Apology Speech Act Realization Patterns in Persian

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Abstract

This study aimed at extracting and categorizing the range of strategies used in performing the speech act of apologizing in Persian. The first objective was to see if Persian apologies were as formulaic in pragmatic structure as in English apologies are said to be (Wolfson, 1983; Holmes, 1990; Bergman and Kasper, 1993). The other issue explored in this study was the investigation of the effect of the values assigned to the two context-external variables of social distance and social dominance on the frequency of the apology intensifiers. To this end, Persian apologetic utterances were collected and analyzed. The research findings indicated that Persian apologies are as formulaic in pragmatic structures as are English apologies. Also, the values assigned to the two context-external variables were found to have significant effect on the frequency of the intensifiers in different situations.

Key Words: Speech Acts, Apology, DCT, Persian, English.

Introduction

Austin (1962) and Searle (1969, 1975) claim that speech acts operate by universal pragmatic principles, whereas, Green (1975) and Wierzbicka (1985) claim for the existence of possible variations in verbalization and conceptualization across languages. Due to the great controversy existing among the linguists and philosophers in viewing language universals and the importance of such notions in the formation of a language theory in general and second language acquisition theory in particular (Blum-Kulka, 1983), a good number of empirical studies have been conducted across different languages which have sometimes confirmed the idea of universality of pragmatic principles and on other occasions have ended up in contrary findings to such claims (Wolfson et al., 1989; Hymes, 1967; Olshtain and Cohen, 1983; Manes and Wolfson, 1981; Beebe and Cummins, 1996;

Hinkel, 1997; Kasper, 2000; Yuan, 2001; Markee, 2002; Rintell and Mitchel 1989; Duranti 1997; Golato, 2000; Golato, 2002).

Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) project, initiated in 1982 (see Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989), was an attempt to analyze speech acts (in this case requests and apologies) across a range of languages and cultures aiming at investigating the existence of any possible pragmatic universals and their characteristics. Concerning apologies, in the CCSARP project, little variation was found in the use of the five main apologies across languages studied. Olshtain (1989:171) points out that the CCSRP data showed "surprising similarities in IFID [Illocutionary Force Indicating Device] and expression of responsibility preferences". In other words, in most situations participants expressed an overt apology and took responsibility for the offence. However, Olshtain and Cohen (1983), comparing apology situations in English and Hebrew, pointed out that an apology in Hebrew is less likely to include the two strategies: "an offer of repair" and "a promise of forebearance" than in English. Clearly, substantive claims about the universality of pragmatic principles across cultures and languages should await further research applied in as many new contexts as possible. As Blum-kulka, House and Kasper (1989) also point out, studies of speech acts need to move away from western languages and include as many non-western languages and cultures in their scope of study as possible.

The present study is a response to such a call. It intends to extract and categorize the range of strategies in the speech act of apologizing in Persian (a non-western language) and to see if Persian apologies are as formulaic in pragmatic structures as English apologies have shown to be (Holmes, 1990; Wolfson and Judd, 1983). According to CCSARP coding scheme, an apologizer may wish to intensify his/her apology by using a number of formulas. Therefore, this study intends to extract and categorize the range of strategies as well as the apology intensifiers.

Method
Participants

One hundred students (50 males and 50 females) took part in this study. The participants were all native Persian-speaking university students studying in different academic fields at Isfahan University. The participants' mean age was 24.14 for the male and 21.68 for the female students. The rationale behind choosing university students was that in most of the studies carried

out on speech acts, the participants had been university students; thus, for the sake of comparability of the results of this study with the findings of other studies carried out around the world, it was decided to collect the data from a sample of a similar population, i.e. university students.

Data Collection

The data in this study was collected through a controlled elicitation method called open questionnaire which is a modified version of "Discourse Completion Test" (hereafter DCT) used in CCSARP project (Blum-+Kulka, 1982).

The DCT used in this study included a brief description of the situation and a one participant dialogue. In other words, the questionnaire included ten fixed discourse situations, which a university student is likely to encounter in his/her daily language interactions. Each situation consists of a brief description of the addressee's characteristics important to this study, namely, social distance (degree of familiarity between the interlocutors), social dominance (the relative degree of the social power of the interlocutors over each other), and finally the offence being committed. The students reading each situation were then supposed to identify themselves with the persons committing the offenses in the situations and write down their normal language reaction in such situations (see the appendix).

The two main social factors specifically included in the situations, i.e., social distance and social dominance, were selected because they have been found to play a decisive role in the speech act realization patterns within the cross cultures (Ervin-Tripp, 1976; Brown and Levinson, 1989; Goody, 1978; Blum-Kulka, 1982). Following Van Ek's (1976) dichotomy of – distance/+distance, the social distance perceived between the interlocutors in our study was also a binary valued variable. That is to say, the interlocutors either had a close relationship (-distance) or hardly knew each other (+distance).

The social dominance or the power relationship between the participants in the study was assigned three values: **status equal** (e.g. student-student), **speaker dominance** (e.g. student-his/her younger sister or brother) and **hearer dominance** (e.g. student-professor).

Based on the above-mentioned considerations, it was decided to have two situations for each combination of the two variables: social distance and social dominance.

Unfortunately, since it is difficult to find situations in which university students clearly have social dominance over their interlocutors, it was decided to include only situations in which university students had dominance over a younger member of their family, namely, their younger sister or brother (see situation no 5 and 10 in the Appendix). Table 1. schematizes the distribution of item characteristics:

Table 1
The Distribution of Item Characteristics

Setting	Dominance	Distance	Sex	Frequency
University	+H.Dom	+Dis	S/D	2
University	+H.Dom	-Dis	S/D	2
University	=Dom	-Dis	S	2
University	=Dom	+Dis	S/D	2
Home	+S.Dom	-Dis	S/D	2

Key:
   +H.Dom=Hearer Dominance
   =Dom=Speaker Dominance
   +Dist=Distance
   -Dist=No Distance
   S/D=Same and Different

Coding Scheme and Data Analysis

The collected data in this study was coded on the basis of the coding scheme developed by CCSARP with some modification (Blum-Kulka and House, 1989). Based on the CCSARP coding scheme, the unit of analysis is the utterance or sequences of utterances produced by the respondents to complete the test items in the DCT. Each utterance is then studied and analyzed into the following segments: (a) Address term or (Alerters); (b) Head act; (c) Adjunct(s) to head act. This segmentation has been actually

done to delimit the utterance(s) to that part of the sequence which might serve to realize the speech act under study independently of other elements.

Mark, I'm sorry, I had to go to the hospital.

> a) Mark (*address term*)
> b) I'm sorry I'm late (*head act*)
> c) I had to go to the hospital. (*Adjunct to head act*)

According to CCSARP coding scheme, the linguistic realization of the act of apologizing can take the form of any of the five possible strategies available to the apologizer as follows:

(The literal Persian translation of the words and sentences is also provided.)

1. An expression of an apology (use of IFID), e.g. I apologize. *m'azerat mikhaham, poozesh mikham, o'zr mikham.*

2. *An acknowledgement of responsibility (RESP), e.g. It was my fault. Taqsir-e man bud.*

3. *An explanation or account of the situation (EXPL), e.g. I'm sorry, the bus was late. Motoasefam, otobus dir kard.*

4. An offer of repair (REPR), e.g. I'll pay for the broken vase. *Pule goldan-e shekasteh ro midam.*

5. *A promise of forbearance (FORB), e.g .This won't happen again.Dige tekrar nemishe.*

'An expression of an apology', the first formula in the list of apology strategies, is the most direct realization of an apology. For in this category, an apology is done via an explicit Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) (Searle, 1969:69). IFIDs are defined as formulaic, routinized expressions in which the speaker's apology is made explicit by using a performative verb, in this case the apology verbs such as (be) sorry, apologize, excuse, etc. (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984). Based on Olshtain and Cohen's (1983) categorization, an expression of an apology itself consists of a number of subformulas:

A. An expression of regret, e.g. I'm sorry. (*motoassefam*.)

B. An offer of apology, e.g. I apologize.(*mazerat mikham*.)

C. Request for forgiveness, e.g. Forgive me. (*bebakhshid*.)

The works carried out by Olshtain and Cohen (1983), as well as Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) on apologies suggest that each language has a direct expression of apology using one or more of the apology verbs.

The frequency of the expression 'I'm embarrassed,' (*sharmandeham*) offered as a head act in Persian was also studied in order to investigate the possible formulation of this expression as a direct apology. It is worth mentioning that, in the literature, any expression of embarrassment has been categorized under the category of indirect apology.

The second formula, 'an acknowledgement of responsibility' is offered as an apology when the speaker recognizes his/her responsibility for the offence. Olshtain and Cohen (1983) claim for the universality of this formula, too. Based on CCSARP coding scheme, this formula is further categorized to include different sub-formulas from strong self-humbling on speaker's part to a complete denial of responsibility; however, this categorization actually includes sub-formulas which do intend to set things right and are rather used to reject any kind of responsibility on the part of the speaker towards the offence that has taken place. Therfore, in the present study, it was decided to reduce the original formula to only include the sub-formulas through which the apologizer, whether explicitly or implicitly, acknowledges his own responsibility towards the offence being committed. Thus, the category of "an acknowledgement of responsibility" in the present study included six sub-formulas as follows:

a) *Explicit self blame, e.g .It was my fault. (Taqsir-e man bud.)*

b) *Lack of intent, e.g. I didn't mean to. (manzuri nadashtam.)*

c) *Justifying the hearer,   e.g .You are right. (Haq ba shomast.)*

d) *Expression of self deficiency, e.g. I was confused.(Gij budam).*

e) *Concern for the hearer, e.g. I hope I didn't hurt you.(Omidvaram be shoma sadameh nazadeh   basham).*

f) *Statement of the offense, e.g. Oh, I spilt the tea. (Akh chai ro rikhtam.)*

The first three sub-formulas are all shared in CCSARP (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989, and Olshtain and Cohen 1983) in their coding system of apologies and are only entitled under slightly different headings. The fourth sub-formula, i.e. "expressing self-deficiency" was only shared by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Trosborg (1987), and Olshtain and Cohen (1983) coding systems. The last two sub-formulas in the above list, i.e., "concern for the hearer" and "statement of the offence" were hypothesized to fit the category of taking responsibility as well. The sub-formula "concern for the hearer" has been repeatedly considered in the literature as an external intensifier (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984, CCSARP coding system, 1989) whereas the offender's concern for the offended party seems to be the natural consequence of one's sense of guilt or responsibility for the damage caused. Therefore, this sub-formula may itself , if used alone, stand as an indirect apology rather than an external intensifier. Similarly, the offender's statement of the offense which seems to have been ignored in the literature, may equally act as an indirect apology. To elaborate, in the related literature, the following utterances: **I'm sorry for knocking into you** and b) **I'm sorry** (Olshtain and Cohen, 1983) have been evaluated as equal direct statement of apology, whereas, stating of the offense by the apologizer seems to convey indirectly his/her sense of guilt for the damage caused. The following figure illustrates the sub-categorization of the main formula of an acknowledgement of responsibility used in this study:

Table 2
The sub-categorization of RESP formula

An Acknowlegement of Responsibility			
Explicit	**Implicit**		
Explicit self blame	Lack of intent	Justifying the hearer	Statement of offense
		Expressing self deficiency	Concern for the hearer

The definition of the other apology formulas, namely, EXPL, RESP and FORB are similar to the ones presented in the CCSARP coding system.

The CCSARP coding scheme also provides us with a categorization of apology intensifiers. However, the CCSARP's coding system of intensifiers seems not to be satisfactory and need some modification. First, the sub-formulas of the category "an intensifier within an IFID" may as well appear outside an IFID expression. Consider the following example:

> -*Oh God*, I'll pay for the broken vase.
> -The bus was *really* late.
> -I *do* promise not to be late again.

Moreover, some new sub-formulas exist in Persian data, and, the external apology intensifier, or "concern for the hearer" might be regarded rather as an indirect apology formula than an intensifier.

Having the above-mentioned considerations in mind, a modified version of the CCSARP coding scheme of intensifiers was used in this study as follows:

a) Internal intensifiers (within direct or indirect apology formulas)

b) Supportive intensifiers (the use of multiple-strategies).

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

a) *Intensifying adverbials,   e.g. I'm very sorry.(Kheili motoasefam.)*

b) *Emotional expressions e.g. Oh God (Vay-Khoda.)*

c) *Double intensifie, e.g. I 'm very very sorry. (Man kheili kheili motoasefam.)*

d) *The word "Please", e.g. please, forgive me (Khahesh mikonam mano bebakhshid)*

e) *Hope for forgiveness, e.g. I hope you'd forgive me. (Omidvaram mano bebakhshid)*

f)   Swear, e.g. I swear I forgot. (Quasam mikhoram yadam raft.)

The first four subformulas in the above list are the sub-formulas shared by CCSARP coding scheme. The last two subformulas, namely, "hope for forgiveness" and "swearing" are, however, the new sub-formulas held by the researchers to be the intensifiers used in Persian apology expressions. As mentioned before, the category of internal intensifiers in this study is also broadened in scope, that is the internal intensifiers may appear not only in direct and indirect head acts but also in direct and indirect adjunct acts. Consider the following example:

Please, forgive me. I really didn't see you.

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

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

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

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

Findings

Overall analysis of the data collected through the DCT questionnaire in this study showed that Persian apologies were as formulaic in semantic structure as are English apologies. In other words, In Persian, as in the other thirteen

languages studied in the CCSARP project, people apologize either directly or by using one of the performative verbs such as (mazerat mikham) "I apologize" or indirectly by accepting the responsibility for the offence, offering repair for the damage caused or finally promising the forbearance of the offense to ever happen again. The most frequent apology formula used in Persian, as in the other languages studied (Olshtain and Cohen, 1983) was an IFID or the most direct apology formula. To elaborate, as presented in table one, out of the total 1800 number of different apology formulas produced by participants as head acts, 1508 or 83.8% included the use of a direct apology offered via an apology performative verb or an IFID expression.

Table 3
Frequency Distribution of the Five Main Apology Head Act Formula
produced by all participants in 10 situations

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

Of the different performative verbs or IFID expressions revealing the direct act of apology, the most frequent one used by both male and female participants was found to be the formulaic expression **bebakhshid** (literally translated as 'excuse me'). As illustrated in Table 4, the frequency of the expression **sharmandam** (I'm embarrassed) offered as a head act suggests that in Persian this expression can function as a direct formulaic expression of apology rather than an indirect apology formula. The low frequency of the last two IFID formulas, that is, **puzesh mikham** and **afv konid**, may be attributed to the fact that these two IFID formulas are highly formal and are usually used in formal conversations or in written materials.

In the case of the second apology strategy, namely, RESP, participants rarely took responsibility for the offence being committed. As presented in table one, out of 1800 number of apology formulas offered as head acts only 119 or 6.6% included the formula taking responsibility, compared to 1508 or 83.8% use of IFIDs. Table 4 illustrates the frequency distribution of the sub-formulas of the main formula RESP.

Table 4
IFID Head Act Sub-formula Frequency Distribution

IFID Type	Total	Percentage
Bebakhshid	754	50%
M'azerat mikham	405	26.9%
Ozr mikham	173	11.5%
Sharmandeam	132	8.7%
Motoasefam	33	2.2%
Puzesh mikham	9	0.6%
Afv-konid	2	0.1%
TOTAL	1508	100%

As for the internal intensifier's sub-formulas, the adverbial and the emotional intensifiers in the participants' apology utterances made up the highest frequency of the internal intensifiers, namely, 38.12% and 22.7% respectively (Table 5). The third most frequent intensifier was found to be the subformula hypothesized by the researchers as a possible internal intensifier, at least in Persian namely hopes for forgiveness with a frequency of 12.8%. Similarly, the other sub-formula of internal intensifier's category suggested by the researchers as a possible internal intensifier, in Persian was swearing which was also found to be as frequently offered as the other sub-formulas developed by CCSARP projects (8% compared to 7.78% for the sub-formula double-adverbial and 10.6% for the sub-formula please).

Among the apology formulas used as supportive intensifiers, the RESP was the most frequent formula in the apology utterances (602 or 33.61% from the total 1791 supportive intensifiers compared to 418 or 23.33% for IFIDs, 380 or 21.22% for REPR, 367 or 20.49% for EXPL and 24 or 1.35% for the formula FORB). It seems that, as also put by Trosborg (1987) and Bergman & Kasper (1992), the two formulas IFID and RESP are the most frequent apology formulas in Persian as well as in English. Among the sub-

formulas of the IFID formula, offered as supportive intensifiers, the IFID **bebakhshid** (excuse me) was the most frequent one (44.75%). The IFID formula **sharmandeam** (I'm embarrassed), as anticipated, was the third most frequent IFID formula offered as a supportive act (16.75%).

Table 5
Frequency Distribution of the Intensifiers offered by all participants to
addressees in percentage

INTENSIFIERS																					
INTERNAL						SUPPORTIVE															
ADV*	EMO	D.ADV	PLES	HOPE	SWR	IFID							RESP						EXPL	PERP	FORB
						beba	m'az	shar	o'zr	mMot	puz	afv	S.BL.M	L.INT	JUST	S.DEF	S.OFF	CFH			
191	114	39	53	64	40	187	98	70	54	5	2	2	63	64	11	185	182	97			
38.12%%	22.7%%	7.78%	10.6%	12.8%.	8	44.755	23.5	13	16.755	1	0.5	0.555	10.5	10.6	1.83	30.73	30.24	16.1			
						418=100%							602=100%						367	380	24
						23.33%							33.61%						20.49	21.22	1.35
501=100%						1791=100%															
21.85%						78.15%															
78.15%						21.85%															

KEY

ADV	Adverbial Intensifier	Mot	Motoasefam
EMO	Emotional	Puz	Puzesh mikham
D.ADV	Double Adverbial Intensifier	Afv	Afv konid
PLES	Please	S.BLM	Explicit Selfblame
HOPE	Hope for Forgiveness	L.INT	Lack of Inent
SWR	Swearing	JUST	Justifying the Hearer
Beba	Bebakhshid	S.DEF	Expressing Self-Deficiency
M'az	M'azerat mikham	S.OFF	Statement of the Offense
Shar	Sharmandeam	CFH	Concern for the Hearer
'ozr	'ozr mikham		

As discussed before, the DCT questionnaire designed and administered in this study consisted of ten situations constructed on the basis of the combination of the values of the two context-external factors, namely, the social distance and dominance perceived between the interlocutors. In other words, situations one and six are similar because the interlocutors in these two situations are close friends and know each other (-distance) and none of them has dominance over the other (-dominance) (see the Appendix). Similarly, situations two and eight are similar because in these two situations the interlocutors know each other (-distance) and the addressee (university professor) has dominance over the apologizer (student) (+hearer dominance). Situations three and nine are also similar because in both of these situations, the interlocutors hardly know each other (+distance) and are both university students (-dominance). Situations four and seven are similar because the interlocutors in both of these situations don't know each other (+distance) but the addressee (a high-rank university staff) has dominance over the apologizer (+hearer dominance). Finally, in situations five and ten, the interlocutors are family members (brothers or sisters) with no social distance between them (-distance). However, the age of the speaker makes him socially dominant over his/her addressee (+ speaker dominance).

Table 6 illustrates the mean frequency of the intensifiers extracted for each group of situations. As shown in table 4, the highest mean frequency of intensifiers (92.75) has been expressed in the combination of situations 1 and

6. In other words, the highest number of intensifiers has been used to close friends with no dominance over the apologizer. The second most intensified group of situations was situations 2 and 8 with the mean intensifier of 75 (student/professor: +hearer/ -dominance).

Table 6
The Mean Frequency of Intensifiers observed in groups of situations with shared values of Context-External factors (social distance and dominance)

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

Situations 4 and 7 were the third group of situations with regard to intensification. Situations 5 and 10 were the fourth group of situations in terms of intensification. The least number of intensifiers had been offered to strangers with no dominance over the apologizer (situation 3 and 9). It seems that the most intensified apologies are offered to friends and the least intensified apologies are offered to strangers and, secondly, the addressee's dominance over the apologizer also seems to result in a higher intensification of the apology.

As for the situation specific analysis of the data, tables 5, 6, and 7 display the frequency distribution of each category of apology formulas and intensifiers in each situation. As presented in table 6, the IFID expressions were the most frequent apology head acts offered in all situations. The indirect apology formula, namely, RESP, EXPL, and REPR were presented as head acts only in a few situations (see table 6). However, the formula FORB was only used once in situations 6 and 10.

Regarding the apologies offered as supportive intensifiers, the formula RESP was almost equally frequent in all situations. The other formulas, namely, EXPL and REPR seem to be situation specific. In other words, as illustrated in table 6 in situation 5 the frequency of the formula REPR was 48.35% and the frequency of the formula EXPL was 9%, whereas, in situation 8 the results were completely reverse; that is, the frequency of the formula REPR was only 0.82% and the frequency of the formula EXPL was

38.11%. Thus, different situations seem to require different apology formulas to be offered as supportive intensifiers.

Concerning the average mean of intensifies offered by each subject in each situation, the highest mean of the intensifiers was observed in situation 1(2.00) and 6 (1.71) (see table 7). The common context-external factors involved in these two situations are that both are –distance and none of the interlocutors has dominance over the other one. However, the lowest average mean of intensifiers was observed in situation 3(0.7) and 9 (0.97). In these two situations, the interlocutors hardly know each other (+distance) and none of them has dominance over the other one (equals).

Table 7
The Frequency Distribution of Apology Head Acts used in different situations

Sit.N	IFID	RESP	EXPL	REPR	FORB	Total
1	94 94%	1 1%	2 2%	3 3%	0 0%	100
2	148 74%	2 1%	47 23.5%	3 1.5%	0 0%	200
3	200 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	200
4	185 92.5%	1 0.5%	14 7%	0 0%	0 0%	200
5	115 57.5%	38 19%	27 13.5%	20 10%	0 0%	200
6	94 94%	2 2%	3 3%	0 0%	1 1%	100
7	189 94.5%	7 3.5%	2 1%	2 1%	0 0%	200
8	191 95.5%	1 0.5%	7 3.5%	1 0.5%	0 0%	200
9	200 100%	0 0 %	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	200
10	92 46%	67 33.5%	20 10%	20 10%	1 0.5%	200
Total	1508	119	122	49	2	1800

Table 8
The Frequency Distribution of Apology Supportive Intensifier different situation

Sit.N	IFID	RESP	EXPL	REPR	FORB	TOTAL
1	48 30.19%	34 21.4%	32 20.12%	43 27.04%	2 1.25%	159
2	29 11.6%	39 15.6%	93 37.2%	88 35.2%	1 0.4%	250
3	51 54.85%	35 37.6%	6 6.45%	1 1.1%	0 0%	93
4	49 25.25%	73 37.6%	60 30.95%	4 2.06%	8 4.14%	194
5	8 3.79%	81 38.38%	19 9%	102 48.35%	1 0.48%	211
6	31 22.98%	58 42.96%	37 27.4%	5 3.7%	4 2.96%	135
7	68 35.25%	76 39.37%	3 1.55%	46 23.83%	0 0%	193
8	70 28.7%	76 31.14%	93 38.11%	2 0.82%	3 1.23%	244
9	61 41.78%	67 45.9%	16 10.95%	2 1.37%	0 0%	146
10	3 1.8%	63 37.95%	8 4.85%	87 52.4%	5 3%	166
TOTAL	418	602	367	380	24	1791

Table 9
The Frequency Distribution of Internal and Supportive Intensifiers used in different situations

Sit.N	Inter.Int	Supp.Int	TOTAL	Ave.Mean
1	41 20.5%	159 79.5%	200	2.00
2	44 14.96%	250 85.04%	294	1.47
3	47 33.57%	93 66.43%	140	0.7
4	47 19.5%	194 80.5%	241	1.20
5	54 20.4%	211 79.6%	265	1.32
6	36 21.05%	135 78.95%	171	1.71
7	87 31.07%	193 68.93%	280	1.4
8	62 20.26%	244 79.74%	306	1.53
9	49 25.13%	146 74.87%	195	0.97
10	34 17%	166 83%	200	1
TOTAL	501	1791	2292	

Summary and Conclusion

Most of the sociopragmatics studies seem to be both geographically and culturally restricted to western societies and cultures (Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper, 1989). This study tried to expand the scope of such studies to include a non-western language and culture. In other words, by studying the realization of apology speech act patterns in Persian, the findings of the previous studies carried out on apologies in western languages have been tested against the data collected in a non-western language and culture for the purpose of assessing the universality of such findings.

The findings of this study indicate that in Persian-as in the other languages studying the western societies (Blum-Kulka and Cohen, 1983; Olshtain and Cohen, 1983; Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984), apologies

generally fit within the framework of the categories explored and discovered by such western studies. Also, a direct expression of apology and an acknowledgement of responsibility were found to be the most frequent apology formulas offered across the majority of the apology situations.

The EXPL and REPR formulas, whether used as head acts or supportive acts, were found to be highly frequent in this study. (See Tables 6 and 7). The apology formula FORB was rarely used as an apology head or supportive act (see Tables 7 and 8).

This study came across some new sub-formulas at work in the expression of apology formulas and intensifiers. As for the RESP apology formula, "the statement of the offense" was the new sub-formula observed under this category. In case of the intensifiers, the scope of the internal intensifiers was broadened. In other words, it was argued that internal intensifiers could also appear outside IFID expressions. Moreover, two more new sub-categories of internal intensifiers specifically observed in Persian apology utterances were added to the Cesar's coding scheme of internal intensifiers. These two were "hope for forgiveness" and "swearing".

Finally, the investigation of the possible effects of the two context-external variables, namely, the social distance and dominance between the interlocutors, on the frequency of the apology intensifiers revealed that –as also suggested by the previous studies –the most intensified apologies were offered to close friends with no dominance over the apologizer (see Table 7, situations 1 and 6) and the least intensified apologies were offered to strangers with no dominance over the apologizer (situations 3 and 9). It seems that the most intensified apologies are offered to friends and the least intensified apologies are offered to strangers. Similarly, the addressee's dominance over the speaker also seems to result in a more intensified apology utterances (see situations 3 and 9 compared to situations 4 and 7 in table 5).

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Appendix

The open questionnaire (Discourse Completion Test) used in this study to collect Persian apologetic utterances.

Age: Sex: Degree:

Native language: University major:

Please read the following description of situations and then write what you would SAY in each situation.

1. You have borrowed your friend's notes and because of the rain yesterday, some of the notes have been wet and damaged. What would you say when you want to return the notes?

2. You have promised to deliver a lecture in class but due to a very bad cold, you have not been able to even attend the class. What would you say to your professor the next session you attend the class?

3. The university bus is very crowded so you are standing in the bus. The bus-driver suddenly brakes and you lose your control and step on a fellow student's foot. What would you say?

4. You have promised one of the university staff to fill in and return a form two days ago but you have a two-day delay. What would you say when you want to return the form?

5. You have promised your younger sister/brother to take her/him to the cinema and you have forgotten to do so. She/he has been waiting for you at home for hours. What would you say to her/him as you get home?

6. You have been supposed to meet your close friend at the university library to exchange some books and you get there an hour later and find your friend still waiting for you at the library. What would you say to your friend as you see her?

7. As you are talking to one of the university staff, you accidentally spill the cup of tea on his/her desk. What would you say?

8. You were expected by your supervisor. Dr...., to discuss some of your problems but due to a heavy traffic, you are 45 minutes late. What would you say to your supervisor as you see him/her?

9. As you are carrying a chair in the lobby of the university, you hurt a fellow student's hand accidentally. What would you say?

10. You have promised your younger sister/brother to buy her/him a book from the bookstore but you have forgotten. What would you say to her/him?