

A Pragmatic Study of Apology Strategies in Urdu: A Case of Kashmiri Urdu Speakers

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Abstract

The present study attempts to investigate basic apology semantic formulae used by Kashmiri speakers in Urdu language. It also elaborates preferences of the participants of study regarding selection of different strategies. The informants are 250 university students, doing MA in Urdu language. A modified version of Discourse Completion Test (DCT) proposed by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) is used for data collection. The current version of DCT consists of 15 situations and data collected is analysed by using taxonomy proposed by Blum Kulka et al., (1989). While, the data collected through observations and interviews is used either to verify or contradict DCT data. The results of the study not only emphasise claimed universality of apology expressions but also reinforces culture-specific aspect of language use by exploring some more expressions being used for apologizing in Urdu language by the population under study. Significance of the study lies in its contribution for promoting global understanding regarding speech act of apology as is perceived and executed in Kashmir.

Key terms: politeness; speech acts; apologies; apology semantic formulae; language and culture; socio- culture and socio - pragmatics; Urdu¹.

Introduction

Brown & Levinson (B&L) in their influential article “Universals in language usage: politeness phenomena” (1978) classified apologies as “negative politeness strategies” (p.¹⁶) as they carry sense of distance, respect and deference

¹**Note:** Urdu words / sentences and name of apology strategies used for analysis of data (taken from Blum Kulka et al.,1989) are italicized to differentiate from English text.

rather than friendliness and association. It is an avoidance based, on-record strategy of self-effacement. Their theory also assumes that negative politeness is a universally preferred approach to face work. Intercultural politeness research, specifically focusing on linguistic politeness patterns found in different languages - primarily operating as reflection of societal differences - has been a leading research area in the field of pragmatics during last two decades (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984). On micro level, study of politeness patterns as a product of distribution of power and social status within certain groups remain one of the major areas of research by many researchers like Brown & Levinson (1987) and Holmes (1995). In this context focus remains mainly on discovering who is polite to whom; influence of gender differences on application of politeness formulae (Wolfson 1983, Holmes (1988), Holmes 1989), and apologies (Holmes 1989, Tannen 1994, Aijmer 1995).

In the current research work, rather than studying politeness in general, use of apology - a speech act which is an undeniable part of it - would be under study because process of apologizing is not merely a matter of routine but involves many of the complex social and psychological issues which work as basics of politeness research. An apology should accompany some compensatory action that 'gives face' to the addressee. Likewise, it may cause apologiser's face loss. Deciding whether to apologize or not to apologize is liable to be affected by many factors like social distance and social power.

2. Literature Review

Brown and Levinson (1987: p⁷⁰) reckon apologies as acts that carry negative politeness: they signal speaker's consciousness of having encroached negative face of the hearer restricting his / her freedom of action. Whereas, according to Holmes (1995: p¹⁵⁵) apologizing contrasting to other face attacks e.g., insults have a positive effect on the hearer. To apologize may stand as an attempt to satisfy, gratify or maintain hearer's face. Hence, it is an inherently face-saving action for hearer. In other words, it antidotes an offence for which the apologizer accepts responsibility. For Goffman (1971: p¹⁴⁰) too, apology is one among many other types of remedies. Likewise, for Fraser (1981: p²⁶²) it is at least taking on responsibility "for the offense committed, though not necessarily for the act itself" and for Olshtain and Cohen (1983: p²²) "it is a social event which is performed if social norms are violated".

According to Bergman and Kasper (1993: p82) an apology is a "compensatory action to an offense in the doing of which speaker (S) was casually involved and which is costly to hearer (H)." The cost might be in the form of losing face or a sheer misunderstanding. Different cultures perceive severity of an offence differently resulting in a different perception regarding obligation to apologize. In their (Bergman and Kasper, 1993) view an action considered very offensive, deserving a serious apology in one culture may not be deserving apology at all in another culture, whereas, in the opinion of B & L (1987) under the same conditions all the speakers employ same strategies. They

tried to validate this claim by analysing data collected in three different languages, namely English, South Indian Tamil and Tzeltal (a Mayan language). However, many researchers criticised this theory claiming that contrary to their view different factors involve both in considering an action as face threatening and in selection of a strategy used to apologize (Trosborg;1987). These factors, says Trosborg (1987), are determined in view of cultural values, social patterns and behavioural norms of the speakers which lead to perception that speakers of different languages not only recognize need of an apology differently but also realize their apologies in different ways.

One of the influential works in the field of speech act realization is “Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns” (CCSARP). This project is focused on requests and apologies establishing similarities and differences between non-native and native speakers in realization of these acts (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain 1984). It investigated eight languages and Discourse Completion Test (DCT) was used for data collection. According to results respondents used similar strategies for apologizing.

Different patterns in application of apology strategies have been associated with cross-cultural differences by the researchers of both interlanguage studies and studies that focused on the way speakers of different languages apologize in their respective languages. Such research studies give certain view on existence of relationship between speech acts and cultural values (Suszczyńska,1999). Holmes (1993) in a study on New Zealanders has revealed significant differences in distribution of apologies among men and women, and that women tend to apologize more than men. In the view of Holmes (1990) apologies are “social acts conveying affective meaning” (p.¹⁵⁵), and she believes that on the part of speaker politeness strategies are supposed to remedy an offense. Holmes, thus, has forwarded an interesting as well as important clarification that when defining apologies, one must consider probability of apologizing for wrong conduct of someone else. This point leads to the inference that “the definition refers to the person who takes responsibility for the offense rather than the offender” (p.¹⁶¹).

Majeed & Janjua (2013) tried to trace out structure of speech act of apology in Urdu, Punjabi and English languages. According to them in English language, application of explicit apologies as head act was higher than in Punjabi and Urdu whereas ratio of implicit apology strategies was highest in Punjabi. Sample of their study was students of English at National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad (NUML) and data was collected by using DCT having 9 different situations. In another study Majeed & Janjua (2014) studied relationship between apologies and gender in Urdu language. According to their findings females were more conscious about their face wants than the males. They (females) preferred less dangerous strategies even for apologizing to friends and

relatives. However, in formal settings both used similar types of strategies for apologizing. Sample of their study was 25 university students. Data was collected through DCT containing 10 apology requiring situations and was analysed through Blum-Kulka et al., (1989) model. The study claimed use of *IFID* and *Explanation* in almost all the situations which, according to them, save positive face wants of the apologizers. Urdu apologetic strategies were found non-formulaic having a mixing of English apology strategies.

Rahman (1998) traced out some linguistic features of politeness among Pakistanis by collecting data through DCTs, naturally occurring conversations and interviews of selected respondents. Three hundred questionnaires were distributed but only hundred which were filled in properly were employed in the study. Whereas twenty-five people were interviewed; and hundreds of conversations were analysed. Data was collected both in formal and informal settings. Findings of his report suggest that in Pakistan, apologies patterns are different in formal and informal settings. He (Raman: 1998) adds, “words, originating from Persian and Arabic and used in Urdu, are used only in the formal contexts and not among family and friends. With the latter, one may use body language and certain less formal words to thank and apologize” (p.¹¹).

In another research Saleem et al., (2014) investigated differences among male and female respondents with respect to application of apology strategies. Data was collected from 106 university students and analysis was made based on Holmes’ (1990) and Blum-Kulka’s (1989) taxonomies. The study discovered that almost all the respondents applied “explanation or account” focusing only on *explanation or account, explicit apology (IFID), expressing self-deficiency and intensifiers of apology*. There was no evidence of ‘*recognizing H as deserving apology*’ and ‘*acknowledgment of responsibility*’ strategies. Further, there were no significant differences in selection of apologies by male and female respondents.

Sultana & Khan (2014) made comparative study between Urdu and Pashtu speaking students regarding use of apology strategies with respect to gender. Sample of the study was 32 students (16 male and 16 female) studying at NUML Islamabad. DCT containing ten apology eliciting situations was employed for data collection, while analysis was done by applying *CCSARP* taxonomy (Blum-Kulka et al., (1989)). The findings revealed that the respondents more often used *IFIDs* which according to the researchers (Sultana & Khan, 2014) help save their positive face needs. They also used ‘*promise of forbearance*’ to maintain good relationship with others. The study also revealed that respondents were less different when apologizing towards same gender while differences were noted high in their apologies towards opposite gender.

Ahangar et al., (2015) using *CCSARP* model (Blum-Kulka et al., (1989)) examined effects of power and gender on realization of apologies. Data was collected from (50) male university students (SBMUS) by using DCT. According to them, ‘*IFID*’ has been most used apology strategy. However, some other strategies used were ‘*evoking the name of God (God willing)*’, ‘*swearing*’, and applying special terms of address like

'gohar' and 'bras' which mean 'sister' and 'brother' which reflect influence of religion and culture. Power and gender were not found influencing apologies. Both, the selection of data collection tool and small-scale sample make this study limited in its scope.

In the light of above literature review, it seems that understanding and producing speech acts (e.g., apology) have been among the important aspects of socio-pragmatic research. Lacking a good level of understanding with respect to social, cultural, and pragmatic context may lead to misunderstandings in cross-cultural communication, both in realization of appropriate speech act and in comprehension of meaning or message intended by someone else. This is what makes it a desirable topic. In line with this perception current research work aims to investigate speech act of apology in Urdu language as is being realized in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (A J&K).

3. Statement of the Problem

According to Encyclopaedia Britannica² there are 60 to 70 million native speakers of Urdu language throughout the world. Pakistan is an independent Muslim state which came into being on 14th August 1947 and A J & K is a part of it. Urdu is national language of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir which is being spoken and understood by almost everyone. It also acts as lingua franca in the country. But, unfortunately, till date no detailed research has been done either on use of Urdu language in society in AJ&K with respect to speech act of apology-which largely constitutes politeness phenomenon - or on attitude of the selected population towards this speech act. Thus, still there lies a gap / blank about linguistic behaviour of Kashmiri speakers; how they process Urdu language for apologizing purpose. Present research - a part of PhD thesis - intends to fill in this gap. Being pioneer work dealing with realization of speech act of apology by Kashmiri speakers, scope of this research paper is delimited to explore basic apologetic semantic formulae used by the population under study.

4. Research Questions

- First research question set for the current research is to discover most frequently used apology semantic formulae/ strategies by Kashmiri speakers for apologizing in Urdu language.
- Second research question for the current research is about general attitude of Kashmiri speakers towards speech act of apology.

²www.britannica.com/

- Third research question is about types of apology strategies being used by Kashmiri speakers.

5. Research Methodology

Following is a detail of research methodology applied in the current research work.

5.1 Population and Sample: Participants

The current research aims to investigate realization patterns of speech act of apology in Urdu language by Kashmiri speakers. Based on simple random sampling technique students of MA Urdu are selected as sample because they are believed to have not only the best knowledge and application skills of this language but are also accessible and manageable for data collection. Another important consideration while finalizing sample was relevance of the selected subjects with the objectives of study. Thus, data is collected from five different study centres where MA in Urdu language and literature is being run under AJ&K University Muzaffarabad. Sample of the study consists of 250 respondents in total. Fifty student- both male and female- were selected from each study centre as per their willingness of participation.

5.2 Data Collection and Analysis

There exists a variety of data collection tools like observation of authentic material/ incidents; questionnaire; interviews and roleplays. Researchers in the field, often debate about their use and effectiveness. For some of them observation of authentic data is the best possible way of collection of data, while for others, observation though useful in collection of effective reliable data suffers from many shortcomings like it gives no provision to control variables and presence of researcher during collection may affect reliability of collected data (Wolfson,1976; Stubbs,1983). Further, collection and documentation of data collected through observation itself is always doubtful with respect to reliability and biasness. Some researchers favour roleplay as a technique but others prefer DCTs (Cohen & Olshtain (1981); Olshtain & Cohen (1983); Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984); Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1985); Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986). So, none of the data collection tools could win ultimate trust of the researchers which provides liberty to researchers to choose suitable tool as per nature of their research and required data. In line with it, in the current research, both, quantitative and qualitative paradigms are used to ensure objectivity and authenticity of data and the results. To achieve this purpose a combination of tools i.e. Discourse Completion Task (DCT)

containing 15 apology eliciting situations, observation³ and interviews⁴ are used for data collection. This combination of tools is helpful not only in triangulation of data but also in obtaining objective findings. DCT is most frequently used and trusted kind of questionnaire which provides different situations, related to the topic under study, to the respondents to answer imagining themselves practicing those situations practically. It is “a series of short written role-plays based on everyday situations which are designed to elicit a specific speech act by requiring informants to complete a turn of dialogue for each item” (Barron, 2003: p.⁸³). DCT used for data collection is designed by adopting some of the apology eliciting situations proposed by Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984). For analysis of apologies forwarded by the respondents of the study *CCSARP* model (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) has been applied. Again, research in pragmatics is replete with taxonomies proposed by many researchers to study speech act of apology but the one, researchers have selected to use in current research is the most frequently used and trusted by researchers in the field.

5.3 Theoretical Underpinnings – Coding Scheme for the Current Research

While analysing responses provided in apology requiring situations it is assumed that the respondents would behave in the exact way in real encounters as they claimed in these responses. The strategies used by the respondents are identified and then classified based on *CCSARP* model (Blum Kulka et al: 1989). The responses provided by the participants (in DCT data) are tabulated to identify strategies they used to apologize. This tabulation process resulted in making it possible to classify different strategies and to determine whether selected model sufficiently applies to the current data. It is worth stating that the respondents have used combination of different apology strategies however the researcher has dealt with each strategy individually as scope of this paper merely confines to discover main apology strategies used by Kashmiri speakers. *CCSARP* model, selected for analysis of data in the present study consists of following strategies: *Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID); explanation or account; taking on responsibility; concern for the hearer; offer of compensation/repair; and promise of forbearance.*

5.3.1. Description of *Apology Strategies* Used for Analysis

Following is a brief description of the strategies provided in the model i.e., Blum-Kulka et al., (1989) used for analysis of data in the current research study:

³ Data collected through observations is incorporated in analysis as when and where required to support / refute the claims. However, these observations are not numbered as they are incorporated.

⁴ -Interviews are conducted to know general perception of the respondents regarding realization of apologies.

5.3.1.1- IFID

The very first apology formula called *IFID* contains vivid and direct expressions. These linguistic expressions include performative verbs like “forgive”, “excuse”, “pardon”, or “be sorry” according to Olshtain & Cohen (1983: p.²²). This strategy contains following sub-formulas and expressions in Urdu:

- **An Expression of Regret.** This sub-formula has appeared in the apologies made in Urdu language. It is applied through expressions like ‘*afsoos hova ya afsoos hy*’ which carry similar meaning which word ‘regret’ carries in English. So, it can be perceived as Urdu equivalent of regret. It does not compensate offence but reflects apologizer's remorse for the happened loss. This is second highest applied apology expression among the sub- strategies of *IFIDs*. Following are the examples taken from the DCT data (appendix 1):
Mujhay bohat afsoos hai k mai apki book wapus lana bhool gia. (**English translation:** I regret for not bringing your book back. I know you need that book). **Situation: 2(appendix 1).**
- **Offer of Apology.** In the current work, apologies are also made through “*offer of apology*”- another sub strategy of *IFIDs* which contains some sets of lexes like *pardon, excuse, and apologise* etc., in English and *mahzrut chahna*, in Urdu which carries a sense like those of aforesaid English expressions. Following examples are taken from DCT data:
Mai mazrut chahta hu~n. mainy a~pko bohat intzar kurwaya. (**English translation:** I am sorry. I kept you waiting for quite a long time). **Situation: 14 (appendix 1)**
- **Request for Forgiveness.** An explicit appeal for forgiveness is made through this apology semantic formula but in the current study it is not employed by the respondents. Anyhow, during observations it has been encountered occasionally.
- **Expression of Embarrassment.** This is a newly added sub- strategy under *IFIDs*. It has been added because of its considerable presence in the collected data. Following is an example:
Uncle Mai bohat sharminda hu~n keh a~pko daykhnaey jaldi nuhin a~saka. (**English translation:** I am ashamed that I could not visit you earlier). **Situation: 8 (appendix 1)**

5.3.1.2- Explanation or Account

This strategy reports description of external elements over which apologizer has no control. Most of the researchers count it as a tool to avoid responsibility but in the culture under study, according to the interviewees, it is a significant way of apologizing. Even, an *IFID* without it is considered a ‘half-hearted apology’. While it alone can achieve purpose of satisfying apologizee as says Fraser (1981), *explanations* on their own can serve purpose of apologizing. Following is an example of this strategy from DCT data:

Sir, *raˉstey maen bohat traffic jam tha is liay mai late ho gia.* –**English translation:** Sir, there was traffic jam, so I got late. **Situation 3 (appendix 1)**

5.3.1.3- Taking on Responsibility

The next apology formula is ‘*taking on responsibility*’. It is applied in the cases where apologizers recognise themselves responsible for the offence. It is realized in many ways e.g., by *accepting the blame, expressing self-deficiency or justifying the hearer*. This strategy though included in almost all the existing taxonomies is not found in the data collected for present study through DCT.

5.3.1.4- Offer of Compensation or Repair

It is used when the apologizer feels him / herself responsible for some serious harm and offers an action to compensate that damage. According to Olshtain & Cohen it is a “situation-specific” (1983, p.²³) strategy, applied in case of physical injury (Blum-Kulka et al 1989) but in the current study it is used regardless of any such condition, for example:

Mai aˉpka nuqsan poora kur doun ga. (**English translation:** 'I will pay for your loss). **Situation:6 (appendix 1)**

5.3.1.5- Promise of Forbearance

The last semantic formula is called ‘*promise of forbearance*’. It is an acceptance of fault and promise of no repetition on part of apologizer:

Dobara aysa kabi nuhin ho ga. (**English translation:** It won't happen again). **Situation:3 appendix 1)**

6. Analysis of Data

Data collected through DCT is tabulated and marked under relevant apology strategy. To discover intended objective of the current research, following pattern is followed:

6.1 Overall Application of Different Apology Strategies in Data (DCT)

Frequency and percentage of different apology strategies are listed in table 1 to get a complete picture of their application. Data presented in this table (1) is collected through DCT

STRATEGIES	Frequency	Percentage
IFIDs	812	18%
Explanation	1451	32.5 %
Taking on responsibility	0	0 %
Offer of compensation	1298	29%
Forbearance	328	7.3 %
Concern for hearer	563	13 %
Total	4452	100

Table 1. Apology strategies (DCT data)

This organization of different apology strategies and their respective value in different situations is of significance as it helped researchers to compare their distribution in diverse situations. For comprehensive analysis, firstly overall application of apologies is calculated to trace out most frequent apology strategies. In total, 3750 remedial exchanges are provided by 250 respondents in response to 15 situations provided in DCT. Thus, it seems that the participants of the study have used more than one strategy in their apologies. A detailed analysis is given below:

The table 1 highlights differences in application of different strategies in Urdu language. In DCT data ‘*explanation*’ is the topmost used strategy (32.5%), while, ‘*offer of compensation*’, is second highly favoured strategy (29%). The third most favoured strategy is *IFID* (18%). Whereas ‘*taking on responsibility*’ which is part of all the apology taxonomies presented till day has not made even a single application in DCT data. The interviewees ascribe absence of this strategy to its face threatening nature as perceived in the culture under study.

6.2 Application of Apology Strategies in Different Situations

Frequency of apology strategies in each of the given situations (15) in DCT (appendix1) is as presented in table 2:

Strategies / Situations	Situation 1	Situation 2	Situation 3	Situation 4	Situation 5	Situation 6	Situation 7
IFID							
a- offer	20	120	145	0	7	69	0
b- regret	0	35	50	0	0	11	0
c- forgiveness	0		0	0	0	0	0
d- embarrassment	0	55	0	0	0	0	0
sub-total	20	210	195	0	7	80	0
2- Explanation	85	147	239	69	2	97	213
3- responsibility							
a- accepting blame	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
b- self-deficiency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
c- H deserving apology	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
sub- total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Concern for hearer	0	29	0	0	0	0	120
4- Compensation	172	140	0	0	189	200	0
5- Forbearance	0	136	192	0	0	0	0
Total							

Strategies / Situations	Situation 8	Situation 9	Situation 10	Situation 11	Situation 12	Situation 13	Situation 14	Situation 15	Total
IFID									
a- offer	35	23	30	20	0	41	35	40	585
b- regret	24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	120
c- forgiveness	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
d- embarrassment	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	52	107
sub-total	59	23	30	20	0	41	35	92	812
2- Explanation	100	42	20	67	64	186	64	56	1451
3- Responsibility									
a- accepting blame	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
b- self-deficiency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
c- H deserving apology	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
sub- total	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3 Concern for hearer	54	0	180	99	0	0	46	35	563
4- Compensation	159	111	170	3		0	64	90	1298
5- Forbearance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	328
Total									4452

Table 2. Frequency of apology semantic formulas in each of the given situations (15) in DCT

6.2.1IFIDs (Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices)

An insight into table 2 shows that *IFIDs* are used in almost all the situations. According to many other researchers like Holmes (1990), Sultana &

Khan (2014), Ahangar et al., (2015), *IFID* is the most regularly used apology semantic formula but in the current data *IFIDs* stand out as third main strategy (n=912) ranging from highest value (n=210) in situation no 2 to the lowest value (n=07) in situation no 5 (father forgets to take son for shopping). Here (table 2), a noteworthy point is that in the DCT data four out of the given situations could not earn even single *IFID* and three situations with higher application of *IFIDs* are situation two (210), situation three (195) & situation six (80). The lowest usage of *IFIDs* has occurred in situation five which discloses disliking for application of this strategy in such situation. Similar practice has been noticed during observations too: if an elder commits mistake towards a kid, s/he prefers to kiss, hug, or offer some sweets etc., in addition to uttering some lovely expressions like, my baby, my love, my darling etc., instead of apologizing. When discussed, respondents report *IFIDs* face threatening for seniors and elders, so they rarely use them. Further, face threatening nature is perhaps cause of confining them mostly to official setting or very severe accidents where they are mostly used with other strategies like ‘*explanation*’ or ‘*offer of compensation*’ etc.

This strategy is used through expressions like *excuse*, *pardon*, *apologise*, and *ashamed* in English whereas in the current work, *afsoos* (sorry, pardon, excuse), *ma’afi chahna* (apologise), *ma’af krna* (forgive), *shurminda hona* (embarrassed) are Urdu equivalents of these expressions. The table (2) shows that sub- strategy of *IFIDs* called ‘*request for forgiveness*’ is not used in the collected data while, ‘*offer of apology*’ is the most common sub-strategy (n=585). “*expression of regret*” is also applied (n=120) along with “*expression of embarrassment*”, (n=107). Sub-strategy ‘*request for forgiveness*’ is perceived more intense an apology than the “*expression of regret*” and “*offer of apology*” in the society under study which might be a reason of its absence from the data. According to interviewees, it brings face loss to the apologizers. Thus, in the data ‘*offer of an apology*’ is the highest used *IFID* – sub formula, which is in line with Thijittang (2010) who asserts that native speakers of English prefer using *sorry*, *excuse me* and *pardon me*; and Shariati and Chamani (2010) who reported it as the most frequent strategy in Persian. Analysis further shows that there is no application of *IFIDs* in isolation which echoes Owen (1983: p.⁸⁶) who proclaims limitations of ‘*sorry*’ for genuine apology and Olshtain & Cohen's (1989: p.⁵³) saying that “*I’m sorry*’ might be less sufficient to express apology”. While high application rate of “*expression of regret*” in the current data corresponds to findings of Owen, 1983; Blum_Kalka and Olshtain, 1984; Holmes, 1990; Deutschmann, 2003; and, Mattson and Johnstone, 1994.

The respondents of the current study have also employed ‘*expressing embarrassment*’ – a newly added sub-formula which is not only confession of offence but also less likely to yield apologiser's positive face loss. In most of the cases it is found accompanied with either gestures or swearing to God (both in appendix 1 & 2). According to Shariati and Chamani (2010: p.²²) swearing in Persian society “was used as a device to intensify apology. Thus, swearing has a genuine power to confirm the truth among interlocutors”.

6.2.2 Explanation or Account of Reason

This strategy reports description of external elements over which apologizer has no control. Most of the researchers count it as a tool to avoid responsibility but in the culture under study, according to the interviewees, it is a significant way of apologizing. Even, an *IFID* without it is considered a ‘half-hearted apology’. While it alone can achieve purpose of satisfying apologizee as says Fraser (1981), *explanations* on their own can serve purpose of apologizing. Following is an example of this strategy from DCT data:

Sir, ra~stey maen bohat traffic jam tha is liay mai late ho gia. –**English translation:** Sir, there was traffic jam, so I got late. **Situation 3 (appendix 1)**

According to data presented in table 2, this strategy is used in all situations except 4 & 5 which are informal in nature. This finding resembles Saleem et al., (2014) who also stated that almost all the respondents of his study applied “*explanation or account*”. The two situations (4& 5) are informal in nature and their addressees are either low or equal in status having low social distance to the apologizers. It implies that it is rarely used in case of apologizee having lower social status or in case of serious happening. As in most of the cases, it expresses reasons of the offence it can be assumed that it implicitly extends excuses to hook the offender off. It does not appear situation specific as it is used in almost all the situations with varying ratio e.g., in situation 4 (69), situation 11 (67), 12 (64) and 13 (186).

6.2.3. Taking on Responsibility

This strategy shows acceptance of responsibility by apologizer. He (the offender) acknowledges responsibility via any of its sub- formula: *accepting the blame, expressing self-deficiency* or *justifying the hearer*. This strategy is not used by the respondents while replying to situations provided in DCT which goes in line with the research findings of Saleem (2014) who found none of his respondents using this strategy. According to many of the interviewees, it is too difficult to face people in society after accepting fault openly and unconditionally because it decreases social position of the person in public eye and raises questions about his potential and abilities with regard to meeting social obligations.

6.2.4. Offer of Repair

Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) declare this strategy as “situation specific and is often resorted to in a situation when physical damage is involved” (p.¹⁴⁹), but in the current research it is used irrespective of any such condition. It is second highly used apology strategy in the collected data (26%) in almost all the situations except few (3, 7, 11, and 12) which suggests that its application is not conditioned merely to physical harm or damage. It has appeared in data with varying values ranging from n=0 (situations: 3,7,11

&12) to n=200 (situation 6) which imply existence of no relationship between physical injury and this strategy.

6.2.5. Concern for Hearer

This semantic formula is also used by respondents of the study. Its ratio remained n= 786. It is used only in situations 2 (formal), 7, 8, 10, 12 (informal) 11,14& 15(formal). Though applied in limited apology situations, the variety of the situations manifests that it is used in multiple contexts which range from situation 2 (student forgets to return professor's book) to situation 12 (a colleague misinterpreted speaker's comments) then from situation 7 (younger brother reached late to receive elder brother) to situation 10 (passenger gets hurt) which cover both formal / informal; severe / not-severe situations. During observations, too, application of this strategy has been encountered without any reference to nature of offence, social status or formality level of the offence unlike in the work of Deutschmann (2003:p¹⁹⁵) who categorizes it "a situation-specific strategy that is resorted to only when a space offence is involved".

6.2.6. Promise of Forbearance

It is applied to redress negative face of the apologizee and to save apologizer's positive face. It reiterates no repetition of such offence in future. This strategy, too, has got a low occurrence in data (n= 328) and is not employed across all the situations which resembles Afghari (2007), who finds it rarely applied by Persian speakers and Thijittang (2010) who claim same for Thai speakers. In the current study, situation 3 (reaching late in office) has triggered highest application of this strategy (n= 192) which suggests its application mainly restricted to formal conversational settings.

7. Findings and Conclusion

First research question set for the current research was to discover most frequently used apology semantic formulae/ strategies used by Kashmiri speakers for apologizing in Urdu language. While analysing data, it is found that Urdu language has a wide range of apology strategies including those proposed by Blum Kulka et al (1989). Based on the data presented in table (1) it can be concluded that in Urdu language 'explanation' stands out as the topmost preferred strategy for apologizing which corresponds to Sugimoto (1997); Trosborg (1987); Intachakra (2001); Thijittang (2010) and Suszczyńska (1999) who also exposed 'explanation or account' as highly favoured apology strategy in their studies on different languages. However, Olshtain and Cohen (1983) reckoned *explanation* a rare strategy. While 'offer of compensation' also called, *reparationis* second most favoured strategy. This finding corresponds to Afghari (2007) who asserts

that ‘*accounts*’ and ‘*reparation*’ are the most common strategies among Persian speakers and Suszczyńska (1999) who discovered the same for Hungarian speakers. *IFIDs* have been third highly preferred apology semantic formula in the current data, which goes contrary to many researches who claim for it being the most frequent apology strategy (Ogiermann, 2008; Shariati & Chamani, 2010; Olshtain, 1989). Another significant finding is absence of ‘*taking on responsibility*’ from the current data which according to Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) and Thijittang (2010) falls under the most frequently used apology strategies.

Second research question set for the current research is about general attitude of Kashmiri speakers towards speech act of apology. While attempting answer to this question, analysis of current data (table,2) brings out some interesting points about overall aptitude of the respondents in this regard. It is important to note that all the apology strategies except *explanation* and *concern for hearer* have made more appearance in formal situations i.e., situation 1,2,3, 11, 13, 14 & 15 (table,2). While shedding light on explicitly apologizing, says Blum-Kulka & Olshtain ((1984), “The most direct realization of an apology is done via an explicit illocutionary force indicating device (IFID), which selects a routinized, formulaic expression of regret (a performative verb) such as: (be) sorry; apologize, regret; excuse, etc”. Thus, it can be claimed that Kashmiri speakers feel it unnecessary and face threatening to apologize explicitly particularly in informal situations which corresponds to Muhammad (2014: p.¹⁰) who discussing about Saudi speakers writes, “they do not like to apologize outright; consequently, they avoid using terms such as apologize”. For the current work, it might be a result of social traditions of the concerned society (Kashmiri) where it is deemed less pertinent to explicitly apologize, but more important is to care for each other which is evident from the use of rest of the apology strategies e.g., *concern for the hearer* and *explanation, offer of compensation* even though apologizer refuses to take responsibility for an offence. The high application rate of “*offer of repair*” (29%) in data suggests that the respondents of the current study are very conscious about face saving of both the apologizer and the apologizee. Following are some very interesting examples of application of this strategy from DCT data:

- *Ohooo, mein mahzret chahta houn k hospital nein a ska.... Ap please ye kuch peisey rakhein, mein ap k liye kuch la b nein ska ap fruite mangwa leina [English translation - Situation 8, appendix 1] Ohhh, sorry uncle I could not come to hospital. Please take this money, I could not bring anything for you. Bring some food item for you.*
- *Aap theek hein na? baba g, ap please meri seat per beith jaein oar mujey koi oar seat talaash krny dein. [English translation - Situation 10, appendix 1] Are you ok? Please take my seat baba gee and let me move to some other seat.*
- *Sir mein mahzret chahta houn lykin mujy tareekh tu btai gei thi but time nein btaya gia tha. [English translation - Situation 3,*

appendix 1] I am sorry sir, but I was informed about the date but not about the exact time.

It is quite visible from the above examples that sometimes the respondents forward apologies even when they believe they are not responsible for any inconvenience or trouble. But, similarly in many examples they apologized explicitly followed by an attempt either to deny obligation or blaming the offended one. So, it can be inferred that in both the cases their purpose is to maintain their image in front of others thus transforming apologies into a self-image elevator. This consideration and importance given to one's face corresponds to Reiter's (2000) findings about British speakers of English and to what Nwoye (1992) calls group face, or Akan speakers' desire to save the face of their entire ethnic group as Obeng (1999) has revealed.

Third research question was about types of apology strategies being used by Kashmiri speakers while apologizing in Urdu. To answer this question, for data categorization and analysis in the current study the researchers selected CCSARP model (Bloom Kulka et al., 1989) which is the most frequently used one in the field of pragmatics. While analysing data, many other strategies are also found e.g., *suggestion, showing intimacy, offering food/ sweets, religious references, interjections* etc., which are not part of CCSARP model (table, 1) and are not included in the analysis (but will be part of analysis in thesis which is going to develop a taxonomy based on current data). Another worth mentioning observation is application of non-verbal communication (apologetic gestures, smile even laughter) to enhance impact of apologies and achieve desired purpose. Use of non-verbal communication as for apologizing does not fall under domain of this paper but it is observed that use of this kind of communication proves highly effective for apologizing. Not only are found these strategies in the current data but a sub strategy called '*expressing embarrassment*' is also added under the heading of *IFIDs* on the bases of its noticeable existence in the collected data. Thus, it shows that range of apology strategies in Kashmir is too wider to be accumulated and studied through a model based on western culture.

8. Concluding Remarks and Further Insights

This research article being very first attempt to trace out realization of speech act of apology by Kashmiri speakers has primarily focused on nature and type of different apology semantic formulae used by them; most frequently used apology formula, and their attitude towards speech act of apology. Other relevant areas, for example, effects of social variables and apology attitude of different genders etc., have been left out to meet very first need i.e., finding out apology strategies to work in this field more rigorously in future. Following are main apology strategies found in the concerned data:

- *Explanation* is the most frequently applied apology strategy (32.5%) which endorses assertion of Janjua (2011) and Sultana & Khan (2014) who also claim that Pakistani speakers mostly use *statements and explanations* for apologizing

- purpose. While, *Concern for the hearer* has been second least applied strategy (13%) in the current data.
- The population under study rely on the strategies proposed by Blum –Kulka (1989) except *taking on responsibility* for apologizing which is totally absent from the data collected through DCT. Saleem et al., (2014) also reports no application of this strategy in his data collected from Pakistani EFL learners.
 - *IFIDs* are not found as standalone strategy but applied in combination with other strategies.
 - Under the sub-strategies of *IFIDs* another strategy called '*expression of embarrassment*' is added on the bases of current data.
 - '*offer of compensation*' strategy is applied without any reference to physical harm which contradicts assertion of Blum Kulka et al., (1989) who claimed it a situation specific strategy involving physical harm.
 - Almost all the apology semantic formulae are assisted by applying appropriate gestures and religious references e.g., swearing to God, smile, laughter, bowing the head etc., which make non-verbal communication an indispensable part of apologies in the population under study.
 - Explicit and vivid apologies are rarely made to kids. They are loved, given sweets and hugs instead.
 - Application of large number of strategies shows that respondents have used more than one strategy in every response.
 - Apologies in Urdu language are non-formulaic. They abundantly accumulate English expression 'sorry' instead of '*Mahzret*' - its Urdu equivalent, which might be taken as a sign of hegemony of English Language. This finding goes in line with the findings of Majeed & Janjua (2014).

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