

The Impact of Contextual Variables on Internal Intensification of Apology Speech Acts in Persian: Social Distance and Severity of Offense in Focus

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Abstract: The current paper primarily provides an account of how apology speech acts are internally intensified in Persian. Moreover, the study checks to what extent contextual variables, namely social distance and severity of offense, may motivate the internal intensification of apology speech acts. To these ends, the study collected the required speech acts through a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) from among Persian male native speakers. The data was analyzed based on the coding scheme developed by Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989). The results revealed that apology speech acts are intensified in Persian in most cases through universal strategies of internal intensification. Moreover, the Persian speakers are sensitive to severity of the offense, as a context-internal variable, which motivates more internal intensifications of apologies. The findings, however, revealed that social distance as a context-external variable does not prompt the use of internal intensifications differently in situations where there is social distance between interlocutors compared to situations where there is no social distance between interlocutors.

Keywords: Apology, Intensifier, Contextual Variables, Social Distance, Severity of Offense.

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Introduction

In Iran, as a country where the majority of people are Muslim and the official religion of the country is Islam, the establishing of a good social relationship with other people is of great importance. The key factors, according to Islamic commands and the ethical principles, for the establishment of a good social relationship with other community members are the maintenance of mutual respect and its implementation among people (Soltani, 2010). Courtesy and polite behaviors are stressed in Islam, as they can act to save the face of every member of a society.

One of the aspects of courtesy and polite behavior which is expressed verbally is linguistic politeness. Language as an important medium of verbal communication should be used discreetly not only in the correct linguistic forms but also appropriately in social contexts to express politeness. The Muslims' holy prophet (peace be upon him) says "the best believer is the one from whose language other people are at peace". The way people in Iran use the Persian language to maintain their social relationship and stay in harmony with other community members is an important issue as it is in every other society. This is highlighted when language is used for such face-saving purposes as apologizing. As Marquez-Reiter (2000, p. 57) states when apologies are employed "the speaker admits that a social norm was violated and that s/he was to some extent part of its cause". Apologies, from one hand, are face-threatening in nature because of the threat addressed to the apologizer and damaging his/her face. Brown and Levinson (1987) suggest that the apologizer's positive face –the desire to be approved and appreciated in certain respects– would be damaged by the act of apologizing. On the other hand, apologies have been considered as face-saving when it comes to the addressee's negative face –the desire to be unimpeded and free to act. An apology is a sort of support in Marquez Reiter's (2000) term for the addressee's negative face. Holmes (1995) confirms the restorative force of apologizing for the hearer as well. The attempt to satisfy the addressee's face through apologizing is also claimed by Edmondson (1981).

Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory is an attempt to claim for universal characteristics shared by different languages as far as politeness is concerned. The analysis of strategies employed in apology speech acts and the way strategies are intensified among Persian native speakers can be an investigation to see whether it can provide supporting evidence to Brown and Levinson's (1987) universal theory. To see whether Iranian interlocutors observe principles of politeness theory can be the starting point of the study. Wolfson (1984, p. 236) states that the study of rules and patterns of a given speech

community will provide “empirical evidence of cultural norms and rules”. What strategies are employed by Iranian speakers to avoid rude and awkward impressions evoked by inappropriate apologies are worthy of attention and need to be investigated so that Persian culture norms and rules can be shed light on from a socio-pragmatic perspective. Therefore, the contribution of this study to the literature on the universal concepts of politeness and face across different cultures and societies in general, and to the operationalizing of these concepts in Persian culture given the cultural, situational, and individual specifications that these concepts are subject to in Persian in particular, can be one of the general goals of the current study.

Moreover, from an applied linguistics point of view, research on cross-cultural communication and second language teaching have pointed out the need for including patterns of naturally occurring talk in the foreign/second language classroom resources (Holmes & Brown, 1987; Golato, 2002). David (1999) stresses making advanced language learners aware of cross-cultural variations in communication is the language teacher’s responsibility. She adds that examples of different speech acts can be used “to sensitize the learners to cross-cultural ramifications of a range of speech acts” (David, 1999, p. 19). The researcher, as an academic dealing with English language instruction, believes that this study can pave the way for a comparative analysis of apology speech act and its intensification by Persian native speakers and those of the English native speakers; such comparisons could bring about pedagogical insights and implications. The other contribution of studies like the present one would be providing practical suggestions of pedagogical value with the preparation and development of teaching materials for English language education in the Persian context as well.

Literature Review

An apology can be an attempt by the apologizer to compensate for an act that has caused an offense threatening the recipient’s face (Brown & Levinson, 1987). According to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), apologies are called for when three preconditions are met. Tsai (2007, p. 29) rewrites the preconditions as follows:

- a) the apologizer did a violation or abstained from doing a violation (or is about to do it);
- b) a violation is perceived by the apologizer only, by the hearer only, by both the apologizer and the hearer, or by a third party as a breach of a social norm; and

c) a violation is perceived by at least one of the parties involved as offending, harming, or affecting the hearer in some way.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984, p. 206) suggest that the apologizer awareness of the precondition would lead him/her to apologize; once the apology is performed the apologizer “pays tribute to the social norm (recognizes precondition (b)) and attempts to placate the hearer (recognizes precondition (c))”.

Apologies fall under the expressive category, according to Searle’s (1969) taxonomy, performed to indicate the psychological emotions of the speakers. Apologies as important verbal devices – which can be manifested also nonverbally – were defined by researchers from various perspectives. One of the most cited definitions of apology is Goffman’s (1971) definition which is quoted in Bergman and Kasper (1993, p. 82) as “remedial interchanges, remedial work serving to reestablish social harmony after a real or virtual offense”. Olshtain (1989, p. 156-7) defines an apology as “a speech act which intended to provide support for the hearer who was actually or potentially malaffected by a violation”. *Explanation* is the Greek meaning of apology, which is a strong apology strategy as Sami-Hou (2006) suggests. The definition presented by the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) for apology includes “a defense, a justification, and an excuse” (p. 38) by which one can infer the varieties in which apology strategies may be manifested.

Since apology attracted the attention of researchers as a popular topic, different classifications of this speech act have been proposed. Fraser (1980), for instance, classified apologies into two main groups, namely direct and indirect apologies. He further subdivided the direct apology strategies as the announcement of apology, stating the obligation to apologize, an offer for apologizing, and request for apology acceptance. Fraser (1980) suggested five indirect apologies as well; his indirect apology strategies include expressing regret, requesting forgiveness, acknowledging responsibility, promising forbearance, and offering redness. Then, it was Olshtain and Cohen (1983) whose apology strategy classification formed a contributive classification. They suggested that apologies can be realized as an illocutionary force indicating device (IFID), an expression of the speaker’s responsibility for the offense, an explanation or account of the situation or of the cause which gave rise to the violation, an offer of repair, and a promise of forbearance.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) later on, built on Olshtain and Cohen (1983) and presented a set of strategies for the performance of apologies. Their classification consisted of IFIDs, an explicit or implicit account of the cause of violation, taking on responsibility that

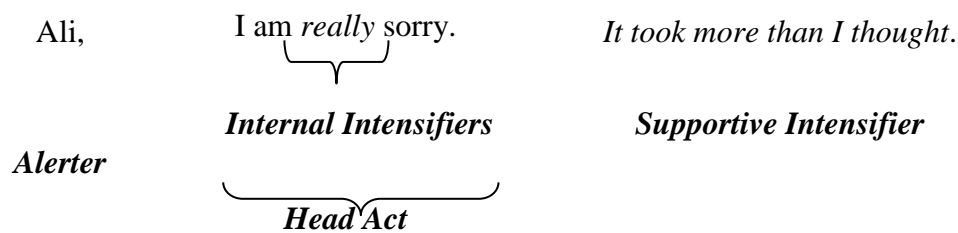
they believed ranges from self-humbling to complete denial of the offense, making an offer, and promise of forbearance. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) classification was the basis for the investigation in Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) in the analysis of apologies.

Table 1. *Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989, p. 290-292) Apology Head Act Strategies*

Category	Strategies and Examples
Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID)	<p>1. Illocutionary Force Indicating Device: Sorry/ Excuse me/ I apologize/ Forgive me/ I regret that ... Pardon me for .../ I'm afraid...</p> <p>2. Concern for the Hearer: I hope I didn't upset you.</p> <p>3. Explicit Self Blame: My Mistake.</p> <p>4. Lack of Intent: I didn't mean to upset you.</p> <p>5. Justifying Hearer: You're right to be angry.</p>
Taking on Responsibility	<p>6. Expression of Embarrassment: I feel awful about it.</p> <p>7. Admission of Fact but not Responsibility: I haven't read it/ I missed the bus/ I forgot about it/ I haven't time to mark it yet.</p> <p>8. Refusal to Acknowledge Guilt It wasn't my fault</p> <p>9. Explanation or Account: The traffic was terrible/ My tutor kept me late.</p>
Other Categories	<p>10. Offer of Repair: I'll pay for the damage/ I'll go and enquire in the kitchen</p> <p>11. Promise of Forbearance: This won't happen again.</p>

Regardless of the strategies through which an apology may be performed, there are components which usually make up apology speech acts. According to Afghari (2007) an apology can be realized through three main components namely Alerters, Head acts and Adjuncts. Alerters function as an initiator to alert the addressee's attention to the ensuing speech act. A Head act is the minimal unit through which the main apology is realized and can be also intensified internally. Adjuncts which follow the main apology strategy are what called by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) as Supportive Moves. Supportive Moves are realized when the speakers opt for strengthening the apology strategy in order to make it more appropriate with regard to the severity of the offense committed and with regard to power and

distance relations between the interlocutors engaged in a situation. As such, the apology strategies may be intensified through two methods. The first method is to intensify the apology strategy internally within the syntactic structure of the utterance; while the second method is to support the apology strategy by repeating or employing another apology strategy outside the syntactic structure of the prior apology strategy. This study refers to the strategies of the first method as apology *internal intensifier*. An example of apology speech act including the internal intensifier and supportive intensifiers could be as follows (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).



Previous Apology Studies

Wouk (2006) conducted a research on apologizing in Lombok, Indonesia as well as intensification of apologies. She utilized DCT to collect data based on six situations written in Indonesian in DCT. The situations she used in her data collection instrument varied according to the relationship of the interlocutors engaged in that situation in terms of social distance and power status determined by age and social position. However, the severity of the offenses committed in the situations was reported by Wouk (2006) to be approximately equal. The data Wouk (2006) analyzed was collected from among one hundred and five participants including both male and female fluent native speakers of Indonesians. Wouk (2006) adopted the coding scheme developed in CCSARP for the classification of apologies and Trosborg's (1995) categories for type of apology intensifications identified in her data. She compared the results collected from among male participants with those of female participants to provide gender-based differences in her study. Wouk (2006) reported the use of Request for Forgiveness in almost all apologies in her study. A rare use of Expression of Regret was found, reflecting that it does not function as an apology strategy in Indonesian but as a supportive move. As for intensification of apologies Wouk found that Indonesians used emotive particles with regard to the nature of the offense and nature of relation between the interlocutors; as "deference strategies were used with higher status addressees, while solidarity strategies were used with social intimates" (Wouk, 2006, p. 1482). The author also pointed out "some gender difference in the use of upgrading, with males in some situations

being somewhat more likely than females to use solidarity-oriented upgrading” (Wouk, 2006, p. 1482). Methodologically speaking, Wouk’s (2006) study was one of the pioneer and sound studies conducted on the intensification of apology; however, the study does not include the severity of offense as a context-internal variable, and it does not examine the possible impact of the severity of offense on the variation of apology intensification either.

Nureddeen (2008) in her study made an attempt to outline the type and extent of use of apology strategies in Sudanese Arabic and to shed light on the sociocultural attitudes and values of this community. Based on the assumption made in politeness theory developed by Brown and Levinson’s (1987), Nureddeen (2008) investigated the effect of social power, social distance and the severity of offense on Sudanese participants’ apology realizations. The corpus examined by Nureddeen contained 1082 apologies collected through DCT that consisted of 10 different social situations of varying severity of offense, strength of social relationship and power between hypothetical speakers and hearers. The DCT used by Nureddeen adopted some situations from CCSARP developed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) because they suited the Arabic context studied by Nureddeen (2008). The participants who took part in Nureddeen’s (2008) study were 110 college educated adults in Khartoum, Sudan. The author’s survey was written in Sudanese dialect to elicit responses that approximate verbal apologies that might be given to situations explained in DCT. She analyzed the corpus based on a more restricted classification of apology strategies compared to that of Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) to determine the strategies used and the frequencies of their use. Although Nureddeen’s (2008) study showed that the participants in her study apologized more often through Illocutionary Force Indicating Device and Explanation strategies, she concluded that there was an orientation toward positive politeness among Sudanese participants. Nureddeen (2008) explained that Sudanese participants generally, by using Explanations, preferred not to apologize explicitly and they used IFIDs in a ritualistic method which does not threaten the speaker’s positive face. Nureddeen’s (2008) study is an informative study for shedding light on the cultural norms and rules of her society. The study, however, could have been more contributive, if Nureddeen had also investigated the impact of context-internal and context-external variables on the variation of apology intensification.

Eslami (2004) explored Persian speakers’ apology strategies in response to complaints in a cross-cultural comparison between Persian and American English to find similarities and differences in speech acts realization patterns of Persian and English with regard to cultural values and attitudes. She used DCT containing six complaint situations representing different

relationship between the interlocutors in terms of social distance and social power. The offenses committed in her DCT were also different in the degree of severity. She administered an adapted version of DCT to collect the relevant data from among a group of thirty Persian university students both male and female. For the purpose of comparison she collected apology strategy examples through DCT from among a group of thirty university students, native speakers of American English too. Eslami (2004) employed a coding scheme based on previous studies, namely Frescura (1995), Cohen and Olshtain (1981), Olshtain and Cohen (1983), the CCSARP coding scheme developed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), and that of Bergman and Kasper (1993) to analyze her data. Eslami (2004) found that the strategies IFID, accepting the responsibility, offer of repair, and explanation are respectively the most frequent apology strategies not only among Persian speakers but also by American English native speakers. As for social distance perception, the researcher found Persian and American English different as American speakers emphasized private territory and more social distance compared to Persian speakers who “are more publicly available to one another”; she added Persian speakers “tend to be much more detailed, elaborate and emotional” through the strategy explanation of situation in situations with minimal social distance (Eslami, 2004, p. 191). In her study, Eslami (2004) controlled for social power and severity of the offense; however, no discussion regarding the effect of these variables on her participants’ linguistic choice was provided.

From a sociopragmatic perspective, Afghari (2007) examined the apology speech acts performed in Persian to categorize apology strategies. Afghari (2007) explored the effect of the value assigned to context-internal variables, namely social power and social distance, only on the frequency of apology intensifiers. In his study, Afghari (2007) employed DCT to collect apology speech acts from among one hundred male and female native Persian-speaking university students. The data collected by Afghari (2007) was analyzed based on the coding scheme developed by CCSARP (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989) with some modification. Afghari (2007, p. 181) found that Persian apologies are “as formulaic in semantic structure as are English apologies. He reports IFID apology strategy as the most frequent apology strategy among Persian participants of his study which is in harmony with other languages studied by Olshtain and Cohen (1983). He maintained that the strategies of Explanation or Account of Situation, Acknowledgment of Responsibility, Offer of Repair, and Promise of Forbearance are respectively the most frequent apology strategies in Persian after IFID strategy. As for internal intensifiers, Afghari (2007, p. 181) states “the adverbial and the

emotional intensifiers in the participants' apology utterances made up the highest frequency of the internal intensifiers". Afghari (2007) added among the apology formulas used as supportive intensifiers, the strategy Acknowledgment of Responsibility was registered as the most frequent strategy in apology utterances; after it, the strategies IFID, Offer of Repair, Explanation of Situation, and Promise of Forbearance were used respectively as the most frequent supportive intensifiers. As for the effect of context-external variables on the frequency of apology intensifiers, he concluded that apologies are most intensified when they are offered to close friends with no dominance over the apologizer; on the contrary apologies are least intensified when they are offered to strangers with no dominance over the apologizer.

In a Persian context, Shariati and Chamani (2010) investigated the apology strategies used by Persian speakers to see the frequency, combination, and the sequential position of apology strategies in Persian. They collected the relevant data through an ethnographic method of observation from among male and female Persian native speakers in different situations. Shariati and Chamani (2010) analyzed the data according to the framework provided by Olshtain and Cohen (1983). Shariati and Chamani (2010) found IFID apology strategies as the most frequent strategies in their corpus. On the other hand, Promise of Forbearance was used as the least frequent apology strategy. Explicit Expression of Apology together with Acknowledgement of Responsibility was reported as the most frequent combination of apology strategies in this Persian study by Shariati and Chamani (2010). The use of naturally occurring data is a contributive factor for the study conducted by them; however, they were not able to control for such factors as context-external and context-internal variables, and the gender of the participants.

Shahrokhi and Jan (2012) investigated the realization of apology speech act by Persian male native speakers to categorize and formulate the apology strategies employed in their interactions in contexts where the effect of power, distance, and severity of offense were varied. By collecting the data through DCT, the study examined the realization patterns of apology speech acts to highlight Persian males' linguistic choice. The study revealed the availability of some of the universal apology strategies in Persian and a culture-specific apology strategy used by Persian men that is situation-dependent in relation to contextual variables. The study is one of the contributive studies in a Persian context; however, it does not provide a detailed analysis of apology intensification with regard to context-internal and context-external variables.

Shahrokhi (2012) examined whether apology supportive intensification is motivated by contextual variables in Persian. In this respect, the relevant apology speech acts were collected through the administration of a Discourse Completion Test consisting of situations which varied in terms of Social Dominance, Social Distance, and Severity of Offense. The elicited data was analyzed and codified according to a coding scheme developed by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). The results indicated that participants' assessment of contextual variables motivated the strategy they used as apology supportive intensifications. Moreover, the study identified the use of culture specific strategies as far as apology speech act supportive intensifications were concerned.

The review of past relevant literature indicated good contributions (for example, Afghari, 2007; Kim, 2008; Shariati & Chamani, 2010) to the field. However, previous studies do not usually control for gender effects; for instance, Afghari (2007) collected his data from a mixed-gender population and did not address single-sex attributes in his study. Moreover, the evaluation of the context-internal variable, that is, severity of the offense is not addressed either in previous studies. Accordingly, the current study is an attempt to fill the research gap since the investigation of the effect of context-external and context-internal variables on apology realizations calls for further studies.

Problem and Objectives

Drawing on the assumption that the diversity in the realization of speech acts in context may derive at least from three different variables, namely contextual (situational) variability, cross-cultural variability and individual variability, these variables have been named as the motivators of diversity in the realization of speech acts (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984).

Contextual variability refers to systematic differences in the realization patterns of speech acts, depending upon the social constrain embedded in the situation. Social Distance (SD), along with Social Dominance (SD) or Power classified as context-external variables, and seriousness of offense classified as context-internal variables implicate contextual variability. The Social Dominance is an evaluation of the interlocutor's power over the other participant. It has a ternary value namely (S>H) where the hearer is dominated by the speaker, (S<H) where the speaker is dominated by the hearer, and (S=H) where they are equal in terms of power. Social Distance, as another context-external variable, indicates the familiarity of the interlocutors and has a binary value, that is to say the speaker and the hearer either know one another well (-SD) or do not know one another (+SD). As regards context-

internal variables, the seriousness of offense indicates how severe an apology should be performed with regard to the corresponding offense; and it is evaluated as either high (H) or low (L) (Shahrokhi & Jan, 2012).

It follows that, due to the above-mentioned variables, the realization patterns of speech acts might be different systematically as much as contextual constraints influence the context of the realization of speech acts. For instance, apologies may be phrased like an expression of apology, an explanation, an acknowledgment of responsibility, an offer of repair and a promise of forbearance as semantic formulas, because context-external and context-internal variables may influence the preference of each strategy by the speakers (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). Therefore, the study intends to achieve the following objectives: 1) it investigates apology speech acts are intensified internally in Persian; 2) the study sets out to explore the influence of context-external variable (social distance) on apology internal intensifiers, and 3) it sheds light on the influence of context-internal variable (severity of offense) on apology internal intensifiers as well. With regard to the above-mentioned objectives, the study formulates the questions as follows.

- 1) What internal intensifiers are used to modify apology speech acts in Persian?
- 2) Does severity of offense significantly motivate the use of apology internal intensifiers in Persian?
- 3) Does social distance significantly motivate the use of apology internal intensifiers in Persian?

Methodology

Research Design

Drawing upon a quantitative design, the current study was conducted based on a descriptive method, using a survey. Descriptive research is the most basic type of enquiry that aims to observe (gather information on) certain phenomena, typically at a single point in time: the cross-sectional survey. The aim is to examine a situation by describing important factors influencing the situation, such as demographic, context-external and context-internal variables (Kelley, Clark, Brown, & Sitzia, 2003). The independent variables under study were social distance and severity of offense whose impact was intended to be checked on the dependent variable, namely apology internal intensifiers.

Participants and Instrument

Convenience sampling as a specific type of non-probability sampling method was used to select the participants of the study. They were 120 Persian male native speakers whose ages ranged between 19 and 27; the participants were all college and university educated. Since the influence of context-internal and context-external variables on the intensification strategies of apology speech acts was the primary concern of this study, the most appropriate data was the data in which the above-mentioned variables were controllable. Accordingly, an adopted version of DCT developed originally by Marquez-Reiter (2000) was selected and translated into Persian for data collection; it consisted of 12 situations which were varied in terms of social distance, and severity of offense. For the purpose of validity, based on the feedbacks collected from two professors of applied linguistics, a few modifications were made to suit it for Persian context. As for the reliability of the instrument, the intra-rater reliability measure turned out quit reliable ($r=.95$). The DCT used was accompanied with a questionnaire through which the participants' general information such as age, sex, and education level was collected.

Coding Scheme

The primary coding scheme used for the analysis of the data in this study is that of Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989), as displayed in the following table.

Table 2. *Apology Internal Intensifier (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989. P. 290-291)*

Strategy	Example
1. Intensifying Adverbials: 2. Emotional Expressions/ Exclamations: 3. Expression Marked for Register: 4. Double Intensifier or Repetition of Intensifying Adverbial: 5. Please:	I'm <i>very/terribly/ so/ really/ awfully</i> sorry. <i>Oh/ Oh no/ Oh Lord/ God</i> I <i>do</i> apologize ... I'm <i>really dreadfully</i> sorry/ I'm <i>very, very</i> sorry. <i>Please</i> forgive me.

Data Analysis and Results for First Research Question

The results include examples, frequencies, and percentages of internal intensifiers employed with apology strategies to highlight Persian male participants' linguistic behavior. The results in this section provide answer to the first research question: what internal intensifiers are used to modify apology speech acts in Persian?

In the current study the participants of the study opted for different apology strategies according to the situation in which an offense had been committed. For instance, Offer of

Apology strategy registered the highest frequencies in situation A2 (Ruin Trousers; for situations context-internal and context-external descriptions see Appendix B) as '*ma?zerat mixaam*' (I apologize). Also, in A10 (Tread Toe) Offer of Apology strategy included such instances as depicted in the following example. The apology strategies were intensified internally as printed in bold style in the following example extracted from the data.

(1) *Ox*, ***vaaghean*** *ma?zerat mixaam. Aslaan paatuno nadidam.*

Ouch, really apologize. At all leg not see.

(**Ouch**, I really apologize. I did not see your leg at all)

In A10 (Tread Toe), the participants of the study used different internal intensifiers to intensify the force of the apology strategy. The internal intensifiers in A10 (Tread Toe) consist of Intensifying Adverbials as '*vaaghean*' (really) and Emotions as '*Ox*' (Ouch) in example (1).

In A3 (Being Late) there is social distance between interlocutors (+SD), and the offense in this situation is not severe. A3 (Being Late) depicts a scenario where the speaker is expected to apologize for a delay. Through Request for Forgiveness strategy the participant makes an attempt to express his regret for the delay due to traffic congestion as '*Shomaa baayad xeili xeili manu bebaxshid...*' (You should forgive me very very much...) in example (2).

(2) *Shomaa baayad **xeili xeili** manu bebaxshid. To teraafik*

You should very very me forgive. In traffic

gir-oftaadam.

stuck.

(You should forgive me **very very** much. I was stuck in traffic.)

As for the internal intensifiers realized along with apology strategies in A3 (Being Late), a minority of them were intensified through Intensifying Adverbial, The internal intensifiers also included Emotion and Double Intensifiers as '*...very very...*' (*...xeili xeili...*) in example (2).

In A4 (Forget Map), the speaker asks his friend to make inquiry regarding the address they are going to while there was no need to do so. The interlocutors in A4 (Forget Map) are friends, that is to say, there is no social distance (-SD) between them and the severity of the offense committed is evaluated as low. The strategy Statement of Offense in A4 (Forget Map) includes such instances as '*...naghshhe tu jibam bud...*' (...the map was in my pocket...) in example (3).

(3) *Vaai, naghsh-e tu jibam bud. Nemixaastam baraat zahmat-*

O, map in pocket was. Not meant you

dorost-konam

disturb

(O, the map was in my pocket. I did not mean to disturb you.)

Regarding the intensification of apology strategies internally in A4 (Forget Map), Emotion, as ‘*Vaai...*’ (O...) in example (3), intensified the some apologies internally.

Instances of the other apology strategies were also identified. For instance, the strategy Lack of Intent was used in A8 (Retype Letters) as ‘*nemixaastam vaghtet ro talaf konam aslan ...*’ (I did not want to waste your time at all ...) in example (4).

(4) *nemixaastam vaghtet ro talaf-konam aslan, vali man matne*

Not want time waste at all, but I text

daghgh ro baraa taaip behet nadaadam

right for type you not gave.

(I did not want to waste your time **at all**, but I did not give you the right text to be typed)

As for internal intensifiers in A8 (Retype Letters), Emotions like ‘*xodaayaa...*’ (My God...) made up some of internal intensifiers and Intensifying Adverbials as ‘...*aslan*’ (...at all) in example (4) were used as well.

The strategy Justifying Hearer as an apology strategy was used and intensified by the participants of the study. An instance of the strategy Justifying Hearer in A12 (Smash Computer) included ‘*hagh daari age az dastam asabaani beshi...*’ (You are right if you get angry with me...) in example (5).

(5) *hagh-daari age az dastam asabaani beshi. Vali vaaghean*

Right if with me angry get. But indeed

nemixaastam amdan beshkanamesh...

not mean on purpose break

(You are right if you get angry with me. But **indeed** I did not want to break it on purpose)

In order to support the main apology strategies, the participants of the study used a variety of intensifiers in this situation. For instance, Intensifying Adverbial as ‘*vaaghen...*’ (indeed...) was the most frequent internal intensifier, identified in A12 (Smash Computer).

In A1 (Book Return) the speaker who is a university student has to apologize for ignorance. The speakers do not know one another well (+SD), and the offense committed in this situation is low in severity. One of the frequent apology strategies used in the situation was Explanation of Situation like ‘*Man ye moshkeli daashtam ke baa?es shod faraamush konam ketaabetun ro biaaram,...*’ (I had a problem which caused me to forget to bring your book, ...) in example (6).

(6) *Man ye moshkeli daashtam ke baa?es-shod faraamush-*

I a problem had which caused forget

konam ketaabetun ro biaaram, xeili ?ozr mixaam

book bring a lot apologize

(I had a problem which caused me to forget to bring your book, I apologize **a lot**.)

In A1 (Book Return) Intensifying Adverbials as ‘...*xeili*’ (...a lot) in example (6) were used to intensify the apology strategies internally.

In A5, the speaker and hearer do not know one another well (+SD), and the speaker is expected to apologize for a high severe damage made to the hearer’s car. The high severity of the offense in A5 (Damage Car with Oil) seems to have motivated the participants to choose the Offer of Repair strategy as one of apology strategies. The Offer of Repair strategy in A5 (Damage Car with Oil) included such instances as ‘...*man xudam tamizesh-mikonam*’ (... I’ll myself wash it up) in example (7).

(7) *Man xudam tamizesh-mikonam. Vaaghean xeili baaese*

I myself wash up. Really very made

sharmandegi-shod.

ashamed

(I’ll myself wash it up. It made me **really very** ashamed.)

Most of the apologies in A5 (Damage Car with Oil) were intensified internally by Intensifying Adverbial and internal intensifiers followed by Emotion. Double Intensifier as ‘...*vaaghean xeili*...’ (...really very...) in example (7), was also among internal intensifiers.

Through another apology strategy the speaker underestimates the offense committed through humor. In other words, through adding humor to the situation, the speaker tries to make his fault not that important. An example of the strategy termed *Underestimating the Offense by Humor* is ‘...*xodaa ro shokr shalvaaret ro xis nakard*...’ (...thanks God it did not wet your trousers ...) in example (8).

(8) *Ox, xodaa ro shokr shalvaaret ro xis-nakard, huh. Etefaaghe*

Ops, God thanks trousers wet not, huh. event
dige pish-miaad.

Happen.

(Ops, thanks God it did not wet your trousers, huh. It is event and happens.)

The above strategy was realized in A2 (Ruin Trousers), where the speaker is expected to apologize to the hearer for spilling the coffee on the hearers' trousers. The internal intensifiers were used to support the apology strategies in A2 (Ruin Trousers) consisted of Intensifying Adverbial including '*...jedan...*' (...indeed...). Moreover, Emotion as '*Ox...*' (Ops...) in example (17), made up some of the internal intensifiers in A2 (Ruin Trousers).

The use of internal intensifiers employed by participants of the study with regard to the statuses of context-internal and context-external variables across situations – social distance as context-external variable and severity of offense as context-internal variable – was observed in the data analyzed. The results of data analysis revealed that Intensifying Adverbial, Emotion, and Double Intensifier were employed by the participants of the study as strategies to intensify the main apology strategy.

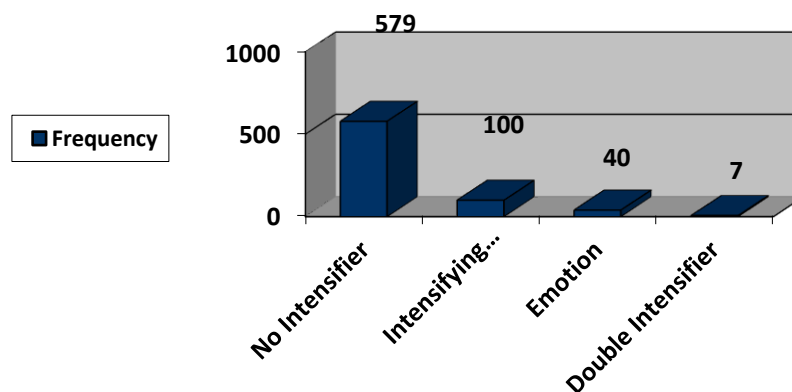


Figure 1. Total Frequencies of Internal Intensifier

Figure 1 shows that from among all apology strategies intensified internally by the participants, 100 realizations were intensified internally through Intensifying Adverbial. A total of 40 realizations of the internal intensifiers were Emotions as the second most frequent internal intensifier and the third frequent internal modification is Double Intensifier, registering 7 realizations of the internal intensifiers.

Table 3 reports the use of internal intensifiers in different situations. The frequencies and percentages marked in bold indicate the most frequent strategy in a situation, while the frequencies and percentages highlighted in gray indicate the highest frequency of a given strategy across all situations.

Table 3. *Frequency and Percentage of Internal Intensifiers across Situations*

Situation \ Strategy	No Intns	IA	EMO	DBI	Total Intns
A1	56 91.8%	4 6.6%	1 1.6%	0 0%	5
A2	33 54.1%	16 26.2%	10 16.4%	2 3.3%	28
A3	50 82%	9 14.8%	1 1.6%	1 1.6%	11
A4	52 85.2%	2 3.3%	7 11.5%	0 0%	9
A5	37 60.7%	17 27.9%	5 8.2%	2 3.3%	24
A6	57 93.4%	4 6.6%	0 0%	0 0%	4
A7	54 65.6%	7 11.5%	0 0%	0 0%	7
A8	54 88.5%	3 4.9%	4 6.6%	0 0%	7
A9	53 86.9%	8 13.1%	0 0%	0 0%	8
A10	42 68.9%	11 18%	8 13.1%	0 0%	19
A11	51 83.6%	9 14.8%	0 0%	1 1.6%	10
A12	44 72.1%	12 19.7%	4 6.6%	1 1.6%	17

No Intns: No Intensifier; IA: Intensifying Adverbial; EMO: Emotions;

DBI: Double Intensifier; Total Intns: Total Intensifier Frequency

Intensifying Adverbial, as the most frequent internal intensifier (68.2%) among the other Internal Intensifiers, is also the most frequent internal intensifier in all situations except A4 (Forget Map) and A8 (Retype Letters) as Table 3 indicates.

The use of Intensifying Adverbial across situations with different varieties of social distance and severity of offense reflects the idea that this strategy is employed regardless of the distance relation between the interlocutors; and the severity of the offense does not play a significant role when Intensifying Adverbials are the choice for intensifying the apologies internally, as instantiated in example 9.

(9) *Vaghen motoasefam anghoshtetun ru leh kardam...*

Really sorry leg pinch

(I'm **really** sorry I pinched your toe.)

As instantiated in example (10), Emotion as the second frequent internal intensifier is used most frequently (16.4%) in A2 (Ruin Trousers). The lack of social distance between the interlocutors, as well as the low severity of the offense makes this situation the most suitable situation for the use of Emotion as internal intensifier among Persian male native speakers of the study.

(10) *Vai xodaa, ona naamehai nabud ke baayad taip-mishud.*

O God, they letter were not type

(O' **God**, they were not the right letters to be typed.)

Double Intensifier is used in A2 (Ruin Trousers), A3 (Being Late), A5 (Damage Car with Oil), A11 (Late Money Return), and A12 (Smash Computer). Few realizations of Double Intensifier in the above-mentioned situations and no use of this intensifier in other situations indicate that Double Intensifier is not a favorable linguistic choice among Persian male speakers. Example (11) includes an instance of the strategy Double Intensifier.

(11) *man xeili xeili sharmandeam shalvaaratun ru kasif kardam.*

I very very ashamed trousers dirty made

(I am **very very ashamed** I made your trousers dirty.)

Data Analysis and Results for Second Research Question

The second research question was posed to look for any significant difference among the use of apology internal intensifiers as far as severity of offense was concerned. Therefore, the second question asked: does severity of offense significantly motivate the use of apology internal intensifiers in Persian?

The severity of offense as a context internal variable had one of the following two possible statuses across all situations. In situations A1, A2, A3, A4, A8, and A10, the apology was performed for a low sever offense. In situations A5, A6, A7, A9, A11, A12 the severity of offense was high. To answer the second research question, the frequency and percentages of internal intensifiers were calculated in high and low sever situations.

Table 4. Frequency of Internal Intensifiers in Low and High Severe Situations

Strategies	Apology Situations													
	Low Severe							High Severe						
	A1	A2	A3	A4	A8	A10	Total	A5	A6	A7	A9	A11	A12	Total
IA	4	16	9	2	3	11	45	17	4	7	8	9	12	57
EMO	1	10	1	7	4	8	31	5	0	0	0	0	4	9
DBI	0	2	0	1	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	1	1	4
Total	79							70						

As displayed in the above table, in situations in which the Persian male speakers had to apologize for a low severe offense, the most frequent internal intensifier was Intensifying Adverbial, registering 45 cases. Following it, Emotion was used as the most favorable internal intensifier by Persian male speakers of the study, recording 31 cases. And, the last internal intensifiers used in these situations was Double Intensifier, recording 3 cases.

According to Table 4, in situations in which the Persian male speakers dealt with a high severe offense, the most frequent internal intensifier Intensifying Adverbial, registering 57 cases. Following it, Emotion was used as the most favorable internal intensifier by Persian male speakers of the study, recording 9 cases. And the last internal intensifiers used in these situations was Double Intensifier, recording 4 cases.

As the above table displays, the severity of offense seems to motivate the use of internal intensifiers by Persian participants of the study. As statistics above indicate, in situations in which the participants had to apologize for a high severe offense, more internal intensifiers had been used, compared to low severe situations. Accordingly, it could be inferred that severity of offense makes a difference in the use of internal intensifiers by Persian male speakers.

In order to check whether the difference made by severity of offense in the use of internal intensifiers is also statistically significant or not, Chi-square statistical procedure was used. It is worth mentioning that the chi-square test is used when the data is categorical and there is a dependent variable with more than one level (e.g., internal intensifiers) and an independent variable with more than one level (e.g., severity of offense).

Table 5. Chi Square Values for Internal Intensifiers Differences in High and Low Severe Situations

	Value	df	Sig.
Chi Square	13.2	2	0.001
Critical Chi Square P≤0.05	5.99		

As it can be seen in the table above, the difference among the frequency use of internal intensifiers employed by Persian male speakers was statistically significant $\chi^2(2) = 13.2$, $p \leq 0.05$. According to the table, the significance value (0.001) corresponding to this comparison was less than the p value (.05). Accordingly, it was concluded that severity of offense significantly motivates the use of apology internal intensifiers in Persian.

Data Analysis and Results for Third Research Question

The third research question of the study was posed to check whether social distance affects the use of Internal Intensifiers strategies realized by male Persian speakers. To answer the question, the distribution of Internal Intensifiers in high social distance and low social distance situations was calculated. As it was mentioned earlier, the situations in the questionnaire of the study were designed to test the effect of social distance as an independent variable. Accordingly, some situations (situations A2, A4, A6, A7, A8, and A9) included low social distance status and other situations (situations A1, A3, A5, A10, A11, and A 12) included high social distance status.

Table 6. Frequency of Internal Intensifiers in (-SD) and (+SD) Situations

Internal Intensifiers	Situations													
	(-SD)							(+SD)						
	A2	A4	A6	A7	A8	A9	Total	A1	A3	A5	A10	A11	A12	Total
IA	16	2	4	7	3	8	40	4	9	17	11	9	12	62
EMO	10	7	0	0	4	0	21	1	1	5	8	0	4	19
DBI	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	0	1	1	5
Total							63							86

As it is displayed in Table 6, the most frequent Internal Intensifiers used by Persian male speakers of the study in low social distance situations were Intensifying Adverbial, registering 40 cases. In low social distance situations, Emotion was used as the second most frequent intensifier used by Persian male participants, recording 21 cases. The third least frequent intensifier used by participants of the study in low social distance situations was Double Intensifier, registering 2 cases.

As for high social distance situations, the above table shows that the most frequent strategy preferred by Persian male participants of the study was Intensifying Adverbial, recording 62 cases. As the second frequently used intensifier, the Persian male participants of the study used 19 Emotions to realize apologies in high social distance situations. And, a

total of 5 Double Intensifiers were used as the least frequent intensifier by the participants of the study.

Quantitatively speaking, the status of social distance in situations affects the frequency use of internal intensifiers used for apology strategies. In order to check whether the differences in the frequency use of impolite complaint strategies between high and low social distance situations was statistically significant, Chi-square statistical procedure was run.

Table 7. *Chi Square Values for Internal Intensifiers Differences in (-SD) and (+SD) Situations*

	Value	df	Sig.
Chi Square	2.62	2	0.267
Critical Chi Square P≤0.05	5.99		

As it can be seen in Table 7, the difference among the frequency use of apology internal intensifiers employed by Persian male speakers in high and low social distance situations was not statistically significant $\chi^2(2) = 2.62, p \leq 0.05$. According to the table, the significance value (0.267) corresponding to this comparison was greater than the p value (.05). Accordingly, the results imply that social distance does not significantly affect the use of internal intensifiers realized by Persian male speakers.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

The purpose of this study was to provide an account of the apology internal intensifications realized in Persian based on the participants' assessment of the context-internal and context-external variables. The results indicated that some of universal intensifiers are used for the intensification of apologies in Persian; this is explained and supported by Brown and Levinson's theory (1987) that there are universal strategies for the realization of apologies and their intensifications (e.g., Emotion).

Moreover, the results implicated that severity of offense motivated the realization patterns of apology internal intensifications in general. The results are in harmony with the overall direction of Wijayanto, Prasetyarini, and Hikmat's (2017) findings indicating that the frequent use of impolite complaints is instigated by the intensity of social situations. This could be explained from a cultural perspective in which Persian culture plays a significant role in Persian speaker's awareness-raising of offense severity. The Persian culture stresses the assessment of context internal variables in the realization of speech acts and linguistically recommends more internal intensifications of apologies for more severe offenses.

Another finding of the study revealed that social distance as a context-external variable does not prompt the use of internal intensifications differently in situations where there is social distance between interlocutors compared to situations where there is no social distance between interlocutors. This could be justified from a cultural point of view. It makes no difference in Persian whether interlocutors in an interaction know one another or not when an offense is committed and an apology is expected; apology speech acts are internally intensified to the same extent regardless of the fact whether interlocutors in an interaction know one another or not. Persian culture recommends the intensification of an apology internally to make it more appealing to the person who expects the apology. However, the finding was contrary to previous literature. For example, Wijayanto et al. (2017) found that the use of impolite complaints was instigated by a number of factors including the interlocutor's perceptions on the social distance. In another study, Shahrokhi (2012) found that the interlocutors' assessments of the context-external variables, namely social distance, interacted with the type and frequency of strategies the interlocutors choose for the intensifications of apologies externally. The controversy above could be explained from several perspectives. For example, the nature of situations described in the instrument to collect the data may have prompted different strategies for the realization of speech acts. Moreover, differences found in this regard could be explained by the significant cultural norms that might have different linguistic realizations cross-culturally.

Implications

The current study is an informative one for a number of readers, including Iranian EFL teachers, Iranian EFL learners, Persian learners, and material developers. Firstly, it contributes to EFL teaching and learning from a cross-cultural perspective. Drawing upon the results of the current study and comparing them with results from other studies, Iranian EFL teachers can familiarize Iranian EFL learners with the norms of apologizing and intensification of apology in Persian and highlight the differences between Persian and English in this regards. Awareness of cross-cultural linguistic differences can lead to better cross-cultural communications among Iranian EFL learners and can result in fewer cross-cultural clashes linguistically.

As for those who are learning Persian as a second or another language, the current study could be inspiring. It is helpful because not only it provides Persian learners with some

of universal intensifiers that are used for the intensification of apologies in Persian, but also it reveals what and how culture-specific norms are used in Persian more frequently.

Regarding materials development, the current study is an aid to developing materials within and for specific geographical contexts; an international practice known as localization (Mishan & Timmis, 2015). Localized materials for contexts where English is not the native language can situate English language learning within familiar cultural reference points, for instance, apology intensification in Persian (Munandar & Ulwiyah 2012). Drawing upon the results of the current study, Iranian ELT material developers can include more appropriate cultural points in the syllabuses of materials developed for Iranian EFL learners.

Limitations and Suggestions

As with any research, the present study faced several limitations in relation to the sample and methodology implemented. One clear limitation was associated with the sample size. The study was limited by the small sample size which may have affected the results. Future research focusing on a greater number of participants should be considered.

Another limitation of the present study lies in the research instruments (DCT). Although DCT could collect the data, the speech acts collected only reflect what the participants believed to perform and, therefore, they may represent different speech act strategies as compared with data taken from authentic conversations. Therefore, future study may opt for triangulation of the data, for example, collected through role-play.

Moreover, since the participants of the study were all selected from male native speakers of Persian, the study also paves the way for conducting the same research on female native speakers of Persian to see whether gender differentiates the choice of apology intensifications internally with regard to contextual variables.

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Appendix A. Persian Translation of Questionnaire and DCT

پرسشنامه

الف. نام و نام خانوادگی:.....
 ب. جنسیت:.....
 د. مقطع تحصیلی: الف) فوق دیپلم ب) لیسانس ج) فوق لیسانس د) دکتری

شما در قسمت زیر چند موقعیت را که در آن دو نفر شرکت کننده وجود دارد می خوانید. شما باید خود را جای یکی از شرکت کنندگان قرار داده و پاسخ خود را به صورت کتبی بنویسید. سعی کنید همان طور که در یک موقعیت واقعی عمل می کنید پاسخ خود را به صورت کتبی بنویسید. همه گفتگوها بین آقایان اتفاق می افتد. زیاد فکر نکنید و سعی کنید طبیعی پاسخ دهید.

۱. شما دانشجوی دانشگاه هستید و کتابی را از استاد خود قرض گرفته اید که قول داده اید امروز بیاورید. زمانی که استاد خود را در راهرو می بینید، می فهمید که فراموش کرده اید که کتاب را با خود بیاورید. به استاد خود چه می گوئید؟

۲. پس از اتمام کار شما مدیر شرکت خود را برای گپ زدن و خوردن چایی در یک قهوه خانه نزدیک محل کار خود ملاقات می کنید. زمانی که با مدیر شرکت در حال گفتگو هستید قهوه خود را به طور تصادفی روی شلوار او می ریزید. به او چه می گوئید؟

۳. شما منشی با سابقه یک شرکت هستید. یکی از همکاران جدید شما قبول می کند تا در چند دقیقه ای که شما به بیرون می روید تا کاری را انجام دهید به تلفن ها جواب دهد پس از انجام کار شخصی خود به شرکت بر می گردید و متوجه می شوید یک ساعت ونیم دیر برگشته اید. به همکار جدید خود چه می گوئید؟

۴. شما از دوست خود درخواست می کنید تا مسیر درست را برای رسیدن به خیابان X از عابر پیاده ای بپرسد، پس از آن متوجه می شوید که این کار لازم نبوده زیرا نقشه دوستان که قبلا برای یافتن مسیر به شما داده در جیب شما بوده است. به دوست خود چه می گوئید؟

۵. همسایه شما که او را به خوبی نمی شناسید قبول کرده تا در جابجایی بعضی وسایل از آپارتمانان به شما کمک کند. زمانی که سوار ماشین او می شوید متوجه می شوید که ماشین خیلی تمیز است و هیچ لکه ای ندارد. در زمان دور زدن سر یک پیچ یک شیشه روغن که بین وسایل شما بوده است روی صندلی عقب می افتد و روغن آن روی صندلی پخش می شود. شما و همسایه شما هر دو متوجه می شوید. به همسایه خود چه می گوئید؟

۶. پس شما با ماشین مدیر محل کار خود که با او رابطه دوستانه‌ای دارید به فرودگاه می‌روید تا همسر خود بیاورید. در راه برگشت از فرودگاه شما تصادف جزئی می‌کنید که موجب شکستن چراغ جلو و کج شدن سپر ماشین می‌شود. وقتی برای پس دادن کلید ماشین مدیر به دفتر او می‌روید، به او چه می‌گویید؟

۷. همکار شما بنا به درخواست شما به سفر نرفته تا در انجام پروژه‌ای که شما مسوول آن هستید به شما کمک کند. در حین پروژه مدیر شرکت به شما اطلاع می‌دهد تا قسمتی از پروژه را که دوست شما در آن کار می‌کند را به دلیل نبود بودجه برای مدتی تعطیل نمایید. چگونه این خبر را به دوست خود اطلاع می‌دهید؟

۸. همکار شما با چند نامه‌ای که از او خواسته‌اید برای شما تایپ کند به دفتر شما می‌آید. وقتی که او نامه‌ها را به شما می‌دهد، شما پی می‌برید که متن نامه‌ها را اشتباه به او گفته‌اید. به او چه می‌گویید؟

۹. در طی اقامت شما در خانه ییلاقی دوستان جوهر سیاهی را روی یک فرش گران قیمت ریخته‌اید و نتوانسته‌اید آن را کاملاً پاک کنید. پس از بازگشت به خانه او می‌روید تا کلید خانه ییلاقی را به او پس دهید. در مورد جوهر روی فرش به او چه می‌گویید؟

۱۰. مسافری در اتوبوس قبول می‌کند تا جایش را با شما عوض کند تا شما بتوانید کنار بچه خود در اتوبوس بنشینید. در حین عوض کردن صندلی، شما اتفاقی پای خود را روی انگشت پای آن مسافر می‌گذارید. چگونه از او عذر خواهی می‌کنید؟

۱۱. مدیر شرکت شما که اخیراً به این سمت برگزیده شده است به شما پول داده است تا قبض‌های منزل خود را پردازید. شما قول داده‌اید که پول او را ظرف یک هفته پس بدهید ولی هم اکنون سه هفته از زمانی که او پول به شما قرض داده می‌گذرد. شما برای پس دادن پول به دفتر او می‌روید. چگونه از او عذر خواهی می‌کنید؟

۱۲. یکی از کارمندان جدید لپ‌تاپ جدید خود را به شما داده تا برای چند لحظه از آن استفاده نمایید. زمانی که شما قصد دارید که به تلفن جواب دهید به صورت اتفاقی لپ‌تاپ را از روی میز می‌اندازید و قسمتی از نمایشگر آن را می‌شکنید. به او چه می‌گویید؟

Appendix B. DCT Context-Internal and Context-External Variables across Situations

Situation	Social Distance	Severity of Offense
A1. Student forgets to return the professor's book on time	+SD	Low
A2. Employee spills coffee on manager's trousers	-SD	Low
A3. Employee returns one hour and a half later than expected	+SD	Low
A4. Driver realizes he had a map all along	-SD	Low
A5. While in neighbor's car oil is split over the back seat	+SD	High
A6. Employee crashes car	-SD	High
A7. Speaker realizes he had the map in his pocket all the while	-SD	High
A8. Employee asks colleague to rewrite them	-SD	Low
A9. Friend spills ink on expensive carpet	-SD	High
A10. Speaker steps on passenger's toe	+SD	Low
A11. Employee returns money later than agreed	+SD	High
A12. Employee smashes computer screen	+SD	High

A = apology, SD = social distance