

**YEDITEPE UNIVERSITY**  
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES**

**TURKISH EFL LEARNERS' PREFERENCE FOR APOLOGY  
STRATEGIES ACROSS DIFFERENT SOCIAL VARIABLES**

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**Istanbul - 2024**

YEDITEPE UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

TURKISH EFL LEARNERS' PREFERENCE FOR APOLOGY STRATEGIES ACROSS  
DIFFERENT SOCIAL VARIABLES

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## ABSTRACT

The objective of this study is to examine how Turkish learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) utilize apology strategies. Specifically, the present study aims to describe the apology strategies preferred by English preparatory school students in specific situations that involve social factors like power imbalance, social distance, and the weight of the action. The data was gathered through two separate discourse completion tests (DCTs): (a) the written discourse completion test (WDCT) and (b) the multiple-choice discourse completion test (MDCT). WDCT presents six and MDCT presents ten distinct situations that necessitate an apology act. Each situation in the tests incorporates diverse social variables to enable users to provide a reaction or describe how they would apologize in real-life scenarios. Through these tests, the study compares the use of apology strategies of Turkish EFL learners with that of native English speakers. The study's findings revealed that Turkish EFL learners had a higher frequency of employing indirect apologies, as opposed to native speakers. The study revealed that Turkish English as a Foreign Language (EFL) speakers at the B1 and B1+ proficiency levels employed similar strategies to express apologies to native speakers, as evidenced by the data collected via Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs). Considering these social factors, Turkish individuals learning English as a second language displayed apology speech acts that closely resembled those of native English speakers. However, Turkish EFL learners employed more indirect strategies than native speakers. The study found that whereas B1 and B1+ non-native speakers used similar methods in broad expressions of apology, they employed negative L1 transfer while apologizing such as the placement of "I am sorry".

***Keywords:*** *Apology Strategies, Power Differences, Social Distance, EFL*

## ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türk üniversite düzeyindeki İngilizce öğrenenlerin özür dileme stratejilerini incelemektir. Çalışma, özel olarak yazılı söylem tamamlama testi (WDCT) ve çoktan seçmeli söylem tamamlama testi (MDCT) olmak üzere iki ayrı söylem tamamlama testi kullanılarak veri toplamaktadır. Bu testler, Türk öğrencilerin sosyal faktörleri içeren belirli durumlarda nasıl özür dilediğini incelemek ve ayırt etmek amacıyla tasarlanmıştır. Bu durumlar arasında güç dengesi, sosyal yakınlık ve yapılan hatanın büyüklüğü gibi faktörler bulunmaktadır. WDCT, 6 farklı durumun uygulanmasını içerirken, MDCT 10 farklı durumun uygulanmasını içermiştir. Her testteki durumlar, kullanıcıların gerçek yaşam senaryolarında nasıl tepki vereceklerini veya nasıl özür dileyebileceklerini açıklamalarını sağlamak için çeşitli sosyal değişkenleri içermektedir. Çalışmanın bulguları, Türk İngilizce öğrenenlerinin, ana dili İngilizce olan katılımcılara kıyasla dolaylı özür dileme stratejilerini daha sık kullandığını ortaya koymuştur. Araştırma, Türk İngilizce öğrenenlerin B1 ve B1+ dil yeterlilik seviyelerinde, Söylem Tamamlama Testleri (DCT'ler) aracılığıyla toplanan verilere dayanarak, özür dileme stratejilerini anadili İngilizce olan katılımcılara benzer şekilde kullandığını göstermiştir. Bu sosyal faktörleri dikkate alındığında, İngilizce öğrenen Türk bireyler, yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğrenirken özürle ilgili konuşma eylemleri sergilemiş ve bu eylemler ana dili İngilizce olan katılımcılara yakın olmuştur fakat Türk katılımcılar yabancı katılımcılardan daha fazla dolaylı özür dileme yöntemleri seçmiştir. Araştırmanın bulguları, B1 ve B1+ düzeyindeki anadili İngilizce olmayan katılımcıların genel özür ifadelerinde benzer stratejileri kullandığını, ancak stratejileri uyarlamak için D1 (ana dil) formlarını kullandıklarını göstermiştir.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

SLA	Second Language Acquisition
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
IFID	Illocutionary Force Indicating Device
ILP	Interlanguage Pragmatics
NS	Native Speaker
NNS	Non-native Speaker
OEDCT	Open-Ended Discourse Completion Test
WDCT	Written Discourse Completion Test
MDCT	Multiple Choice Completion Test

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This section describes the study that compared the usage of apologetic strategies between Turkish EFL learners and native speaker participants. The obtained data is also used to identify potential differences between Turkish EFL learners and native speakers in scenarios involving a variety of social factors, including social distance, power disparity, and action weight.

### 1.1. Overview

Language has a crucial role in our understanding and communication of the world, both in our local environment and beyond. The significant significance ascribed to language in human social interactions has been thoroughly analyzed from several viewpoints, encompassing its linguistic framework, phonological mechanisms, and cultural influences. The main objective of this study is to examine the cultural elements and linguistic variations of language, particularly in the domain of pragmatics. Pragmatics, as defined by Cutting (2008), is a field of study within linguistics that examines language and its many forms depending on the particular situations in which they are used. The cultural milieu in which a language is utilized is one of its utmost significant circumstances. As per La Castro (2012), behaviors like requesting someone to shut the door or placing an order for coffee at a coffee shop are closely connected to the social context. Communication effectiveness may be affected by a lack of understanding with the cultural traditions that influence language usage across different cultures.

Scholars and educators are questioning teaching techniques and language competency due to the enduring presence of cultural differences in language usage. They are considering whether mastery of grammar, syntax, and semantics alone is enough for effective communication. Pragmatic competence, the focus of scholars and educators, pertains to the aptitude for efficient communication within a particular linguistic context. The significance of pragmatic competence can be elucidated within the context of a linguistic situation. For instance, whereas uttering "I am sorry" could be satisfactory as an apology in several circumstances in Japan, other cultures like Jordan, it may be necessary to provide some explanation for the wrongdoing (Bataineh and Bataineh, 2008). Mastery of a language's grammatical structure does not necessarily ensure effective communication.

In order to enhance learners' communicative or pragmatic abilities, it is important for students to initially comprehend the target culture and its language usage. Second language acquisition (SLA) involves studying and comparing the pragmatic characteristics of the native language (L1) and the second language (L2). Researchers have endeavored to examine and contrast various languages and cultures, as well as the mechanism by which pupils acquire pragmatics. Although there has been much study on cross-cultural pragmatics, there is still a need for further enhancement, specifically in evaluating the pragmatics of Turkish language and English learners in Turkey. To effectively promote communicative competence in the target language, it is crucial to comprehend the proficiency levels of Turkish learners in correctly utilizing English in accordance with its cultural norms.

## **1.2. Theoretical Framework**

As a subfield of pragmatics, speech acts refer to the foundational activities that occur in human communication via utterances. This summary places emphasis on three seminal works in the fields of philosophy and pragmatics: Austin (1962) and Searle's (1979) speech act taxonomy which is derived from Austin's categories, and Grice's (1975) implicatures in a discourse.

According to Holmes (1995), an apology is a polite verbal expression in which the apologizer admits fault, accepts accountability, and endeavors to restore social connections. Speech act theory, which was first introduced by Austin in 1962, posits that language serves the dual purpose of transmitting information and carrying out actions. This was refined by Searle (1969), who defined speech acts as the fundamental unit of communication, where illocutionary force signifies the speaker's intended meaning. Every oratory act is associated with a distinct emotional state of the speaker, communicating convictions, grievances, or apologies.

Schmidt and Richards (1980) defined speech acts as all spoken communication activities, including gestures, attitudes, and surrounding circumstances. Expressions of grievance, compliments, invitations, vows, requests, and remorse are among them.

Three categories of meaning are distinguished by Austin's (1962) theory: perlocutionary, illocutionary, and locutionary (verbal expression, social purpose, and intended impact, respectively). For example, the explicit meaning is conveyed by the statement "That cake appears delectable," whereas the illocutionary act discreetly encourages sharing and the perlocutionary act seeks to ensure that the listener receives a portion.

### **1.3. Statement of the Problem**

A great body of research has been devoted to investigating apologies in English (Deutschmann, 2003; Holmes, 1990; Owen, 1983; Owen, 2019). Cross-cultural pragmatic studies have long dominated the field by solely focusing on the differences and similarities of using speech acts across different cultures, e.g., “A Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSSARP)” by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1987). Although there is empirical evidence from previous research that learning speech acts is an important part of L2 development, it can be said that there is a dearth of research regarding speech acts, particularly apology speech acts, in classroom practice (Derakshan & Arabmofrad, 2018; Zayed, 2014). This gap is seemingly greater in the Turkish tertiary-level education context (Aydin, 2013).

### **1.4. Purpose of the Study**

Apologies in English have been the subject of much inquiry (Deutschmann, 2003; Holmes, 1990; Owen, 1983; Owen, 2019). Cross-cultural pragmatic studies have long dominated the subject, focusing only on differences and similarities in the use of speech acts across cultures, such as "A Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSSARP)" by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1987). Although prior research has shown that learning speech acts is a key aspect of L2 development, there is a lack of study on speech acts, specifically on Turkish EFL students' preferences for speech acts in diverse social situations. (Derakshan & Arabmofrad, 2018; Zayed, 2014; Aydin, 2013). Therefore, the current study aimed at understanding how Turkish learners of English tend to use apology strategies across different situations and variables.

### **1.5. Research Questions**

The present research is based on the following research questions:

RQ1- What apology strategies did Turkish EFL students, as nonnative speakers of English (NNS), choose:

- a) when there is power difference?
- b) when there is social distance?
- c) depending on the weight of their action?

RQ2- What apology strategies are chosen by English native speakers (NS):

- a) when there is power difference?
- b) when there is social distance?
- c) depending on the weight of their action or the severity of the action?

RQ3- What are the various semantic formulas employed by Turkish EFL students (NNS) in a wide range of situations involved in WDCTs?

RQ4- Are there any differences in apology strategies preferred by participants in open-ended DCT (ODCT) compared to multiple-choice DCT (MDCT)? If so, what specific differences were observed?

## **1.6. Overview of the Methodology**

The researcher collects data through two different types of discourse completion tasks. These are Multiple-Choice Discourse Completion Tests (MDCT) and Open-Ended Discourse Completion Tests (ODCT or WDCT). The participants were divided into two groups. There was a group of native speakers, which consisted of 8 participants, and there was a group of Turkish EFL learners, which consisted of 20 participants.

The study acknowledges the potential constraints associated with every data collection instrument. Therefore, in order to achieve accurate results and profound insights on Turkish EFL learners' use of apology strategies, two different data collection instruments (i.e., ODCT and MDCT) were integrated. ODCTs offer valuable insights into the unaided comprehension of situations by participants and their selection of semantic strategies, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of their reactions. Nevertheless, it is recognized that these outcomes might not comprehensively reflect the entire understanding of the subject by the examinee.

In addition to ODCTs, MDCTs were used as a remedial measure, as they offer participants guidance and alternatives regarding the semantic strategies they prefer. The participants were asked to participate actively in dialogues concerning their responses to various scenarios presented in MDCTs. The purpose of the discussions is to clarify the reasoning behind the participants' preferred semantic strategies and the manner in which they arrive at a joint agreement on a single answer. Engaging in this collaborative process offers the researcher a more profound understanding of the participants' preferences as they apply semantic formulations to a wide range of situations involving diverse social variables, including social distance, power difference, and the weight of the action.

In pursuit of the primary objectives of the research, the scholar employs discourse analysis to investigate the functions of the forms that are present in DCTs. Furthermore, the study seeks to analyze the responses of participants to a variety of situations across diverse social contexts, taking into account variables. Consistent with prior investigations into apologetic speech acts, this study recognizes their multifaceted nature, encompassing linguistic, cognitive, affective, and social elements. This study aims to help us better understand the complicated relationships that affect Turkish EFL learners' apologetic communication by using a variety of social variables and focusing on real-life situations.

### **1.7. Significance of the Study**

This study holds significance in two key dimensions: practical and theoretical. This study aims to investigate how Turkish English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners utilize apology methods in comparison to native English speakers. This will be achieved by conducting two types of discourse completion tasks (DCTs) to gather empirical data. The research findings provide valuable insights into the actual use of apology techniques, as the study investigates the specific strategies employed by participants in different contexts. It is especially beneficial for instructing Turkish-speaking students in the EFL classroom to elucidate their lectures through practical application. Additionally, the results of the research can assist curriculum developers and textbook authors working in similar contexts.

There is a shortage of research in the pragmatics field that focuses on Turkish EFL students' preferences for speech acts in diverse social situations. Therefore, the results of the current study can help future researchers expand their apology research spectrum, as it could include more than what type of apology strategies a certain kind of community would use. Furthermore, a study was undertaken to examine the limitations experienced by English learners as a foreign language. This study specifically focused on students who had a medium to high degree of proficiency. The study was carried out using a coercive approach, as indicated by previous research conducted by Derakshan & Eslami (2015), Erçetin (1995), Jeon & Kaya (2006), and Tunçel (2014). This program aims to provide instruction to intermediate-level students, equipping them with the necessary skills to comprehend the dynamics and effectively monitor the challenges faced by their lower-grade peers. In contrast to the preceding chapters (Almasaaed, Waugh, & Burns, 2018; Almasaaed, Taguchi, & Tamimi, 2020), individuals with limited certification encounter a greater number of difficulties and modify codes to their native language. As pupils develop their verbal skills, they are able to understand the semantic connotations of an expression. Yet, it is unattainable

to assign significance to a statement without incorporating the existing language into the context of its creation. According to Taguchi (2009), students need to develop pragmatic competence in order to effectively use, operate, and control meaningful language in order to engage in communication in the target language. Consequently, an investigation has been conducted using Discourse Completion Tasks (DCTs) to assess the Turkish EFL students' understanding and proficiency in apology strategies.

### **1.8. Limitations of the Study**

Like other studies in the field of language and pragmatics, the current study had limitations. Firstly, although the selection of the data collection method as DCT is pragmatic, it does have limitations. One such limitation is that, due to the nature of written responses, they may deviate somewhat from spontaneous or authentic responses. Moreover, certain circumstances necessitate individuals to immerse themselves in unfamiliar surroundings. Another constraint of the study is the demographic composition of the participants. The anticipated equilibrium in the number of participants for each group could not be achieved throughout the recruitment phase. The disparity could lead to problems of comparison and inexactness. Although the study has limits, it may be concluded that the results could greatly contribute to society's knowledge of apologetic speech acts.

### **1.9. Terms and Definitions**

**Apology:** The commonly cited definition of apology is attributed to Holmes (1998), who states that an apology is a verbal action directed towards satisfying the emotional needs of the offended party (B), with the intention of rectifying a wrongdoing for which the apologizer (A) assumes responsibility. The ultimate goal is to restore balance between A and B.

**Face:** Drawing from Goffman's (1976) research, Brown & Levinson (1978) provide a definition of face as "the public representation of oneself that individuals strive to maintain."

The Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) is a research project initiated by Olshtain and Blum-Kulka in 1984. Its aim is to get similar results across different cultures on the way speech acts are expressed.

Pragmatics refers to the examination of how meaning is transmitted in a given context by individuals involved in an interaction, utilizing techniques and according to social standards (Crystal, 1996).

Interlanguage pragmatics, as defined by Blum-Kulka & Kasper (1993), refers to a specific aspect of pragmatics. It can be viewed as a sociolinguistic, psycholinguistic, or purely linguistic endeavor, depending on how one delineates the boundaries of pragmatics.

Communicative competence refers to an individual's ability to efficiently and responsibly apply their language expertise in accordance with societal standards.

Pragmatic competence is the ability to utilize and comprehend statements accurately and appropriately, in line with social standards.

### **1.10. Summary of the Chapter**

In this chapter, a brief overview of the current study has been laid out. The chapter proceeded with the purpose of the study and the research questions on which the present study was based, followed by the significance of the study. Lastly, the terms frequently used in this study were defined.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Overview

In this chapter the history and theories underpinning pragmatics will be introduced: its relevance to language education and related studies will be shared. The chapter proceeds with the introduction of communicative competence and different taxonomies developed by researchers. Under communicative competence, sociolinguistic and pragmatic competence will be briefly introduced. Following, speech act theory and apology strategies will be outlined and lastly, empirical studies focusing on apology strategies in language education will be outlined.

### 2.2. Pragmatics

The word pragmatics is derived from the Greek word 'pragmaticus' meaning pragmatical. As a relatively new branch of linguistics, many scholars started to make contributions to this field starting from early 1970s. American philosopher and semiotician Charles William Morris (1938) defined pragmatics as "pragmatical dimension of semiosis", meaning signs and interpretation are done in line with the relation of signs and who interprets them. In the early 80s, Morris counted pragmatics as one of the four sub-fields of linguistics, these are namely, semantics, syntax, phonology, and pragmatics.

According to Yule (1996), the study of meaning that is transmitted by a speaker or writer and understood by a listener or reader is called pragmatics. However, this is rather a simplistic definition of this complex field. More specifically, pragmatics is the study in which a speaker's speech is analyzed by considering the situation, and the context. The focus is on whether the speaker's speech is influenced by the context. Additionally, pragmatics is the study of the interpretation of a speech or writing beyond the words used in that specific context. According to David Crystal (1995), on the other hand, pragmatics deals with the variables that influence our language choices in social situations and the implications of those choices on others. It causes us to reflect on the speaker's intentions (to the extent that we can discern them) and how the listeners may interpret them. Crystal states that 'appropriateness' and 'cooperativeness' are the two major considerations encompass the field of pragmatics. Appropriateness refers to actions taken accordingly with our social positions and the context, for example, thanking, wishing a good day to someone. Cooperativeness, on the other hand, refers to the speakers' strategies and willingness to take part in an interaction, such as turn-taking strategies.

As one of the most prolific sub-fields of linguistics, there is no shortage of definitions of pragmatics in the literature, many philosophers, linguists, researchers have made major contributions to this field and defined the term from their own perspective.

### **2.2.1. A Brief History of Pragmatics**

A relatively new branch of linguistics, the foundation of pragmatics can be dated back to ancient Greece. The term “pragmatism” first used by Charles Sanders Peirce, an American mathematician, philosopher, and logician, to describe how meaning derived from signs is heavily dependent on their usage (Jucker, 2012). Peirce is accepted as the father of pragmatics. On Peirce’s definition and later works, American semiotician and philosopher Charles William Morris was one of the first names who made distinctive definitions of phonology, semantics, syntactics, and pragmatics under linguistics. Pragmatics studied by well-known philosophers and linguists such Wittgenstein, Searle, Russel, Habermas, and Austin later helped this field gain prominence as a linguistic discipline, who regarded this field as a liberating approach seeing as previous linguistic philosophies following the works of Saussure and Chomsky were closed systems (Nerlich, 2006). According to Jucker (2012), one of the names above is particularly important to the field of pragmatics: Wittgenstein. In his later works, Wittgenstein contradicted to earlier beliefs about words being mere nouns to name objects but are actually meaning carrier words that might change accordingly with their uses.

In the 1960s, Searle, Austin, and Grice, unlike their predecessors turned their focus from large perspective of philosophy to study of ordinary language(s); hence, ordinary language philosophers. In 1962, British philosopher John Langshaw Austin compiled the William James lectures that he had delivered at Harvard University under the name of *How to Do Things with Words*. In the book, Austin introduces three distinct speech acts: locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary. These speech acts were later analysed thoroughly and expanded by Searle, which will be discussed in length in the subsequent paragraphs. Lastly Grice, who is largely known with his co-operative principles. These three names paved the way for further studies in pragmatics and their works have had influenced many.

Since the 1970s, pragmatics widened its scope by being used in communication studies, discourse analysis, and applied linguistics since with the help of pragmatics researchers were able to study *sentence* unlike *sign* in early linguistic studies. Journal of Pragmatics was established in 1977, followed by The International Pragmatics Association in 1985 thanks to

those studies in the field of pragmatics increased considerably (Jucker, 2012). With the contribution of Austin's work in this field, pragmatics witnessed to several approaches developed mainly in Europe and the United States of America.

1. American approach of pragmatics mainly put the focus on action that the meaning brings.
2. German approach of pragmatics, according to Nerlich (2006), this framework was shaped around "genthood of (transcendental) subject, dialogue, pronouns" (p.329).
3. French approach of pragmatics subjectivity, "markers of subjectivity, indexicals" (Nerlich, 2006, p.329)
4. Anglo-Saxon approach of pragmatics mostly focused on speech acts and within it meaning and use became dominant by taking the context and intention into account.

This period also witnessed a major paradigm shift(s) not only affected pragmatics but other sub-fields under linguistics. In this period, the foci are given to the *use* of language rather than competence; *heterogeneity* became a mainstream idea in which language is not considered as a closed abstract system but a dynamic, interactional, and ever-changing system; more empirical studies have done in the field, more scales and comparative study techniques developed in this period; and *diachrony*, changes in natural languages gained prominence. According to Jucker (2012), a shift from competence to use made pragmatics a "mainstream field".

In the 1990s, computers were ubiquitous, and they became a major tool for conducting research, which led to a plethora of research within the field of corpus linguistics. Thanks to these developments, corpora used widely in sub-fields of linguistics, but this trend arrived late to the field of pragmatics. Thus, a new field was born, corpus pragmatics, a field combining methodologies and tools of both fields (Aijmer & Rühlemann, 2015). Karin Aijmer (1996, 2002) one of the first ones who conducted research on speech acts and discourse makers by utilizing corpus. Later, the most extensive study on corpus pragmatics was published by Deutschmann in 2003 on apology in British English, in which British National Corpus was used. The availability of electronic corpora reinvigorated pragmatics and many comparative studies have been conducted (Aijmer & Rühlemann, 2015; Lutzky & Kehoe, 2017; Peñarroja, 2021). That said, due to the mechanical nature of corpus and context-heavy nature of pragmatics bring many research problems together. In any available corpus, by researching a word one can access to millions of authentic examples of spoken or written language;

however, these examples will be decontextualised. Thus, corpus pragmatics remains to be a laborious and developing field.

### 2.2.2. 'Interlanguage Pragmatics'

The word "interlanguage" was used by Selinker in 1972 to refer to the language learning process of second or foreign language learners, which is a dynamic process that is also susceptible to fossilization. Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) examines the process by which individuals who are learning a foreign linguistic acquire, comprehend, utilize, and employ speech actions. According to Blum-Kulka & Kasper (1993), ILP refers to the examination of how individuals understand and express language in certain situations.

According to Rose (2000), learners whose interlanguage pragmatics is lacking may not fully comprehend or respond to a particular speech act (Crystal, 1997; Skyes, 2018), e.g. *Let's have a cup of tea sometime*, by a speaker is not always an invitation but just a way of closing small talk. Although it has drawn many linguists from the field of pragmatics, interlanguage pragmatics is classified under the field of second language acquisition together with other interlanguages (Blum-Kulka & Kasper, 1993). Many scholars limit interlanguage pragmatics to non-native speakers' competency in the target language; however, this does not fully represent the problems encountered by competent bilingual speakers.

Interlanguage pragmatics may result in pragmatic transfer. The term pragmatic transfer refers to the transfer of pragmatic properties of a learner's L1 to their L2, which can be positive or negative. Negative pragmatic transfer, not always a signal of lack of proficiency in the target language, refers to the transfer of a speech act that is not found in L2. The negative pragmatic transfer might be a way of preserving the speaker's own cultural identity, e.g., Turkish and Arab speakers' use of the discourse marker *yani* in English, it may also occur due to fossilisation in L2. Positive pragmatic transfer, on the other hand, refers to pragmatic properties that are available across languages, e.g., providing an explanation after apologising in Turkish and English (Blum-Kulka & Kasper, 1993).

Pragmatic failure can occur when speakers' identity or lack of skill level affects their ability to communicate effectively. Pragmatic failure, unlike grammatical or phonological failure, may not be readily discernible or spontaneously rectified by those who are non-native speakers. Pragmatic awareness and teaching in the target language are necessary due to this reason.

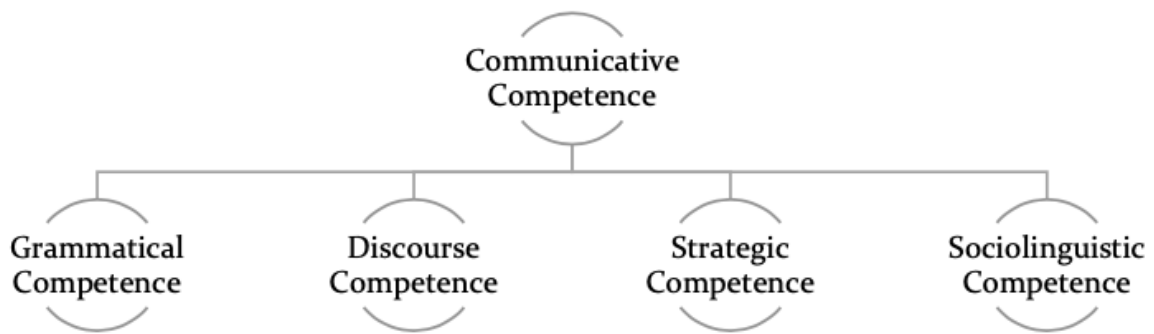
### **2.3. Communicative Competence and Models Developed**

Savignon (1972) and Rivers (1973) were the ones who paved the way for those who are interested in integrating communicative competence into language teaching and testing. According to whom, learning grammar and sentence structure were not enough, but learners need to gain native-like communicative skills (Spolsky, 1989). These skills are later called as ‘communicative competence’.

#### **2.3.1. Canale and Swain’s Communicative Competence Model**

In the 1980s, Canale and Swain (1980) developed arguably the first model of communicative competence, as it can be seen from figure 1, the first model consists of three sub-competences, namely, grammatical competence, strategic competence, and sociolinguistic competence. Grammatical competence refers to one’s knowledge of grammar rules, structures and grammatical competence as an umbrella term here encompasses pronunciation and spelling as well. Sociolinguistic competence refers to the knowledge of sociocultural norms in the target language, e.g., politeness. Lastly, strategic competence refers to the knowledge and ability of using communicative strategies in an interaction, e.g., turn-taking in an interaction.

Later, Canale (1983) added discourse competence, referring to the knowledge of merging different types of texts, e.g., academic articles, emojis, literature to this model. This model has been widely used in foreign and second language education due to its practicality in different areas such as syllabus design, material development and writing, and pre-service and in-service teacher education. The core tenet of this model suggests that the first and foremost pedagogical implication of communicative competence is to approximate classroom communication to real-life authentic communication as much as possible.



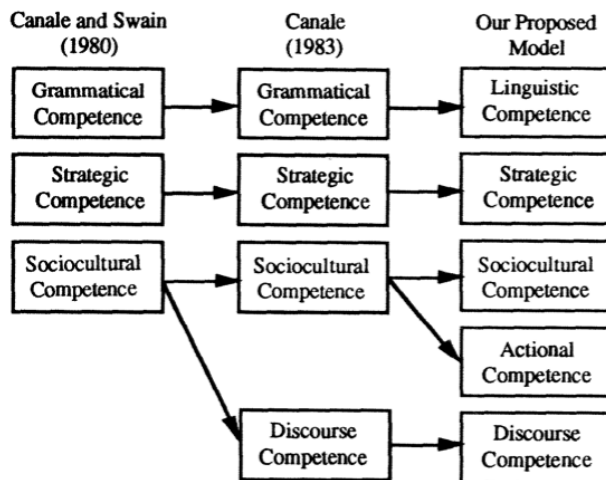
**Figure 1**

*“The communicative competence model by Canale and Swain (1980), Canale (1983)”*

Later, Savignon (1983) proposed a new model in a shape of inverted pyramid enclosed by a circle. In this model, instead of using sociolinguistic competence, Savignon used sociocultural competence to emphasise that factors affecting an individual’s social cohesion with the community of the target language is not limited to his / her sociolinguistic knowledge but also culture. Additionally, in this model, Savignon (2002) considered strategic competence, which are communicative strategies used in communication such as planning before speaking, as a method to assist grammatical competence.

### **2.3.2. ‘Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrel’s’ Communicative Competence Model**

‘Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrel’ (1995) established an additional model that stemmed from their focus on providing explicit instruction for the teaching and acquisition of a foreign language. In this approach, Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) substituted the word "grammatical competence" with "linguistic competence," which encompasses phonological and morphological aspects. Similarly, they replaced the term "sociolinguistic competence" with "sociocultural competence," a concept first introduced by Savignon (1983). The concept of sociocultural competence was expanded by incorporating actional competence, which is closely linked to interlanguage competence. Actional competence refers to the ability to effectively convey and comprehend communicative intentions, by aligning one's intended actions with appropriate linguistic forms. This is achieved through the knowledge and utilization of a range of verbal schemata that carry illocutionary force, such as speech acts and speech act sets (Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei, & Thurrel, 1995).

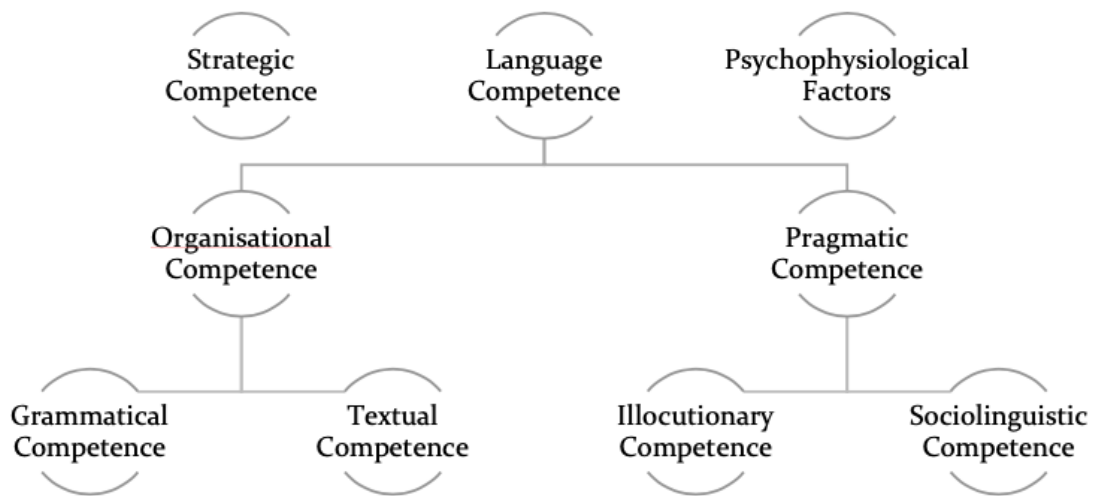


**Figure 2**

*“Chronological Evolution of the Proposed Model” (Clece-Murcia, Dörnyei, and Thurrel, 1995)*

### 2.3.2. Bachman’s Communicative Competence Model

Another favorably influential model was developed by Bachman (1990), different from the previous models. In this model, Bachman (1990) combined competence and performance under strategic, language and psychological competences. In comparison with previous models, Bachmann’s model mainly focuses on combining abstract and concrete language knowledge. In this model psychological factors refer to one’s psychological processes experienced in the language production process such anxiety. Strategic and language competences are used in the same manner with other models with slight differences. Organisational competence referring to form, encompasses grammatical and textual competence, according to Bachman (1990) language competence is not conducive to meaningful communicative alone. The pragmatic competence component of this table will be discussed in the subsequent paragraphs under pragmatic competence in this chapter.



**Figure 3**

*“Model of Communicative competence by Bachman (1990)”*

Later, Bachman and Palmer (1996) extended on this model by adding functional knowledge under pragmatic knowledge refers to actional knowledge in Thurrel’s (1995) model. Additionally, in this model lexical knowledge was categories under pragmatic knowledge, which was categorised under grammatical / linguistic competence in earlier models.

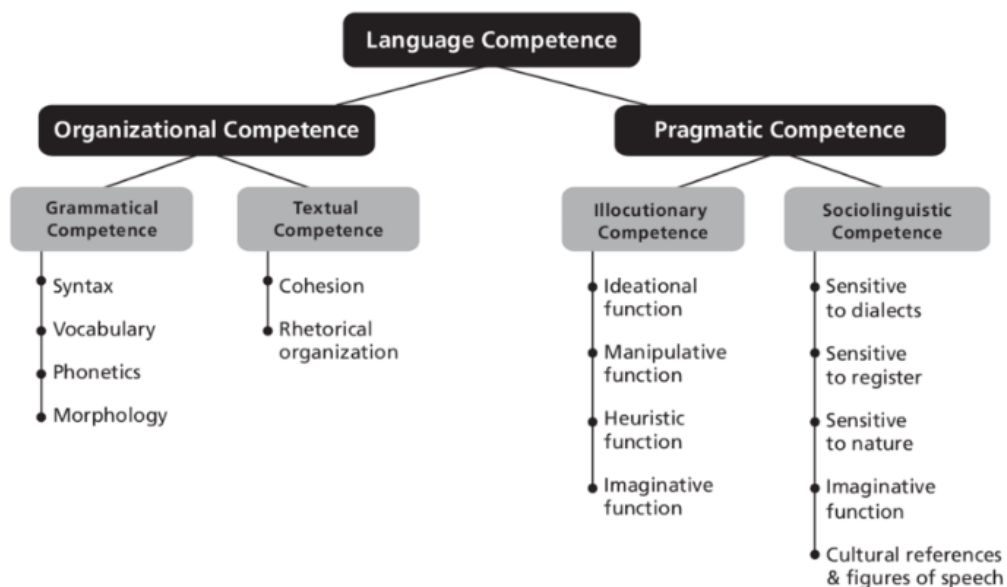
In the literature, there is no shortage of models developed by scholars to elaborate communicative competence to make their model more comprehensible for curriculum developers, material writers, and teachers.

### 2.3.4. Pragmatic Competence

Pragmatic competence encompasses an individual's capacity and understanding of successfully and appropriately employing the target language within a specific social situation (Taguchi, 2009; Thomas, 1983). Bachman and Palmer (1982, as cited in Bachman, 1990), also define pragmatic competence as the ability to effectively produce or understand language in a suitable manner. More precisely, it encompasses illocutionary competence, which refers to the understanding of how to carry out speech actions, and sociolinguistic competence, which refers to the understanding of the sociolinguistic norms that regulate language usage. Bachman (1990) introduced the concept of pragmatic competence as a separate component of language competence, which is illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1.**

*Pragmatic Competence (Bachman, 1990, p. 87)*



**Note.** "Bachman, L. F. (1990). *Fundamental considerations in language testing*. Oxford university press"

According to Bialystok (1993), pragmatic competence includes the ability to use language for specific purposes, the capacity to understand the underlying meaning by omitting performance elements like sarcasm and irony. The process that learners go through as they acquire their pragmatic competence involves them gaining awareness of the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic norms that are present in the target language.

### 2.3.5. Sociolinguistic Competence

An important aspect of communicative competence is sociolinguistic competence (Trosborg, 1987). The term sociocultural competence refers to combining knowledge appropriate a particular context in the target language community and social norms, taking its from Dell Hymes' seminal work (1972) "On Communicative Competence" as a reaction to Chomsky's generative theory of syntax. In the light of this information, a child might know grammar, but it does not guarantee a meaningful communication in his L1, hence sociolinguistic competence. Therefore, grammar or words alone, even in L1, might not be enough for communication and they should be fostered and supported with socially appropriate language in a particular context. Therefore, it we must then take into account the fact that a typical youngster learns that sentences can be both grammatical and suitable. He or she gains proficiency in knowing when to speak and when not to, as well as knowing what to discuss with whom, when, where, and how. A kid develops the skills necessary to do a variety of speech actions, participate in speech activities, and receive feedback from others on their performance.

Research within the field of sociolinguistic competence reported patterns of difficulties that foreign language learners face (Blum-Kulka, 1982; Ebsworth & Bodman, 1986; Van Campenolle & Williams, 2012; Van Campenolle, 2019). Much as communicative competence was formulated and developed by researchers within the field of SLA (Canale & Swain, 1980; Celce-Murcia, 2007), it was concluded again that linguistic competence alone is not sufficient, but as in L1, L2 learners should also learn what is socially appropriate in context and what is not.

Acquisition of sociolinguistic competence remains to be an important yet a problematic area in foreign language education due to learners' lack of natural and frequent exposure and practice (Holmes & Brown, 1976; Regan & Bayley, 2004).

### 2.4. Speech Act Theory

According to Searle, Kiefer, and Bierwisch (1980) the speech act theory, developed on Austin's seminal work *How to Do Things with Words*, is quite straightforward, according to whom human communication is merely achieved through sentences to convey meaning but through acts performed such as apologising, providing explanations, thanking and so on. Austin lists three distinctive aspects of a daily interaction: (1) Locutionary acts: consist of producing sounds, basic speech; (2) illocutionary acts: in which an act is performed through

thanking to someone, making a promise, or warning somebody about something; (3) perlocutionary acts: consist of the results of an illocutionary act, for example, convincing someone.

The speech acts can be categorized under five categories, these are as follows:

1. **Expositives:** are speech acts used to convey information, beliefs, insisting, guessing and so on, e.g. I suspect someone from the class stole my wallet.
2. **Commissives:** are speech acts occur when a speaker commits to an action such as threatening someone. Directives frequently occur in question forms.
3. **Directives:** are speech acts mostly occur when a speaker have the listener do something, e.g. Can I run this by you?
4. **Declaratives:** are speech acts when a speaker declares and does or will do the action that he / she declared, e.g. I delete your number from my phone.
5. **Expressives:** are speech acts mainly occur when a listener expresses his / her feelings, attitudes, or interpretations to someone, e.g. I am so glad you came.

#### 2.4.1. Apology Speech Acts

Apologies are classified as speech acts under expressives which has compensatory consequences, which is in line with Goffman's (1971) claims that apologies can be used to defy any potentially harmful or offensive interaction between speakers and hearers. Apologies, in this view, are ritualistic and follows a certain pattern playing an instrumental role to create a social harmony among individuals (Bergman and Kasper, 1993), what Lakoff (2005) labelled as "greasing of the social wheel". Apologies, categorically, are listed as an expressive and performative speech act at the same time. As per performatives, apologising as an act itself is actualised through apologising. As expressives, on the other hand, apologies are evaluated in its seriousness, remorse the apologiser shows, and sincerity (Blum-Kulka & Kasper, 1989; Fraser 1981; Owen, 2019).

Apologies are divided into two broad categories: ritualistic and substantive apologies. Ritualistic apologies following different formulae from substantive apologies, are mainly uttered by speakers to mitigate invasion of a personal space of, e.g., saying *excuse me* interrupting someone's speech; or before putting a halt in a continuing interaction, e.g., saying *excuse me* to order something at a restaurant; it is also used when someone's personal space is violated, e.g., saying *excuse me* before penetrating a crowd of people at a metro to get off

(Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Borkin & Reinhart, 1978; Owen, 2019; Tajeddin & Pirhoseinloo, 2012). Substantive apologies, on the other hand, require more eloquent approach.

A great body of research has been conducted exclusively on apology (Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper, 1989; Blum-Kulka, 1982; Deutschmann, 2003; Jucker & Taavitsainen, 2008; Owen, 1989; Owen, 2019, Van Campenolle, 2019), which has gained momentum now thanks to the availability of electronic corpora (Deutschmann, 2003). In English (Deutschmann, 2003; Holmes, 1990; Jucker & Taavitsainen, 2008; Owen, 1989; Owen, 2019), in French (Van Campenolle, 2019), contrastive analyses of French and English (Ancarno; 2015; Beeching, 2019), in German (Vollmer & Olshtain, 1989), comparative analyses of English and Turkish (Hatipoğlu, 1995), in Romanian (Demeter, 2006), Sudanese Arabic (Nureddeen, 2008). The previous studies in the literature suggested that the most common formulaic apology expression is '*sorry*' (Aijmer, 1996; Owen, 1983). According to Deutschmann's (2003) study of British National Corpus (BNC), corpus data supports these findings.

According to Williams (2017), in the history of the English language apology is also closely related to sincerity. The level of sincerity at a personal level, what Williams call subjectivity, may facilitate better communication among people. According to Cohen (2010), on the other hand, the assessment of sincerity in a performed apology, unless it is given in an inane tone, it quite problematic in an EFL classroom.

Regret is considered to be a major reason for apologies, apology is given when a transgressor acknowledges the transgression by ensuring that his/her interlocutor is aware of his/her remorse. The formula of an apology starts with the transgressor acknowledging the fact that there is a transgression and providing explanations, offering repair, and promising that the action will not be repeated (Ely and Gleason, 2006; Olshtain, 1989)

Sarcasm can be an instrument conveyed through apologies too. A multi-dimensional phenomenon sarcasm is a very culture specific as apology it is. Deutschmann (2003, p.205), in his analysis of corpus, found out that around 3% of apologies are sarcastic or included irony.

#### **2.4.2. Apology Strategies**

The focal point in the present study is to find out what kind of apology strategies Turkish EFL learners use when compared to native speakers. However, as stated in the

previous chapter, culture plays a pivotal role in speech acts, therefore these strategies may differ to a greater or little extent in other English-speaking countries, e.g., Nigeria, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, the United States of America, and Ireland.

### 2.4.3. Deutschmann's Corpus-Informed Model of Apology Strategies

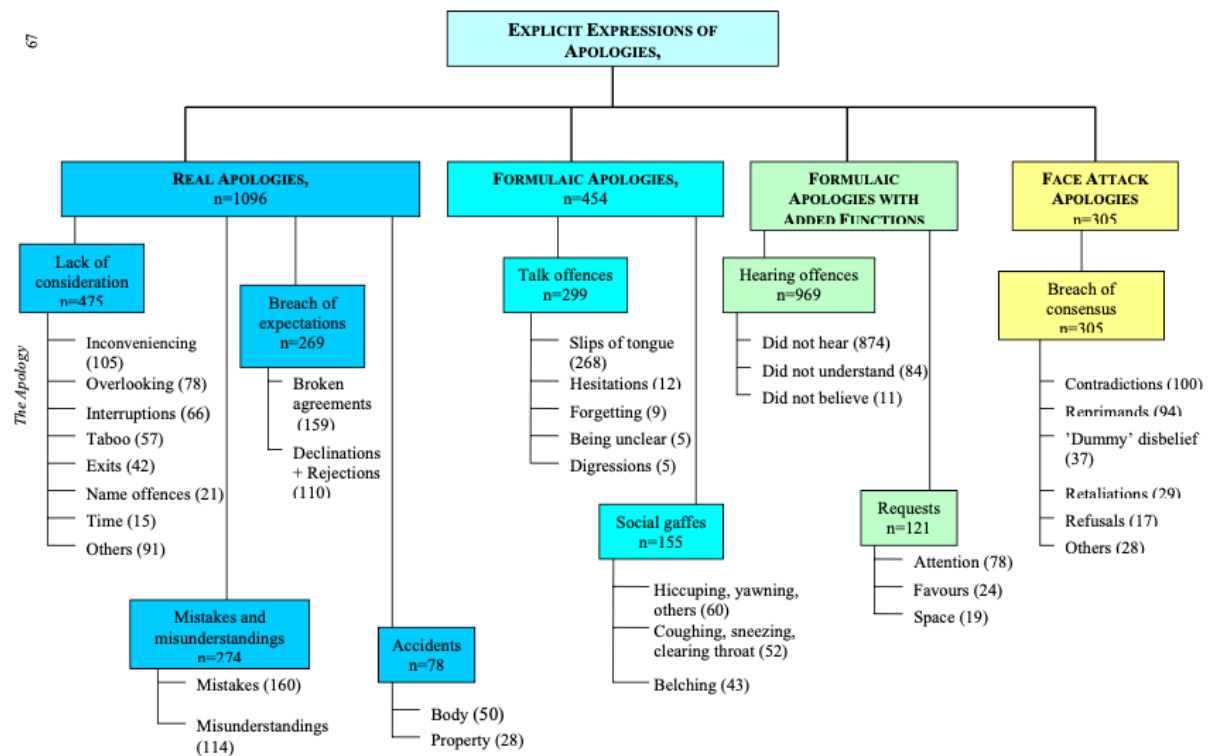
Deutschmann (2003) classifies apologising in British English into five categories:

1. Expressing explicit apology only.
2. Expressing explicit apology with an extra attempt to minimise the offence, e.g., explaining, justifying the reasons to shirk responsibility.
3. Expressing apology to shoulder the responsibility.
4. Expressing apology with a combination of different strategies.

And meta-strategies

1. Real apologies: According to Deutschmann (2003) real apologies are the most complex strategies, seeing as apologies in this category frequently accompanied by several other apology strategies.
2. Formulaic apologies: Deutschmann states that formulaic apologies are single strategy type of speech acts mostly occur in case there is a request, e.g., Excuse me, can you turn off the radio?
3. Face-saving apologies: are mostly followed with conjunctions like *but* used to minimise the offence or trivialise the matter, e.g., Excuse me but aren't you this a bigger deal than it is?

Deutschmann (2003) used British National Corpus (BNC) to compile apology speech acts used in British English. As it can be seen in figure 4, the number of real apologies in the corpus outnumbered formulaic apologies, formulaic apologies with added functions, and face attack apologies, respectively.



**Figure 4**

*“Distribution of the offences in the corpus” (Deutschmann, 2003)*

#### 2.4.2. Olshtain and Cohen’s Model of Apology Strategies

Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs) classified by Blum-Kulka & Olshtain part of their A Cross-cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) study (1984). IFIDs are the most common speech acts used to express explicit apology. Explicit apology strategies as follows:

1. When the speaker takes on the responsibility:
  - a) Expressing explicit remorse
  - b) Expressing that the offence was not the intent
  - c) Acknowledging the hearer’s reaction
  - d) Expressing shame or embarrassment
  - e) Expressing self-dispraise or self-deficiency
  - f) Acknowledging the facts but avoiding responsibility
  - g) Denying the offence
    1. Providing an explanation on account behind the offence

- a) Implicit explanation, e.g., these things happen all the time, am I right?
- b) Explicit explanation, e.g., It happened because I was distracted and didn't save the document.
  - 2. Offering for a repair
    - a) Repair, e.g., I will give you my own oyster card.
    - b) Compensation, e.g., Or you can take my credit card to buy a new card.
  - 3. Promise of forbearance, e.g. I won't repeat it.

#### **2.4.4. Trosborg's Model of Apology Strategies**

According to Trosborg (1987) explicit apologies include apology verbs when given directly, e.g., apologise, excuse, and be sorry. Apologies can be performed indirectly with different strategies such as attempting to trivialise the offence. Trosborg's redefinition of apology strategies are set forth as following:

- 1) Minimising or trivialising the degree of offence or negotiating the preconditions caused the offence, the speaker might put the blame on someone else to save face and avoid responsibility.
- 2) Recognizing the situation and acknowledging the responsibility which might result in self-deprecation. The sub-category of this strategy goes as following:
  - a) acknowledging the responsibility implicitly, e.g. I should have probably asked you before acting on it.
  - b) acknowledging the responsibility explicitly, e.g. I admit it did not even cross my mind that you would disagree.
  - c) expression of lack of intent (Trosborg, 1987), e.g. It was never my intention to hide it from you. / I did not mean to hide it from you.
  - d) expression of self-deficiency (Trosborg, 1987), e.g. I am not very punctual, and I am aware that I should work on it.
  - e) Expression of embarrassment (Trosborg, 1987), e.g. I cannot believe I made myself look like a fool now.
  - f) Shouldering the blame explicitly, e.g. You have every right to blame me.
- 3) Explanation or account (Trosborg, 1987, p. 151), the speaker might attempt to alleviate the burden by providing further explanations
  - a) Explaining the situation explicitly, e.g. I was ill that's why I couldn't attend.
  - b) Explaining the situation implicitly, e.g. These things can happen to everyone.
- 4) Conveying apology
  - a) Showing regret, e.g., I am really sorry.

- b) Offering apology, e.g., I apologize.
- c) Asking for forgiveness, e.g., Excuse me.
- 5) Offer of repair can occur figuratively or literally due to a damage resulted from the interaction.
  - a) Compensation, e.g., how can I make this up to you?
  - b) Repair, e.g., I can give you my card.
- 6) Promise of forbearance, mostly through promising, the speaker can ensure that the action will not be repeated.
- 7) Expressing concern for the hearer, some previous models, e.g, Blum-Kulka and Cohen's model, were criticized by Meier (1996, p. 222) for not including this strategy.

#### **2.4.5. Fraser's Model of Apology Strategies**

Fraser (1981) developed a different taxonomy of apology strategies, in this model Fraser claims that to mitigate the offence and convey sincerity, the offender should use not one but several strategies.

Violation of one or more social norms may require apology, Fraser (1981) bases his model on basic assumptions such as the sincerity that the speaker feels, the speaker may have been fully or particularly caused the offence, the violation of hearer's face. Either only one of those assumptions or some of them occur, an apology should be expressed by the speaker sincerely to conform to social norms. The steps of this model are as following:

#### **Figure 5**

*"Fraser's (1981) model of apology strategies"*

Announcement of the apology

Example: I want to apologize for raising my voice.

Expressing one's responsibility for an apology

Example: I feel like I owe you an apology.

Offering an apology

Example: Should I apologize for...

Asking for an approval

Example: Please accept my apology.

Expressing regret

Example: I am terribly sorry for raising my voice.

Asking for forgiveness

Example: Please forgive my behaviour.

Taking on the responsibility of the offence

Example: It is entirely my fault.

Promise of forbearance

Example: It won't happen again; I will do my best to behave.

Offering repair

Example: how can I make this up to you?

#### **2.4.6. Aijmer's Model of Apology Strategies**

Holmes (1990) in her model of apology strategies, which was further extended and developed by Aijmer (1996), present six different causes for offence requiring apology.

#### **Figure 6**

*"Apology strategies by Aijmer (1996)"*

Talk: not being clear, interruption, digression etc.

Time: tardiness, wasting time, cancelling a meeting or appointment etc.

Space: intruding, violating someone's personal space, barging in on someone etc.

Social gaffe: sneezing, hiccupping, clearing throat etc.

Possession: damaging someone's personal effects or belongings.

Inconvenience of impoliteness: leaving a room to answer the door, interrupting someone to text etc.

#### **2.5. Cross-Cultural Speech Acts Realization Project – CCSARP**

The Cross-Cultural Speech Acts Realisation Project (CCSARP), initiated by Shoshana Olshtain in 1984, performed a comprehensive analysis of apologetic content in order to construct a metric for assessing sociocultural proficiency in second language acquisition, specifically in the domain of making requests and apologies. The CCSARP has identified five techniques in the "apology speech act set": illocutionary force indicating device (IFID), explanation, statement of responsibility, offer for repair, and promise of forbearance (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983).

Several research papers in cross-cultural pragmatics have examined apologies, contrasting their usage among native English speakers and speakers of other languages such as Persian

(Eslami-Rasekh, 2004), Danish (Trosborg, 1995), Spanish (Garcia, 1989), Turkish (Tunçel, 1999), and so on. The objective of these research, frequently conducted as part of the CCSARP project, was to examine the patterns in which requests and apologies are expressed in various languages, emphasizing the commonalities and distinctions between native and non-native speakers. Inter-language apology studies primarily examine how non-native language learners produce and perceive apologies. These studies compare the usage of apologies in English with other languages, particularly those from Western societies. It is crucial to acknowledge that their understanding of apology is rooted on Western sociocultural standards, which may not correspond to the traits observed in non-Western cultures (Liebersohn et al., 2004).

## **2.6. Apology Studies in Education**

Previously done studies to improve apology speech acts in an EFL classroom are inherently comparative and based on dichotomies such as explicit vs implicit instruction, L1 and L2 strategies and productions used, or comparison of different speech acts. Previous studies mostly reported positive results, according to Limberg (2015) pragmatic competence is rather a neglected area in foreign language education; thus, positive results in these studies might be due to the focus given on pragmatic competence.

Alerwi and Alzahrani (2020) investigated the effectiveness of using speech acts of requests, apology, and refusal. 18 Saudi female first-year college students participated in this study. The results of the study suggest that using sitcoms to improve speech acts proved useful, that said, according to the results of the study students mostly avoided taking the responsibility and put the blame on someone else.

In a study conducted by Zerey (2019), the pragmatic language skills of preschool children between the ages of 4 and 6 were examined. The study specifically looked at the use and tactics of apologetic speech actions, and if there were any differences in the preferences for apology usage and techniques across genders. A study was conducted where an oral discourse completion assignment was given to 100 pre-school pupils in order to collect data. The results of this study showed that the major apologetic methods utilized by the students were IFIDs. However, male students employed more rudimentary and less complex apologies in comparison to their female counterparts. The findings also indicated that the educational background of parents and caregivers did not exert a significant influence on the apology tactics which were employed by the students.

Shark (2019) in his comparative study investigated the effects of implicit and explicit instruction on EFL learners' development of apology strategies. 10 English speakers and 40 EFL students participated in this study, EFL learners were divided into implicit and explicit instruction groups randomly. The findings of the study showed that although both groups made progress after the instruction, but the group received explicit instruction outperformed their counterparts.

Al Maseed, Waugh, and Burns (2018) investigated the apology strategies used by English-speaking students studying Arabic at an American university. In this comparative study, 15 Arabic-speaking native speakers and 45 college students from different proficiency level participated. In line with the literature, the results of this study showed that students with higher proficiency level showed more awareness and use of apology strategies. Additionally, students used more regret expressions compared to their native counterparts due to L1 interference.

Istifçi (2009) in their comparative study investigated whether proficiency level and native-speaker norms are related, students from intermediate level ( $n=20$ ), advanced level ( $n=20$ ), and native speakers ( $n=5$ ) participated in this study. The findings of this study revealed that the more proficiency students get, the more they were adhered to native-speaker apology norms. That said, the intermediate group showed negative pragmatic transfer in their apologies.

Tunçel (1999) in their cross-cultural study with 50 native English speakers and 173 native Turkish speakers, 68 preparatory students, 48 senior students, and 44 native Turkish speakers. The results of this study revealed that the more complex situations occurred, the more L1 transfer was employed by Turkish speakers to apologize in English. L1 transfer differed accordingly with speakers' proficiency in the target language, proficiency speakers mostly did positive pragmatic transfer from their L1, whereas students with low-proficiency level showed more examples of negative pragmatic transfer. Negative pragmatic transfer also occurred due to the unfamiliarity and formality of the situation.

## **2.7. Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter aimed to provide the literature review of the current study. The chapter started with a brief overview and history of pragmatics, followed with communicative competence and communicative competence taxonomies developed by various scholars. Next, speech act theory was briefly outlined, and apology speech acts was introduced. The

chapter proceeded with empirical studies explored apology speech acts and lastly, using video clips to teach speech acts was explained briefly.



### 3. METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the research design of the study is explained in detail. The data of this study was collected through two different data collection instruments, the ‘Open-Ended Discourse Completion Test’ (ODCT), or, with its other name, the ‘Written Discourse Completion Test’ (WDCT) and a ‘Multiple-Choice Discourse Completion Test’ (MDCT). These instruments, research coding and analysis procedures are explained meticulously in the upcoming parts.

#### 3.1. Research Questions

The present research is based on the following research questions:

RQ1- What apology strategies did Turkish EFL students, as nonnative speakers of English (NNS), choose:

- a) when there is power difference?
- b) when there is social distance?
- c) depending on the weight of their action?

RQ2- What apology strategies are chosen by English native speakers (NS):

- a) when there is power difference?
- b) when there is social distance?
- c) depending on the weight of their action or the severity of the action?

RQ3- What are the various semantic formulas employed by Turkish EFL students (NNS) in a wide range of situations involved in WDCTs?

RQ4- Are there any differences in apology strategies preferred by participants in open-ended DCT (ODCT) compared to multiple-choice DCT (MDCT)? If so, what specific differences were observed?

#### 3.2. Research Design and Approach

The researcher used 2 different types of DCTs to triangulate the data. The DCTs available are the Open-Ended Discourse Completion Test (ODCT), the Written Discourse Completion Test (WDCT), and the Multiple-Choice Discourse Completion Test (MDCT).

The WDCT comprised 6 distinct scenarios necessitating diverse approaches in terms of apologetic tactics, while the MDCT encompassed 10 varied situations requiring different approaches in relation to apologies strategies. These situations also involved several social elements, such as power disparity, social distance, and the significance of the action. Furthermore, alongside MDCT, the researcher implemented a deliberation exercise where the Turkish EFL learners engaged in a conversation to explore their choices and ultimately reached a consensus on a single alternative.

### **3.3. Participants**

In this study, the intact sampling group method was employed. The research had a total of 28 participants, out of which 8 were native speakers. The researcher taught the group of non-native students for the second track of the education year's total of 4 tracks; additionally, 1 track was equal to 8 weeks, and the researcher spent a minimum of 18–20 hours with them each week. Besides, none of the non-native participant group members have ever visited an English-speaking country. They started as B1 students according to the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages). At the beginning of the year, the school administered a proficiency test to determine their level. They were randomly assigned to the classroom according to the points they had gotten from the exam. They were taught general English during the first module or track; in the second track, their lessons were separated into 4 different skills: reading, listening, speaking, and writing. The level of the group was intermediate, and they had one more track to finish the preparatory program. Out of 20 Turkish students, 12 were female and 8 were male. Their ages were between 18 and 22. They had similar language learning and socio-cultural backgrounds according to the demographic questionnaire, including age, gender, education, and prior English language learning experiences.

The participant groups were carefully composed to consider their native languages for the research questions, which aim to investigate differences in apology strategies and the semantic strategies that would be used in cooperation with the strategies. Hence, the second cohort of participants comprised Canadian individuals who were native English speakers. They came to Turkey as a part of a special exchange program to study software and technology. The number of native English-speaking participants was 8, and their ages were between 18 and 25. Also, 5 of them were female, and 3 of them were male. For this native speaker group, the researcher used the convenient sampling method because it was easier for

him to access the participants for inclusion in the study. In Turkey, it is hard to find native speakers of English, regardless of their country. Therefore, the researcher, with the help of another colleague at a different university in Istanbul, managed to find eight native speakers of English, as mentioned above.

### **3.4. Data Collection Instruments**

The many contexts of the DCT contain space in which various speech acts that are examined by the research could be entered. They do this with intent of ascertaining their true capability for production. According to Kasper and Dahl (1991c), the DCT proposed by Blum-Kulka (1982) remains till today the most frequently employed instrument of data collection in speech act research. Typically, the DCT is provided in the form of a questionnaire that has several examples of the actual scenario. However, the respondent's role is limited to short dialogue responses which are stated in the following way – “what he/she says”. Ellis (1994) also notes that although these tools like the DCT are controlled, they enable the fast and simple gathering of large amounts of information. Therefore, in the current study, the researcher used 2 different types of discourse completion tests, which are written discourse completion test and multiple-choice discourse completion test.

The study uses WDCT and MDCT to test learners' pragmatic competence. It then compares the results of EFL learners to results of native speakers.

The DCT, or Discourse Completion Task, used in many cross-cultural speech act studies, seems to have shown effectiveness as an eliciting tool. According to Beebe and Cummings (1985), this method is advantageous for several reasons:

- (a) Efficient Data Collection: The DCT also helps in gathering huge amounts of data at high speed.
- (b) Initial Classification: It plays a role in creating an early classification of semantic formulas and strategies typical for conversational speech.
- (c) Examination of Socially Appropriate Responses: However, in the DCT, it is possible to examine socially appropriate requirements, including those that are never seen as being polite.
- (d) Insight into Social and Psychological Factors: It offers in-depth analysis of social or psychological variables that may influence speaking and acting out.

(e) Understanding Canonical Shapes of Speech Acts: A DCT helps in finding what this canonical shape is for different speech acts or refusals, apologies, partings, and so forth perceived by speakers of one language or another.

DCT is a short-written test that involves a description of the setting, the level of familiarity between actors, as well as the social standing of each one. There is a brief conversation after that, and the respondents are required to respond in writing. Such a type of DCT is called free response statements, which require participants to say what they would utter in the described cases. The present investigation utilized the DCT (Discourse Completion Task), in which participants were presented with a prompt or scenario and had to compose a suitable apology or employ an acceptable semantic formula. The participants were asked to act in accordance with different social variables. For example, for one of the respondents, they were expected to act as if they had more power than the respondent. Or in another situation, they were expected to act as they share (both native speakers and Turkish EFL learners) equal powers, such as colleague to colleague, and then respond to the situation.

The WDCT tests pragmatic awareness and aptitude for certain speech acts, whereas the MDCT assesses learners' true pragmatic ability when different options, including apology semantic strategies, are presented to them. However, WDCTs and MDCTs have limitations, such as not fully capturing the cognitive processes behind verbal interaction, failing to imitate conversational turns, and failing to effectively cover the social involvement aspect of communicative events common in real conversations (Spolsky, 1989). The WDCT was based on the DCT, which was used by Beckwith & Deweale (2008). Therefore, the researcher added a discussion part for only Turkish EFL learners in order to understand the factors that led them their choices. The discussion was not applied to the native speaker group since English is their own native language.

### **3.5. Validity and Reliability of DCTs**

Reliability during the process of coding, a programmer may sometimes unintentionally form judgments. Hence, Inter-coder reliability was utilized to evaluate the results in this study. Inter-coder reliability refers to the evaluation of a text by several coders who subsequently come to an agreement (Tinsley & Weiss, 2000). In order to assess the consistency between raters, two individuals analyzed the data to determine inter-rater reliability. After finishing the process of structurally coding the data, the researcher sent it to a colleague who possessed

specialized knowledge in qualitative research projects. Two raters evaluated the apologetic strategies using Cohen & Olshtain's (1983) compilation of apology strategies. The findings exhibited a high level of consistency between both raters. As a result, we ensured that the intercoder reliability was both efficient and morally sound. The different codes were discussed and unanimously agreed upon by two programmers.

### **3.6. Procedure and Analysis**

In the first phase of data collection, participants were invited to a space, and they were given the WDCT at the same time. They were asked to submit the test at the end of the same session. Their interaction among themselves was strictly prohibited, and questions were not allowed in order not to influence the answers of other participants. The other group, which consisted of native speakers, was asked to come to school to take the test as after the Turkish EFL learners.

In the second phase, data was collected through for the administration of MDCT, and the participants, the Turkish EFL learners, were already gathered together that day since they had classes, and the native speakers were asked to come to the school after the students were gone, where there were plenty of empty classes for them to fill out the test in quiet. The researcher chose the date for this procedure a week later from the first operation, and he tried to be inclusive for all the best possible conditions for all the groups, such as whether all of them were totally available, well-fed, well-slept, well-informed, or the most substantial one is that they were in an appropriate mindset, which could be related to their mental tiredness or their mental state, to be able to go through a test.

When analyzing the data from both of the instruments, whether MDCT or WDCT, the participants' answers were analyzed based on Cohen & Olshtain's (1983) classification of apology strategies, which was described in detail in the Chapter 2. This classification includes illocutionary force-indicating devices as an expression of regret, an offer of apology, and a request for forgiveness. The others that were in his classification were responsibility, providing an explanation on account behind the offense, offering for a repair, concern for the hearer, and promise of forbearance. The answers of the participants were coded on the basis of these strategies. Related examples of these strategies are provided in the literature review chapter in the section "Apology Strategies."

The process of semantic analysis in the context of this study involved the following steps:

- **Data Preparation:** The responses from the participants were prepared for analysis. This involves transcribing any verbal responses into text (if they were not already provided in written form), cleaning the data to remove any irrelevant information, and converting the data into a format that can be easily analyzed.
- **Categorization:** Each response was categorized according to the apology strategy it represents.
- **Semantic Coding:** In this step, the responses were coded based on their semantic properties. This involved assigning codes or labels to the responses based on their meanings. The coding scheme was determined based on the research objectives and the apology strategies.
- **Interpretation:** Based on the deduced insights about the apology strategies and semantic formulas used by the participants, the researcher then interpreted the coded data. This might involve comparing the apology strategies used by different groups of participants (e.g., Turkish vs. native speakers), identifying patterns or trends in the data, and drawing conclusions about the research questions.

By using semantic analysis, this research aimed to gain deeper insights into the apology strategies used by Turkish compared to native individuals and how these strategies vary depending on the power difference, social distance, and weight of the action.

Numerous elements can impact the optimal results or environments to administer the DCT instruments. Thus, before administering the second Discourse Completion Test (MDCT) to focus on English-language apology speech acts the following factors were considered:

**Participant Engagement:** Administering a DCT too quickly after a previous one may lead to participant fatigue or disinterest, affecting response quality. To mitigate these issues, there were 1-week breaks between tests.

**Memory Effects:** Timing between DCTs is crucial when comparing responses over different periods or conditions. Waiting too long may result in memory effects, while conducting tests too closely may yield inconsistent responses influenced by recent exposure.

**Research Design:** The overall research design and objectives influence the timing of DCT administrations. A designated waiting period may be necessary for studies aiming to capture temporal or contextual changes, while studies with repeated measurements may require more frequent testing.

**Participant Availability:** Considering the participants' schedules and availability, aim to administer tests at convenient times to enhance collaboration and minimize potential frustration.

**Ethical Considerations:** To be able to administer the DCTs to the participants, the researcher presented a consent form to the participants. After all the required signatures were taken, the researchers were able to start the process of gathering data.

**Reliability:** The answers of both types of DCTs were analyzed by two different researchers before analyzing the participants' answers.

All in all, balancing the data collection needs with participants' well-being is crucial. Utilizing pilot testing, careful consideration of research objectives, and adherence to ethical principles can guide decisions on when to administer a MDCT as the subsequent DCT tool.

Also, after all of the rules above were followed, in order to triangulate the data collection tools, another discourse completion test was used. The second DCT was a multiple-choice DCT, which had 10 multiple-choice questions, situations, or scenarios that included 3 social variables: social distance, power difference, and the weight of the action. Each of the questions or scenarios includes those 3 variables that require a different apology strategy, and so, in connection with this, naturally, different semantic strategies or formulas are also called for. Furthermore, the MDCT was used in order to capture the perceptions of both participant groups. To have been able to do this, the researcher decided to add a further step to data collection procedures. The study employed the model created by Farshaiyan and Yazdi Amirkhiz (2011), which integrated Fraser's semantic formulae (1979) and Cohen and Olshtain's (1981) model of apologetic methods and semantic formulas, along with its following iterations (1983). The researchers utilized the CCSARP, a coding manual (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989), that was meticulously chosen as the most pertinent reference for the present study. The data was analyzed using SPSS 26, employing descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage. This analysis aimed to examine the semantic strategies employed by participants in various contexts. Employing the MDCT was essential in order to accomplish one of the additional objectives of the present study, which is to determine if the preferred semantic techniques alter when using ODCT or when employing MDCT.

**Table 2**

*“Apology Strategies and the Examples of Semantic Strategies Regarding Fraser (1979) and Olshtain and Cohen (1983) Studies of speech acts of apology”*

Apology Strategies - Olshtain and Cohen (1983)	Fraser's (1979) and Olshtain and Cohen's (1983) Semantic Strategy Examples
(1) Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)	
a. An expression of regret	e.g. I'm sorry
b. An offer of apology	e.g. I apologise
c. A request for forgiveness,	, e.g. Excuse me/Forgive me/ Pardon me
(2) Explanation or account	e.g. The traffic was terrible
(3) Taking on responsibility	
a. Explicit self-blame	e.g. It is my fault/my mistake
b. Lack of intent	e.g. I didn't mean it
c. Expression of self-deficiency	e.g. I was confused/I didn't see you/I must have forgotten
d. Expression of embarrassment	e.g. I feel terrible about this happened
e. Self-dispraise	, e.g. I'm such an idiot!
(4) Concern for the hearer	e.g. I hope I didn't unsettle you/ Are you all right?
(5) Offer of repair	, e.g. I'll pay for the damage
(6) Promise of forbearance	e.g. Trust me. It won't happen again.

In the table above, different types of apology strategies and their semantic formulas can be seen. According to Olshtain and Cohen (1983), apologies can be divided into 6 main categories as Illocutionary Indicating Devices (IFID), promise of forbearance, explanation or justification, an offer of repair, an expressing / taking responsibility, and concern for the hearer. The data were analyzed as stated by Olshtain and Cohen's (1983) apology taxonomy, and with the help of a coding manual which was based on also Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) CCSARP coding manual. An example of the data categorization according to Olshtain and Cohen's (1983) apology taxonomy.

- 1) I am sorry that I broke your vase. (An expression of regret)
- 2) It was dark and I didn't see the vase. (A elucidation or narrative of the circumstances)
- 3) It was my my fault that I broke your vase. (An acknowledgement of responsibility)
- 4) Are you okay? Did I hurt you? (Concern for the hearer)
- 5) I can buy the exact same vase for you. (An offer of repair)
- 6) I will be more careful from now on. (A promise of forbearance)

## 4. FINDINGS

This chapter is divided into two subsections: the findings of the open-ended discourse completion task (WDCT) and the data collected through the multiple-choice discourse completion task (MDCT). The reporting of the findings is organized according to the apology strategies varied by power difference, social distance, and the weight of the action (the severity of the action).

### 4.1. In-depth analysis of the Findings of the WDCT

The table below summarizes the social variables depicted in open ended discourse completion tests throughout the research. There are 6 different situations, and all of the situations require different kinds of apology strategies which include different semantic strategies for the participants.

**Table 3.**

*Combinations of the Social Variables in the O-DCT - WDCT*

“Situation”	“Power Difference”	“Social Distance”	“The Weight of Action”
1	-	+	+
2	-	-	-
3	+	+	+
4	-	-	+
5	+	+	-
6	+	-	+

When we have a look at the power difference the sign (P+) shows the speaker has an upper-hand or power over the hearer. And we will analyze what kind of apology strategies occur in those situations, also, the symbol (-) refers to the situations where the hearer has the upper-hand, or it can be said that the hearer is socially higher than the speaker. In the other column, the summary of the social variable of the matter of distance between the interlocutors. The issue which these variable concerns, the speakers and the hearer’s being familiar and unfamiliar with each other. The symbol (+) refers to the situations where there is a social distance issue between the interlocutors and we call this “unfamiliarity”, for example, a relationship between the professor and the student or an employee and employer, and the symbol (-) refers to the situations where interlocutors are close to each other and we call this

familiarity, for example, an issue between two best friends, or an issue between two same level colleagues. These symbols and their explanations also extend to MDCT tables.

In the present study, in order to categorize the apology strategies, the researcher used Olshtain and Cohen's apology strategies model. Also known as the model of Blum-Kulka, Olshtain, and Cohen (1984) model of apology consists of several key components:

1- 'Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)': The most basic apologies are those that have "formulaic" meaning and include words like; "sorry," "forgive me" among others with verb inclusions like, "excuse me" or "I'm sorry!" "I am sorry" is more common in written than in spoken English. The words "really" or "very" can also be used as intensifiers to enhance apologetic remarks.

2- Explanation or Account: They are likely to provide self-justification for the offense by identifying its causes and blaming external factors that were not in their power. It may be overt, referring directly to heavy traffic, e.g., "Traffic is heavy at peak times" or covert, implying traffic is heavy during evenings.

3- Taking on Responsibility: As a way of assuaging the aggrieved, the speaker might accept liability for the transgression. Some sub-strategies for admitting guilt could be explicit self-blame, denying intent, showing shame, justifying the reactions of others, self-depreciation, and refusal of guilt to mention a few.

4- Concern for the Hearer: To relieve the victim of further pain, the wrongdoer could mention that he hoped to have not upset him, or asked to inquire if he was fine.

5- Offer of Repair: In this regard, apologies may be followed by certain actions that aim at making up for the damage or offence caused. This might mean making an offer for lunch; reschedule or organizing some gesture to amend the situation.

6- Promise of Forbearance: The assurance "it will not happen again" expresses this idea when the speaker strongly feels guilt.

#### **4.2. Apology Strategies in WDCT's Where There Are Power Differences**

According to Austin's (1962) categorization of the framework of illocutionary acts, it can be regarded as a behabitive act. It involves a response by the speaker with respect to the previous activity where they regret the deed that was done and promise to abstain from the same activity. The illocutionary force of apology is explicit in "I apologize" and implicit in "I

am sorry.” The table below demonstrates the frequency and percentage of apology strategies used by Turkish EFL learners and native speakers. Individuals may use numerous apology tactics to navigate and control potential face-threatening acts in settings where social power is a concern. The technique chosen is frequently determined by the dynamics of power relationships between the apologizer and the offended person. Here are some commonly used apologetic strategies by Turkish EFL students and native students in the context of social power issues:

**Table 4.**

*Depicting the frequencies and the percentages of the preferred strategies in the situations presented in WDCT regarding power difference (+) for Turkish EFL learners and NSs*

Apology Strategies Power Difference (+)	Turkish n:20		N. Speaker n:8	
	F	%	F	%
(1) Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)				
a. An expression of regret	32	58,00%	28	50,00%
b. An offer of apology	12	28%	9	21%
c. A request for forgiveness,	2	3%	0	0
(2) Explanation or account	5	15%	4	12%
(3) Taking on responsibility				
a. Explicit self-blame	4	8%	3	6%
b. Lack of intent	4	8%	3	6%
c. Expression of self-deficiency	4	8%	3	6%
d. Expression of embarrassment	2	10%	2	15%
e. Self-dispraise	2	10%	2	15%
(4) Concern for the hearer	0	0	2	2%
(5) Offer of repair	12	28%	9	21%
(6) Promise of forbearance	2	10%	4	%12

*Note.* This table illustrates the circumstances (P+) in which speakers exert power over the hearer.

**Table 5.**

*Depicting the frequencies and the percentages of the preferred strategies in the situations presented in WDCT regarding power difference (-) for Turkish EFL learners and NSs*

Apology Strategies Power Difference (-)	Turkish n:20		N. Speaker n:8	
	F	%	F	%
(1) Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)				
a. An expression of regret	28	51,00%	26	48,00%
b. An offer of apology	12	28%	11	25%
c. A request for forgiveness	3	7%	2	6%
(2) Explanation or account	7	17%	4	12%
(3) Taking on responsibility				
a. Explicit self-blame	7	17%	2	12%
b. Lack of intent	4	14%	3	12%
c. Expression of self-deficiency	4	16%	3	12%
d. Expression of embarrassment	2	10%	0	0
e. Self-dispraise	2	10%	0	0
(4) Concern for the hearer	0	0%	2	4%
(5) Offer of repair	20	40%	26	32%
(6) Promise of forbearance	12	26%	9	22%

*Note.* This table illustrates the circumstances in which the hearer possesses authority over the speaker, as shown by the presence of (P-) conditions.

The table above shows that the most used apology strategies divided into two columns where Turkish EFL learners' apology strategies and native speakers' strategies can be seen. Regarding the situations in which the speakers have power over the hearers. An expression of regret, (58% NNS, 50% NS) where the power is in favor of the speaker as in the situations S3, S5, and S6. The situations that are presented were specially designed to participants to act and write in a situation where sometimes they have a power over the hearer or vice-versa. When we first look into the analysis of the P+ conditions, in the situations such as, "A server mistakenly delivers an incorrect dish to a customer", where the speaker has more power than the hearer (S3, S5, S6), and in that case, the first selected strategy was an expression of regret (51% NNS, 48% NS) as an example from the data, "I kept you waiting for too long, I am sorry". the speaker as the client in that restaurant. The second selected semantic strategy was

an offer of apology and an offer of repair with the ratio of 28% of Turkish EFL learners, and 21% of native speakers. As another example from the extracts, “I spill your drink sorry” There are also some strategies that very rarely preferred by native speakers and Turkish EFL learners as it can be seen in the table, they have low percentages, and those strategies are explicit self-dispraise (NNS 10%, N %0), expression of embarrassment (NNS 10%, NS 0%), and request for forgiveness (NNS 7%, NS 6%).

When it is scrutinized extensively P- conditions, where the hearer has more power than the speaker (S1, S2, S4), and in that case, the first selected strategy was again an expression of regret (51% NNS, 48% NS) as an example from the data, “I am sorry for deleting the hard drive” the speaker says to his boss, as the boss is the hearer. The second most used semantic strategy is an offer of repair such as “I will recover the deleted data from the hard drive I am sorry again.” Furthermore, there are also some strategies that are very rarely preferred by native speakers as they have low percentages, and those strategies self-dispraise (NNS 10%, N %0) and (NNS 10%, NS 0%), and request for forgiveness (NNS 3%, NS 0%). All in all, whether the hearer has more power, or the speaker has more power, the participants went with surefire option, which is an expression of regret. When we look at the descriptive stats in-depth, it can be inferred that the difference in the percentages is when the hearer has more power. For example, in the situation in which “the speaker sends an embarrassing e-mail to his boss”, and this requires a delinquent approach so that is why the speakers said, “What can I do to make it right?” they chose to use the offer of repair strategy which was written by 40% for Turkish EFL students and 32% for native students. As in one of the situations, “the offender keeps his boss or CEO waiting for a very important meeting”. As it can be understood that the hearer has more social power than the speaker. Therefore, the most used semantic strategy in this situation is the expression of regret (NNS 51%, NS 48%) since the hearer has more power, and the outcome of the situation can end badly for the speaker. Therefore, when the researcher checks the extracts, most of the participants went with expressions or sentences like “I am sorry for keeping you waiting.” Overall, it can be explained that when the power is in favor of the hearer, for example, a student says something offensive to his professor and thinks about the best way to apologize in addition to the expression of regret semantic strategy, it can be observed that there is another high ratio of semantic strategies, which are the promise of forbearance and an offer of repair. Therefore, it can be inferred that when the hearer has the upper hand, the participants tend to take action to

save the situation, or they make amends regardless of their native languages in spite of the percentage difference between them.

### 4.3. Apology Strategies in WDCT's Where There Are Social Distance Issues

Since this apologetic strategy is pivotal in many languages according to Al-Zumor (2011), it could be assumed that Turkish EFL users and native speakers choose it due to its relevance. Expressing regret, explaining, or offering an apology does not much impact the self-image or dignity. The frequent application of these two apologies is justified using their reduced effect on maintaining the apologist's sociological status and social distance.

**Table 6.**

*Depicting the frequencies and the percentages of the preferred strategies in the situations presented in WDCT regarding social distance (-) for Turkish EFL learners and NSs*

Apology Strategies Social Distance (-)	Turkish n:20		N. Speaker n:8	
	F	%	F	%
(1) Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)				
a. An expression of regret	14	34,00%	17	42,00%
b. An offer of apology	8	27%	10	28%
c. A request for forgiveness,	2	3%	0	0
(2) Explanation or account	9	%13	6	10%
(3) Taking on responsibility				
a. Explicit self-blame	5	8%	3	3%
b. Lack of intent	4	4%	3	3%
c. Expression of self-deficiency	4	8%	3	2%
d. Expression of embarrassment	2	2%	0	0
e. Self-dispraise	2	3%	0	0
(4) Concern for the hearer			2	2%
(5) Offer of repair	5	12%	6	16%
(6) Promise of forbearance	2	4%	4	12

*Note. This table illustrates the circumstances in which the speaker and the hearer share a mutual familiarity.*

**Table 7.**

*Depicting the frequencies and the percentages of the preferred strategies in the situations presented in WDCT regarding social distance (+) for Turkish EFL learners and NSs*

Apology Strategies Social Distance (+)	Turkish n:20		N. Speaker n:8	
	F	%	F	%
(1) 'Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)'				
a. An expression of regret	22	58,00%	26	48,00%
b. An offer of apology	7	30%	5	46%
c. A request for forgiveness,	3	4%	2	4
(2) Explanation or account	35	59%	22	42%
(3) Taking on responsibility				
a. Explicit self-blame	5	14%	2	10%
b. Lack of intent	4	16%	3	14%
c. Expression of self-deficiency	4	16%	3	14%
d. Expression of embarrassment	2	8%	0	6%
e. Self-dispraise	2	5%	0	2&
(4) Concern for the hearer			2	4%
(5) Offer of repair	12	45%	9	37%
(6) Promise of forbearance	2	10%	4	12%

*Note. This table illustrates circumstances in which the speaker and the hearer are unfamiliar with each other.*

The expression and comprehension of communicative practices related to expressions of gratitude are significantly influenced by social distance variables. Leech (2016) highlights how it is fundamental for influencing politeness behavior and linguistic tact. Wolfson (1989) notes that social distancing is one of the most important concepts in understanding why people behave differently with respect to politeness across cultures. Similarly, Holmes (1995)

perceives this factor as one of the crucial components shaping appropriate types of politeness in terms of apologizing behavior towards others in most (if not all) societies.

When we look at the frequencies and percentages in depth, it can be seen that when there is a social distance (S1, S3, S5), the most commonly used semantic strategy is categorized as the expression of regret, with the ratio of %58 for Turkish EFL learners, and %48 for native students. The second most common strategy followed by an expression of regret is another IFID strategy which is an offer of apology (27% NNS, 28NS). Moreover, it is surprisingly interesting that the most preferred option is that an explanation of the circumstance, which comes first with the ratio of %58 for Turkish EFL learners and with the ratio of %42 for native students. For example, in the situation, “where the speaker sends an offensive e-mail to his boss rather than her friend”. He (NS) tries to express his feelings by writing “I am really sorry, my friend was having a bad day, so I tried to cheer him up with a joke.” Therefore, this can have a couple of implications such as where the interlocutors are distant from each other, they feel the need of a detailed account of the occurrence. Lastly, the offer of repair strategy comes third with the ratio of 45% NNS and 37% NS. This constitutes that when the speaker does not know the hearer, the speaker may think that the best way to get out of that situation is to apologize and then, offer a repair as in situation 3 in which “the speaker hits a car in front of him”. When look at the table, we see that when there is a familiarity between the interlocutors in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> situations, so an expression of regret is still a very popular answer %34 for Turkish EFL students and %42 for native students in the situations where there is familiarity between the interlocutors in terms of social context. Similarly, it would be expected to be opposite results might have occurred in this kind of variable (familiarity and unfamiliarity) is considered. For example, similar to current studies’ finding about social distance variable, a cross-cultural study which was done by Mengjiao (2021) and which investigated social distance as well, demonstrated that in the situations where people interact with strangers, they tend to provide more detailed explanations compared to when talking to familiar others. The level of closeness in a relationship influences the use of explanation; the less familiar someone is, the more likely they are to explain things. Social distance plays a role in choosing how to apologize. Researchers also looked at the impact of culture and language proficiency. They discovered that the explanation strategy is used more often in these situations where there is an unfamiliarity between the interlocutors.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrate that the participants oftentimes preferred or wrote apologies in which they mitigate or redress their actions. As an example, “I am really sorry, my friend was having a bad day, so I tried to cheer him up with a joke.” The participants chose to write in order to lessen their impacts of their actions to avoid FTAs. In the example, when the interlocutors are distant from each other socially, the one who made the mistake tries to redress his or her action to restore face.

#### 4.4. Apology Strategies in WDCT’s Where There Are Severity of Action Problems

The following results refer to the situations in which the issue is the severity or gravity of the actions. In some of the situations, which will be explained directly further, the actions will be severe and might end in damaging the interlocutors, and some of them are lighter compared the others.

**Table 8.**

*Depicting the frequencies and the percentages of the preferred strategies in the situations presented in WDCT regarding the weight of the action (+) for Turkish EFL learners and native speakers*

Apology Strategies Severity of the Action (+)	Turkish n:20		N. Speaker n:8	
	F	%	F	%
(1) ‘Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)’				
a. An expression of regret	32	52,00%	26	38,00%
b. An offer of apology	18	30%	11	28%
c. A request for forgiveness,	2	3%	0	0
(2) Explanation or account	12	24%	6	12%
(3) Taking on responsibility				
a. Explicit self-blame	5	8%	3	3%
b. Lack of intent	22	36%	20	42%
c. Expression of self-deficiency	22	36%	3	2%
d. Expression of embarrassment	2	2%	0	0
e. Self-dispraise	2	3%	2	3%
(4) Concern for the hearer	0	0	0	0%
(5) Offer of repair	22	56%	35	50%

(6) Promise of forbearance 18 25% 16 28%

*Note.* This table illustrates the circumstances in which the weight of the action is significant.

**Table 9.**

*Depicting the frequencies and the percentages of the preferred strategies in the situations presented in WDCT regarding the weight of the action (-) for Turkish EFL learners and native speakers*

Apology Strategies Severity of the Action (-)	Turkish n:20		N. Speaker n:8	
	F	%	F	%
(1) 'Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)'				
a. An expression of regret	24	38,00%	26	42,00%
b. An offer of apology	7	7%	5	9%
c. A request for forgiveness,	3	4%	2	4
(2) Explanation or account	7	7%	5	9%
(3) Taking on responsibility				
a. Explicit self-blame	0	0%	0	0%
b. Lack of intent	0	0%	0	0%
c. Expression of self-deficiency	7	7%	5	11%
d. Expression of embarrassment	0	0%	0	0%
e. Self-dispraise	0	0%	0	0
(4) Concern for the hearer	8	9%	6	12%
(5) Offer of repair	0	0%	0	0%
(6) Promise of forbearance	2	10%	3	8%

*Note.* The circumstances detailed in this table pertain to particular situations where the severity of the action is not overly burdensome or severe.

The last two tables of the results of open-ended discourse completion test are regarding the weight of the action or the severity of the action. In the situations S2 and S5 the actions done by the speaker is quite prominent and heavy in terms of socially accepted dogmas. For example, in the situation 6, the speaker breaks a very important item which is the

camera of the hearer, and the hearer is a professional photographer, so this means that his or her livelihood depends on that camera. Therefore, when we look at the analysis, we see that the most popular semantic strategy is offer of repair, which is “How can I help you to recover from this?” or “Let me buy a new camera this instant”. When we look at the semantic strategies in depth, it can be seen that as the most popular answer, an offer of repair is preferred by %56 Turkish EFL students and %50 by native students. The lack of intent strategy is also interestingly preferred by %36 of Turkish EFL learners, and %42 native speakers, and the last comes the expression of regret with the ratio of %52 for Turkish EFL learners and %38 for native students. When the action is not severe, like in the situation 2 where the speaker just stepped on the hearer’s foot accidentally, he just said “I’m sorry”, and it is relatively understandable for the speakers to not take it too seriously even though they say still say, “I’m sorry”, or “I didn’t see you”. Thus, they (Turkish EFL students %38 and native speakers %42) use the semantic strategy of expression of regret. Even though the weight of the action is not severe, the participants found expressing regret highly requirable. Also, the second popular strategy is the explanation or an account by writing “You are okay, right?”, or “I hope it didn’t hurt so much.”. Moreover, some other strategies that are favored when the action is not severe compared to the actions in the situations 1,3,4, and 6, the self-deficiency strategy (%7 NNS, %11 NS) and the promise of forbearance strategy (%10 NS, %8 NNS).

#### 4.5. The Most Frequently Used Apology Combinations in WDCTs

No matter how similar their apology strategies are, Turkish EFL learners and native speakers differ in terms how they combine apologies and place some of the apology strategies such as IFIDs.

**Table 10.**

*The most frequently used combinations*

	Native		Non-Native	
	N	%	N	%
IFID and REPAIR with some other	26	28%	54	52.8%
IFID and REPAIR only	62	58%	32	30.06%
IFID, EXPLANATION, FORBEARANCE	18	16%	16	20.07%

**Note.** Table above reveals what kind of combinations of apology strategies were employed in WDCTS.

Table 10 shows that IFID+repair is the combination that natives employ the most frequently. Stated otherwise, they chose to employ the combination by itself instead of combining it with the other strategies. On the other hand, non-native speakers employed a number of other tactics in addition to the IFID+repair combination (see table 10). A natural speaker may write, "Hello. I sincerely apologize for damaging your camera. I am aware of its cost. I'll get you a replacement. The fact that the speaker said, "I know how expensive it was," indicates that they took responsibility. However, native participants used many methods of expressing accountability strategies, whereas non-native speakers tended to use only one. "You're absolutely correct, I wasn't thinking." "I appreciate your help, but it was an honest mistake." "I'm sorry for causing such a problem," "I accept," or "I really didn't mean to do that." "I know it's my fault," "It was my irresponsibility," "It's completely my fault," and "So, it's really my fault to be this late to return it to you" were the statements that non-native participants were more likely to express. These illustrations demonstrate how non-native speakers expressed their regrets using fewer diverse frameworks. The sole strategy used by the participants, which included IFID and Repair, is listed in the second column. As an example, one person responded to a scenario by saying, "Sorry. Could I help you? Please accept my sincere regrets." He thus only used these two methods.

Native speakers utilized IFID and Repair together with other strategies 26 times (28%) in the first column, but non-native speakers did so 54 times (52.8%). Consequently, those who were not native speakers used combinations with other techniques twice as frequently as those who were. In contrast, non-native speakers used IFID and Repair alone 34 times (32.6%), whereas native speakers used it 62 times (59%). We may thus draw the conclusion that native speakers used IFID and Repair more frequently than non-native speakers.

When asked about the use of IFID, EXPLANATION, and FORBEARANCE together, a non-native participant said, "Yeah, I see, but I was in a hurry (Explanation)." I'm sorry to have bothered you (IFID), but I had to run. I apologize; it won't happen again. In a similar vein, a participant who was native said, "I'm so sorry (IFID)." I have terrible memory. It won't occur once again (forbearance). Thus, data (NS %16, NNS %20) suggest that nonnative speakers employed the IFID + EXPLANATION + FOREBEARENCE method somewhat more frequently than native speakers.

In response to a query, a non-native participant said, "I'm sorry, I didn't see you; I was trying to catch the bus." They also said, "I can buy a new T-shirt." As the example illustrates, the structure utilized in the discussion was EXPL+IFID+EXPL+IFID+REP. Stated differently,

s/he introduced more methods in between the IFID+REP combo. "Look, man, I'm sorry, I am going to buy a new T-shirt," stated a native speaker, though. Additionally, the table that follows shows the locations of IFIDs in WDCTs that were assigned to native and non-native speakers. There are two columns labeled "At the beginning" and "At the end."

**Table 11.**

*Places of Use of IFIDS*

	At the beginning		At the end	
	N	%	N	%
Native	110	85%	25	15%
Non-Native	65	45%	85	55%

The table shows a significant difference between native and non-native speakers' answers on where IFID is placed. In 85% of cases, native speakers used IFID at the beginning of the sentence, and in 15% of cases, they used it at the end of the phrase. A non-native speaker may respond to the question, for example, by responding, "I really apologize; I was in a rush." I couldn't see you. Are you hurt? Can I help you in any way?"

The chart indicates that NS tend to use Illocutionary Indicating Devices (IFID) to begin remorseful statements. On the other hand, when NNS employed IFID near the end of their speech, they did so four times more often than native speakers. Conversely, NS showed a propensity to stop utilizing IFID as the study went on. In particular, they were six times more likely to employ IFID at the beginning of the apologetic section than at the end, suggesting that they preferred to apologize at the beginning of their remarks.

#### 4.6. Multiple Choice Discourse Completion Test Results

In order to triangulate the data and have a deeper understanding of apology strategies used by Turkish EFL students and native students, the researcher decided to use MDCT as well. MDCT was constructed based on Bataineh and Bataineh's (2006) WDCT with reference to Olshtain and Cohen's (1983) categorization of apology strategies. In each given situation, respondents are presented with 4 options, each representing a specific apology strategy: apology, responsibility, explanation, repair, concern for the hearer and forbearance. In the present study, there was no option for the participants to offer a different strategy, but the researcher aimed to verify that the Turkish EFL students possessed a comprehensive understanding of the provided scenarios and the available choices. Due to the non-native participants' English proficiency, the researcher planned for the NNS participants to convene in pairs on a separate day. Their objective was to engage in discussions and reach a consensus on selecting a single alternative or semantic strategy for each of the ten instances. This debate elucidated the cognitive abilities that influenced the participants' responses. In order to triangulate the data and have a deeper understanding of apology strategies used by Turkish EFL students and native students, the researcher decided to use MDCT as well. MDCT results were calculated after the Turkish participants had a discussion about which option that they would have agreed on. Furthermore, the aim of the discussion was to observe the process of how they were thinking in those situations before they used a specific apology strategy. The researcher gained really an enormous amount of insight into how the thinking process works, and as it can be seen in the excerpt below. On an additional note, this might bring out the question why there was no discussion between the native speakers. The researcher thought that since English is their native language, native speakers would be fully capable of understanding the situations and choices.

An example excerpts from one the students' discussion for the situation 1 in MDCT:

*Öğrenci 1: Benim cevabım A seçeneği olacak. Bu durumda hatam yüzünden ortaya çıkan sıkıntı için özür dileyerek, karşı tarafa hatanın kabul edildiğini ve bir daha tekrarlanmayacağını belirtmek en uygun davranış olacaktır.*

*Öğrenci 2: Ben de A seçeneğinde hem özür dilenmesi hem de hatanın kabul edilmesi gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Ancak belki bir şey daha eklemek gerekebilir. Örneğin, "Bir daha böyle bir hata yapmayacağıma dair size söz veriyorum." gibi bir ifade hatanın tekrarlanmayacağına dair güvence verir.*

*Öğrenci 1: Kesinlikle katılıyorum. Ek bir ifade, hatanın tekrarlanmayacağına dair güvence vermek için önemlidir. Ayrıca, hatanın telafisi için başka bir öneri de sunulabilir. Örneğin, "Bir dahaki sefere benzer bir durumda, size daha önceden hatırlatma yapacağım." gibi bir teklif, hatanın düzeltilmesine yardımcı olabilir.*

*Öğrenci 2: Evet, bu da iyi bir fikir. Sonuçta, hatayı telafi etmek ve hatanın tekrarlanmamasını sağlamak için somut adımlar atmak önemlidir.*

*Öğrenci 1: Tek bir şık seçebileceğimiz için ben A şikkından yanayım.*

*Öğrenci 2: Ben de A şikkından yanayım.*

As it can be understood from the excerpt, the students are agreed on the option A which is "I'm sorry for the inconvenience caused by my mistake." It is the semantic strategy of expression of regret.

The table below summarizes the social variables depicted in multiple choice discourse completion tests throughout the research. There are 10 different situations, and all of the situations require different kinds of apology strategies between the interlocutors.

**Table 12.**

*Combinations of the Social Variables in MDCT*

"Situation"	"Power Difference"	"Social Distance"	"The Weight of Action"
1	-	+	+
2	+	-	-
3	-	+	-
4	+	+	+
5	-	-	+
6	+	+	-
7	-	-	+
8	-	-	+
9	+	-	-
10	-	+	+

#### **4.7. Apology Strategies in MDCT's Where There Are Power Differences**

In the situations which will be designated further on, there are power disparities between the parties. Therefore, the apology strategies regarding the situations change in accordance with who has power over the other.

**Table 13.**

*Depicting the frequencies and the percentages of the preferred strategies in the situations presented in WDCT regarding the weight of the action (-) for Turkish EFL learners and native speakers*

Apology Strategies Power (+)	Turkish n:20		N. Speaker n:8	
	F	%	F	%
(1) Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)				
a. An expression of regret	36	48.00%	28	42,00%
b. An offer of apology	14	27%	11	28%
c. A request for forgiveness	2	3%	15	3%
(2) Explanation or account	31	49%	24	28%
(3) Taking on responsibility				
a. Explicit self-blame	5	8%	3	3%
b. Lack of intent	7	18%	5	16%
c. Expression of self-deficiency	4	12%	3	2%
d. Expression of embarrassment	2	2%	0	0
e. Self-dispraise	2	3%	2	6%
(4) Concern for the hearer			0	0%
(5) Offer of repair	22	56%	35	50%
(6) Promise of forbearance	18	27%	16	30%

**Note.** *This chart depicts the specific situations (P+) in which speakers exercise dominance over the listener.*

**Table 14.**

*Depicting the descriptive statistics of preferred strategies in MDCT in the situation regarding the power differences (P+) for Turkish EFL learners and native speakers*

Apology Strategies Power (-)	Turkish n:20		N. Speaker n:8	
	F	%	F	%
(1) 'Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)'				
a. An expression of regret	39	63,00%	48	59,00%
b. An offer of apology	10	15%	11	28%
c. A request for forgiveness,	5	4%	2	4%
(2) 'Explanation or account'	8	10%	7	9%

(3) 'Taking on responsibility'				
a. Explicit self-blame	4	12%	2	8%
b. Lack of intent	5	14%	4	16%
c. Expression of self-deficiency	4	12%	3	2%
d. Expression of embarrassment	2	2%	0	0%
e. Self-dispraise	2	3%	2	6%
(4) 'Concern for the hearer'			0	0%
(5) 'Offer of repair'	11	13%	9	7%
(6) 'Promise of forbearance'	5	9%	9	17%

**Note.** *The table displays the outcomes (P-) of the MDCTs where the listeners possess control over the speaker.*

A statement of regret is the most often utilized semantic approach when the MDCT results are examined in terms of power differences. Of Turkish EFL students, 58% utilize it, while native speakers use it 59% of the time. This indicates that when the hearer had the upper hand or more power than the speaker, the majority of participants favored this alternative. For instance, in scenario 1, the customer gets hot coffee on his or her shirt from the worker. Based on several traditions—particularly Turkish ones—the client is always correct; hence, the hearer is probably in a position of authority. Additionally, examining the data gathered indicates that the most often employed tactic is "I sincerely apologize for spilling coffee on you." Option A on the exam is "Please let me know if there is anything I can do to make it right." Furthermore, provide repair ranks as the second most frequent tactic, employed by 50% of native speakers and 58% of Turkish EFL students. Additionally, in the other scenarios (S1, S3, S5, S7, S8, and S10) when the hearer (P-) has the advantage of power balance, a very similar strategy is used. For instance, in scenario 5, if the hearer is the speaker's employer, there is a negative power dynamic (-P) and the hearer, not the speaker, is the stronger party. The speaker ought to have shown greater consideration for their joint plans, given that their relationship is predicated on their roles as employer and employee. An offer of repair ranks second in terms of desired semantic strategies. Native speakers use it 28% of the time, compared to 49% of Turkish EFL learners. Thus, the issue can be observed as an avoidance of a face-threatening act due to its nature because the speaker forgot their

date and excused himself by offering a reschedule. Hence, the participants chose the option in which it says, “Is there anything that I can do the fix this?”. Furthermore, when we look at the situations where there is power situation with the speaker as in the situations S2, S4, S6, and S9 (P+), the most common used semantic strategy is an offer of repair which is employed by Turkish EFL students 56%, and it is used by native speakers 30%.

The concept of social distance is central in this investigation, for it needs to be explored if the apology strategies are to be understood within cultural contexts. Such cases of social distance are not static and may be different in various societies. Cultural perspectives are important because various societies may view their understanding as well as definition of relationships, ultimately resulting in mismatched expectations, especially in relation to teacher-student dynamic.

Ogiermann (2018) explains that social distance connects conversational participants with both social power and position. As stated by Ogierman (2018), social distance is said to be a symmetrical variable, indicating the degree of intimacy and occurrence of interaction between the speaker and the hearers. Social distance is categorized into three categories by Ogiermann (2018). The first category relates to social interactions among strangers with whom there is much social distance. In the second category, interlocutors know each other, thus there is an intermediate social gap to overcome. This last type of relationship consists in friendships and other ties with minimal social differences. Meyerhoff (2011) highlights that speakers demonstrate more politeness during instances where the hearer has more social power than them since they are subordinate to him/ her. By way of an example, she draws reference on how one would request assurance from a government executive officer to endorse a certain major document versus the casual conversation while taking your midday tea with a telemarketer. According to Meyerhoff (2011), social distance matters in communication because people usually tend to be polite when they communicate with unfamiliar counterparts.

#### **4.7. Apology Strategies in MDCT’s Where There Are Social Distance Issues**

The results that are shown in this section include different types of situations that involve social distance problems. Some of the events there is familiarity between the interlocutors and in some of them is unfamiliarity.

**Table 15**

*Depicting the frequencies and percentages of preferred strategies in MDCT in the situations regarding social distance (-) between the interlocutors for Turkish EFL learners and native speakers*

Apology Strategies Social Distance (-)	Turkish n:20		N. Speaker n:8	
	F	%	F	%
(1) 'Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)'				
a. An expression of regret	34	49,00%	30	45,00%
b. An offer of apology	30	38%	25	40%
c. A request for forgiveness,	2	3%	15	3%
(2) 'Explanation or account'	7	14%	5	11%
(3) 'Taking on responsibility'				
a. Explicit self-blame	5	8%	3	3%
b. Lack of intent	3	12%	4	14%
c. Expression of self-deficiency	3	12%	3	8%
d. Expression of embarrassment	2	2%	0	0
e. Self-dispraise	2	3%	2	6%
(4) 'Concern for the hearer'			0	0%
(5) 'Offer of repair'	3	12%	8	16%
(6) 'Promise of forbearance'	4	10%	4	12%

**Note.** *The figure displays the outcomes of MDCTs that involve scenarios with either no or minimal social distance, or situations where there is a perceived sense of familiarity between the individuals engaged in the conversation.*

**Table 16.**

*Depicting the frequencies and percentages of preferred strategies in MDCT in the situations regarding social distance (+) between the interlocutors for Turkish EFL learners and native speakers*

Apology Strategies Social Distance (+)	Turkish n:20		N. Speaker n:8	
	F	%	F	%
(1) 'Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)'				
a. An expression of regret	35	52,00%	32	48,00%
b. An offer of apology	24	30%	28	25%
c. A request for forgiveness,	5	4%	2	4%
(2) 'Explanation or account'	30	46%	26	42%
(3) 'Taking on responsibility'				
a. Explicit self-blame	4	12%	2	8%
b. Lack of intent	5	14%	5	10%
c. Expression of self-deficiency	4	12%	3	2%
d. Expression of embarrassment	2	2%	0	0%
e. Self-dispraise	2	3%	2	6%
(4) 'Concern for the hearer'	0	0	0	0%
(5) 'Offer of repair'	25	30%	15	24%
(6) 'Promise of forbearance'	2	10%	4	12%

**Note.** *The figure displays the outcomes of MDCTs that involve scenarios social distance, or situations where there is a perceived sense of unfamiliarity between the individuals engaged in the conversation.*

When the frequencies and percentages are analyzed in-depth, they demonstrate that in the situations where the interlocutors have a distant relationship with each other (S1, S3, S4, S6, S10), with a ratio of 52% NNS to 48% NS, an expression of regret is the most often utilized semantic approach. In the test, the option is A, and it is "I'm sorry for the inconvenience caused by my mistake." When we look at the IFIDs, up comes next, an offer apology as an apology strategy (30% NNS, 22% NS). As an example, "I apologize for forgetting to send the document". However, overall, one of the most preferred apology strategies is explanation or account (46% NS, %42 NNS). As an example, in the situation 2,

the speaker forgets to meet with his or her recruiter for an interview, the most common option that was chosen was “I was stuck at traffic that’s why I couldn’t make it”. As it can be understood that it is a type of an explanation. In another example, in the situation 7, the speaker spills soda to his client’s shirt, and the participants chose the option A which is “I didn’t see you; I am sorry for your shirt.”, and it is also a strategy of apologizing by using explanation strategy.

In the opposite situations where the interlocutors have a close relationship to each other (S2, S5, S7, S8, S9), the most common used semantic strategies are an expression of regret (49% NNS, 45% NS) and an offer of apology (38% NNS, 40% NS). For example, “I am sorry for breaking your vase.” or “I apologize for breaking your vase. It can be inferred that when there is familiarity between the speaker and the hearer, people tend to choose a straightforward apology without providing an explanation. For example, when we go about the situation 3, where the speaker misses an important friend date, he or she just goes with the option B in which it is stated “I apologize for missing out our friend date”.

These factors may raise issues regarding why the participants used various semantic techniques in situations involving both distant and intimate relationships. The tables demonstrate that participants opted for an explanation or account semantic strategy alongside IFIDs. This strategy is employed when the interlocutors lack familiarity or intimacy with each other. In such cases, the offender is required to provide a justification for the transgression. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1998) emphasized the concept of IFID as a technique for apologizing, which involves expressing direct remorse using phrases such as 'sorry', 'sorry me/mea culpa!/pardon me', and 'I am sorry'. IFIDs indicate the speaker's acknowledgment of remorse and confession of an affair that violated the recipient. Bergman and Kasper (1993) provide an example of the IFID technique in action: if speaker A does not return the borrowed book to speaker B, speaker A apologizes by saying "I'm sorry." I neglected to bring the book. Furthermore, alongside the widely used apologetic techniques known as "IFIDs", participants, particularly non-native speakers (NNS), also generally choose an explanation or account approach. This strategy, albeit indirect in nature compared to IFIDs, is frequently employed.

Therefore, in situations involving closeness, IFIDs were more frequently utilized. However, in situations lacking intimacy, IFIDs were still employed, along with a clarification or explanation (40% NNS, 42% NS) and a proposal for resolution (30% NNS, 24% NNS). Both Turkish EFL learners and native speakers showed a preference for semantic techniques. It is evident that non-native speaker (NNS) participants show a greater preference for indirect

techniques compared to native speaker (NS) participants. There will be a further elucidation on this matter.

#### 4.8. Apology Strategies in MDCT's Where There Are Severity of Action Problems

The latest social variable that was examined in terms of frequency and % is the weight of the action. The participants were informed that they were equal in terms of power and social distance. Subsequently, the exams were administered to all the Turkish EFL learners, as is customary with MDCT findings. They convened once again to reach a consensus on a single alternative. The researcher excluded the native speaker group from further analysis due to their proficiency in English as their first language, and the limited size of this population.

**Table 17.**

*Depicting the frequencies and percentages of preferred strategies in MDCT in the situations regarding the severity of the actions (+) performed in the situations for Turkish EFL learners and native speakers.*

Apology Strategies Severity of the Action (+)	Turkish n:20		N. Speaker n:8	
	F	%	F	%
(1) 'Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)'				
a. An expression of regret	30	54,00%	26	52,00%
b. An offer of apology	26	48%	22	48%
c. A request for forgiveness,	2	3%	0	0
(2) Explanation or account	17	32%	14	30%
(3) Taking on responsibility	0	0%	0	0%
a. Explicit self-blame	5	10%	3	9%
b. Lack of intent	25	44%	20	42%
c. Expression of self-deficiency	5	10%	3	9%
d. Expression of embarrassment	2	2%	0	0
e. Self-dispraise	2	3%	2	3%
(4) Concern for the hearer			0	0%
(5) Offer of repair	19	35%	17	38%
(6) Promise of forbearance	9	22%	9	25%

**Note.** *The table above displays the findings of the MDCTs for actions with a significant or intense level of gravity. It can be deduced that the consequences of the activities are more detrimental to the individuals involved.*

**Table 18.**

*Depicting the frequencies and percentages of preferred strategies in MDCT in the situations regarding the severity of the actions (-) performed in the situations for Turkish EFL learners and native speakers.*

Apology Strategies Severity of the Action (-)	Turkish n:20		N. Speaker n:8	
	F	%	F	%
(1) 'Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)'				
a. An expression of regret	20	36%	26	30%
b. An offer of apology	12	28%	10	26%
c. A request for forgiveness,	7	11%	8	14%
(2) Explanation or account	0	0%	0	0%
(3) Taking on responsibility				
a. Explicit self-blame	0	0%	0	0%
b. Lack of intent	2	8%	1	6%
c. Expression of self-deficiency	4	10%	6	9%
d. Expression of embarrassment	0	0%	0	0%
e. Self-dispraise	0	0%	0	0
(4) Concern for the hearer	2	8%	2	8%
(5) Offer of repair	12	28%	10	26%
(6) Promise of forbearance	2	6%	4	12%

**Note.** *The table above displays the findings of the MDCTs for actions with a less or no severity. It can be deduced that the consequences of the activities can be quite easy on the interlocutors who are involved in.*

In terms of severity of offenses or the weight of the action variable, the respondents' choices whether or not it belongs to Turkish EFL learner or native speaker, there is high IFID (Illocutionary Force Indicating Device) utilization in the category for serious offences in the situations such as S1, S4, S5, S7, S8, and S10. Specifically, both of the groups exhibit the highest of IFID use in the aforementioned situations where the action performed by the wrongdoer is quite severe such as having an accident with a friend's car, or another example can be in the situation 4 where the speaker barrows the hearer's laptop and drops it and causes it a serious damage. Most of the participants chose the semantic strategy of an expression of regret (54% NNS, 52% NS), and followed by the second semantic strategy, which is an offer of apology (48% NNS, 48% NS). This is consistent with what was observed by Nordi (2008). In his study, the results reflect that of most of the students primarily used an expression of regret, and after that an offer of repair. On the other hand, there is also distinct difference between aforementioned study and the current study indicates that in addition to IFIDs, an explanation or account (%32 NNS, %30 NS), lack of intent (44% NNS, 42% NS), an offer of repair (35% NNS, 38% NS), and promise of forbearance (22% NNS, 25%NS) semantic strategies were undeniably preferred many times as well. This indicates that nearly half of the participants considered a mere apology might not be enough; therefore, they chose the options such as "I didn't mean to drop your laptop" in the situation 4. Moreover, in the situations (S1, S4, S5, S7, S8, S10), where the actions might be considered severe or heavy in contrast to the actions presented in the other situations (S2, S3, S6,S9), where the actions no or less severe, the participants mostly preferred the semantic strategy an expression regret (36% NNS, 30% NS), followed by another IFIDs semantic strategy, an offer of apology (20% NNS, 22% NS). For example, in the situation 9, the speaker forgets to bring the hearers notebook to the class, and he or she expects an apologize. Therefore, when the action is not considered heavy or severe by the participants in accordance with the social norms or cultural norms, an offer of repair (NNS %36, NS %30), an offer of apology (NNS %28, NS %26), or an offer of repair (NNS %28, NS %26) are used. The table also demonstrates that whether the offense is serious or not very serious, both of the participant groups explicitly apologized, and this means that IFIDs once again the most popular apology regardless of the participants native language.

However, it is undeniable that when the weight of the action is heavy, indirect apologies are also commonly preferred, especially NNS participants.

The 4<sup>th</sup> inquiry of the study was to investigate the differences between Turkish EFL Learners and native speakers when presented with a Discourse Completion Task (WDCT) and a Multiple-Choice Discourse Completion Test (MDCT). The students were asked to select 1 apology sentence which contains an apology strategy option out of 4 in 10 MDCTs after they wrote their apologies in accordance with the 6 situations which were presented to them in writing. Subsequently, participants constructed their own apology utterances by envisioning themselves as the wrongdoer in different kind of social variables. The data indicates that regardless of the DCT style, an apology method of expressing regret (IFID) was consistently utilized by Turkish EFL students (B1 and B1+) and native speakers of English.

When comparing open-ended versus multiple-choice examinations, it is crucial to recognize that the former demands more comprehensive responses, whereas the latter offers participants a pre-established selection of answers to pick from. Open-ended assessments, as a result of the requirement for thoughtful reflection in responses, may require more time to finish but provide students with the chance to showcase a more sophisticated comprehension of the subject matter. Conversely, multiple-choice exams are typically more efficient in terms of time spent administering and grading, but they may not adequately assess the student's true understanding of the subject matter. When creating assessments, educators must carefully evaluate the advantages and drawbacks of each test format.

According to the existing data, there are discernible disparities in the apology techniques employed by students in open-ended assessments as opposed to multiple-choice tests. During open-ended tests, students have a tendency to utilize a greater number of personal expressions and provide more elaborate and sometimes exaggerated apology strategies. Conversely, they have a preference for broader and standardized phrases in multiple-choice exams.

#### 4.9. Summary

Overall results indicate that there were some differences between how Turkish EFL learners and native speakers apologize, although the percentages and frequencies change according to the social variables. The most commonly used apology strategy is IFIDs, followed by an offer of repair, and lastly, an explanation or account, especially in social distance issues. Social distance or status distance made the great distinction, whether it was WDCT or MDCT. In WDCTs, the Turkish EFL learners were more apologetic in a way that was more repetitive and exclamatory. As opposed to NNS, the NS group were direct and precise in their apologies, regardless of the social variable.

Considering MDCTs, the results were almost the same. the NNS participants preferred the same semantic strategies when given comparable options as the NSs under equal circumstances. This shows that when non-native speakers are offered some options, their apology strategies expand as their comprehension gains additional structures and terms. This brings out some implications that will be mentioned later.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present chapter examines the outcomes derived from the gathered data. The primary distinctions exhibited by Canadian English native speakers and non-native upper-intermediate EFL learners in Turkey is discussed in relation to the relevant literature. Social distance, social status, and severity of offence are social variables that influence the preference of apology strategies and politeness. In this research question, the purpose was to identify any differences between the groups in terms of considering these variables in producing apology utterances. Talking to someone you know or someone you do not may well determine linguistic hedging and politeness level.

The statistics indicate that when engaging in interactions with individuals of high social standing and significant social distance, the learners chose to utilize expressions of regret, offering to fix the situation, and providing explanations or accounts. Nevertheless, in the scenarios where individuals have the similar social standing or familiarity, the learners employed IFIDs mostly. Nevertheless, the individuals' preferences for alternative tactics differ. When the transgression was severe, the majority of them chose to offer of repair and explanation strategies. Alternatively, when the offence was not that significant, they were inclined to commonly utilize IFID. In conclusion, it is evident that the participants possess an understanding of the social circumstances and demonstrate a tendency to utilize the most suitable apology approach regardless of their native languages.

Hamida Ibrahim (2015) investigated the influence of social factors on Sudanese English learners' choice of apologetic tactics in her PhD research. According to her research, social distance and social power have an impact on the choice of apologetic technique. Her research also showed that the social distance and seriousness of the crime had a major influence on the students' replies; that is, when the offense was serious, they tended to use more extreme techniques. After doing her research, she came to the conclusion that the students can use appropriate expressions of regret in a range of social situations. Her significant research might increase the legitimacy of the current study's conclusions.

The study's several findings suggest that native and non-native participants differ slightly in how they apply each WDCT and MDCT strategy. In MDCT and WDCT, the social power and social distance variables were the only ones where English native speakers and Turkish ELT learners did not frequently use IFID. The participants also used an explanation

or account, an offer or repair, or an promise of forbearance apologetic tactics when there was a social power or social distance issue. It's interesting to note that NNS participants consistently used such tactics at greater rates. This finding supports the findings of studies conducted by Bergman and Kasper (1993) on Thai and American speakers and by Demeter (2006) on Romanian and English speakers. Additionally, the results of the study showed that both non-native and native speakers favored using IFID to communicate concise expressions of regret. Because it was assumed that non-native speakers would not have the confidence, NNS participants were more likely than NS participants to use additional methods in addition to IFIDs. In addition, native speakers made an effort to be simple and direct in WDCTs. This finding is consistent with the work of Eslami-Rasekh and Mardani (2010), who found that Iranian EFL students implemented sociopragmatic methods from Persian to English, such as apologizing excessively when it wasn't necessary. In Turkish culture, for instance, it is customary to provide an explanation even when one is not required. Furthermore, this study supports Aydın's (2013) findings, which indicated that native English speakers communicate more directly than Turkish English speakers. There are notable differences between the two groups with respect to IFID's location. Turkish EFL learners utilize repair or explanation + IFID, but native speakers typically use IFID + repair or explanation. The significant discrepancy may be explained by the mother tongue's effect on those who are not native speakers. According to study, Turkish native speakers used IFID equally in the beginning and end of their apologetic speeches, as found by Aydın (2013). As a result, it can be concluded that the Turkish English speakers who took part in our study made use of negative L1 pragmatic transfer, also known as language transfer from first to second language.

As a result, another notable issue comes to the surface in the research. The issue was the systematic arrangement of the apologetic tactics employed. NS participants adhered strictly to a formula of combinations, such as IFID+EXP or IFID+REP, where IFIDs were exclusively used at the start of an apology chunk. However, in the case of NNSs, the sequencing of apology strategies was more adaptable, and structures like EXP+IFID or REP+IFID were commonly observed. One may argue that the pattern happens quite frequently in Turkish since, in this language, the meaning is typically provided at the end of a phrase or paragraph. Intermediate or advanced English learners can be said to have not almost embraced Canadian English's apologetic standards, as it was noticed that non-native speakers of English preferred to include initial formulaic directness in (IFIDs) in their apologies; however, Turkish EFL learners utilized more indirect apologies in addition to IFIDs.

Furthermore, the explanation method helped both groups almost equally; nevertheless, native speakers used different explanations, with some using more surface-level language than the other group. From this, it may be inferred that native participants often apologize for the inappropriate behavior or offense by providing apologies that are less detailed. Moreover, from the replies of both groups, it can be inferred that native participants used a range of techniques to indicate responsibility, whereas non-native speakers often used a single strategy. There is a notable difference in how the forbearance technique is applied between native and non-native individuals, which is at odds with most of the results. In WDCT, native speakers used a noticeably greater variety of terms to demonstrate their fortitude and tenacity; in MDCT, however, preferences do not change. This may be due to the fact that they are much more fluent in their original tongue, or it may be because social and cultural differences are having an impact. is because, while having a lot to say, they are not proficient enough in the target language to properly convey their feelings. As a result, there are a plethora of hypotheses as to why non-native speakers use more indirect apologetic techniques than do native speakers. Suszczyńska (1999) found that native English speakers use the sequential combination of IFID+repair+other approaches more frequently than English language learners from Hungary. Similarly, the current study found that native English speakers use a regular practice of combining primarily IFIDs with repair. This finding showed that native speakers, as opposed to individuals who were not native speakers, preferred to use the methods exclusively, without enhancing them with extra indirect tactics when expressing regret. Additionally, Chamani and Zareipour (2010) looked at the differences between Persian and British English apologetic techniques. They examined information from two different corpora that included data from naturally occurring situations. Deutschmann (2003) provided the data on British apologies using spoken data from the British National Corpus (BNC). A corpus of 500 apology conversations provided the data for the Persian apologies. The researcher and three of his helpers recorded the precise words used in the conversations and gathered context information on the apologies in order to compile these exchanges. The results showed that the strategies used by the two individuals were similar. However, Persians used an explicit apology in a variety of contexts, whereas British speakers frequently used a single IFID. Comparably, during the course of the study, the researcher also discussed the issue of NNS vs. NS in terms of apologetic strategies. The findings show that, although the overall percentages of IFID use by NS and NNS are relatively close to one another, non-native participants gave more in-depth explanations, while native participants offered more generic and surface-level information or only IFIDs. Aydın (2013) found that non-native participants'

explanations were, nonetheless, more generic in character. The new study supports the earlier findings by indicating that non-native speakers select the same semantic strategy when given different alternatives than native speakers. It might be argued that this is due to the many apologetic tactics that are offered in MDCT scenarios. Consequently, it is reasonable to presume that despite their best efforts, B1+ Turkish EFL intermediate level learners were unable to do as well in WCDTs as native speakers. But when the alternatives were given to them, they selected nearly the same tactics—if not, they went with the ones that offered more heartfelt excuses.

In summary, the research indicates that Turkish EFL learners tend to employ more indirect methods in addition to IFIDs when offering apologies compared to Canadian participants. Despite upper-intermediate learners making progress towards the desired cultural standards, they are nevertheless influenced by their original culture. Istifci (2009) also proposes that advanced learners possess the capacity to conform to the norms of the target language to a certain degree. A significant conclusion of the current study is that non-native speakers generally use more indirect apologies regardless of the social variables when NS participants are capable of applying direct apology techniques in terms of their cultural norms and traditions.

## 6. LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Our research illustrates how non-native speakers (NNS) comprehend and apply the target language when performing a specific speech act, namely., apologies (Kasper, 1992). According to Thomas (1983), EFL learners frequently transfer speech act rules from their native language (L1) into their second language due to both cross-cultural variations and proficiency-related differences. It is essential to consider some limitations when interpreting the study's findings. The research specifically focused on Turkish EFL learners at B1+ and B2 proficiency levels in comparison to native speakers, drawing on the rich information and insights provided by the participants. One limitation of the study pertains to the participant number. The study's findings, based on a limited sample size of 20 EFL learners and 8 native speakers, make it challenging to draw broad conclusions. To enhance the reliability and validity of future research findings, it is recommended that subsequent investigations include a larger number of participants.

Given the observed variations in the speech act of apology across different English proficiency levels, future research could also encompass EFL learners at various levels such as A1, C1, and C2. The research conducted in the domain of apology speech acts has uncovered a fundamental comprehension of the potential variations in speech acts across languages and cultures. Realizing how important it is to understand how languages differ, it can be said that more research is needed to find out the specifics of pragmatics in each language. This would help teachers, students, and researchers in this field. Examining the example of Turkish, while some research has been conducted, there remains a requirement for additional research to achieve a more comprehensive and intricate comprehension of Turkish and English pragmatics, particularly regarding how Turkish learners utilize apologies.

## 7. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

In order to communicate at a level comparable to that of a native speaker, it is emphasized while teaching and learning a language how crucial it is to comprehend and internalize the pragmatic norms of a culture as well as gaining pragmatic competence. This study has important ramifications. Involving native speakers of Turkish who are able to translate these questions into Turkish is crucial. In order to evaluate the influence of the first language on the second language, participants would thus answer the questions in their mother tongue. This would make it easier for academics to get comprehensive and trustworthy data about how interlanguage affects non-native speakers. As a result, the researchers would be able to offer feedback on non-native speakers' interlanguage, producing more thorough and accurate results. Additionally, oral DCT was used in this study; nevertheless, it is recommended to use a variety of devices to get more reliable findings. This study focused only on strategies used in oral acts of apology. The sociopragmatics of the apologetic strategies used by Turkish speakers of English as a foreign language (EFL) should be the subject of future study. To get more complete statistics, it is crucial to take into account participant characteristics like gender, age, and socioeconomic status. Furthermore, under the light of current study, the importance of using authentic materials while teaching speech acts is quite essential. Also, the study demonstrates that explicit teaching of speech acts and semantic formulas are required to realize various speech acts like apologies should be added to the curriculum of preparatory school to raise awareness.

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## APPENDIX A

### Open Ended Discourse Completion Task

- 1) You accidentally spilled hot coffee on a stranger's shirt while walking on the street.

You were in a rush to get to work and had your morning coffee in your hand. As you were walking down the crowded street, you bumped into someone and spilled hot coffee on their shirt. They looked at you in shock and disbelief, and you knew you had to apologize.

- 2) You forgot to call your best friend on their birthday and didn't get them a present.

You've been best friends with your friend for years and you know their birthday is important to them. However, this year you got caught up with work and other things, and completely forgot to call them or get them a present. When you finally realized what happened, you knew you had to apologize for forgetting such an important day.

- 3) You were running late for a meeting and didn't see the red light. You ended up hitting the car in front of you.

You were running late for an important meeting and were trying to make up time on the road. As you approached an intersection, the light turned yellow, but you thought you could make it. However, you didn't see the car in front of you slowing down, and you ended up rear-ending them. The other driver was angry and demanded an apology for your mistake.

- 4) You borrowed a friend's expensive camera and accidentally dropped it, causing significant damage.

Your friend is a professional photographer and lent you their expensive camera for a weekend trip. Unfortunately, while you were taking a photo, you accidentally dropped the camera and caused significant damage. Your friend was understandably upset and demanded an apology and compensation for the damage.

- 5) You made a joke that offended your friend and hurt their feelings.

You were hanging out with your friend and made a joke that you thought was funny. However, your friend didn't find it funny at all and was deeply hurt by it. They called you out on it and demanded an apology for your insensitive comment.

- 6) You accidentally sent an embarrassing email to your boss about a coworker to the entire company.

You were in a hurry to send an email to your boss about a work matter, but accidentally selected the entire company as the recipient. The email contained embarrassing personal information about another colleague, and you knew you had made a huge mistake. You needed to apologize to your coworker and the entire company for your thoughtless mistake.



## APPENDIX B: ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL



T.C.  
YEDİTEPE ÜNİVERSİTESİ REKTÖRLÜĞÜ

15.06.2023

Sayı : E.50532705-302.14.01-1587  
Konu : Kerem Başaran Kurul Onayı

### İLGİLİ MAKAMA

Üniversitemiz Eğitim Bilimleri Enstitüsü İngiliz Dili Eğitimi Yüksek Lisans Öğrencisi Kerem Başaran'ın, Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Dilara Koçbaş danışmanlığında gerçekleştireceği "University Preparatory Students' Apology Speech Act Techniques" başlıklı araştırmasının Beşeri Bilimler etik standartlarına uygunluğuna ilişkin Yeditepe Üniversitesi Beşeri ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Etik Kurulu Onayı ekte sunulmuştur.

Gerekli iznin verilmesi hususunu bilgilerinize arz ve rica ederim.

İmza  
Prof. Dr. Fatma Yeşim EKİNCİ  
Rektör a.  
Rektör Yardımcısı

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