

## Apology Strategies in Jordanian Arabic

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### ABSTRACT

Most apology studies in the Jordanian context have investigated apologies based on a corpus of elicited data. Rarely have apologies been observed in the natural data; nor have the contextual factors that obligated these apologies been considered. This study is based on a corpus of 1100 naturally occurring apology events, collected through an ethnographic observation. Semi-structured interview was also used to examine the influence of contextual factors (social status, social distance, and severity of offence) on the choice of apology strategies. The respondents for this study were selected via convenient sampling. The naturally occurring apologies were coded using a modified version of the apology strategy typology outlined by Olshtain and Cohen (1983). There are series of findings that are worth noting; the first is that, acknowledging responsibility was the most common apology strategy in Jordanian Arabic. Second, acknowledging responsibility and swearing by God's name, formed the most frequent combination of apology strategies in this language. Third, another strategy that was high on the percentage of occurrence and deserving discussion was the non-apology strategies. Fourth, the selections of apology strategies were influenced by social status more than the degree of the severity of the offence or the social distance. Last but not least, new culture-specific apology strategies were detected in the corpus and elaborated in the paper. The findings of the study will assist material developers in preparing for resource books or modules for teaching and training of language and cultural awareness. The findings can also be used to raise the awareness about the sociocultural rules that govern the use of language functions.

**Keywords:** Apology strategies; Jordanian Apology; intercultural differences; speech acts; Jordanian Arabic

## INTRODUCTION

Speech Acts or simply communicative acts have proved to be one of the attractive areas in pragmatics and sociolinguistics. A number of studies have shown that there are significant cross-cultural differences in the speech act performance between two different speech communities (Eslami, 2004; Al-Zumor, 2011; Turnball, 2001; Banikalef & Marlyna, 2013a). Such studies have consistently found that social norms differ from one culture to another, so what is acceptable in one culture could be rejected in another. With a more general view of speech as a form of communication, one may start with the investigation of speech act in terms of its components or the functions. In other words, while speech act is controlled by universal pragmatic principles (Searle, 1969, 1975; Leech, 1983), they vary in conceptualization and verbalization across languages and cultures (Lee, 2003; Green, 1975; Wierzbicka, 1985). Therefore, to establish universal views of speech acts, it seems essential to examine their typical realization pattern in different languages. This assumption is confirmed by Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989) who state: "If claims to pragmatic universality are to approximate any type of validity, they should be based on the empirical investigation of many more, and diverse languages" (Blum, House & Kasper, 1989, p. 8).

Apology has been the focus of many studies in west and east. Some of these studies (Banikalef & Marlyna, 2013a; Bataineh, 2004; Al Adaileh, 2007; Bataineh & Bataineh, 2008) have focused on Arabic, but none of which have dealt with the use of apology in Jordanian non-standard Arabic. The current study is, therefore, an attempt to examine the realization of apology speech act, which inclines to be more situation-dependent and less frequently occurring than other speech acts (Overfield, 1995). It also examines how the patterns of apology strategies are varied in relation to contextual factors (social status, social distance, and severity of offence) as used by the Jordanians in Arabic language.

## RELATED STUDIES

Like other speech acts, apologizing strategies have drawn the attention of many investigators, especially those interested in studying second language teaching and learning. Speech act theory defines and classifies apologizing according to felicity conditions for its realization that contains an apologetic performative verb and/or an expression of regret (Jacobson, 2004). Apology is also seen based on the functions it may serve. For example, it is defined as a remedial interchanges used to restore social harmony after transgressing by the wrongdoer (Goffman, 2009). Al-Abdi (1981, pp. 4-5) also defines apology as the utterances and deeds a person tries to offer to lift punishment or blame due on him/her for a malicious deed he has committed.

Research on speech acts was either focused on the culture-specificity of the item or on the contrastive nature of the forms from the native English speakers and native speakers of other languages such as Persian (Salehi, 2014), Japanese (Long, 2010), English, Urdu and Punjabi (Majeed & Janjua, 2013), Egyptian Arabic (Soliman, 2003), Sudanese Arabic, Jordanian Arabic (Al-Adaileh, 2007), Spanish (Mir, 1992) and Chinese (Qian & Yang, 2005).

On the other hand, studies of inter-language apology generally investigate the production and perception of apologies by non-native language speakers. They have so far contrasted the use of apologies in English with other languages. Thijittang (2010), for example, investigated the speech act of apology in Thai and English and examined the pragmatic strategies of English used by Thai undergraduate university students. The data were gathered and analysed quantitatively via discourse completion test (DCT) elicitation and qualitatively via interview. DCT questionnaires were gathered from 130 Thai undergraduate students of different disciplines at a university in Thailand, whereas the participation for interview involved nine students. The questionnaire contained 15 different situations

according to various sociolinguistic factors. The collected data were analyzed based on the four main strategies classified by Holmes (1990). The findings showed that English has more strategies for apologizing than the Thai language. Thijittang (2010) concluded that the sociolinguistic factors (social status, social distance, and severity of offence) have a momentous influence on the production of apologies.

To explore the apology behaviour of native and non-native speakers of English, a comparative study has been carried out between 20 Greek speakers of English and 20 British English. Gonda (2001) employed DCT to conduct this study. The findings showed that the severity of offence and social distance determine the choice of strategies, and this is prominent in the use of any particular two strategies such as explanation and repair as well in use of combinations of strategies. Gonda (2001) also noticed that the non-native tended to use more strategies and more lengthy accounts of apology.

The next subsections present studies on apology in the Jordanian context, though non-extensively enough to give readers a general idea that is related to the aim of this paper.

#### **STUDIES ON APOLOGY IN JORDANIAN CONTEXT**

Although apology is a common part of our language of relationships, there are only few studies that present culturally significant differences in apologies between Jordanian speakers and other cultures. Most of the detected studies have compared Jordanian Arabic apologies with American English apologies.

Bataineh (2004) also has conducted a comparative study, but hers was between the Jordanian Arabic and American English speakers. She shed light on the cultural differences that affect language users' attempts at expressing themselves. She studied responses of two randomly chosen groups of one hundred American and one hundred Jordanian students and collected data by the means of DCT. Bataineh (2004) used two tests; one of them was taken from Sugimoto (1997) who compared the strategies used in apology by American and Japanese students, while the other test was designed by Sugimoto herself. Bataineh (2004) found differences between the two cultures in expressing apology; and that lie in the fact that Jordanians used more types of (1) the statement of remorse, (2) the strategy of promising not to repeat offence, (3) invoking Allah's (God's) name, and (4) the use of proverbs. On the other hand, Americans used more compensation, and tended to blame others as well as themselves when trying to apologize for the committed offence.

Moreover, Al-Adaileh (2007) conducted an investigation of the realisation patterns of apologies in British English and Jordanian Arabic, with special attention to politeness phenomena in Jordanian culture as contrasted with British culture. He employed the theoretical framework of the model of politeness by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987) in which a difference is made between two main constituents of face, namely, negative face and positive face. He also used the open-type questionnaire and interviews to collect data. His findings showed that Jordanian subjects were not inclined to use illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs) as frequently as did the British subjects. In addition, participants of both languages were likely to employ the expression of regret subcategory.

Al-Adaileh (2007) collected data via open-type questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The open-type questionnaire used in Al-Adaileh's (2007) study was adopted from Cohen (1981), Olshtain (1983), Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) and Reiter (2000), though some situations have been slightly modified. The questionnaire consisted of twelve situations. The situations depicted in the questionnaire represented socially differentiated situations which simulate everyday events. Each situation reflects different social variables: social status, social power, and severity of offence. The questionnaire was then translated into Arabic language. The translated version of the questionnaire and the original version had

been pilot-tested with five informants before being distributed as the final version. The apology situations of the final version of the questionnaire were chosen and modified according to cross-cultural comparisons, such as to catch a clear idea about the two cultures' perceptions of such social variables as social power, social distance, and the severity of the offence.

Al-Adaileh (2007) also proposed that the use of the sub-strategy such as "I am afraid + sentences" was used only by British subjects, so that it could be assumed that this substrategy (I am afraid + sentences) is a language-specific strategy. This means that each language has its own conventional expressions to realize its IFIDs. According to him, the most frequent IFID expressions in the responses of Jordanian Arabic are as the following: *asif*, *muta'a ssif*, *asef* (sorry), verbs: *atta'a ssaf* (sorry), a *tather* (apologise), *samehni* (forgive me), and nouns: *'afwan* (pardon), *alma'thirah*, and *al'uther* (apology). Noteworthy, both British participants and Jordanians leaned to employ the most commonly used remedial expressions, specifically "I'm sorry," and the interchangeably used *asif/mut'assif*. He concluded that apology is strongly affected by social parameters.

More recently, Banikalef and Marlyna (2013b) investigated the apology strategies adopted by Jordanian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) graduate students in various situational settings. They also aimed to highlight the influence of social status and social distance on the choice of apology strategies. The data were elicited through discourse completion tests (DCTs) and semi-structured interviews. The collected data were analysed and collated based on six super-strategies separated into sub-strategies as designed by Cohen (1981) and Olshtain (1983). Findings showed that explicit expressions of apology, specifically, expressing regret is the most frequently occurring strategy used by participants. An offer of repair is the second most frequently used apology strategy, followed by an explanation or account strategy. Other new strategies such as arrogance and ignorance, blaming something else, and swearing which fall outside the model adopted from Cohen (1981) and Olshtain (1983) also appeared in the subjects' responses. The researchers concluded that those new apology strategies are culture-specific acts that are deeply rooted in the Jordanian society.

From the mentioned studies, most of the studies on speech acts of apology in the Jordanian context have been carried out to find out the similarities and differences of apology strategies produced by Jordanian EFL students in one hand, and American or English language on the other hand. Most of those studies have mostly investigated apology based on western perspectives. They have explored apology based on the background of the western socio-cultural system, which may vary across different cultural contexts (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2008). Moreover, the majority of apology studies have been carried out through either DCT or interview, while the data in the current study are collected through ethnographic observation and semi-structured interviews.

Therefore the current study is an attempt to highlight the following issues:

1. It casts light on the Jordanians' comprehension and production of apology speech act in nonstandard Arabic language (a non-western language).
2. It illustrates the relationship between expressing apology and contextual factors (social distance, social power, and severity of offence).

## METHODOLOGY

This section includes a description of the methodology of study used by the researchers in order to explore the use of the speech act of apology in Jordanian non-standard Arabic language. It also gives a description of the society and the sample of the study. The tool used in collecting data is also identified briefly.

## INSTRUMENTATIONS

Previous researches into apology speech act in the Jordanian context have mostly been based on the data elicited through DCT or interviews (e.g., Al-Adaileh, 2007; Bataineh, 2006; Banikalef & Marlyna, 2013a; Hussein & Hammouri, 1998; Bataineh, 2008). This means that most of these studies elicit unnatural data because what people would write or say in the imaginary situation is not necessarily what they actually say in real situations (Nurani, 2009).

DCT is a written questionnaire requires respondents to read a description of a situation (designed to show varying settings and roles, with varying degrees of social power, social distances, and severity of offence) then asks the respondents to write what they would say next in the situation (Banikalef & Marlyna 2013a). Although DCT has been widely used in speech act studies, it is severely criticized by some linguists.

Golato (2003) claims that DCT does not accurately represent the way speakers use language and calls for the use of natural data as the basis for examining sociopragmatic aspects of speech acts. However, natural data is hardly elicited particularly when the target form of speech does not occur frequently in natural situations (Ishihara, 2006). One solution proposed is to use ethnographic observation because it reflects spontaneous and naturally-occurring form of discourse in natural settings, and although it is time-consuming and difficult, it may give insights on how interlocutors apologize in natural communication (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989; Hymes, 2003; Trosborg, 1994).

However, Patton (2002, p. 341) suggests that observation is not enough because "we cannot observe feelings, thought, intentions, and behavior". He adds that "we have to ask people question about those things". Therefore semi-structured interview is also employed in the current study. A combination of methods was used to reduce the limitation and disadvantage of using the ethnographic observation in this study. The interviews were based on four questions. They were used to assess the Jordanian students' perceptions regarding speech act of apology. The following are the interview questions:

1. What is your view about the significance of apology?
2. Do you vary apology patterns to match hearers' social status that are higher, equal or lower status? Why?
3. Do you vary apology patterns to match hearers' social distance that are close, neutral, or far social distance? Why?
4. Do you use different apology patterns following the situation whether it is severe or not severe? Why?

## DATA COLLECTION

The current study is based on a corpus of 1100 apology utterances, in spoken non-standard Jordanian Arabic, collected through an ethnographic approach to observation, with the data written down rather than recorded. This method was used successfully by other researchers such as Cohen (1996) , as well as Holmes (1990). The data were produced by 1890 speakers of different ages in 2014.

The data were collected until they reached a point of saturation. However, collecting apologies in natural sitting is time-consuming and there is a risk that enough samples may not be collected during a specific period of time. Therefore, the researchers took a decision to ask the help of some assistants in data collection. It was made sure that those assistants were familiar with the research's objectives to follow the data collection procedures exactly.

Four volunteers, with a master's degree in linguistic and a bachelor's degree in literature, helped with data collection. They were instructed in advance. The researchers gave them a brief that they were going to explore how Jordanians speakers apologize in real-life situations and, more specifically, what utterances, expressions or strategies they use to

apologize. For instance, what would they say when they want to apologize for forgetting a meeting, for insulting a friend, for breaking a promise, or for forgetting doing a homework?

Then, they were asked to write down the discussions containing common apology expressions or strategies in Jordanian Arabic in forms prepared in Advance. These forms comprised three parts including, demographic data about speakers (such as gender, age and occupation), contextual information (such as setting, the nature of violation triggering the apology, and the known or perceived social relationship between the interlocutors), and the exact expressions of the actual dialogues (refer to Appendix). The onlookers were advised to note down the exact lexemes used in the apology exchanges spontaneously, and avoid deriving apologies.

The researchers and the observers were taking notes of apology instances in real-life settings like street, home, workplace, shopping centers, university, and even on the public transportation in the northern part of Jordan. It should be noted that the data was collected daily until a saturation point is reached (seven months). Data saturation occurs when any further data gathering yields no new valuable information. The researchers and their assistants were acting as both observers and participant observers in apology interactions.

It should be noted that the researchers and the team of observers had to wait until apologies were made then note them down. This means that it was not predictable how many apologies were produced during a specific period of time. Thus, data collection was conducted using convenience sampling. With this method, participants are selected on the basis of their availability and willingness to respond (Levy & Lemeshow, 2013).

#### CODING SCHEME AND DATA ANALYSIS

Samples of naturally occurring apologies were encoded using a modified version of the apology strategy typology outlined by Olshtain (1989) and Cohen (1996), and then modified by Banikalef and Marlyna (2013b). The modification was made to capture the production of apology among EFL postgraduate Jordanian students. Three strategies were added into Olshtain (1989) and Cohen (1996) original framework, namely, arrogance and ignorance, blame something else, and swearing. In line with Banikalef and Marlyna (2013b), the researchers have assigned a code to each strategy. All strategies were coded from A1 to I. The apology strategies and their codes are shown in Table 1:

TABLE 1. Apology Strategies and Their Codes

Code	Strategy	Examples
A. Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID)		
A1	An offer of apology	I apologize, <i>Ana Atazer</i>
A2	An expression of regret	I am sorry, <i>Ana Asef, Mutasef</i>
A3	A request for forgiveness	Please forgive me, <i>Afwi</i>
B. Explanation or account		
I am sorry for this lateness, I stuck in terrible traffic jam, <i>Ana Asef, kan hunak Azmet sear ze Al seft</i>		
C. An acknowledgement of responsibility		
C1	Explicit self-blame	It is my fault, <i>Al hag Ali</i>
C2	Lack of intent	it was intentionally, <i>Mesh Qasdi</i>
C3	Expression of self-deficiency	I was blind, <i>Wallah alwahed Mn'mi</i>
C4	Expression of embarrassment	I do not know what I want to say, <i>Ana mesh 'arefsho badi ahki</i>
C5	Self- dispraise	I'm such a dimwit brother!, <i>Ana mnahabel ya zalameh</i>
C6	Justifying the hearer	you have the right to be angry, <i>Haqek tez'l</i>
C7.1	Denial of responsibility	it is not my guilt, <i>Mesh zanbi</i>
C7.2	Blame the hearer	it is your fault, <i>Wallah hza muskeltik</i>
C7.3	Pretend to be offended	you have to say sorry for me, <i>anta لازم t'tzrli</i>

D. Concern for the hearer	the most important thang is your health, <i>Ahm she sahtek</i>
E. Offer of repair	by God , By my honor, I will take you when I am free, <i>Wallah Bsharafi Lma Afza rah Akhdek</i>
Strategies were added by Banikalef & Marlyna (2013b)	
F. Arrogance and ignorance	My speech is not with you , where is the manager, <i>Kalami mesh ma'k , wean al mudear</i>
G. Blame something else	Could you forgive me bro, I had headache, <i>M'e suda Mesh Qader</i>
H. Swearing	By my honor I forget it, <i>wa bsharafi ani enseat</i>

To establish reliability, two independent raters were invited to code all the apology strategies. To ensure that the raters have expertise in the focused discipline, two PhD candidates in Applied Linguistics were chosen. Both of them are Jordanian native speakers of Arabic and they have significant experience in the analysis of speech acts coding scheme. The researchers provided the raters with the classifications of apology strategies modified by Banikalef and Marlyna (2013b). The raters first worked independently then as a group to match the apology utterances used in the current study in light of the strategies identified by the researchers. There were some differences found in the coding scheme between both raters, therefore a discussion was conducted and further adjustments were made, based on consensus.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Before considering the frequency of apology strategies in Jordanian speech community, as the main concern of the current study, it is important to give a short account of what people were apologizing for, to who and to whom these apologies were given. Apology in this study can be seen as an act that expresses emotional state in order to re-establish social harmony after a real or virtual offence. This act tries to prevent the worst possible interpretation of events from being made. According to Norrick (1978) apologies often serve several social functions such as "to evince good manners, to assuage the addressee's wrath, or simply to get off the hook and be on one's way" (1978, p. 280). However, in order to know how a communicative function is realized in Jordanian community, it is important to understand how the function is defined in this community. Unfortunately, the previous apology studies in Jordanian context have taken it for granted that the definition of apology and the situations that obligate an apology in Jordanian Arabic language are the same as in western languages. Thus, this area needs to be examined thoroughly in future studies.

Therefore, the current study examines only the form of apologies and their function may be explored in future research studies. It only attempts to give a general view of what Jordanians were apologizing for in the corpus according to Holmes' (1990) framework. Holmes (1990) categorized the offences lead to apologies into six categories. Table 2 shows the occurrence of the offence types which appeared in the corpus.

TABLE 2. Offence types detected in the corpus

Offence types	NO.	%
Inconvenience (e.g. failing to provide adequate service)	205	28.8
Space: infringements on another's personal space (e.g., walking too close to another person)	190	26.6
Possessions (e.g. damage or loss to the addressee's properties)	110	15.4
Talk (e.g. intrusion on the addressee' talk)	98	13.7
Time (e.g. arriving late for an appointment)	100	14
Social gaffe (e.g. breaking a social etiquette rule)	10	1.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>713</b>	<b>100</b>

As displayed in table 2, 55.4% of the apologies in the corpus were made because of committing offences related to inconvenience and space while the fewest apologies were performed by social gaffe offences. Additionally, further analysis of the data showed that 55% of apologies were performed between strangers or unfamiliar people, 25% between close friends, and 20% between acquaintances. Moreover, 55% of apologies were performed by those with less power, 34 were exchanged among equals, and 11% were made by speakers of a higher status.

### APOLOGY STRATEGIES

New sub-strategies emerged from the data analysis, namely, requiring the offended not to get angry, reassuring the hearer, blaming something out of control (determinism), and trivializing the severity of the offence. Those new sub-strategies were not considered in either Olshtain (1989) and Cohen's (1996) model or Banikalef and Marlyna's (2013) work.

Within the 1100 apology utterances analyzed in the current study, 2259 cases of strategy use were found because in most situations two or more different sub-strategies of explicit expression of apology (A1, A2, A3) and accept of responsibility (C1, C2, C3, C4, C5, C6) were used, each was taken as single occurrence. In addition, in many situations a combination of several apology strategies was employed. Table 3 shows the frequency of different apology strategies in the corpus.

TABLE 3. Apology Strategies and frequency

Code	Strategy	No.	%
	<b>IFID</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>10.4%</b>
A1	An offer of apology	75	3.3%
A2	An expression of regret	140	6.2%
A3	A request for forgiveness	21	0.9%
B	Explanation or account	350	15.5%
<b>C</b>	<b>Acknowledging responsibility</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>16.9%</b>
C1	Explicit self-blame	127	5.6%
C2	Lack of intent	51	2.3%
C3	Expression of self-deficiency	96	4.2%
C4	Expression of embarrassment	3	0.1%
C5	Self-dispraise	12	0.5%
C6	Justifying the hearer	93	4.1%
D	Concern for the hearer	36	1.6%
E	Promise of forbearance	36	1.6%
F	Offer of repair	198	8.8%
G	Swearing	365	16.2%
H	Reassuring the hearer	21	0.9%
I	requiring the offended not to get angry	39	1.7%
<b>J</b>	<b>Non-apology strategies</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>26.4%</b>
J.1	Denial of responsibility	3	0.1%
J.2	Blame the hearer	57	2.5%
J.3	Pretend to be offended	30	1.3%
J.4	Arrogance and ignorance	73	3.2%
J.5	Trivialize the severity of the offence	220	9.7%
J.6	Determinism	150	6.6%
J.7	Blame something else	63	2.8%
<b>Total</b>		<b>2259</b>	<b>100</b>



As shown in table 3, strategy (C) with 382 times of occurrences was the most common strategy in the corpus (16.9%). By accepting responsibility, the speaker admits his responsibility for the offence. Taking on responsibility was achieved very often via the expression of explicit self-blame (5.6 %%).

The results are in line with Vollmer and Olshtain (1989), who also found that acknowledgement of responsibility as the most frequent strategy. In another study, Olshtain (1989) found IFID and acknowledgement of responsibility as the most common strategies in Canadian, Hebrew, French and Australian English. Shariati and Chamani (2010) also reported IFID as the most frequent strategy in Persian. It seems that speakers of different culture adhere to different pragmatic norms and therefore, perform various speech acts differently. Here forth, the most frequent apology strategies are discussed in details in the next sub-section, one by one.

#### ACKNOWLEDGING RESPONSIBILITY (C)

This strategy is used when the wrongdoer admits his or her responsibility for the offence. In all the apology exchanges examined in the current study, there was at least one C strategy per situation. Although the Jordanian speakers of Arabic used (C) strategies in general, particularly the expression of explicit self-blame (5.6%) “It is my fault (*Al hag Ali*) in their remedial responses, these strategies did not occur alone. The findings showed that the wrongdoers always attempt to set things right, in one sense, by swearing (16.2%), or by explaining the act of offence (15.5%). It was noted that this strategy (C) occurs most frequently between equal friends, as shown in the following example:

*"hag Ali ....bis lazem t'zrni lanh...er... wallah kunt masghoul"*

(It is my fault but you know by God I was so busy)

#### SWEARING

The third most frequently used strategy is a swearing strategy with 18.26% of the total strategies used. Swearing in Arabic context is a common routine feature that often takes place in most types of speech act (Al-Adaileh, 2007). Most substrategies occurred in combination with swear words. In other words, swearing was used as a device to intensify apology. Thus, swearing has a genuine power to confirm the truth among interlocutors. Although Muslims are commanded to swear by God through saying “*Wallah al atheem*” (Allah is the Great), the findings showed different formulas of swearing were employed, such as, swearing by the family members -especially the dead, the life or honor of close relatives (e.g. sister and mother), or to swear by body parts such as the moustache, eyes, and soul. In order to be honest in apologizing, Jordanians tend to prelude their apologies with swearing formula, consider the following examples:

· *Ya zalamh..... Wa bsharafî ani enseat. (O' man by my honor I forget it)*

· *ya sadegi Wallah ma.....er..... kent mrakz” (O' my friend, By god, I was distracted)*

#### ILLOCUTIONARY FORCE INDICATING DEVICE (IFIDS)

Unlike previous similar studies in which IFID was the most commonly used strategy in different languages such as Persian (Shariati & Chamani, 2010; Chamani & Zareipur, 2010); Russian (Ogiermann, 2008); American English (Banikalef & Marlyna, 2013a), Romanian (Demeter, 2006); Norwegian (Awedyk, 2011), and Hebrew (Olshtain, 1989), the current study found that this strategy is the fourth most frequently used strategy with 10.4% of the total strategies used. This may be because Jordanians think that doing explicit apologies (e.g. IFIDs) will make them 'lose face'. More Jordanians prefer to use implicit apology strategies

(e.g. B '15.5%', C '16.9%', F '8.8%', H '0.9%', and I '1.7%' strategies) rather direct way of apology making to save the face of their own as well as that of others. Avoiding direct apology could be due to the apprehension of the speaker from being interpreted by the hearer as a sign of weakness. This is in line with Wierzbicka's (1985) claim that different preferences in the use of apology strategies appear to be deeply rooted in different cultural norms and orientations.

Moreover, further analysis of the corpus revealed that Jordanians inclined to express their apologies more frequently via expression of regret (6.2%) rather than through offer of apology (3.3%) and request for forgiveness (0.9%). This could be because the use of the Arabic performative verb apologize (*ana a'tzer*) is considered as a formal way of apologizing, and commonly used in a high variety of spoken and written Arabic, or to the great possibility of expressing negative emotion (such as a sense of losing one's face) through using request for forgiveness.

#### NON-APOLOGY STRATEGIES (J)

The findings indicate that Jordanians used high percentages of non-apology strategies (26.4%). Non-apology strategy is a speech mechanism that the wrongdoers use to avoid taking responsibility for the offence and apologizing for it. Jordanians applied a wide range of non-apology strategies. As table 3 shows, seven types of non-apology strategies were found in the corpus, three of which, e.g., denial of responsibility (0.1%), blame the hearer (2.5%), pretend to be offended (1.3%), fit into the sub-categories specified by Olshtain and Cohen (1983). Another two non-apology strategies, namely, arrogance and ignorance (3.2%), and blaming something else (2.8%), were added later by Banikalef and Marlyna (2013b). Furthermore, expressions of determinism (6.6%) and trivializing the severity of the offence (9.7%) were used routinely in combination with other strategies (e.g., B & D) in Jordanian Arabic. It is worth noting that these new and additional non-apology strategies were not considered either in Olshtain and Cohen's (1983) model or Banikalef and Marlyna's (2013b) work. This point can be clarified by the classic debate that language and culture can never be detached. Language has been depicted as the heart in the body of culture. The pioneers of linguistic relativity hypothesis like Benjamin Lee Whorf and Edward Sapir suggested that different languages present different ways of realizing the world. Each language has its own view of the realities of life, and reflects the social organization and the realization of the world of its members in a way that varies. See the following examples for each strategy:

- Denial of responsibility

*"entah z'lan ali leash .....er.....Al sar ma eli 'laqh beeh"* why are you upset with me, I did not nothing bad to you)

- Blame the hearer

*"Bt'refenh ana 'tban 'leak kteer..... ana eli haqi az'l mesh entah"*

(The fact that I am blaming you tremendously since I am the who has the right to be angry not you)

- Pretend to be offended

*"Entah lazem t'tazer mesh ana enth btht' halek bmwaqef baekhh"*

(You are the one who has to say sorry not me because you always put yourself in silly situations)

- Arrogance and ignorance: this strategy is resorted to when the speaker responds directly without any consideration for the hearer's face. The act of apologizing needs an utterance or action which aimed to 'set things right'. However, in some cases the speaker who has performed the offence may not find himself guilty, hence, he may not feel the need to apologize and, as a result, the speaker may deliberately damage

hearer's face (degrade hearer's face) (Banikalef & Marlyna, 2013b). It has been noted that this strategy was mostly performed by speakers of a higher status. Consider the following example:

"Hel 'ani, ana mushgoul" (Get out of my business, I am busy)

- Trivialize the severity of the offence

"Laweesh enta m'aseb, Ma sar shi ya bn al halal" (why are you angry? no need to be angry, nothing serious happened)

- Determinism: It is used to remind the offended that the offence is out of anyone's control. Since God is the only one who has full mastery of harms and benefits, all events occur inevitably. Notably, this is deeply rooted in the fact that Muslims completely believe in predestination or that every single event is fated to take place. Belief in Allah's supremacy, knowledge and control of all things is one of the six articles of faith in Islam. For the lack of words, the researchers used determinism to refer to 'Qader' in Arabic, nearly translated as Divine.

*Yallah Allh behwen kulshi Naseab* (May Allah Make it easy to you everything is fate and destiny)

- Blame something else: This strategy is an attempt to reduce the wrongdoer's responsibility for the act. Thus, when a wrongdoer uses 'blaming' strategy he admits to committing the offence but denies responsibility by placing blame on others such as traffic jam, sickness, work, Satan, or sleeping:

"Ya sahib ..... Allah yl'n alshetan ali khlani ansa, mnaseq marah Taneah"

(Oh dear friend, damn Satan who made me forget the appointment, we manage it later ok?).

To conclude, Jordanians applied a wide range of apology strategies to meet speakers and hearers' needs. The use of the new strategies partly accounts for the low percentage of apology in Jordanian context. Meanwhile, it exposes the complexity of apology strategies used by Jordanians. Similarly, according to Trosborg (1995), such strategies are evasive responses which are directly related to the strategies, in which the apologizer fails to take full responsibility for his offensive act. Meanwhile, the findings revealed that the apologizer did not deny responsibility literally, or rather, he or she attempted to minimize the degree of offence, either by blaming something else or, by swearing. Using evasive apology strategies therefore, is a linguistic option preferred to trace the politeness principles of any culture, and to achieve the goal of successful communication in general, or to set things right, in particular. In short, these strategies are culture-specific as has been approved by researchers such as Grice (1975), Leech (1983), and Brown and Levinson (1987).

#### **JORDANIANS' PERCEPTION REGARDING EXPRESSING APOLOGY**

The following part will present the Jordanians' opinions regarding issues of the significance of apology, varying apology patterns to match hearers' social status that are higher, equal or lower status, varying apology patterns to match hearers' social distance that are close, neutral or far social distance; and the use of apology patterns according to situation that it severs or not severe. The interviews data was collected through semi-structured interview from 70 Jordanian volunteers, audio taped and transcribed. Those interviewees were chosen using convenience sampling. They consisted mostly of Jordanian teachers, undergraduate students, storeowners, housewives, nurses, and community members. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in Jordanian stores, restaurants, school, universities, lunches and dinners. A qualitative analysis is important for the deep understanding of the different choices that the Jordanian speakers made in each apology, and thus, giving supports to the natural-occurring data.

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF APOLOGIZING

All the interviewees had the same view concerning the significance of apology in that it is a main device to keep good relations among people. People who have been hurt or degraded often hope for an apology. They may hope that an apology from wrongdoer will restore dignity, trust, and a sense of justice. It is important to realize that a sincere apology can mend a relationship and restore social harmony. See the following example:

"Apology is essential [...] because it keeps good ties with other people. It is important to apologize for an offence and justify that offence. For sure apology is so important to keep the relation between people better than without apologizing. If you do not apologize you will lose the people around you"

#### USING DIFFERENT APOLOGY PATTERNS TO MATCH A HEARER'S SOCIAL STATUS

The Jordanians pay more attention to vary their apology strategies to match the hearer's social status. They varied their apology strategies according to their perspective about the hearer's social status, whether the hearer is of higher or of lower social status. As expected, when interviewed, all of them agreed that the social status of hearer is important in determining the patterns of utterances of speech act in their daily life interaction. The following is an example of comments from the participants which reflect their views about the importance of hearer's social status and their choices for the apology strategies.

"Yes sure and it is important, to use different apology patterns to cope with hearers' social status... errr... People who are considered as having higher status in our society will get an extremely formal pattern of apology. rrr also [it is important to do that, as we have you know long distance between formal and informal so we need to save our face if you know what I mean as they have the power and the authority ... If I am apologizing to my friend for example am telling an example, I will use simple form ... errr ...Yes indeed, and actually I think those who are in lower status are received apology with a lesser degree of formality"

#### APPLYING DIFFERENT APOLOGY STRATEGIES TO MATCH A HEARER'S SOCIAL DISTANCE

All the participants agreed that apology strategies have to be varied according to the social distance between the interlocutors, as one of the participants put it as "more familiarity between interlocutors' needs utterances less formality." The following example was taken from the interview responses.

"Usually apologize to everyone but of course I apply different apology forms according to the hearer social distance actually if he is my friend, he will receive simple patterns of apology I mean However, for foreigners, I will use you know somewhat polite and formal apology patterns with them and the reason is that when I am talking to my close friend no need to him you know I am very very sorry for mistake no I will not tell him like that, just I will tell him sorry and he knows me right, but for the foreigner is different because I do not know him, he does not know me so I have to be more polite than in my speech"

#### APPLYING DIFFERENT APOLOGY STRATEGIES TO MATCH THE SEVERITY OF THE SITUATION

All the participants agreed that in cases of more severe offence, there is a need to use more apology strategies to mitigate the offensive act. They supported the use of explicit apology strategies combined with other strategies such as offer of repair strategy or explaining the offence.

"Yes, I absolutely I use different patterns of apology for severe and nonsevere offences. For simple offence I always just use "hagk Ali" (it is my fault) [... ..] on the other hand I use intensifiers such as I am "very" or "so" .... With explicit expression of apology to show more concern for a severe offence and I try to explain the reason of this offence"

In conclusion, this section highlights the results of the interview data regarding the participants' view about using apology strategies. As expected, the importance of apology is to mitigate offensive acts and keep social harmony between interlocutors. All the interviewees also agreed that they varied their apology strategies according to different sociolinguistic factors. Moreover, Jordanian speakers feel that there is no need to express explicit apology to their children. This phenomenon might be due to the fact that parents regarded themselves as senior to children in the Jordanian culture. So, any apology utterances from a parent to a child would be outside the norms of Jordanian culture. This tendency also prevails among intimates or close friends; Jordanians usually do not find it a necessity to say "Sorry," or not to take responsibility for "simple matters."

### **LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH, AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS**

As mentioned earlier, the current study was based on a corpus of naturally-occurring apology data collected through written ethnographic observation. Definitely, it would be advantageous if the data were tape-recorded since in this way prosodic features of speech sounds, as a significant aspect of apology interaction, would be available. However, even without this data, the study offers a valuable source of information on the apology strategies and their semantic forms in the Jordanian speech community.

This study observes the form, frequency, contextual factors of apology strategies in Jordanian Arabic. To reach more definite conclusions about apology realizations in Jordanian Arabic, the findings of this research need to be supported by further research. It also highlighted only the influence of contextual factors (social status, social distance, and the severity of offence) on the choice of apology strategies, other variables like gender, age and the rank of the imposition seem to be good topics for further research. The study makes the following recommendations for future research:

1. Examining the apology responses as one aspect of apologies.
2. The current study highlighted only the production of the apology speech act, it might be interesting to examine the hearer's reaction whether s/he accepts the apology or not.

However, the findings may be useful to the learners of Jordanian Arabic who need to know the popular strategies of apology as well as the situations in which these strategies may be used to communicate effectively and appropriately in Jordanian Arabic. Furthermore, the findings of this study may be contrasted and compared with that of similar research on other languages with the aim of finding similarities and differences in the realization of apologies among different speech communities in order to help Jordanian learners to be cautious about inappropriate transferring of these norms to target language, which may lead to different consequences for the interaction, including communication breakdown

### **CONCLUSION**

The current study was aimed at examining and describing apology strategies in spoken Jordanian Arabic, based on a corpus of 2259 apology exchanges. The findings revealed that Jordanian speakers apologized through a wide range of apology strategies ranging from

taking responsibility to completely denying the responsibility. The latter is also known as the non-apology strategies, which include denial of responsibility, blame the hearer, pretend to be offended, arrogance and ignorance, trivialize the severity of the offence, determinism, and blame something else. According to researchers such as Grice (1975), Leech (1983), and Brown and Levinson (1978/1987), these non-apology strategies are culture-specific patterns of social interaction, in other words, they are not language-universal. Hence, in this case, the strategies represent uniqueness in Jordanian apologies.

To summarize this paper, the initial attempt to examine the realization of naturally occurring speech act of apology among Jordanian Arabic speakers revealed many interesting patterns. Most of all is the balance between what is universal and what is culture-specific. On the one hand, there are patterns that confirm on the universality of apology strategies as highlighted by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989), Austin (1962), Searle (1969), Olshtain (1989) among others; and on the other hand, it supports the culture-specific aspect of language (Banikalef & Marlyna, 2013a; Farashaiyan & Hua, 2012; Thijittang, 2010; Al-Adaileh, 2007). The findings likewise correspond to Zhao and Throssell's (2011) claim that different cultures may contain utterances that are particular to the speech community to carry out some particular acts of speech. Therefore, findings of the analyses provide insights into the cultural norms and pragmatic rules of Jordanian speech community.

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## APPENDIX

### Data Collection Form

1. Characteristics of the person who is apoloizing:  
Age:      Gender:      Degree:      Occupation:
  
2. The relationship between the interlocuters:
  
3. The place in which apology takes place:
  
4. The reason of apologizing:-----  
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5. The exact words of apology exchanges:-----  
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