SPEECH ACT OF APOLOGY AS USED BY IRAQI EFL LEARNERS

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0. Introduction

Apologizing is considered to be one of the highly complex speech acts as it differs cross-culturally and very often prone to misunderstandings. This study represents an attempt at investigating the act of apologizing using subjects from two different proficiency levels of English to find out if there are any similarities and differences between these groups and if they come close to native speaker norms in using the speech act of apology. Twenty subjects in intermediate level, twenty subjects in advanced level and five native speakers of English participate in this study. Discourse Completion Test is utilized to gather the data that is composed of eight apology situations. All responses are categorized according to Cohen and Olshtain's (1981) apology speech act set in the analysis of the data. The results of the study indicate some similarities and differences between the two groups. Their first language (L1) can be said to have an influence on their use of apologies because intermediate level subjects transfer native Arabic speaker norms into English.

In his work in (1972), Hymes asserts that knowledge of linguistic rules is supported by the competence of using the language appropriately in situations. Native speakers of a language, while acquiring the language, also acquire the knowledge of rules and choose among the speech acts when communicating with others. Hymes (Ibid.) shows that communicative competence involves not only rules of the language but also abstract knowledge about social and functional rules of language. However, the situation is different when people learn a second/foreign language since speech acts have been accepted as one of the troublesome points in learning a second/foreign language (Schmidt and Richards 1980). It has been claimed that second/foreign language learners face problems in using speech acts as their usage requires socio-pragmatic competence. Although speech acts are universal and can be found nearly in all languages, their usage differs according to the culture of the community. Cross-cultural studies of speech acts have shown that second language (L2) learners face problems in using speech acts when they communicate with native speakers of the target language (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984; Cohen and Olshtain, 1993).

1. Aims of The Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the act of apologizing with subjects from different levels of English proficiency in order to find out whether there are similarities and differences between their usage of apologies and whether they approach native speaker norms in using apologies.

The study tries to answer questions like; What are the formulas used by intermediate and advanced level subjects in apology situations? Are there any similarities and differences between their use of apologies? Do they approach native speaker norms in using apologies?

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Communicative Competence

Pragmatic speech acts such as requests, apologies, compliments and suggestions are significant components of communicative competence. Therefore, learners to be communicatively competent in a second or foreign language demand not only to promote their grammatical knowledge but also to improve their pragmatic competence. Communicative competence includes knowledge of the grammar, vocabulary of the language, rules of speaking, knowing how to use and respond to different types of speech acts and knowing how to use language appropriately (Richards et al,1985). Hymes (1972) views language behavior in terms of its appropriateness and correctness. Many researchers have agreed that

communicative competence should be the goal of L2 teaching and communicative competence of learners should include the ability of how language is used in social contexts to perform communicative functions, and knowledge of how utterances and communicative functions can be combined according to the principles of discourse (Canale and Swain, 1980).

Four components of communicative competence are identified by Canale and Swain (Ibid.), viz, grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence and strategic competence. Sociolinguistic competence includes appropriateness of meaning and appropriateness of form and for nonnative speakers every situation is potentially unfamiliar because of unknown sociolinguistic conventions. Being a part of sociolinguistic competence, socio-pragmatic competence in a language includes not only linguistic and lexical knowledge but also knowing how to adopt different speech act strategies according to the situational or social variables in communication.

2.2 Speech Acts

Speech act theory is concerned with uses of language and speech acts can be defined as *the basic unit of communication* which are considered as part of linguistic competence. Schmidt and Richards (1980) propose that speech acts are *all the acts we perform through speaking, all the things we do when we speak* and the interpretation and negotiation of speech acts are dependent on the discourse or context. Searle
(1969) states that there are a series of analytic connections between the notion of speech acts, what the speaker means, what the sentence uttered means, what the speaker intends, what the hearer understands, and what the rules governing the linguistic elements are. Speech act theory has gained importance with Austin (1975) and Searle (1969, 1976) who have made a distinction between what is actually said (locution), what is intended by what is said (illocution) and what is done by what is said (perlocution). According to Brown & Levinson (1987) the locutionary aspect has to do with "the utterance of a sentence with determinate sense and reference", the illocutionary aspect with 'the naming of a statement, offer, promise in uttering a sentence, by virtue of the conventional force associated with it', whereas the perlocutionary aspect deals with 'the bringing about of effects on the audience by means of uttering the sentence, such effects being special to the circumstances of utterance'. The illocutionary force has been the concern of researchers who are interested in speech acts. Searle (1976) classifies speech acts with illocutionary aspect into some basic types such as representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations.

Speech acts, according to Searle (Ibid.), have also been classified as direct and indirect speech acts. One speech act is brought about indirectly by performing another one in indirect speech acts and their interpretation changes according to the situation, the manner of speaking and to whom people speak. Fraser (1981) claims that indirect speech acts with illocutionary force are same across languages but their distribution, function and frequency of occurrence may show differences. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) add that there are inter-cultural, cross-cultural and individual differences in using speech acts. According to Cohen and Olshtain (1993), second language learners have disadvantages in using speech acts to communicate with native speakers of the target language because of the complexity of speech acts since they are conditioned by social, cultural, situational and personal factors. Second language learners generally try to apply the rules they use in their first language when they speak in the second language. Thus, the result is communication breakdown or communication conflict.

2.3 Interlanguage Pragmatics

Richards et al (1985) define interlanguage as the type of language produced by second and foreign language learners who are in the process of learning a language. For Ellis (1985) interlanguage is *the systematic knowledge of language which is independent of both the learner's L1 and L2 system*. Interlanguage studies were generally carried out to see grammatical development of L2 learners. However, by the emergence of communicative competence approach, interlanguage studies gave emphasis to the interactional and

communicative dynamics of L2 performance. So, the term 'interlanguage pragmatics' came into existence. According to Kasper & Blum-Kulka (1993, cited in Tunçel, 1999:39) interlanguage pragmatics is *the study of nonnative speakers' use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns in a second language* and it places an emphasis on the pragmatic study that focuses on people's comprehension and production of linguistic action in context. L2 learners transfer L1 speech act rules into L2, so they engage in pragma-linguistic failure or their different perceptions about correct linguistic behavior cause socio-pragmatic failure.

2. 4 Speech Act of Apologizing

When there is some behavior which has violated social norms, the act of apologizing is called for. When an action or utterance has resulted in the fact that one or more persons perceive themselves as offended, the culpable person needs to apologize. Here we, therefore, deal with two parties: an apologizer and an apologizee. However, only if the person who caused the infraction perceive himself or herself as an apologizer do we get the act of apologizing. Olshtain (1983:235) asserts that the act of apologizing requires an action or an utterance which is intended to "set things right".

According to Marquez-Reiter (2000: 44), an apology is a "compensatory action for an offense committed by the speaker which has affected the hearer. Bataineh & Bataineh (2006:1903) indicate that apologies fall under expressive speech acts in which speakers attempt to indicate their state or attitude. They add that in order for an apology to have an effect, it should reflect true feelings.

Searle (1979 cited in Olshtain, 1983, 235) certifies that a person who apologizes for doing A expresses regret at having done A so the apology act can take place only if the speaker believes that some act A has been performed prior to the time of speaking and that this act A resulted in an infraction which affected another person who is now deserving an apology.

Cross-culturally, apology speech acts have been investigated in order to find similarities and differences between the languages. The studies have generally been carried out in situations where learners learn the target language as their second language. The studies have shown that some learners employ language transfer from their L1, some learners approximate native speaker norms or some learners use completely different formulas different from the formulas they use in their L1 or L2.

Olshtain and Cohen (1993) carried out a study with 44 college subjects and comparing the use of apologies in Hebrew and English, they found that native speakers' apology forms are patterned and nonnative speakers deviate from native speaker norms because of transfer and lack of proficiency.

Olshtain (1983) carried out a study with 63 college subjects (12 native English speakers, 12 native Hebrew subjects, 12 Russian subjects and 13 English speakers learning Hebrew at Teacher's College in Jerusalem) to compare their apology usage. Depending on the results obtained from his study, he claimed that English speakers' data differed from native Hebrew data and they employed transfer. He used the categorization of Cohen and Olshtain (1981) such as:

1) An expression of apology (Illocutionary Force Indicating Device IFID)
a) An expression of regret: I'm sorry
b) An offer of apology: I apologize
c) A request for forgiveness: excuse me, forgive me
2) An offer of repair/redress (REPR): I'll pay for your damage
3) An explanation of an account (EXPL): I missed the bus
4) Acknowledging responsibility for the offense (RESP): It's my fault
5) A promise of forbearance (FORB): I'll never forget it again

In a study on requests and apologies with native speakers of Hebrew and learners of Hebrew, Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985), found that the learners of Hebrew approached native speaker norms when they had the same rules in their native languages and deviated from native speakers when they had language-specific rules. They also found that non-natives' choice of the formulas was affected by their length of stay in the target language community.

Erçetin (1995, cited in Tunçel 1999:49) carried out a study on the use of apologies by Turkish EFL learners and she claimed that EFL learners exhibited transfer from Turkish. Tunçel (1999) also carried out a study on the use of apologies and thanking with 129 EFL learners, 50 native American and British speakers and 44 native Turkish speakers. His findings suggested that EFL learners exhibited transfer in the use of apologies from their L1 in some situations (e.g. the situation in which a driver dents the side of someone else's car or the situation in which a classmate does not return a book on time). He found that Turkish EFL learners transferred some socio-cultural norms of Turkish into English in above mentioned situations like blaming the driver or a friend instead of apologizing. He adds that transfer of the rules of L1 can cause misunderstandings and failure in communication.

3. Methodology

The use of apologies was selected for this study since apology speech acts were found to reflect cultural values. It has also been suggested in literature that proficient learners use speech acts appropriately in communicating with native speakers of the target language. Thus, this study incorporates 20 subjects from one of the *intermediate level classes* and 20 subjects in *advanced level class*. The data gathered from these subjects were used to find similarities and differences between the groups. In order to find native speaker norms, the data gathered from 5 native speakers of English. The data were collected using a Discourse Completion Test which had 8 apology situations.

3.1 Subjects

The subjects of this study were *20 intermediate level EFL learners, 20 advanced level EFL learners and 5 native speakers of English* at Babylon iBT TOEFL Centre. The subjects in this centre had taken the Placement Test at the beginning of the course and had been placed into different classes according to their proficiency levels. Subjects who scored between 10-30 were accepted as intermediate level subjects and subjects who scored between 31-50 were accepted as advanced level subjects. One class of intermediate subjects and one class of advanced subjects served as the subjects of the study. Their ages ranged from 22-40.

Native speakers of English are the teachers in ETS. Their ages ranged from 26-50 and all of them have been in Iraq for more than two years. Although the number of native teachers was 5, it was thought that their answers to Discourse Completion Test could give an idea about native speaker usage of apologies.

3.2 Discourse Completion Test

The Discourse Completion Test (DCT) was taken from Cohen and Olshtain (1981). The original version of the test consisted of 14 apology situations and they had been pilot tested before the actual study. The reliability of the test was 75%. The test in this study consisted of 8 situations which were taken from Tunçel (1999: 57) and they started with a description of the situation. The subjects were wanted to write the first thing that came into their minds. The situations in this study were organized according to the severity of the offense and social status of the apologizer and apologizee (see Appendix A for the discourse completion test).

EFL subjects were also given a short background questionnaire to have an idea about their age, sex and if they had been abroad. Native English speakers also completed the background questionnaire, they wrote about their country of origin, age, sex and the duration of their residence in Iraq.

3. 3 Data Collection

EFL subjects were instructed to write the first thing that came into their minds regarding the situation they were in and the person they were interacting. DCT was applied to them in their usual class hours by their usual course teachers. In the analysis of the data, all responses were categorized according to Cohen and Olshtain's (1981) apology speech act set. According to their categorization, there were 5 main categories such as the following:

1) An expression of apology (Illocutionary Force Indicating Device IFID)

a. an expression of regret (e.g. I'm sorry)

b. an offer of apology (e.g. I apologize)

c. a request for forgiveness (e.g. excuse me, forgive me)

2) An offer of repair/redress (REPR) (e.g. I'll pay for your damage)
3) An explanation of an account (EXPL) (e.g. My daughter was ill, I took her to hospital)
4) Acknowledging responsibility for the offense (RESP) (e.g. It's my fault)
5) A promise of forbearance (FORB) (e.g. I'll never forget it again)

As Tunçel (Ibid.) states the above list did not cover all the responses of his subjects, so he added some other categories into the list such as:

6) Deny (denial of fault or offense) (e.g. I did not cause the accident. You parked your car on my way!)
7) Blame (putting blame on the hearer) (e.g. Why didn't you remind me?)
8) Health (asking the state of health) (e.g. Are you all right? I can take you to hospital)
9) Exclamation (EXL!) (expressing surprise) (e.g. Oh!)
10) Request (e.g. Can I use it for two days?)

The responses of 40 subjects and 5 native English speakers were counted and categorized according to the above criteria in the coding tables for each situation. The frequency and percentage of semantic formulas were calculated. In some situations, there were some combinations such as IFID+EXPL, REPR+RESP (see Appendix B for coding).

4. The Results

The aim of this study was, as it was stated in the previous chapters, to investigate the speech act realizations of EFL learners in situations which required apologies. The data were collected through a discourse completion test. The answers of the subjects were calculated and their frequencies were taken in order to make a comparison between the two groups.

4.1 Situations Analysis

Situation 1 was about meeting an old lady accidentally. As Table 1 reveals IFID+EXP and IFID+RESP were the most commonly used categories by the subjects in intermediate level whereas IFID+RESP category was mostly used by the subjects in advanced level (e.g. Sorry, it was my fault). When all the data are taken into account, subjects in advanced level preferred to use a wide variety of strategies, two subjects preferred IFID+RESP+HEALTH, three subjects preferred IFID+HEALTH+REPR and two subjects preferred IFID+EXP+REPR (I'm sorry, I'm very careless. I'll help you pick up your packages). In advanced level data, there were also individual preferences in IFID, IFID+EXPL, IFID+HEALTH, REPR+HEALTH, IFID+RESP, IFID+RESP+REPR and IFID+RESP+REPR+HEALTH categories.

In Table 1, it is seen that native English subjects mostly preferred IFID+HEALTH+REPR (three subjects) category. One subject employed a totally new category such as EXL!+IFID+REPR (e.g. Oh, dear. I'm really sorry about that. Is there anything I can do for you?).

Table 1. Frequency of the use of semantic formulas in situation 1.

Formulas	Intermediate Level Subjects		Advanced Level Subjects	
	N	%	N	%
IFID	1	5	1	5
REPR	1	5	0	0
EXPL	0	0	0	0
RESP	0	0	0	0
FORB	0	0	0	0
IFID + EXPL	6	30	1	5
IFID+HEALTH	0	0	1	5
REPR+HEALTH	0	0	1	5
RESP+HEALTH	1	5	0	0
IFID+RESP	2	10	1	5
IFID+REPR	6	30	6	30

IFID+RESP+HEALTH	0	0	2	10
IFID+RESP+REPR	0	0	1	5
IFID+HEALTH+RESP	1	5	3	15
IFID+EXPL+RESP	1	5	2	10
IFID+RESP+REPR+HEALTH	0	0	1	5
RMPTY	1	5	0	0
TOTAL	20	100	20	100

Situation 2 is about accidentally breaking a vase of a friend. Table 2 shows that the subjects in intermediate and advanced levels differed in their use of formulas. BLAME, IFID+REPR(20%) and IFID+EXPL+REPR (10%) categories were mostly employed by the subjects in intermediate level whereas IFID+EXPL (25%) and IFID+REPR (40%) were commonly used by the subjects in advanced group. REPR and IFID+REPR+RESP categories were employed by two subjects in advanced group. EXPL, FORB, IFID+EXPL, IFID+RESP, EXPL+REPR, IFID+REPR+RESP and EXCL+IFID+REPR categories were used by one subject in intermediate group. The use of IFID and combinations of IFID accounted for 70% of the data of intermediate group whereas it accounted for 30% of the data of advanced group.

Table 2. Frequency of the use of semantic formulas in situation 2.

Formulas	Intermediate Level Subjects		Advanced Level Subjects	
	N	%	N	%
IFID	1	5	1	5
REPR	2	10	2	10
EXPL	1	5	0	0
RESP	0	0	0	0
FORB	1	5	0	0
IFID + EXPL	1	5	5	25
BLAME	3	15	0	0
I FID + REPR	4	20	8	40
IFID+RESP	1	5	0	0
EXPL+REPR	3	5	0	0
IFID+EXPEL+RESP	1	15	1	5
IFID+REPR+RESP	1	5	2	10
IFID+REPR+FORB	0	0	1	5
EXCL+IFID+REPR	1	5	0	0
TOTAL	20	100	20	100

Situation 3 is about intermediate level subjects who preferred IFID (15%) and IFID+EXP (45%), BLAME (15%) and IFID+HEALTH(15%) mostly. Subjects in advanced group, on the other hand, preferred IFID+EXP (30%), IFID+HEALTH (15%) and IFID+EXPL+HEALTH (30%). It's interesting to note that three subjects used BLAME and one subject preferred IFID+BLAME categories which were not preferred by the subjects in advanced group. This can be because of the effect of Arabic. Since the situation was about accidently meeting a friend on the corner, four subjects in intermediate group put the blame on their friends such as "Why are you running so fast?"

In this study, two native English subjects preferred IFID+HEALTH, one subject preferred BLAME, one subject preferred IFID+EXPL+HEALTH and EXL!+IFID. It is difficult to generalize the results of native English subjects because their number is few. However, Tunçel's (1995) data can give some insights on native speaker usage. The data of his study revealed that native English speakers preferred IFID, IFID+EXPL, IFID+HEALTH, EXL!+IFID combinations. The data of this study reveals that the subjects approached native speaker norms in using IFID+EXPL and IFID+HEALTH categories. The subjects in advanced

group can be said to approach native speaker norms in terms of using EXL!+IFID+EXPL (5%) and IFID+EXPL+HEALTH (30%) categories.

Table 3. Frequency of the use of semantic formulas in situation 3.

Formulas	Intermediate Level Subjects		Advanced Level Subjects	
	N	%	N	%
IFID	3	15	1	5
REPR	0	0	0	0
EXPL	0	0	1	5
RESP	0	0	0	0
FORB	0	0	0	0
IFID+EXPL	9	45	6	30
BLAME	3	15	0	0
I FID + BLAME	1	5	0	0
IFID+HEALTH	3	15	3	15
HEALTH+EXPL	1	5	0	0
EXLI+IFID+EXPL	0	0	1	5
IFID+EXPL+HEALTH	0	0	6	30
EMPTY	0	0	2	10
TOTAL	20	100	20	100

As Table 4 demonstrates, REPR (10 %), EXPL (15 %), IFID+EXPL (20 %), IFID+REPR (15 %) and EXPL+REPR (20 %) were the categories which were commonly used by the subjects in intermediate group. The formulas used by the subjects in advanced group differed from those used by the subjects in intermediate group. They mostly preferred IFID and combinations of IFID. IFID+EXPL accounted for 10 %, IFID+REPR accounted for 15 %, EXPL+REPR 15 % and EXL!+IFID+EXPL+REPR accounted for 20 % of the data.

Table 4. Frequency of the use of semantic formulas in situation 4.

Formulas	Intermediate Level Subjects		Advanced Level Subjects	
	N	%	n	%
IFID	0	0	1	5
REPR	2	10	0	0
EXPL	3	15	1	5
RESP	0	0	0	0
FORB	0	0	0	0
IFID+EXPL	4	20	2	10
BLAME	0	0	1	5
I FID + REPR	3	15	3	15
EXPL+REPR	4	20	3	15
REQUEST	1	5	0	0
EXPL+REQUEST	0	0	2	10
IFID+EXPL+REQUEST	0	0	1	5
IFID+RESP+REPR	1	5	1	5
IFID+EXPL+REPR+EXLI	0	0	4	20
QUESTIONING	1	5	0	0
EMPTY	1	5	1	5
TOTAL	20	100	20	100

Table 5 shows that the most common formula used by both intermediate and advanced level subjects was the use of IFID+EXPL (e.g. I'm sorry, by my daughter was ill; I'm sorry, I had to go to police station). This formula accounted for 60% of the data in both levels. Another

common formula was EXPL (Explanation of an account) accounted for 25 % for intermediate level subject data and 30 % for advanced level subject data (e.g. My child was ill). Advanced level subjects used IFID+EXPL.+FORB 10% (e.g. I'm extremely sorry, my car broke down, this won't happen again and intermediate level subjects used IFID + FORB formula 15% (e.g: I'm sorry, I won't be late again). It's interesting to note that subjects in both levels did not use single IFID formula. When the native English speaker data is taken into account, it is seen that 3 subjects used IFID+EXPL, one subject used EXPL and one subject used a totally different category which did not exist in EFL data as IFID+REQUEST (e.g. I'm really sorry but I had an emergency at home. Would it be possible to reschedule for another time?). It is seen that IFID categories accounted for most of the data.

Table 5. Frequency of the use of semantic formulas in situation 5.

Formulas	Intermediate Level Subjects		Advanced Level Subjects	
	N	%	N	%
IFID	0	0	0	0
REPR	0	0	0	0
EXPL	5	25	6	30
RESP	0	0	0	0
FORB	0	0	0	0
IFID + EXP	12	60	12	60
IFID + EXP + FORB	0	0	2	10
I FID + FORB	3	15	0	0
TOTAL	20	100	20	100

Table (6) shows that advanced level subjects preferred IFID 5% whereas intermediate level subjects did not prefer IFID. Intermediate level subjects used explanation of an account (EXPL) 45 % while advanced level subjects used it 20% (e.g. : I have to tidy my room, I couldn't get up). A promise of forbearance (FORB) was used by the subjects in both levels, 5 % for intermediate level, 10 % for advanced level. The percentage of EXPL+FORB was same for both groups, 5 %. IFID + EXPL preference of both groups was mostly used by intermediate level subjects (45 %) and advanced level subjects (40 %). Advanced level subjects differed from intermediate level subject in their use of IFID + EXPL + FORB (10 %), IFID + EXPL + RESP. (5 %) and IFID + RESP + FORB (5 %). Intermediate level subjects again did not prefer single IFID. As for the native speakers of English, 3 subjects preferred IFID+EXPL and 2 subjects used a different category as IFID+EXPL+REQUEST (e.g. I'm sorry, I completely forgot that we were going to meet. Can we re-arrange a night out?).

Table 6. Frequency of the use of semantic formulas in situation 6.

Formulas	Intermediate Level Subjects		Advanced Level Subjects	
	N	%	n	%
IFID	0	0	1	5
REPR	0	0	0	0
EXPL	9	45	4	20
RESP	0	0	0	0
FORB	1	5	2	10
EXPL + FORB	1	5	1	5
IFID + EXP + FORB	0	0	2	10
I FID +EXPL + RESP	0	0	1	5
IFID+ RESP + FORB	0	0	1	5

IFID+ EXPL	9	45	8	40
TOTAL	20	100	20	100

Situation 7 was about a small car accident. Table 7 reveals that subjects in both groups employed a wide variety of strategies. In terms of IFID only one subject in intermediate level used it (5 %). The use of acknowledging responsibility (RESP) and IFID + FORB were same for both groups (5 %). Two subjects in intermediate level preferred EXPL (10 %), FORB (10 %) and IFID + RESP (10 %). IFID + EXPL accounted for 15 % for intermediate level and 5 % for advanced groups. The subjects in intermediate level employed BLAME (35 %). Combinations of IFID were used by advanced subjects. IFID + REPR (35 %), IFID + RESP+ REPR (20 %), IFID + RESP + FORB (5 %). IFID + RESP + REPR was used by one intermediate level subject. 2 advanced subjects preferred to use EXPL + REPR and 3 of them used RESP + REPR (e.g. It's my fault, I'll pay your damage). The use of BLAME can be said to be an influence from Arabic. Seven intermediate level subjects did not apology but put the blame on the other driver (e.g. That's your fault, shut up!. You parked in a wrong place).On the other hand, native English subjects employed REPR (1 subject), IFID+EXPL (2 subjects), RESP+REPR (1 subject) and IFID+REPR (1 subject). It can be said that advanced level subjects employed the same categories as native speaker subjects.

Table 7. Frequency of the use of semantic formulas in situation 7.

Formulas	Intermediate Level Subjects		Advanced Level Subjects	
	N	%	N	%
IFID	1	5	0	0
REPR	1	5	1	5
EXPL	2	10	0	0
RESP	0	0	0	0
FORB	2	10	0	0
IFID + EXPL	3	15	1	5
EXPL + FORB	1	5	1	5
I FID + RESP	2	10	0	0
BLAME	7	35	0	0
EXPL+REPR	0	0	2	10
IFID+RESP+FORB	0	0	1	5
RESP+REPR	0	0	3	15
IFID+REPR	0	0	7	35
IFID+RESP+REPR	1	5	4	20
TOTAL	20	100	20	100

Situation 8 was about forgetting the book of a classmate. Table 8 reveals that combinations of IFID were higher in both groups (40 % for intermediate subjects, 60 % for advanced subjects). Single IFID formulas were employed by only two subjects in advanced group. The use of REPR and IFID + EXPL + BLAME was same for both groups (5 %). EXPL category was preferred only by seven subjects in intermediate group. IFID + EXPL preference was higher in both groups (25 % for intermediate, 20 % for advanced group). Three subjects in advanced group used IFID+EXPL + REPR (e.g. I'm sorry, I completely forgot about it, I'll bring it tomorrow). BLAME is used by three subjects in intermediate group (e.g. Why didn't you say?). Other formulas were used individually by the subjects in advanced group such as BLAME, IFID+BLAME, EXPL+FORB+BLAME + EXPL and IFID + RESP + REPR.

Taking native English speaker data into account, we notice that one subject used RESP, one subject used IFID+EXPL+REPR and three subjects used IFID+EXPL. The use of the last category is similar to intermediate and advanced subjects' data. They can be said to approximate native English speaker norms.

Table 8. Frequency of the use of semantic formulas in situation 8.

Formulas	Intermediate Level Subjects		Advanced Level Subjects	
	N	%	N	%
IFID	0	0	2	10
REPR	1	5	1	5
EXPL	7	35	0	0
RESP	0	0	1	5
FORB	0	0	0	0
IFID + EXPL	5	25	4	20
IFID + REPR	1	5	2	10
BLAME	3	15	1	5
IFID+BLAME	0	0	1	5
EXPL+ FORB	0	0	1	5
BLAME+EXPL	0	0	1	5
IFID+EXPL+BLAME	1	5	1	5
IFID+EXPL+REPR	0	0	3	15
IFID+REPR+RESP	0	0	1	5
EXCL+REPR	1	5	0	0
IFID+RESP	1	5	0	0
EMPTY	0	0	1	5
TOTAL	20	100	20	100

Different strategies are employed by the native English subjects in this study such as IFID+EXPL+REQUEST, IFID+EXPL, EXPL, EXL!+EXPL+REPR (e.g. Oh no, I knew I had forgotten something. I'll give you the book tomorrow) and Questioning + EXPL (e.g. I've been meaning to see you to return your book. Will you be in your office later?).

5. Discussion

The aim of this study was to compare and contrast the use of formulas of intermediate and advanced level subjects in situations which required apologies. The data revealed that the apology formulas of these two groups differed according to the situation. The formulas they mostly used were more or less similar in situations 1,2,3,4,5, 6, and 8. There were also some individual differences in the data but they were not taken into consideration. In situations 5 and 6 they mostly employed EXPL and IFID+EXPL, in situation 8 they mostly chose IFID+EXPL, in situations 1 and 2 they mostly preferred IFID+REPR, in situation 3 they mostly chose IFID+EXPL and IFID+HEALTH formulas and in situation 4 their choice of IFID+REPR and EXPL+REPR were similar. In situation 7 the formulas they used differed. Subjects in intermediate level preferred to use EXPL, FORB, IFID+EXPL, IFID+RESP and BLAME mostly whereas subjects in advanced level used EXPL+REPR, RESP+REPR, IFID+REPR and IFID+RESP+REPR formulas. Intermediate subjects' use of BLAME in situations 7 and 8 can be explained as a transfer of sociocultural norm into English. This fact was proven to be true in Tunçel's study who pointed out that blaming is a typically Turkish norm where a driver bumped his car and expected to apologize, but put the blame on the other driver who was innocent. Although the formulas they used were similar in situation 8, subjects in intermediate and advanced groups employed other strategies. Intermediate level subjects preferred EXPL and BLAME category mostly whereas advanced level subjects used IFID, IFID+REPR and IFID+EXPL+REPR. These categories were similar to the categories of native English speakers in our data and in Tunçel's data. In situation 4 intermediate and advanced level subjects' use of formulas showed differences. Subjects in intermediate level preferred REPR, EXPL and IFID+EXPL mostly whereas advanced level subjects preferred IFID+EXPL, EXPL+REQUEST and IFID+EXPL+REPR+EXL!. Their use of EXL! category can be explained to approach target language norms because our data and the data of Tunçel revealed that exclamations are widely used by native English speakers. IFID usage showed that advanced level subjects used this category and its combinations more than intermediate level subjects. IFID usage was also found to be prevalent among native English speakers and the

overwhelming expression was "I'm sorry" which expresses regret (Holmes 1990). As Owen (1983; cited in Suszczynska 1999:1059) states the IFIDs are the strategies which are the most conventionalized and routinized, being as it were in the center of the speech act category of apologizing and representing verbal routines or syntactic-semantic formulae. Although the main concern of this study was to compare and contrast intermediate and advanced level subjects' apology strategies, these data can be compared with our native English speaker data and native Turkish and English speaker data in Tunçel's study. Turkish speakers can be said to use apologies more differently than native English speakers. When native English speaker and native Turkish speaker data are taken into account, subjects in advanced level may be said to approach native English speaker norms. However, subjects in intermediate level may be said to employ Turkish norms in their target language usage. It is interesting to note that subjects in both levels, especially intermediate level subjects used some formulas which are not used in their target language in some situations. They developed their own interlanguage formulas.

6. Conclusion

The results of this study suggested that in some situations advanced level subjects approached native speaker norms more than the subjects in intermediate group in the use of apologies. However, in some situations it was seen that the formulas used by subjects in both groups were similar and different from native English data. Their L1 can be said to have an influence on their use of apologies, especially intermediate level subjects transferred native Turkish speaker norms into English such as blaming the other person. It is difficult to generalize the findings because the data were collected from 40 L2 learners. More reliable and valid conclusions might have been drawn had more subjects participated in the study.

The study showed that there are many instances in which L1 cultural norms affected the subjects' realization of apology speech acts. As Olshtain and Cohen (1983) suggest formal instruction on the use of speech acts by L2 learners speed up the process of learning the target language although acquisition of native-like production by nonnative speakers may take many years. Teachers can develop students' meta-pragmatic ability by exposing them with real life situations through watching videos, role-playing and simulations, i. e. by engaging them in consciousness - raising tasks.

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Appendix I

Discourse Completion Test

1. You completely forget a crucial meeting at the office with your boss. An hour later you call him to apologize. The problem is that this is the second time you've forgotten such a meeting. Your boss gets on the line and asks: Boss : "What happened to you?"
2. You forget a get-together with a friend. You call him to apologize. This is really the second time you've forgotten such a meeting. Your friend asks over the telephone: Friend:" What happened ? "
3. Backing out of a parking place, you run into the side of another car. It was clearly your fault. You dent in the side door slightly. The driver gets out and comes over to you angrily.
   Driver: "Can't you look where you're going? See what you've done!"
You:……..
4. You promised to return a textbook to your classmate within a day or two, after xeroxing a chapter. You held onto it for almost two weeks.
Classmate : I'm really upset about the book because I needed it to prepare for last week's class.
You: ……..
5. You accidentally bump into a well-dressed elderly lady at an elegant department store, causing her to spill her packages all over the floor. You hurt her leg, too. It's clearly your fault and you want to apologize profusely.
You: ……
6. Spending an evening at a friend's apartment, you accidentally break a small vase belonging to her.
You: …….
7. Rushing to get to class on time, you run round the corner and bump into one of your fellow students who were waiting there, almost knocking him down.
You: ……..
8. You have forgotten to return the book you borrowed from your professor. On the staff corridor you come across your professor.
You: ……

Appendix II

Coding Scheme of Apologies

IFID: Illocutionary Force Indicating Device which includes apology speech acts such as "I'm sorry", "Excuse me", "Forgive me", "I'm terribly sorry".
REPR: an offer of repair or redress or compensation for the damage (e.g. I'll pay for your damage, I'll buy you another one).

EXPL: giving explanation, cause or reason (e.g. I took my daughter to hospital, I completely forgot about meeting).
RESP: acknowledging responsibility for the offense (e.g. It was my fault, What an absent-minded person I am!).
FORB: promising for not repeating the action again (e.g. I'll never forget to meet you again).
BLAME: putting the blame on the other person (e.g. Why didn't you remind me?, You parked your car in the middle of the road!).
HEALTH: after an undesired behavior asking the health of the person (e.g. Are you all right? I can take you to hospital).
REQUEST: asking for something politely (e.g. Could you give me the book for a few days?).
EXL!: using words that show surprise (e.g. Oh!, Oops!).
QUESTIONING: asking a question (e.g. Is it possible to use the book for two days?).