

Cultural Effect of Gender on Apology Strategies of Pakistani Undergraduate Students

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Abstract

This research paper examines the differences and similarities between Urdu and Pashtu speaking students concerning the way they devise apology strategies according to the need of the situation. It also attempts to investigate gender effects on the choices and preferences made at the time of apologizing. The study is informed by two-culture theory (Troemel-Ploetz, 1991) that claims separate cultures for men and women. The findings are based on an open-ended questionnaire that attempts to create incidents and events forcing the respondents to tender apology. The data has been collected from randomly selected students enrolled in undergraduate courses in the disciplines of English, Business Administration and Computer Science at National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad. The study reveals that male and female students are less different in their responses while encountering members of the same gender. It also reveals that considerable variations are found in their handling of apology strategies with the opposite gender. In addition, it is also found that the strategies are in consonance with the overall socio-cultural backgrounds of the respondents. The study concludes that gender effects are noticeable where the students are found more formal and less caring in tendering apology to members of the same gender. On the contrary, apology is viewed as a means to establish intimacy and connectedness with members of the other gender. Overall, the students observe great care in dealing with members of the opposite sex. The findings also reveal that students are socialized to adhere to the predominantly gendered social structure that in turn guides their public behavior.

Key words: *gender, culture, apology strategies, Urdu, Pashtu*

Introduction

Research on investigating speech acts is mostly associated with western languages in general and English language in particular. More recently, studies have been undertaken in other world's languages by sociolinguists especially in the African, Japanese, Arabic, Persian and other eastern languages. The studies have also attempted to investigate apology

speech acts in variety of contexts. Inspired by the scope of the issue and significance of apology strategies investigated, this study is undertaken with particular reference to the interplay of culture and gender in determining the choice of the respondents (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Suszczynska, 1999). Based on the social situations, this study gathers data where the respondent has committed some offence to someone and is asked to apologize to that person. The offended persons or hearers hail from variety of social backgrounds but are placed in an educational institution where all are treated in the same manner. With a population sample of 32 students with equal number of male and female participants, the data has been analyzed with the help of the model proposed by the project of Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns which was initiated in 1982 (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989). Analysis of data reveals that apology strategies vary in line with the factors determined in the framework.

Literature Review

Primarily associated with the concept of politeness, apology is best appreciated when approached in the context of politeness. Lakoff (1973) identifies three basic rules of politeness including “don’t impose,” “give options” and “be friendly” (p. 298). He does not deny cross cultural variations in giving preference to one over the other however. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), we as members of society, tend to keep certain image or “face.” They labeled them as positive and negative face. Insofar apology is concerned, it is face threatening as the speaker admits having done wrong but is equally face saving because when the hearer accepts, the strategy alleviates the offense of the speaker (Lubecka, 2000). The concept of face is culture specific however. Matsumoto (1988) notes that the theory of face does not apply to Japanese speakers who define themselves not as individuals but members of a group. Based on these variations, Nwoye (1992) views it necessary to classify face into sub-categories of “individual face” and “group face.” To him, the former relates to an individual’s desire to place his image above others while the latter is an expression of a desire to behave in a culturally acceptable manner (p. 313).

An apology is a speech act that is required to mend behavior and ward off offence in partial fulfillment of social norms or a strategy to undo the effect of offensive linguistic expression (Trosborg, 1995). It can also be identified as a speech act that is intended to remedy the offense for which the apologizer takes responsibility and, as a result, to rebalance social relations between interlocutors (Holmes, 1995). It is at the least accepting the responsibility for the offence and regretting it at the same time or realization of the failure to fulfill someone’s personal expectations (Fraser,

1981). It is a social event in the sense that its need arises when a social norm is violated (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983). According to Bergman and Kasper (1993), the purpose of apology is to restore social relational agreement after the offense is committed (see also Owen, 1983). Such forms are more conventional – used more often than others, such as “I’m sorry” in English, transliterated as *mu’af krna* in Urdu or *za bakhana gwaram* in Pashtu. Blum-Kulka and Kasper (1993) state that speech acts differ in the extent to which conventionalized linguistic forms are used; some speech acts, such as apologizing and thanking, exhibit more conventional usage than others do.

Linguists classify acts of apology according to various criteria. Such classification is primarily based on external factors mainly including the situation or object of regret. When the situation arises, the response of the offender may vary according to situation. Apology may be tendered in an explicit manner for the offence committed, responsibility may be accepted for the mishap or the person may well brush off the incident as not important to exonerate himself from blame (Bataineh, 2005). At other times, the person may regret as well as explain the reason of the mishap and may go to the extent of committing to repair the damage done. Equally significant part of the apology strategy may be the express commitment on the part of the offender to observe great care in future. All such apology strategies are expressed in different ways with different words and with different styles and tones depending upon the context.

There are several types of apology categories as Bergman and Kasper (1993) distinguish between seven different categories. To them, the commonest category is Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) i.e. “I’m sorry” (Urdu: *Main muafi chata hon*; Pashtu: *Za bakhana gwaram*). Other categories of apology strategy include intensified IFID i.e. “I’m terribly sorry” (Urdu: *Mujay behad afsoos hai* or *Main tehe dil say muafi chahta hon*; Pashtu: *Za da zra da kumi na muafi gwaram*); accepting responsibility i.e. “I haven’t completed it yet” (Urdu: *Main na abhi tak is ko mukammal nahi kia*; Pashtu: *Ma la da na day khatam karay*); explaining the contextual reasons for committing the action i.e. “I was asked by my father to bring food from the marketplace” (Urdu: *Mujay abu na kaha kay market say khana lay ao*; Pashtu: *Ma ta me plar way che bazaar ta lar sha au rotai raora*); minimizing the intensity of the situation i.e. “I’m only 5 minutes late” (Urdu: *Main sirf 5 minute late hon*; Pashtu: *Za sirf 5 minute late shom*); making an offer to pay for the damages or compensation i.e. “I’ll pay the price” (Urdu: *Main nuksan pora ker don ga*; Pashtu: *Za ba tawan pora kam*); verbal redress i.e. “It won’t happen again” (Urdu: *Ainda aisa nahi hoga*; Pashtu: *Bia ba dasi na kege*) and last but not the least, a kind of minimization strategy i.e. “I hope you didn’t wait for long” (Urdu: *Umeed*

hay aap nay ziada intizar nahi kia; Pashtu: Zama umaid day che der intizar ba de na ye karay) (p. 86). Similarly, Fraser (1981) identified nine categories of apologies based on the intent of the speaker. They included “announcing that you are apologizing,” “stating one’s obligation to apologize,” “offering to apologize,” “requesting the hearer accept an apology,” “expressing regret for the offense,” acknowledging responsibility for the offending act,” promising forbearance from a similar offending act,” and “offering redress” (p. 263).

A framework to measure apology strategies mostly depends upon the speaker, the addressee or both. The importance of social distance, sex, power, social status, age and situation also come into play to determine the course of action (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Suszczynska, 1999). Apology speech acts may relate to situations where the offended may have different level of relations with the speakers ranging from most formal to most informal. They may also have different social dispositions and power. Therefore, apologies may vary accordingly from highly apologetic to least apologetic depending upon the interlocutor. Moreover, they also differ with the intensity and type of mistake or mishap. Also significant is the role played by the language of apology. As a matter of fact, apologizing is never easy. It is difficult to exercise the option in one’s own language but the situation becomes more complicated if the linguistic situation demands the use of another language. There is likelihood of misinterpreting the gravity of the situation in second or foreign language. This also makes it important to examine the subtle delicacies of different languages to appreciate the nature of apologetic gestures.

The influence of cultural norms and traditions also cause changes in the taxonomy of apology as a speech act. The study by Barnlund and Yoshioka (1990), in which they interviewed the native speakers of Japanese and American English, led them to identify twelve modes of tendering an apology. They included: “not saying or doing anything,” “explaining the situation,” “apologizing ambiguously,” “apologizing nonverbally,” “casually saying sorry,” “acting helpless,” saying directly “I am very sorry,” “writing a letter,” “apologizing several times in several ways,” “offering to do something for the other person,” “leaving or resigning,” and “committing suicide” (p. 198). A more important feature of the categorization is the inclusion of non-verbal ways of apologizing. Rarely observed in studies of similar nature, these categories can be of great thematic value to appreciate apology strategies cross-culturally. Deutschmann (2003) uses a different approach in drafting the taxonomy of apology strategies. Based on his examination of British National Corpus, he identifies three functional categories of apology speech acts. First, there are the most frequently used real apologies like “I apologize for this”

(Urdu: *Main is par muafi mangta hon*; Pashtu: *Pa de bande za muafi gwaram*), second, there are formulaic apologies that rely on the use of IFIDs like “I’m sorry” and third, there are “face attack” apologies that attempt to disarm the hearer as in the case of “Excuse me David, I’m talking to Chris” (Urdu: *Muaf karna David may Chris say baat kar raha hon*; Pashtu: *Khafa na shay David kho za Chris ta ligya yam*) (p. 75).

Theoretical Framework

For measuring and calculating apologies, different frameworks have been proposed especially by the western linguists. However, variety in dealing with the subject owes much to the recent advances of linguistic theories enunciated by Japanese, Chinese, African and Middle Eastern scholars. The underlying assumption of such studies of apology speech acts is to draw pragmatic rules that govern the use of speech acts in different socio-cultural backgrounds. Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) project initiated in 1982 by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, was an attempt to analyze speech acts (in this case requests and apologies) across a range of languages and cultures aimed at investigating the existence of any possible pragmatic universals and their characteristics (Afghari, 2007). This project found out five different apology speech acts that are similar to IFID (Illocutionary Force Indicating Device). In this case, speaker expresses an overt apology and takes responsibility for the offence. This project seems to draw boundaries between different apology strategies and intensifiers.

For the purpose of present study, five strategies to advance apology taken from CCSARP project include:

1. An expression of an apology (use of IFID) e.g. I apologize.
2. An acknowledgement of responsibility (RESP) e.g. It was my fault.
3. An explanation or account of the situation (EXPL) e.g. I’m sorry, the train was late.
4. An offer of repair (REPR) e.g. I’ll pay the price.
5. A promise of forbearance (FORB) e.g. This won’t happen again.

These strategies are transliterated in Urdu and Pashtu in Table 1. Variation in them may be observed according to the context in which the conversation takes place.

Table 1: Apology Strategies in English with their Equivalent Forms in Urdu and Pashtu

Description	English	Urdu	Pashtu
IFID	I apologize.	Main ma'azrat khawan hon.	Za bakhana gwaram.
RESP	It was my fault.	Ye mera kasoore hi.	Da zama ghalti da.
EXPL	I'm sorry, the train was late.	Mujhey afsos hi, train main dair ho gai.	Ma ta afsos day, bus nawakhta ko.
REPR	I'll pay the price.	Main nuksan pora ker don ga.	Za ba tawaan pora kam.
FORB	This won't happen again.	Ainda ahtiyat karon ga.	Bia dapara ba khiyal kom.

Participants of the Study

The findings of the study are based on the data collected from 32 undergraduate students studying in National University of Modern Languages. The choice of the university is significant for its location and students' population. Situated in the federal capital, the university attracts students from all parts of the country. Predominantly, the students communicate in Urdu, the National language. English is the medium of instruction in majority of the teaching departments, however. Proportionally, majority of the enrolled students belong to the province of Punjab whose mother tongue is Punjabi. Nonetheless, majority of them have families permanently settled in and around the capital city where the major means of communication is Urdu. Over the years, these people have developed a taste for Urdu and use Punjabi in highly informal situations only. This tendency is also the outcome of cultural diversity and multi-ethnic composition of the federal capital and its adjoining areas. Based on these facts, all students from Punjab are therefore assumed to be Urdu-speaking for the purpose of this study. Alongside, the number of Pashtu-speaking students from the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) is comparatively higher than other ethnic groups i.e. Baluchis and Sindhis. The presence of Pashtuns as the second largest group in the university has several reasons. First, there is lack of quality educational institutions at higher level in the province particularly in the field of world's languages. Second, the law and order situation in the Pashtun belt particularly after the rise of Taliban in the wake of US led invasion of Afghanistan in the aftermath of 9/11, is not satisfactory due to which many students find it safer to stay and study in the more peaceful environment of the federal capital. Third, the federal capital is geographically placed at a convenient distance from many parts of the province and therefore it is easy for majority of them to travel to the capital. Fourth, a considerable number of

Pashtuns also serve in public and private sector organizations in the capital and the university's population therefore includes many children of these employees and businessmen.

As far as the language options available to the students, Urdu is used for informal communication on the campus. Some students also prefer to interact in English, however. Punjabi students may also find it convenient to use their mother-tongue outside the class. In teaching situation, English dominates other languages but the use of Urdu may not be overruled. As far as the use of Pashtu is concerned, it is not used in a class situation as majority of other ethnic groups do not understand it. Although in minority, Pashtu speakers are observed to take pride in their mother tongue and its use among themselves. Based on this observation, many Pashtuns can be observed interacting in Pashtu in library, cafeteria or in the playgrounds. However, as observed by the co-author who belongs to the same ethnic group, the incidence of the use of Pashtu is rare in encounters with members of the opposite gender. This can be one outcome of the preferred higher level of formality between men and women in Pashtun culture.

Population Sample

The population sample includes 16 Urdu-speaking and 16 Pashtu-speaking students with equal number of male and female enrolled in undergraduate courses in teaching departments including English, Business Administration and Computer Science. The average age of the participants is 21 years. The rationale for selecting university students is their sharing the same linguistic environment, same resources and exposure to similar learning strategies. Having similarity in their IQs, they may resort to different strategies at different occasions. Differences may also result from change in the language situation from mother tongue to another and across gender. Other reasons for conducting the study in a university include the availability of both male and female students and their openness to interact among themselves. Such situations are rarely found in the gender segregated society of Pakistan. In the predominantly Urdu-speaking population of the university, the Pashtu-speaking students were included in the study on two grounds: first, Pashtuns were in considerable majority and second, they were more enthusiastic in asserting their cultural and ethnic identities (Rahman, 1995).

Methods and Procedure

The data was collected through a specifically designed discourse completion test (DCT) with guidance from the one developed by Blum-Kulka (1982) for CCSARP (see Appendix). The study conducted by Majeed and Janjua (2014) was of great contextual help in finalizing the DCT for the

current study. The open-ended test included questioning statements relating to routine affairs that asked for apology in normal circumstances. The ten situations highlighted in the statements were selected on the basis of their relevancy to education environment at undergraduate level. With a view to get an appropriate response from the respondents, the statements had been loaded with information regarding the age, social status and professional affiliation of the addressee to enable him/her to make an informed response. The nature of the offence was presented in a clearly articulated way so that no confusion remained in the mind of the respondents in the selection of the apology strategy. The inclusion of all these significant bits of information was meant to measure how the respondents weighed and calculated apology strategies on the basis of the nature of the offence in relation to people having varying degrees of association with them particularly in the context of gender. In addition, these informative hints regarding the addressee were also important for rendering the responses natural as no two respondents were similar owing to differences in their social positions and backgrounds.

During the process of data collection, the researchers took into consideration the three social factors including age of the addressee and the addressor, the social distance between them and their power relations. The reason for considering these factors was their direct relationship with particular apology strategies. It has been noted that strategies may vary based on social factors. The responses may be different due to differences in age, distance and power relations for the same offence. They may also vary according to the formality of the situation, which also corresponds with the power relations and the distance between the offender and the offended. For the purpose of this study, it was assumed that the three social factors would be similar as all the respondents belonged to the same university and were from the same age group enjoying equal rights on the campus. However, it was expected that the apology strategies may vary across gender. For the purpose of the study, the data collected was related to six social situations:

1. apology strategies between Urdu-speaking female students
2. apology strategies between Urdu-speaking male students
3. apology strategies between Urdu-speaking female and male students
4. apology strategies between Pashtu-speaking female students
5. apology strategies between Pashtu-speaking male students
6. apology strategies between Pashtu-speaking female and male students

Data Analysis and Discussion

Apology Strategies of Female Students

The data indicates that the apology strategy of Urdu-speaking female students varied according to the gender of the hearer. While dealing with the same sex, majority (75%) of them preferred a more formal means of tendering apology and would use IFID. They were also found less caring or concerned about the offence that they had committed. However, in some cases they would use REPR (25%) which indicated that they would preempt and apologize fearing an unpleasant reaction from the hearer. In comparison, the response strategies of female students in case of encounter with male students were considerably different. Majority (62.5%) of them used the strategy of RESP which indicated that they were more prone to accept responsibility with male students in comparison to female students. This was interpreted as a response to the predominantly male-oriented setup in the society where men were perceived more powerful and resourceful than women. One female member preferred the use of FORB committing that she would try to avoid such situation in future. The response of 25% female students was in the category of IFID signifying formality in relation and trying to remove any hard feelings in future.

Like Urdu-speaking female students, the apology strategy of Pashtu-speaking female students also varied when they encountered female and male students. However, there were visible differences in the inclinations of the two. Pashtu-speaking female students (50%) were found prone to use RESP which was a clear indication that they were willing to accept the responsibility for the offence and preferred to leave nothing for future to settle. Like their Urdu-speaking counterparts, they also tended to use IFID (50%) while strategizing apology with other female members. While dealing with male students, majority (75%) of them used FORB which was again different from Urdu-speaking respondents. It is important to note that Pashtun society valued gender segregation both in theory and in practice. Further, their social structure was patriarchic and male-dominated (Khan, Sultana, Bughio & Naz, 2013). The trend was also reflected in the majority (75%) response of the female students who were found willing to submit and resign. They would also assure the hearer that they would take care in future and would do their best not to repeat such act in future. Likewise, some (25%) of them used REPR which again showed their submissive nature in gendered encounters.

Comparatively, the significant difference between female students in the Urdu and Pashtu speaking communities was their perceptions of men. The former were closer to male students while Pashtuns believed in

segregated and male-dominated social setup as reflected in their apology strategies.

Overall, IFID tended to dominate apology strategies among female students (63%) in dealing with members of their own sex while majority of them (44%) used FORB with a significant inclination to RESP (31%) while dealing with male students. It can be said that the strategies reflected the broader social structure where female members were found more informal among themselves and observing segregation from the male members. With particular reference to the context, Pashtuns social structure was strictly patriarch and male-dominated that did not encourage free mixing and informality between genders. Women were supposed to keep away from male members and to submit and surrender in case of any offense (Khan et al., 2013). In comparison, Urdu-speaking culture was not much different from the Pashtun one (Khan & Sultana, 2012). However, with the advent of modern means of communication particularly media and computer technology, traditional cultural views had undergone modification and reinterpretation in urban societies. Therefore, majority of the Urdu speakers were less chained by their tribal laws and affiliations as were their Pashtun contemporaries. The latter still formed part of the largest tribal society in the world (Ahmad & Boase, 2003) the culture of which had less to offer and to accept change in attitudes towards gender. The data collected from Urdu and Pashtu-speaking female students is presented in tabulated form as follows:

Table 2: Apology Strategies Used by Urdu/Pashtu-Speaking Female Students

Urdu-Speaking Female Respondents												
Situation/ encounter (Total respond- ents=8)	Apology Strategies										Total	
	IFID		EXPL		RESP		REPR		FORB		No	%
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%		
With female student	6	75	-	-	-	-	2	25	-	-	8	100
With male student	2	25	-	-	5	62.5	-	-	1	12.5	8	100

Pashtu-Speaking Female Respondents												
Situation/ encounter (Total respond- ents=8)	Apology Strategies										Total	
	IFID		EXPL		RESP		REPR		FORB			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
With female student	4	50	-	-	4	50	-	-	-	-	8	100
With male student	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	25	6	75	8	100
Overall Female Respondents												
Situation/ encounter (Total respond- ents=8)	Apology Strategies										Total	
	IFID		EXPL		RESP		REPR		FORB			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
With female student	10	63	-	-	4	25	2	12	-	-	16	100
With male student	2	12.5	-	-	5	31	2	12.5	7	44	16	100

Apology Strategies of Male Students

The analysis of the apology strategies revealed that half (50%) of the Urdu-speaking male students preferred to keep their relation at formal terms with female students by preferring IFID while the other half (50%) prefer RESP. Like female speakers of the same language, the trend indicated their inclination to keep the relation closer and open by accepting the responsibility. In comparison, the Pashtu-speaking male students were found more formal and less caring about their relation with female students. All of them (100%) found IFID more appropriate strategy which also corresponded with the gender segregated social structure to which they belonged.

On comparative analysis, Urdu-speaking students were more caring and receptive to female students in dealings and hoped for

informality in their relations with them. However, half (50%) of them were also motivated to use FORB that signified the segregated social structure where women were given respect and those who did so were considered socially and culturally more sophisticated. It also indicated the unintentional acceptance of the act committed as the cultural values in Pakistan give utmost importance to be true to women and discourage any harm to them.

Upon analysis of the apology strategies of male students, the data revealed that Urdu-speaking students mostly used IFID (75%) and remained more formal with students of their gender. Some students (25%) were found more caring, however. They used RESP strategy which indicated their accommodative nature by accepting the responsibility. In comparison, Pashtu-speaking students were found more caring, accommodative and submissive in their relations. Half (50%) of them used RESP while the other half (50%) used FORB. It also revealed that they were more worried about their future relations and attempted to keep closer to their own gender.

Comparative analysis of the data collected from male respondents revealed that in Urdu-speaking community, male students gave more importance to their relation with the opposite gender while Pashtu-speaking students tended to keep distance with female students and worried more about their relations with students of their own sex.

As a whole, it is said that majority (75%) of male students prefer IFID when dealing with female students which indicates the comparatively segregated gender identities in the society. This trend also reflects the national culture of Pakistan where men and women are treated separately and majority still do not approve of mix-gender groupings.

The data gathered from male students point to differences across gender and language. It also highlights the subtle variations across cultures. Urdu-speaking male students are found inclined towards better relations with members of the opposite gender. They frequently interact with them and have a general tendency of giving them equal space in the social structure. They do not find women alien to their existence and strive for informality in their relations. In contrast, the Urdu-speaking male students are found less careful about their relations with other male students. In a sense, they value their relationship with female students and do not worry about other male students. As far as Pashtu-speaking male students are concerned, they are found more worried and concerned about keeping face when with members of their own gender in comparison to the opposite gender. This trend is also in conformity with the strictly gender segregated pattern among Pashtun ethnic group. As

highlighted in the context of Pashtu female speakers, Pashtun culture does not encourage mix gatherings and warn about the drastic social consequences. Further, the social structure reserve specific gender based domains where each gender is expected to perform his/her social roles. Further, the traditional code of *Pashtunwali* clearly differentiates between men and women (Ahmad & Boase, 2003; Babar, 2005; Banerjee, 2004; Hussain, 2005). It makes it binding upon women to keep away from men and expects the latter to keep his eyes away from the former.

In summing up the whole situation, a visible gap between apology strategies of Urdu and Pashtu-speaking male members can be found with reference to their relations and encounters with men and women. Urdu-speaking male members are more informal and caring than their Pashtu-speaking counterparts. The details of the data are presented in the form of a table below:

Table 3: Apology Strategies Used by Urdu/Pashtu-Speaking Male Students

Urdu-Speaking Male Students												
Situation/ encounter (Total respond- ents=8)	Apology Strategies										Total	
	IFID		EXPL		RESP		REPR		FORB			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
With female student	4	50	-	-	4	50	-	-	-	-	8	100
With male student	6	75	-	-	2	50	-	-	-	-	8	100
Pashtu-Speaking Male Students												
Situation/ encounter (Total respond- ents=8)	Apology Strategies										Total	
	IFID		EXPL		RESP		REPR		FORB			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
With female student	8	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	100
With male student	-	-	-	-	4	50	-	-	4	50	8	100

Overall Male Students												
Situation/ encounter (Total respond- ents=8)	Apology Strategies										Total	
	IFID		EXPL		RESP		REPR		FORB			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
With female student	12	75	-	-	4	25	-	-	-	-	16	100
With male student	6	37.5	-	-	6	37.5	-	-	4	25	16	100

Summary and Conclusion

The study was undertaken with the aim to highlight apology strategies adopted by male and female undergraduate students at university level. The study was conducted to know the pattern of apology strategies with the same gender and with members of the other gender. The data was collected on the basis of an open-ended questionnaire which had been designed to reflect everyday occurrences in relevance to an educational institution. The findings of the study provided an insight into the ways through which particular strategy was preferred by the students in line with gender preferences and the pattern of the relationship that they wanted to maintain. The results also highlighted variation in the choice of apology strategies based on the nature of the offence. It also revealed that differences existed in the choice of strategy at cultural level. It was found that there was a marked difference between the choices and preferences of Urdu-speaking and Pashtu-speaking students. Their approach also varied across gender. This also highlighted the underlying social structure from which the students had come and the cultural legacy they carried with them. The findings further revealed that the Urdu-speaking community was more liberal and accommodative and looked positively to future relations with the other gender while Pashtuns were more conservative and formal to members of the opposite gender. The study could be of considerable help in understanding the approach of the offender while tendering apology. It tells us whether the respondent attempts to dominate or prefers defensive attitude during the process. Equally significant is the aspect of keeping public face that can be compromised by resorting to more formal and less caring strategies of apology. The too much use of IFID although less threatening in this regard,

can prove otherwise in the context of Pakistani culture where people tend to be more emotional than rational.

The findings also revealed that the respondents more often apologized by the use of IFID in majority of the situations. It meant that they tended to protect their positive face wants by using less dangerous apology strategies. By choosing such categories the respondents did not apologize explicitly but implicitly. They also used FORB in order to negotiate their relations with their fellows. In educational context, such strategy seemed more appropriate as it pointed to the willingness on the part of the respondent to continue with the relational encounters and to avoid any embarrassing situation at the same time.

Owing to the particular nature of the study that focused interaction at micro level, a comparatively smaller population sample was selected. The findings of the study therefore should not be generalized to a wider population. The researchers are of the view that the results can be applied to universities which are located in major cities of the country where the presence of Urdu-speaking and Pashtu-speaking groups is in considerable number.

Lastly, the two-culture theory can be applied to the findings of the study in a careful manner. Its incidence and currency is clearly visible in the attitudes of Pashtu-speaking students who are socialized in a gender segregated and conservative social setup. Guided by the code of Pashtunwali, they behave in a gendered manner and have separated masculine and feminine domains. In comparison, Urdu-speaking students are less conscious to such differences owing to their exposure to modern means of communication, media and commercialization. Although not included in the scope of the study, the attitudes of students from major cities and business centre can best be described by *dominance* theory than the two-culture theory.

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Appendix

Discourse Completion Test (DCT) adapted from Majeed and Janjua (2014)

Age ----- Gender ----- Degree-----

Mother Tongue----- Ethnic group -----

Resident of city/ town/ village-----

Please read the following situations carefully and imagine yourself in these situations practically and write down your reaction under each situation.

1. You have borrowed your class fellow's book and any child at your home tore some of its pages. What would you say when you return the book?

2. You were supposed to meet your class fellow at the university library but you got there an hour later. What would you say, when you apologize to your class fellow?

3. You were to submit the assignment of your friend who could not attend the class due to ill health; you have not been able to do so. What would you say to your fellow?

4. You were to share library books with your class fellow before the final paper but you failed to do so. What would be your response to your friend after taking the paper?

5. You promised with your friend to go for outing, but at the nick of time you got an urgent piece of work at home and couldn't go with him/her. How would you apologize with your friend?

6. You promised to reach at your friend's house at his/her marriage two days before the ceremony. But you couldn't get leave from university. What would you say to your friend when you meet him/her?

7. You were getting late from the class and hurriedly ran towards the class. While going upstairs you dashed with male/female student. How would you react?

8. You were given a form to fill in and return for getting library card but you lost the form. What would you say to your class representative when you meet him/her?

9. You promised your friend to accompany him/her to a movie theatre on Sunday. But you stayed at home the whole day and forgot your promise. The friend calls you and reminds the same. What would you say to her/him?

10. You had promised your friend to share your birthday cake but you forgot to bring one. What would you say to your friend on reaching the university?
