Variation in Apology Strategies Among Friends and Acquaintances in Jordanian Arabic

by

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Abstract

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The present study is planned to investigate the apology strategies which are invested by Jordanian friends and acquainted interlocutors in repairing promise violations, verbal and physical insults, and in turning down invitation offences that usually occur in the Jordanian society.

The study falls into four parts:

Part one provides a brief account about the act of apologizing from different perspectives, each of which has a considerable amount of credibility on its side. From the speech act theory perspective (Austin 1962; Searle 1969), the act of apologizing could materialise by issuing locutions, i.e. utterances that have illocutionary force indicating apologizing (i.e. explicit apology) or via employing equivalent locutions implicitly performing apologizing. In addition, in light of the Gricean cooperative principle, apology implies the participant's politeness and his awareness of the social norms which in turn would guarantee restoration of relationships and social tranquillity (Leech 1983; Levinson 1983). Here, the importance of an apology does not lie in its compensatory value but rather in its strength to restore harmony. Further, 'face-preservation' concept
is widely believed to underly the act of apologizing (Goffman 1967, Brown and Levinson 1987). To this effect, apology is interpreted as a negative polite strategy that is substantially utilised by the speaker for maintaining face. On the one hand, the offended has the right to claim compensation. On the other hand, the offender has the obligation to provide adequate compensations. Thus, apologies are universally accepted to have a redressive power.

Part two presents a statement of the problem, purpose, design and limitations of the study. The research community of the study comprises eighty Jordanians living in Irbid region. The informants are divided into two groups according to sex: males (group A) and females (group B). Each group is in turn divided into two age-groups: those who are above forty years old (group A1 and B1) and those under forty years old (group A2 and B2).

To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher adopts the questionnaire technique. The questionnaire falls into two sections. In the first section, the informants are asked to supply demographic information, such as sex, age and educational level. The second section comprises three stereotype offences under which three prototype offences are listed (see the appendix).

Part three is data analysis and discussion. The collected data were intuitively classified into seven apology strategies. Each strategy was represented by the most frequently occurring expression that was recorded by the subjects in response to every single prototype offence (tables: 1,3,5). The apology strategies are arranged in special tables according to their frequency for analysis purposes.
Part four is summary, conclusions and recommendations. The researcher has found that variation in the frequency and distribution of the apology strategies opted for by Jordanians can be successfully accounted for in terms of differences in the sex and age of friends and acquaintances in the Jordanian community when they apologise for promise violations, verbal and physical offences and turning down invitation faults. Besides, Jordanian female participants appear to employ implicit apology devices more often than males do in apologizing for the same offences. This may entail that females in our society tend to be more tactful than males in apologizing for the offences in question.