupying high status. When Jordanians come to study in British universities, they find it strange to address university teachers with their first names, and it takes them some time to realise that it will not be impolite if they do so. In order to facilitate the cross-cultural communication process, foreign language teachers need to carry out activities inside the classroom that are designed to raise the learners' awareness of any cultural differences that have the potential to affect the intercultural communication (Kasper & Rose 2002, Davies 2004). Learners will thus broaden their knowledge about appropriateness in the target language and increase their understanding of their own culture. All this demonstrates the close connection between language and culture. In order to use language properly and correctly, learners need to know the social structure and the cultural values of the society in which language is used.

## **7.5 Implications for future research**

Due to the fact that English is an international language, there are millions of people who speak it as a first or second language. That said, investigation of how people use language in their lives is of help to improve intercultural and intracultural communication. Because politeness is a social phenomenon and is represented by language, further research is needed to discover the reasons that render social interactions successful or not, and shed further light on what renders linguistic expressions appropriate or inappropriate. Brown & Levinson's (1987) model of politeness is extensive, and it lays the foundations of how to study interaction, serving as a basis for cross-cultural and intracultural research. Nonetheless, further research is needed to unveil, for example, the pragmatic meaning of deference, as deference has different connotations in different cultures. Additionally, classifying speech acts as inherently positive or negative politeness strategies, or as face-threatening acts and face-supporting acts, is not universally applicable. This has become clear in Jordanian culture where apologies, contrary to what Brown & Levinson (1987) hold, prove to be positive politeness strategies and a way to emphasise solidarity and closeness in relationship. Further research on a variety of cultures is likely to recognise a number of new positive

and/or negative politeness strategies that are prevalent in daily interactions; as has been shown in the employment of new politeness strategies – proverbs, determinism, and self-punishment – by Jordanians. The intracultural analysis conducted in chapter 5 demonstrates that although cultures may have a certain politeness direction, they may display different internal preferences for strategies, such as men’s and women’s selection of apology strategies in Jordanian culture. The similarity of orientation within one culture or across cultures deserves further investigation, as this will be of help to support or contest the universality of politeness phenomena. As mentioned, English is an international language and this entails contact between people from different cultures and different backgrounds. As such, further cross-cultural research is crucial to explain similarities and differences in a wide range of linguistic settings, to identify what is appropriate and what is inappropriate, and to shed further light on how speech acts such as the speech act of apology can be successfully realised.

It has been indicated in chapter 4 that social distance and social power affect the way the speech act of apology is realised in British and Jordanian cultures. It has also become apparent that while the incorporation of social power and severity of offence is the main motivation for apologising in British culture, the interaction of social distance and severity of offence is the main motivation behind apologising in Jordanian Arabic. This in fact invites researchers to carry out further research to discover which combinations of social variables affect the performance of different speech acts, like Searle’s *directives*, *expressives*, *assertives*, and *commissives*. Since, in some apology situations in this study, Jordanians chose not to verbalise their apologies, further investigation of non-verbal politeness should be considered equally important to investigation of verbal politeness, as this might lead to classifying societies as verbal or non-verbal for particular aspects of politeness. Further research would be helpful in validating some of the observations made in this study and providing deeper insights into people’s perceptions of what constitutes polite/impolite behaviour in Jordanian culture.

## 7.6 The study's main contribution to the field of politeness research

Based on our observations of Jordanian men's and women's linguistic behaviour as exhibiting differences in choice and frequency of semantic formulas of apologies, with reference to Brown & Levinson's (1987) social parameters, and in their preference to realise politeness non-verbally or via explicit and direct expressions, we find that carrying out within-culture analysis is of paramount importance before exploring politeness interculturally. We demonstrated that such differences are not likely to detract from the homogeneity of culture, and that analysis of cross-gender interaction is of use in providing insight into the overall picture of social interaction, as monitored by the social norms adopted in Jordanian culture. Also, we see that the main contribution of the present study is to reinforce the findings of those researchers who claim that apologies could be of benefit for the apologiser (Davies et al. 2007, Koutsantoni 2007) – a claim that frees apologies from being labelled as intrinsically face-threatening acts – and to reaffirm the findings of Locher & Watts (2005), Spencer-Oatey (2005) and Arundale (2006) in which politeness is defined as part of relational work that could be accomplished via friendly and/or aggressive communication. This again substantiates that no linguistic expression can be taken to be inherently polite, and as such supports the claim of the above-mentioned authors that Brown & Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies would not be obsolete were they reconsidered as part of relational work.

## 7.7 Limitations of the study and suggestions for follow-up work

There are certain limitations that need to be acknowledged regarding the present study. The first has to do with the identification of utterances that include *account* and *self-deficiency* (as a sub-formula of the strategy of responsibility). As explained in the chapter on methodology, the classification of apology strategies consisted of assigning each utterance to the appropriate category of the CCSARP scheme, yet we came across some confusing Arabic utterances that could be categorised as both *account* and *self-deficiency*. However, the co-existence of these two strategies sorted out this shortcoming. That is, when a non-straightforwardly identified *self-deficiency* sub-strategy co-existed

with an easily recognised *account*, this made it easy to consolidate our opinion that the former was really used as *self-deficiency* and vice versa. Driven by the doubt that my theory in this regard might not work well, I consulted some Arabic language teachers from Mu'tah University regarding such confusing pairs of strategies and they offered invaluable comments confirming this approach, which helped me greatly.

The second limitation concerns the return of the non-completed English and Arabic questionnaires and the fact that few of the English questionnaire respondents were willing to act as interviewees in the second stage of data collection, which was disappointing. A further limitation in this regard is that some Jordanian and English respondents, though this was rare, provided responses in the form of reported speech rather than in the form of direct quotation, though it had been emphasised in the questionnaire instructions that respondents should react to the apology situations as if they were in such situations. Nonetheless, the cross-cultural findings and conclusions of this study indicate that the study's goals which centre on unveiling the intercultural similarities and differences between the two cultures were achieved.

In this study, the intercultural analysis (resulting from data collected from undergraduate students) revealed the fact that the combination of seriousness of offence and social distance are likely to determine the frequency and intensity of apology in Jordanian Arabic. Further study is needed to examine Jordanian pre-school children's apologies, as an under-researched area, to discover whether and how children apologise. If so, such a study could move a step forward and attempt to examine which combination of social parameters might shape their apologies. Such a study might also indicate whether or not children recognise offences that constitute a breach of social norms, and discuss any remedial strategies used to remedy such offences.

Additionally, inspired by the notion of relational work and because "[...] there are occasions when people do indeed attack rather than support their interlocutors, and sometimes those attacks are considered by others to be impolite and sometimes they are not" (Mills 2005: 264), I intend – as part of future work – to investigate this particular

area in Jordanian culture, and demonstrate whether or not displays of aggression, negotiation of conflicts and interruptions always amount to rudeness. Culpeper (1996: 352) and later Culpeper et al (2002: 1546) draw a distinction between two types of impoliteness: between “genuine” and “mock” impoliteness. For him, mock impoliteness, or banter, refers to untrue impoliteness that is understood not to be offensive, but to strengthen social intimacy. He emphasises the importance of context if impoliteness is to be interpreted as not causing an offence. In support of this, Mills (2005: 265) argues that most impolite expressions can be used by friends as a way to show intimacy. This indeed indicates that speech acts cannot be classified as intrinsically impolite. Driven by the authors’ observations mentioned above, I am planning, following an ethnographic approach, to investigate this particular area in my home city, Karak, narrowing the focus to exploring interruptions and turn-taking. The aim of the study will be to examine the contextual factors and paralinguistic features that contribute to the assessment of these linguistic features (interruptions and flouting the rules of turn-taking) as being polite or otherwise. The study of situated impoliteness is of use in that impoliteness is explored within a stretch of discourse that specifies the context of its use, and helps to understand how conflictive disputes are usually sorted out.

As regards the methodology employed in this study, I would like to state that the multiple research approach represented by the combination of DCT and interview methodologies is fruitful. Without the use of questionnaires, it would not have been possible to collect data that would allow the comparison of apologies and politeness in British English and Jordanian Arabic. The use of open-ended questions together with the ample space available to respondents in which to write their answers generated a considerable amount of data needed for the purpose of cross-cultural comparability. Equally important, the use of interviews allowed us to gain a deeper insight into the questionnaire respondents’ views of politeness.

In conclusion, the findings of this study indicate that the two cultures orient to two different politeness strategies. This, as demonstrated earlier, should not be interpreted as one culture being more polite than the other, but should be indicative of the cross-cultural



variation in evaluating and realising politeness. The findings of the study also suggest that one should not evaluate politeness in the target language according to the norms of one's own.



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**Situation 3**

You completely forget a crucial meeting at the office with your boss. An hour later you call him to apologise. The problem is that this is the second time you've forgotten such a meeting. Your boss gets on the line and asks:

Boss: "What happened to you?"

You:.....  
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**Situation 4**

You forget a meeting with a friend. You call him to apologise. This is already the second time you've forgotten such a meeting. Your friend asks over the phone.

Friend: "What happened?"

You:.....  
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**Situation 5**

You call from work to find out how things are at home and your kid reminds you that you forgot to take him shopping, as you had promised. And this is the second time that this has happened. Your kid says over the phone:

Kid: "Oh, you forgot again and you promised!"

You:.....  
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**Situation 6**

While backing up to park, you hit another car and damaged its rear. It was clearly your fault. The driver gets out and comes over to you angrily.

Driver: "Can't you look where you're going? See what you've done?"

You:.....  
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**Situation 7**

Your manager with whom you get on well agreed to lend you his car for you to collect someone from the airport urgently. On the way back from the airport you had a small road accident which results in a broken headlight and a bent bumper. You go to your manager's office to return the keys. What do you say to him?

The manager: "What happened?"

You:.....  
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**Situation 11.**

You are on a bus with a child. There are plenty of seats on the bus but there are not any for two people together. You ask a passenger who is sitting on his own on a two seater to change seats with you so that you can sit next to the child. When he stands up to change seats, you accidentally bump into him and disturb him a bit. It's your fault, and you want to apologise.

He: "Hey, look out!"

You:.....  
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**Situation 12**

You're at a meeting and you say something that one of the participants interprets as a personal insult to him.

He: "I feel that your last remark was directed at me and I take an offence."

You:.....  
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**Thank you for cooperation**

## B. Arabic version of apology instrument

### وسيلة اعتذار

المستوى التعليمي:.....

الجنس:.....

اللغة الأم:.....

العمر:.....

سيطلب منك قراءة اثني عشر موقف اعتذار موجز. في كل موقف سيتكلم الشخص الذي تدين له بالاعتذار أولاً. أجب بالقدر الوافي ما أمكن كما لو كنت في موقف حقيقي .

الموقف الأول:

أنت أستاذ في جامعة وكنت وعدت أن تعيد بحثاً لطالب في ذاك اليوم ولكنك لم تنته من قراءته.  
الطالب: " أتمنى أنه حظي بإعجابك "

أنت.....

هل و كيف ستعتذر إذا كان الشخص الذي تدين له بالاعتذار من الجنس الآخر؟

الموقف الثاني:

أنت طالب وكنت قد استعرت كتاب أستاذك الجامعي والذي وعدت أن تعيده في ذلك اليوم ولكنك نسيت أن تحضره.  
الأستاذ: " هل أحضرت الكتاب؟ "

أنت:.....

هل و كيف ستعتذر إذا كان الشخص الذي تدين له بالاعتذار من الجنس الآخر؟

الموقف الثالث:

أنت تماماً نسيت لقاءً مهماً جداً في المكتب مع مديرك . بعد مرور ساعة تتصل به لتعتذر . المشكلة تكمن في أنه هذه هي المرة الثانية أنت تنس مثل هذا اللقاء . يجيب مديرك على الاتصال ويسأل :  
المدير: " ماذا حدث لك ؟"  
أنت:

هل و كيف ستعتذر إذا كان الشخص الذي تدين له بالاعتذار من الجنس الآخر؟



الموقف الرابع:

تنس لقاء مع صديق . تتصل به لتعتذر . هذه هي المرة الثانية أنت تنسى مثل هذا اللقاء . يسألك صديقك عبر الهاتف .  
الصديق: " ماذا حدث ؟ "

أنت:

هل و كيف ستعتذر إذا كان الشخص الذي تدين له بالاعتذار من الجنس الآخر؟

الموقف الخامس:

تتصل من العمل لتعرف كيف تجري الأمور في البيت ويذكرك ولدك بأنك نسيت أخذه للتسوق كما وعدت وهذا يحدث للمرة الثانية . يقول ولدك  
عبر الهاتف :  
الولد: " أه ، أنت نسيت مره أخرى وأنت وعدت ! "

أنت:

هل و كيف ستعتذر إذا كان الشخص الذي تدين له بالاعتذار من الجنس الآخر؟

الموقف السادس :

أثناء إرجاع سيارتك إلى الوراق في الموقف ، اصطدمت بسيارة أخرى و حطمت مؤخرتها . وكان واضحاً أنه خطوك . يخرج السائق من سيارته ويتقدم نحوك غاضباً .  
السائق: " ألا تستطيع أن تنظر إلى أين أنت ذاهب ؟ انظر إلى ما فعلت ؟"  
أنت:

هل و كيف ستعتذر إذا كان الشخص الذي تدين له بالاعتذار من الجنس الآخر؟

الموقف السابع:

يوافق مديرك الذي تربطك به علاقة جيدة أن يعيرك سيارته لتحضر بها شخصاً ما من المطار على عجل. في طريق العودة من المطار تتعرض لحادث سير بسيط يؤدي إلى كسر الضوء الأمامي والتواء المصد ( الصدام الأمامي في السيارة ) . تذهب إلى مكتب مديرك لتعيد له المفاتيح.  
ماذا تقول له؟

المدير: " ماذا حدث ؟"

أنت:

هل و كيف ستعتذر إذا كان الشخص الذي تدين له بالاعتذار من الجنس الآخر؟

الموقف الثامن:

يوافق جارك على مساعدتك في نقل بعض الأشياء من شقتك في سيارته. عند وجودك في السيارة تلاحظ كم هي نظيفة وخالية من الأوساخ. بسبب دور أنك وانحنائك تسقط زجاجة زيت والتي هي جزء من أمتعتك على المقعد الخلفي وينسكب محتواها على المقعد. كلاكما يشاهد ذلك الجار: " أنظر ماذا فعلت." أنت:

هل و كيف ستعتذر إذا كان الشخص الذي تدين له بالاعتذار من الجنس الآخر؟

الموقف التاسع:

في مطعم تغير رأيك بعد ما تم تقديم الطعام. تريد أن تعتذر وتغير الطلب.  
النادلة: " ولكن هذا الذي طلبت !"

أنت:

هل و كيف ستعتذر إذا كان الشخص الذي تدين له بالاعتذار من الجنس الآخر؟

الموقف العاشر:

أنت في حافلة مع طفلك . هناك وفرة من المقاعد في الحافلة ولكن لا يوجد أي مقعد يتسع لشخصين معا. تسأل أحد الركاب ممن يجلس وحده على مقعد مزدوج ( يتسع لاثنتين ) أن يبذل مقعده. بحيث تستطيع أن تجلس بجانب طفلك . عندما ينهض ليبادل المقاعد ، ترتطم به من غير قصد ، وتطأ على أصابع قدمه وأخيرا تتسبب في إسقاط الرزم كلها على الأرض . انه بوضوح خطوك وتريد أن تعتذر بشدة .

هو: " أه ! يا الهي !"

أنت:

هل و كيف ستعتذر إذا كان الشخص الذي تدين له بالاعتذار من الجنس الآخر؟

الموقف الحادي عشر :

أنت في حافلة مع طفلك . هنالك وفرة من المقاعد في الحافلة ولكن لا يوجد أي مقعد يتسع لشخصين معا. تسأل أحد الركاب ممن يجلس وحده على مقعد مزدوج أن يبدلك مقعده بحيث تستطيع أن تجلس بجانب طفلك . عندما ينهض ليبدل المقاعد ترتطم به من غير قصد وتهزه قليلا . انه خطوك. وتريد أن تعتذر.  
هــو: "أه، انتبهه!"

أنت:

هل و كيف ستعتذر إذا كان الشخص الذي تدين له بالاعتذار من الجنس الآخر؟

الموقف الثاني عشر:

أنت في اجتماع وتقول شيئا يفسره أحد المشاركين على أنه إهانة شخصيه له.  
هــو: "أنا أشعر أن ملحوظتك الأخيرة كانت موجهة لي وأعدّها إساءة".

أنت:

هل و كيف ستعتذر إذا كان الشخص الذي تدين له بالاعتذار من الجنس الآخر؟

أشكر لكم تعاونكم

## Appendix II

### Some quotes taken from the British interview data

#### 1) Situation 1 (University professor not returning a student's term paper)

- Well, I'd expect the professor to apologise. Yeah, and giving the reasons why, that they've forgotten or whatever because, yeah, students have deadlines same as anyone else. So it's just courtesy, really, to apologise.
- If a promise has been made to return the student paper, and it wasn't finished, then yes, I think an apology would be necessary. I would expect the university professor to do his work and return it to me on time with, and if not, then an apology would be expected.
- I think the professor should be honest and say what had happened, and the student must then accept that as being the professor's way of apologising. "I just didn't get it read. I'm sorry, but I will read it now." Yeah, I think that is perfectly adequate for any student. Professors are human beings like anybody else.
- Because as a professor, you are in a position of trust. You have asked this student to produce a term paper, presumably, there will be a time limit; "You must turn this paper in by," such-and-such a date. If the student has complied with that, and handed it in by the given date and it hasn't been read and returned, then apology is needed.
- It may just be an automatic reflex. "Oh, I've messed up. I better apologise and see if I can get out of it." But I would hope that he respects his students and that's why he or she should apologise.
- Yeah, crucial. You certainly should apologise, yes, definitely. But I don't, I don't think it's sort of a matter of life or death or anything, it's just you know you should apologise and get the paper back as soon as possible.
- Apology demonstrates his care for his student, which any staff member should have care and respect for their students, anyway. So, I think you know in that situation if he apologised to the student and explained why he was late with the term paper, then I think yeah, the student would accept that.
- Oh, yeah definitely. Yeah, I mean you shouldn't, if he's promised to return the student's paper, then he should do it and I think he's quite you know within his rights to that you know, for the student to be upset by the professor not, is it taking it all

right? But you know for the, it's probably in his rights you know to be upset by the professor not promising to do what he'd already you know promised to do.

- Oh, yeah I think it's very much so. I mean, if he's promised to do it and then he didn't for whatever reason, he should apologise and you know and put the student at ease, you know. Because it'd be applicable to fulfil what he'd already promised to do.

## **2) Situation 2 (A student forgetting to return the professor's book)**

- Yeah, I'd make my apologies if I'd forgot to bring the book back when I said I would. I suppose it's a similar thing to that, but it's a bit role reversal. But yeah, I mean, I'd give him, my first thing would be give apologies for forgetting the book and excuses, you know, why it's been forgotten is important because I suppose the book, he could pass it on then to another student, or he could need it, so he or she could need it. So yeah, maybe an apology starts addressing that situation.

- On the courtesy level, apology shows some regard, yeah.

- Oh, certainly. Certainly. Not to apologise would be very impolite when you've borrowed someone's possessions and you promise to return it and you don't, then it's as though you don't care for that possession.

- Yes, because you promised to return it that day. I would think that perhaps it has to be returned that day because the person who lent it needs it for doing some other work, and he might be giving a lecture or needs to refer to it for other work that he's doing. So I think, yes, you do apologise.

- Yeah, well, you see it's the word "promised" which a lot of us do, and we don't actually know for definite if we can do that, you see. So, fair enough assume as promised to return the professor's book and the professor's gone out of his way to lend the student that book, so therefore, the student should return it from the day and the time they said they were going to return it. And just be late with it and then say to professor, "Oh, I forgot," isn't really an excuse. So, in that situation you should apologise very much to the professor and not just apologise, but you know explain to the professor that if he lends any more books then he'll make sure that they're returned on time.

- Well, again, it's, if it's just a straightforward you forgot it, that doesn't necessarily always see that as very worthwhile you know apology really. I think he, he must apologise to him and because that's the least he can do you know to maintain you know a good rapport between the professor and the student because this is important. But, there again, the student has to you know gain the professor's respect, you know the way that he apologises and not to him for forgetting his book.



### 3) Situation 3 (Forgetting a meeting with a boss)

- Possibly, yeah, yeah, it could be, actually, depending on if it's a specific meeting between you and the boss, definitely. If it's a meeting with other people there, it's still bad that you've missed the second meeting, and you need to apologise, yeah. Even an hour later, you need to apologise, but I don't know what else you could do really in that situation.

But again, it's the courtesy thing and keeping people informed. Yeah, you'd have to apologise, and "Why have you missed two in succession?" which is possible. But yeah, apologise.

- Yeah, I think I'd really emphasise how I'd missed two meetings because that could be taken by them as anything really. It could be you're avoiding the meetings or anything. So I'd emphasise that it was just overlooked, yeah.
- If this is the second time, certainly. Certainly, because it obviously is not high on your agenda if it's a crucial meeting, and just to apologise is an easy way to get 'round it, isn't it? I would be very upset if I'd arranged a second crucial meeting and the same person forgot about it. They're obviously not very much impressed in what the meeting is about.
- I think it's the second time, you've really got to eat humble pie and be really sorry, you know, terribly sorry if it's the second time.
- Well, you ought to apologise, but if it's the second time you've forgotten, that puts you in a very difficult position if it's a crucial meeting. But you have no alternative. I mean you have to. You weren't there, so if you don't ring him or her, they'll ring you, and you'd have to say "sorry," whatever.

I mean you would automatically say "sorry" if they rang and said, "Did you know that there was a meeting this morning?" And you would say, "Oh, I'm sorry. I forgot." Well, perhaps you might find another excuse.

- No, I think you need to provide greater apologies if it's the second time you've done it. Definitely!
- Oh, the second time, yeah. Well, it's, in my eyes, offensive. If I was a boss and if somebody was coming to me and forgot two times then I would just, I would be very angry.
- To forget once is, I personally think acceptable. It's not very good, but as long as you apologise. But to forget twice is unacceptable.

- Yes, because you're working for a man that's you know paying your wages. And this situation is that you've left it a full hour before you ring you know your boss up to apologise. In one sense, you have to have the deepest respect for your boss, as he's you know paying your wages. In another sense, you don't wait for a full hour to ring him up and apologise because that's just being disrespectful. If it's the second time, you've forgotten a meeting and then if I was the boss I would have sacked him. Yeah, if I was a boss I wouldn't, I mean companies have meetings for a reason. That's how the company's run. They have their meetings.

- Oh, definitely. To begin with, he waited a full hour before he called to apologise. I mean that in itself, is bad enough. But the problem is that this here is the second, this is the second time he'd forgotten such a meeting, which shows a definite disrespect in one way to the boss, you know for not being in touch with him or not giving him a valid excuse why he hasn't you know, why he hasn't attended the meeting. And it's a crucial meeting anyway and he should have been there. I mean to be an hour late is bad enough but and if it's the second time, then and then he's certainly you know shown quite a lot of disrespect to his boss by not, you know turning up for the meeting.

- And I mean you've also, I mean you by doing it twice, in particular, and you're not getting the respect of your boss very much, so you've got to be you know doubly sure that you can tell him that you know this will not happen again, and you know to try and verify what you, the position that you're actually in.

#### **4) Situation 4 (Forgetting a meeting with a friend)**

- Yeah, definitely. And again, it's the second time I've forgotten to meet you in this situation. Yeah, definitely because, you know, people are wondering where you are, what's happened, and is there something wrong? You know, has the friendship sort of gone wrong or something.

- Yeah, yeah, I'd say so. Yeah, because, yeah. I think, yeah, even someone you knew really well, if it's the second time of missing a meeting, it's, yeah, you still want to know what's wrong.

- I think if you're meeting a friend, it's important to the friend, and it should be important to you, so yes, you certainly should apologise, and if it's the second time, I don't think your friendship counts for a lot.

- Even if you're familiar with them, if it's the second time that you've bought tickets for somewhere and they've let you down, then you should apologise.

- Well, if a friend has turned up to meet you, and you don't turn up, you know, they've wasted time and money getting there, and it isn't done. You must apologise.

- It is important. And you should apologise. But it's not on the same level as your boss. You know yes, your friend is very, very important and you should definitely apologise. But, it's not as important as forgetting a meeting with your boss.
- Oh, no. You would definitely apologise, because it's still wasting your friend's time, isn't it?
- Oh, I think it's important. And if you have any respect for your friend at all, then if you've, you know forgotten a meeting with him, then surely it's up to you to put that right. And the least you can do is get in touch with him and apologise you know for not, and hopefully being able to give him a reasonable excuse why he, you know the reason why he forgot the meeting.
- I think, I think it's even more important. If you've got a good relationship, you don't want to damage that good relationship. And that surely you know if you have any respect for your friend and that you think highly of him and you think a lot about the friendship, then it's up to you to make it you know correct with him. I think it's the least you do and I think it's very important that you do that, yes I do.

#### **5) Situation 5 (Forgetting to take son shopping)**

- Yeah, because, well, this situation, it's been promised, so the kids are relying on, you know, that outing, that shopping trip, and if it's not happening, you need to let the kids know why it's not happening, and just that it's not being forgotten or dismissed or whatever.
- [Responding as if he were a father]: I think you do. I would expect my child to apologise to me, so I would apologise to them if I forgot. It happens in families, you know, but I certainly wouldn't not apologise because it's my child. I'd expect them to apologise to me, so I would apologise to them.
- Oh, yes! If you promised to do something to children, it's very important that you keep your promises. So you will have to actually apologise. Do something else to make up for forgetting to take them shopping. You really must make a big effort and do that because it's not good to promise children and then go back on your word.
- Same as what, same as what was said in Situation One because they, if you're not respectful of them, they won't be respectful of you.
- Yeah. Yeah. Because parents learn from the children, no, children learn from the parents. Sorry, I said that wrong. Children learn from the parents, so if the parent's not going to apologise to them, then how will they ever learn to apologise in certain situations?

- And they learn an awful lot from what you do. And you set the example. And if, you see children basically are very honest, normally and they expect that if you promise something, especially if you're the father, that you're going to you know fulfil that promise. And they respond to the respect that you give to them and therefore they can then respect other people, you know. This is how I feel about it anyway.

#### **6) Situation 6 (Backing into someone's car and causing damage)**

- Yeah. But then I suppose it would be just calming the situation down. Hopefully, getting the anger of the other driver to lose the anger and admit it's your fault.

- Yeah, definitely taking responsibility to this situation, yeah, to try and get the anger away. And yeah, generally, being sorry, saying "sorry" I think apply to that.

- Well, to calm the situation down, it still needs to be done, I think, to get a conversation going where you can deal with it without shouting or getting angry, being aggressive or whatever. So yeah, it's a matter of, yeah, getting the conversation to dealing with the situation in a more controlled sort of way.

- If people are angry with you about this, and it's your fault, then you have to apologise. You diffuse the situation by taking the blame and apologising. Yeah.

- Yeah. Yeah, if you've hit somebody's car, it's your fault, you apologise. You don't try to blame somebody else or think it don't matter because they're not like me or whatever. That's the way to cause more problems. You know, you've got a problem, so you solve it. The only way of solving it is to apologise and say, "I'll pay for damage, and it was my fault."

- Well, it is. It's clearly your fault, and this happened to my father, and he was a bit nonplus, but my mother was very, very grovelling and very, very apologetic, and said, "Of course, it's our fault, and we accept totally responsibility." Immediately, you take that attitude, it deflates the situation and then the other person isn't nearly angry.

- No, you would say, "I'm sorry. It's my fault. I accept responsibility," and you exchange addresses, and that's it. You don't get any closer than that. You know, it's sort of in a formal way, but, you know, it is your fault, so you have to say, "I'm sorry," because you can't do anything else. It's your fault.

- Yeah, oh, definitely. If it's clearly your fault then you admit to it, definitely. Yeah, you swap insurance details or whatever, you know or offer to pay for the repair, or you know whatever. It's, if it's clearly your fault then that you've run into them, then yeah. Yeah.

- Well, because if it's your fault then you apologise. It shouldn't matter who it is, whether they're higher than you, or lower than you, or whatever. It's your fault then you apologise.
- If it was me, say, if it was me, I would find it offensive. The problem now with hitting cars is there are a lot of you know angry people out there now, on the road with cars. So, in that situation, then I can understand why the driver is angry because you know if you're backing up to park your car, you should know, you should be watching what you're doing, you should know if there's any other vehicles there, and if you hit another car and damage it, then yeah you should apologise very much, especially if the person's angry.
- Well, you should be sorry, yeah. And you should also offer repair. But in those situations, you would give your number and details anyway because the insurance would cover that. So, if you've got all your details and if you're insured then even though the other driver's angry about it, he's going to get it all repaired and not have to pay for it anyway.
- I think in British society "sorry" does mean more than, anything else, especially if you've done something wrong to the person. And I think "sorry" is quite a strong word for us, so I think that would be the one that would be more important.
- No, it's, you see it doesn't matter how much, somebody's got more power over you because if you haven't done anything wrong to that person, then you don't need to apologise or you don't need to be sorry about anything. Say, like the Queen or the President or someone like that just because they've got more power than you, if you haven't done anything wrong to them, then you don't need to apologise to them.
- It should be, really. I mean if, I mean if you do back, you know your car up and then you hit another car, and it is your fault and you know it's your fault, then you should take the responsibility for that. I mean, in this day it's bad enough, but if there's no injuries that you know at least insurance, you can exchange your names and addresses and you know for insurance purposes and the other driver can get compensation back for it, you know the injury that you did.

#### **7) Situation 7 (Having an accident with the manager's car)**

- Probably apologise profusely, which possibly in that situation you would be anxious about all that had happened and getting back to the office with the keys, and yeah, it would, yeah, I think you'd be quite emphasising your apology and quite a lot. Probably be shook up which would add to it, yeah, profusely.
- In a situation like that, you would certainly still apologise. If it was my car and they apologised and they offered to pay for the damage, it wouldn't make any

difference. If it was my car and they apologised and said, "You know, I broke your window, but tough," then I would be upset.

But if it was my manager, it wouldn't make any difference. I've done it. I've been there. You still apologise and offer to pay for the damage if you're driving it. But that's my assumption of it.

- No! Oh, no! No, really, you see, in a way it's even more important if it's somebody you know and somebody you get on well with. You don't take advantage of their good will, and you apologise, and you make good whatever damage you've caused. So I think it's more important for friends that you don't take them for granted.

- Well, in this situation here, even though the manager has gone out of his way to lend his car to his employee, it couldn't, it might not be in the employee's fault that he's had the accident, so it's like two situations there. Now if it was the employee's fault that you had the accident, then he should apologise to the manager and also agree to pay for the damages. But, if it wasn't his fault that the car got damaged then fair enough still apologise for the damage, but don't go no further than that because it wasn't his fault. And if the manager, if he explains that to the manager, then I think the manager would accept that.

- You can't just say "oh, I'm sorry, here's your keys," you know you've got to explain why his car is damaged and it depends what type of car is it. If it's a Porsche then he might be very angry. But yeah, it's like the two situations, you say "sorry" in both situations but in one situation, you explain why. Another situation if it you know wasn't your fault you don't need to go into detail how it happened.

- Well, I think they should, I think he should have respect, you know for his boss' car. And it doesn't matter, even though the injury of the, not the injury, the damage to the car was only slight. That isn't important, whether it was slight or even, more. I mean it would be a big nuisance to the management, I mean if he's got a broken headlamp and he's got bent bumper, well they've got to be put right. And you can't just neglect you know or not mention it to begin with which would be very wrong of you. You should bring it up. And when you go back to return the keys, and you know be apologetic and then you know come to some agreement with your manager, how it's going to be repaired. I think that is important.

#### **8) Situation 8 (Spilling a bottle of oil over a neighbour's car seat)**

- Well, the neighbour's been kind enough to use their car to move things from your flat. So if, well, they've been kind enough to do you a kindness, so you'd note if the car is clean, you've spilled the oil which is from your belongings, it would just be rude not to mention it and apologise.

- Yeah, definitely. Yeah. Yeah, I would do that, and I'd probably offer to do it myself, you know. Yeah, definitely. A simple "sorry" is not, it's a bit empty on its own. But yeah, I would make efforts to make right the spillage, if you like.
- Certainly. Yes, again, it's your fault, so you apologise for it. Yes, you'd try and make the situation better. You know, you'd try and repair it.
- Yeah, certainly. Yeah, yeah. Oh, yes, I would hope that they would be neighbourly back and take the apology in the manner given that you really didn't mean to do this and accidents happen, so yes, still apologise. Yeah.
- Well, yes. You'd have to apologise and hope to maintain the relationship, whether the neighbour reciprocates doesn't matter.
- Oh, yeah, yeah, definitely. Um, I mean he's doing you a favour by helping you to move the things from your flat. And if, and it was an accident. It's obviously that you know that the oil spilt onto the car. And (a) you should definitely apologise, but also, you could say well, I'll take steps to have it put right.
- No, it shouldn't you know. You need to make an offer at least. Whether it's taken is immaterial. But at least you must make an offer that you will you know that you'll get rid of the oil.

#### **9) Situation 9 (Changing the order at a restaurant)**

- It's one of those where I'd feel awkward if the food's already got to the table. I think I'd feel awkward and maybe just put up with the meal I've got. Yeah, thinking if the meal's on the table, I'd feel awkward saying, "Ah, can I now change this?" Maybe if it's not reached the table.
- If the food's not good, yeah. Yeah, and I would expect people would apologise. I suppose in that situation, yeah, you'd probably want the food taken away and it being replaced by whatever the problem was. A simple apology and, "Yeah, no problem, certainly take it away and bring it back," would do for me.
- I don't think they would have. No, I don't think they would. They'd put up with it, or probably swap it with a friend or something. Yeah, I don't think they would apologise and change the order. No, I wouldn't.
- If the quality of food is poor, no, I wouldn't change the order. I would refuse it and expect them to apologise to me for serving me inferior food. But I certainly wouldn't if the food was not inferior.

- I wouldn't apologise if the food was bad. I would say, "Look, you know, it's not up to standard. It's not properly cooked," or "It's not what I ordered. Take it away and bring me something else." I wouldn't apologise in those circumstances.
- If there's nothing wrong with the food, and you want to change it, then you know, from courtesy you would say, "I'm sorry. I don't want this. I've changed my mind. Could I have so-and-so?" You may well be charged for it, but if you're going to accept that, then that's fair enough.
- Well, I wouldn't do it, definitely not. You'd made up your mind, then you're stuck with it aren't you?
- I wouldn't, I would not do that at all.
- Yeah. If there's nothing wrong with the food and you've made the wrong choice, then that's your fault. So, you deal with it or if you want to order something else, then yes, you pay the extra cost. But if there's something wrong with the food, then that's different. You might complain.
- No. If you've ordered a meal, right and the restaurant is preparing that meal, you've got all that time from ordering that meal to the meal coming out to change your mind. I don't think you should be allowed to change your mind after the meal that you'd already ordered had been brought to you because, I don't know, if you do change your mind then, I think you should be charged for the meal that you'd already ordered. So, you should be charged for both meals.
- Yeah, he should pay for the meal that he originally ordered and also, pay for the meal that he's changed, you know to order, again. So, he should pay twice.
- I think a lot would depend on the type of restaurant that it is and but, I mean if you've ordered a meal and the timing would come into this. I mean if it's a very short time after that you'd ordered it, then, you might be able to rectify it. But, if this you know probably quarter of an hour, 20 minutes, well by that time the meal could be prepared. And then you could be, I don't know how you would handle that. It would be rather awkward actually.

#### **10) Situations 10 + 11: Bumping into a passenger and hurting him/ bumping into a passenger and disturbing him**

- Yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, definitely. Yeah, as I was apologising, yeah, that would be the thing to be doing, really, to sort of clear the situation up.
- It can be, yeah. It can be offensive to some people, so yeah. Yeah, quite an emphasised apology I think would be quite in order. Yeah.



- Some people will forgive providing that they realise that, “Oh, yeah. It is not intended, so I can forgive you now.” But when they realise that it is intended, they might get offended.

- I think the apology is the same in 10 and 11. You’d probably do more to alleviate the situation in 10 by picking his packages up and that sort of thing which you wouldn’t do in Situation 10. But obviously, if someone changes their seat for you, and you bump into them or tread on their toes, you would apologise more profusely because you’ve hurt them when they’re doing you a favour.

So then you would be very, very sorry, you know, doubly sorry, if you know what I mean. But as far as this Situation 10 and 11 is different, the only difference would be you would pick up all his packages for him as well.

- In Situation 10, I would just say, “I’m terribly sorry for that. I didn’t want you to have to drop all you’ve got shopping.”

- Well, yeah. You’d help him pick his stuff up. You say, “I’m very sorry,” but then you would also help him pick his stuff up get himself together. Where as in Eleven, you would just say “I’m very sorry.”

- Right. In one situation, the person shouldn’t ask the other person to move anyway because fair enough, I know that person’s with their child. But, if there’s a seat there and a seat there, then the person can still keep an eye on the child. So, because of their asking them to move and he gets hurt in the process, then I think the person should apologise profusely as it says. But also, in that situation when you’ve been on the bus, you know when you stand up on a bus it jerks about very much. So, the bus could have jerked and that’s why the lady bumped into him and stepped on his toes and caused him to you know spill all his packages all over the floor. But, she’s done it or he’s done it, so they still should apologise and help you know to pick up his packages. But in the first place, they shouldn’t have asked him to move anyway. But in Situation Eleven because she just bumped into him and shook him up a bit, I mean I don’t think just bumping into somebody would shake you all up that much.

- In Situation Ten, it has to be more than just “sorry.” Ah, because they’ve asked him to move out his seat and she’s also hurt him a bit more by stepping on his toes and causing him to spill all his bags open, which is hard enough on a bus with your bags anyway. So, yeah to say “sorry” and also, to you know explain to him why they’d asked him to move seats, then yeah, I think the person would accept that.

- It’s like, it’s like going away if you’re at a bus stop or if you’re on a bus or if you’re, you know in the shopping and if anybody comes right near me with trolleys and that all, trying to get something that won’t move, then yeah, it’s very, it’s very annoying, you know. In any sort of culture if anybody’s, you know intruding in your

area or around your space, you're going to be very annoyed anyway because there isn't, there's no reason for them to be doing that.

- Eh, I mean it shows here it's clearly your fault. I mean you want to apologise profusely. Probably you would and you would be more careful how you apologised under the situation then because of you know, as you said there was more, like damage done because you step on his toes and all those, all his packages spilt over the floor. Well, like in an instance like that surely you would also help to pick up his packages for him, which is an indication that you know that you are genuinely apologetic for what you have done, and if you do apologise profusely for stepping on his toes which you never meant to.

- You should have a sincere apology, not just an abrupt "oh, sorry", you know which wouldn't go down very well with the person you know who was, spilt all his things and got his foot trodden on.

- You should point out that it wasn't intentional and that it was an accident and that you are sincerely sorry for you know for doing it.

## **12) Situation 12 (Insulting someone at a meeting)**

- Yeah, definitely. Yeah, apologise and just emphasise that it wasn't meant to offend anybody.

- Well, I'd say, "I'm sorry. Let me rephrase that." If what you've said they've perceived as insulting, then you say, "I'm sorry. I didn't mean that," and rephrase what you were saying so that you make your intention clear without it being offensive.

If it's still offensive, then you just have to say, "I'm sorry. Why is it offensive?" and go on from there because if it's a workmate, you have to work with this person, so you've got to clear the air. You can't let them go away harbouring a grudge.

- If you'd offended somebody like that, then, it would take courage to go, to go up to them and say, "Look, I'm really sorry," especially if he had been insulted by, he might not want to speak to you at that time.

- Well, definitely I think you should, well unless, unless of course, and you aren't concerned about and you know in insulting that person. You might actually have done it intentionally. So, it would all depend if you think that you're in the wrong by how you, you know insulted someone or he or the participant and one of the standards that it was a person of influence, then you maybe would apologise.

- **Yeah, definitely. I mean what more can you do but apologise. You cannot, there's not a lot more you can do than apologise, provided that you think you are in the wrong by you know the way that you insulted the participant.**

## **Appendix III**

### **Some quotes taken from the Jordanian interview data**

#### **1) Situation 1 (University professor not returning a student's term paper)**

- Yes, a university professors' apology is crucial, though I think that forgetting a student's term paper is not a strong reason for apology. A university professor can explain the reason that impeded him from bringing the student's term paper without the need for saying I'm sorry. The university professor's apology could also take the form of a promise to return the term paper shortly.
- I think apology in this situation is different from that in the other situations, in that most students do not regard forgetting student's stuff as an offensive act for which the university professor should apologise. Most students know how busy university professors are and the number of responsibilities they have. In this case, it is normal for the professor to be late even if he has promised to return it in a certain time. Students should take these facts into account and know that no university professor would do it intentionally but only due to the fact that he is always busy.
- Some lecturers never apologise even if they are at fault simply because they are university professors. I personally believe that each university professor should apologise regardless of the power difference between him and the student. Part of university professors' reasons for abstaining from apologising is their realisation that no student would ask them to apologise for any wrongdoing. As for this situation, I think profound apology is not needed as the student has not been severely offended.
- It is unlikely that a student would expect a university professor to apologise even if he is at fault, as students realise that the corollary of this apology is the student's failure in that course. A student would be crazy if he expects the professor to apologise. Even if the professor is one month or more late, the student should never expect an apology.
- It differs from one lecturer to another; some intentionally apologise in a very polite way, as a way of showing respect to students; others would not [apologise] even if the offence were more severe than the one involved in this situation. For me, university professors should be humble and part of this humbleness is to realise they are at fault and therefore present the apology needed.
- Don't you see there is no need for apology in this situation? I mean everyone is expected to forget and this is something normal. A student should never get offended and should not expect a professor to apologise as it is only a result of forgetfulness.

- [Responding as if he were the university professor]: Yes, I apologise and clarify the reasons that prevented me from bringing it with me, because it is my fault.
- Apology in this situation depends on the severity of the offence; if this is not likely to affect the student's progress, then no profound apology is needed. If, on the other hand, this affects the student negatively, the professor should apologise, explaining the reasons for his failure to bring the term paper. A professor should do all he can to put the student at ease, especially if the student's progress in this module might affect that in other modules.
- Some university professors mistakenly believe that apology might undermine their high academic position at universities. For some, apology could be interpreted as a sign of the lecturer's weakness; some believe that if the lecturer is academically competent, he will not apologise. But I think the opposite is true, as the professor's apology is likely to increase the student's respect of the professor.
- A university professor should apologise evenly to both male and female students. (Female respondent)
- A university professor is like a judge; he should apologise equally to female and male students in much the same way men and women are dealt with at court. (Female respondent)
- Professors should be more formal and more polite with female students than with males' if they want to put their minds at rest. (Male respondent)

## **2) Situation 2 (A student forgetting to return the professor's book)**

- Yes, I should apologise profusely and undertake not to do it again. Apology in this situation is a sign of student's respect to a university professor.
- If appropriate apology is not presented, the professor might get a bad impression of me. I have to apologise, explaining the reasons behind my failure to bring the book on time. Because I might take another module with the same professor, it would not be of benefit for me if I do not present good apologies. For this reason I have to apologise profoundly.
- A good student never forgets and should not forget such a thing when dealing with his university professor. Because a student might need to borrow another book from the same professor, he has to apologise profusely clarifying the reason for not bringing the book on time. It will be more to a student's credit if he promises not to do it again.
- This normally depends on the personality of the university professor. Some attach a great importance to this kind of apology, whereas others make the student feel that

there is no problem and no harm is done and that the student can bring the book some time later. However, I think a student should apologise in either case.

- Because the success or failure of a student in any module is determined by the module teacher, a student has to apologise if he wants to succeed.
- Yes, I have to apologise but would never request the professor to forgive me, as this could be a strong reason for him to decline my apology.
- Apology is crucial in this situation; if I do not apologise, not only this professor but all the staff members in the department will get the impression that I am a bad student, and this greatly harms me as a student.
- Apology is necessary in this situation as the absence of it could mean my failure in this module.
- Any student likes to be seen as a good student by professors, and as such I should apologise and promise not to do it again.
- Because students could be either hard-working or lazy, a student's apology is a way to prove to a professor that he is a hard-working student. Yes, apology is essential in this situation.
- I apologise similarly to both male and female professors.
- With female professors, I need to apologise more and try to find a good reason to convince her, whereas with male professors I apologise less as they are more likely than females to accept my apology. (Male respondent)
- Male professors are more cooperative with students than females and easier to deal with than female professors. (Female respondent)
- I apologise more to a female professor because she will not forgive me unless I swear it is not intended and that it is simply because of forgetfulness. (Male respondent)

### **3) Situation 3 (Forgetting a meeting with a boss)**

- Yes, I should apologise to a boss, explaining the reasons that prevented me from coming to the meeting. However, forgetting a meeting with a boss is less offensive than forgetting to bring the professor's book on time.
- Generally speaking, the relationship between a boss and an employee is often built on mutual respect and not on power difference. So, I should apologise to display my respect to my boss.

- I apologise but not profusely, profound apologies could be interpreted as a sign of my weakness and as an indication of my intent to not come to the meeting.
- I apologise, not because he is a boss but because I'm at fault. A boss can never harm an employee because he [the boss] is part of a three-member committee, and any action against or for the employee will be taken unanimously. But I should apologise to anyone regardless of his status. Apology in this situation is obligatory because there is an offence.
- Yes I apologise and present my apologies humorously, because this is what most bosses are looking for – to be addressed and apologised to in a friendly way.
- A good boss is like a father, and for this I should apologise and explain the reasons that hindered me from coming to the meeting as a way to respect him. Yes I apologise and promise not to do it again.
- I think what is important for a boss is not an apology but a commitment on the employee's part to make it up by working hard. I might apologise verbally but not translate this in my work and this for sure will not please any boss. So, I should apologise by actions not by words.
- This depends on the nature of the boss, if the boss is serious and easily angered I apologise profusely and promise not to do it again. If the boss is friendly, just "I'm sorry" is enough to rectify the offence.
- If the boss himself comes late to meetings, he should not get offended if I am late to a meeting. A boss is a model for employees; if he keeps promises and comes on time to meetings, all employees will copy him. If otherwise, they will not.
- I should apologise more to female bosses than to males. In order for a female boss to accept my apology, I have to give detailed explanation and undertake not to do it again. (Male respondent)
- I apologise more to female bosses than to males because women in general need more apology than men. (Female respondent)

#### **4) Situation 4 (Forgetting a meeting with a friend)**

- Friends rarely apologise for every offence. I think this depends on the severity of the offence; they should apologise for severe offences only. In this situation, slight apology is needed.
- I normally never apologise profusely to friends. A friend is a friend and I therefore should not apologise profoundly.

- Apologising for every offence is likely to cause friends to run away from me, and in order to maintain my relationship with friends, I should not apologise.
- Yes, I apologise to a friend to keep my relationship with him. However, I do not apologise as profusely as I do to a professor at university.
- There are two types of friendship. There is a formal friendship in which you have friends but never meet them on a regular basis. In this case I should apologise. On the other hand, there are friends like brothers to whom I feel I should not apologise, and if I apologise, I present my apology in a very funny way.
- What is important is not the apology but an explanation of why I forgot the meeting.
- I should not apologise to friend.
- If my friend likes to be apologised to, I will apologise. If not, I will not. This is because I like to deal with friends the way they like to be dealt with and not the way I like.
- I would neither apologise to a woman friend nor expect her to apologise. It would be a shame to ask women to apologise even if they are at fault. (Male respondent)

##### **5) Situation 5 (Forgetting to take son shopping)**

- Yes, parents should apologise to children. The reason for apology is to teach children how to apologise to others when they wrong other people.
- Parents should only explain the reasons that prevented them from taking their son shopping. It would not be appropriate for parents to say I'm sorry, and children should not expect parents to do so.
- A father should apologise to his son. Fathers should treat sons the way they would like to be treated when getting old. Yes, they need to apologise.
- I think apology is not appropriate as it might be interpreted by sons as a sign of parents' weakness.
- A father can apologise by taking the son shopping and not by saying I'm sorry. If a father says I'm sorry without taking the son shopping, this will not be an apology for the son.



- Yes, I apologise profusely because he is my son and because I wronged him and kept him waiting without taking him shopping. I should provide well-organised apology.
- Children rarely expect parents to apologise, so there is no need for apology.
- I should not apologise but bring a gift to make it up for him.
- Parents should apologise evenly to sons and daughters. (Female respondents)
- Fathers apologise more to daughters because they are more obedient to fathers than sons, and because fathers are more sympathetic with daughters than with sons. (Female respondent)
- Mothers apologise more to sons than to daughters; sons are likely to express their displeasure before mothers and not before fathers. (Female respondent)
- A father is like a judge; he should fear God and apologise similarly to sons and daughters. (Male respondent)

#### **6) Situation 6 (Backing into someone's car and causing damage)**

- Yes I apologise profoundly especially if it is my fault. The reason for apology is that I damaged his car and perhaps the offended is physically hurt. I apologise and undertake to pay the cost of damage.
- Yes, I apologise and express my readiness to pay the expenses incurred by the accident. I would also offer to take him to hospital if he is seriously injured.
- I first ensure he is not injured then I apologise and reassure him that I would pay the cost of damage. I have to apologise, whether or not it is my fault if he is seriously injured, and take him to hospital.
- I apologise profusely if his car is brand new and it is my fault. If it is not my fault, he is the one who should apologise.
- The offended in this situation does not like to be apologised to but wants to ensure I am going to cover the cost of damage, so I only undertake to pay the accident cost.
- Yes I apologise and he has to accept my apology because everyone is subject to make an accident and hurt others. He has to accept my apology in order to find someone to forgive him when he makes an accident and it is his fault.

- I apologise profusely as if I do not present profound apology, this will be another offence. I should express my displeasure about the accident and try to sort it out amicably.
- If he addresses me using an inappropriate language, I will not apologise but wait until police come to determine whose fault it is. If it is my fault, I will pay the cost of damage.
- Yes, I apologise profusely especially if the reason for the accident was high speed or my disregard of the general traffic rules. Yes, I apologise because it is my fault.
- I should neither ask a woman to apologise nor lay blame on her. I only ensure she is all right and leave it for police to sort it out. (Male respondent)
- I apologise more to women than to men, because they more than men need apology in this situation. (Male respondent)

#### **7) Situation 7 (Having an accident with the manager's car)**

- Yes, I apologise. I should first inform the manager I have had an accident with his car and then I can present my apology. Providing explanation would help get me excused by the manager.
- I should apologise even if it is not my fault because it is not my car but the manager's.
- Profound apology like the one used in situation 6 is not needed in this situation. However, I have to undertake to pay all the expenses incurred by the accident.
- It would be inappropriate if I choose not to apologise. Part of apology is to keep the manager informed with what exactly happened and then an appropriate apology can be delivered.
- Even if I have a good relationship with the manager I should apologise, but not as profusely as I did in situation 6 where the offended person is unfamiliar to me.
- Because I'm the one who was driving the car and who had the accident, I should apologise and have the car repaired at my expense.
- If it is not my fault, I will not apologise. I only provide explanation and undertake to pay the damage.
- If the manager realises that it is not my fault, he will not ask me to repair his car. Nevertheless, I should show him my readiness to pay all the expenses as this is the only thing I do in return to the favour he did to me, lending me his car.

- I apologise more to women managers than to men. Women like to be apologised to, whereas the opposite is true for men. (Female respondent)
- I apologise similarly to both men and women, because there is an offence and both men and women are likely to get offended when hearing that their car has been damaged in an accident. (Female respondent)
- I tend to be more polite with women, and as such I will apologise more to women than men. (Male respondent)

#### **8) Situation 8 (Spilling a bottle of oil over a neighbour's car seat)**

- Considering the nature of the relationship between neighbours, I think apology is not needed in this situation. If presented, apology should be aimed at displaying the offender's regret and should not be designed to appease the offended. Apology in this situation is a means of showing respect for a neighbour not a way to placate him.
- In the case of severe offences, of course I should apologise and express my regret for the offence. However, if the offence is slight, like the one involved in this situation, I will not apologise but express my readiness to have the car cleaned, though I know he will not allow me to do so, out of respect.
- No, I should not apologise. We, neighbours, rarely reciprocate apology, and this is good.
- No, I should not apologise, because I know my neighbour will get offended by my apology and that what he will gather from my apology is that he should apologise to me if he offends me in future. And this is not what I'm looking for.
- I only say I'm sorry but never try to offer him repair, because I know he will decline my offer. Because the neighbour volunteered to move my stuff out of my house with his car, it will be an insult to him if I try to get it repaired.
- No, no need for apology in this situation. Recurring apology is likely to spoil the relationship between neighbours. I only apologise when the offence is highly severe.
- I apologise similarly to both men neighbours and women neighbours. (Male respondent)
- I apologise more to a female neighbour than to a male neighbour because I 'm always in touch with her and see her more than men neighbour. (Female respondent)

## **9) Situation 9 (Changing the order at a restaurant)**

- I would not change the order after the food has already been served. If this happened, I have to pay the cost of both meals because it is my fault.
- This depends on the reason for changing the order. If there is something wrong with the food, I should not apologise; on the contrary, I'm the one who should be apologised to. If it is because I change my mind, I have to pay the expenses of the two orders.
- I would not change the order at a restaurant whatever the reason is.
- I apologise profusely to the restaurant owner and promptly pay the cost of both meals because it is my fault and because this is likely to cause loss to the restaurant. Any problem that could be sorted out by money is not a problem.
- For the sake of keeping my reputation safe from going down, I without hesitation pay the cost of the two orders and apologise profusely to the restaurant owner, explaining the reasons for changing the order.
- I have never changed an order at any restaurant.
- What is important in this situation is that I should not only say I'm sorry, but undertake to pay the loss caused by changing the order. If I only say I'm sorry or provide account, this for sure will be interpreted by the restaurant owner as an attempt by me to avoid paying the cost of the second order. I promptly pay in order not to indulge into conflictive conversation with the restaurant owner.
- If I change the order at a restaurant three times, this will not be a problem if I am going to pay the cost of each.
- If it is my favourite restaurant, I apologise profoundly and pay the cost of both meals. I will try to keep the restaurant owner happy with me because I need to come back and eat again at this restaurant.
- In order not to be accused of being mean, I pay the cost of the second order even if the reason for changing the order is the poor quality of food. I might be wrong but this is what I would do.
- As a woman, I apologise more to men than to women in order not to be accused of being a person who likes to eat without paying for that. (Female respondent)
- I apologise regardless of the gender of the restaurant owner, simply because both men and women will get offended if I change the order at a restaurant. (Male respondent)

**10) Situations 10 + 11: Bumping into a passenger and hurting him/ bumping into a passenger and disturbing him**

- Yes, I apologise in both situations but more in 10 and less in 11. Apology is needed because I am the one who intruded on the passenger.
- I apologise in both situations but aim to help the passenger in situation 10 by picking up his packages.
- Yes, I should apologise in 10 and prove it is not intended. However, in 11 saying I'm sorry would be enough.
- The degree of apology that should be presented in these situations depends on whether or not the passenger gets offended. If the passenger displays his displeasure, I profusely apologise. If he does not express any sign of annoyance and says to me "no harm done", I only say I'm sorry.
- I apologise more to women in both situations and offer help. I think acceptance of apology is determined by women's recognition as to whether the offence is intentional or not. If women realise it is not intended, they will accept apology. If otherwise, they will get severely offended. (Male respondent)
- I apologise similarly to both men and women. (Female respondent)
- As a woman, I should apologise more to men than to women in order to prove it is not intentional. (Female respondent)

**12) Situation 12 (Insulting someone at a meeting)**

- I think abject apology is not needed in this situation, as most comments exchanged between workmates in work meetings are for sure about work and not directed to cause insult. However, because some people find it difficult to know how the speaker likes his comments to be interpreted, it is the role of speaker to clarify the underlying message of his comment, showing whether or not it is intended to cause insult.
- I have to explain to him that my comment was not directed at him at all and was not intended to cause insult to him. Only a clarification of my clear intention is needed in this situation.
- If I did not mean to insult him, I should not apologise. He is the one who should apologise because he misinterpreted me.
- Yes, I apologise and invite him on tea or coffee.
- If I did not intend to insult her, I do not apologise at all. (Female respondent)

• I should apologise even if I did not intend to offend him. I apologise to maintain my good relationship with my workmates and do all I can not to lose friends and workmates. I think it is only misconception on the part of the offended, so I have to apologise and put his mind at rest. (Female respondent)

• I apologise more profusely to women than to men because verbal offences are more harmful than any others. I have to think more before articulating any utterance that could be misinterpreted as to the way I see this situation. (Male respondent)

## Appendix IV

Table 1. Significance levels resulting from Chi-square test for British and Jordanian frequency of the main semantic formulas across the first six apology situations

Strategy	Situation 1			Situation 2			Situation 3			Situation 4			Situation 5			Situation 6			
	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	
IFIDs	64.561	1	0.001	2.025	1	0.155	43.538	1	0.001	26.965	1	0.001	.662	1	0.416	43.175	1	0.001	
Intensified IFIDs	28.250	1	0.006	21.334	1	0.001	28.250	1	0.001	44.784	1	0.001	24.195	1	0.001	33.330	1	0.001	
Responsibility	5.730	1	0.017	14.629	1	0.001	25.803	1	0.001	32.400	1	0.001	2.294	1	0.130	2.025	1	0.155	
Account	3.584	1	0.058	84.153	1	0.001	.928	1	0.335	.928	1	0.335	0.921	1	0.337	28.270	1	0.001	
Offer of repair	14.409	1	0.001	.784	1	0.376	37.702	1	0.001	30.861	1	0.001	3.605	1	0.058	8.229	1	0.004	
Concern for hearer	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	10.329	1	0.001
Promise of forbearance	*	*	*	1.006	1	0.316	10.460	1	0.001	4.444	1	0.035	.340	1	0.560	*	*	*	

Table 2. Significance levels resulting from Chi-square test for British and Jordanian frequency of the main semantic formulas across the last six apology situations

Strategy	Situation 7			Situation 8			Situation 9			Situation 10			Situation 11			Situation 12		
	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value
IFIDs	49.308	1	0.001	25.247	1	0.001	57.837	1	0.001	2.025	1	0.155	2.488	1	0.115	44.894	1	0.001
Intensified IFIDs	43.276	1	0.001	26.755	1	0.001	14.41	1	0.001	32.401	1	0.001	43.531	1	0.001	32.750	1	0.001
Responsibility	1.609	1	0.205	7.226	1	0.007	.914	1	0.339	.400	1	0.527	.753	1	0.385	30.625	1	0.001
Account	1.053	1	0.305	7.320	1	0.007	.011	1	0.646	.754	1	0.385	2.133	1	0.144	33.750	1	0.001
Offer of repair	2.771	1	0.096	22.336	1	0.001	3.609	1	0.057	*	*	*	1.000	1	0.317	*	*	*
Concern for hearer	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	26.133	1	0.001	17.260	1	0.001	*	*	*
Promise of forbearance	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	.427	1	.514	4.103	1	0.043	*	*	*

\* = No statistics are computed because the apology strategy in question is constant

## Appendix V

Table 1. Significance levels resulting from Chi-square test for Jordanian female female vs. male male (same gender interactions) frequency of the main and newly used semantic formulas of apologies across the first six apology situations

Strategy	Situation 1			Situation 2			Situation 3			Situation 4			Situation 5			Situation 6		
	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value
IFIDs	1.841	1	0.175	2.051	1	0.152	14.459	1	0.001	12.800	1	0.001	.125	1	0.723	8.584	1	0.003
Intensified IFIDs	1.409	1	0.235	6.765	1	0.009	7.813	1	0.005	3.117	1	0.077	.213	1	0.644	12.832	1	0.001
Responsibility	.092	1	0.762	2.051	1	0.152	11.429	1	0.001	9.038	1	0.003	.075	1	0.785	1.013	1	0.314
Account	11.114	1	0.001	4.114	1	0.043	.853	1	0.356	1.920	1	0.166	.474	1	0.491	.556	1	0.456
Offer of repair	6.545	1	0.011	457	1	0.499	.152	1	0.692	9.833	1	0.002	.392	1	0.531	4.211	1	0.040
Concern for hearer	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1.053	1	0.305
Promise of forbearance	*	*	*	*	*	*	6.275	1	0.012	4.211	1	0.040	2.051	1	0.152	*	*	*
Proverbs	*	*	*	2.051	1	0.152	1.013	1	0.314	*	*	*	2.051	1	0.152	16.970	1	0.001
Determinism	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	19.286	1	0.001
Self-punishment	*	*	*	.457	1	0.499	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	8.571	1	0.003

Table 2. Significance levels resulting from Chi-square test for Jordanian female female vs. male male (same gender interactions) frequency of the main and newly used semantic formulas of apologies across the last six apology situations

Strategy	Situation 7			Situation 8			Situation 9			Situation 10			Situation 11			Situation 12		
	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value
IFIDs	13.333	1	0.001	27.860	1	0.001	9.833	1	0.002	2.051	1	0.152	3.529	1	0.060	16.200	1	0.001
Intensified IFIDs	3.529	1	0.060	6.486	1	0.011	2.051	1	.152	17.067	1	0.001	2.222	1	0.136	2.883	1	0.090
Responsibility	.833	1	0.361	15.221	1	0.001	.556	1	0.456	16.241	1	0.001	10.912	1	0.001	36.053	1	0.001
Account	1.569	1	0.210	.125	1	.723	3.529	1	0.060	1.053	1	0.305	7.813	1	0.005	.346	1	0.556
Offer of repair	.105	1	0.745	20.000	1	0.001	9.800	1	0.002	*	*	*	392	1	0.531	*	*	*
Concern for hearer	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	3.914	1	0.048	1.013	1	0.314	*	*	*
Promise of forbearance	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	4.211	1	0.040	*	*	*	*	*	*
Proverbs	*	*	*	6.486	1	0.011	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	17.067	1	0.001
Determinism	15.221	1	0.001	2.051	1	0.152	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Self-punishment	12.754	1	0.001	*	*	*	*	*	*	17.067	1	0.001	*	*	*	*	*	*

\* = No statistics are computed because the apology strategy in question is constant



## Appendix VI

Table 1. Significance levels resulting from Chi-square test for Jordanian female female vs. female male (cross-gender interactions) frequency of the main and newly used semantic formulas of apologies across the first six apology situations

Strategy	Situation 1			Situation 2			Situation 3			Situation 4			Situation 5			Situation 6			
	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	
IFIDs	26.667	1	0.001	20.000	1	0.001	8.901	1	0.003	8.498	1	0.004	2.883	1	0.090	8.205	1	0.004	
Intensified IFIDs	.392	1	0.531	9.600	1	0.002	4.588	1	0.032	2.051	1	0.152	2.635	1	0.105	.213	1	0.644	
Responsibility	.82	1	0.775	3.117	1	0.077	4.073	1	0.044	3.164	1	0.075	2.990	1	0.084	.346	1	0.556	
Account	1.053	1	0.305	1.409	1	0.235	*	*	*	8.717	1	0.003	8.455	1	0.004	.213	1	0.644	
Offer of repair	201	1	654	.457	1	0.499	.721	1	0.396	7.912	1	0.005	.556	1	0.456	9.038	1	0.003	
Concern for hearer	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Promise of forbearance	*	*	*	*	*	*	6.275	1	0.012	1.920	1	0.166	8.658	1	0.003	*	*	*	
Proverbs	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Determinism	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	5.698	1	0.017	
Self-punishment	*	*	*	6.486	1	.011	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	.464	1	0.496	

Table 2. Significance levels resulting from Chi-square test for Jordanian female female vs. female male (cross-gender interactions) frequency of the main and newly used semantic formulas of apologies across the last six apology situations

Strategy	Situation 7			Situation 8			Situation 9			Situation 10			Situation 11			Situation 12		
	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value
IFIDs	1.257	1	0.262	8.352	1	0.004	.450	1	0.502	2.051	1	0.152	.213	1	0.644	.065	1	0.799
Intensified IFIDs	.313	1	0.576	.457	1	0.499	.721	1	0.396	8.901	1	0.003	8.571	1	0.003	7.813	1	0.005
Responsibility	.201	1	0.654	7.040	1	0.008	1.385	1	0.239	.065	1	0.799	.052	1	0.820	.721	1	0.396
Account	.125	1	0.723	.125	1	0.723	*	*	*	7.813	1	0.005	.238	1	0.626	*	*	*
Offer of repair	.827	1	0.363	8.717	1	0.003	.474	1	0.491	*	*	*	.313	1	0.576	*	*	*
Concern for hearer	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	1.053	1	0.305	*	*	*
Promise of forbearance	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	3.117	1	0.077	*	*	*	*	*	*
Proverbs	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Determinism	1.829	1	0.176	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	0.556
Self-punishment	7.440	1	0.005	*	*	*	*	*	*	4.114	1	0.043	*	*	*	*	*	*

\* = No statistics are computed because the apology strategy in question is constant

## Appendix VII

Table 1. Significance levels resulting from Chi-square test for Jordanian male male vs. male female (cross-gender interactions) frequency of the main and newly used semantic formulas of apologies across the first six apology situations

Strategy	Situation 1			Situation 2			Situation 3			Situation 4			Situation 5			Situation 6		
	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value
IFIDs	5.013	1	0.025	2.051	1	0.152	2.650	1	0.104	3.130	1	0.077	.457	1	0.499	2.813	1	0.094
Intensified IFIDs	9.928	1	0.002	14.907	1	0.001	1.127	1	0.288	*	*	*	3.130	1	0.077	4.501	1	0.034
Responsibility	1.867	1	0.172	.346	1	0.556	11.429	1	0.001	3.529	1	0.060	.069	1	0.793	*	*	*
Account	4.588	1	0.32	4.114	1	0.043	.220	1	0.639	1.251	1	0.263	.051	1	0.822	10.313	1	0.001
Offer of repair	10.208	1	0.001	.105	1	0.745	556	1	0.456	1.250	1	0.264	.392	1	0.531	*	*	*
Concern for hearer	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	17.635	1	0.001
Promise of forbearance	*	*	*	*	*	*	.346	1	0.556	*	*	*	3.117	1	0.077	*	*	*
Proverbs	*	*	*	.346	1	0.556	1.013	1	.314	*	*	*	2.051	1	0.152	.054	1	0.816
Determinism	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	.457	1	0.499
Self-punishment	*	*	*	.152	1	0.692	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	6.486	1	0.011

Table 2. Significance levels resulting from Chi-square test for Jordanian male male vs. male female (cross-gender interactions) frequency of the main and newly used semantic formulas of apologies across the last six apology situations

Strategy	Situation 7			Situation 8			Situation 9			Situation 10			Situation 11			Situation 12		
	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value	$\chi^2$	D.F.	P-value
IFIDs	.346	1	0.556	1.003	1	0.317	*	*	*	2.051	1	0.152	.738	1	0.390	45.490	1	0.001
Intensified IFIDs	.213	1	0.644	*	*	*	*	*	*	61.288	1	0.001	8.658	1	0.003	68.493	1	0.001
Responsibility	.524	1	0.469	.053	1	0.818	.157	1	0.692	18.152	1	0.001	7.168	1	0.007	22.400	1	0.001
Account	.346	1	0.556	1.920	1	0.166	.313	1	0.576	15.313	1	0.001	2.635	1	0.105	2.635	1	0.105
Offer of repair	1.127	1	0.288	.287	1	0.592	.487	1	0.485	*	*	*	13.091	1	0.001	*	*	*
Concern for hearer	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	32.821	1	0.001	*	*	*	*	*	*
Promise of forbearance	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Proverbs	1.013	1	0.314	2.222	1	0.136	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	16.970	1	0.001
Determinism	.457	1	0.499	2.051	1	0.152	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Self-punishment	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	2.051	1	0.152	*	*	*	*	*	*

\* = No statistics are computed because the apology strategy in question is constant

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