

**INTERPERSONAL APOLOGY STRATEGIES AND RESPONSE TO APOLOGY IN  
SAUDI ARABIA**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Nottingham Trent  
University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**School of Art and Humanities  
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### **Conferences and presentations**

- Doctoral Student Research Conference, 02/12/2016 – 03/12/2016.
- Translation International Conference, 15/2/2018.
- International Corpora and Discourse conference (CAD 2018) Lancaster university, 22/06/2018 - 24/06/2018.
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## **Abstract**

This research is aimed at investigating the apology strategies and responses to apology employed by Saudis in speech acts. In investigating the apology strategies and response to apology, the study also explores the different factors that could affect the choice of these strategies such as age, gender, social power and social distance.

A mixed-methods approach is adopted, grounded in speech act theory and using a discourse completion task (DCT) and semi-structured interviews. Focus groups are used for piloting purposes. There were 89 participants involved in the focus groups, which contributed to the development of the DCT situations and identification of apology and response strategies. A total of 276 participants were included to answer 15 DCT situations. An additional 10 participants were interviewed in order to gain understanding of the factors affecting the realization of the speech acts.

The study found that the most used apology strategies were offer of apology, expression of regret and explanation of account. These apology strategies were often used in combination with other apology strategies. A statistical significance difference in utilisation of apology strategies was observed between males and females; for instance, females expressing more concern for the hearer, while males more inclined to express embarrassment and offer repair than females. However, differences in apology strategy utilisation based on age group, social distance and social power were not found to be statistically significant. The nature of the offence, position of the offended, words employed, and cultural upbringing were key factors considered when apologising. Further, the use of intensifiers and religious terms helped show sincerity in apologising and often followed an offer of repair.

In terms of apology responses, the most frequently used strategies were deflecting and acceptance, which were often used together. The explaining response strategy was often used with returning, thanking and religious amplifiers. The study also suggested that males employed more returning, explaining and religious amplifiers strategies than females, and that relatively more females than males were willing to accept an apology and actually thank the apologisee. However, gender differences in the use of response strategies were not found to reach statistical significance. Similarly, differences according to age group, social power and social distance were not statistically significant. The most commonly used response phrase was 'no problem', with religious amplifiers such as 'inshallah', 'alhamdulillah' often used with other response strategies (returning, explaining, thanking and disagreeing).

The study contributes in showing that apology and response speech acts are context specific. The contextual factor of gender has more significant than age, social power or social distance in the context of Saudi Arabia.

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## **Dedication**

This work is dedicated to the soul of my beloved Mama Mezna and Baba Ali, the first teachers in my life.

You were always holding my hand when I needed and always there for me.

I wish you were here today to tell you that your guiding hands will remain on my shoulder forever.

Till we meet again in heaven. I love you.

### **Acronyms and abbreviations**

AIQ	Apology Introspection Questionnaire
CCSARP	Cross Cultural Speech Act Research Project
DCT	Discourse completion test
FTA	Face threatening act
KSA	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
IFID	Illocutionary force indicating device
L1	First Language
L2	Second language
NNS	Non-Native Speaker
NS	Native Speakers
RPT	Role-Play Tasks
RPSA	Role play self-assessment
WDCT	Written discourse completion task

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## **Chapter One: Introduction**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Apologies are an integral part in maintaining human relationships (Scher & Darley, 1997; Hatfield & Hahn, 2011; Almegren, 2018; Haugh & Chang, 2019). The generic role is to repair relationships when an offence has been committed whereby one party (or both) to the interaction recognises that an offence has been committed and takes a degree of responsibility. The offence could be either intentional or unintentional. It is the act of taking a degree of responsibility for the offence that counts towards the maintaining of relationships. Thus Olshtain (1989, p. 235) argues that “the act of apologising requires an action or an utterance which is intended to ‘set things right’”. In this sense, apologies are set to repair relationships.

However, apologies are complex, consisting of one or a combination of strategies which are influenced by several factors (Kitao & Kitao, 2013) including culture. Culture has an important influence on the selection of an apology strategy (Kim et al., 2008; Lee & Kim, 2013). Apology is essentially a culture-specific phenomenon particularly since offence is a violation of social norms (Mills & Kádár, 2011). Apology is then “called for when social norms have been violated” (Trosborg, 1995, p. 373) its occurrence signifying that the speaker acknowledges the wrongdoing and takes responsibility for it in order to restore the relationship or damage caused. In this regard, a person apologises when there is a behaviour that violates a perceived social norm or when expectation held by the offended person are not held (Fraser, 1981). Thus, although universally applicable to human languages and cultures, apology is a culture-specific issue that is influenced by several social factors that are bound to vary between cultures. The

common social factors include age, gender, social status, social background, power, social distance and religion or faith (Yule, 1996; Wood, 2002; Lakoff, 2006; Roberts, 2018). The power of these social factors differs from one socio-cultural context to another. As such, the obligation to apologise would also differ from one socio-cultural context to another, for example, what is an offence in one culture might not necessarily be perceived as an offence in another cultural context.

## **1.2 Study background and rationale**

As apology is a culturally specific phenomenon, this study seeks to explore the interpersonal apology strategies and responses to apology used in Saudi Arabia. Over the past few decades, literary critics, pragmaticians and ethnographers of communication have shown a growing interest in the pragmatic rules that govern linguistic behaviour. Speech acts, particularly apology, is one such area of language that has drawn a considerable amount of interest (Válková, 2013; Roberts, 2018; Geurts, 2019). The importance of apology in resolving conflict and building rapport is widely acknowledged (Levi, 1997; Henson & Holt, 2000) because conflict is inevitable, and the patterns and formulas of this speech act have been extensively investigated in different languages and cultures, though mainly in the western cultural context (Attardo & Brown, 2000; Tamanaha, 2003; Jandt, 2004; Válková, 2013).

Saudi researchers, nevertheless, appear to show less details and attention in conducting investigations into this important subject (see El-Dakhs, 2018). For example, apart from a few compiled or non-peer reviewed articles (often published on the Internet), reference is sometimes

made to two papers; Al Ali (2012) and Yallah & Allahiby (2014). The study by Al Ali (2012), which is a comparative study on apology between Saudi and Australian university female students, is narrow in scope and it raises many questions as to its research design. For example, the study employs only one data collection technique, discourse completion tasks (DCTs), with a focus on apology in female groups in an academic setting. It seems inappropriate that males were eliminated from the study that makes it an incomplete investigation on the Saudi society. As regards to the Yallah & Allahiby (2014) study, although it is claimed that it investigates interpersonal apology, it is interesting to note that data obtained for the purpose of analysis are in the standard/literary variety of Arabic, which is rarely used in interpersonal apology situations. Indeed, at least for this particular reason, it can be argued that the study can be further developed. Thus, it seems there still remains a gap in literature about apology in the Saudi social context. In this respect, this study seeks to contribute to this identified research gap. This will contribute to a better understanding of the influence of context on language as used in apology and also responses to apology in a non-western setting.

### **1.3 Research aims**

The aim of this research is to investigate apology strategies and responses in Saudi Arabia. Although studies on apology have been done in classical Arabic (Al-Fattah, 2010), there still remains a gap in the literature about apology in spoken Arabic, particularly spoken Saudi Arabic. This is the gap the proposed research attempts to bridge. Moreover, evidence shows that most types of apology have been extensively investigated in a western context (Attardo & Brown, 2000; Tamanaha, 2003; Cohen, 2004; Jandt, 2004; Válková, 2013; Jucker, 2017). Further,

although linguists investigate apology strategies intensively, as far as I am aware of, very little interest has been shown in response to apology and, as such, try to establish what constitutes an appropriate apology as perceived by the addressee. An appropriate apology perceived by the addressee could be judged as one that results in a positive or expected response. Apology responses have mainly been discussed in the psychology literature (Lazare, 1995; McCullough et al., 1997; Kim et al., 2004; Slocum et al., 2011) which discusses different factors that influence the response to the apology, for instance, the perceived sincerity or genuineness of the offender (Holmes, 1995; Slocum, 2013).

#### **1.4 Research questions**

The research is particularly intended at answering the following research questions:

1. What types of apology strategies do Saudi adults employ in different contexts, considering, for example, social distance, power relationships and seriousness of the addressed offence)?
2. What types of apology responses do Saudi adults use in answering to the apology strategies in research question 1?
3. What contextual variables (e.g. social power and social distance) and social variables (e.g. gender, age) may influence apology strategies and the responses to apology?

#### **1.5 Expected theoretical and practical significance of the study**

As an act of speech, apology is largely influenced by the socio-cultural context (Jung, 1994; Sugimoto, 1997; Tamanaha, 2003). From this perspective, it is important to acknowledge the

influence of the socio-cultural context on the meanings attached to speech acts. The context or setting and the background knowledge of the language and culture help to determine the force of a speech act (Kim et al., 2008; Lee & Kim, 2013). Hence, through analysing verbal behaviour, knowledge about the language and its culture characteristics develops. This is particularly important as both verbal and non-verbal aspects of apology behaviour are integral to understanding differences in cultural groups. For instance, facial expressions often accompany apology acts (Golato, 2003; Cohen, 2004). This is embedded in the communication process of the apology. This study makes a theoretical contribution to the advancement of speech act theory (and politeness theory) by using the non-western context of Saudi Arabia. As Bergman & Kasper (1993, p. 86) suggest “it is requisite to extend the scope of study to non-western languages and cultures to advance the fundamental issues in cross-cultural pragmatics; namely, the universality and specificity of linguistic action”.

Further, as apology is regarded as a social event produced because of the violation of social values (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983), its effect should be about bringing remedy or mediation among people (Goffman, 1971). Apology can, therefore, be viewed as an educational interchange with the function of changing the meaning, comparing what could be seen as offensive into what can be seen as acceptable (Goffman, 1971; Borkin & Reinhart, 1978). In this case, the apology has a remedial aspect to it in which the speaker offers to correct the wrongdoing and repair the damage done in a way as if it never occurred. The remedial interchanges serve to re-establish social harmony after an offence. Goffman (1971) classified apologies into ritual apologies and substantive compensation while Barnlund & Yoshioka (1990) distinguished casual apologies from genuine apologies. In this respect, this study contributes in highlighting, from the

perspective of both the addressee and the addresser what constitute genuine or appropriate apology. Borkin & Reinhart (1978) study, for instance, showed that using appropriate expressions for ritualistic apology is problematic for non-native speakers. Further, Olshtain & Cohen (1983) note that occasions that involve apology have been shown to vary cross-culturally. This is why understanding the influence of the socio-cultural context on speech act is important. However, this study goes beyond the identification of the contextual factors that affect the selection of the apology strategies, instead, it seeks for a more in-depth understanding and valuation of how the contextual factors are culturally determined. This is aimed at obtaining an explanatory understanding to the influence of culturally determined factors. Thus, this study agrees with Meier's (1998, p. 226) argument that:

“the specific situations (with their specific constellations of contextual factors) elicited in the various studies are unlikely to replicate themselves in actual encounters. What is replicated is the fact that culturally-informed perceptions of the contextual factors (e.g. valuations of equality, space, time, distance, individualism) significantly affect the choices made in apology behavior across situations, both intra- and interculturally.”

In this respect, this study makes a contribution in applying a western-oriented framework in the Saudi context and uses that data findings to influence the revision of the existing framework to such contexts. In addition, this study, not only analyses the apology strategies but also the responses to apology which has largely been neglected.

As for the practical significance, given the fact that pragmatic knowledge is often ignored in intercultural research and the language classroom, the findings of the study can be employed in educational settings and especially in ethnographic and language acquisition research. Moreover, the study findings would be useful to diplomats, businessmen or foreigners seeking jobs in Saudi Arabia. It is also worth mentioning that previous studies are mainly focused on apology

strategies and pay little attention to the response of the offended or attempt to address the question as to what constitutes appropriate apologies. Further, researchers often use a restricted classification of apology strategies, employ a single data collection method and tend not to validate their research tools. In addition, previous research tended to adopt the existing research tools without contextualising the research approaches on the basis of a particular socio-cultural context. Therefore, this research makes a methodological contribution in employing both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The qualitative research method involves the usage of focus groups and semi-structured interviews whilst the quantitative research approach employed the discourse completion task technique. Thus, through this methodological choice, it is hoped that the study will make a contribution to the existing research area.

## **1.6 Structure of the thesis**

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. This chapter was aimed at introducing the research. It gave the study's background, aims and research questions. In addition, the theoretical and practical contributions of the study were highlighted. Chapter two is directed at a review of the literature. This starts with definitions of apology and apology strategies followed by a discussion of the contextual factors that influence apology strategies. Further, the responses to apology strategies are discussed before exploring the relationship between apology and socio-cultural context.

Chapter three presents the research methodology. The philosophical orientations of the study are discussed before delving into a discussion of the justifications of the methodological choices

adopted in the data collection. In particular, the qualitative research method employing pilot focus groups, semi-structured interviews and quantitative research method utilising discourse completion task technique is discussed. The method employed in the data analysis process is then discussed.

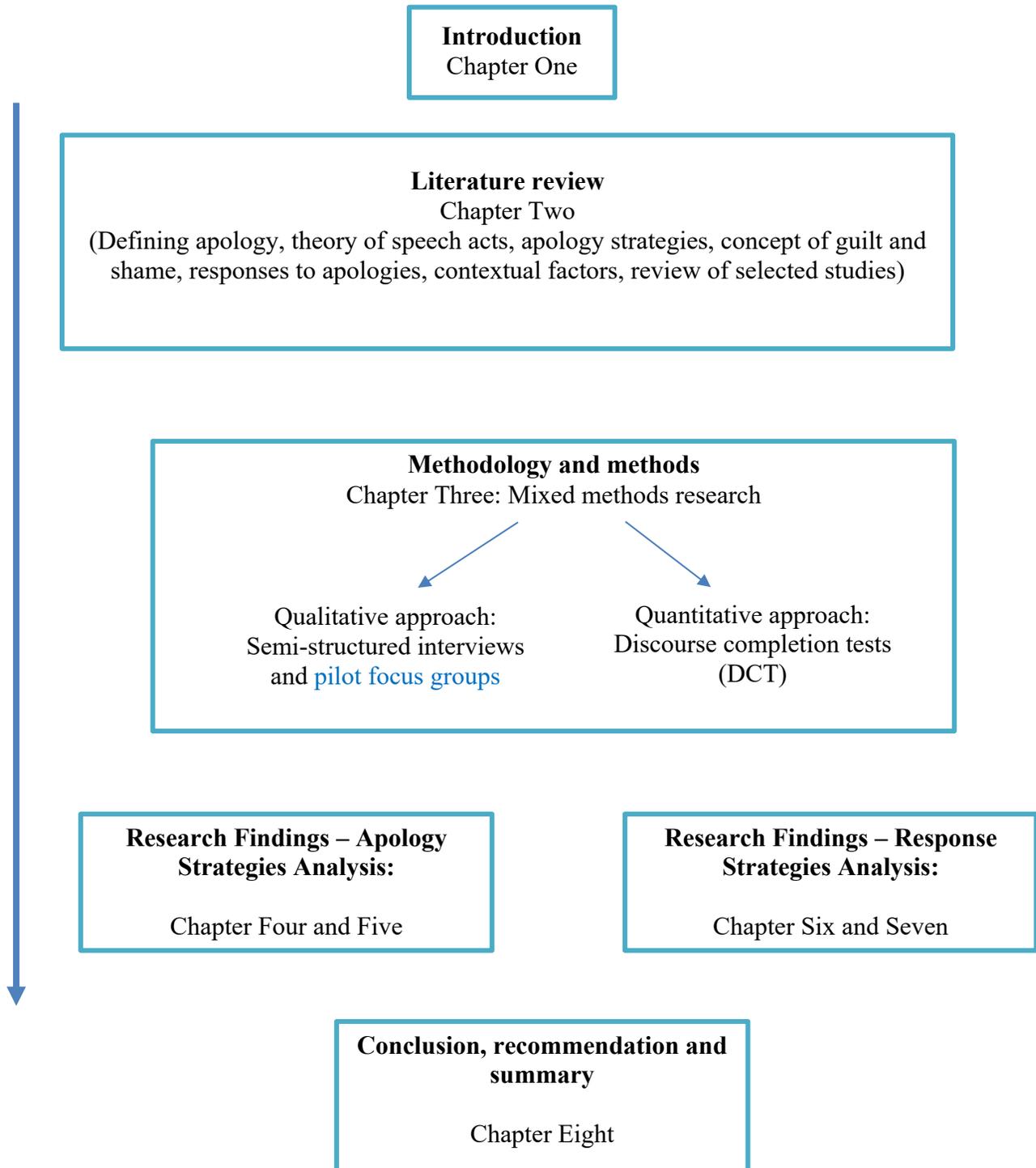
In chapters four and five, the results of the analysis of apology strategies are discussed. The apology strategies are analysed across the 15 DCT situations. The chapter highlights some differences in the employment of the apology strategies across the DCT situations and also explores the significance of gender and age group on the usage of apology strategies. In addition, the impact of situational factors is investigated by examining social distance and social power. The differences in the usage of apology strategies is also investigated to examine its statistical significance. The chapter also presents results of the analysis of the perspective of the offenders when apologising in addition to the examination of the frequently used words and their contexts.

Chapters six and seven focus on the response strategies, presenting and discussing the utilisation of response strategies across the DCT situations. The response strategies results are analysed from different facets such as age, gender, social distance and social power. The identified differences are also statistically explored with significant relationships highlighted. A discussion of the findings in relation to the literature review of chapter 2 is then made. The chapter then explores the perception of the addressees when responding to an apology.

The last chapter draws conclusions, summarises the key findings, suggests recommendations based on the research evidence, presents the study's contribution to the current field of

knowledge and cites implications. This final chapter also includes suggestions for future research based on the findings of the current study.

Figure 1: Diagrammatic presentation of the thesis



## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to introduce the key concepts applied in this study. It starts with defining these key concepts before discussing the different theoretical perspectives adopted in prior studies to the study of apology strategies. The different contextual factors that affect apology strategies and responses to strategies are reviewed. The aim is to develop sufficient understanding of the contextual nature of the apology phenomenon. A review of studies which examine apology strategies in Arabic countries, particularly the Middle East are examined. The aim is to highlight the gap to which this study makes a contribution.

### **2.2 Defining apology**

There exist several perspectives to defining apology. Some approaches used to define apology include semantic formula (Olshtain & Cohen, 1981; Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989), condition-based approach (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1979) and function-centered approach (Holmes, 1990).

Firstly, based on the semantic formula approach, models of semantic formulae or strategies which usually coincide apology responses are built using elicited or natural data. Apologies are important in the performance of the associated speech act. Thus, apologies are defined as a ‘speech act set’ (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983). Constituting a comprehensive semantic formula that

captures all expressions of apology is, however, impossible especially when apology is expressed implicitly, instead of directly (Holmes, 1990).

Secondly, from a condition-based approach, Searle (1979, p. 15) defines apology as speech acts that express the “psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content”. Thus, through the act of apologising, a person expresses their psychological state arising from the encountered situation of an offence. Brown & Levinson (1987, p. 70) used politeness to define apology as “acts that express negative politeness”. In this approach, the conditions from which apologies are created become relevant. According to Holmes (1990), some minimal sincerity conditions that should exist are: (a) an act has occurred; (b) A believes the act has offended B; and (c) A takes some responsibility for the act. The interpretation in this condition is that what ‘A’ says is essentially an apology. The criticism of this approach is that there are literally no systematic limitations on the conditions that create relevant indirect speech acts.

Thirdly, Holmes (1990, p. 159) defines an apology from a ‘function-centered’ approach as an:

“apology is a speech act addressed to B's face-needs and intended to remedy an offence for which A takes responsibility, and thus to restore equilibrium between A and B (where A is the apologist, and B is the person offended).”

In this respect, apologies are social acts that carry an effect content. The advantage of a function-centered approach is that it overcomes the limitations of the semantic formula-based approach which was limited in the capturing of all the semantic formulae to express apologies. Further, this approach is consistent with Goffman's (1971) conception of apologies as remedial interchanges that help to restore social harmony after an offence, whether direct or implied. In

Goffman's (1971) conception, apologies are classified into ritual apologies and substantive compensation. The ritual apologies are those that redress virtual offences remedied through the sole offering of an apologetic formula. Substantive compensation, on the other hand, redress actual damage inflicted on the addressee, in some cases offering material compensation. From this perspective, Bergman & Kasper (1993, p. 82) define an apology “as a compensatory action to an offence in the doing of which S was casually involved and which is costly to H”.

Other classification of apologies exists in the literature such as Barnlund & Yoshioka (1990) categorization of casual apologies and genuine apologies. In this classification, casual apologies would be given when there is a minimal violation of social norms. Genuine apologies, on the other hand, recognize that another person has been harmed physically, socially or psychologically; there is also awareness that one shares indirect or direct responsibility for such harm and; an obligation to acknowledge this awareness exists (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990).

### **2.3 The theory of speech acts**

Speech acts are concerned with the ways in which words do actions rather than merely transferring meaning. A speech act is basically an utterance that serves a function in communication. Richards (1985, p. 265) defines speech act as “an utterance and as a functional unit in communication”. Apology is a speech act (other speech acts are greetings, requests, complaints, invitations, compliments, refusals) which can be performed in one word e.g. ‘sorry!’ or in several words e.g. ‘I am sorry I forgot your birthday’. Importantly, speech acts (in this case an apology) include real-life interactions which require not only knowledge of the language, but

also the appropriate use of that language within a given culture (Hatch, 1992). As such, it makes it often difficult to perform these speech acts in a second language as the speaker might not know the idiomatic expressions or cultural norms of the second language, among others. There is no universality of speech acts which makes cultural contexts very important. The successful performance of speech act, as a result, depends on the social norms prevailing in a particular language community.

This study analyses the apology speech acts of the agents in and how the offended party interprets the act during the apology, the power level of the apologiser relative to the offended party and the degree of the imposition of an apology. The degree of imposition may influence the degree and manner of apologizing such that severe offences demand more sincere level of apologizing (O’Keeffe et al., 2011). The interpretation of the apology act by the offended party presents one way in which the effectiveness of the apology act could be judged. Apology as a speech act is theoretically grounded in speech act theory.

The idea of speech acts can be traced back to Austin's (1962) pioneering concept of an illocutionary act. Austin considers that when one says something that has a sense and reference, the speaker performs an act other than just saying it. For example, in saying the words ‘I name this ship the Queen Elizabeth’, the speaker performs the locutionary act of “issuing the utterance” (Austin, 1962, p. 6), and the illocutionary act of naming. Austin also noted that by performing an illocutionary act, we often have some effect on the hearer through the utterances. As such, Austin (1962) made an important distinction of the levels at which one is ‘doing’ something in producing an utterance. These utterances can make a recognizable change in the

world, as language can be or is used to 'do' things. Austin (1962) makes three distinction of utterances. These are 'locutionary act', 'illocutionary act' and 'perlocutionary act'. The locutionary act is the utterance of a sentence with determinate sense and reference (Levinson, 1983). This is the physical act of producing an utterance. Illocutionary acts relate to the "the making of a statement, offer, promise, etc., in uttering a sentence, by virtue of the conventional force associated with it or with its explicit performative paraphrase" (Levinson, 1983, p. 236). The illocutions are intentional in that they are what the speaker intends to do in producing the locutionary act. In other words, an illocutionary act is what is directly attained through the conventional force that is associated with the issuance of a particular type of utterance in accordance with acceptable conventional procedures. In short, the utterance enables the saying of something to convey more than what it literally said. Perlocutionary act, on the other hand, refers to the "effects which are brought about on the interlocutor/third parties as a result of the utterance of the locution. Speakers have in mind the perlocutionary effect(s) they wish to produce as a result of their utterance, but these are not guaranteed to come about. So an apology may give rise to the perlocutionary effect of repair to a damaged relationship, but also may cause annoyance on the part of the hearer" (Murphy, 2018, p. 168). The perlocutionary act, therefore, brings about the effects on the audience of uttering sentences and such effects are special to the circumstances of utterance. In short, it is the effect of the performed speech act on the offended party's feelings, attitudes, or mind.

Searle & Searle (1969) contribute to the speech act theory by developing Austin's concept of felicity. Austin (1962) concept of felicity postulates that for speech acts to be effective, it is important that the circumstances in which the utterance are made are appropriate. These

circumstances that must be in place are the ‘felicity conditions’ (Austin, 1962). Building on Austin’s conception, Searle (1969) argues that speech acts are subject to four types of felicity conditions: propositional content conditions, preparatory conditions, sincerity conditions, and essential conditions. The propositional content condition requires participants to understand language, not to act like actors or lie indistinctly e.g. a promise or warning must be about the future (Thomas, 1995). The propositional content is always that the speaker does some future action. Preparatory condition, on the other hand, requires that the speech act is embedded in a context that is conventionally recognized, as just by uttering a promise, the event will not happen by itself. The preparatory condition helps to clarify what the speaker implies by the act. Two parts to the preparatory condition are identifiable, which are, (i) the differences in the status or position of the speaker and hearer in relation to illocutionary force of the utterance and, (ii) the differences in the way the utterance relates to the interests of the speaker and hearer (Searle, 1976). Sincerity condition requires that the speaker is sincere in uttering the declaration e.g. a promise is only effective when the speaker really intends to carry it out. The essential condition, on the other hand, requires that all parties involved intend to see the results e.g. a promise changes state of speaker from obligation to non-obligation. Thus, the “speaker intends that the utterances of the sentence will place him under an obligation to do the act” (Schmidt & Richards, 1980, p. 134) whether now or in future.

Felicity conditions as proposed by Searle & Searle (1969) were not explicitly applied to apology speech act. Thus, Owen (1983) makes a contribution in applying the felicity conditions to the apology act. In Owen's (1983, pp. 117-122) application, three rules apply in the preparatory condition as follows:

Rule (1) The act A specified in the propositional content is an offence against the addressee H

Rule (2) H would have preferred S's not doing A to S's doing A and S believes H would have preferred S's not doing A to his doing A.

Rule (3) A does not benefit H and S believes A does not benefit H.

Thus, in the preparatory condition, Owen (1983) places importance on a rule that one does not apologize for acts that are not (interpretable as) offences. Then, under the sincerity and essential conditions, the following are expected

Sincerity condition: S regrets (is sorry for) having done A.

Essential condition: Counts as an expression of regret by S for having done A.

Similarly, Thomas (1995, p. 99) analysed the felicity conditions of apology as follows:

1. propositional act: the speaker (S) expresses regret for a past act (A) of S;
2. preparatory condition interest: S believes that A was not in the hearer's (H) best interest;
3. sincerity condition: S regrets A;
4. essential condition: counts as an apology for A.

Thomas (1995) further argues that there are inherent limitations in Searle (1976) formal classification of speech acts which might lead to an unsatisfactory capture of the complexity of speech acts as too many different criteria and different types of criteria are involved. Thus, instead of classification of speech acts based on rules as defined by Austin (1962) and Searle

(1976), Thomas (1995) proposed a classification based on principles. Principles are probabilistic, regulative, motivated and can co-occur whilst rules are exclusive, constitutive, definite and conventional.

Thus, whilst Austin (1962) and Searle (1976) postulated that speech acts operated based on universal pragmatic rules, other scholars have argued that the conceptualization and verbalization of the speech acts varies across cultures and languages ( Wierzbicka, 1985; Greene, Caracelli, & Graham, 1989). As such, culture and language differences have been studied as key determinants of speech acts (Wierzbicka 1985; Olshtain & Cohen, 1989; Bayat, 2013).

Further, Norrick (1978, p. 280) highlighted the social functions of apologizing as: “admitting responsibility for a state which affected someone in an adverse way (thereby implicating contrition); asking to be forgiven; showing good manners; assuaging the addressee’s wrath; and getting off the hook”. From Norrick (1978) identification of the social function of apology, there is a “realization that in an apology more is at stake than expressing regrets and apologies are made in the hope of being forgiven or in the hope that the addressee will dismiss the matter” (Trosborg, 2011, p. 376).

Broadly, speech act theory is located within the philosophy of language and arose as a challenge to previous linguistic theories that were based on simplified presupposition that human languages are only a combination of “sound and meaning” (Mey, 2001, p. 110). As such, in proposing speech act theory, Searle (1969, p. 16) argues that

“The unit of linguistic communication is not, as has generally been supposed, the symbol, word or sentence, or even the token (roughly: the occurrence) of the symbol, word or

sentence, but rather the production or issuance of the symbol or word or sentence in the performance of the speech act.”

In this respect, speech acts are perceived as the basic units of linguistic communication with the focus being on the utterance meaning rather than the sentence meaning. From this perspective, Tsohatzidis (2002) states that speech acts or linguistic acts are an intentional, meaningful act performed with an expression or expressions. Almost every speech act is “really the performance of several acts at once, distinguished by different aspects of the speaker’s intention: there is the act of saying something, what one does in saying it, such as requesting or promising, and how one is trying to affect one’s audience” (Murad, 2012, p. 23). From this conception, it can be established that all participants in the communication process, including the speaker, writer and audience, may perform linguistic acts. Oatley (2002) also defines linguistic acts as intentional acts performed by language users. Intentional acts are characterised by the agent’s intention for the act (Oatley, 2002). For example, a child who scribbles, intending to write a letter to his grandparents, is unable to realise his intention for an act because he is unable to read and write. Therefore, an agent must have an intention for his or her intentional act. From this, it can be established that the intention of the act is the purpose that the agent intends to achieve by performing the act. Even though one recognises the agent’s intention for his or her act, the intention of the act need to be realised (Trosborg, 2011).

## **2.4 Apology strategies**

In the performance of an apology, different strategies could be utilised by the apologizer in order for the apology speech act to be successful. Some strategies can be perceived as more direct (explicit) whilst others are indirect. When using direct strategies, the offender employs an

explicit illocutionary force indicating device (IFID). An illocutionary force is the property of an utterance to be made with the intention to perform a certain illocutionary act (Searle & Vanderveken, 1985). Thus, the illocutionary force of an utterance indicates the speaker's intention in producing that utterance. The IFID serves to indicate or delimit the illocutionary force of an utterance. The IFID is meant to aid the hearer in identifying the illocutionary force of the utterance in the apology speech act. This strategy consists of formulaic and routinised forms of apology, which is achieved using explicit, performance verbs that express an apology (Olshtain & Cohen, 1981; Mulamba, 2011). With reference to IFID, Harris, Bowers, & Gerhart (2006) argue that for the apology speech act performances to be successful, there must be an explicit involvement of the illocutionary force indicating device along with the apologiser taking responsibility. The expression of responsibility, which related to the speaker's willing to admit to fault (Olshtain & Cohen, 1989) consists of sub- strategies that relate to "pleas for excusable lack of foresight, pleas for reduced competence and admissions of carelessness" (Owen, 1983, p. 94). However, Olshtain & Cohen (1989) argue that the IFID with or without the speaker's expression of responsibility could achieve an act of apology in any situation and therefore, can be used in all situations where an act of apology is needed.

Building on the apology strategies distinguished by Searle (1975) and Fraser's (1981) notion of indirect speech acts, Olshtain & Cohen (1981, p. 119) propose a speech act set comprised of five apology strategies listed below:

- i. An expression of apology: 'I am sorry, forgive me.'
- ii. An acknowledgement of responsibility: 'It is my fault.'
- iii. An explanation: 'The bus was late.'
- iv. An offer of repair: 'Let me fix it for you.'

- v. A promise of forbearance: 'It will not happen again.'

Based on Olshtain & Cohen's (1981) position, Olshtain & Cohen (1983) and Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984) applied these apology strategies in their studies. Thus, apology strategies were studied based on five strategies of "an illocutionary force indicating device (IFID), an expression of responsibility, an account(explanation) of cause of violation, an offer of repair, and a promise of forbearance" (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983, pp. 22-23). The first two strategies (illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) and an expression of responsibility) are general or not situation specific (Mulamba, 2011). The other three (an account of cause of violation, an offer of repair, and a promise of forbearance) are situation specific that will "semantically reflect the content of the situation" (Olshtain & Cohen, 1989, p. 157).

Further, as a modification to Fraser's (1979, 1981) semantic formulae, another strategy which has concern for the hearer or the apology recipient was added by Olshtain & Cohen (1983, p. 23) called "semantic formulae". The semantic formulae extend the expression of apology to identify sub-formula of an expression of regret, an offer of apology, a request for forgiveness and an expression of an excuse (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983). Thus, Olshtain & Cohen (1983) define apologising as a culture-sensitive speech act set of semantic formulae. Later, Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) identified seven apology strategies, developing on the five apology strategies distinguished by Olshtain & Cohen (1983) by adding 'expressions of embarrassment (e.g. I'm embarrassed) and 'distracting from the offence' (e.g. I hope I am not late?).

According to Tsohatzidis (2002), any of these strategies, or a combination of several, can fulfil the function of an apology. Importantly too, the apology strategies may vary across culture (El-

Dakhs, 2018; Roberts, 2018; Geurts, 2019). In particular, whereas expressions of apology and acknowledgements of responsibility can be used in arguably any apology situation (i.e. these are general strategies), the strategies of explanation, offer of repair and promise of forbearance are situation-specific (these are context specific strategies).

Apology strategies and the way apology is perceived and produced have been the subject of investigation by many researchers (Edmundson, 1992; Deutschmann, 2003; Demeter, 2006; Humeid, 2013; Banikalef et al., 2015; Cedar, 2017; Haugh & Chang, 2019;). In these studies, some of the researchers employ an intracultural approach, which involves studying one particular language, mainly the native tongue of the participants (Vollmer & Olshtain, 1989; Edmundson, 1992; Suzuki, 1999; Deutschmann, 2003; Demeter, 2006; Cedar, 2017). Other researchers adopt a comparative or cross-cultural approach (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Ide, 1998; Sadeghi, 2013). The result of these investigations has been a long list of taxonomies to describe apology strategies or types (Owen, 1983; Holmes, 1990; Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Trosborg, 1995). Although these researchers use different terms, their classifications appear to be based on Olshtain & Cohen's (1983) theorisation that apology consists of the five inter-related components: illocutionary force identification device (IFID); expression of responsibility for the offence; explanation of the cause of the offence; offer for repair; and promise of forbearance.

However, although some researchers (mainly in the west) purport that the act of apology is governed by universal rules, they still claim that differences in the type of apology may exist due to differences in age, gender, educational level and socio-cultural settings (Yule, 1996; Wood, 2002; Lakoff, 2006; Roberts, 2018; Geurts, 2019). By contrast, other scholars (mainly those

interested in languages and cultures in the Far East (e.g. Jung, 1994; Sugimoto, 1997) argue that the role that culture plays in determining the shape, type and form of apology is often underestimated. According to this latter group of researchers, considerable differences exist in terms of conceptualising apology between people of different cultures. For example, Jung (1994) reports a markedly negative pragmatic transfer in Korean advanced learners of English. Similarly, Tamanaha (2003) studied apology strategies in two groups, Japanese and Western (Australian, American and English) adults and concluded that whereas the former group tended to follow an emotional approach when they apologise, the latter group tended to employ a rational approach. Barnlund & Yoshioka (1990) also found that unlike their western counterparts, the Japanese elaborate and employ a wide range of strategies when apologising. Evidence that the type of apology employed is largely determined by the socio-cultural context comes mainly from cross-cultural studies (Haugh, 2010; Mills & Kádár, 2011). What is missing, however, is that although apology strategies have been extensively investigated, linguists have showed little interest in the response to apology (Yallah & Allahiby, 2014), even though it is equally important to examine what constitutes a valid and effective apology. Nevertheless, answers to this question of what constitutes a valid and effective apology can be extracted from the psychological literature (Lazare, 1995; McCullough et al., 1997; Kim et al., 2004; Slocum et al., 2011)

The study by Slocum (2013), for example, was aimed at establishing how apology is perceived from the viewpoint of the participants. Slocum (2013) interviewed 23 Australian male and female adults who had been in an intimate relationship but were offended by their partner. The researcher concluded that the type of apology depends on the severity level of the offence and

the approach taken by the offender. Slocum (2013) further found that a valid apology consists of one or more of three components: affect, affirmation and action. Each of these components has two categories: one is focused on the offender's own needs, and the other on the needs of the wronged person. Offended individuals reported that apology would be more effective when their own needs are met. In a USA study, Smith (2008), notes that apologies do not have a finite or fixed meaning. Rather, Smith (2008) argues that apologies are a "constellation of interrelated meanings" (p. 140) and a dialogue revolving around "an emotional experience" (p. 106). Smith (2008) further argues that although, a "categorical apology" is a rarity, the apologiser should at least identify the error and provide meaningful and clear information about it, specify the harm incurred by the recipient, accept moral responsibility for causing that harm, and show remorse or regret. In another American study, Kim et al. (2004) note that the type of offence and its physical and psychological impact determine the approach of apologising, the level of elaboration and the type of apology. Kim et al. (2004) argue that competence-based offence apology (lack of judgement) is usually more effective than honour-based offence apologies.

## **2.5 Politeness theory and guilt and shame**

Apology strategies/acts are often considered under the politeness theory (e.g. Brown & Levinson, 1987). Brown & Levinson's (1978, 1987) theory of politeness and face proposed the conceptualization of face which is the self-public image that every person tries to protect. Politeness is "the expression of the speaker's intention to mitigate face threats carried by certain face threatening acts towards the listener" (Mills, 2003, p. 6) while Foley (1997, p. 23) defines politeness as "a battery of social skills whose goal is to ensure everyone feels affirmed in a social

interaction”. Brown & Levinson (1978, 1987) postulated politeness theory drawing on some conception of ‘face’ from Goffman (1967). Brown & Levinson (1978) argue that face and rationality form the most significant features in the process of effective communication in their concept of a model person. Face is defined as “the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact” (Goffman, 1967, p. 5). In Goffman’s (1967) proposition, the notion of ‘face’ (one’s social image) is perceived as the foundation on which behaviours of individuals in any social interaction are formulated and constructed. The inclination to apologise is often associated with a face threatening act (FTA) (Goffman, 1967; Brown & Levinson, 1978). Brown & Levinson (1987) argue that individuals in social interactions strive to save face when confronted with a face threatening act, which represent acts that “run contrary to the face wants of the addressee and/or the speaker (p. 70).

Drawing on this notion of ‘face’, Brown & Levinson (1978) applied it in their proposition of a model person postulating two specific wants of a person: the want to be unimpeded and the want to be liked by others. In this conception, Brown & Levinson (1978) defined face as “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself/herself” (p. 61). As such, this public self-image is susceptible to change and must be continuously monitored in social interactions. The two specific wants of a model person are labelled positive face and negative face (Brown & Levinson, 1978; Fraser, 1990). Positive face refers to the desire to be esteemed by others. Brown & Levinson (1978, p. 62) defined positive face as “the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others”. Negative face relates to the desire to be unimpeded by others, defined as “the want of every competent adult member that his actions be unimpeded by others”

(ibid). The implementation of Brown & Levinson's (1978) dichotomy of positive and negative face is called positive politeness and negative politeness respectively. Kadar & Mills (2011) argue that Brown & Levinson's (1978) categorisation can be used to identify differences in culture. In this case, between negative politeness culture and positive politeness culture. In this vein, Ogiermann (2009) argues that all Arabic cultures are collectivistic in nature and are intrinsically positive politeness oriented (see section 2.7). This is because positive politeness is based on solidarity and informality preferring more friendly expressions or behaviour that seek to redress and minimise face threatening acts in social interactions (Felix-Brasdefer, 2006). Thus, it is ideal for collectivistic cultures as it facilitates for easy communication in bringing people closer (Felix-Brasdefer, 2006; Kadar & Mills, 2011) bridging the gap between the speaker and the hearer.

On the contrary, negative politeness could be more suited to individualistic cultures (Ogiermann, 2009; Kadar & Mills, 2011) as it is inclined towards promoting independence. Negative politeness relates to speech acts intended to keep the hearer unimpeded and rationally independent (Brown & Levinson, 1978). O'Keefe et al. (2011, p. 69) argue that negative politeness is "action aimed at non-interference and non-imposition on the hearer and so the maintenance of negative face requires the achievement of distance" and thus, more noticeable in factors such as power relations. Brown & Levinson (1987, p 129) contend that "when we think of Western cultures, it is negative politeness that springs to mind" which involve strategies that are aimed at saving the negative face of an individual (i.e. a person's desire for freedom of action and non-imposition).

Further, with respect to rationality as a significant feature of good communication, Brown & Levinson (1978) postulate that a model person has the ability to recognise the rationale behind speaking in addition to the means used to achieve that aim. However, the politeness theory and the concept of face originated in the Western cultural context. Indeed, the criticism of Brown & Levinson's (1978, 1987) politeness model revolves around its lack of universal applicability and its positive and negative face classification. The theory is based on the assumption that different cultures are homogeneous and thus, agree, to a larger extent to the universalisation of politeness, its rules and principles. The application of the theory to other cultural context has been empirically demonstrated as not appropriate, for instance, to collectivistic cultures of Polish (Wierzbicka, 1985) and Japanese (Matsumoto, 1988; Ogiermann, 2009) people. The relevance, however, of understanding the concept of face is to help understand the concept of guilt and shame that are more applicable to some cultures.

In the context of the Saudi Arabian culture, the terms 'shame' and 'guilt' are widely applied and deeply rooted (Feghali, 1997; El Alaoui et al., 2018). However, from the perspective of theologians, psychoanalysts and cultural anthropologists, vast variances exist between the two concepts. For, whereas guilt is often defined as a "self-punitive, vindictive attitude towards oneself" (Perls, Hefferline, & Goodman (1951) quoted in Banmen, 1988, p. 39), shame is defined as "the agony of being found wanting and exposed to the disapproval of others" (Ausubel, 1955, p. 378). Bierbrauer (1992), on the other hand, conceptualises shame as a defensive response to the criticism of others that originates from a person's fear of rejection and retraction of social support. Guilt, on the contrary, relates to self-criticism that arises from failures to meet internalised standards (Bierbrauer, 1992). Similarly, Gilbert (2003) argues,

largely from an evolutionary perspective, that guilt originates from a person's responsibility towards others; as such, it has an outward focus and relates to competencies for altruism. Shame, on the other hand, arises from a threat to the self and the need to get acceptance from others; as such, it has an inward focus and an epiphenomenon of a self-defensive mode. Contrary to Bierbrauer's (1992) and Gilbert's (2003) distinction of shame and guilt, Wong & Chung (2007) argue that shame has an outward orientation whilst guilt has an inward orientation. According to Wong & Chung (2007), guilt involves evaluating oneself negatively whilst shame involves a negative evaluation by either real or imagined others.

The differences between the two constructs, however, are much greater than is reflected in simplistic definitions. For example, whereas an internal sense of failure is attributed to guilt, a sense of humiliation and defeat is ascribed to shame. Also, unlike guilt which is described as a response to transgression against internalised prohibitions and boundaries that form conscience, shame is believed to rely on external pressure and follow actions perceived by the family or larger community to harm one's reputation and reduce his/her status and social standing. Whilst these distinctions are valid, Lewis (1971) argues that the fundamental difference between guilt and shame is less about the specific undesirable behaviour or transgression a person portrays but rather, that individual's attributional focus. Contrary to the conceptualisation of guilt and shame as distinct emotional responses, Kitayama, Ishii, Imada, Takemura, & Ramaswamy (2006) do not perceive this distinction but instead regard both as negative engaging emotions.

Benedict, Anderson, & Klepeis (1991) stated that some cultural anthropologists distinguish between cultures that are primarily shame-based, such as Eastern cultures, and those that are

predominantly guilt-based cultural such as Western cultures. According to this classification, individuals in guilt-based cultures are capable of indulging in constructive self-criticism and accepting responsibility for the undesirable act (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994). In itself, this indicates that they can be sensitive to the way their actions affect others, are focused on resolving conflict in an effective manner, and are also prepared to learn a lesson from their experience (Hareli, Shomrat, & Biger, 2005). In contrast, individuals in shame-based cultures are likely to be haunted by fears of abandonment, rejection and social exclusion. As a result, they can easily engage in a negative evaluation of the self (Lewis, 1971). In itself, this can lower their self-confidence, and they may even find a need to be defensive and hide or escape (Tangney & Dearing, 2002). It is, however, to be noted that no known culture is strictly guilt-based or shame-based. It can be regarded as a continuum. Rather, all cultures appear to have elements of both guilt and shame and one form of the two constructs may be more dominant than the other. El Alaoui et al. (2018) investigated the role of language and cultural orientation in guilt and shame experienced by bilingual female speakers. Their study sought to understand whether the dominant cultural orientations of the bilingual female speakers (from collectivism and individualism), as promoted by the language use of Arabic and English, would lead to treating guilt and shame as distinct or largely similar emotions and whether the affective profiles of guilt and shame would be similar or diverge based on cultural difference. El Alaoui et al. (2018) found that although the two emotions were narrowly differentiated, shame was found to be more dominant than guilt. Unlike guilt, “shame also yielded a greater focus on oneself” (El Alaoui et al., 2018, p. 17). Their study also highlights that language differences (English versus Arabic) underlined the differences in the focus on either others or oneself.

El Alaoui et al.'s (2018) study can be compared to Young's (2000) study that showed evidence that Korean culture which represents East Asian cultures is predominantly shame-based. Young (2000) refers to Korean culture as an example of East Asian culture and gives four main reasons for the shame-based orientation. Firstly, Koreans have a strong group orientation, and they attach great importance to social harmony. Secondly, in Korean culture, a strong sense of shame would be generated when individuals fail to meet the expectations of their parents and the elderly. Thirdly, rules of proper conduct are strictly determined by ancestor veneration rather than adopted code of law. Fourthly, strong emphasis is placed on maintaining the social status of the group.

With the exclusion of ancestor veneration, what has been said about the Korean culture above applies to Saudi culture. In that culture, any action that can cause damage to the social status of the group will be seen as a source of shame. Moreover, family pride is much more important than the honour of the individual, and any action that brings disrepute to the reputation of the family will not be tolerated (Klein & Kuperman, 2008; Nydell, 2012). Sharabi & Ani (1977) argues that shame seems to be at the core of childrearing practices of educational, religious and family institutions in Saudi Arabia such that a child “is made to feel ashamed because others see him as having acted wrongly, not because he inwardly regrets having done wrong and judges himself accordingly” (p. 248). Fear of shame also motivates people to conform to social norms, and exclusion from the group can mean total alienation. At the same time, it is to be emphasised that, in Saudi and Arab culture, the term, “shame”, is relative. For example, the strong Arabic term, “*a'ar*” stands for honour-related shame (Nydell, 2012). In fact, crimes against honour are often resolved in a dramatic fashion. According to Arab wisdom, for instance, “*fine honour will*

*never be saved unless blood is shed on its flanks*". On the other hand, the term, "a 'yb", relates to a milder form of shame and is somewhat similar to the English term.

With the above stated, one important question could be asked: how do the two moral emotions of shame and guilt relate to the act of apologising and its outcomes? In answering this question, it is surprising that only a few studies have been conducted on the role played by expressions of emotions in the context of apology. In fact, all the studies reviewed come from the fields of cultural psychology, psychology and theology, and only one study was found (i.e. that relates to apology). In their study, Hareli & Eisikovitz (2006) sought to establish how the injured person responds to apologies driven by one or more of the social emotions of shame, guilt and pity. Hareli & Eisikovitz (2006) found that the knowledge that guilt and/or shame motivated the apology increased forgiveness. More precisely, their study found that apology messages revealing guilt are more effective than shame motivated messages. On the other hand, pity induced apologies were found to decrease forgiveness. Hareli & Eisikovitz's (2006) study shows that formal status indications influenced expectations regarding the behavioural intentions of the protagonist and the self, but not anticipated emotions when strong informal status cues were presented. However, when personality information is more refined, status information is used as an alternative and affects anticipated emotions (Tiedens, Ellsworth, & Mesquita, 2000).

Furthermore, religion, which is mainly Islam in Saudi Arabia, is an essential factor in the Arabic shame experience. The teachings of Islam, represented by the Holy Qur'an, the sacred book of Islam, and the instructions of the prophet, Mohammed, forbid Muslims from committing religion-related shame-triggering actions (e.g. drinking alcohol, eating pork, gambling are

prohibited in Islam, and if one breaks a rule, should s/he potentially feel ashamed or guilty?). On the other hand, religion may not play that important a role in shame in English. For example, not praying or forgetting to pray for one day, using the name of God, and not saying one's prayers before eating are all typical shame antecedents in Arabic culture but not necessarily so in Western culture.

## **2.6 Response to apologies**

Despite the proliferation of studies on apology strategies, very few studies have explicitly considered the response to apology nor made propositions regarding apology response strategies. Agyekum (2006) argues that responses to apologies play an essential role in the remedial interchanges as they complete the interaction offender-affected party loop. The response to the apology, in particular, determine whether the offended party is satisfied with the apology (Holmes, 1995).

Within the studies on speech act responses, however, what is observable are studies that focus on compliment responses (Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001; Golato, 2003; Tran, 2008; Chen & Yang, 2010). Thus, in discussing apology responses, compliment response studies offer a valuable reference point. Similar to studies on apology strategies, compliment responses studies have shown that speech act responses are culturally specific in terms of verbalisation and conceptualisation. Thus, the manifestation of responses to apology may be influenced by different social, cultural, contextual, linguistic and pragmatic influences. In addition, the apology response act is complicated by the embodiment of not only linguistic aspects but also psychological and social elements. In this respect, McCullough (2000) argue that individual

factors, situational factors and the interactions of personality and situations are all determinants which play an important part in the response realisation.

Further, some compliment response strategies have been identified and categorised at either a macro or micro level. At the macro level, some compliment response strategies include ‘acceptance’, ‘evasion’ and ‘rejection’ (Tang et al., 2008 ; Chen & Yang, 2010; Adrefiza & Jones, 2013) which are typically similar to those identifiable or conceivable under apology responses. Whilst there are few macro level compliment responses, the micro level strategies to response are numerous. These include ‘agreeing’, ‘disagreeing’, ‘returning’, ‘explaining’, ‘deflecting’, ‘thanking’, and ‘using humour’ (Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001; Adrefiza & Jones, 2013) . These responses strategies have been investigated in some compliment response studies with respect to some social aspects too in order to highlight how aspects such as age group, gender, power status and social distances could influence them. This is important considering the context specific nature of application.

Drawing on compliment speech act responses, some studies (e.g. Bennett & Earwalker, 2001) have attempted to apply the conception to apology speech acts. Bennett & Earwalker (2001) investigated the degree of offender responsibility and outcome severity on the determination of whether an apology is rejected or accepted. In their study, Bennett & Earwalker hypothesised that “whether an apology is accepted is related to the extent of the offender’s responsibility for the event, and independently, to the seriousness of the event” (2001, p. 458). Their study showed that the extent of the desire to reject an apology and whether the apology was actually likely to be rejected was influenced, in part, by the degree of the offenders’ responsibility for the event

and, independently, by the severity of the event. Thus, Bennett & Earwalker (2001) provide some empirical evidence to support the importance of responsibility and outcome severity in aspects of conflict resolution. For instance, they showed that the perceived likelihood that an apology would actually be rejected was very small, even when offender responsibility and outcome severity were high supporting (Goffman, 1955) proposition that interactions are likely to complete the corrective interchange even in serious conflict. The findings are also consistent with (Schlenker & Darby, 1981) who argue that more elaborate apologies are offered when the offender had a high degree of responsibility for an event or when the consequences of an event were very serious.

Further, Bennett & Dewberry (1994) showed that there is surmountable pressure for the offended party to accept apologies, which places the offended party in a position of constraint. In Bennett & Dewberry (1994) study, participants were more willing to accept the apology with only 8% showing that they would 'show offence'. The pressure to accept apologies, however, is not equal in all circumstances.

In general, the responses to apology have been shown to fall into two categories: acceptance or forgiveness category (Holmes, 1995; Robinson, 2004). Further, Owen (1983, p. 23) states that three acts usually follow the apology speech acts which are "relief, appreciation and minimisation". Some expressions such as 'you're welcome', 'that's all right' are common minimising remarks. On the other hand, Norrick (1978) identified some remarks such as 'it's nothing', 'never mind', 'no harm done' as the act of forgiving which reflects the speaker's attempt to dismiss the offence by denying its importance.

Some apology response studies (e.g. Holmes, 1990, 1995; Robinson, 2004) have suggested other categorisations of apology responses which reflect relief, appreciation, and minimisation. Holmes (1995) states that apology responses can be expressed in different ways which range from silence to different other linguistics expressions. As such, 'silence' is also a response strategy to an apology. Given the numerous apology responses, Holmes (1995) broadly classified the apology strategies into 'accept' (e.g. That's OK), 'acknowledge' (e.g. that's OK, but please don't do it again), 'evade' (e.g. let's make it another time), and reject (silence). The 'accept' strategy which involves remarks such as 'that's alright' or 'that's okay' was classified as 'absolution' by Robinson (2004) and Owen (1983). Absolution has been identified as the most preferred response to apology (Adrefiza & Jones, 2013). The acceptance of an apology essentially reflects the affected party's goodwill and positive attitude towards maintaining a harmonious relationship with the apologizer, through the dismissal of the offence by being tolerant or generous.

Consistent with Holmes (1995), Robinson (2004) argues that 'acknowledgement' is another apology response strategy though such a response would get represented through non-verbal behaviour as no particular verbal expression could capture the response strategy. Unlike Robinson (2004), Holmes (1995) argues that an acknowledgement is identified as a combination of an acceptance and some form of face threatening expressions of speech acts. Further, Robinson (2004) argues that acknowledgement is the most disfavoured of the apology responses. Acknowledgment can also be perceived as a strategy to signal partial agreement with the offender's admission of offence.

Evasion strategies are mainly used to avoid and deflect an explicit response (Agyekum, 2006) which might result from the speaker being in a difficult situation to decide whether to accept or reject the apology. Rejection of the apology is another strategy that could be used which signals the speaker's (offended party) objection to forgiving the apologizer. It might also indicate that the offence is too serious that the speaker takes it deep (Eaton et al., 2007). The severity of the offence has been demonstrated as one critical factor which affect the likelihood of an apology being rejected (McCullough et al., 1997)

The next section discusses the importance of context in apology and apology strategies.

## **2.7 Contextual factors**

As highlighted in section 1.2, apology is context specific; influenced by different contextual factors. Several studies have shown that the apology strategies employed is largely determined by the socio-cultural context (Roberts, 2018; Geurts, 2019 ). The importance of context arises because language, how it is used and how it is integrated, is context specific. Meaning of words, as a result, can change from one context or culture to another (Wierzbicka, 1985; Olshtain & Cohen, 1989; Bayat, 2013). An expression, for instance, “if I were in your shoes” is often used in English culture when a person expresses to another person what he/she would have done if in the other person's position or situation. However, such an expression would be confusing in the Arabic culture as there is no directly corresponding idiom in Arabic. In this regard, such an expression would not result in similar effect or outcomes in the Arabic context. The role of

context, as a result, in determining meanings attributed to linguistic units (speech acts) has to be considered and taken into account. Wilkins (1973, p. 39) emphasised the importance of context in stating that:

“the function of an individual utterance is often not deducible from its form but can only be discovered when the context in which it occurs is fully taken into account and . . . that there are recurrent, though not fixed, patterns of interaction through language so that different language functions may chain together in not unpredictable ways.”

Context basically refers to the ‘background’ where both verbal and non-verbal acts are similar (Duranti & Charles, 1992) and can be classified into external context and intra-interactional context. The external context encompasses compositions of social interactions which include class, gender, power, ethnicity and culture. These can be taken as distinctive aspects that can either order or constrain social interactions or social life. These aspects could also be “embodiment of more general properties such as ‘power’ (in various of the senses in which the term is used)” (Duranti & Charles, 1992, p. 195). The external context also encompasses the various institutional matrices within which interaction occurs (such as the legal, economic or market order) in addition to ecological, regional, national and cultural settings. All these have a role in shaping social life or interactions. Similarly, Schegloff (1992) identified sexuality, gender, social distance and class, culture as external aspects of context. These external aspects of context have been widely researched (Ahearn, 2012; Kashkouli & Eslamirasekh, 2013; Majeed & Janjua, 2014; Qari, 2019). Considerations of these external factors help to better understand what shapes social interactions (Kashkouli & Eslamirasekh, 2013). Afghari (2007), for instance, examined the effect of context-external variables on the intensification of apologies and found that apologies are most intensified when offered to close friends with no dominance over the apologizer. On the contrary, when apology is offered to strangers with no dominance over the

apologizer, there is least intensification. Al-Sobh's (2013) comparative study of Arabic and English native speakers found that the use of apology intensifiers such as 'so' sorry or 'very' sorry were often used by Arabic speakers when the offended person held a higher position than the apologizer. However, when there was no significant difference in positions between the apologiser and the offended, and also in less formal situations such as with relations, the apologetic expressions were largely free of intensifiers for Arabic speakers. Intensification of apology can be perceived as the degree or strength of the apology. Al-Hami (1993, p. 42) suggests three devices for apology intensification: "(a) adverbials (e.g. I'm very sorry), (b) repetition (e.g. I am very very sorry), and (c) combination of strategies (e.g. I am very sorry, I will replace it)". Thus, the use of adverbials in the illocutionary force of the apology intensifies that speech act expression. Intensification should be seen as an attribute of explicit expressions of apology (Tahir & Pandian, 2016). The apologetic expressions, including the use of intensifiers, are context specific.

In Goodwin & Duranti's (1992) classification, the intra-interactional context refers to the setting of the social interaction. The intra-interactional context is essentially the basic building block for interaction. In this respect, identification of the settings within which interaction occurs becomes important. Aspects such as the interlocutor, who is the speaker to whom he/she is talking and on what occasion and event is the interaction e.g. request, apology, thanking; all need consideration. Goodwin & Duranti (1992, p. 195) highlight that "we can understand the sort of occasion or genre of interaction which participants, by their conduct, make some episode be an instance of, the sorts of sequences of talk or courses of conduct in which particular events may occur (stories, request sequences, etc), the capacity in which participants act relative to the episode in progress

(e.g. as the initiator of a conversation or a topic, or its recipient)". In making a comparison between external context and intra-interactional context, Raclaw (2010) argues that the external context is often relatively stable over an interaction whilst the intra-interactional context might be subject to regular change. Intra-interaction context, by definition, is a dynamic element as each utterance is part of this context. This is because every contributory utterance form part of the context of the subsequent or future utterances, regardless of whether the intended or actual interpretation of the utterance changes.

Thus, because of the dynamic nature of intra-interaction context, studying this aspect poses operational or practical challenges. However, external factors are relatively stable and more observable which makes researching them more feasible. This study thus, focusses on some of the external factors, in particular gender and culture. The two external factors are particularly crucial in the context of Saudi Arabia. The country is a highly gendered society with women segregated from men at all levels, including in their private and professional lives ( Syed et al., 2018; Watch, 2019). Thus, unlike other countries, Saudi Arabia has a unique socio-culture context because of the existing norm of a strict segregation based on gender: for instance, women are generally not allowed to move around without the company of a male (Watch, 2019) . The country has been described as ‘the most gender segregated nation in the world’ (Benjamin, 2016; Week, 2018), ‘with women requiring male permission to work, travel, study, marry or even access healthcare. They are also unable to drive<sup>1</sup> or open a bank account and must be accompanied by a male chaperone on shopping trips’ (Independent, 2016). This gender segregation has religious roots. Al-Saraj (2015, p. 35) explains that:

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<sup>1</sup> Driving for women has now been permitted since 2018 (BBC, 2018)

“Islam dictates that women should not have physical contact with men except for male relatives – our fathers, brothers, husbands, sons, and uncles. It would not be acceptable for an unfamiliar man – even a police officer- to arrest a woman, or even to stop a woman on the highway. Her male guardian must be present for any interaction with a man from outside the family... If a woman is not married, her father [or brother] is her guardian.”

The visible outcomes of the gender segregation arise from the deeply rooted socio-cultural norms (Adya, 2008; Chandra, 2012). These norms, practices or values can be perceived as socially constructed over time through social interactions. Schwandt (2000) argues that characteristics thought to be immutable and solely biological (such as gender, race, class, ability, sexuality) are effectively products of human definition and interpretation, shaped by cultural and historical contexts. In this context, the interpretation of gender has some cultural and historical contexts to it. Over time, people’s social interactions shape the meaning attached to these aspects such that they become reality or ‘acceptable’ (Burr, 2015). Thus, gender segregation has been reproduced and constructed over time to become an ‘acceptable norm’ in the case of Saudi Arabia. The cultural context, which draws mostly from a religious influence (Islam), has been shaped by social processes and interactions. The social world, however, can change; becoming deconstructed and reconstructed over time (Luckmann, 2013). In the case Saudi Arabia, this might take a long time. The social customs are intricately engraved into the social arrangements; retrojected into consciousness and seen as a normal way of life (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Luckmann, 2013).

A discussion of the influence of external factors of gender and culture on apology follows in the next section. . Mills & Kádár (2011) argue that social attributes (e.g. gender, age, social status) though relative and debatable, have a significant role in influencing speech acts (apology, politeness) performance in different cultural setting, such that ignoring them might be regarded

as a serious offence which could damage the relationship between interlocutors. Consideration of these social factors is important as apology strategies are particularly sensitive to these factors. In the context of Saudi Arabia, gender and culture are of particular significance (Al-Musallam, 2016; Almegren, 2018; El-Dakhs, 2018).

### **2.7.1 Gender and apology strategies**

Several studies have examined the influence of gender on apology and apology strategies (Rothman & Gandossy, 1982; Gonzales et al., 1990; Holmes, 1995; Bataineh & Bataineh, 2008). Giddens (1989, p. 158) defines sex as ‘biological or anatomical differences between men and women’ and gender as ‘concerning the psychological, social and cultural differences between males and females’. According to the biological perspective, the distinction is made between male and female based on sex, and thus gender is perceived to be an inherent characteristic of the individual (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Durkin, 1997). This biological distinction is what has been used in speech acts studies. This is different to the socially constructed meanings which refer to the social distinctions drawn between men and women (i.e. feminine and masculine) (Acker, 1992).

Gender is one of the key social factors which has been investigated as language use between men and women has been identified as different between cultures and within the same culture (Lakoff, 1973; Tannen, 1999). Lakoff (1973) showed that in English culture, women make different language choices from men; using adjectives such as lovely, charming, adorable and divine, and alternative words to ‘purple’ (a lavender, mauve, magenta) which are rarely used by

men<sup>2</sup>. Thus, language differences exist even within the same culture for men and women. Given the difference in language choices, it is implicated that there could be different ways of using speech acts. Tannen (1999) argues that gender differences are apparent in apology and politeness as women tend to use more polite and less critical language than men; and prefer rapport or cooperative talk instead of competitive talk.

Men, argues Tannen (1999), are less apologetic than women as they use fewer expressions of remorse than women. Similarly, Holmes (1995) argues that women are more caring for the interlocutor's feelings and as such, use more positive strategies than men. Women were found to use more apologies than men and tended to do this with interlocutors of equal power (e.g. female friends) whereas men apologised to women regardless of status (Holmes, 1995). Gonzales et al (1990) also found that women employed more detailed strategies such as explanations, acknowledgment, justifications and excuses in their apologies. These strategies could thus, be perceived as gender-based strategies. Further, Gonzales et al. (1990) found that females were more interested in using the explicit IFID (e.g. I am sorry) and expressing chagrin (embarrassment and sorrow) which shows that embarrassment and sorrow is more strongly related to females than males. Similarly, Basow & Rubinfeld (2003) found that women used speech style that was characterised by emotional reactions and responses in advice and sympathy situations. However, Basow & Rubinfeld (2003) observed that women socialised in a manner that inclined them to apology to both sexes.

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<sup>2</sup> However, Lakoff (1973) has been criticised in depicting linguistic features as 'women's language' that demonstrates and reinforces women's inferior position in society (Svendsen, 2018).

Hogan (2003) states that women use different communicative styles and pattern than men and observed that “women engage in more eye contact than men do” (p. 23). However, Attardo & Brown (2000) argue that this assertion whilst valid in western societies as a communication and persuasive skills is not applicable to Arabic cultures such as Saudi Arabia. In Saudi Arabian culture, for instance, it is a sign of respect and politeness in cross-gender interactions for women to lower their eyes when speaking with a non-family man.

The gender difference in apology acts was also observed in Al-Marrani & Sazalie (2010) study of Yemeni Arabic males and females using discourse completion test. The study revealed that Yemeni males prefer to use indirect apology strategies particularly when speaking to females. However, there was a high level of directness in male-male interactions which could be attributed to the closeness and the solidarity between the interlocutors. The usage of indirect strategies in the male-female interactions was attributed to culture and religious values (see 2.7.2 below). These results are largely similar to Buda & Elsayed-Elkhouly (1998) study that showed that there are special linguistic utterances that men use when addressing women, and vice versa in Arabic, because of cultural and religious values.

In making intercultural comparison, Humeid (2013) showed that American male are more detailed and less direct in their apologies than female whilst Iraqi males use fewer apology strategies than the Iraqi women. The observed difference in the apology between men and women in the two countries (America and Iraq) was attributed to the difference in the level of freedom. In Iraq, men have more freedom than women in their societies which made women relatively more apologetic and more polite. In a comparison of Jordanian males and females,

Bataineh & Bataineh (2006) found that men adopt non-apologetic strategies (such as blaming the offended people and lessening the importance of the offence) while females would often try to ignore the offence itself in order not to be engaged in a discussion over it. Bataineh & Bataineh (2006) highlight that Jordanian males tended to downgrade their responsibilities by blaming their interlocutors. Similarly, Rothman & Gandossy (1982) in a study on court cases revealed that women were more likely to acknowledge responsibility and express regret for their offences than men.

Yeganeh's (2012) study of speech acts of apologizing among Kurdish-Persian bilinguals in Iran using discourse completion task found that monolinguals and men used fewer amounts of apology strategies in comparison to women and bilinguals. The study examined frequencies in apology strategies used in the different groups. In addition, Yeganeh (2012) study revealed that men provided a more apologetic expression to the hearer/offended in case of repairing than in other situations and would compensate for the damage they caused more than women. These results are largely inconsistent to Humeid (2013) findings that found women to be more apologetic than men. Khalil (1998) study on Jordanian Arabic found that accounts and justifications for the offence were the key apology strategies employed perceived to be essential in relieving the offence. Further, Khalil (1998) observed that male Jordanians adopted explicit apologies as compared to females.

### **2.7.2 Culture and apology strategies**

As highlighted above, the conceptualization and verbalization of the speech acts varies across cultures (Greene et al., 1989; Thomas, 1995). As a result, cultural differences have been studied

as key determinants of apology speech acts (Wierzbicka, 1985; Olshtain & Cohen, 1989; Bayat, 2013) . Trouillot (2000, p. 175) argues in this context that apologies are “always culturally specific”. Psathas (1995) observed that because of cultural differences, meanings of specific utterances might differ from one cultural context to another.

Defining culture is “notoriously difficult” (Spencer-Oatey & Franklin, 2012, p. 1) as different perspectives and applications exists. Tylor (1871, p. 1) conceived culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society”. The usage of the term ‘man’ is, however, gender neutral. In attempting to define it, Kroeber & Kluckhohn (1952, p. 181) noted that:

“culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behaviour acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiment in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditional elements of future action.”

From this perspective, culture is transmissible through its constituents (traditional ideas and values). Hamblin (1978, p. 6), describes culture as “a set of beliefs, objects and events acquired by individuals as members of society” whilst Hofstede (1980, p. 25) defines it “as the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another”. Similarly, Matsumoto (2009, p. 16) states that culture represents the “set of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviours shared by a group of people, but different for each individual, communicated from one generation to the next”.

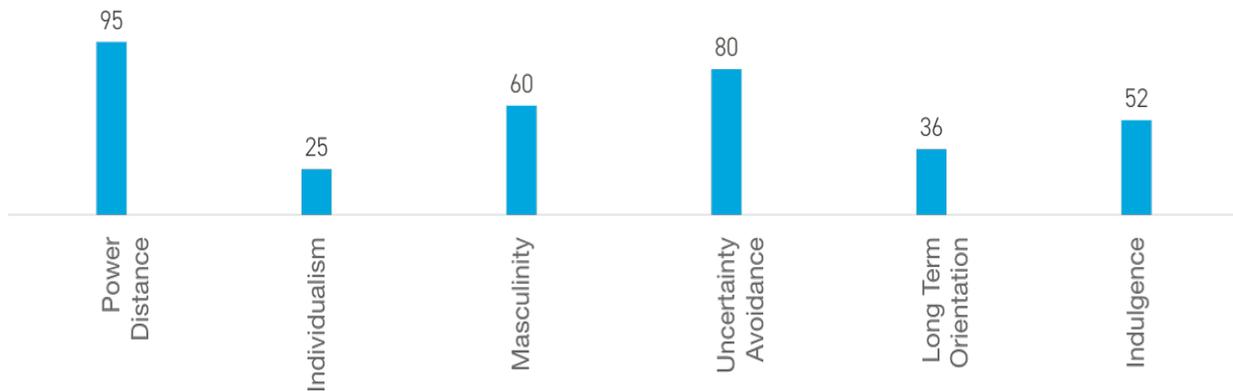
In understanding cultural differences, Hofstede (1980) developed a six-dimensional cultural model which has been extensively used in the literature as providing a valuable insight to understanding different aspects of culture in different national jurisdictions. These dimensions are power distance, individualism<sup>3</sup>, masculinity<sup>4</sup>, uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation (Hofstede, 2012). While the cultural framework has its criticism (see McSweeney, 2002), it offers a valuable insight to understanding some cultural differences in many countries. The power distance dimension “expresses the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally”. This is a reflection of how a society handles inequalities among people; is it something easily acceptable by people or not? On the other hand, uncertainty avoidance dimension captures “the degree to which the members of a society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity” (Insights, 2018). The consideration here is on “how a society deals with the fact that the future can never be known: should we try to control the future or just let it happen?”. Uncertainty avoidance brings essentially examines how different cultures deal with anxieties about the future. Saudi Arabia scores high in these two cultural dimensions: power distance and uncertainty avoidance; and more collectivist than individualistic (see Figure 2 below). These cultural aspects have implications on social interactions and speech acts.

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<sup>3</sup> Individualism dimension reflects “the degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members” (Insight, 2019). It basically captures people’s self image which can either be expressed as ‘I’ or ‘We’. Thus, in individualist societies people are supposed to look after themselves and their direct family only whilst in collectivist societies, people belong to ‘in groups’ that take care of them in exchange for loyalty.

<sup>4</sup> Saudi Arabia is a masculine society which indicates that “the society will be driven by competition, achievement and success, with success being defined by the winner/best in field – a value system that starts in school and continues throughout organisational life” (Insight, 2019). The opposite, Feminine society reflects that the dominant values in society are caring for others and quality of life. Thus, a Feminine society is one where quality of life is the sign of success and standing out from the crowd is not admirable. The fundamental issue here is what motivates people, wanting to be the best (Masculine) or liking what you do (Feminine) (ibid)..

Figure 2: Hofstede's six-dimension cultural model of Saudi Arabia



Source: Insight (2019)

A comparison between speakers from different cultural contexts is thus possible as some distinctions are observable in cultural trends. As a result, cross-cultural studies (Trosborg, 1987; Holmes, 1990; Sugimoto, 1997; Haley, 1998; Soliman, 2003; Chang, 2008) have examined the differences in apology strategies between interlocutors from different cultures. For instance, Olshtain & Cohen (1989) undertook a comparative study of apology used by speakers of English, French, German, and Hebrew and found significant similarities in selecting expressions of responsibility. As such, Olshtain & Cohen (1989) argues that different languages would often realize apologies in very similar ways. Sugimoto (1997) also investigated the apology strategies used by American and Japanese speakers and found that the four most employed apology strategies were statement of remorse, accounts, description of damage, and reparation. However, Sugimoto (1997) found that Japanese speakers used the strategies (apart from accounts) more often than American. Okumura & Wei (2000), for instance, found that while both British and Japanese men often apologize for accidents caused by their children, Japanese men on the other hand, would also apologize for accidents caused by their wives while British men would often not do so. Chang (2008) combined both cultural and gender differences to investigate the perception of apology

between Australians and Taiwanese Chinese. Chang (2008) study revealed a slight difference between both sexes in the two cultures as far as gender differences were concerned. However, on cultural differences, Chang (2008) found that cultural factors were more significant than gender in influencing the perception of apology.

Trosborg (1987) investigated the differences in apology strategies between Danish and English speakers. Trosborg (1987) study showed that the different non-apology strategies employed by both cultures were: explicit denial of responsibility, implicit denial of responsibility, providing justification for the act, blaming a third party, and blaming the complainer. However, Trosborg observed differences in that Danish speakers used non-apologies more than English native speakers. Bataineh & Bataineh (2008) also compared the apology strategies between American and Jordanian speakers and found that Jordanian speakers used several manifestations of explicit apology and were more detailed than American speakers; employing a combination of different apology strategies at the same time. Similarly, Hussein & Hammouri (1998) study on the comparative apology strategies used by American and Jordanian speakers found that Jordanians use more strategies to apologise than Americans. Also, Jordanians often used the strategies of praising God for what happened, attacking the offended, minimizing the degree of offence and interjection. This was not the case for American speakers. Similarities, nonetheless, between the two groups were in respect to use of expressions of apology, offer of repair, acknowledgment of responsibility, and promise of forbearance.

Soliman (2003) investigated the apology styles between Egyptian and American speakers and observed some similarities as well as differences. Soliman (2003) found that intensifiers and

interjections (such as ‘oh’) were employed in both cultures to express sincerity and show that the offender really cares about what happened. In addition, both American and Egyptian interlocutors would often express embarrassment for the offending act. However, Soliman (2003) found that Egyptians would usually praise God for everything that happened (whether good or bad). This is consistent with Hussein & Hammouri (1998) study on Jordanian and American speakers. In addition, Egyptians would often attack the offended when the offender thinks the offended cannot justify his/her position (e.g. the headteacher could blame a janitor he bumped into for the incident instead of apologising).

The social status of interlocutors has been identified to be an important contextual variable that needs to be taken into account in research on apology and politeness (Levinson, 1987; Bataineh, 2014; Brown & Ifantidou, 2014). Thus, Brown & Levinson (1987) proposed the consideration of the social status and gender as key contextual variables in socio-linguistic studies. The social status could be captured in terms of social distance and social power (Bataineh, 2014). These are discussed next. Importantly, people’s perception of the social variables (i.e. social status) is culturally specific. Both social power and social distance are conveyed differently from one culture to another, and thus, the culturally specific context.

### **2.7.2.1 Social power**

The social distance and social power basically define the “relationship between two interlocutors” (Ogiermann, 2018, p. 233). Both the social distance and social power are context-external variables. Locker & Buzard (1990) state that the role of social power in communication involves interlocutors recognising each other’s social position which then affects what is

perceived as appropriate and suitable speech acts. Social distance, on the other hand, relates to how well the interlocutors know each other which is essentially the degree of intimacy between the interlocutors (Afghari, 2007; Al-Khaza'leh & Ariff, 2015; Zhang, 2018).

Social power (SP) in speech act studies is often represented as an asymmetrical variable indicative of the degree to which a speaker can impose his or her will on the hearer. It basically captures the degree of power that the hearer has over the speaker, for instance, a teacher has relatively more power over a student; a parent has more power over a child; a manager has more power over the subordinate. In order to capture this contextual variable in speech act studies, three constellations of social power are generally perceived between the interlocutors. The first constellation refers to situations of equal status (Equal SP), the other two constellations is where one party is more powerful than the other (Low SP and High SP). However, while some distinctions of classifying of low, equal and high could be ascertained in most situations, there is an involvement of reasoned judgement in this assessment process (Ogiermann, 2018). In other words, it is important to recognise that some subjective judgement is involved in deciding on the differences that exist between interlocutors in speech acts. Particularly, the categories of social power might not be clearly distinguishable (Spencer-Oatey, 1996; Culpeper & Kytö, 2010). This also applies in the case of social distance, discussed below.

### **2.7.2.2 Social distance**

This social variable refers to how well the interlocutors know each other. In other words, how close the relationship between the parties is (Al-Khaza'leh & Ariff, 2015). Social distance, thus,

basically captures the familiarities between the interlocutors. Social distance has been defined as a symmetrical variable which indicates the degree of familiarity and frequency of interaction between two interlocutors (Afghari, 2007; Waldvogel, 2007). The degree of familiarity and also frequency of interactions between the interlocutors could be either personally or professionally (Waldvogel, 2007).

Social distance can be perceived as a continuum with differing degrees of distance along the line. The line, thus, would reflect the different levels of familiarity and frequency of interaction. At one end of the line would be an individual's family members and intimates where familiarity is highest whilst on the other end would be strangers who barely know each other. Similar to social power, social distance can arguably be considered as a continuum and that there are no clear-cut distinctions in the labelling of social distance categories.

In order to capture the influence of social distance on apology strategies, the different levels of familiarity are generally represented on three levels: strangers (high SD), acquaintances (medium SD) and friends (low SD). Thus, despite social distance being a continuum, the three categorisations are useful for practical application in studying speech acts. This research acknowledges the limitation that arises in making a distinction between these categories (low, medium and high social distance).. The distinctions, as used in the literature, are meant to help operationalise the analysis of speech acts (Culpeper & Kytö, 2010) in order to understand the context within which speech acts are used. In politeness strategies, for instance, Holmes & Stubbe (2003) argue that negative politeness is employed more in relationships with high social distance while positive politeness is expressed more between friends. In this respect, negative

politeness shows distances and inequality in power. Culpeper & Kytö (2010) emphasises, nonetheless, that social distance and social power are not mutually exclusive.

The two contextual factors have been examined in several studies on speech acts, including those that focus on the Arabic language and Saudi Arabia specifically (Al-Sobh, 2013; Alsulayyi, 2016; Almegren, 2018; Qari, 2019). For instance, Alsulayyi (2016) study found that Saudis use more intensifiers when apologising in situations where interlocutors are distant (or high social distance) and also where there is high social power. Importantly, Alsulayyi (2016, p. 79) suggest that “the adoption of upgraders in such cases is attributed to cultural reasons as the Arab culture necessitates the use of such intensifiers as a sign of showing respect to the interlocutors”. Further, in situations of low social distance between the interlocutors, Alsulayyi (2016) found that Saudis adopted long apology strategies, for example, using a combined upgrader strategy. Qari (2019) argues that in situations of high social power, it is in the interest of the apologisee with low social status to try to maintain a positive respectful relationship with the offender. Binasfour (2014) study on the speech acts of apology of Saudi learners of English found that the higher the social power of the offender, the more apology strategies that were employed. In other words, a combination of apology strategies was used when the social power between the interlocutors was high. In this respect, the social status of interlocutors has an influence on speech acts.

In the study of apology strategies in Jordanian Arabic, Banikalef et al. (2015) found that the choice of apology strategies is influenced more by social power than social distance. In another study on Jordanian Arabic, Hussein & Hammouri (1998) found that Jordanians tended to use

honorific addresses whenever the hearer was higher in rank. Al-Khaza'leh & Ariff (2015) also showed that Jordanians have relatively high sensitivity towards hierarchical power and social distance than English native speakers. Tawalbeh & Al-Oqaily (2012) study suggested that directness in apology and request by Saudis was an expected behaviour in situations where the interlocutors were of equal status (social distance and social power). Tawalbeh & Al-Oqaily (2012) observed that this directness was irrespective of the weight of the request/apology. Thus, Tawalbeh & Al-Oqaily (2012) argue that indirectness in the context of Saudi Arabia should not be perceived as impoliteness; instead, it should be perceived as “a way of expressing connectedness, closeness, camaraderie and affiliation” (p. 94).

Importantly, in the context of Saudi Arabia (and other Arabic countries), contextual factors such as gender and social status form an integral part of culture and thus, the need to consider them in speech act studies. The next section reviews some studies that have focussed on the Middle East and Saudi Arabia in particular.

## **2.8 Selected studies on apology strategies in Middle East countries**

There has been a growing number of studies on speech acts (apology, requests, compliments, refusals, greetings, invitations) that focus on the Arabic language (or countries) (Al-Zumor, 2011; Jebahi, 2011; Al Ali, 2012; Al-Ghamdi, 2013; Al-Moghrabi, 2013; Al-Sobh, 2013; Humeid, 2013; Binasfour, 2014; Yallah & Allahiby, 2014; Ageel, 2016; Al-Musallam, 2016; Alsulayyi, 2016; Almegren, 2018; El-Dakhs, 2018; Qari, 2019). Qari (2019) argues that what is observable among the Arabic world is the high positive politeness associated with their societies

in which people (of the same gender) are comfortable speaking to each other with a small spatial distance between them. Thus, interlocutors in their social interactions are generally “comfortable with little personal space” (Walker, 2014, p. 19). Drawing on Hofstede's (1980) cultural dimension, Ogiermann (2009) argues that all Arabic cultures are collectivistic which implies that they value group harmony over individual autonomy. Further, unlike individualistic societies (e.g. United Kingdom and USA), collectivistic societies are intrinsically positive politeness oriented<sup>5</sup> (Ogiermann, 2009).

Qari (2019) investigated the role of gender in apology speech acts between Saudi Arabia and British speakers. Qari (2019) study involved 80 participants (20 Saudi males, 20 Saudi females, 20 British males and 20 British females) with data (collected using written questionnaires) analysed based on Brown & Levinson (1978) politeness theory and the Cross Cultural Speech Act Research Project (CCSARP) apology strategy coding system. The study found significant differences between the Saudi and British apology selection strategy. Saudis, especially male, were found to be more submissive, evasive and reluctant to admit their faults; but showed their remorse in a non-verbal way by kissing their father's hand or head. The non-verbal apologetic behaviour was also observed in Ahmed (2017) study who argued that “non-verbal performance parallels verbal apologies in (some particular) family situations” (p. 147). Further, Qari (2019) revealed that Saudi males employed more negative politeness strategies to express their apologies as compared to female Saudis that used more positive politeness apology strategies.

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<sup>5</sup> This is drawn on politeness theory. Positive politeness strategies highlight friendliness and camaraderie between the interlocutor and hearer; the interlocutor's wants are in some way similar to the hearer's wants (Jansen & Janssen, 2010). Examples of positive politeness include compliments, and might also include statements such as, "I really like the way you've done this," or, "It took me forever to figure this out, but what I eventually came to was..." or, "You know it's always important to me to do the best job I can, and I know the same is true for you”.

Employing discourse completion tests (DCT), Humeid (2013) investigated the effect of gender and status on the apology strategies used by American and Iraqi university students. In applying DCT, Humeid (2013) designed twelve situations drawing from Demeter (2000), Hussein & Hammouri(1998), and Bataineh (2005) studies. Of the twelve situations, the first four situations were designed to examine how the subjects apologize to people of higher status, whilst the second four were meant to show how interlocutors apologize to people of equal grade to them. The last four situations were designed to investigate how the subjects apologize to people of lower rank. Thus, the design of the DCTs incorporated these contextual variables, such as a situation involving teacher and student. Humeid (2013) study found that Iraqi male speakers often used more apology strategies with people of higher-level contrary to American male speakers who employed more apology strategies with people of lower position. Further, Iraqi females were found to use more apology strategies than Iraqi males; a finding which is consistent with Holmes (1995) study.

Bataineh & Bataineh (2006) investigated the apology strategies used by Jordanian Arabic undergraduate students aged mostly between 19-22 years old. Their study employed a DCT questionnaire designed based on Sugimoto's (1997) study consisting of 10 hypothetical scenarios. In their study, Bataineh & Bataineh (2006) aimed to identify the primary and secondary apology strategies used in Jordanian Arabic and also to highlight the role of gender on these apology strategies. Drawing on Sugimoto's (1997) study, the primary strategies of apologising are statement of remorse, accounts, description of damage and reparation whilst the secondary apology strategies are compensation and promise not to repeat offence. Bataineh & Bataineh (2006) found that both the primary and secondary apology strategies were used except

the description of damage. In addition, Jordanian Arabic employed non-apology strategies of “blaming victim and brushing off the incident as unimportant to exonerate themselves from blame” (p. 1901). In addition, their study highlighted some differences between males and females in the usage of the apology strategies. For instance, Bataineh & Bataineh (2006) found that females tended to use more primary apology strategies than males. This finding is observable in Holmes (1995) study also. Further, females were more inclined to assign responsibility to themselves or others and also used non-apology strategies than males. Interestingly too, Bataineh & Bataineh (2006) found that only males invoked Allah (God)’s name when apologising.

Further, Al-Laheebi & Ya-Allah (2014) investigated the type and sequence of apologising employed by Saudi Arabians using two research methods, ethnographic observation and DCTs. The DCTs comprised of 12 hypothetical situations meant to capture different types of social violations. In order to investigate the regional variations in apology strategies, Al-Laheebi & Ya-Allah (2014) had to identify and select participants from five different regions of Saudi Arabia (North, West, Centre, South and East). In total, their study had 370 participants who were mostly undergraduate students in various disciplines. Al-Laheebi & Ya-Allah’s (2014) study found that the frequently used apology strategies are IFID strategies (request for forgiveness, request for patience, expression of regret and offer of apology) and taking responsibility (acknowledging the hearer’s right to act). Among the IFID strategies, the request for forgiveness was the highest used. In addition, Al-Laheebi & Ya-Allah (2014) observed that the apology strategies of offer of repair and promise of forbearance often required the locution [inshā Allah] “if Allah wills”. The

use of this locution is an acknowledgement that people do not own the future, instead, future occurrences are the province of Allah/God.

Another study employing DCT that consisted of 10 situations by Alsulayyi (2016) investigated apology strategies employed by 30 Saudi Arabian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teachers. The study revealed that Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) was the most utilised apology strategy, followed by downgrading responsibility (DR), upgrader, offer of repair, taking on responsibility and least verbal redress. Alsulayyi (2016) study also showed that gender was a key determinant in the selection of the apology strategies. In this respect, the study found that the IFID strategy and the upgrader strategy were often used by males than female Saudis. Females, on the other hand, employed more DR apology strategy than male. The influence of gender on apology strategy selection supports findings of other studies too (Gonzales et al., 1990; Holmes, 1995; Bataineh & Bataineh, 2008; Humeid, 2013).

Employing DCT technique and the Apology Introspection Questionnaire (AIQ), Almegren (2018) investigated the apology technique used by 50 students with Arabic background in their interaction in English among peers/colleagues. The focus in Almegren's (2018) study was to understand the apology technique learned by the Arabic students as conveyed in their thoughts and apologies in English. The study revealed that the direct apology was effectively used in both Arabic and English . Further, there were some instances where indirect apologies were found to be effective in both languages as well as a mix of direct and indirect apologies. Almegren (2018) study also highlighted that grammar, syntax, and spelling were not the only tools to articulate an apology.

El-Dakhs (2018) investigated the apology strategies of Saudis learners of English in a foreign language learning context and employed the DCT technique involving 500 participants. El-Dakhs' (2018) study also investigated the influence of language exposure, gender, distance and dominance on the apology strategies. The study found that Saudis preferred face-saving apology strategies while the variables of gender, distance and dominance had also an influence on these apology strategies to varying degrees. El-Dakhs' (2018) study results are largely consistent with Alsulayyi (2016) study on Saudi EFL teachers.

In another study by Alhojailan (2019) that aimed to investigate the apology strategies used by Saudi Arabic speakers in six communicative contexts, the research technique of role-play tasks (RPTs) was used. Alhojailan (2019) study involved 6 participants (3 males and 3 females) and had six hypothetical situations drawing on Bergman & Kasper (1993) and Jebahi (2011). The study found that the most used apology strategy was explanation of account followed by IFID strategies. Alhojailan (2019) study findings are consistent with Nureeddeen (2008) study on Sudanese Arabic which also found that explanation and IFID strategies were the most frequently used apology strategy. Further, Alhojailan (2019) study found that females were more inclined to use no strategy and/or one strategy as compared to males who often utilised two and/or three strategies. The study also revealed that females offered more explanation when apologising than males. Alhojailan (2019) also examined the influence of the severity of the offence on the apology strategies used and found that "the perceived severity of the offence affects the number of apology strategies used" (p. 1). Thus, Alhojailan (2019) contributes in giving a perspective of apology strategies in the context of Saudi Arabic. However, the study had only 6 participants in

the role play tasks and these were aged between 50-60 years old. As such, there are limitations regarding the age group and also number of participants which might affect the results.

A summary review of studies on apology speech acts is shown in appendix 1. The review shows that studies that have focussed particularly on Saudi Arabia are limited. Further, most of these are not in peer reviewed journals (but unpublished dissertations). There is a valuable contribution, in this regard to gain more insight into apology speech acts in Saudi Arabia. Further, besides the employment of apology strategies considering gender and culture (as key determinant), this study goes further to consider the responses to apology. The review of the literature has shown that responses to apology has received limited attention, in general, but also specifically to Arabic contexts. There exists the lacuna in not only apology speech acts in Saudi Arabic, but in the responses to apology in general to which this study makes a contribution.

## **2.9 Summary**

This chapter was aimed at reviewing the literature on the speech act of apology. It defined the meaning of apology and noted the different perspective that exist to defining apology (semantic formula, condition-based approach, function-centred approach, casual apologies and genuine apologies). This was followed by a discussion of the theory of speech acts which has been utilised in several language studies as it helps to understand utterances and functional units of communication. Further, different apology strategies have been proposed in the literature. The contributions, particularly of Searle (1975), Fraser (1981), Olshtain & Cohen (1981) and (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984) were highlighted as these have formed the basis for several studies on

apology speech acts. The concepts of guilt and shame were discussed in relation to apology. The aim was to highlight that Saudi Arabia is more of a 'shame' based culture. Thus, in studying about apology in a Saudi Arabian context, it's important that the cultural aspect, which is highly rooted in religious doctrines, is taken into consideration. This has a significant role to play in the effectiveness of apology strategies too as perceptions of apology have a cultural orientation.

Further, responses to strategy were discussed and the review of the literature shows that very few studies have explicitly considered the response to apology nor made propositions regarding apology response strategies. This is despite the role that responses to apologies play in the remedial interchange as they complete the interaction offender-affected party loop (Agyekum, 2006). Thus, this study makes a contribution in consideration of the responses to apology besides the apology strategies. The responses to apology are studied in a 'shame' based cultural context. In addition, some contextual aspects of gender and culture were reviewed in order to highlight the influence that these contextual factors have in the apology strategies adopted. Mixed findings exist in this respect, for instance, with respect to men and women in the selection of apology strategies. Nonetheless, the review of the literature has highlighted that these are important contextual factors that should be taken into account. The chapter ended with a review of studies that have focused on the Arabic countries, in particular, the Middle East and Saudi Arabia. This has shown that there is still a significant gap on apology speech act studies in these countries. In Saudi Arabia specifically, a lot still needs to be investigated to which this study makes a contribution

## **Chapter Three: Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to outline the methodology and analytical framework that will aid the achievement of the research aims. The general principle applied in the design of the methodological framework is that the research strategies and the methods employed must be appropriate in order to address the research questions (Silverman, 2016). A research methodology or design, as implied in this study, refers to:

“the specifications of methods and procedures for acquiring the information needed. It is the overall operational pattern or framework of the project that stipulates what information is to be collected from which sources by what procedures. If it is a good design, it will ensure that the information obtained is relevant to the research questions and that it was collected by objective and economical procedures” (Green & Tull, 1970, p. 73).

Thus, the research methodology is basically “a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems” (Kerlinger, 1986, p. 279). In this case, the research methodology will help to answer the three research questions (see sections 1.4 and 3.4.2). The plan developed will present the overall scheme or programme of the research, outlining what action or activities the researcher will do. The benefit of a plan is that it provides some overall framework and direction to investigation (Silverman, 2016), in this case, of apology and apology responses in Saudi Arabia in the most efficient manner. Developing a good research design is critical, firstly, because it serves as a plan that specifies the sources and types of information relevant to the research question (Emory & Cooper, 2003). Secondly, it is a strategy or blueprint specifying which approach will be used for gathering and analysing the data (Phillips, 1971). An explicitly outlined methodology also assists in the development of a

framework for replication and constructive criticism through providing a basis that guides logical and valid reasoning (Robson & McCartan, 2016). In other words, a methodology facilitates “communication between researchers who have either shared or want to share a common experience” (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008, p. 14).

A distinction based on the above understanding can thus, be made between methodology and methods. In this respect, whilst a methodology is “the general approach the researcher takes in carrying out the research project” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, p. 14), research methods are “the techniques or procedures used to gather or analyse data related to some research question or hypothesis” (Crotty, 2005, p. 3). The methodology can also be viewed as the link between the theoretical approach and the chosen research methods (Gray, 2019). Thus, the methodology in this study links the speech act theory and politeness theory, which draw from the philosophy of language (Searle & Searle, 1969), to the chosen research methods namely discourse completing task (DCT), focus groups and semi-structured interviews.

### **3.2 Purpose of research**

Before the discussion of the methodological framework, it is important that the different purposes of research are highlighted in order to give more context to the justification of the chosen research design. Silverman (2016) states that the purpose of research can be exploratory, descriptive, explanatory or policy oriented. In the first category (exploratory), a researcher usually explores a setting or a social phenomenon. The importance of exploratory work is that it helps give some background information or context that becomes a basis for planning descriptive

or explanatory research. Descriptive research, on the other hand, is designed to provide systematic information about a social phenomenon where the researcher might not begin with hypotheses but is likely to develop hypotheses subsequent to the collection of data (Silverman, 2016). Gray (2019, p. 32) states that the “purpose of a descriptive study is to provide a picture of a phenomenon as it naturally occurs”. In the third category, explanatory, the researcher starts with ideas about the possible causes of a social phenomenon, i.e., the researcher develops hypotheses before collecting any data and then plans a study that can provide systematic evidence that support (or refute) the initial conceptions about cause (Berg & Lune, 2012). The third category, evaluation, is designed so that findings from the research can provide information useful for making decisions about public policy or private issues. However, it should be emphasised that these categories are not mutually exclusive. In the case of this research on apology and response to apology in Saudi Arabia, a largely exploratory aspect is undertaken in seeking to understand the influence of the socio-cultural context on these aspects. This exploratory aspect then feeds into the explanatory and evaluation aspect. Once an understanding has been obtained of the apology strategies and responses to apology, the study further investigates the influence of different contextual factors on the speech act phenomenon. Zikmund et al. (2013), for instance, argue that exploratory research can be conducted during the initial stages of research as it helps the researcher to clarify and understand the problem more. In my study, before investigating whether there are any social and cultural factors that might influence the use of apology strategies and response to apology, I consider that an understanding of the apology strategies and the responses to apology adopted is imperative.

In summary, in this study's investigation of the apology strategies and responses to apologies in Saudi Arabia; including the factors that might have an influence on these aspects, a mixed methods research approach is adopted. The mixed methods approach adopted has employed discourse completing tasks (DCT), focus groups and semi-structured interviews which are discussed in detail below (section 3.5). The mixed methods approach has both philosophical and theoretical implications. The justification for the appropriateness of this approach is discussed in the sub-sections below.

### **3.3 Philosophical and theoretical orientation**

The development of a methodological framework generally starts with an understanding of the philosophical orientations of the research and the underlying implications that this might have on the overall research design (Silverman, 2016). The importance of acknowledging philosophical issues when undertaking research lies on the effect such aspects have on the research quality (Gray, 2019). An understanding of philosophical issues is very important for several reasons. Easterby-Smith et al. (2012, p. 46) state that there are at least four reasons for this importance:

“First, the researcher has an obligation to understand the basic issues of epistemology in order to have a clear sense of her/his reflexive role in research methods....Second, it can help to clarify research designs...Third, knowledge of philosophy can help the researcher to recognise which designs will work and which will not. It should enable them to avoid going up too many blind alleys and should indicate the limitations of particular approaches. Fourth, it can help the researchers identify, and even create, designs that may be outside their past experience. It may also suggest how to adapt research designs according to the constraints of different subject of knowledge structures”

The philosophical debates revolve around assumptions of ontology, epistemology, theoretical perspective and methodological design (Creswell, 2013; Gray, 2019). As discussed in section

2.3, this study's theoretical lens is drawn from the theory of speech acts. As such, the discussion of the philosophical aspects involves the underlying ontological and epistemological position of speech act theory.

### **3.3.1 Ontology**

Ontology refers to the science or study of being (Blaikie, 2010) and deals with the nature of reality and existence (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). It is basically the philosophical assumption about the nature of reality (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Crotty (2005, p. 10) defines ontology as “the study of being; it is concerned with ‘what is’, with the nature of existence, with the structure of reality as such”. Guba & Lincoln (1994) perceive ontology as a group of assumptions about reality. In other words, the basic ontological question is on “whether the ‘reality’ to be explored is external to the individual, imposing itself on individual consciousness from without, or the product of individual consciousness; whether ‘reality’ is of an ‘objective’ nature, or the product of individual cognition; whether ‘reality’ is a given ‘out there’ in the world, or the creation of one’s mind” (Burrell & Morgan, 2005, p. 5).

The ontological position of speech act theory is consistent with the view that reality is essentially subjective (Lycan, 2018). Speech act theory provides an extension to the ‘philosophy of language’ and criticised propositions of logical positivism with its objective view of reality (Austin, 1962; Searle & Searle, 1969). In this case, reality is not perceived as an objective and external product. Instead, reality is subjective with the main function of language in utterances going beyond offering only the true or false utterances (Austin, 1962). Austin (1962) argues that there exist several utterances that cannot be ascribed as true or false but that these are dependent

on the social norms prevailing in the language communities. As such, reality gets created through the social interactions of people (Burr, 2015). Words as used in the social interactions are perceived to do actions rather than only transferring meaning (Searle, 1975).

According to Searle (1975) language is essentially constitutive of institutional reality. The ontology in this institutional reality derives from intentionality. Institutional reality is marked by the fact that what seems to be the case determines what is the case (Searle, 2003). Language is conceived as the “basic social institution because it is language – or language-like systems of symbolization – which enables these new forms of collective intentionality to exist at ever higher levels of complexity” (Searle, 2003, p. 19).

Interestingly, Searle (1962) argues for a two levelled ontology: facts on the lower level (brute facts) and facts on the upper level (institutional facts). This depiction is meant to conceptualise the construction of social reality. The facts at the lower level can exist largely independent of human beings and institutions whilst facts on the upper level depend on human institutions and above all on an associated ‘collective intentionality’ (Searle, 2003, p. 285). This conception of social reality largely explains Austin's (1962) two aspects to a statement: performative and constative. This could also be seen in the context of facts that cannot be explained (brute facts) as compared to those that are dependent on human/institutional constructs.

### **3.3.1 Epistemology**

Epistemology refers to a general set of assumptions about ways of inquiring into the nature of the world (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). It's basically the philosophical assumption that deals with

“the nature of knowledge, its possibility, scope and general basis” (Hamlyn, 1995, p. 242). In other words, epistemology is the philosophy of knowledge or how we come to know (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Understanding the epistemological orientation helps “answer questions about how one can be a ‘knower’; what tests beliefs must pass in order to be legitimated as knowledge; and what kind of things can be known” (Harding, 1987, p. 3). Thus, it can be distinguished that whilst “ontology embodies understanding ‘what is’, epistemology tries to understand ‘what it means to know’” (Gray, 2013). It offers a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible and how one can guarantee that they are both adequate and legitimate (Gray, 2013)

In the context of language as applied in speech act theory, “truth and meaning do not exist in some external world, but are created by the subject’s interactions with the world” (Gray, 2013, p. 20). In this epistemological stance, meaning is constructed such that subjects construct their own meaning in different ways, even in relation to the same phenomenon. Thus, there could exist multiple, contradictory but equally valid accounts of the world (Bryman, 2016). What is common, however, is the “interest in how language actually functions, and a common belief that just as there are rules within the areas of language traditionally studied by linguists, so too there are rules in operation and grammars to be written to describe how language is used in face-to-face communication among human beings” (Schmidt & Richards, 1980, p. 414). As highlighted above, speech act theory arose from a critique of logical positivism that postulate that there is only one basic kind of language use: that of making descriptive utterances (in speech or in writing) that are either true or false depending on how the world is (Searle & Searle, 1969). The logical positivist focussed on a scientific discourse posing that utterances are meaningful only if

they are tautology or to the extent that they can be confirmed or disconfirmed (in principle) through experience; which makes other utterances useless (nonsense) (Kasher, 1998). In this respect, logical positivism focusses on verifiability (Searle & Searle, 1969). However, in proposing speech act theory, Austin, (1962, p. 112) observes that “it was for too long the assumption of philosophers that the business of a ‘statement’ can only be to ‘describe’ some state of affairs, or to ‘state some fact’, which it must do either truly or falsely”. In this conception, Austin (1962) proposes two aspects of a statement, a ‘performative’ which can be either ‘happy’ or ‘unhappy’ and a ‘constative’ (statement) which can be true or false. Thus, in saying something, a person is essentially performing some kind of act. The constatives (descriptive utterances), according to this proposition, cannot fully capture all the meaningful uses of language (Fotion, 2014). As such, these constatives are only one of the many kinds of utterances or speech act (i.e. the illocutionary acts) that comprise of social acts performed through means of linguistic utterances in appropriate circumstances (Fotion, 2014). In other words, the theory of speech acts “starts with the assumption that the minimal unit of human communication is not a sentence or other expressions, but rather the performance of certain kinds of acts, such as making statements, asking questions, giving orders, describing, explaining, apologising, thanking, congratulating, etc” (Searle, 1980, p. 7).

### **3.4 Methodological choices**

The methodological choices adopted in this research have been influenced by the research aims and the underlying research questions. The focus is on adopting an appropriate research methodology that enables the research questions to be sufficiently addressed (Creswell & Poth,

2017). One of the key considerations in developing the methodological framework was deciding on whether this research is qualitative or quantitative or mixed.

### **3.4.1 Research approach**

In general, finding out what kind of research is most suitable for the problem to be analysed is an important step in every research. Saunders et al. (2012) argue that the distinction between quantitative research and qualitative research is not only on the question of quantification but also on context of knowledge and objectivity. In this respect, Gray (2013) states that the core of qualitative analysis lies in the related process of describing phenomena, classifying it and seeing how the concepts interconnect while Amaratunga et al. (2002) state that a quantitative research design is characterized by the assumption that human behaviour can be explained by what may be termed social facts which can be investigated by methodologies that utilize the deductive logic of natural sciences. Similarly, Thompson (1995) states that quantitative approaches are drawn on positivism that assumes an objective and neutral view of the world: made up of measurable, observable and quantified facts. Logical positivism (what speech act theory critiques) would thus adopt a quantitative approach. In order to conduct valid quantitative research, a researcher needs to enquire from respondents in sufficient numbers in order to ensure the quality or validity of the research that promotes generalisability of findings (Aliaga & Gunderson, 2000).

Creswell (2013) in distinguishing between quantitative and qualitative research argues that 'reality' in qualitative research is constructed by individuals involved in the research situation while 'reality' 'out there' in the world is in quantitative research. In qualitative research,

reasonable number of participants are necessary too, but the focus is on gaining sufficient depth (rather than breadth) of the phenomenon (Gray, 2013). To ensure sufficient depth of analysis, the numbers of participants are far smaller in qualitative research than quantitative research. Thus, Krauss (2005, p. 750) argues that “ultimately, the heart of the quantitative-qualitative “debate” is philosophical, not methodological”.

Nonetheless, the choice of qualitative or quantitative research depends mainly on the research aims, objectives, procedure, focus and questions of any research (Saunders et al., 2012). Thus, in linguistic research, it is imperative that the methods adopted are focussed on addressing the aims of the research. Importantly, whether a quantitative or qualitative approach is adopted, each approach has its associated strength and weaknesses (Patton, 2005). For instance, the depth and internal validity of findings from a qualitative approach are often achieved at the expense of generalisability of the findings to wider population that quantitative research can provide (Greene, 2007; Patton, 2005; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Thus, it is important to recognise that neither of the methods is intrinsically better than the other. The suitability of each, however, needs to be decided by the context, purpose and nature of the study in question (Bryman & Burgess, 1999). In this respect, a research strategy that enables the weakness inherent in one approach to be neutralised by the strengths in the other (Davies, 2003; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009) becomes attractive to the extent that the research questions are sufficiently addressed. Thus, there is some complementarity that is achieved when both qualitative and quantitative research approaches are utilised (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). This research supports this complementarity and proposition that a researcher is bound to learn more about the world when

both quantitative and qualitative methods are used instead of adhering to one method only (Creswell, 2013).

### **3.4.2 Mixed methods approach**

Mixed methods research is basically any research that adopts a “research strategy employing more than one type of research method” (Bryman, 2016, p. 20). This also implies working with different types of data. In other words, it is research that “involves collecting, analysing, and interpreting quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or in a series of studies that investigate the same underlying phenomenon” (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009, p. 266). In a wider context, mixed methods research can be viewed as an approach to knowledge accumulation that attempts to consider multiple viewpoints, perspectives, positions, and standpoints of qualitative and quantitative characteristics (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004) perceive mixed methods research as philosophically representing the ‘third wave’ or ‘third research movement’; a movement that moves past the paradigm wars (i.e. positivism, interpretivism, critical, pragmatic) by offering a logical and practical alternative (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

In the literature, mixed methods research has been defined in different ways and the actual terms used to denote the mixed methods study have varied. Some terms include multitrait-multimethod research (Campbell & Fiske, 1959), integrating qualitative and quantitative approaches (Glik, Parker, Muligande, & Hategikamana, 1986; Steckler, McLeroy, Goodman, Bird, & McCormick, 1992), interrelating qualitative and quantitative data (Fielding & Fielding, 1986), combining qualitative and quantitative research (Bryman, 2003; Creswell, 2013), mixed model studies

(Datta, 1994), and mixed methods research (Caracelli & Greene, 1993; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007; Greene, 2007; Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). The underlying theme in all these terms, however, is the idea of combining or integrating different methods. Johnson et al., (2007, p. 123) define mixed methods as “the type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combine elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration”. Creswell & Plano Clark (2007, p. 5) provide a more comprehensive definition:

“mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone”.

In this respect, this study contends that a better understanding of apology and responses to apology in Saudi Arabia are better understood through the complementary benefits that arise from using both quantitative and qualitative research methods. A mixed methods approach is necessary for better and broader insights into the study’s research questions and brings advantages when compared to a single method utilisation. Thus, the aim is to address the three research questions:

1. What types of apology strategies do Saudi adults employ in different contexts, considering, for example, social distance, power relationships and seriousness of the addressed offence)?
2. What types of apology responses do Saudi adults use in answering to the apology strategies in Research Question 1?

3. What contextual variables (e.g. social distance, social power) and social variables (e.g. age, gender) may influence apology strategies and the responses to apology?

### **3.5 Data collection methods**

As this research is a mixed methods research, the research methods used are drawn from both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Three principle research methods: focus groups, discourse completion tests (DCTs) and semi-structured interviews, have been utilised in order to address the research questions. The DCTs form the quantitative data collection aspect of the research whilst the focus group and semi-structured interviews form the qualitative aspect of the study. The appropriateness of these research methods and the validation checks employed are discussed in the next sub-sections.

#### **3.5.1 Discourse Completion Tests (DCTs)**

DCT is a widely used data-collection technique in linguistics to elicit particular speech acts ( Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Rose, 1994; Bataineh & Bataineh, 2006; Jones, 2013; Labben, 2016; Demirkol, 2019). It is one of the data collection technique that can sufficiently yield large quantities of comparable and systematically varied speech act data (Kasper, 2000; Aijmer, 2011; Zhang, 2018) on speech acts. DCT is basically a form of questionnaire which usually includes various situations formed to elicit particular speech acts from respondents (Demirkol, 2019). DCT is also known as ‘production questionnaire’ (Ogiermann, 2009). Thus, a typical DCT “consists of a certain number of situational descriptions (usually between 10 and 20) followed by a short dialogue containing some empty fragments to be filled by the participants, who are asked

to imagine that they are acting in particular situational roles and to write down what they would most probably say in such circumstances” (Wojtaszek, 2016, p. 163). In this regard, participants are requested to read situational descriptions carefully and imagine being in a real-life interaction. The participants have to write down what they would say in such imagined real-life situations. The short descriptions of particular situations are intended to reveal the pattern of a speech act. Thus, the data obtained can then be analysed as “speech act realisations of the desired speech act type” (Richards & Schmidt, 2014, p. 162).

Some attributes of the DCT technique makes it a popular method in linguistics. These include: (i) the ability to cover a relatively extensive range of naturally occurring situations in which particular speech acts could be performed; (ii) the ability to offer the potential of yielding very rich samples in order to ensure proper representativeness; (iii) the potential for replicability that promotes the consistency of findings and the prospective comparability of the results; and (iv) the increased practicality that helps reduce to the very minimum the necessary time and effort which has to be invested in the process of data collection (Barron, 2003; Ogiermann, 2009; Jones, 2013; Wojtaszek, 2016; Demirkol, 2019). Besides these attributes, it has an advantage of keeping participants’ information anonymous, thus building trust and integrity of their responses (Cohen, 2007; Perry, 2011). Confidentiality of information also contribute to its integrity as participants respond more honestly (Perry, 2011).

The rationale for using the DCT technique, therefore, arises from its appropriateness to capture speech acts and its attributes. In this respect, the method enabled the researcher to collect large quantities of data quickly and less costly in terms of time and money. In addition, when applying

the technique, it was possible for the researcher to identify the effect of different social factors (i.e. gender) on the apology and responses to apologies on the participants. This was made possible through designing a sequence of situationally varied scenarios (see 3.5.1.2 below). As a result of its application to large sample sizes, this provides a means to generalisability of the findings with respect to Saudis' apology and responses to apology.

In addition, the benefit of using a written DCT in this study was that it provided an opportunity or freedom for participants to think and plan their speech acts; and even change their answers if they felt not compatible with the usual or accepted native Saudi culture or language. As such, an opportunity for reflection provided an added advantage into the integrity of the responses. Importantly, as Aston (1995) argues, it is the thinking of something that matters more than the uttering or writing down speech. This is key because responses to proposed descriptive situations might not reflect exactly what the participants would say if there were in such situation. However, it is what they think they would have said or responded that matters (Aston, 1995). Thus, whether the participants would use exactly the same expressions if they found themselves in the described situations is not as important as long as their responses are regarded as socially and culturally appropriate (Zhang, 2018). The data captured from the DCT is essentially an indirect mirror of participants' natural speech (Barron, 2003). DCT technique becomes more useful in that it can be designed to elicit multiple occurrences of any speech acts across a variety of situations. Its appropriateness to this study can be conceived as Bardovi-Harlig, (1999, p. 239) argues that DCT is useful "when investigating languages which have not yet been described pragmatically and for speech acts which have not been described in languages which are better documented".

Further, the appropriateness of the DCT technique to this study is that data captured would be relatively similar to naturally occurring data particularly with respect to main formulas and patterns which share the same semantic formulas and strategies despite their difference in their structures in response to situations across different language dialects (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000; Golato, 2003). Zhang (2018, p. 230) argues that “although DCT responses do not fully resemble naturally occurring data, the administrative advantages make the DCT a valuable and effective data collection method”.

### **3.5.1.1 Criticism of the DCT**

Like any other method, the DCT technique also has its drawbacks. The main criticism is that the method does not effectively capture the dynamic discourse features that occur in real-life situations such as conversational structure, turn taking and pragmatic features (Barron, 2003; Zhang, 2018). Thus, whilst the DCT method indirectly mirrors natural speech, there is an implicit recognition that the completion of a written task (questionnaire) involves different cognitive processes than speaking (Golato, 2003). Completing a questionnaire would require participants to “recall pragmatic information from memory and report rather than use it” (Barron, 2003, p. 85). The participants in the DCT process would be responding to the researcher rather than interacting with another person; which is acknowledged as artificial (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000). In this respect, Golato (2003) in a study comparing DCTs and recordings of naturally occurring talk found that the two data collection procedures do not always yield data that speaks equally well to given research questions. In particular, Golato (2003) highlights that “recording naturally occurring talk-in-interaction enables the researcher to study how language is organised and realised in natural settings, whereas responses from data elicitation procedures such as DCTs

indirectly reflect the sum of prior experience with language”. Thus, the responses within a DCT can be conceived as indirectly revealing a participant’s accumulated experience within a given setting while bearing some questionable similarity to the data which actually shaped that experience (Barron, 2003; Golato, 2003). In the same vein, Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford (1993, p. 47) concluded that DCTs do not “promote the turn-taking and negotiation strategies found in natural conversations”. Instead, DCTs “obscure the sequential and co-constructed nature of talk” (Turnbull, 2001, p. 35).

Further, the responses in DCT questionnaires are often short, simple and without emotions involved unlike naturally occurring speech. Because of the lack of emotions, the prosodic features (such as intonation, pitch) and kinesics or body language features (such as facial expressions, posture or gestures) are inevitably missing which often affect subsequent responses (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000; Golato, 2003). These features could be captured, for instance, on video recorded data rather than written responses.

Despite these limitations, DCT remains a valuable technique which can elicit participants’ responses reflecting what they ‘would’ say in a situation as compared to what they would ‘actually’ say or do in that or similar situations (Aston, 1995; Schneider, 2011). The aim is to “establish general, culture-specific patterns of language use” (Zhang, 2018, p. 233) which is sufficiently captured in written DCTs. In addition, DCT scenarios can be usefully designed to contain certain social variables which helps to investigate their impact on speech act realisation (Barron, 2003). The sociolinguistic variables (e.g. age, gender) can be varied systematically in investigating their impact on the speech acts (Schneider, 2011).

### 3.5.1.2 Designing the DCT

In developing questionnaires, it is imperative that a number of factors that could affect its validity are taken into consideration. Gray (2004), for instance, identified wording of the questions, sequencing, structure and design of the questionnaires as important. As such, in developing the DCT questionnaires, the researcher ensured that these had clear and understandable wording, were appropriately short, avoided jargons, technical terms, words of double meaning that could be misinterpreted, emotive and offensive ambiguous, annoying and embarrassing words. As Labben (2016) highlights, completing a DCT questionnaires should not make any participant uncomfortable. Gillham (2000) suggests that in order to make DCT questionnaires more effective, they should be no longer than six pages so as to make it easier for participants to complete.

In using the DCT to examine speech act realisations, some flexibility exists in the literature regarding the number of descriptive situations. Longer scenarios provide more contextualisation whilst shorter scenarios have the advantage of being easier to process (Zhang, 2018). However, Billmyer & Varghese (2000) argue that whilst detailed descriptions of scenarios are bound to result in longer responses, their length does not necessarily affect speech act realisations. As Wojtaszek (2016) observed, situational descriptions which require participants to respond based on what they think is an appropriate response for that particular situation range from 10 to 20 situations. These situational descriptions have to be designed in order to investigate specific features of situations. In this study, the aim was to capture the apology strategies and responses to apology employed by both Saudi male and female participants. The DCT designed consisted

of 15 statements aimed at eliciting apology speech acts to hypothesised offences in different situations and contexts. The DCT design, adopting 15 situations, was influenced by apology strategies and taxonomies that have been reviewed in the literature (see section 2.4), particularly the taxonomy developed by Olshtain & Cohen (1983) that has influenced several other studies (Edmundson, 1993; Deutschmann, 2003; Demeter, 2006; Humeid, 2013; Banikalef et al., 2015; Cedar, 2017; Haugh & Chang, 2019), adapted to different contexts.

Importantly, in drawing the DCT scenarios and given the socio-cultural variations in the way people perceive and produce apologies in the real world (Roberts, 2018; Geurts, 2019), the socio-cultural context of the target population was taken into consideration. As highlighted in section 2.7, apology strategies employed are largely determined by the socio-cultural context. The designed DCT questionnaire which has 15 situations is shown in appendix 3A.

The quality of the data collected affects the quality of the results in research (Silverman, 2016). As such, it is important that a designed technique or method be tested or validated before the actual data collection can begin. This can often be done through testing the technique on a few individuals or conducting a pilot test on a small part of the population (Grabowski, 2008; Labben, 2016). The need to validate the DCTs is imperative given the criticism that the method under-represents the construct that it is meant to measure (Grabowski, 2008). Strengthening the design of the DCTs provides one valuable means of improving the construct validity (Labben, 2016). Bax (2013, p. 2) highlights the importance of ‘cognitive validity’ in written DCTs in stating that:

“when we prepare reading tests, it is important to ensure that our tests are valid, and part of a test’s validity involves ensuring that the mental processes of which test-takers use as they

respond are similar to and representative of the mental processes they would use in the target situation in real life – what is known as cognitive validity (Glaser, 1991)”.

In this regard, Labben (2016) suggests that in order to enhance cognitive validity, it is imperative that a researcher explores “the cognitive demands that a DCT places on respondents, hence determine the type of knowledge retrieved when responding to DCTs. It might also be crucial to investigate the question of whether DCTs make use of the same type of pragmatic knowledge accessed by language speakers in real life contexts” (p. 70). The cognitive demands that a DCT places on respondents relates to the “ability to understand and report through writing a pragmalinguistically and sociopragmatically ‘appropriate’ speech act in an artificial situation” (Labben, 2016, p. 72). The aim is to capture as closely as possible the responses that would be obtained in a real-life context whilst acknowledging the differences that exist in the abilities required to respond to a DCT and those abilities used to perform a speech act in a real-life context.

It was in this consideration of strengthening the DCTs that focus groups were conducted before the design of the DCT questionnaire.

### **3.5.2 Focus groups as a pilot study and development of DCT questionnaire**

In order to strengthen the construct of the DCT, focus group technique was employed as a pilot study. This technique was helpful in the development and refinement of the situations included in the DCT. The advantage in adopting focus group technique was that it helped obtain information from a large number of participants within a short period (Silverman, 2016). Also,

because of the socio-cultural context, there is an opportunity within the focus groups for participants to influence one another to give honest opinions and perspectives about the topic (i.e. Saudi apology strategies) (Edley & Litosseliti, 2010). In this respect, the researcher could seek further clarification and could also identify changes in behaviour among participants. Participants could explain further why they felt the way they felt or why they held particular viewpoints. This was useful as it helped in the design of the DCT questionnaires so that the wording was appropriate in capturing the desired speech acts. The use of focus groups to help in developing the DCT questionnaires follows the approach of other studies (e.g. Nelson et al., 2002). Nelson et al. (2002) utilised pre-structured face-to-face interviews with focus groups before creating the DCT questionnaires. Their usage of focus groups was aimed at determining the feasibility of the situations depicted in the DCT questionnaire happening in real life. It was through the evaluation of the focus groups that (Nelson et al., 2002) dropped two situations that they had originally planned for their Egyptian respondents. Thus, the validation process of focus groups does help give insight and built additional context considerations. For instance, even within the same country, regional differences do exist which need to be taken into account besides differences in dialects. In Saudi Arabia, for example, there is a consideration of whether one is using classical Arabic (*Al-arabiyah al-fusha*: ‘the pure Arabia’) (i.e. the most formal dialect of Arabic as used in the Qur’an) or *Al-ammiyyah* (e.g. Hijazi and Najdi) (i.e. the colloquial informal dialect or language of the common people (Miller et al., 2007; Beeston, 2016) .

In total, there were 89 participants in the focus groups. These 89 participants formed the 7 focus groups conducted in Manchester and Nottingham. Three focus groups were conducted in

Manchester and four focus groups were done in Nottingham in the period October 2017 to February 2018. The participants in the focus groups were Saudi Arabian males (42) and females (47) who are currently in the United Kingdom (UK) pursuing their higher education (see Table 1 below). One of the considerations for the choice of this group was the relatively easy accessibility of the participants when compared to other categories (e.g. Saudis in employment). The researcher is a member of this group which made access to participants much easier. A snowball sampling technique was employed. The term 'snowball sampling' follows Dörnyei's (2007) definition, in that 'this involves a 'chain reaction' whereby the researcher identifies a few people who meet the criteria of the particular study and then asks these participants to identify further appropriate members of the population' (ibid.: 980). The participants were sampled through the 'Saudi Community Club' in Nottingham and Manchester, United Kingdom, which provides a valuable 'pool' of Saudis in the UK Higher Education. The focus group sampling criteria include (i) native Saudi Arabic speaker: a participant needs to be a native Saudi Arabic speaker and (ii) different age groups: participants need to be 20 years old and above. While this sample were accessible and fulfilled the objectives of contributing to the development and refinement of DCT situations and identification of apology strategies, the sample is not representative of the Saudi population. The limitation of this sample is that the sample consists of participants from mainly the Higher Education background and they are not representative of the whole Saudi population. Also, their experience of staying in the UK can potentially affect their use of apology strategies.

Invitations were sent out to the members of the club, with an explanation of the purpose of the focus groups, the role of the participants and what was expected of them and how long these would last for.

Table 1: Focus Groups

FOCUS GROUP	MALE	FEMALE	PLACE
Focus Group 1	6	5	Manchester
Focus Group 2	5	7	Manchester
Focus Group 3	6	6	Nottingham
Focus Group 4	6	7	Manchester
Focus Group 5	7	8	Nottingham
Focus Group 6	5	8	Nottingham
Focus Group 7	7	6	Nottingham
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>89</b>

Prior (2018) states that in conducting focus groups, the facilitator needs to describe the ground rules, reemphasise the purpose of the focus group and importantly, make the environment comfortable for participants to discuss. Without an honest and open discursive environment, a researcher may not obtain the information hoped for or information provided might not be reliable.

Further, with respect to selecting questions to be discussed, it was important that careful consideration was made in order that these questions were easily understood, were not biased, and were in the right order. The researcher was able to develop a structure to the questions which built on each other and enabled probing. The key aim was to ensure that questions put to

participants were focused on evaluating the suitability and adequacy of the situations presented in the apology scenarios in the context of Saudi Arabia.

The focus group included open questions to capture different situations in which apology may be used. In the initial process, 30 questions depicting different situations were chosen for discussion in the focus groups. The 30 situations were chosen on the basis of a review of the literature on apology strategies as well as the researcher's own construction. The purpose is to capture different aspects, involving several different types of interlocutors. The situations include interlocutors of different social and cultural context. The 30 questions discussed during the focus groups are reflected in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Focus group situational questions

Que No.	Question
1	You borrowed an umbrella from your best friend, and the wind broke it beyond repair. What would you say (apologise) to your best friend ?
2	You have made plans to go to a concert with your friends; you could not make it and you still owe them money for the ticket. What would you say (apologise) to them?
3	You showed up an hour late for a group trip on mid- semester break. What would you say (apologise) to the students traveling with you?
4	You have borrowed a classmate's homework, submitted yours and failed to return his/hers. What would you say (apologise) ?
5	You didn't show up for a meeting due to a friend's accident. What would you say to the student; who was supposed to meet with you?
6	You borrowed a CD from your roommate and did not return it for three weeks. What would you say (apologise) to him/her?
7	You failed to meet a friend at the hotel due to miscommunication. What would you say (apologise) to him/her?
8	You were playing with your friend's computer and erased the important paper s/he had been working on for the past two weeks. What would you say (apologise) to him/her?
9	You borrowed your brother's/sister's iPad and broke it. What would you say (apologise) to him/her?
10	You cancelled a club meeting and inconvenienced all the members of the club. What would you say (apologise) to them?
11	You have been helping your neighbour, a high school student, with his/her studies for two months now. Your next meeting with him/her is Monday evening. You have an important report on Tuesday and you want to postpone your appointment with your neighbour till Wednesday evening. You say...
12	You are a waiter at restaurant. You spilled food on a customer's clothes. What would you say (apologise) to the customer?
13	You have a job. You borrowed some money from a work colleague and promised to pay it back within a week. Nearly two weeks have passed and you have not been able to pay back your debt. What are you going to tell that colleague?
14	While in the marketplace, you accidentally step on a lady's toe. What are you going to say to her?
15	You forgot to return a book you borrowed from your instructor. What would you say (apologise) to the instructor?
16	You have a job interview with a bank manager. Because of heavy traffic on the road, you arrive 15 minutes late for the interview. What are you going to say to the manager who has been waiting for you?
17	You borrowed a friend's car without telling him/her that you do not have a valid driving licence. You had an accident on the road and the car was badly damaged. How are you going to apologise to your disappointed and angry friend?
18	You were using your brother's CD player and suddenly it fell out of your hand and broke. What would you say (apologise) ?

19	You promised your spouse to go on an outing this weekend, but you broke your promise when you found later that you had some important work to do. What would you say (apologise) to your spouse?
20	You have been abusive towards a close friend and you even used strong language and threatened him/her. That friend is extremely upset and hurt. How are you going to approach him/her?
21	You are a university student. You borrowed a book from your tutor and promised to return it next day. You remember that you have forgotten to bring the book back only when you meet the tutor two days later. What are you going to tell him/her?
22	As you were entering the café, you bumped into the waiter who dropped the platter. - The waiter: Watch out!! – what would you say to the waiter?
23	You had an appointment with your supervisor. You came 1 hour late. - Your supervisor: Why are you so late? What would you say (apologise) ?
24	You promised to help another student with his lessons. The exam period was upon you but you could not find time to keep to your promise. – The student: Why did you not help me? what would you say (apologise) to student?
25	An elderly woman asked you to help her cross the street. You were in a hurry so you ignored her. When you were back home you found out that the elderly woman is your mom’s neighbour and she was talking about it with your mother. - The elderly woman: Why didn’t you help me cross the street? – what would say (apologise) to the elderly woman?
26	Your colleague’s father passed away, but you neither visited nor gave him/her a call to say you were sorry as you did not know about it on time. A few days later your colleague was back to work. - Your colleague: Hi! – What would you say (apologise) to him/her?
27	Imagine you have a daughter. You promised to buy her a doll on your way back from work. You forgot to buy the doll. The girl was extremely disappointed, and she started crying as she saw you back home empty-handed. What would you say to her
28	Ahmad is your 4-year-old nephew. You found him playing with your broken brand-new iPad. You immediately gave him a slap. - Ahmad: It wasn’t me. – What would you say (apologise) to your nephew?
29	You are renting a house with fellow student, the month is over and you could not pay your share. - The landlord: You have not yet paid the rent!! What would you say (apologise) to the land lord?
30	Your best friend (from childhood) was getting married on Thursday. You had arranged to attend the ceremony, but unfortunately your father was hospitalised hours before the ceremony. What would say (apologise) to your best friend?

The analysis of the responses from the above 30 situational questions (see section 3.7.1) contributed to the development of the DCT situations. Those situations judged by focus group participants as not likely to occur in Saudi Arabia contexts were removed.

Then, based on this evaluation, improvements were then made to the revised DCT questionnaire and seventeen situations were removed. Two new situations were added. The resultant 15 apology scenarios formulated in the DCT questionnaire referred to offences of different types and contexts, while at the same time taking the constructs of power relations and social distance into consideration. Brown & Levinson (1987) proposed the consideration of social distance, social power, sex and degree of imposition as key contextual variables in socio-linguistic studies. Social distance and power relations define the relationship between two interlocutors; which in the context of a DCT reflects the relationship “between the character (the hearer) described in a given scenario and the participant filling in the DCT (the speaker)” (Ogiermann, 2018, p. 233). Both the social distance and social power are context-external variables. Locker & Buzard (1990) state that the role of social power in communication involves interlocutors recognising each other’s social position which then affects what is perceived as appropriate and suitable speech acts. Social distance, on the other hand, relates to how well the interlocutors know each other which is essentially the degree of intimacy between the interlocutors (Afghari, 2007; Al-Khaza'leh & Ariff, 2015; Zhang, 2018).

In discussing the appropriateness of scenarios in the Saudi Arabian context, the categories of scenarios considered included: apologising to a friend for being late; to a partner for being violent or unsupportive; and to a manager for not doing the job properly. Further, because the Saudi Arabian cultural norms dictate that males and females be strictly segregated unless they are closely related by blood or marriage, information had to be obtained from male participants using the help of a male facilitator. Thus, a male colleague, familiar with this research’s aims and adopted methodology, acted as the moderator for the male focus groups. An initial meeting with

the male assistant was held in order to go through the process, structure and questions, so as to ensure some consistency in the approach.

As highlighted above, the DCT scenarios must take into consideration a number of important factors, among them: offence type, social power and social distance (Zhang, 2018). The variables for these factors can be represented at different levels. The different levels or categories are: for the offence type (mild or serious), social status/power (low-high; high-low, and equals), and social relationship/distance (close or friend, acquaintances and distant or stranger) (Afghari, 2007; Al-Khaza'leh & Ariff, 2015; Zhang, 2018). These factors are reflected in the situational examples below:

1. You borrowed a book from a friend. As you were walking in the rain, you dropped the book and it got damaged by the rainwater. What would you say to that friend?

In this situation, the offence type is mild, social distance is equals and social relationship is close/friend.

2. You promised to buy your youngest daughter a doll on your way back from work. You forgot to buy the doll. The girl was extremely disappointed, and she started crying as she saw you back home empty-handed. What would you say to her?

In this situation, the offence type is mild, social distance is low-high and social relationship is close.

3. You are a university student. You borrowed a book from your tutor and promised to return it next day. You remember that you have forgotten to bring the book back only when you meet the tutor two days later. What are you going to tell him/her?

In this situation, the offence type is mild, social distance is high-low and social relationship is acquaintance.

A discussion of the 30 different scenarios in the focus groups helped in evaluating the appropriateness of the selected scenarios in the Saudi Arabian context. The underlying aim was to ensure that the DCT technique would provide the means for exploring the types of apology strategies Saudis adopt in different contexts or situations, and also, in determining whether males and females employ similar or different strategies. Further, in using the DCT technique, determining what constitutes an effective apology in the Saudi culture context could be established. Thus, in light of the information obtained from the participants, the necessary improvements to the initial draft of the DCT questionnaire was made.

Further, in speech act realisations, the exact response of the offended party would be the most ideal and reliable source of information (Kasper, 2009; Zhang, 2018) Some techniques, such as role-play (i.e. performing the apology and response acts) have been suggested as closer to depicting the naturally occurring speech act (Reiter, 2000; Parvaresh & Tavakoli, 2009). Parvaresh & Tavakoli (2009), in their identification of six types of DCTs outline that role play DCT is but one form. Others include written discourse completion task (WDCT) (the type used in this study), multiple choice question discourse completion task (MDCT), oral discourse

completion task, discourse self-assessed task (DSAT) and role play self-assessment (RPSA) (Parvaresh & Tavakoli, 2009). The researcher had initially planned for a role play DCT, however, cultural and time constraints made it impractical. The relative disadvantage of role play is that they are not easy to set up and would require additional training for participants who are often unfamiliar with the technique, in addition to the use of more than one research assistant (Reiter, 2000; Parvaresh & Tavakoli, 2009; Félix-Brasdefer, 2018). Thus, another research method that could help address the research questions was adopted: semi-structured interviews. The would be based on the initial findings from the DCT data analysis.

### **3.5.3 Semi-structured Interviews**

Interview method has been widely used in sociolinguistic studies (Gillham, 2000; Heigham & Croker, 2009; Hinkel, 2011; Prior, 2018). As a common research method in qualitative studies, interviews<sup>6</sup> are generally useful for providing an understanding of the meaning individuals ascribe to their experience and for unravelling complexities surrounding significant social changes (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002). The method is useful in gaining access to participants' backgrounds, self-reported actions, opinions, thoughts, beliefs or interpretations (Heigham & Croker, 2009). Thus, it helps in providing some deeper understanding of the participants and their perceptions of phenomenon, in this case speech acts of apology and responses to these apologies. In the same vein, Mey (2001, p. 113) argues that the use of interviews with other methods (DCT in this study) in a research helps in clearing the way for the researcher to enquire

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<sup>6</sup> Interviews could be structured, semi-structured or unstructured/open-ended. Structured interviews with predetermined and standard questions are generally used in large-scale surveys. In contrast, unstructured interviews are completely informal where the interviewees are allowed to talk freely. The semi-structured interviews lie between the structured and unstructured interviews (Saunders et al., 2012, p. 243)

about the participants' opinions or conceptions of certain social phenomenon whether as a whole or only particular aspects of the social behaviour in specific situations. The advantage is that it provides an opportunity to understand further participants' real perceptions or views; useful insight for exploring the underlying factors that influence such perceptions.

As highlighted in section 1.1 and 2.2, apology is a culture-specific phenomenon particularly since offence is a violation of social norms ( Mills & Kádár, 2011; Haugh & Chang, 2019), as such, the researcher has adopted the interview method as an integral part of the mixed methods research approach in order to obtain cultural specific knowledge about apology phenomenon from the participants (Hinkel, 2011). As there are several types of interviews (Saunders et al., 2012), the specific type used in this study is semi-structured interviews. This involves the use of an interview guide (see appendix 4) to direct the direction of the interviews whilst allowing the interviewees more freedom to talk (Saunders et al., 2012). Olshtain & Cohen (1994, p. 271) define semi-structured interviews as “a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the sake of obtaining research relevant data, and focused by him (or her) on content specified by research objectives of a systematic description or explanation”. In this respect, the interviewer directs the interview process in order that the research objectives are achieved. The interview guide or schema helps in facilitating this. The questions are flexible enough to help the researcher obtain more details from the respondents which could also lead to the researcher coming across unexpected or new explorations. For instance, interviewees were asked questions such as: in your choice of apology, did you consider the person that you were apologizing to? How did the offence itself affect how you apologized? Why did you respond the way you did? (see appendix 4). As such, interviews can be perceived as “conversations with a purpose”

(Burgess, 2002, p. 102) conducted in order to discover knowledge, experiences and perspectives of participants. Thus, the method is helpful in getting more in-depth information in addition to providing the opportunity to seek clarification from interviewees on their perceptions which contributes to more accurate interpretations of the findings (Heigham & Croker, 2009).

### **3.5.3.1 The rationale for adopting the semi-structured interview method**

The key strength in the use of semi-structured interviews in this study is that it aided exploring in further detail the different social-cultural factors that affect apology strategies and responses to apologies. The socio-cultural factors, including personal factors, such as gender, educational background, age, social distance and class, power, could be explored much deeper than could be obtained from questionnaire method. Thus, through semi-structured interviews, the researcher aimed to understand further the different constructs to apology and the underlying factors that affect such constructs. In addition, aspects such as guilt and shame, are relatively hard to extract from stand-alone questionnaires (Feghali, 1997; El Alaoui et al., 2018). This is because these aspects are deeply engraved in participants' persona. As discussed in section 2.5, there is an aspect of outward orientation in shame whilst guilt has an inward orientation (Wong & Chung, 2007). The element associated with an inward focus and an epiphenomenon of a self-defensive mode (Gilbert, 2003) are intricately difficult to extract. Semi-structured interviews provide an avenue to explore such aspects.

Further, it could be argued that an interview technique provides a more effective way to elicit information than natural conversation because of the role of the interviewer in the interview

process who plays a key role in controlling and guiding the interaction towards the research objectives. This argument supports the perspective of interviews as conversations with a purpose (Burgess, 2002) which allow researchers to discover (often hidden) knowledge, experiences and perspective of interviewees. The integrated role of the researcher is key as there is direct contact with the interviewees which provides an avenue to reveal implicit feelings, attitudes and understanding (Gray, 2019) of the participants. This is what makes interviews an appropriate technique in exploratory studies in particular (Saunders et al., 2012). Thus, contrary to natural conversations where the researcher has no role in guiding or controlling events as he/she is limited to observing the interactions, the interviews help in achieving the research objectives more explicitly.

Furthermore, there is opportunity to repeat the interview process with different individuals as compared to natural conversations which occur by chance. In this respect, the interview method was guided by the interview schedule in repeating the interview process with different interviewees in order to address the research objectives. As a purposeful conversation, the direction of the interviews was to understand in detail the apology strategies, responses to apologies and how guilt and shame are part of the apology phenomenon. Thus, the rationale for the use of semi-structured interviews is that the frequency and repetition of the events (interviews) is guaranteed which is not possible in authentic speech. The different socio-cultural aspects and their effect on apology was also explored further during the interviews.

The advantage of interviews is that unlike in DCT, the researcher has an opportunity to observe face to face, the participants' feelings and attitudes (in the performance of speech act) and their

views on particular aspects (e.g. guilt and shame) which are largely unobtainable using quantitative methods. The method provides a means to access interviewees' world of understanding, perception or interpretations of specific social behaviour or experiences. This requires the interviewer to be both active and sensitive; to show understanding and demonstrate a careful attitude particularly that cultural norms are intricate in the case of Saudi Arabia. In addition, an interviewer must be a good listener (Murchison, 2010) as this is one attribute that encourages the interviewees to speak more openly and be interactive in the conversation. The researcher has developed these skills and also the ability to build good relationship with the prospective respondents. Spradley (2016, p. 34) amply depicts the role of the interviewer in stating that:

“by word and by action, in subtle ways and in direct statements, (researchers) say, “I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you would explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand?”

This approach was adopted by the researcher in conducting the interviews on apology and response to apology strategies in Saudi Arabia.

### **3.5.3.1 Criticism of the semi-structured interview method**

Among the criticisms of the semi-structured interview method is the position of the researcher in the interview process (Bryman, 2016). There is an inherent problem of researcher bias, poor recall and poor or inaccurate articulation of interviewees' data. This raises the need to establish 'trustworthiness' (Huberman & Miles, 2002) of the interpretations of interviewees' views or perceptions. In this respect, Kvale (2008, p. 120) argues that these issues go “beyond technical or

conceptual concerns and raise epistemological questions of objectivity of knowledge and the nature of interview research”. Obtaining trustworthy and valid data using a qualitative interview technique is thus both subjective and disputable. Therefore, Kvale (2008, p. 121) suggests that a researcher must continuously check, question and theorise the data set and subsequent analysis in order to maintain a “continual process of validation” that permeates the whole research process.

Further, in the interview process, there is a possibility of change in the behaviour of the interviewees resulting from the intrusion of the researcher. Buckley, Buckley, & Chiang (1976) argue that the interviewer’s race, religion, gender, age and social class can have an undesired effect on the interview process. Thus, an important consideration in this respect is the positionality of the researcher which suggest that power relations enter into the interview process (Sands, Bourjolly, & Roer-Strier, 2007). An interviewer’s education (in the researcher’s case, a PhD student) can easily intimidate the interviewees (Hill, 2004). Also, there is a likelihood that what the interviewees say could be influenced by previous contributions to the mutually constructed conversation by the interviewer (Drever, 1995). As a result, there could be some inconsistency among interviews conducted leading to less comparability, and thus affecting data analysis.

Gaining access to the interviewees is another limitation that could be faced in the interview method particularly where cultural barriers, such as the case in Saudi Arabia, exist. Gaining voluntary participation becomes potentially challenging in such context and thus, both formal and informal channels are necessary (Shah, 2004). There are generally two factors that should be the focus of interviewers in aiming to obtain more natural responses from the interviewees.

These are (i) the respondents' willingness to participate and (ii) the respondents' freedom to talk or answer freely. Patton (1990) argues that to have natural responses from interviewees is largely influenced by the interviewer. Thus, the role of the interviewer in the process becomes even greater. The use of consent forms and an interview guide that uses open-ended questions could help address some of these limitations.

Further, whilst the interview method can be used to gain a deeper understanding of the apology phenomenon and the factors that influence this social act, the results obtained from this process are largely not generalisable (Saunders et al., 2012). This is particularly the case as the number of participants in interviews is smaller than in quantitative methods in order to gain the deeper understanding. In this respect Kvale (2008, p. 127) argues that qualitative research does not aim for analytical generalisability but instead should give 'reader based' opportunities for generalisability whereby the reader "on the basis of detailed contextual descriptions of an interview study, judges whether the findings may be generalised to a new situation".

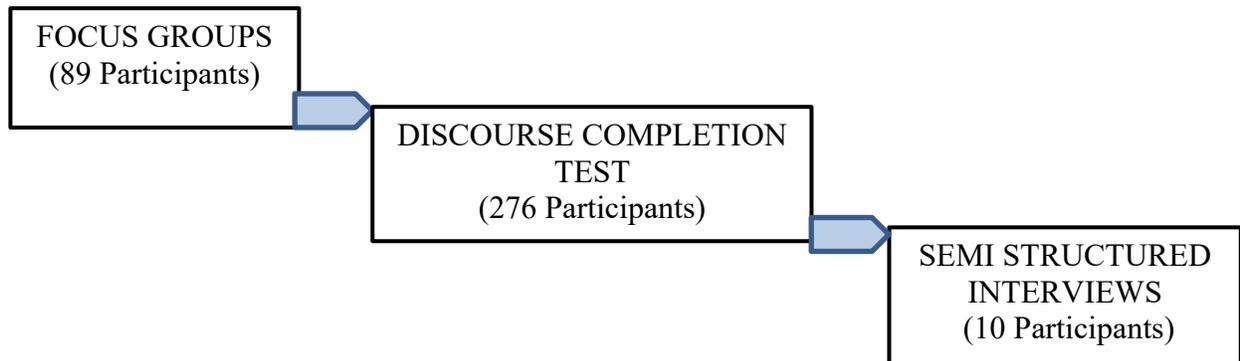
Despite these criticisms/limitations of the interview method, it provides a valuable technique for data collection, complementing the DCT method. The combined use of DCT and semi-structured interviews provides some complementing advantages which help the achievement of the research objectives of this study.

### **3.6 Data collection**

Employing the research methods above, the process of data collection followed is depicted in Figure 3 below. The first stage of the data collection process involved the conducting of focus

groups. As discussed in section 3.5.2, there were 7 focus groups involving 89 participants; 42 male and 47 females. The data gained from the focus groups helped to develop and refine the questionnaire for the DCT. This was necessary in order to design an appropriate DCT questionnaire that is relevant to the Saudi Arabian context. Thus, after the focus groups, it was important for the researcher to take time and reflect on data that the method had enabled to be obtained. This reflection was necessary as it would shape the subsequent data collection, analysis and interpretations. The opportunity to reflect on the researcher’s engagement with the focus group participants is in essence a “window of self-examination” (Davies, 2012, p. 127). This process contributes to research validity (see section 3.8)

Figure 3: Data collection process



Whilst the first phase of focus groups was conducted in United Kingdom, the next phases had to be conducted in Saudi Arabia. Apology is context specific (Roberts, 2018; Geurts, 2019) and since the focus is on Saudis, this had to be done within Saudi Arabia. A non-probabilistic sampling technique, snowball sampling approach, was adopted. Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling in which participants meet the desired traits (i.e. sampling criteria), and where participants provide useful referrals to recruit other participants in the research study

(Goodman, 1961). The underlying aim was to capture Saudi participants of different age groups and gender, in order to obtain a reasonable sample that could help capture apology and response speech act. Goodson & Sikes (2001) argue that accessibility is one of the challenges that researchers might face during fieldwork. In order to overcome this challenge, a snowballing sampling method (Noy, 2008) was employed. This involved utilising both formal and informal networks in order to recruit participants for the DCT in Riyadh City, Saudi Arabia. In applying the snowball sampling, the sampling criteria used was (i) native Saudi Arabic speaker; (ii) different age groups and (iii) different educational backgrounds.

The participants were recruited from academic (Higher Education institutions) and non-academic institutions. The academic institutions were particularly helpful in recruiting the younger age groups (mostly less than 20 years) whilst the non-academic institutions were most useful for capturing the older age groups. The initial aim was to target 350 participants, however, only 300 participants in total took part. Among the 300 responses, 24 were discarded as unsuitable for analysis, thereby remaining with 276 valid responses. The number of valid DCT responses is sufficient to capture apology strategies and response strategies in the 15 scenarios of the DCT. Participants had to complete a consent form before completing the test and some general background information (i.e. gender, age range) were also solicited. The DCT is written in Arabic reflecting the 15 situations for easy understanding. The English translated version is shown in appendix 3A. Further, as highlighted in section 3.5.2, there is strict gender segregation between male and female in Saudi Arabia. As such, in order to administer the DCT to male participants, a male assistant was used. This male assistant has conducted such tasks before and thus, it was easier to relate and highlight the research objectives to him. In total, 136 males and

140 females, chosen based on their education background and age group, took part. The participants categorised in terms of age are shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: DCT participants

Age range	Group	
	Male	Female
50 and over	25	28
40-49	28	26
30-39	30	30
20-29	28	30
Under 20	25	26
Total	136	140

The initial data analysis of the DCT fed into the next phase of the data collection process. Developing on the initial DCT findings, semi-structured interviews were conducted. These were conducted in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. In gaining access to the interviewees, both formal and informal channels were utilised applying a snow-balling technique (Titscher, 2000) as these participants were also involved in the DCT process. Thus, convenience sampling technique was used, based on the criteria of (i) native Saudi Arabia speaker, (ii) having taken part in the DCTs and (iii) agreed to be interviewed. Before fully rolling the interviews, it was important to test the appropriateness of the interview questions, developed based on the initial DCT results, in soliciting the desired results for the achievement of the research aims. As such, a pilot test interview on 2 respondents was conducted in Riyadh. Some refinements were then made to the interview questions in the interview guide (see appendix 4) based on this short pilot test. A pilot study is meant to prepare for the main or final study (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001) by using a small sample of the population. It helps in improving the design of the research techniques and for checking their viability or fitness to the overall study (Baker, 1999). In total, 10 interviews were conducted. The interviews lasted between 15-45 minutes. Further, in line with the

university ethics policy, consent forms were signed by each interviewee before the interview began. The interviews were conducted in Arabic, with notes also being taken during the interview. The researcher aimed to conduct face to face interviews. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic affecting movements, this was impractical. Therefore, online interviews were conducted. The interviews were recorded and subsequently transcribed. The interviewee details are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Interviewee details

<b>Interviewee No.</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age group</b>	<b>Education level</b>
1	M	20-29	Bachelor's degree
2	M	40-49	Bachelor's degree
3	F	50 and over	Master's degree
4	M	Under 20	High School
5	M	30-39	PhD
6	F	Under 20	High School
7	F	20-29	Tertiary
8	F	30-39	Bachelor's degree
9	F	40-49	Master's degree
10	M	Over 50	Bachelor's degree

In addition, throughout the research process, the researcher kept a detailed research log, taking notes and reflecting on the research process. The strength of the research process is enhanced by reflexivity and transparency of the researcher (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Transparency is promoted through providing a detailed description of the research design and process, which can form a reference for future research to use (Shenton, 2004). This is complemented by the detailed research log kept which provides a form of audit trail that increases the research validity.

It also improves the transparency of the research process as these can be inspected, whilst maintaining confidentiality and anonymity.

As highlighted, the main challenge encountered by the researcher in the research process was the cultural barrier of direct engagement with the male participants. In order to overcome this access barrier at each stage of the research process, a male colleague (assistant) was sought. Whilst this overcame the cultural barrier, the inherent limitations of using research assistants (or any person different from the researcher) should be acknowledged. Particularly, the general lack of consistency in the detailed approach taken during the implementation of the research methods (Deane & Stevano, 2016) to the male respondents/participants. A discussion with the male assistant of the detailed process to be followed and the recording of the proceedings helped in overcoming this limitation.

### **3.7 Data analysis**

#### **3.7.1 Analysis of focus group data and development of DCT situations**

The first step in the analysis of focus group data was (i) the evaluation of the suitability of situations in the Saudi Arabian context and (ii) the appropriateness of such situations to the underlying research objectives. In this context, 30 situations were evaluated, adopting a similar approach to Nelson et al. (2002). It's important to reiterate that the development of the 30 situational questions for focus group discussion was influenced by apology strategies and taxonomies reviewed in the literature; in particular, the taxonomy developed by (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983) that has influenced several other studies (Deutschmann, 2003; Demeter, 2006;

Humeid, 2013; Banikalef et al., 2015; Chen, Hsiao, & Hsu, 2015; Cedar, 2017; Haugh & Chang, 2019). The underlying aim is for the situations to assist in eliciting apology speech acts and responses to apology to hypothesised offences in different situations.

### **3.7.1.1 Characterising the DCT situations**

The final DCT questionnaire comprised of 15 situations that were designed to assist in eliciting apology speech acts and responses to apology to hypothesised offences in different situations and contexts. These 15 situations are analysed in detail in order to give more context to the DCT analysis performed. The 15 DCT situations can be characterised in terms of the type of offence, the severity of the offence, the type of participants, the nature of the relationship between the participants which also affects their social power relationship and social distance. Inherently, these reflect the social and contextual variables that are built into the design of the DCT.

There are several types of offences to which apology speech acts would have to be given. Through the focus groups, different types of offences were discussed, and thereafter, the common or typical offences identified. The offence types discussed and identified during the focus groups were related to time (T), space (S), social commitment (SC), possession damage (PD), socio-religious commitment (SR). For instance, the focus group discussion resulted in the identification of the 30 situations in terms of offence types as shown in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Offence types

<b>Type of offence</b>	<b>Observed in the 30 situations</b>
Time related offence	7
Space related offence	4
Social commitment related offence	8
Possession damage offence	7
Social and religious commitment related offence	3
Talk	1
Total	30

Of all the 30 situations, the most common offences are related to social commitment, possession damage and time. Identifying the offence types was useful in the evaluation process in order to remove situations that were relatively common or similar (e.g. relating to the same offence type).

The aim in designing the 15 situations was to be able to capture as many different types of offences as possible. The literature identifies different types of offences related to talk, time, space, social gaffe, inconvenience, possession, physical damage, among others (Holmes, 1995; Deutschmann, 2003; Jacobson et al., 2004; Shahrokhi & Jan, 2012; Tahir & Pandian, 2016). In general, literature suggests that the type of apology is usually determined by the nature and severity of the offence committed. As such, the aim of identifying the type of offence and its severity in the situations was to give more context and also to undertake further analysis. The types of offences identified in the 15 situations relate to time (T), space (S), social commitment (SC), possession damage (PD), socio-religious commitment (SR). Drawing on (Holmes, 1995), the severity of the offences has been identified as either light (L) or severe (S) following the focus group discussions. In this respect, the final 15 situations in the DCT questionnaire were

discussed in the focus group to help in the classification of severity as applied to the Saudi Arabian context. In doing this, some consensus was reached among the focus group participants regarding their perspective on the severity of the offence. The importance of this characteristic aspect arises from the understanding that apology is highly influenced by the degree of imposition of the offence (Cohen, 1984; Kasper, 1992; Holmes, 1995; Jones, 2017; Bashir et al., 2018) in which light offences have low imposition whilst severe offences have high imposition. This classification, however, should be seen as not evaluating the level of transgression, but instead, as an attempt to describe and compare types of offences from each other.

Further, as discussed in section 2.7.2, the social power and social distance are two key factors that have an influence on apology strategies. The social power (P) in this case highlights the perceived extent or degree to which a speaker can impose his or her will on their interlocutor (Spencer-Oatey, 2000; Kiger, 2004). Social distance, on the other hand, indicates the degree of familiarity and frequency of interaction between two interlocutors (Byon, 2004). In other words, the social distance reflects how well the speaker and hearer know one another while the social power relates to the relative social dominance of one of the interlocutors on the other person. These two aspects form an important facet of cultural distinctions (Chang, 2008; Mills & Kádár, 2011) and thus, the interest to analyse them in this study. The social power between the interlocutors in the situations was categorised as either high (HP), equal (EP) or low (LP) whilst the social distance is categorised at three levels of high (HD) for strangers, medium (MD) for acquaintances and low (LD) for friends. This categorisation is consistent with several other studies (Mills, 2003; Stadler & Stöltzner, 2006; Chang, 2008; Félix-Brasdefer, 2008; Hodeib, 2019). As discussed in section 2.7.2, one of the discussion topics in the focus group was the

classifications of the (sub)categories of social power, social distance and severity of offence. For example, although social distance can arguably be perceived as a continuum, the utilisation of focus groups helped to improve the process of characterising the DCT situations, reducing the researcher's bias or subjectivity in making these distinctions. This forms an important part of data validity (see detailed discussion of data validity in section 3.8). As in the previous studies, the variables of social power and social distance are built into the design of the DCTs.

Thus, utilising the different means of characterising the DCT situations, the 15 situations characterised based on type of offence, severity of offence, social power and social distance are summarised in Table 6 below. For instance, in situation 1, this involved postponing a meeting with interlocutors being a teacher and a student. In this situation, the social power is high (HP), the social distance is medium (MD), the type of offence relates to time (T) whilst the severity of the offence is low (L).

Table 6: Characteristics of the DCT situations

Situation No.	Description (interlocutors)	Type of Offence*	Severity of Offence**	Social Power (P)***	Social Distance (D)****
S1	Postponing Meeting (Teacher vs Student)	T	L	HP	MD
S2	Damaged book (Friend vs Friend)	SC	H	EP	LD
S3	Promise to daughter (Parent vs Child)	SC	L	HP	LD
S4	Borrowed book (Student vs Tutor)	T	H	HP	MD
S5	Bag falling on passenger (Stranger vs Stranger)	S	H	EP	HD
S6	Damaged your friend car while driving without license (Friend vs Friend)	PD, SR	H	EP	LD
S7	Wrong bill given to customer (Manager vs Customer)	SC	H	HP	HD
S8	Accidentally stepping on a lady's toe (Stranger vs Stranger)	S, PD	L	EP	HD
S9	Upset and hurt a close friend (Close friend vs Close friend)	SC	H	EP	LD
S10	Late for job interview (New employee vs Boss)	T	H	HP	HD
S11	Unable to repay debt (Work colleague vs Work colleague)	T, SC	H	EP	MD
S12	Failed to submit report to manager before due date (Employee vs Manager)	T	L	HP	MD
S13	Wrongly given cup of coffee with sugar to diabetic friend (Friend vs Friend)	SC	L	EP	LD
S14	Your child breaks a valuable vase in your friends' house (Mother vs New friend)	PD	H	EP	LD
S15	Missed student appointment due to another urgent meeting (Teacher vs Student)	T	L	HP	MD

\* Type of offence are related to time (T), space (S), social commitment (SC), possession damage (PD), socio-religious commitment (SR); \*\*Severity of offence can be low (L) or high (H); \*\*\*Social Power can be Equal (EP), High (HP), Low (LP); \*\*\*\*Social Distance (D) can be High (HD), Medium (MD), Low (LD)

The focus group data analysis, which helped in identifying apology strategies, is discussed next.

### **3.7.1.2 Identification of apology strategies**

The data obtained from the focus group, as addressed earlier, was useful in validating the situations in the DCT questionnaire. Another critical step of the focus group was to identify the possible apology strategies.

Thus, in the analysis of the pilot focus group data, the initial step was to test the categories of the apology strategies. Following Olshtain & Cohen (1981, 1983) and Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984), the apology strategies were first analyzed based on six main strategies: an expression of apology, explanation or account, taking or acknowledgment of responsibility, concern for the hearer, offer of repair, promise of non-recurrence. However, there are some strategies that can be clustered as a broader concept of ‘category’ based on their shared functions (Mulamba, 2011). These broader strategies are more than the choice of words and are thus classified as ‘categories’ in this study. For instance, an expression of apology is a ‘category’ while the strategies within this category are ‘an offer of apology’, ‘an expression of regret’ and ‘a request for forgiveness’. This conceptualisation is consistent with other studies such as Banikalef et al. (2015) and Alsulayyi (2016). This classification is important to identify choices of words in speech act which are closely linked. This aids analysis of apology strategies in relatively close situations (Cedar, 2017). This type of classification can also be seen in Cohen & Olshtain’s (1981) identification of semantic formulas (drawing on Fraser’s 1980) and subformulas within the semantic formula (see section 2.2). In this case, an expression of apology is the category

(semantic formulae) which is divided into three apology strategies (subformulas) of an expression of regret, an offer of apology and a request for forgiveness.

A closer examination of the data revealed three new apology strategies that could not fit into the six categories. The word 'new' is used here because they are different from the key literature in the area, namely, Cohen & Olshtain (1981). These related to pride and ignorance, blame something else and religious term, which will be discussed further in the analysis of focus group data (page. 125-127). These three strategies were also mentioned in other non-Western studies, such as Banikalef & Marlyna (2013), who identified arrogance and ignorance, blame something else and swearing in Jordanian Arabic. The detailed results from the data analysis process from the pilot focus groups is discussed later in this section.

The analysis of the data obtained from the 7 focus groups revealed some expressions of apology that were identified as mainly expressing regret, acceptance of responsibility and an offer of repair.

- *Expressing regret* – this was the most common occurring strategy applied by the Saudi participants in the focus group (18.6%). The percentages are drawn on the counts or frequencies of the apology strategies identified. The apology strategies are often composed of more than one word (e.g. I am very sorry). This finding supports the general tendency addressed in other studies (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2008; Alfattah, 2010;), in that apologies are often explicit.

Within the apology strategy of 'expressing regret', the main use is "I am sorry". This appeared in sentences such as:

“I am sorry, I cannot be there”

“Sorry, I will take you tonight”

“I am so sorry! I promise I will buy you the present”

“I am sorry, I will fix the mistake”

- *The acceptance of responsibility* – this strategy came as the second most frequent strategy, accounting for 17.2%, while *denial of responsibility* strategy accounted for only 2.1% of the total responses. The key themes identified for acceptance of responsibility included expressions such as:

“It was my fault, I am sorry”

“My mistake, I should have known better”

“I am sorry, it’s my fault for not checking”

Among the expressions identified for denial of responsibility strategy were comments such as:

“It’s not like me to be late, but it was out of my control”

“My apologies, I was stuck in traffic, that’s why I am late”

“I did not intend to be late, my mother needed me”

In this theme, it is common to reference to something else as causing the problem, in which the interlocutor infers as beyond their control.

- *An offer of repair* – this was the third frequently used apology strategy 12.3%, followed by ‘*an explanation or accounts*’ strategy which occurred with a proportion of 8.7%. This is when the apologiser might feel that he or she needs to *offer repair* after apologising.

In analysing the apologies, under the offer of repair theme were expressions such as:

“I’m very sorry, I will get you another one”

“Sorry, can we reschedule?”

“My apology, I will fix the problem”

In addition, there are three distinctive apology strategies that became evident from the analysis of the data. These are pride and ignorance, blame something else and use of religious terms.

- *Pride and ignorance* - this strategy was resorted to by the speaker when he or she responded directly without any concern or respect to the hearer. However, in some cases the speaker who has committed the offence may not perceive himself/herself as guilty. As a result, he or she does not feel that it is important to apologise. In brief, this strategy is recognised when the offender does not acknowledge his or her responsibility of the offence. The followings are some examples of the new apology strategy from the study data:

“I did not finish speaking yet”

This example shows that the speaker uses her/his pride and does not accept the hearer to interrupt him/her. Another example of an expression that demonstrates pride is:

“Change my order, I do not want it”

In this example, the speaker displays his/her intention to apologising to the hearer..

- *Blame something else* – this strategy reflects how the offender tries to lessen responsibility when he or she uses a “blaming” strategy that shows his or her declaration of committing the offence but at the same time denying responsibility by placing blame on others. Examples from the data are:

“...I had a stomach-ache”

“...when I want to see you, strange things happen”

- *Use of religious terms* - this strategy is one of the specific strategies that is deeply rooted in the culture and the religious beliefs of the Saudis. This apology strategy has been categorized as ‘religious considerations’ reflecting the socio-cultural and religious context of Saudi Arabia. This strategy can be considered as a separate layer, but it can also be combined with other strategies in order to increase the emotional commitment involved in the utterance. Swearing in the name of Allah (e.g. *Wallahi*, I swear to God) is a common routine feature which takes place in most types of speech acts in Arabic contexts (Mey, 2001; Al-Adaileh, 2007). It is used extensively in apology. Thus, use of religious terms intensify the confirmation of truth among interlocutors, particularly among speakers of Muslim background. It is often perceived as “he or she is honest in apologizing”. Examples from the study data include:

- “..I swear I did not mean it...”

- “...by God, it was out of my hand..”

As the focus group data suggests, 4.2% of all the apologies were *pride and ignorance*. It was often used in the situations when the hearer has higher status than the speaker. This was followed

by the expression of *blame something else* (3.2%). This was often used when the offender tried to reduce the seriousness of the offence and at the same time to save his/her face. The last new strategy, *use of religious terms*, occurred with a frequency of 3.1%.

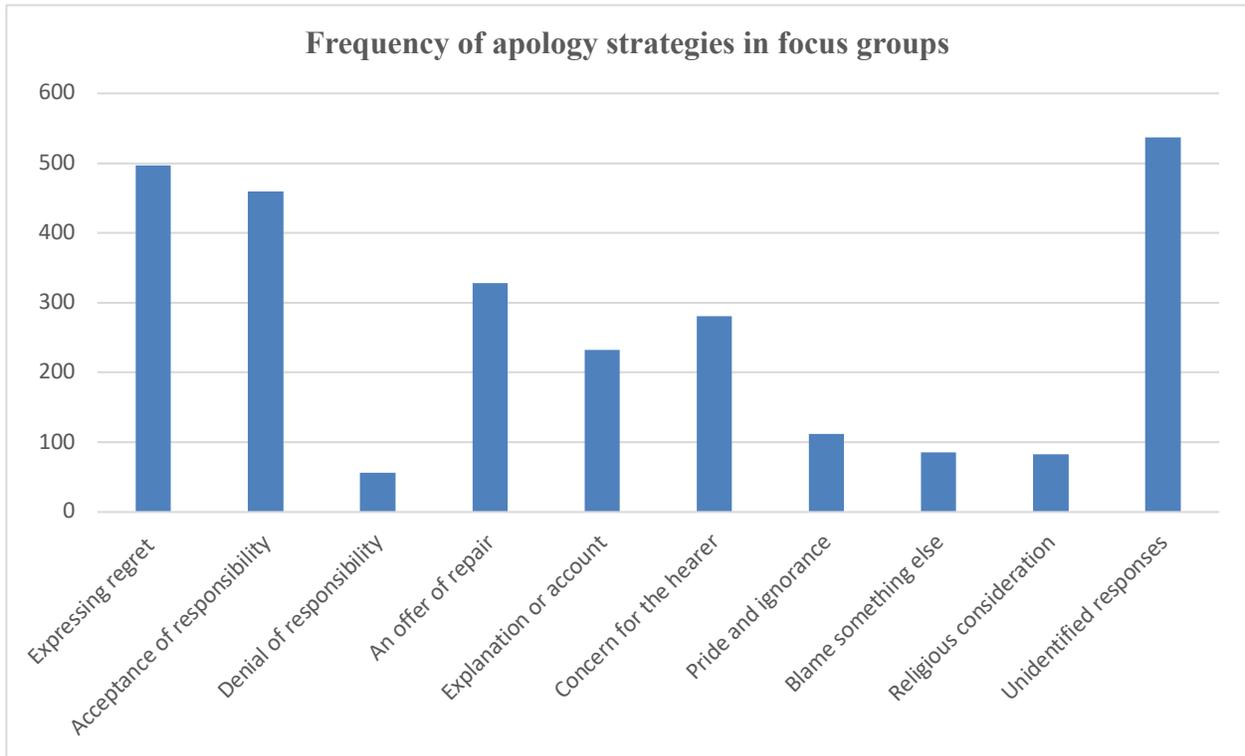
The results of the apology strategies identified in the focus group data are summarised in Table 7 below and graphically depicted in Figure 4 below.

Table 7: Summary of focus group apology strategy analysis

Apology strategy	Frequency	Percentage
Expressing regret	417	18.60%
Acceptance of responsibility	459	17.20%
Denial of responsibility	56	2.10%
An offer of repair	328	12.30%
Explanation or account	232	8.70%
Concern for the hearer	280	11%
Pride and ignorance	112	4.20%
Blame something else	85	3.20%
Use of religious terms	83	3.10%
Unidentified responses	622	20.10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,675</b>	<b>100%</b>

The frequencies represent the counted number of apology strategies in their raw numbers.

Figure 4: Frequencies of apology strategies in the focus group



This figure shows the number of apology strategies counted from the focus groups. It graphically depicts the results shown in Table 7.

The next section discusses the coding system used in order to facilitate for the DCT analysis. As the focus group was intended as a pilot study, it has contributed to redefine the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) questions as well as identifying the apology strategies.

### 3.7.2 Coding the apology strategies

In order to facilitate for further investigation of the strategies, the researcher allocated a code to each apology strategy. These strategies were coded from A1 to I. This classification has been adopted in other studies such as Jebahi (2011), Banikalef & Marlyna (2013), Banikalef et al. (2015) and Huwari (2018). Importantly, these apology strategies (pride and ignorance, blame

something else and use of religious terms) are distinct apology strategies, separate from other apology strategies, as addressed in the previous section. These strategies have also been identified in other Arabic contexts (e.g. Banikalef & Marlyna, 2013; Banikalef et al., 2015). Further, drawing on Olshtain & Cohen (1989), the intensification of the apology had to be determined. The apology strategies and their codes are shown in Table 8 below. These codes form the basis for the DCT analysis of the data presented in chapter four.

Table 8: Apology strategies and their codes

Category	Code	Strategy	Example
An expression of apology	A1	An offer of apology	I apologise
	A2	An expression of regret	I am sorry
	A3	A request for forgiveness	Forgive me
Explanation or account	B	Explanation or account	The bus was late/ The traffic was terrible
Taking or Acknowledgment of responsibility	C1	Explicit self-blame	It is all my fault, I apologize
	C2	Lack of intent	I did not mean to interrupt you.
	C3	Expression of self-deficiency	I couldn't get all the money in time; so please give me more time
	C4	Expression of embarrassment	I am so embarrassed, so sorry I forgot your book
	C5	Self-dispraise	I can't believe I did that
	C6	Justifying the hearer	I didn't get it for you because I wanted you to choose it yourself
	C7	Denial of the responsibility	"It wasn't my fault"
Concern for the hearer	D	Concern for the hearer.	Are you alright, sorry
Offer of repair	E	Offer of repair.	"Let me clean it up."
Promise of non-recurrence	F	Promise of forbearance.	"It won't happen again."
<b>Newly identified strategies in non-Western contexts</b>			
Pride and ignorance	G	Pride and ignorance	"Change my order, I do not want it"
Blame something else	H	Blame something else	"...when I want to see you, strange things happen"
Religious considerations	I	Use of religious terms	"..Wallahi, it was out of my hand.."

Coding the apology strategies (and response strategies) forms an important step in the data

analysis process. The first step in the data analysis process was the identification of apology (and response) strategies for each participant and for each situation. An extract of this step is shown in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Coding of apology (and response) strategies

<b>Situation No.</b>			<b>S1*</b>	
<b>Participant No.</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Apology</b>	<b>Response</b>
<b>P1</b>	<b>F</b>	Under 20	regarding our appointment next Monday, I apologise for not being able to attend due to educational circumstances, is it possible to reschedule a more suitable time?	no problem, anytime, God bless you
<b>Strategy (Code)</b>	F	Under 20	A1, B	E, G

\*S1 stands for situation one

The second step required is to code the strategies in each situation (see Table 10 below). Microsoft Excel was used to code the strategies. Following this second step is the calculation of each apology strategy in each situation performed by the participants. It is from the calculation of the frequencies of apology strategies and response strategies that the subsequent analysis could be carried out, such as a frequency analysis of apology strategies and response by gender and age groups. The frequencies of the apology and response strategies were then exported to the statistical software, namely, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), for further statistical analysis.

In order to perform quantitative analysis in SPSS, three categories of variables (binary, nominal

and ordinal) were considered. Gender can be considered<sup>7</sup> a binary variable whilst age and social distance and power, as ordinal variables. The frequencies/counts were nominal variables for statistical analysis purposes; these are non-negative values. In statistics, binary variables are variables which can only take two values (e.g., male or female); nominal data is a group of non-parametric variables, while ordinal data is a group of non-parametric ordered variables (Woods et al., 1986).

In performing statistical analysis, Pearson's correlation, T-test and ANOVA tests were used. These tests were employed in order to identify possible statistical relationships. The choice of each statistical method consist of their underlying assumptions. For example, using parametric tests (Pearson, T-test and ANOVA) is mainly because of the decision on which apology strategy or response strategy that speakers choose to use in any situation is perceived as independent of the choice for any situations. In addition, the choice of each participant is perceived as independent of the choice of apology/response strategies of other participants. Independence of observations is one of the key assumptions when performing parametric tests (Woods et al., 1986). In other words, the apology or response words of one participant is regarded as independent of another i.e. the participants do not influence each other in choice of words used. The apology or response words of one participant is regarded as independent of another i.e. the participants do not influence each other in choice of words used. When comparison is made between males and females, Pearson correlation and T-test are used. The assumption is that the two groups are independent of each other. Further, in ANOVA testing, there is an assumption that all samples are independent and that there is homogeneity of variances (Rietveld & Van

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<sup>7</sup>Although this study consider gender as a binary variable, the research acknowledge that gender can be regarded as 'fluid' in the study of gender and language studies.

Hout, 2010). In order to test this assumption, the Games-Howell Post Hoc Test was utilised to help validate the assumptions. In addition, as parametric tests, there is an assumption of a linear relationship of the variables. Thus, in applying Pearson's Correlation and ANOVA test, there was also an assumption that data has a linear relationship (Rietveld & Van Hout, 2010). For instance, that the direction of apologising or responding to apology is identifiable. In other words, there is an identifiable pattern or relationship that could be revealed through statistical analysis. There are limitations in such assumptions of linearity of the data.

Table 10: Extract of the process of consolidating the apology strategies

Situation No.			S1*	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10
Participant No.	Gender	Age Group	Apology strategies									
P1**	F	Under 20	A1, B	C4, B, E	F, D, E	A3, F, I	D	A2, E	A2, E	A2	A2, F	A2, B, C7
P2	M	Under 20	A1, B	A2, B, E	B, D, E	A2, B	A2, C1	A2, E	A1, E	A2	B	A3, B
P3	F	Under 20	D, E	A2, B	E, I	A2, F	A2, D	E	A1, E	A1	A2, E	A2, B, H
P4	F	Under 20	B	A2, E	B, E	A2, E, I	A2, B	B, E, I	F	A2	I, E	I, B, A1
P5	M	Under 20	A2	A2, E	C6, D	B, E	A2	A2, E	A1, E	A1	B	A2
P6	M	Under 20	A1	B, E, I	E	A3, E	A2	A2, A1	A1, E	A2	B	A2, B, H
P7	F	Under 20	E	E	A2, E	A2, E	A2, H	A2, E	A1, E	A2	B, C2	A2, B
P8	M	Under 20	A2, E	E, A2, B	A2, B, E	A2, B, C2	A2, D	A2, E	A2, B, E	A2, C1, E	A2, B	A1, B
P9	F	Under 20	A2, E	A2, B	A2, E, F	A2, B	A2, E	A2, E	E	A2	B, E, F	A2, A1

This table is an extract from Microsoft Excel showing how the coded apology strategies were consolidated for each participant for each situation and then subsequently counted to obtain frequencies for each apology strategy. In this extract, participants P1 to P9's consolidation process is shown. \*S1 stands for situation one, \*\*P1 stands for participant one.

### 3.7.3 Combinations in the use of apology strategies

The apology strategies for the DCT analysis process were identified and highlighted as discussed in section 3.7.1.1 above following the analysis of the data from the 7 focus groups. In order to then perform the DCT analysis, these apology strategies were coded with the respective codes of A1 to I. Thus, the DCT analysis process started from getting the apologies speech acts from the DCT participants for each of the 15 situations. The apologies for each situation for each participant was then analysed to locate it to the identified 7 categories and sub-categories of apology strategies. Once located to the specific apology strategy, the respective apology code (i.e. A1 to I) was then assigned. Importantly, some apology speech acts had more than one apology strategy that were identifiable and thus, these were allocated accordingly. For instance, apologies such as these below employed more than one strategy.

أشعر بالحرج الشديد لأخبرك أن الكتاب سقط ودمره المطر ، سأعوضه بكتاب جديد وأنا آسف للغاية

“I am very embarrassed to tell you that the book fell and was ruined by the rain, I will make it up to you with a new one and I am very very sorry”

In this apology for instance, the strategies involved are expression of embarrassment expressed in the phrase ‘I am very embarrassed to tell you’, explanation or account expressed in the phrase ‘that the book fell and was ruined by the rain’, offer of repair expressed in the phrase ‘I will make it up to you with a new one’ and also an expression of regret captured in the phrase ‘I am very very sorry’. Some other examples of a combination in the use of apology strategies can be identified in the apologies below.

أنا آسف يا حبي ، لقد نسيت أن أذهب إلى المتجر ولكن أعدك غداً بأنني سأأخذك معي وأسمح لك بشراء دميتين  
“I am so sorry my love, I forgot to go to the shop but I promise tomorrow I will take you with me and let you buy two dolls” (has explanation or account, concern for the hearer and offer of repair apology strategies)

أنا آسف حقاً لأنني لن أتمكن من جعله يوم الاثنين ، هل تمانع إذا قمت بإعادة جدولته ليكون يوم الأربعاء  
“I am really sorry I will not be able to make it on Monday do you mind if I reschedule it to be on Wednesday” (has an expression of regret and offer of repair apology strategies)

أعتذر عن هذا التأخير فهذه هي المرة الأولى التي يحدث فيها هذا معي ولكن كانت لدي ظروف شخصية  
“I apologize for this delay, this is the first time this happened to me but, I had personal circumstances” (has apology strategies of an offer of apology, explanation or account and blame something else)

Further, in order to performance the analysis of apology strategies in chapters four and five, the number of strategies used were counted for each situation. This formed the basis for further analysis based on situational and social variables. The next section discusses the approach to the response strategy analysis.

#### **3.7.4 Response strategies analysis**

Similarly, drawing on the literature review on the response to apologies (see section 2.6), it was necessary that response strategies were formulated that are specific to the context of Saudi Arabia. In formulating these response strategies, reference was drawn to suggested response strategies that include ‘agreeing’, ‘disagreeing’, ‘returning’, ‘explaining’, ‘deflecting’, ‘thanking’, and ‘using humour’ (Farghal & Al-Khatib, 2001; Tang et al., 2008; Cheng & Chiang, 2010; Jones, 2013). These seven response strategies were first analysed to identify their relevance to the Saudi Arabia context. As such, the responses to apology obtained during the focus groups were categorised in these seven groups. However, whilst the responses obtained

during the focus group could be identified within these seven categories, the category of ‘using humour’ didn’t seem to be obvious. Instead, what was recognised was the influence of ‘culture(religion)’ on the response where focus group participants responded using phrases such as ‘inshallah’ (meaning: if Allah is willing), ‘Allah yahdek’ (meaning: May God guide you) , ‘Allah yesahel’ (meaning: May God make it easy for you). Some examples of responses that include these phrases include:

إن شاء الله ، إن شاء الله  
inshallah (if Allah is willing)

(إن شاء الله) لا بأس ، لم يحدث شيء سيئ إن شاء الله  
it's okay, nothing bad happened inshallah (if Allah is willing)

السيارة تضررت بشدة ولكن الحمد لله لم يصب أحد ولا داعي لدفع ثمن أي شيء (الله يرشدك) الله يهدك.  
Allah yahdek (May God guide you) the car was badly damaged but alhamdullilah  
(Thank God) no one got hurt there is no need to pay for anything.

هل تسمح بشرحها لي من فضلك. لدي شيئين يجب أن أفهمهما أولاً. (الله يسهل عليك) الله يسأل  
Allah yesahel (May God make it easy for you). I have a couple of things I need to  
understand first. Would you please explain them for me

Thus, an identified response strategy in this context was the use of the name ‘Allah’ or ‘God’ in the expressions. As discussed further in the qualitative analysis of the response, the reference to ‘Allah’ or ‘God’ does not explicitly imply that the respondent is necessarily religious but that this has been a societally accepted way to emphasis commitment or seriousness or simply as a way to add more value to the response. In this context, the use of the name ‘Allah’ or ‘God’ can be perceived as ‘intensifiers’ as observed by Soliman (2003) in the case of Egyptians who often praised God for everything that happened (whether good or bad). However, what’s significant in the case of Saudi Arabian participants is the cultural influence in the usage of the terms which

acknowledges limitations of human planning or event being the control of human beings (Tibi, 2001). Further, what is unique in this aspect of culture is the difficulty that lie in separating concepts of Islam (as a religion) from concepts specific to Arab culture, or indeed from the language itself (Rosenthal & Marmorstein, 1992; Versteegh, 2014). Thus, this response strategy was categorised as ‘cultural intensifier’ in order to highlight the influence of culture and also the impact that Islam (religion) has on culture.

The resultant response strategies that were analysed with their respective coding to help with the analysis are shown in Table 11 below. The use of coding was important in order to aid the quantitative analysis (see chapter five) in identifying the usage of these response strategies according to the different situations.

Table 11: Response strategies and their codes

Category	Code	Strategy	Example
Acceptance	A	An acceptance of apology	‘it is okay my love’; ‘its okay’; ‘I accept your apology’
Disagreeing	B	A disagreement of apology given	‘are you kidding me!’
Returning	C	Responding by giving the apologizer added option/choice	‘you have to give it to me by tomorrow’
Explaining	D	An offer to explain/give details when responding	‘I’ll cry because I wanted it to be with me today’
Deflecting	E	Deflecting the situation or redirecting attention	‘no worries, mistakes happen’
Thanking	F	Thanking the apologizer	‘Thank you mummy’
Culture intensifier	G	Using the name of ‘Allah’ or ‘God’ in response	‘inshallah (if Allah is willing)’; ‘Alhamdallah (thank God) I am good’.

This coding strategy informed the initial analysis of the responses from the 15 situations (see appendix 3) which have been presented and discussed further in chapter five. Similar to the observation in the employment of apology strategies in the 15 DCT situation, there were instances where more than one response strategy was used. These needed to be identified and coded accordingly for analysis of the utilisation of the response strategies. Some examples of such occurrences where more than one response strategy was used include:

لا بأس ، لم يحدث شيء سيئ إن شاء الله

It's okay, nothing bad happened inshallah (if Allah is willing)

In this example, three response strategies are identifiable. These are acceptance captured by the phrase 'its okay', then the deflecting response strategy reflected in the phrase 'nothing bad happened' and the use of culture intensifiers represented by 'inshallah (if Allah is willing)

In the example below, two response strategies were noted: acceptance and explaining. The first part of 'it's alright' captures the acceptance whilst the second part of 'next time make sure to put it in a safe place' reflects the explaining response strategy.

أنا بخير ، في المرة القادمة تأكد من وضعها في مكان آمن

Its alright, next time make sure to put it in a safe place

In the next example, the participant employed the thanking response strategy and the returning response strategy. The thanking response strategy reflected in the 'thank you' expression whilst the 'be careful next time' representing the returning response strategy.

شكرا لك ، كن حذرا في المرة القادمة

Thank you, be careful next time

In another example, the usage of thanking and disagreeing is identifiable. The participants used the phrase ‘thank you’ reflecting the thanking response strategy and ‘but I did not expect this’ capturing the disagreeing response strategy.

شكرا لك ، لكنني لم أتوقع هذا

Thank you, but I did not expect this

Similarly, deflecting and explaining were reflected in the example of the response below in which ‘no worries’ reflects the deflecting response strategy and ‘but I wish you told me beforehand’ captures the offer to explain to the apologizer.

لا تقلق ولكن أتمنى أن تخبرني مسبقا

No worries but I wish you told me beforehand

As such, it was important to acknowledge the occurrences of such combination of use of response strategies. Further, in order to performance the analysis of response strategies in chapters six and seven, the number of strategies used were counted for each situation. This formed the basis for further analysis based on situational and social variables.

The next section discusses the approach to the analysis of interviews.

### 3.7.5 Interviews analysis

With respect to semi-structured interviews, these were transcribed first from their recorded version. As the interviews were in Arabic, the transcription was made in Arabic. These were not translated into English in order not to lose any possible syntax related features in the interviews through the translation process. Akan et al. (2019) for instance, argue that translation problems such as syntactic, semantic, stylistic, phonology and usage of the source language are bound to occur in the process. The analysis of the transcribed data then followed a thematic analysis process.

The key aim was to be able to identify interviewees' conceptualisation of apology, the choice of strategies and the socio-cultural factors' influence on both the apology and response to apology strategies. Braun & Clarke (2006) six phases of thematic analysis process aided this process. Braun & Clarke (2006) outlined the six phases as: familiarisation with the data; generating initial codes; searching for themes; reviewing and refining themes; defining and naming themes; and finally, producing a report or presenting a thematic structure. However, the thematic analysis process is not a linear process (where a researcher simply moves from one phase to the next) but a recursive process where a researcher moves back and forth as needed through the phases.

The advantage of this data analysis technique is that it does not get in the way of new discovery, but instead enables concepts or ideas and their relationships to emerge from the cross-sectional data collected (Braun & Clarke, 2006). There is also more flexibility regarding themes, concepts and trends which can be changed and reinterpreted as more data is gathered and as new ideas and

their relationships emerge which either strengthen or weaken previously captured factors and their relationships (Charmaz, 2011). As such, because the DCT data analysis has already provided some insights on apology strategies in Saudi Arabia, the themes and sub-themes was partly influenced by the understanding gained in that technique. Thus, the complementarity of the interview data to the DCT data analysis remains the underlying motivation in this mixed methods research.

### **3.8 Data validity**

The consideration of the validity of the research data has been taken into account by the researcher throughout the research process. As highlighted in section 3.5 above, the use of focus groups was to help in the validation of the DCT questionnaires. Further, with respect to semi-structured interview, the use of a pilot study also helped to ensure the credibility of the interview questions.

Other considerations, however, are also necessary particularly in the implementation of the data collection technique. In the interview approach, for instance, the position of the researcher has to be clarified and taken into account as this has a potential influence on the quality of the responses obtained (Shenton, 2004). In this respect, Goodson & Sikes (2001) argue that researchers are implicated in the subject of their research and the consequences of particular ways of seeing both themselves as writers, and the subject. Thus, the positionality of the researcher was considered in the process since the social class, gender and education could have an effect on the research process. The researcher was/is aware of the participants/respondents' cultural background and traditions. This is why interaction with male respondents/participants

was done through a male assistant. This approach helped overcome the cultural barriers in the implementation of the data collection techniques.

Further, the researcher has to consider the participants' responses and respondents' narratives reflexively. This is an important aspect in the research process that enhances the validity of the research process. According to Goodson & Sikes (2001) reflexivity helps in identifying possible biases in the collection and interpretation of collected data. In the same vein, Tong, Sainsbury, & Craig (2007, p. 351) argues that when the researcher reveals his/her "identity, credentials, occupation, gender, experience and training", reflexivity would then contribute to improving the research validity. This is a continuous process and the provision of information to participants/respondents before the data collection forms an important element to this validation process. This is supported by Finlay (2002, p. 211) who argues that reflexivity is meant to "make explicit how intersubjective elements impact on data collection and analysis in an effort to enhance the trustworthiness, transparency and accountability of their research".

As highlighted in section 3.5.1.1, the challenge of capturing speech acts through descriptive situations in the DCT technique is that these do not represent the naturally occurring speech (Barron, 2003; Zhang, 2018). This limitation was acknowledged by the researcher, and thus, the need for developing descriptive situations that would depict the socio-cultural context of Saudi Arabia. The approach was to capture, as close as possible the situations that would reflect real-life situations; not hypothetical situations. The use of focus groups and pilot testing helped in accomplishing this aim. The advantage of the DCT of being able to cover a relatively extensive

range of naturally occurring situations in which particular speech acts could be performed (Jones,2013; Demirkol, 2019) became more vivid.

In addition, through providing translated ‘verbatim’ quotes of interviewees, which represent the actual translated views or comments, on their conceptualisation of apology and the concepts of guilt and shame (to be reflected in chapter five), the researcher attempted to reduce her own bias by being reflective of the research process and by the pilot focus group discussion. This also shows transparency in terms of the interpretations of representations from respondents. The maintenance of a detailed research log is also in respect of promoting a form of audit trail that contributes to research validity. The research validity and transparency has also been enhanced through the supervision process. The ongoing supervision process helps me to identify deficiencies in my approach which has had to be corrected. The approach taken in promoting research validity agrees with Kvale (1996, p. 242) argument that “achieving validity in the research process is not: some final verification or product control; verification is built into the research process with continual checks on the credibility, plausibility and trustworthiness of the findings”.

Importantly in this research, triangulation provides a valuable means of research validity (Patton, 1999) as data on apology and responses to apology has been captured through the different data research techniques. Thus, a more comprehensive understanding of apology that takes the socio-cultural context of Saudi Arabia in account is promoted through using focus groups, DCT and interview techniques.

### **3.9 Research ethics**

An important consideration in the conduct of research is research ethics (Gerson & Horowitz, 2002; Saunders et al., 2012). Thus, the researcher has considered relevant research ethics issues in the conduct of the research. Firstly, the data collection strategy (focus groups, DCT and interviews) used in this study were approved by the University's Research Ethics Committee. This is an important step as it involved the consideration of all potential ethical issues that could arise from undertaking this research. Secondly, it was important to secure the consent of all the participants and respondents in this research. As indicated in section 3.6, each participant/respondent had to give their informed consent before taking part in the focus group, DCT and interviews. Further, participants/respondents were briefed on the topic, objectives and procedures of the study in order to ensure their understanding of their contribution to the research.

The privacy of the interviewees in the interviews and participants in the focus group and DCT has been considered. In this respect, the identities of the interviewees and participants was not revealed to any other person other than the researcher and her PhD supervisors. Besides promoting confidentiality, interviewees and participants were fully informed of their right to withdraw at any time from the interviews, focus group or DCT activity, and that they could refuse to answer any questions that they did not wish to answer.

In addition, data collected was subsequently stored in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity. All data has been stored securely, using a password protected computer. Any hard

copies of transcripts and DCT questionnaires do not have names on them, instead, codes have been used. These are also stored securely locked under key in a cabinet. Thus, the consideration of research ethics has been paramount throughout the research process.

### **3.10 Summary**

This chapter has provided a rationale for the methodological framework that that guided the study. It critically examined the philosophical orientation and methodological choices adopted in order to achieve the research objectives. In adopting a mixed methods research approach, the underlying aim was to achieve the research aims. The data collection techniques employed are focus groups, DCT and semi-structured interviews. These have provided valuable data for analysis from both a quantitative and qualitative data analysis approach.

The quantitative data analysis was aided by the use of computer software, SPSS, with the aim of exploring relationship among different captured variables of apology and responses to apology. In particular, some contextual factors could be logically investigated further, such as gender, social distance, social relations and seriousness of offence. The results are presented and discussed in chapter four below. Further, the qualitative analysis of data follows a thematic data analysis technique that builds on (Braun & Clarke, 2006) six phases of the thematic analysis process. The aim is to capture aspects that might otherwise remain hidden from a quantitative approach, such as conceptualisation of apology and aspects of guilt and shame. The results are presented and discussed in chapter five.

## **Chapter Four: Analysis of Apology Strategies**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter is aimed at presenting the results of the analysis of the apology strategies. The analysed apology strategies are based on the discourse completion tests (DCTs) conducted as detailed in section 3.6. As the DCT involved both apology and response to apology, this chapter therefore, only presents the first part of the findings from the DCT data obtained; specifically, apology strategies whilst chapter five will present the findings from the analysis of response strategies. In chapters four, five and six, an important aspect that will be highlighted is the role of situational and social factors in influencing the apology and response strategies encompassing aspects related to social power, social distance and gender and age. Aspects of social distance and power relationship, for instance, have been identified in the literature as key distinctive facets of culture (Bayat, 2013; Al-Khaza'leh & Ariff, 2015; Zhang, 2018; Hodeib, 2019).

The next section analyses the apology strategies across all 15 situations. This will be followed by an analysis of each situation. The chapter will then present the results and discussion of the analysis of the occurrence of combinations of apology strategies followed by a summary.

### **4.2 Apology strategies for all situations**

The distribution of the apology strategies across the 15 situations is presented in Table 12 below. A summary of these apology strategies distribution is presented in Table 13 and graphically depicted in Figure 6. The occurrences as presented in the tables represent the frequencies of

respective apology strategies in the DCT situations. In other words, the number of times that an apology strategy was used in each situation forms the background to the subsequent numerical analysis. For instance, in Table 12 below, an offer of apology strategy was used 78 times in situation one and a total of 726 times across all situations.

Table 12: Apology Strategies for all situations

Category	Strategy	S1*	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11	S12	S13	S14	S15	Total**	
An expression of apology	<b>An offer of apology</b>	78	24	0	12	18	54	150	30	12	108	30	72	12	60	66	726	
	<b>An expression of regret</b>	102	180	108	180	204	126	78	222	102	126	90	72	162	150	120	2022	
	<b>A request for forgiveness</b>	0	0	12	30	0	6	18	12	18	12	12	12	0	30	0	6	156
Explanation or account	<b>Explanation of account</b>	120	150	126	102	36	114	120	54	198	234	114	132	96	54	180	1830	
Taking or Acknowledgment of responsibility	<b>Explicit self-blame</b>	0	0	12	6	6	24	12	6	0	0	6	12	6	0	12	102	
	<b>Lack of intent</b>	0	0	0	6	0	6	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	18	
	<b>Expression of self-deficiency</b>	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	12	0	0	0	24	
	<b>Expression of embarrassment</b>	0	36	0	12	0	12	0	0	0	6	48	0	0	12	0	126	
	<b>Self-dispraise</b>	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	18
	<b>Justifying the hearer</b>	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
	<b>Denial of the responsibility</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	6	6	0	0	6	24
Concern for the hearer	<b>Concern for the hearer</b>	6	0	18	6	24	6	6	0	0	0	12	6	6	0	0	90	
Offer of repair	<b>Offer of repair</b>	186	192	222	144	102	210	150	24	60	24	186	126	168	192	90	2076	
Promise of non-recurrence	<b>Promise of forbearance</b>	6	6	12	12	0	6	6	0	54	12	6	72	12	12	0	216	
Pride and ignorance	<b>Pride and ignorance</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	12	
Blame something else	<b>Blame something else</b>	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	12	
Religious considerations	<b>Use of religious terms</b>	6	30	12	36	12	18	6	18	6	6	54	48	0	42	6	300	

\*S1-S15 represents the DCT situations from 1 to 15

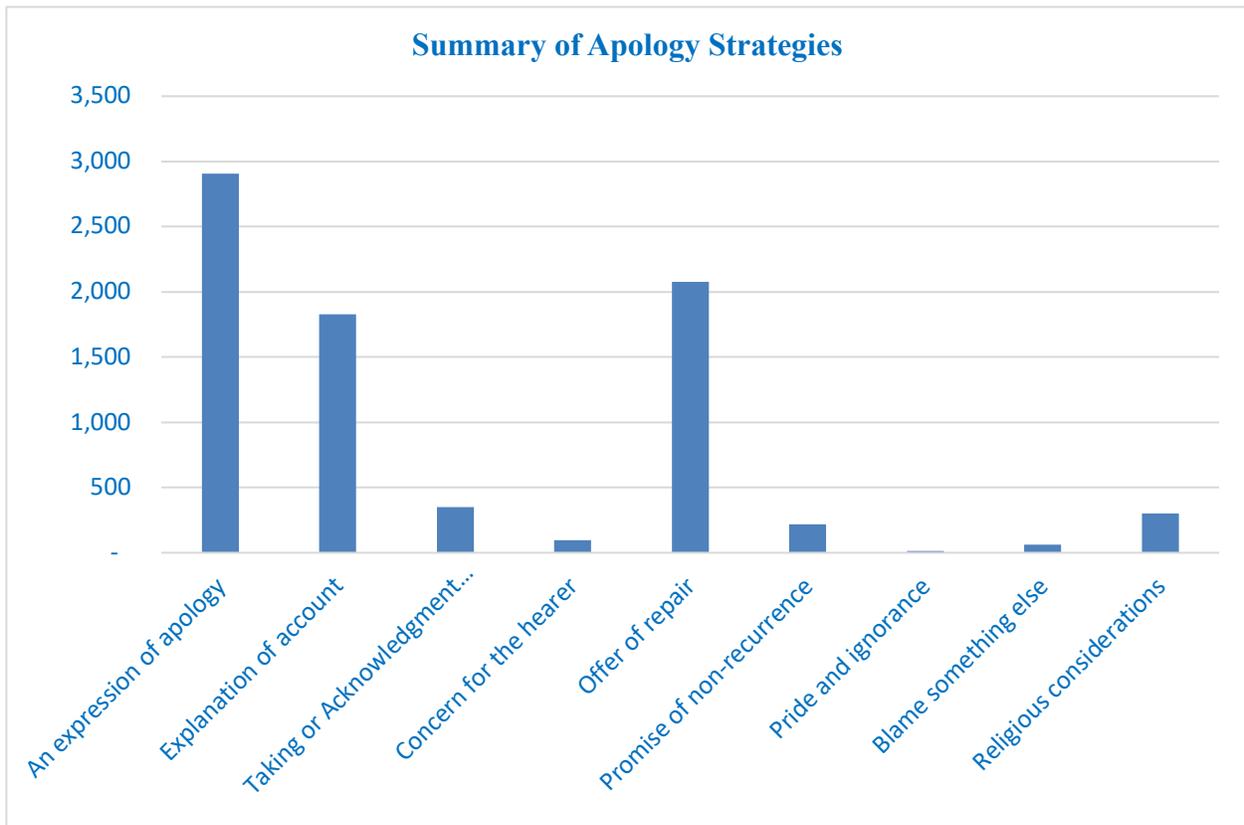
\*\*reflects the total occurrences across the 15 DCT situations.

Table 13: Summary of apology strategies for all situations

Category	Total Occurrence	Percentage*
An expression of apology	2,908	37%
Explanation of account	1,830	23%
Taking or Acknowledgment of responsibility	348	4%
Concern for the hearer	96	1.2%
Offer of repair	2,076	27%
Promise of non-recurrence	216	2.8%
Pride and ignorance	12	0.2%
Blame something else	60	0.8%
Religious considerations	300	4%
Total	7,846	100%

\*The percentages are obtained out of the total occurrences.

Figure 5: Summary of apology strategies in all situations



This figure graphically captures the summary of the apology strategies for all situation showing the frequencies of the 7 apology categories across the 15 DCT situations.

As shown in Table 13, the highest apology strategy used in all situations was an expression of apology capturing 37% of all apology strategies occurrences. In other words, the total counts/frequencies of an expression of apology across all the 15 DCT situations is 2,908 which is 37% of the total 7,846 apology strategies counted. The frequencies of the apology strategies across the DCT situations is useful in interpreting the results. In this case, for example, the counts/frequencies showed that an expression of apology was the frequently used apology strategy. This is largely consistent with Alsulayyi (2016) study that showed that Saudi participants employ the Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) apology strategy the most, similar to Bagherinejad & Jadidoleslam (2015) study in the context of Iranian Arabic speakers. The comparison, in relation to this study, is that the IFID apology strategy is categorised as an expression of apology strategy which comprises of an expression of regret, an offer of apology and a request for forgiveness, consistent with other studies that have used similar categorisations (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Suszczyńska, 1999; Farashaiyan & Amirkhiz, 2011; Mohamadi, 2014). In Alsulayyi's (2016) study, IFID apology strategies was the most used apology strategy followed by downgrading responsibility. Downgrading responsibility, in Alsulayyi's (2016) study pertained to a speaker's utterance to reduce his/her accountability for the offence expressed in various forms such as claiming ignorance or denial.

In my study, a further examination of this apology strategy category revealed that of all overall expression of apology as mentioned above, 37% is composed of an expression of regret (26%), an offer of apology (9%) and a request for forgiveness (2%). Thus, when the apology strategies are examined distinctively (on their own without grouping), the highest apology strategy employed by Saudi participants is offer of repair (27%), an expression of regret (26%) and

explanation of account (23%). These results are inconsistent with Banikalef et al's (2015) study which found that the frequently used apology strategies in Jordanian Arabic was acknowledging responsibility. Banikalef et al. (2015) explored the use of speech act of apology in Jordanian non-standard Arabic language using an ethnographic approach to observation that had a corpus of 1,100 apology utterances in natural settings. Their study found that acknowledging responsibility as the most common apology strategies and these strategies are often used with swearing by God's name. Their study showed that "wrongdoers always attempt to set things right, in one sense, by swearing or explaining the act of offence" (Banikalef et al., 2015, p. 91). Although Banikalef et al. (2015) study is not directly comparable with my study in terms of the research methods and data, it is nonetheless, interesting regarding use of Arabic language in the Middle Eastern contexts.

Further in my study, the use of religious term had a similar frequency as taking or acknowledgement of responsibility (4%). Religious term usage, however, unlike taking or acknowledgement of responsibility formed part of other apology strategies as found by other studies (Soliman, 2003; Al-Laheebi & Ya'Allah, 2014; Banikalef et al., 2015). The use of religious term, categorised as 'swearing in God's name' in other studies (e.g. Banikalef et al., 2015) has been identified as a common routine feature in most types of speech acts in Arabic context (Al-Adaileh, 2007). This has religious cultural linkage (Mey, 2001; Al-Adaileh, 2007; Nureddeen, 2008) and used as a device to intensify the apology, expressing genuineness or sincerity of the apology (see also section 5.7). It is thus, unsurprising that this strategy was often used in combination with other strategies.

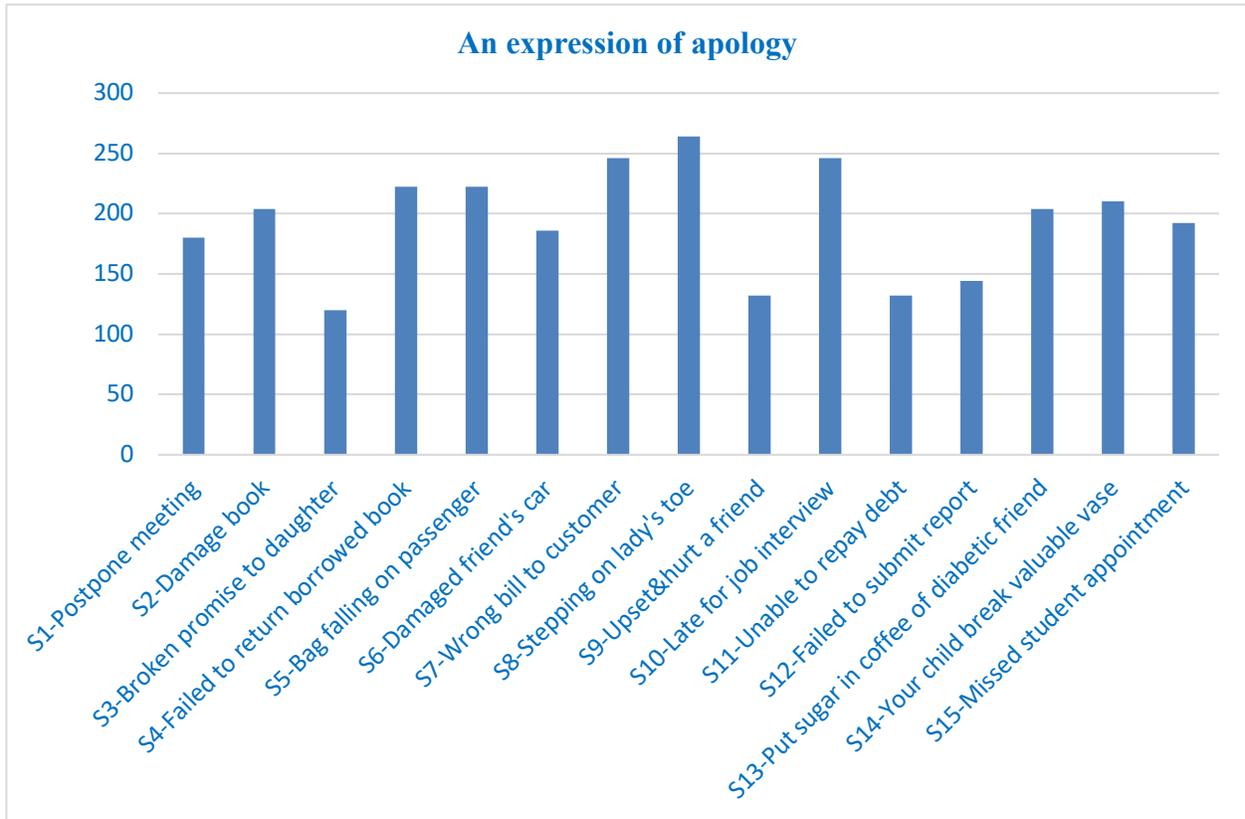
A further examination of the taking or acknowledgement of responsibility apology category revealed that the apology strategies employed in this category were mainly an expression of embarrassment (C4) and explicit self-blame (C1) representing 1.6% and 1.5% respectively. Promise of non-recurrence was prevalent at 3% whilst the concern for the hearer represented 1.2% of the apologies.

In the next section, the aim is to highlight the distribution of each apology strategy across all the situations. A better understanding of the apology strategies is obtained by exploring the occurrences of the apology strategies across the DCT situations. This understanding is useful as it also helps to develop and explain the relationships among the apology strategies (see section 5.4).

#### **4.2.1 An expression of apology**

The apology strategy, an expression of apology, that is made up of an offer of apology (e.g. I apologise), an expression of regret (e.g. I am sorry) and a request for forgiveness (e.g. forgive me), had the highest occurrences in situation 8 (i.e. accidentally stepping on a lady's toe) accounting for 9% of the apology's total occurrence. This was followed by situation 7 (i.e. wrong bill given to customer) (8%) and situation 10 (late for job interview) (8%) respectively. The lowest occurrence of the apology strategy was in situation 9 (i.e. upset and hurt a close friend) (5%), situation 11 (i.e. unable to repay debt) (5%) and situation 3 (i.e. promise to daughter) (4%). This is graphically depicted in Figure 7 below.

Figure 6: An expression of apology strategies across all situations



This figure shows the main category of expression of apology across the 15 DCT situations showing the occurrences and associated percentages.

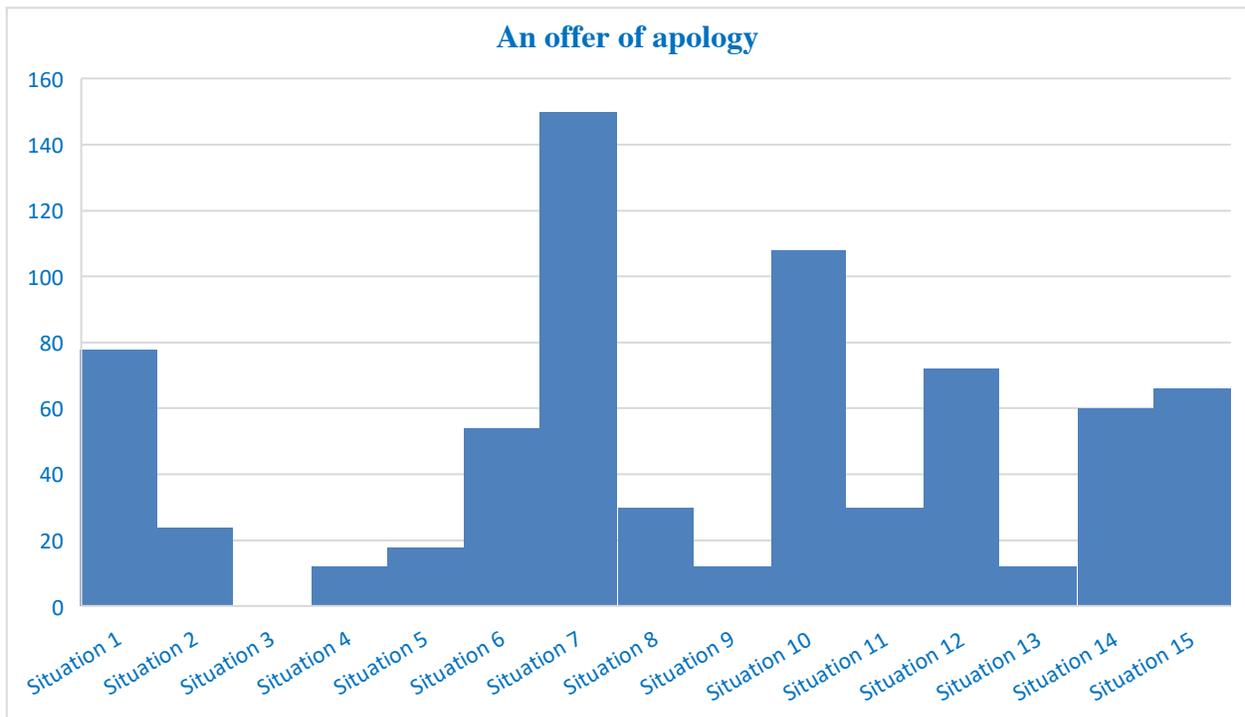
What is common among the three situations where the apology category is highest (situations 8, 7 and 10) is that these situations are characterized by relatively high social distance (SD) and high social power (HP). This suggests that in situations where the interlocutors are less familiar with each other, with one interlocutor possibly having relatively more social dominance over the other speaker, an expression of apology would most likely be used. Nureddeen (2008) study also found that the Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) strategies are frequently used in high social distance situations in Sudanese Arabic, highlighting that the use of IFID strategies varies according to social distance. The comparison to Nureddeen (2008) study is made here since an expression of apology strategy, as categorized in this study, forms part of the IFID strategies

(Olshtain & Cohen, 1989; Gonzales et al., 1990; Alsulayyi, 2016). The frequent use of an expression of apology was also found in Al-Sobh (2013) study on Jordanian Arabic speakers. Al-Sobh (2013) showed that the employment of the apology strategies fluctuated based on relationship between the interlocutors. In particular, Al-Sobh (2013) found that Arabic equivalents of the English intensifiers like ‘so’ and ‘very’ were used in apologetic expressions whenever the interlocutors held higher positions. With respect to this observation, section 5.4 investigates the relationship statistically in order to test if the relationship between the use of strategies and social distance or social power are statistically significant. The component apology strategies of an offer of apology (A1), an expression of regret (A2) and a request for forgiveness (A3) is discussed next in order to understand further this apology category.

#### 4.2.1.1 An offer of apology

An offer of apology strategy forms the first part of ‘an expression of apology’ category in this study. Thus, an exploration of the utilization of the apology category necessitates investigating the component apology strategies usage. An investigation to particularly identify the offer of apology strategy usage across the 15 DCT was undertaken. Figure 8 graphically depicts the results obtained of the frequencies of an offer of apology strategy across the 15 situations.

Figure 7: An offer of apology strategy



This figure shows the distribution of the apology strategy ‘an offer of apology’ across the 15 DCT situations arranged from the highest situation occurrence to the lowest situation occurrence. In this case, four situations (S7, S10, S1 and S12) contributed to over 50% of total occurrences of the apology strategy.

This apology strategy was employed the most in situations 7 (wrong bill given to customer) (21%) and 10 (late for job interview) (15%) respectively. What is particularly common in the two situations (7 and 10) is the severity of the offence and both high social power and social distance (see section 3.6.1). This suggests that because of the nature of the offence (perceived as severe) and also the high social power and distance between interlocutors, there was more willingness to offer an apology. In this case, not only is there very little familiarity between the interlocutors, but that it was more prudent to offer an apology considering the perceived severity of the offence by the offender. In using this apology strategy, some examples of sentences used are shown below. For instance, in example 1, ‘we apologise’ phrase captures ‘an offer of apology’ strategy whilst ‘we will pay your cheque’ reflects the ‘offer of repair’ strategy.

الشيء وسندفع ذلك عن نعتذر

“We apologise for this and we will pay your cheque” (Example 1)

In examples 2 and 3 below, the apology expressions have the phrase ‘I apologise’ which is identifiable in ‘an offer of apology’ strategy.

حادث بسبب مروري ازدحام هناك كان ولكن المتأخرة البداية عن أعتذر

“I apologise for coming late but there was a traffic jam due to an accident (Example 2)

الكافي الوقت لدي وليس الثلاثاء صباح أقدمه أن يجب ، مهم تقرير لدي ، أعتذر

“I apologise, I have an important report, I have to submit it on Tuesday morning and I do not have enough time (Example 3)

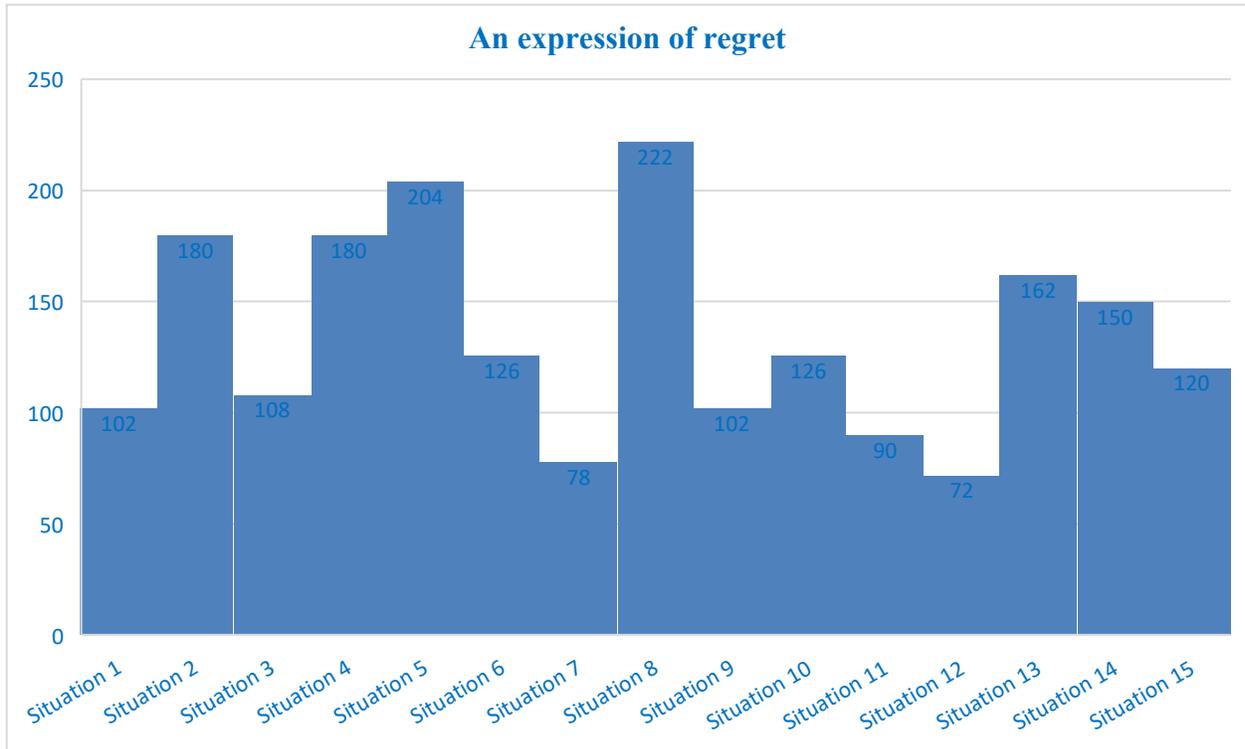
What is observable in the cases where this strategy is used is the explicit usage of the word we/I ‘apologise’ which was often followed by an explanation of account or blaming something else like in example 2 where speaker blamed traffic. The explicit usage of the phrase ‘I/we apologise’ seems inconsistent to Al-Laheebi & Ya’Allah (2014) argument that Saudis do not like to apologise outrightly but instead prefer to shift responsibility. Al-Laheebi & Ya’Allah (2014) suggest that apologies in Saudi Arabian culture typically shift responsibility away from the offender avoiding to apologise by all means. In contrary, the results of this study suggest that offer of apology is seen across the 14 situations and highest in situations when severity of offence and social power and social distance are high. This suggests that there is more

willingness to apologise and restore relationship which might also be construed in term of avoiding possible implications of a bad relationship (e.g. loss of valued customer as in Example 1).

#### 4.2.1.2 An expression of regret

An expression of regret is the second component of the category ‘an expression of apology’ which has labelled as an Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) in other studies (Gonzales et al., 1990; Nureddeen 2008; Al-Sulayyi, 2016). An expression of regret apology strategy was the highest component among the three strategies under the expression of apology category accounting for 70% of the occurrences. Figure 9 below shows the distribution across the DCT situations from the highest occurrence to lowest occurrence with the associated cumulative contribution of each situation.

Figure 8: An expression of regret



This figure shows the distribution of the apology strategy ‘an expression of regret’ across the 15 DCT situations arranged from the highest situation occurrence to the lowest situation occurrence. In this apology strategy, five situations (S8, S5, S2, S13 and S14) contributed to approximately 50% of total occurrences of the apology strategy.

As depicted in Figure 9, the apology strategy was used widely across all situations with the spread ranging from a high of 11% in situation 8 to a low of 4% in situations 7, 11 and 12. The cumulative increase was 60% for six situations highlighting the relative spread of the apology strategy across the 15 DCT situations. In the two situations of 8 and 5 were it was highest at 11% and 10% occurrences respectively, the similarity between these situations was the high social distance (HD) but equal social power (EP) which possibly suggests more regret when interlocutors are less familiar to each other. In using this apology strategy, participants used terms such as examples 4, 5 and 6). In example 4, the apologetic phrase ‘I am sorry’ reflects an expression of regret whilst ‘I will get you a new book’ is an offer of repair.

أنا آسف ، سأجلب لك كتابا جديدا

I am sorry, I will get you a new book (Example 4)

Similarly, the examples below have the expression ‘I am sorry’ and ‘sorry’ which captures an expression of regret followed by an offer of repair (I will pay for all the damages) and explanation of account (it was by accident) respectively.

أنا آسف ، سأدفع جميع الأضرار

I am sorry, I will pay for all the damages (Example 5)

عذرا ، لقد كان بالصدفة

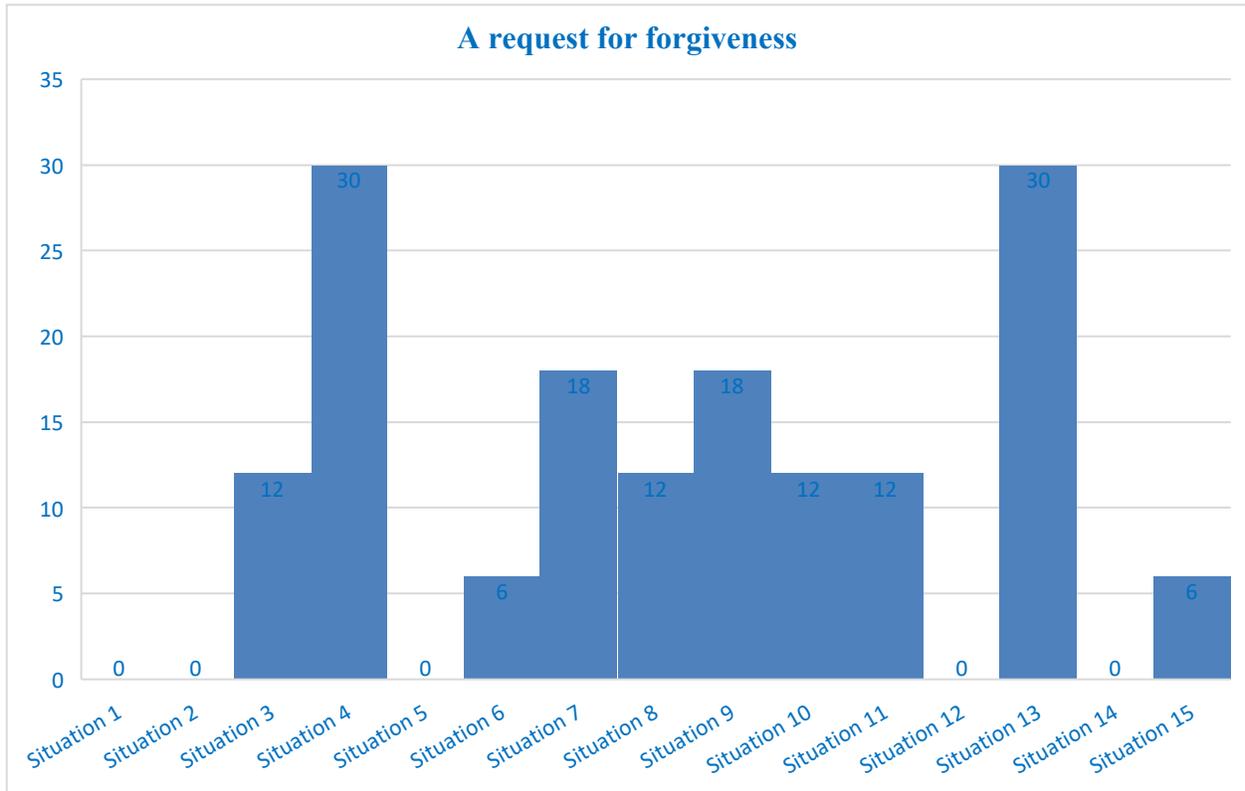
Sorry, it was by accident (Example 6)

In this strategy, as will also be explored further in section 5.5, the commonly used phrase was ‘I am/we’re ‘sorry’’. The use of this apologetic phrase is cross-cultural as evidenced in several studies (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Bataineh & Bataineh, 2008; Alfattah, 2010; Al-Laheebi & Ya-Allah, 2014).

#### 4.2.1.3 A request for forgiveness

A request for forgiveness, unlike an offer of apology or an expression of regret strategies, was not employed in all situations. Instead, this strategy was found to be used in 10 of the situations with the highest two being situation 4 (19%) and situation 13 (19%) as shown in Figure 10 below.

Figure 9: A request for forgiveness



This figure shows the distribution of the apology strategy ‘a request for forgiveness’ across the 15 DCT situations arranged from the highest situation occurrence to the lowest situation occurrence.

The two situations with the highest occurrence (situation 4 and situation 13), however, do not share similar characteristics with respect to type of offence, severity of offence, social power and social distance. With situations 7 and 9 which have 12% occurrences respectively, a common feature that is observed is the type of offence which relates to social commitment and the high severity of the offences. This could suggest that a request for forgiveness is most likely to be given in situations where the offence is perceived as severe and thus, potentially damaging social relationships. The associations between situations are explored further in section 5.4.3.

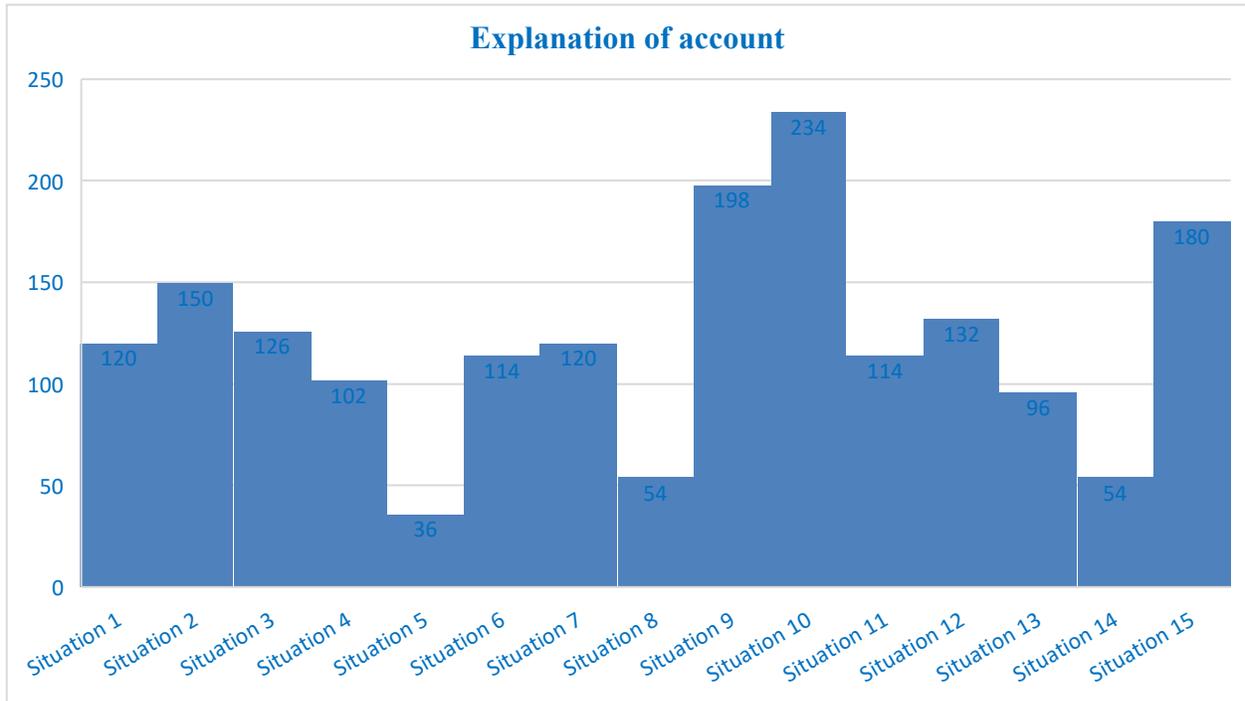
An example of the apologetic expression which captures this apology strategy is ‘forgive us for

the misunderstanding; we will serve you dessert on the house' which has the expression 'forgive us for the misunderstanding' capturing a request forgiveness and 'we will serve you dessert on the house' reflecting an offer of repair. The results for an explanation of account apology strategy are discussed next.

#### **4.2.2 An explanation or account**

This apology strategy was spread throughout the situations and ranged from a high of 13% occurrence in situation 10 to a low of 2% in situation 5. The three situations in which the apology strategy was most used which cumulatively accounted for 33% across the 15 situations are situation 10 (13%), situation 9 (11%) and situation 15 (10%). This apology strategy is distinctively applied to different combinations of offence types, severity and social distance. However, the apology strategy seems to be most pronounced in equal to high social power situations with a relatively high severity of offence. This apology strategy, nonetheless, had high prominence across all situations and was the third highest used apology strategy as depicted in Table 13 above.

Figure 10: An explanation of account



This figure shows the distribution of the apology strategy ‘explanation or account’ across the 15 DCT situations arranged from the highest situation occurrence to the lowest situation occurrence. In this apology strategy, five situations (S10, S9, S15, S2 and S12) contributed to approximately 50% of total occurrences of the apology strategy.

Some examples of this strategy usage include:

أنا أسف لأنني لم أعطيك الكتاب في الوقت المحدد ، لكنني كنت مشغولاً

I am sorry I did not give you the book on time, but I was busy (Example 7)

What can be seen from this example 7 is that in addition to the apologetic expression of ‘I am sorry’ which is an expression of regret as discussed above, the offender offered an explanation as reflected in the statement ‘I did not give you the book on time, but I was busy’. An explanation or account can also be observed in the examples below.

لذا من .فكل شيء على ما يرام وسأصلحه (كل شيء إن شاء الله)لقد تعرضت لحادث سيارة لكن إن شاء الله  
فضلك لا تحزن

I was in a car accident with your car but inshallahh (if Allah is willing), everything is  
fine and I will fix it; so please do not be sad (Example 8)

أعتذر عن التأخير ، حركة المرور في الرياض مشكلة

I apologise for being late, Riyadh's traffic is a problem (Example 9)

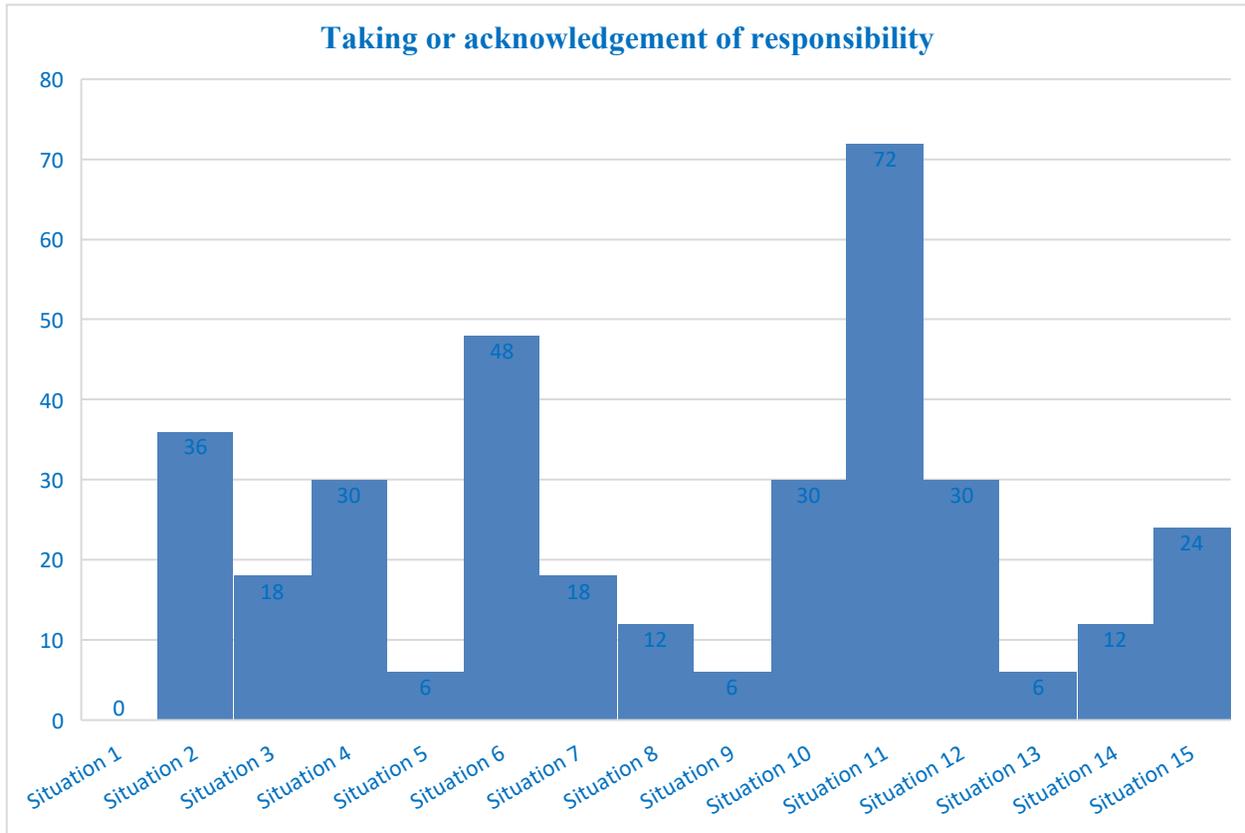
What is noticeable in the examples of the usage of this apology strategy is that it is often used in combination with other apology strategies similar, for instance, to Alhojailan (2019) study on Saudi Arabic speakers. Gonda's (2001) study also showed that an explanation of account and offer of repair were most used in cases where the severity of the offence was relatively high. Gonda (2001) argues that both the severity of the offence and social distance determine the choice of apology strategies. A combination of explanation and repair, for instance, were observed as high in situations where the offence was perceived as severe. The explanation to the apology is often given following another apology strategy. For instance, 'I apologise for being late' (an expression of regret), then an explanation for being late 'traffic is a problem' (explanation or account). In this context, it will be insightful to explore the association of this strategy to other strategies. This is investigated, and results discussed in section 5.4.4.

#### **4.2.3 Taking or acknowledgment of responsibility**

This apology category, whilst composed of 7 apology strategies (explicit self-blame (C1), lack of intent (C2), expression of self-deficiency (C3), expression of embarrassment (C4), self-dispraise

(C5), justifying the hearer (C6) and denial of the responsibility (C7) had only 4% utilisation across the 15 situations (see Table 13). This is inconsistent to Bagherinejad & Jadidoleslam (2015) and Banikalef et al.'s (2015) studies that showed a relatively high usage of this strategy among the Iranian and Jordanian Arabic speakers respectively. However, this seems consistent with Al-Laheebi & Ya'Allah (2014) that identified Saudis as inclined to shift responsibility when apologising. An examination of the overall spread of these apology strategies across the 15 situations produced the results graphically depicted in Figure 12 below. The highest occurrence was in situation 11 (21%) followed by situation 6 (14%). A further examination of the apology strategies in this category for these two situations shows a relatively high usage of 'expression of embarrassment' and 'explicit self-blame'. A relatively high usage of 'expression of embarrassment' is also noticeable in situation 2 (10%).

Figure 11: Taking or acknowledgment of responsibility



This figure shows the distribution of the apology strategy ‘Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility’ across the 15 DCT situations arranged from the highest situation occurrence to the lowest situation occurrence. In this apology strategy, four situations (S11, S6, S2, and S4) contributed to over 50% of total occurrences of the apology strategy.

Some examples of explicit self blame (C1) and expression of embarrassment (C4) from the situations are given in example 10, 11, 12 and 13 below.

كل هذا خطئي ، أعتذر

It is all my fault, I apologize (Example 10)

أنا أشعر بالحرج جدا؛ لم أتمكن من جمع الأموال التي أدين لك بها ؛ هل يمكنك إعطائي أسبوعين آخرين؟ سأكون شاكرا

I am so embarrassed; I couldn't collect the money I owe you; can you give me two more weeks? I will be thankful (Example 11)

بصراحة ، أنا محرج جدا ومستعد لتعويضك

Honestly, I am so embarrassed and willing to make it up to you (Example 12)

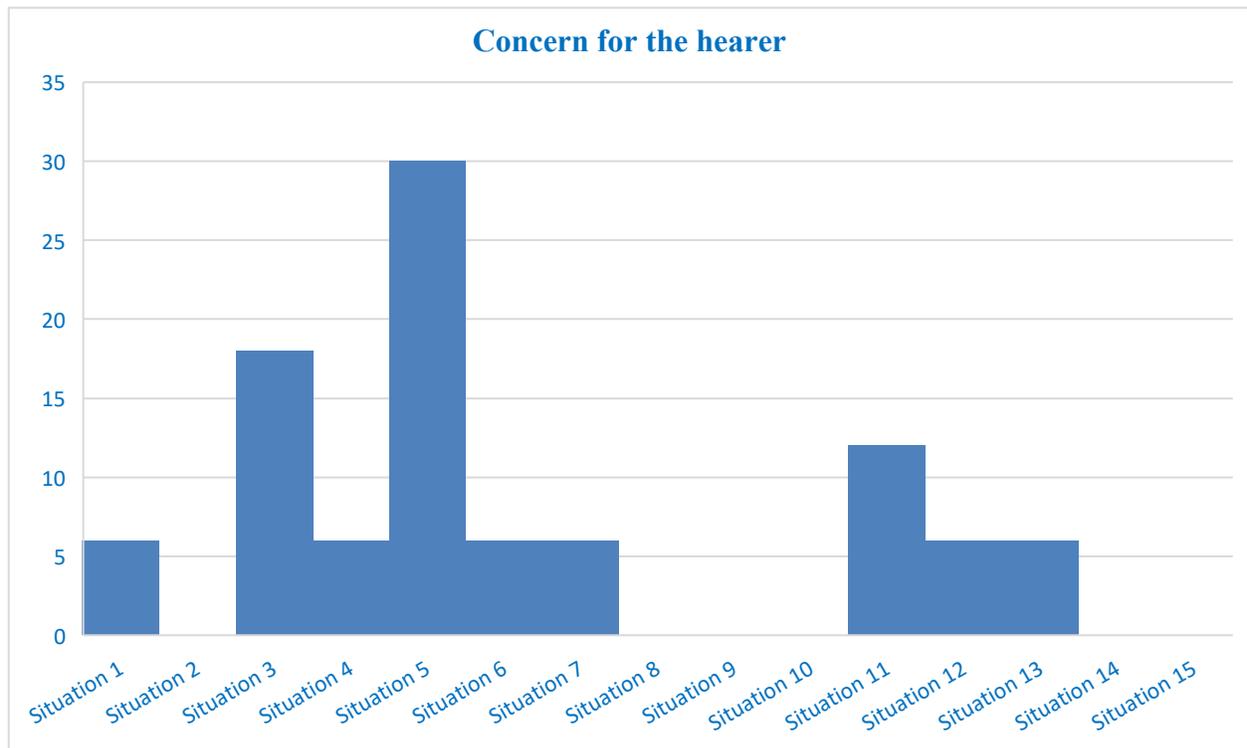
الآن سنذهب ونشتريها معًا. لقد نسيت ذلك تمامًا يا عزيزي

I totally forgot about it my dear; Now we will go and buy it together (Example 13)

#### **4.2.4 Concern for the hearer**

The concern for the hearer (D) apology strategy was observed in only 9 situations with the highest instances being in situations 5 (27%), 3 (20%) and 11 (13%). A similar level of occurrence was noticed in the other nine situations. The highest three occurrences had equal to high social power while the other situation characteristics (severity and social distance) were well dispersed. Interestingly though, situation 3 and situation 11 both related to social commitments which could be perceived as a cost for maintaining friendship. In other words, the commitment, for instance, to spend time with friends is perceived as an important requirement for sustainable friendship. The results of the analysis of this apology strategy across the situations is graphically depicted in Figure 13 below.

Figure 12: Concern for the hearer



This figure shows the distribution of the apology strategy ‘concern for the hearer’ across the 15 DCT situations arranged from the highest situation occurrence to the lowest situation occurrence. The apology strategy occurred in only 9 situations. In this apology strategy, two situations (S5 and S3) contributed to approximately 50% of total occurrences of the apology strategy.

Some examples of the utilization of this apology strategy include:

بخير؟ أنت هل ، عذرا

Sorry, are you okay? (Example 14)

بخير؟ أنت هل ، جدا آسف أنا

I’m so sorry, are you okay? (Example 15)

تأذيت؟ هل ، بخير أنك أمل

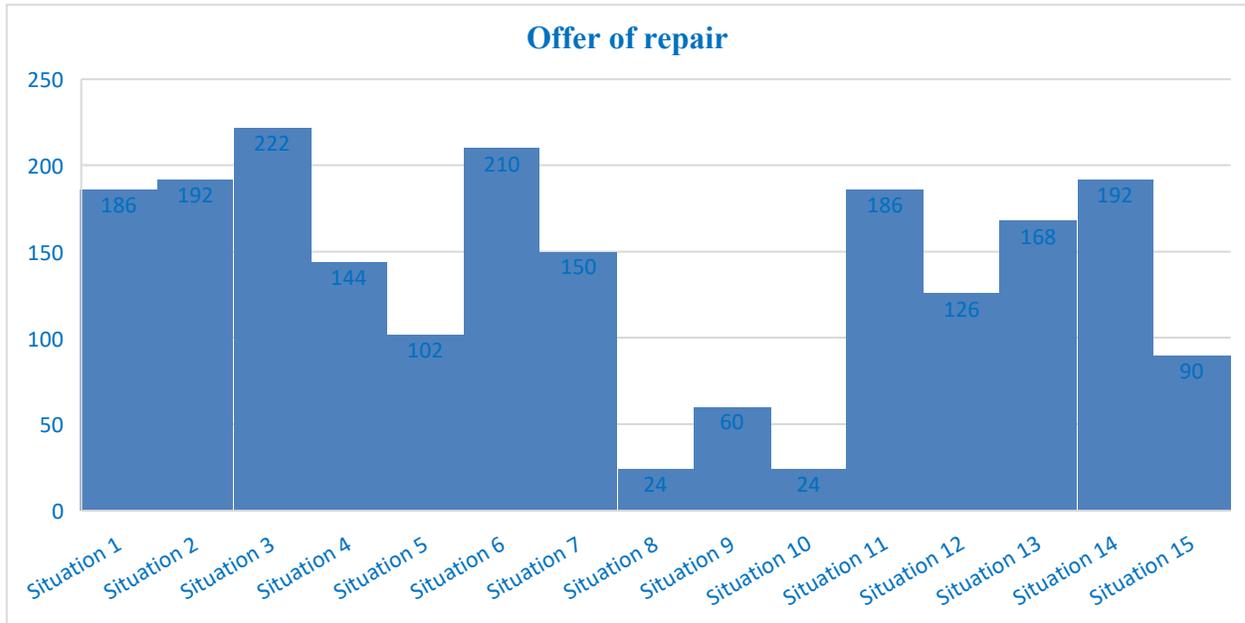
I hope you’re okay, did you get hurt? (Example 16)

In the examples above, the apologizer goes beyond the expression of regret, for instance, ‘I’m sorry’ to express concern, ‘are you okay’ or ‘are you hurt’. As such, this apology strategy tends to occur with other apology strategy.

#### **4.2.5 Offer of repair**

An offer of repair (E) was the second most used apology strategy across the 15 situations after an expression of apology (see Table 13) occurring 26% of the incidences. The analysis of the spread of this strategy across the situations is depicted in Figure 14 below. The spread of occurrence ranged from a high of 11% in situation 3 to a low of 1% in situation 8 and situation 10. The common feature observed in situations 8 and 10 where the observations were low is the high social distance and equal to high social power of the interlocutors. Another feature observable in the situations of high occurrences (situations 3, 6 and 2) is the low social distance (LD) of the interlocutors.

Figure 13: Offer of repair



This figure shows the distribution of the apology strategy ‘offer of repair’ across the 15 DCT situations arranged from the highest situation occurrence to the lowest situation occurrence. In this apology strategy, six situations (S3, S6, S2, S14, S1 and S11) contributed to approximately 50% of total occurrences of the apology strategy.

As the apology strategy occurred across the 15 situations, section 5.4.4 will highlight further whether there is an association between this apology strategy and other apology strategies. Some examples of the usage of this strategy by interlocutors include:

عزيزتي جدا اسف انا ؛ واللعب الغداء طعام لتناول وسنذهب غداً هدية أفضل لك سأشتري

I will buy you the best gift tomorrow and we will go eat lunch and play; I am very sorry my darling (Example 17)

الأضرار جميع سأدفع ، أسف أنا

I am sorry, I will pay for all the damages (Example 18)

لك ذلك أغير دعني ، للغاية آسف أنا

I am so sorry, let me change that for you (Example 19)

لي سمحت إذا آخر واحد إحضار يمكنني ، طفلي سلوك لسوء آسف أنا

I'm sorry for my kid's misbehavior; I can bring another one if you allow me

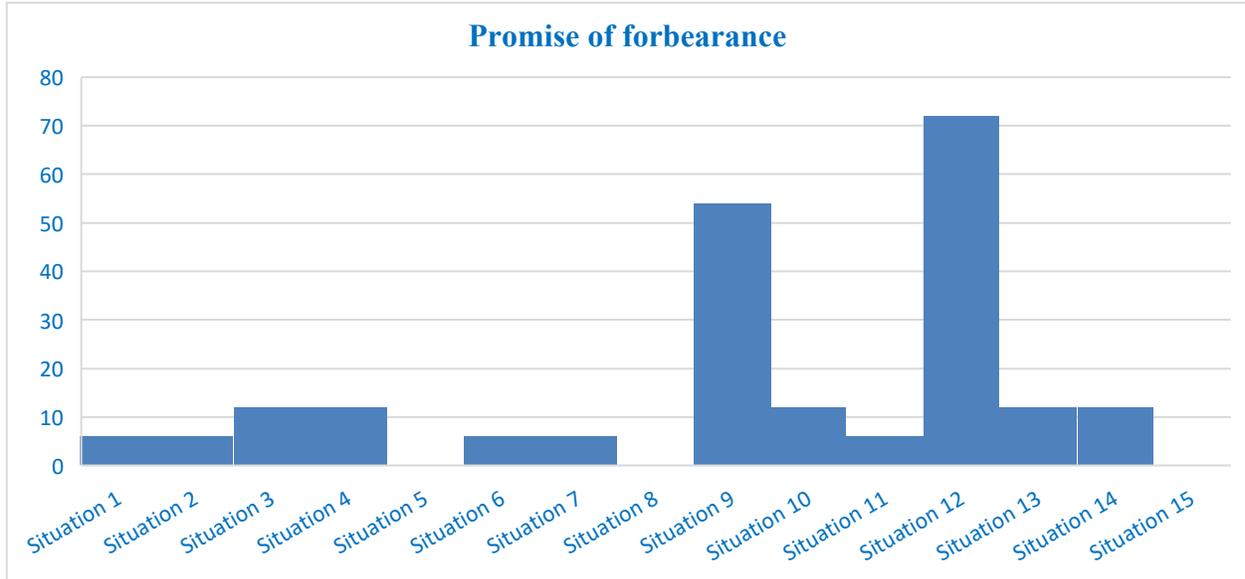
(Example 20)

In example 20, for instance, the offender not only offer an expression of regret (I'm sorry for my kid's misbehavior' but also offers to repair for the damage 'I can bring another one if you allow me'. This suggests in part that the offender not only perceives an expression of regret as important but that an offer to repair completes the apology.

#### **4.2.6 Promise of non-recurrence**

Similar to concern for the hearer strategy (D), promise of non-recurrence (F) apology strategy only occurred in 12 situations with the highest occurrences observed in situation 12 (33%) and situation 9 (25%). Five situations 3, 4, 10, 13 and 14 had low percentages of 6% whilst situations 1, 2, 6, 7 and 11 had 3% respectively, as shown in Figure 15. The similarities observed in situation 12 and situation 9 is the low to medium level of social distance status of the interlocutors.

Figure 14: Promise of forbearance



This figure shows the distribution of the apology strategy ‘promise of forbearance’ across the 15 DCT situations arranged from the highest situation occurrence to the lowest situation occurrence. In this apology strategy, two situations (S12 and S9) contributed to over 50% of total occurrences of the apology strategy.

Some examples of participants using this apology strategy included:

الأخيرة المرة ستكون ، تعلمون كما المحدد الوقت في بالتقديم فيها أقوم لا التي الأولى المرة هي هذه

This is my first time not submitting on time as you know, it will be the last time

(Example 21)

أخرى مرة يحدث لن بأنه وأعدك جيدة بطريقة قصدته ؛ الفهم أسأت لكنك أفعالي على أسف أنا

I am sorry for my actions, but you misunderstood; I meant it in a good way and I

promise it will never happen again (Example 22)

أخرى مرة ذلك تفعل ألا وأعدها الزهور من باقة سأرسل

I will send a bouquet of flowers and promise her to not do it again (Example 23)

والأخير الأول خطئي سيكون أنه أعدكم

I promise you that it will be my first and last mistake (Example 24)

Contrary to Al-Laheebi & Ya-Allah (2014) study that identified the use of the locution ‘insha Allah’ (if Allah wills) in both the offer of repair and promise of forbearance apology strategies, the locution usage (inshallah) was not particularly evident in the promise of forbearance apology strategy in this study.

#### 4.2.7 Pride and ignorance

Pride and ignorance (G) apology strategy was the least used apology strategy at only 0.2% (12) occurrences across the 15 situations. This type of apology strategies are only used for 6 times in both situations 14 and 15. This apology strategy only occurred equally in two situations (14 and 15). This position is graphically depicted in Figure 16 below. The two situations had low to medium social distance and equal to high social power. Some examples of the use of this apology strategy include:

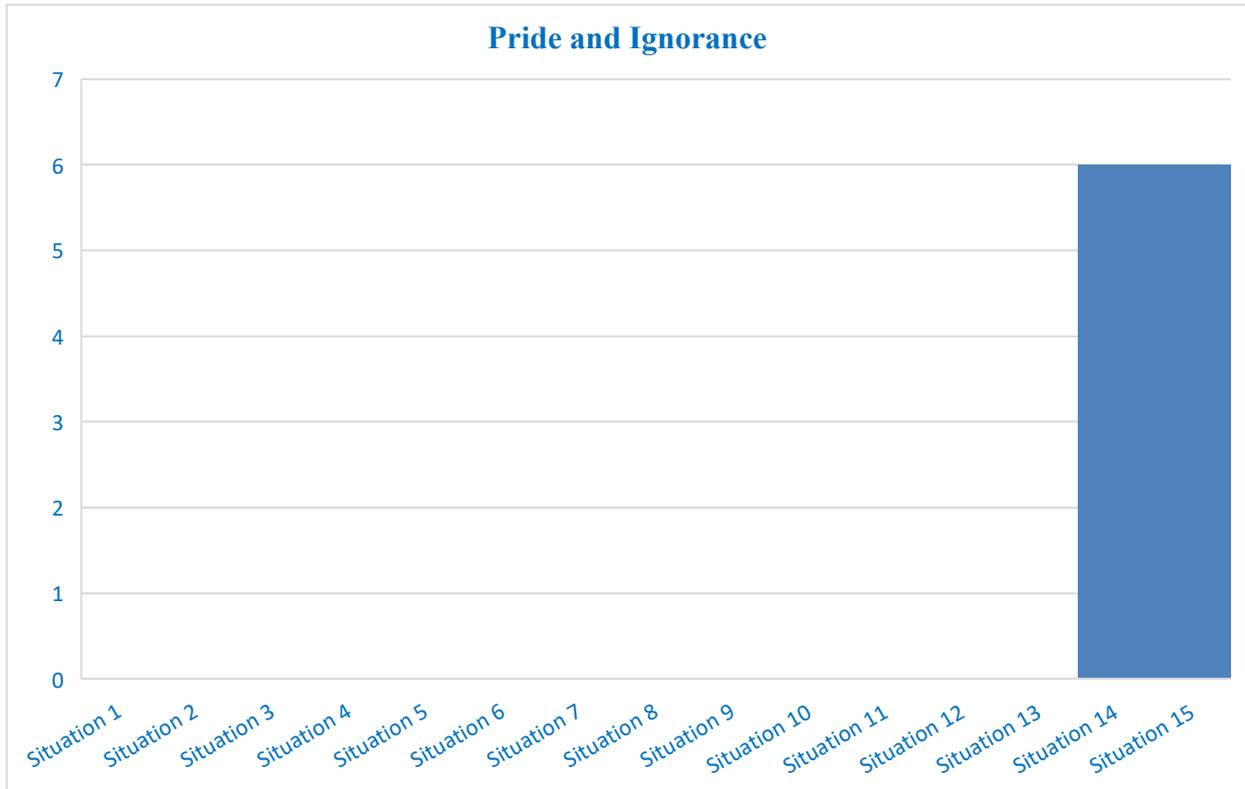
لماذا لم تأت أمس

Why didn't you come yesterday? (Example 25)

لماذا اخرجتني امام صديقي؟

Why did you embarrass me in front of my friend? (Example 26)

Figure 15: Pride and ignorance



This figure shows the distribution of the apology strategy 'pride and ignorance' across the 15 DCT situations. Only two situations had instances of use of this apology strategy.

#### 4.2.8 Blame something else

Similar to pride and ignorance (G) apology strategy, blame something else (H) apology strategy only occurred in three situations with the most prominent in situation 10 (80%). Situation 10 was characterised by high severity of offence, high social power (SP) and high social distance (SD).

Some examples of the usage of this apology strategy include:

أعتذر عن البداية المتأخرة ولكن كان هناك ازدحام مروري بسبب حادث

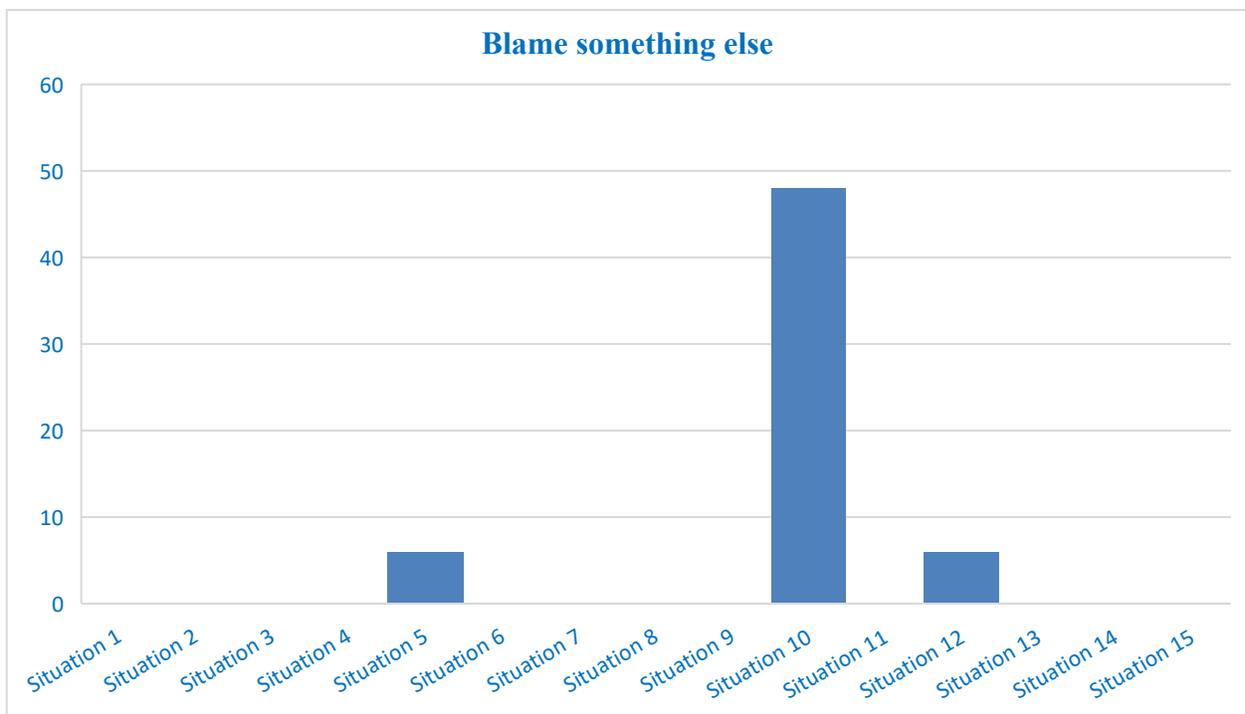
I apologise for beginning late but there was a traffic jam due to an accident (Example 27)

هذه هي المرة الأولى التي يحدث فيها هذا لي ولكن كان لدي ظروف شخصية. أعتذر عن هذا التأخير

I apologise for this delay; this is the first time this happened to me but I had personal circumstances (Example 28)

The spread of the utilisation of this apology strategy is graphically depicted in Figure 17 below.

Figure 16: Blame something else



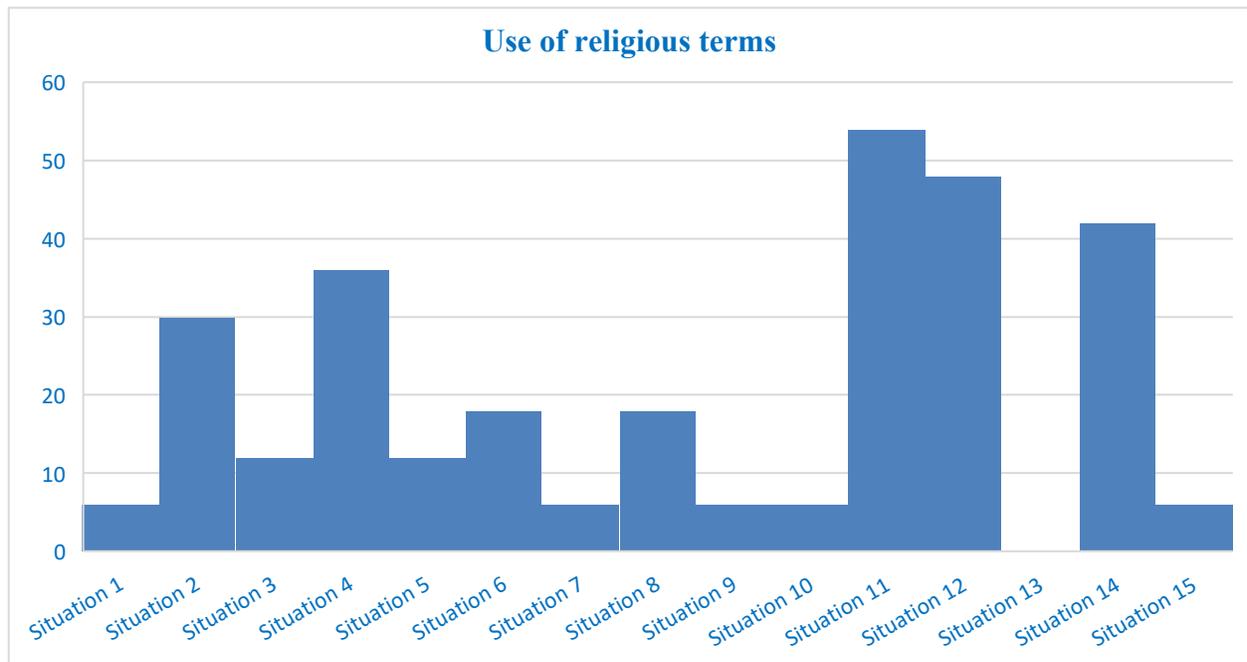
This figure shows the distribution of the apology strategy 'blame something else' across the 15 DCT situations. Only three situations had instances of use of this apology strategy with the main occurrence in situation 10.

The results in this study that identifies the use of this apology strategy in only three situations is inconsistent with Hussein & Hammouri (1998) study that found Arabic speakers to be more inclined to blame something else or attack the offended. This is also inconsistent to Bagherinejad & Jadidoleslam's (2015) study that identified the use of this apology strategy in combination with other strategies in the case of Iranian Arabic speakers.

#### **4.2.9 Use of religious terms**

The use of religious terms strategy (I) was observed in 14 situations with the distribution across the situations depicted in Figure 18 below. The highest frequency of use of the apology strategy was observed in situations 11 (18%), 12 (16%), 14 (14%) and 4 (12%) cumulatively accounting for 60%. What is common among these four situations is their relatively low to medium social distance whilst the social power is equal to high. Interestingly too, three of these situations had time (T) related offences. A high frequency in the use of religious term across situations was observed also in Banikalef et al. (2015) study on apology strategies in Jordanian Arabic. Similarly, Al-Adaileh (2007) argues that the use of religious terms (often using God's name) in Arabic culture is a common routine feature.

Figure 17: Use of religious terms



This figure shows the distribution of the apology strategy ‘use of religious terms’ across the 15 DCT situations arranged from the highest situation occurrence to the lowest situation occurrence. In this apology strategy, three situations (S11, S12 and S14) contributed to approximately 50% of total occurrences of the apology strategy.

Some examples in the usage of this apology strategy include:

أن لدي ظروف شخصية (أقسم بالله)آسف ، لكن والله

Sorry, but wallah (I swear to Allah) that I had personal circumstances (Example 29)

يخرجوننا (أقسم بالله)لن نزره مع الأطفال مرة أخرى ؛ والله (أقسم بالله)نعنذر بشدة والله

We deeply apologise wallah (I swear to Allah) we won’t visit with the kids again;  
Wallah (I swear to Allah), they embarrass us (Example 30)

What is evident in the employment of this strategy is that it occurred in combination with other strategies. This is consistent with other studies (Al-Laheebi & Ya-Allah, 2014; Jehabi, 2010;

Nureddeen, 2008) that identified the use of religious terms (locution) in different Arabic contexts. For instance, Al-Laheebi & Ya-Allah (2014) found the use of the locution ‘Insha Allah’ (If Allah wills) when participants utilised the offer of repair and promise of forbearance apology strategies. However, Jebahi (2011) argues that the expression ‘inshallah’ (if Allah wills) seemed to “be used in a non-serious way to avoid disagreement with an interlocutor, to say something comforting, or to reply to a request which is not going to be fulfilled” (p. 654).

As such, an investigation of the association between the strategies is insightful and thus discussed in section 5.4.4. The next section presents the results of the analysis of the combination of apology strategies. This is aimed at giving more insight into the extent to which apology strategies are used discreetly and also in combination with others.

### **4.3 Analysis of apology strategies in each situation**

In section 4.2 above, the analysis of apology strategies was discussed across all the 15 DCT situations. This was useful in giving an overview of how the apology strategies are used in general. In gaining more perspective to how the apology strategies were used in each situation, which then culminates in the results discussed in section 4.2, an analysis was performed for each individual situation. The aim is to highlight that each situation has distinctive characteristics which impact on the use of apology strategies. As such, this distinctiveness could have elaborated which helps to understand the overall usage of the apology strategies.

### **4.3.1 Analysis of Situation One**

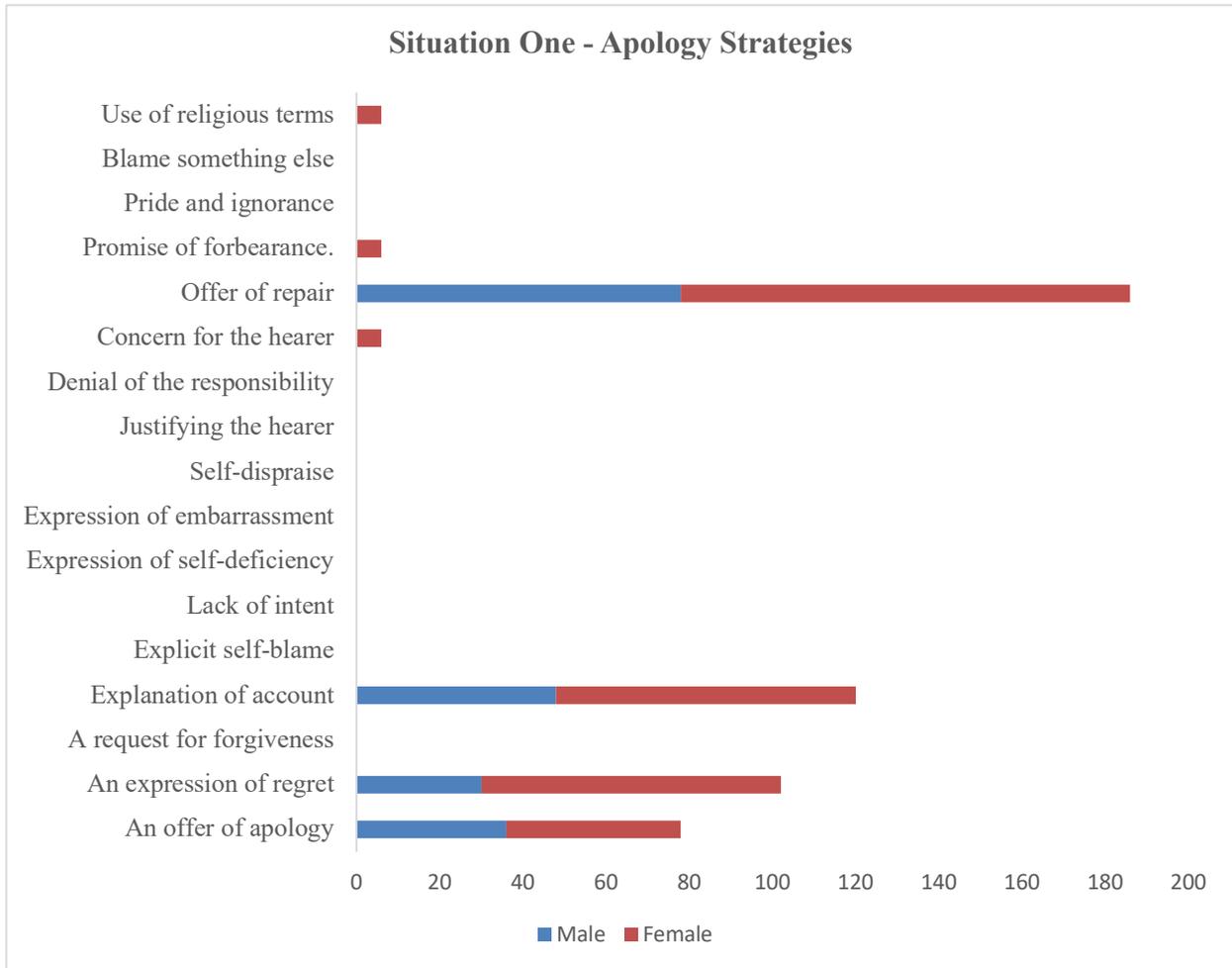
Situation one referred to postponing of meeting by teacher which characterises the DCT situation in term of offence related to time (T), severity of offence as low (L), social power as high (H) and social distance as medium (MD) (see Table 5). In this situation, the apology strategy that was frequently used is ‘offer of repair’ (182) followed by explanation of account (120), an expression of regret (102) and an offer of apology (78). The results of the analysis of apology strategies in this situation are shown in Table 14 below which are then graphically depicted in Figure 19.

Table 14: Situation One Apology Strategies

<b>Situation One</b>				
Type of offence	<b>T</b>			
Severity of offence	<b>L</b>			
Social power	<b>HP</b>			
Social distance	<b>MD</b>			
<b>Category</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>An expression of apology</b>	An offer of apology	36	42	78
	An expression of regret	30	72	102
	A request for forgiveness	0	0	0
<b>Explanation or account</b>	Explanation of account	48	72	120
<b>Taking or Acknowledgment of responsibility</b>	Explicit self-blame	0	0	0
	Lack of intent	0	0	0
	Expression of self-deficiency	0	0	0
	Expression of embarrassment	0	0	0
	Self-dispraise	0	0	0
	Justifying the hearer	0	0	0
	Denial of the responsibility	0	0	0
<b>Concern for the hearer</b>	Concern for the hearer	0	6	6
<b>Offer of repair</b>	Offer of repair	78	108	186
<b>Promise of non-recurrence</b>	Promise of forbearance	0	6	6
<b>Pride and ignorance</b>	Pride and ignorance	0	0	0
<b>Blame something else</b>	Blame something else	0	0	0
<b>Use of religious terms</b>	Use of religious terms	0	6	6

This table shows the use of apology strategy in situation one. The analysis of the use of apology strategies was further categorised between male and female to see any identifiable significance differences.

Figure 18: Situation One Apology Strategies



This figure graphically captures the results shown in Table 8, highlighting the use of apology strategies in situation one.

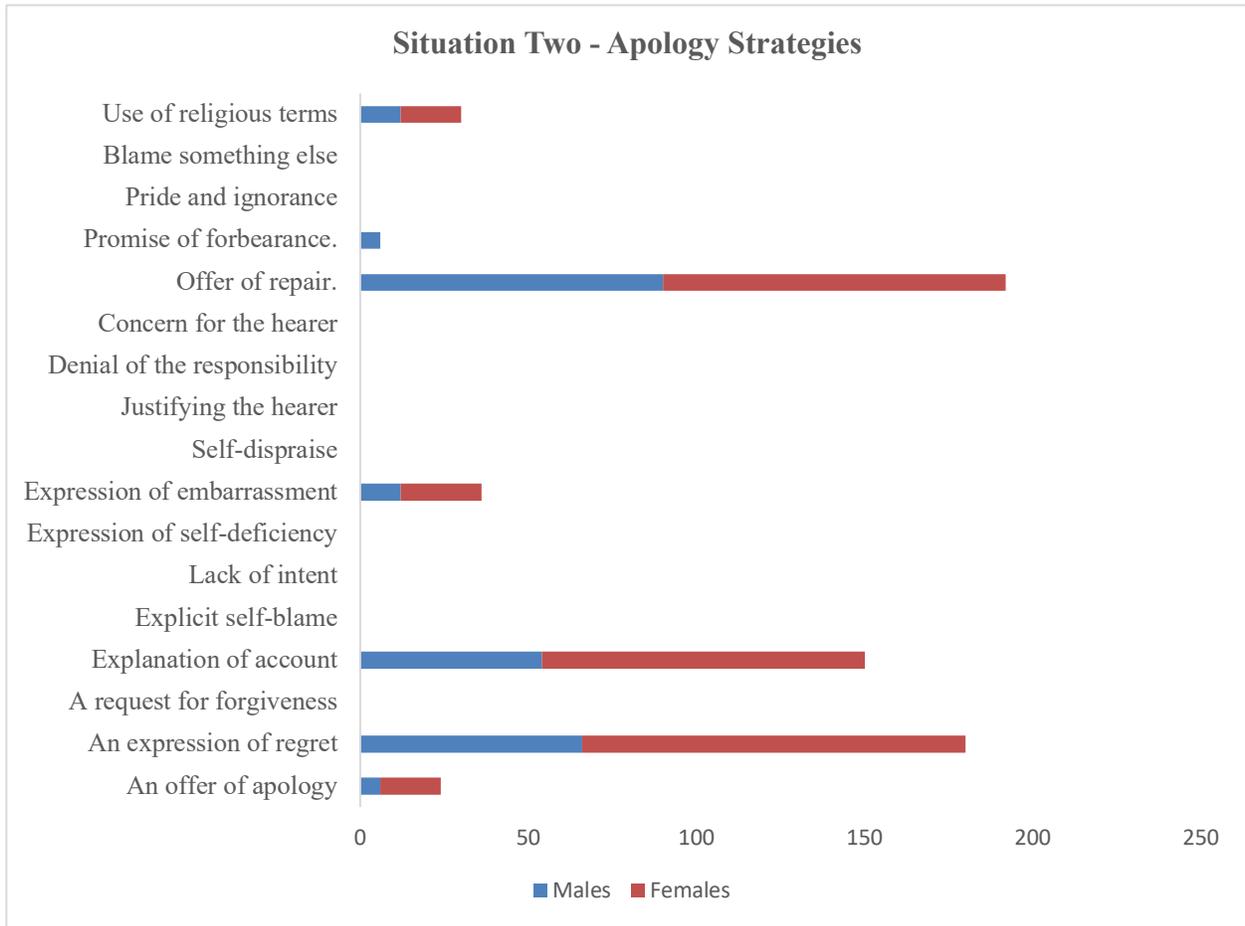
When the results of the use of apology strategies in situation one are analysed further based on gender, its revealed that female participants offered other apology strategies of use of religious terms, promise of forbearance and expressed concern for the hearer which were not observed in male participants. These three apology strategies (use of religious terms, promise of forbearance and concern for the hearer) seem to portray more feminine characteristics valued more by females (Smulyan, 2004) such as caring, helping or being emotional. In other words, based on

the situation results only, the characteristics that seem common across the apology strategies that only female participants used have some reference to paying more attention to the hearer's feelings. These results are consistent with Holmes (1995) study that also showed that females are more caring for the interlocutor's feelings. Ogiermann (2018) also highlighted the use of these positive apology strategies in English, Polish and Russian female speakers that take into account the hearer's feelings, employing a more positive than negative approach to apologising. The use of positive strategies highlights friendliness and camaraderie between the interlocutors and hearer (Jansen & Janssen, 2010).

#### **4.3.2 Analysis of Situation Two**

Situation two involved a damaged book offence between friends. As such, the type of offence is social commitment whilst the social distance is low (LD) and social power is equal (EP). The analysis of the apology strategies in this situation revealed the results graphically depicted in Figure 20 below.

Figure 19: Situation Two Apology Strategies



This figure shows the use of apology strategies in situation two. The use of apology strategies in this situation is further categorised between male and female.

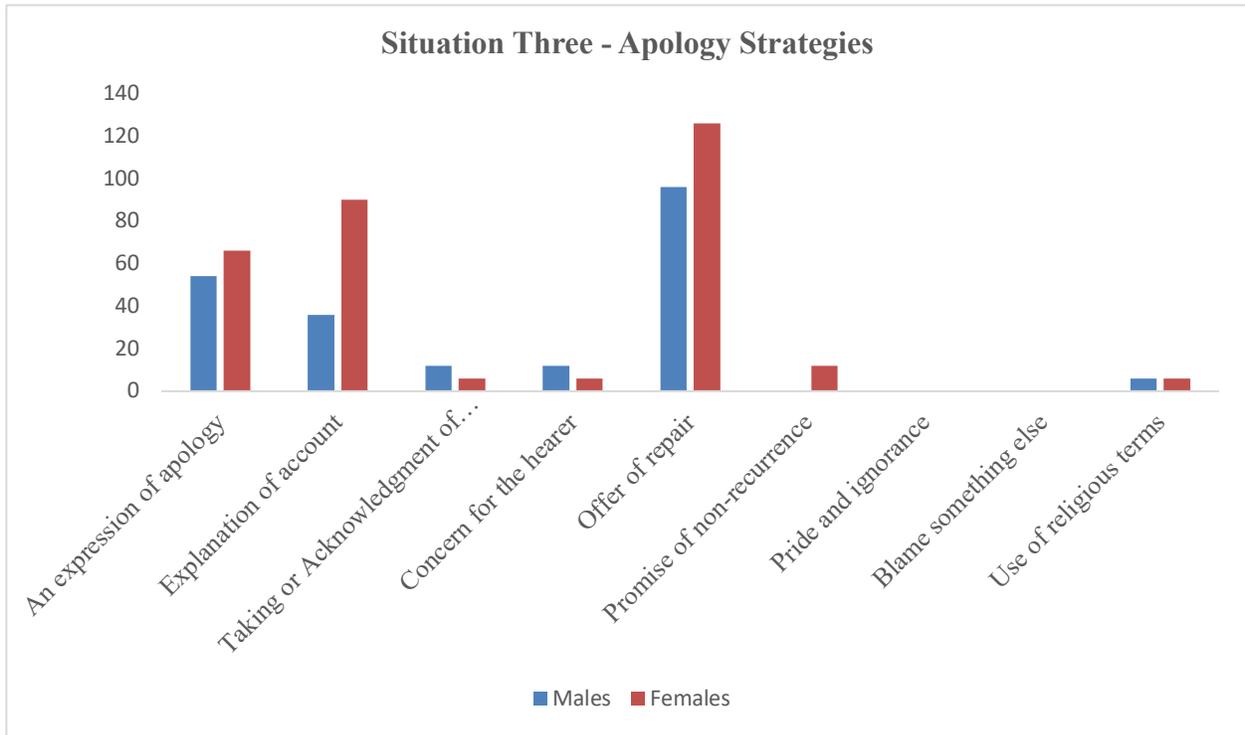
The most used apology strategies in this situation were offer of repair, an expression of regret and explanation of account respectively. Other apology strategies evidenced were expression of embarrassment, use of religious terms and an offer of apology. Interestingly, unlike in situation one where only females had used the promise of forbearance strategy, in this situation, only males had used this strategy. This is contrary to Ogiermann (2018) study that identified females to be more inclined to use positive apology strategies (i.e. offer of repair, promise of forbearance and concern for the hearer) but similar to Al-Marrani & Sazalie (2010) study that found men to

use more positive and indirect apology strategies. As discussed for situation one above, positive politeness strategies pay more attention to the hearer's feelings and wish to promote a sense of friendliness and camaraderie between the interlocutors. Further, both male and female participants used religious terms strategy in this situation unlike in situation one. This might be reflective of the perceived severity of the offence between interlocutors of low social distance (friends). In this case, the use of religious terms gives the apologetic expression more power (Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Alsulayyi, 2016). The use of religious terms has been highlighted in several Arabic language studies (Al-Marrani & Sazalie, 2010; Al-Zumor, 2011; Banikalef et al., 2015; Hussein & Hammouri, 1998; Soliman, 2003) but shown to exist in different situations in combination with other strategies (see section 4.4 also). Another apology strategy that was used in this situation was expression of embarrassment which was not used in situation one. The usage of these apology strategies highlights in part, the nature of the interlocutors who are friends. Soliman (2003) study also highlighted the use of expression of embarrassment apology strategy in Egyptians when interlocutors had low social distance.

### **4.3.3 Analysis of Situation Three**

Situation three involved a parent to child relationship with the offence type being a social commitment. In this situation, the social power is high (HP) whilst the social distance is low (LD). The analysis of the apology strategies in this situation revealed the results shown in Figure 21 below.

Figure 20: Situation Three Apology Strategies



This figure shows the use of apology strategies in situation three. The use of apology strategies in this situation is further categorised between male and female.

As depicted in Figure 21, the highest apology strategy in this situation was the offer of repair (222) followed by an explanation of account (126) and expression of apology (120). In the case of offer of repair apology strategy, Alsulayyi (2016) study showed that this was commonly used among Saudis contrary to Al-Zumor (2011) study that showed less offer of repair strategy among Arabic speakers. In Alsulayyi's (2016) study, it was found that Saudis are more willing to offer repair for an offence followed by an explanation. This can be depicted, for example, in apologetic expressions such as *'I will buy you the best gift tomorrow and we will go eat lunch and play; I am very sorry my darling'*. A further exploration of the expression of apology strategy showed the prominence of an expression of regret, reflected in expressions such as *'I am sorry, I will pay for all the damages'* which capture both expression of regret (*I am sorry*) an

offer of repair (*I will pay for all the damages*). However, this was more in female interlocutors than male interlocutors. This finding is consistent with Rothman & Gandossy (1982) study that found that females were more willing to acknowledge responsibility and express regret for their offences than men. However, Al-Sobh (2013) study did not identify this distinction in the case of Jordanians speakers. In addition, female interlocutors offered a promise of non-recurrence as compared to male participants who didn't use this strategy in apologising. Section 5.2 below discusses the use of apology strategies according to gender in more detail across the 15 DCT situations.

#### **4.3.4 Analysis of Situation Four<sup>8</sup>**

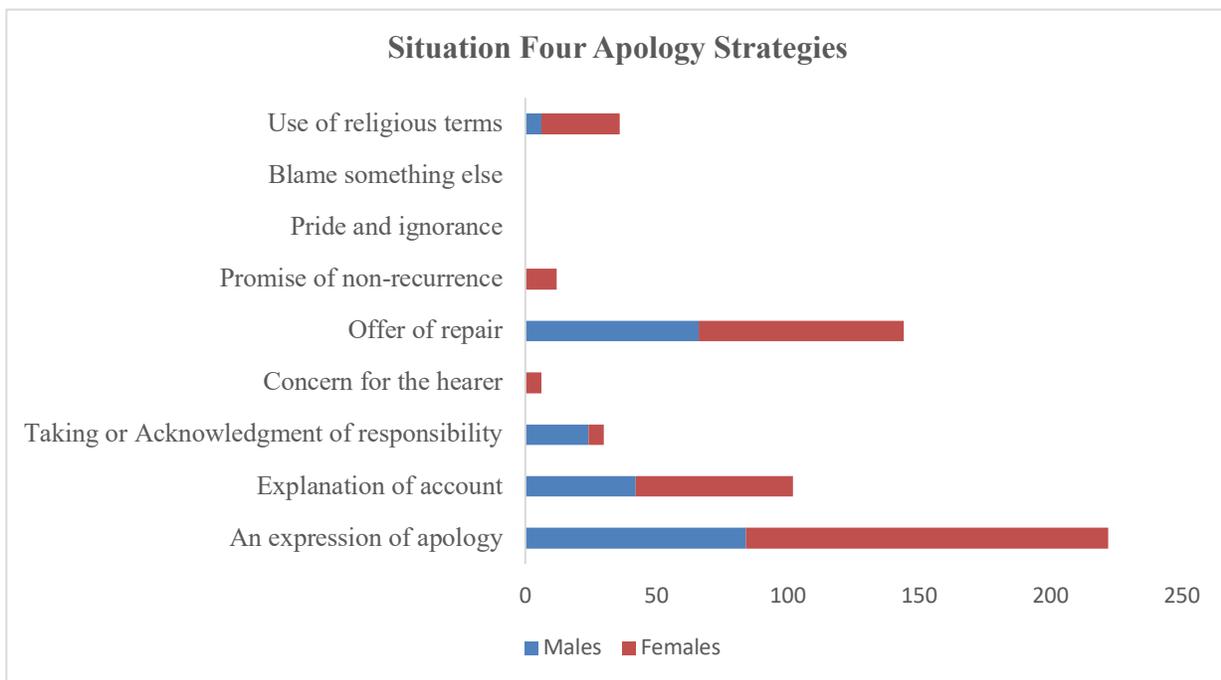
In situation four which involved a student delaying in returning book to the tutor, and thus, the type of offence relating to time (T) with the social power being high (HP) and social relation being medium (MD), the results of the apology strategies are graphically depicted in Figure 22 below. Of the apology strategies, 40% (222) involved as expression of apology strategy. This expression of apology category was composed of 81% expression of regret apology strategy and 13% request for forgiveness. Following on from an expression of apology (40%) was the offer of repair (26%) and explanation of account (18%). Interestingly in this situation too, female participants employed also an offer of apology (12), concern for the hearer (6) and promise of forbearance (12) which male participants did not use. This is largely consistent with Ogiermann (2018) findings of the use of positive apology strategies in females. On the other hand, a further

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<sup>8</sup> Although including all the situations was not included in the examiners' comments, it was mentioned by the Internal Examiner in the viva that the discussion of the situations should not be in the appendix in case important findings are lost.

examination of the taking or acknowledgment of responsibility apology category showed that male participants employed explicit self-blame (6), lack of intent (6) and expression of embarrassment (12) which female interlocutors did not utilise when apologising. These results are contrary to Gonzales et al. (1990) study that showed expression of embarrassment and sorrow as being more prevalent in females than males.

Figure 21: Situation Four Apology Strategies



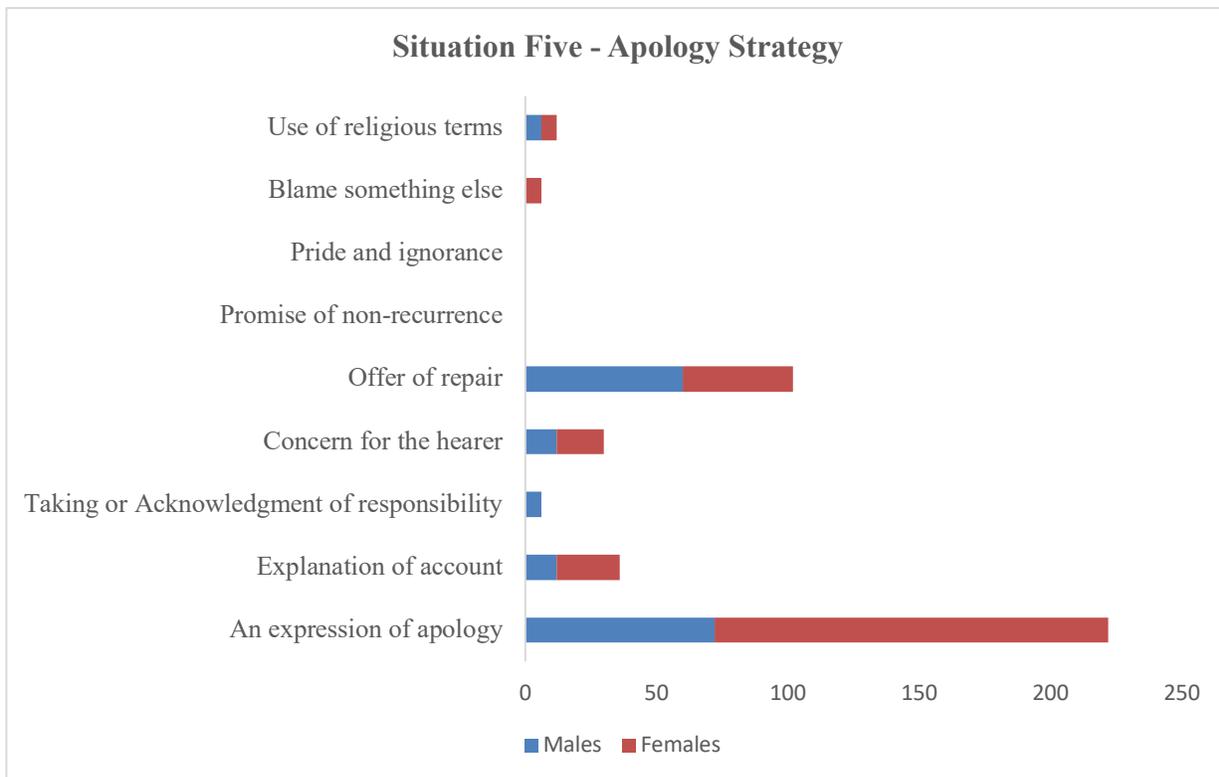
This figure shows the use of apology strategies in situation four. The use of apology strategies in this situation is further categorised between male and female.

#### 4.3.5 Analysis of Situation Five

The DCT scenario involved two strangers with the offence type related to space (S) and severity of offence being high (H). The social distance of strangers is high (HD) whilst their social power is equal (EP). The analysis of the apology strategies in this situation revealed the findings

graphically depicted in Figure 22 below. The highest apology category strategy used in this case was an expression of apology (54%) which involved mainly an expression of regret strategy (92%) with an offer of apology accounting for the other 8%. An expression of apology is followed by an offer of repair (25%), explanation of account (9%), concern for the hearer (6%) and use of religious terms (3%). When the analysis is delved deeper to look at distinctions between male and female usage of apology strategies in this situation, it was observed that females were more willing to offer regret for the situation whilst male more willing to offer repair. In addition, females would blame something else whilst male had explicit self-blame. Mohamadi (2014) study showed that self-blame apology strategy was mainly used by Iranian females than males, contrary to the findings in this situation.

Figure 22: Situation Five Apology Strategies

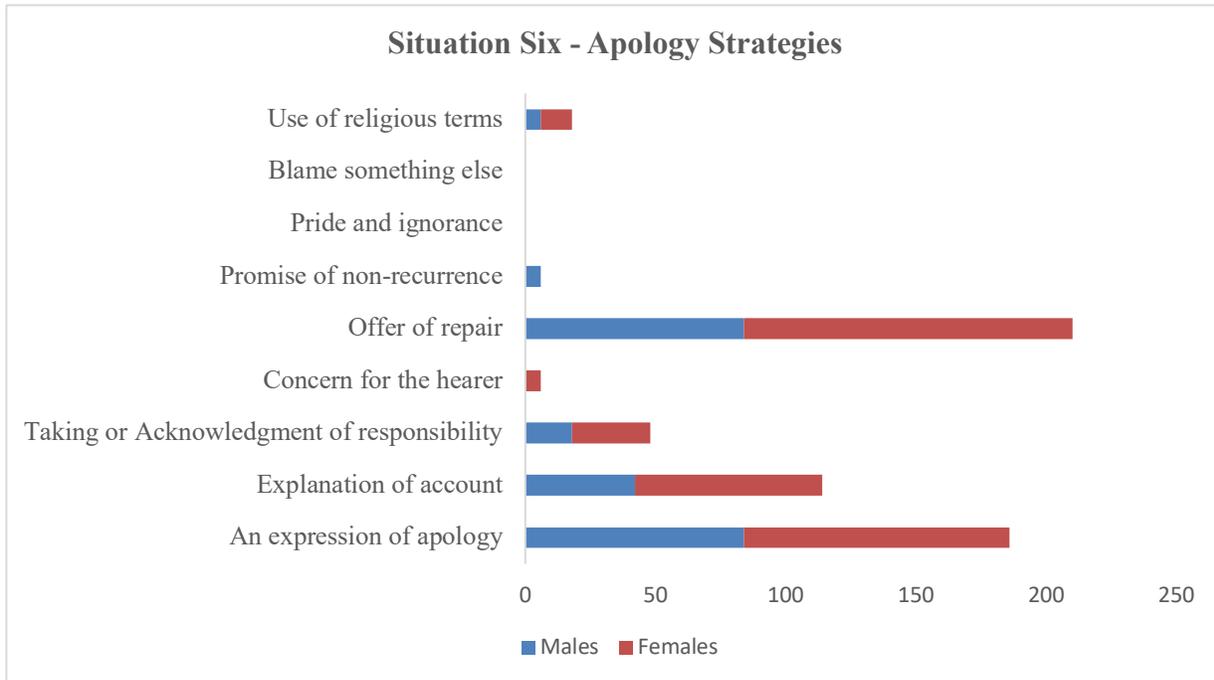


This figure shows the use of apology strategies in situation five. The use of apology strategies in this situation is further categorised between male and female.

#### 4.3.6 Analysis of Situation Six

The type of offence in situation six was possession damage (PD) and socio-religious commitment (SR) as it involved the damage of a vehicle with sheer negligence and pretence which makes the offence's severity high (H). The interlocutors are friends and therefore, the social distance is low (LD) whilst the social power is equal (EP). The results of the analysis of the apology strategies in this situation are graphically depicted in Figure 24 below which shows the offer of repair strategy as most prominent (36%) followed by an expression of apology (32%) and explanation of account (19%). Fraser (1981, p. 262) argues that "repair can be offered without any implication of responsibility". However, in this situation, the offer of repair and acknowledgement of responsibility were both utilised. Thus, consistent with Lubecka (2000, p. 170) the function of this apology strategy is to "reinforce the sincerity of the apology presented and to show the apologiser's concern for the offended person". A further examination of an expression of apology category revealed an expression of regret strategy (68%) and an offer of apology (29%). Interestingly though, a request for forgiveness strategy and promise of non-recurrence were used by male participants only. Similarly, only female participants expressed concern for the hearer and explicitly employed lack of intent strategy. The apology strategy of the use of religious terms was used by both males and females but only in limited cases (3%).

Figure 23: Situation Six Apology Strategies



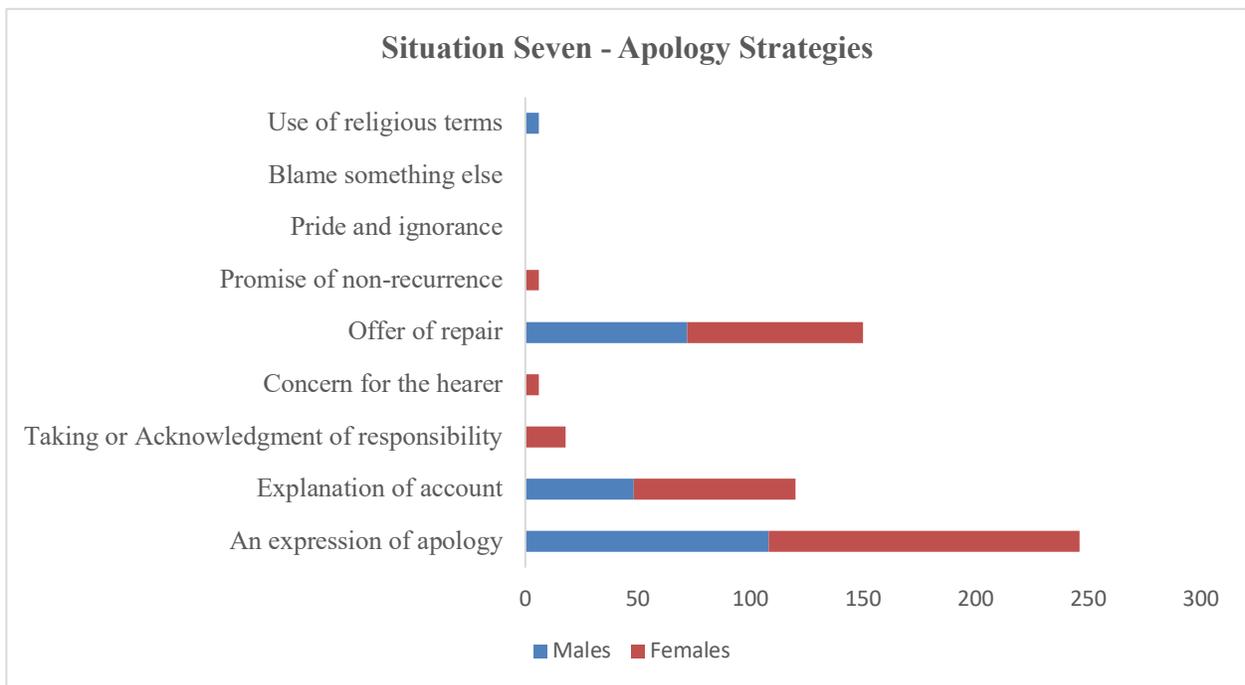
This figure shows the use of apology strategies in situation six. The use of apology strategies in this situation is further categorised between male and female.

#### 4.3.7 Analysis of Situation Seven

Situation seven involved a wrong bill given to a customer which makes the offence type more of a social commitment (SC) but perceived of high severity (H) as the customer feels cheated/lied to. The social distance is high (HD) since it involves interlocutors that don't know each other while the social power is high (HP) as the restaurant manager could be perceived as having higher social status. The results of the analysis of apology strategies is graphically represented in Figure 24 below. What is evident from the results is the high usage of an expression of apology strategies (45%) followed by an offer of repair (27%) and explanation of account (22%). In the expression of apology, what was used the most was an offer of apology (61%) and an expression of regret (32%). In addition, a request for forgiveness strategy was also utilised which, for

instance, was not used in situations one, two and five. In this situation, both male and female participants employed a request for forgiveness strategy unlike in situation six where only male participants had used it. A further review of the results shows the use of religious terms apology strategy by males only whilst females were willing to acknowledge responsibility and also promise non-recurrence. Females' willingness to acknowledge responsibility in apologising was also noted in Bataineh & Bataineh (2006) study on Jordanian Arabic speakers. Females were also expressing a concern for the hearer which males did not employ.

Figure 24: Situation Seven Apology Strategies

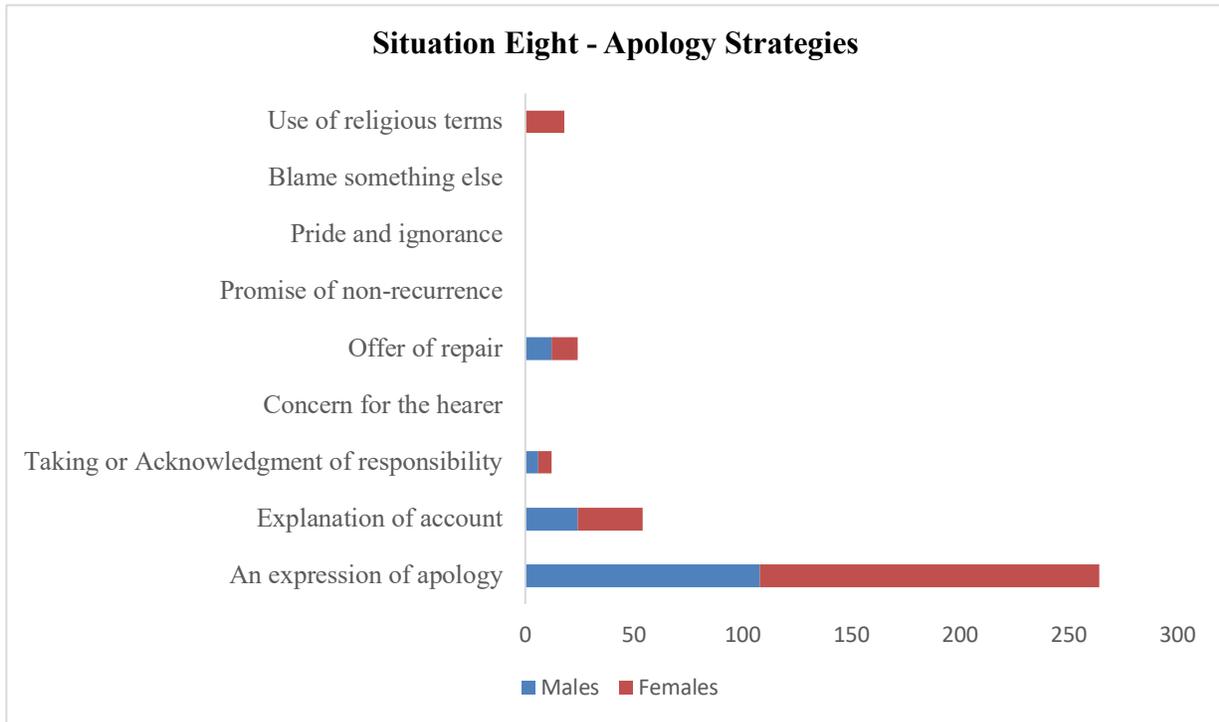


This figure shows the use of apology strategies in situation seven. The use of apology strategies in this situation is further categorised between male and female.

#### 4.3.8 Analysis of Situation Eight

Situation eight involved two strangers with the offence of accidentally stepping on a person's toe. The offence type relates to space (S) and also possession damage (PD) whose severity could be perceived as low (L). Because the interlocutors are both strangers, the social distance is high (SD) whilst the social power is equal (EP). An analysis of the apology strategies employed in this situation is graphically presented in Figure 26 below which revealed only five strategies with the highest being an expression of apology (71%). This expression of apology category is mainly made up of an expression of regret apology strategy (A2) with 222 (84%) occurrences and an offer of apology (A1) of 30 (11%) occurrences. Further, only a small proportion of both males and females employed an explanation of account strategy (15%), offer of repair (6%) and acknowledgement of responsibility (6%). Interestingly too, only female participants utilised the use of religious term strategy. Contrary, in Banikalef et al. (2015) study, swearing by God's name was second in frequency among Jordanians but used by both males and females in apologising.

Figure 25: Situation Eight Apology Strategies



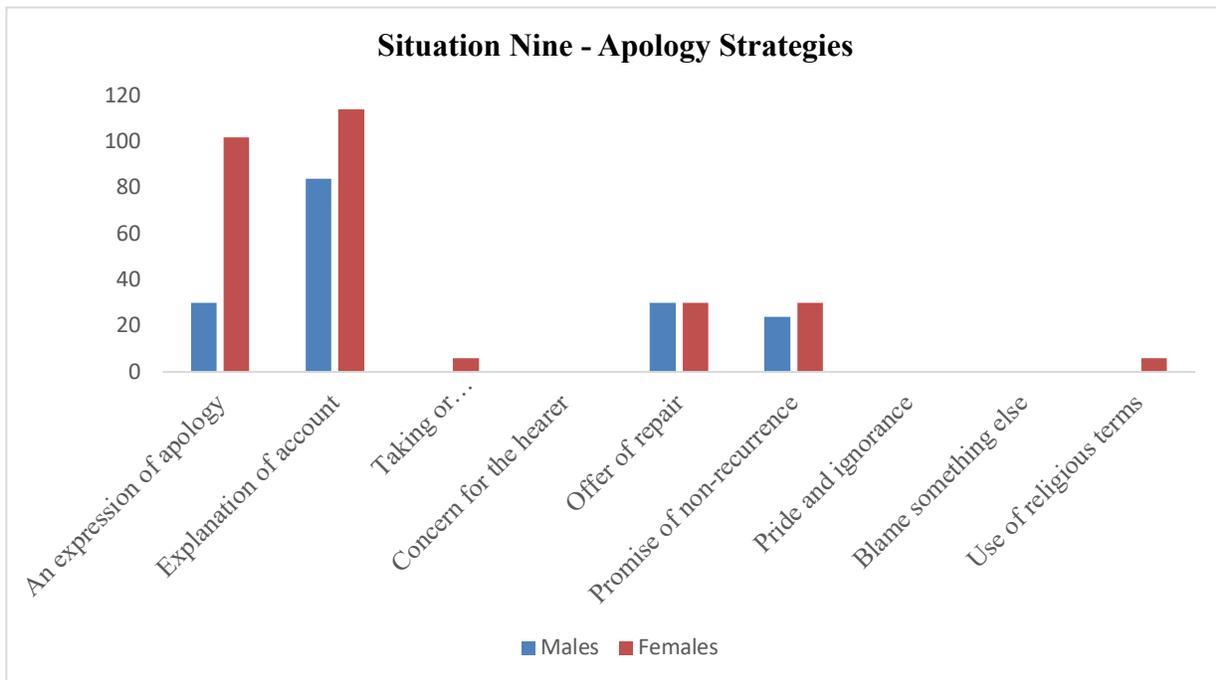
This figure shows the use of apology strategies in situation eight. The use of apology strategies in this situation is further categorised between male and female.

#### 4.3.9 Analysis of Situation Nine

This situation involved a social commitment (SC) offence between two close friends. Since the interlocutors are close friends, the social distance is low (LD) whilst the social power is equal (EP). The offence type is perceived as high (H) since a close friend was abusive and used strong language which upset and hurt the other person. An analysis of the apology strategies employed by the DCT participants is graphically depicted in Figure 27 below. The results of the apology strategy analysis show a high employment of an explanation of account apology strategy (44%) followed by an expression of apology (29%), offer of repair (13%) and promise of non-

recurrence (12%). The high use of explanation of account was also noted in Ghanbari et al. (2015) study on Kurdish bilinguals in Iran who used both explicit and implicit explanations. A high disproportionate use of the apology strategy, an expression of regret (A2), is observed between male and female participants. Female participants employed an expression of regret relatively more than male participants, 84 times as compared to 18 times respectively. Banikalef et al. (2015) also showed the high usage of expression of regret among Jordanian EFL (English as a Foreign Language); however, they did not find a significance difference between males and females. Interestingly in this situation also, only females utilised the religious term apology strategy. The use of religious terms as intensifies expresses some form of sincerity (Soliman, 2003) especially in this situation of equal social power and low social distance.

Figure 26: Situation Nine Apology Strategies

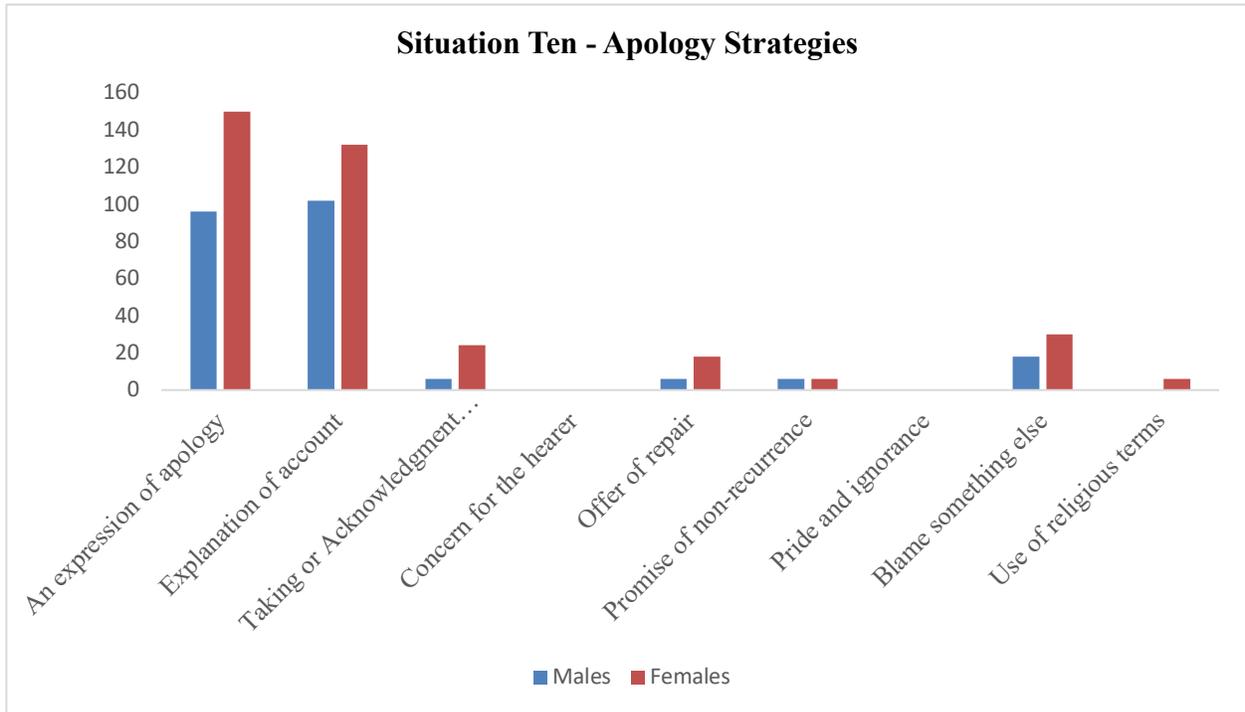


This figure shows the use of apology strategies in situation nine. The use of apology strategies in this situation is further categorised between male and female.

#### 4.3.10 Analysis of Situation Ten

This situation involved a time (T) offence whose severity of high (H) as it might result in the prospective job seeker not securing a new job. The social distance and social power between the interlocutors are both high (HD and HP). The results from the analysis of the apology strategies used in this situation are highlighted in Figure 28 below. Two main apology strategies were used in this situation, an expression of apology (41%) and an explanation of account (39%). In addition, participants employed the new sub-category of blame something else (7%) while 5% acknowledgement responsibility of the offence. A further examination of an expression of apology category revealed almost similar occurrences for an expression of regret (51%) and an offer of apology (44%). This is consistent with the results of Banikalef et al. (2015) study that showed a high inclination to use an expression of regret than an offer of apology when the social status was high. Some distinctions, however, were observed between male and female participants in the usage of four apology strategies (a request for forgiveness (A3), expression of embarrassment (C4), denial of the responsibility (C7) and religious terms (I)). The three strategies of expression of embarrassment (C4), denial of the responsibility (C7) and religious term (I) were used only by female participants whilst the strategy a request for forgiveness (A3) was utilised by male participants only. Similarly, Bagherinejad & Jadidoleslam (2015) found that Iranian males use the request for forgiveness strategy more than females when employed as a single strategy. However, Bagherinejad & Jadidoleslam (2015) also revealed that females use the request for forgiveness strategy more when combined with other strategies.

Figure 27: Situation Ten Apology Strategies



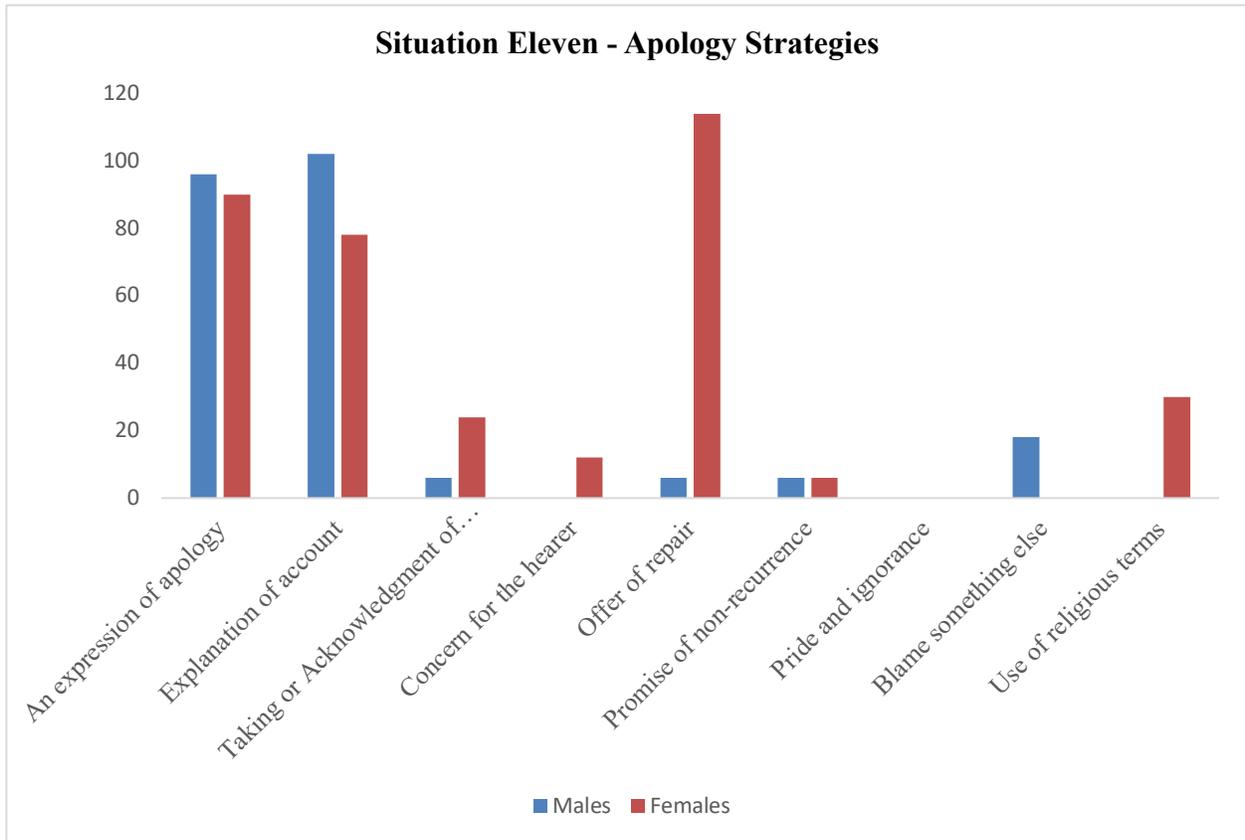
This figure shows the use of apology strategies in situation ten. The use of apology strategies in this situation is further categorised between male and female.

#### 4.3.11 Analysis of Situation Eleven

Situation eleven involved both a time (T) and social commitment (SC) offence in which a work colleague has failed to honour a debt repayment to another work colleague. The related social distance is medium (MD) as these are acquaintances whilst the social power is equal (EP). This offence can be perceived of high severity (H) that can potentially damage relationships. The results of the apology strategies analysis are shown in

Figure 28 below. Three main apology strategies were employed, an expression of apology (32%), explanation of account (31%) and offer of repair (21%). Significant among the female participants was the use of offer of repair which accounted for 20% of all occurrences. Females also acknowledgment responsibility (C2, C4), showed concern for the hearer and used amplifiers through religious term strategy (I) which male participants did not utilise. These apology strategies reflect a high concern to keep the relationship among the interlocutors with equal social power. Some studies have shown the concern for the hearer to be more in females than males (Ogiermann, 2018; Rothman & Gandossy, 1982). Interestingly too, male participants were more inclined to give explanation to support the apology (B) and would blame something else (H) instead of taking or acknowledging responsibility as did female participants. These results are also consistent with Bataineh & Bataineh (2006) study in the case of Jordanian males that tended to downgrade their responsibilities by blaming the interlocutor or something else.

Figure 28: Situation Eleven Apology Strategies



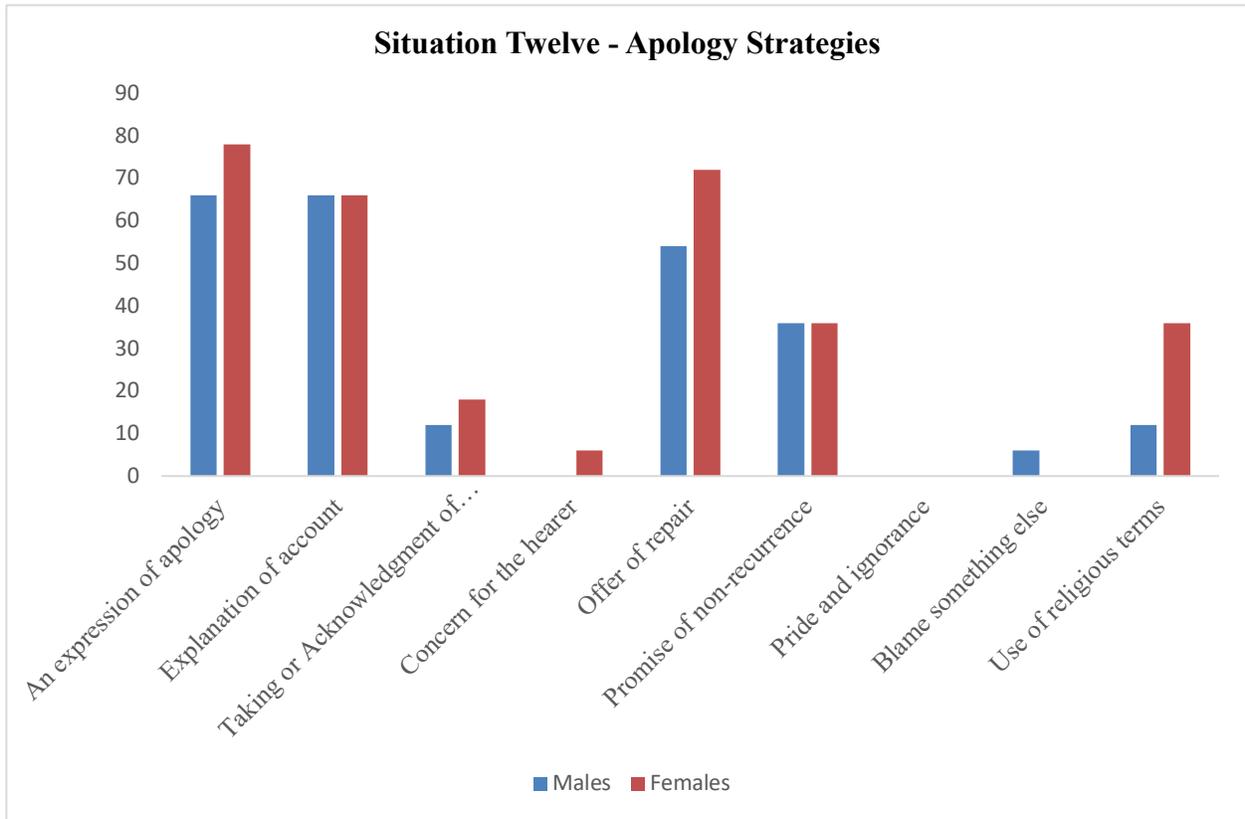
This figure shows the use of apology strategies in situation eleven. The use of apology strategies in this situation is further categorised between male and female.

#### 4.3.12 Analysis of Situation Twelve

Situation twelve involved another time (T) related offence in which an employee failed to submit a report to the manager before the due date. As this is the first time that the employee has missed a deadline, the severity of the offence could be perceived as low (L). The relationship, however, between the manager and the employee implies high social power (HP) but medium social distance (MD). The analysis of the apology strategies from the DCT situation revealed the results graphically depicted in Figure 30 below. What is evident from the results on apology strategies used in this situation was an expression of apology (26%) composed of an offer of apology

(50%) and an expression of regret (50%). This was followed by an explanation of account (B) at 23%, an offer of repair (E) at 22%, promise of non-recurrence (13%). What is observable also is the level of similarity between male and female in the employment of these strategies. A distinction arises, however, in that females expressed a concern for the hearer (D) whilst males seem to blame something else (H). This is contrary, for instance, to Ghanbari et al. (2015) study that showed no difference in concern for the hearer between genders when apologising despite other studies highlighting the frequency of this strategy among females (Ogiermann, 2018; Rothman & Gandossy, 1982). The use of religious terms in the apology strategies was also noticed in both male and female participants.

Figure 29: Situation Twelve Apology Strategies



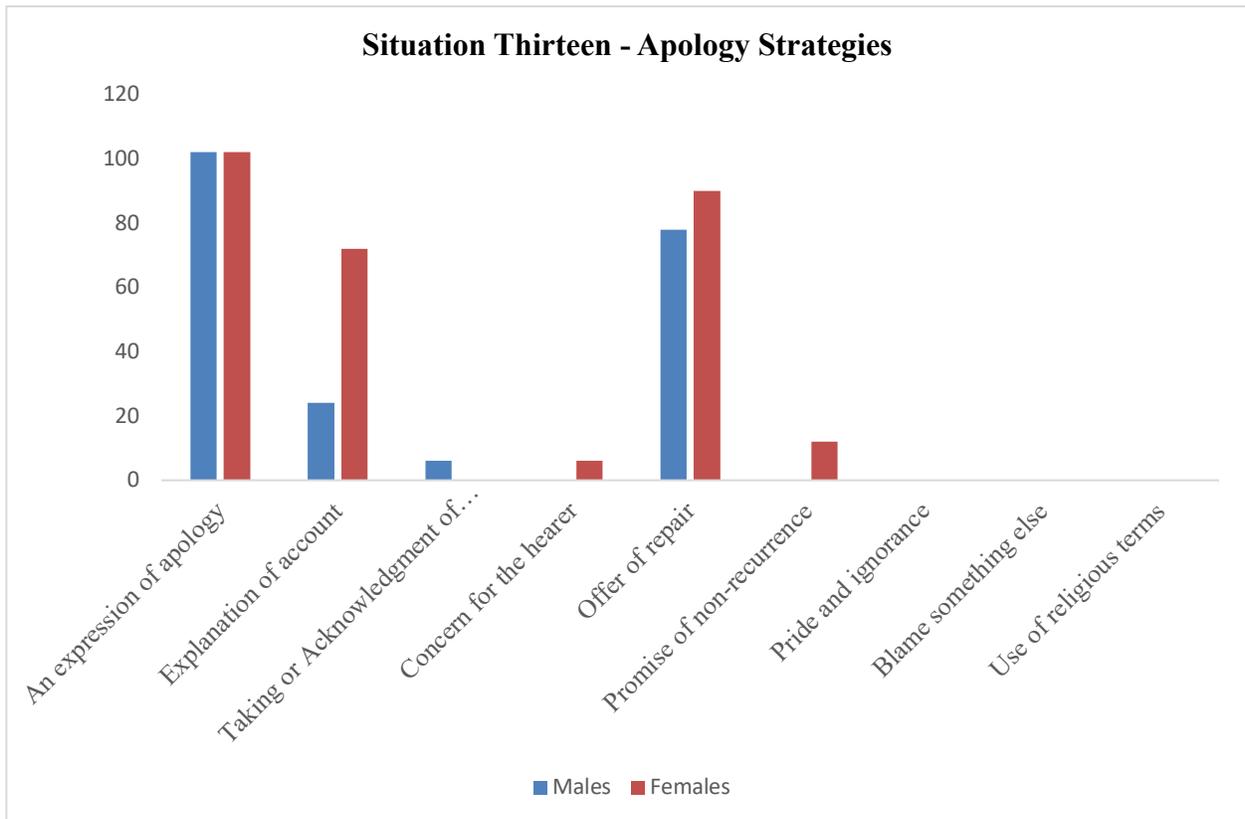
This figure shows the use of apology strategies in situation twelve. The use of apology strategies in this situation is further categorised between male and female.

#### 4.3.13 Analysis of Situation Thirteen

The interlocutors in situation thirteen are close friends and thus, the social distance is low (LD) and social power is equal (EP). The situation involved a social commitment (SC) offence in which a close friendly wrongly put sugar in a cup of coffee to a diabetic friend. The offence severity could be perceived as low (L). An analysis of the apology strategies used in this situation showed the results graphically depicted in Figure 31 below. Three key strategies were used in this situation, an expression of apology (41%), offer of repair (34%) and an explanation of account (20%). The exploration of an expression of apology revealed the usage of apology

strategies of an expression of regret (79%) and a request for forgiveness (15%). Expression of regret apology strategy has been found to be often used in situations where interlocutors are relatively close (Al-Sobh, 2013; Rothman & Gandossy, 1982). Some distinctions are observable with respect to apology strategies of an offer of apology (A1), explicit self-blame (C1), concern for the hearer (D) and promise of forbearance (F) between male and female. Only males utilised an offer of apology (A1) and explicit self-blame (C1) strategy whilst only women employed the concern for the hearer (D) and promise of forbearance (F) strategies. However, there was no usage of the sub-categories of pride and ignorance (G), blame something else (H) and religious terms (I) strategies.

Figure 30: Situation Thirteen Apology Strategies

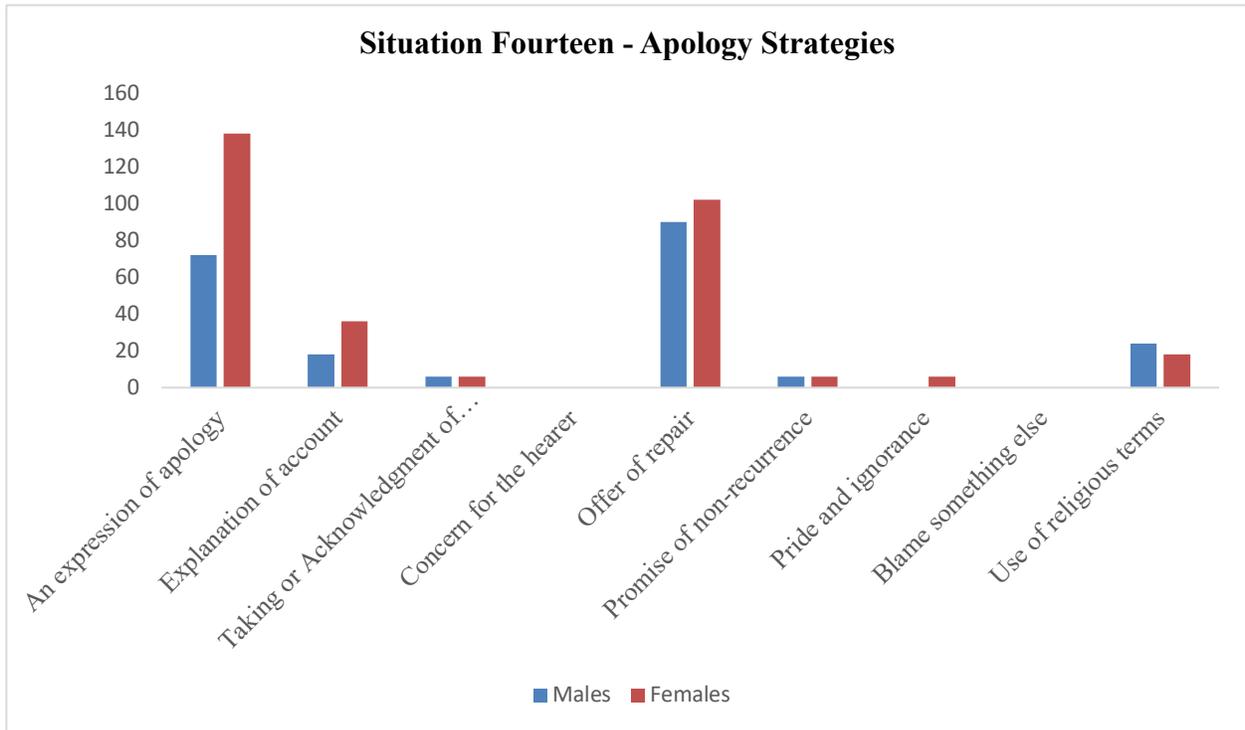


This figure shows the use of apology strategies in situation thirteen. The use of apology strategies in this situation is further categorised between male and female.

#### 4.3.14 Analysis of Situation Fourteen

In this situation, the offence type is possession damage (PD) in which a mother is supposed to apologise for her child breaking a valuable vase in her friend's house. The severity of the offence can be perceived as low (L) while the social distance between the interlocutors is low (LD) and social power is equal (EP). The analysis of the apology strategies in this situation revealed relatively similar usage between male and female participants in the strategies offer of repair, use of religious terms, promise of non-recurrence and taking or acknowledgment of responsibility. As depicted in Figure 32, the highest used apology strategies are an expression of apology (40%), offer of repair (36%), explanation of account (10%) and religious terms (8%). A further examination of an expression of apology category revealed that 71% of this was attributed to an expression of regret and an 29% to offer of apology. The explicit use of expression of regret and offer of repair is inconsistent with Al-Laheebi & Ya'Allah (2014) argument that Saudis do not like to apologise outrightly but instead prefer to shift responsibility. Further, as highlighted by Alhojailan (2019), invoking God's name is a common way among Saudis to intensify the apology, making the addressee more inclined to accept the apology. In addition, there was use of pride and ignorance (G) apology strategy by female participants only.

Figure 31: Situation Fourteen Apology Strategies



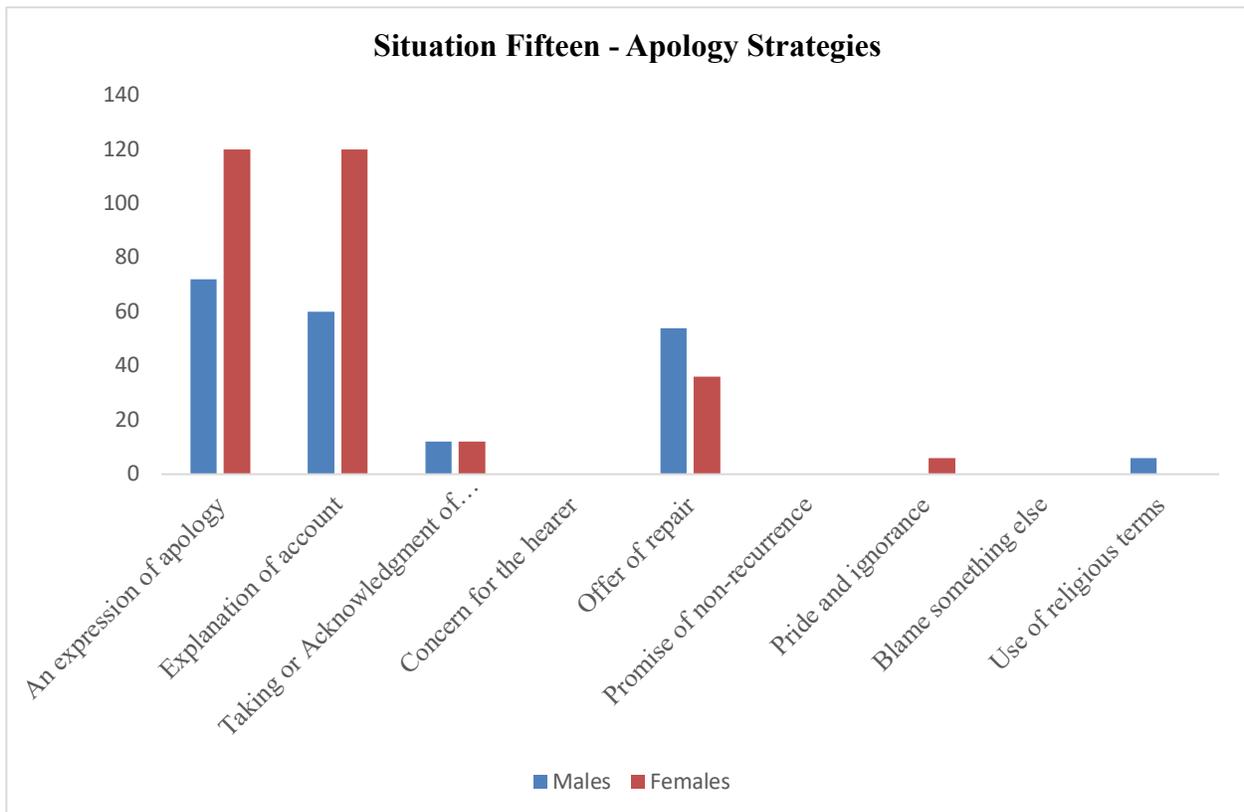
This figure shows the use of apology strategies in situation fourteen. The use of apology strategies in this situation is further categorised between male and female.

#### 4.3.15 Analysis of Situation Fifteen

Situation fifteen involved a teacher and student engagement in which the offence type related to time (T) while the severity is low (L) as it involves postponing a student appointment due to another urgent meeting. The social distance in this situation is medium (MD) whilst the social power is high (HP). The analysis of the apology strategies in this situation revealed the results graphically depicted in Figure 80 below. As shown in Figure 33, there were three main apology strategies used in this situation, an expression of apology (39%), explanation of account (36%) and offer of repair (18%). A further exploration of an expression of apology category showed the composition as 63% an expression of regret (A2) and 34% an offer of apology (A1). In addition,

a small and equal proportion of male and female participants employed explicit self-blame (C1) strategy. The use of self-blame apology strategy is inconsistent with Hussein & Hammouri (1998) study that found Arabic speakers to be more inclined to blame something else or attack the offended. On the other hand, Bagherinejad & Jadidoleslam (2015) identified the use of this apology strategy in combination with other strategies in the case of Iranian Arabic speakers. A distinction was observable in the use of apology strategies of a request for forgiveness (A3), denial of the responsibility (C7) and pride and ignorance (G) as only female participants utilised these strategies instead of males. On the other hand, only male participants used self-dispraise (C5) and religious term strategies (I).

Figure 32: Situation Fifteen Apology Strategies



This figure shows the use of apology strategies in situation fifteen. The use of apology strategies in this situation is further categorised between male and female.

In the next section, the focus was directed at analysing the use of a combination of apology strategies across the 15 DCT situations.

#### **4.4 Analysis of the combination of apology strategies**

Section 3.7.1.3 highlighted that apology strategies were often used in combination with other strategies. As such, in this section, the analysis of the occurrences of the apology strategies are analysed with respect to their combination with other strategies. This helps to give an additional perspective in the context of Saudi Arabic apology speech acts on what could be perceived as effective forms of apologizing. The first stage in this combination of apology strategies analysis reveals the combination of strategies across the 15 DCT situations.

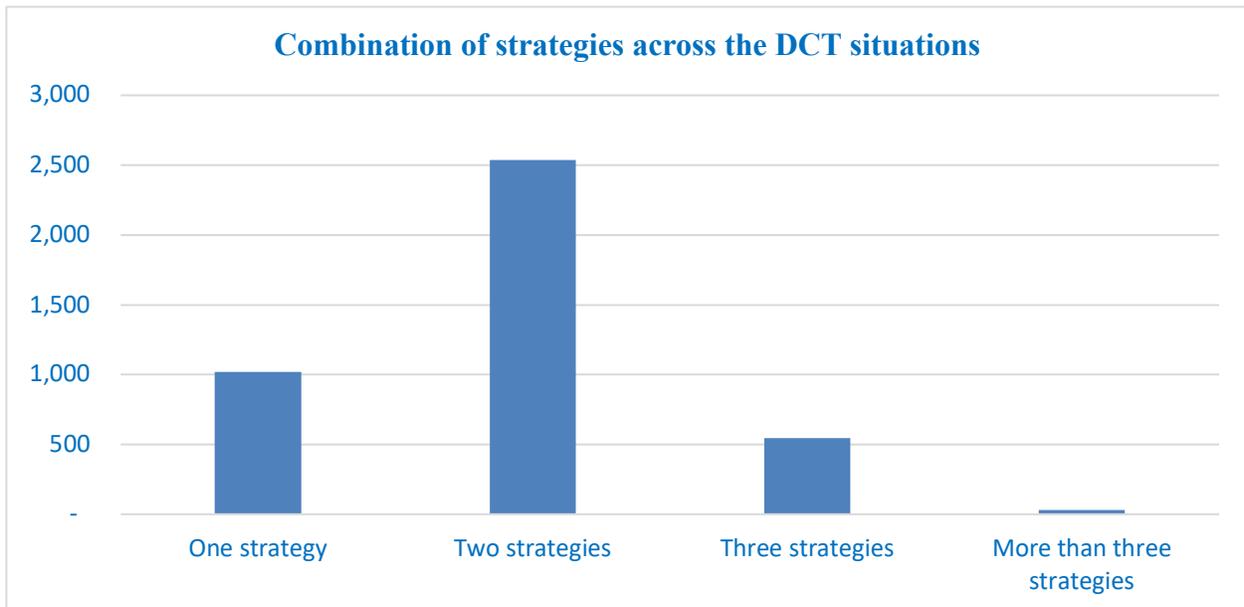
The results of the analysis of the combination of strategies across all the 15 DCT situations is shown in tabular format in Table 15 and graphically in Figure 34 below. The results showed that over 50% of the situations had employed two strategies. This is reflected by the 61% usage of two strategies compared to 25% utilization of one strategy. Only 13% of the occurrences employed three strategies and 1% more than three strategies. These results suggest that Saudi participants are more inclined to use more than one strategy when apologizing. In this research, this is reflected by the use of more than one strategy in 75% of the occurrences.

Table 15: Analysis of combination of strategies

No. of strategies	Total	Percent	Cumulative
One strategy	1,020	25%	25%
Two strategies	2,538	61%	86%
Three strategies	546	13%	99%
More than three strategies	30	1%	100%

These results are inconsistent with Alhojailan (2019) study on the apology strategies of Saudi Arabic speakers that found an equal proportion of the utilization of one strategy and two strategies accounting for 42.8% each. However, this is consistent with respect to the proportionate utilization of three and more apology strategies in Alhojailan’s (2019) study. Some methodological differences exist between Alhojailan’s (2019) study which used role-play tasks (RPTs) in six communicative contexts and this study which has used DCTs involving 15 situations. Such methodological differences may affect the differences in the findings.

Figure 33: Analysis of combination of all strategies



A further analysis was performed to identify the combination of the apology strategies across the 15 DCT situations with results shown in Table 16 and graphically depicted in Figure 35. The analysis revealed that situations 8, 5 and 9 had the highest use of only one strategy. A further examination of these situations as illustrated in section 3.6.1 revealed that these three situations were characterised by equal social power.

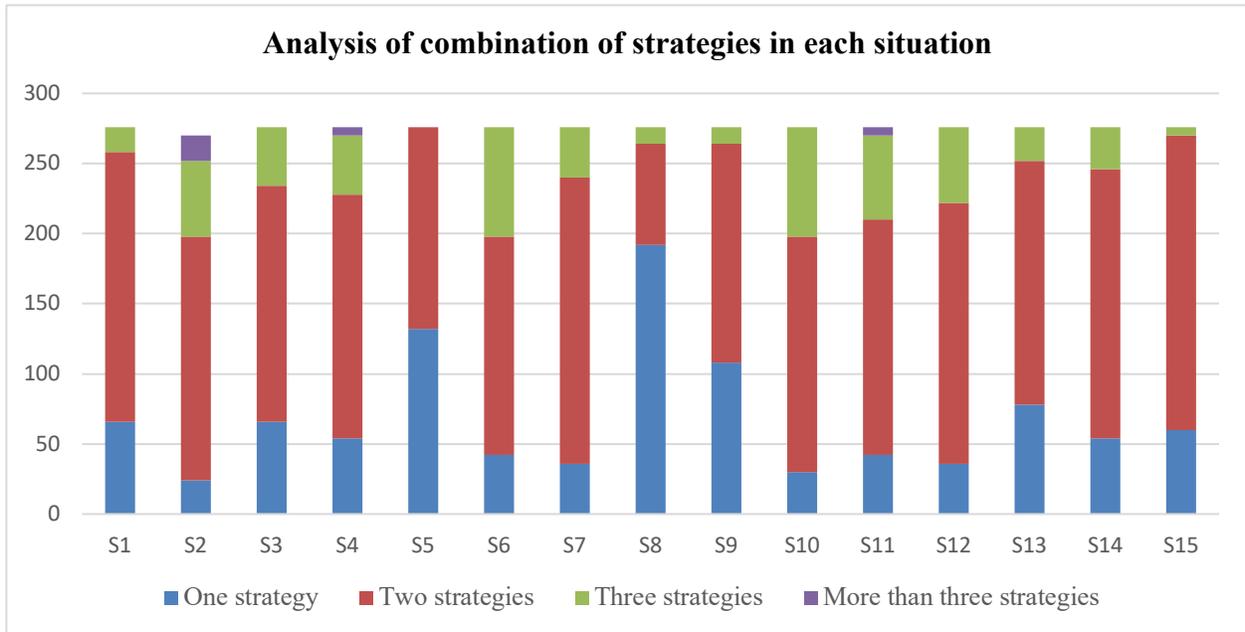
The use of two strategies was highest in all the situations except situation 8 which had one strategy use the highest. The utilisation of two strategies was relatively evenly spread across the 15 situations ranging from 6% to 8% proportionate utilisation. The highest use of two strategies was observed in situations 1, 7, 14 and 15. These four situations were characterised mostly by high social power and mixed social distance. The use of three strategies in apologising was highest in situations 6 and 10. These two situations were characterised by high severity of offence which is consistent with the argument that the nature of the offence has a significant influence on the number of apology strategies employed (McCullough et al., 1997; Gonda, 2001; Alhojailan, 2019). More than three strategies were utilised in situations 2, 4 and 11. These three situations were also characterised by high severity of the offence and had low to medium social distance. Again, this suggests that nature of the offence and the social status have an influence on the perspective of the effectiveness of the apology strategies employed, with a higher number of apology strategies perceived as showing more sincerity (Al-Hami, 1993; Hatfield & Hahn, 2011; Tahir & Pandian, 2016; Haugh & Chang, 2019).

Table 16: Analysis of combination of strategies

No. of strategies	S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10	S11	S12	S13	S14	S15	Total
One strategy	66	24	66	54	132	42	36	192	108	30	42	36	78	54	60	1,020
<i>Percentage</i>	6%	2%	6%	5%	13%	4%	4%	19%	11%	3%	4%	4%	8%	5%	6%	100%
Two strategies	192	174	168	174	144	156	204	72	156	168	168	186	174	192	210	2,538
<i>Percentage</i>	8%	7%	7%	7%	6%	6%	8%	3%	6%	7%	7%	7%	7%	8%	8%	100%
Three strategies	18	54	42	42	0	78	36	12	12	78	60	54	24	30	6	546
<i>Percentage</i>	3%	10%	8%	8%	0%	14%	7%	2%	2%	14%	11%	10%	4%	5%	1%	100%
More than three strategies	0	18	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	30
<i>Percentage</i>	0%	60%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	20%	0%	0%	0%	0%	100%

This table shows the combination of apology strategies across the 15 DCT situations. In each situation, the combination of two, three or more than three apology strategies are shown. The combination of two strategies was the most common across the DCT situations.

Figure 34: Analysis of combination of strategies in each situation



This figure shows graphically the combination of apology strategies and highlights which of the combination was proportionally higher or lower for each situation.

Further to the analysis of the combination of apology strategies according to each DCT situation, a further investigation was undertaken in order to understand each apology strategy and the combination of its respective usage. The analysis of each apology strategy and the combination of its utilisation is tabularly presented in Table 17 below and also graphically shown in Figure 36. The apology strategies that had the highest one strategy and two strategies combination usage were an expression of regret (A2), offer of repair (E) and explanation of account (B). Unlike one strategy and two strategies combination usage, explanation of account (B) had the highest usage of three and more than three strategies combination followed by offer of repair (E). The results also revealed that the apology strategies, blame something else (H) and use of religious terms (I) had the highest usage in three strategies combination.

Table 17: Analysis of combination in utilisation of apology strategies

	<b>One strategy</b>	<b>Two strategies</b>	<b>Three strategies</b>	<b>More than three</b>	<b>Total</b>
An offer of apology	48	528	150	0	726
An expression of regret	330	1380	294	18	2022
A request for forgiveness	6	102	36	0	144
Explanation of account	216	1158	390	30	1794
Explicit self-blame	0	60	60	6	126
Lack of intent	6	12	6	0	24
Expression of self-deficiency	6	18	0	0	24
Expression of embarrassment	0	66	42	18	126
Self-dispraise	0	18	0	0	18
Justifying the hearer	0	6	0	0	6
Denial of the responsibility	12	12	0	0	24
Concern for the hearer	30	42	24	0	96
Offer of repair	300	1266	348	24	1938
Promise of forbearance.	30	114	66	0	210
Pride and ignorance	6	6	0	0	12
Blame something else	0	12	48	0	60
Use of religious terms	0	132	150	18	300

This table shows the utilisation of each apology strategy on its own (one strategy) and in combination with other strategies (two, three and more than three).

Figure 35: Analysis of combination of strategies for each strategy



This figure gives a graphical depiction of each apology strategy in term of its utilisation on its own and also in combination with other apology strategies. For instance, use of religious terms was used almost 45% times with other apology strategy, never on its own.

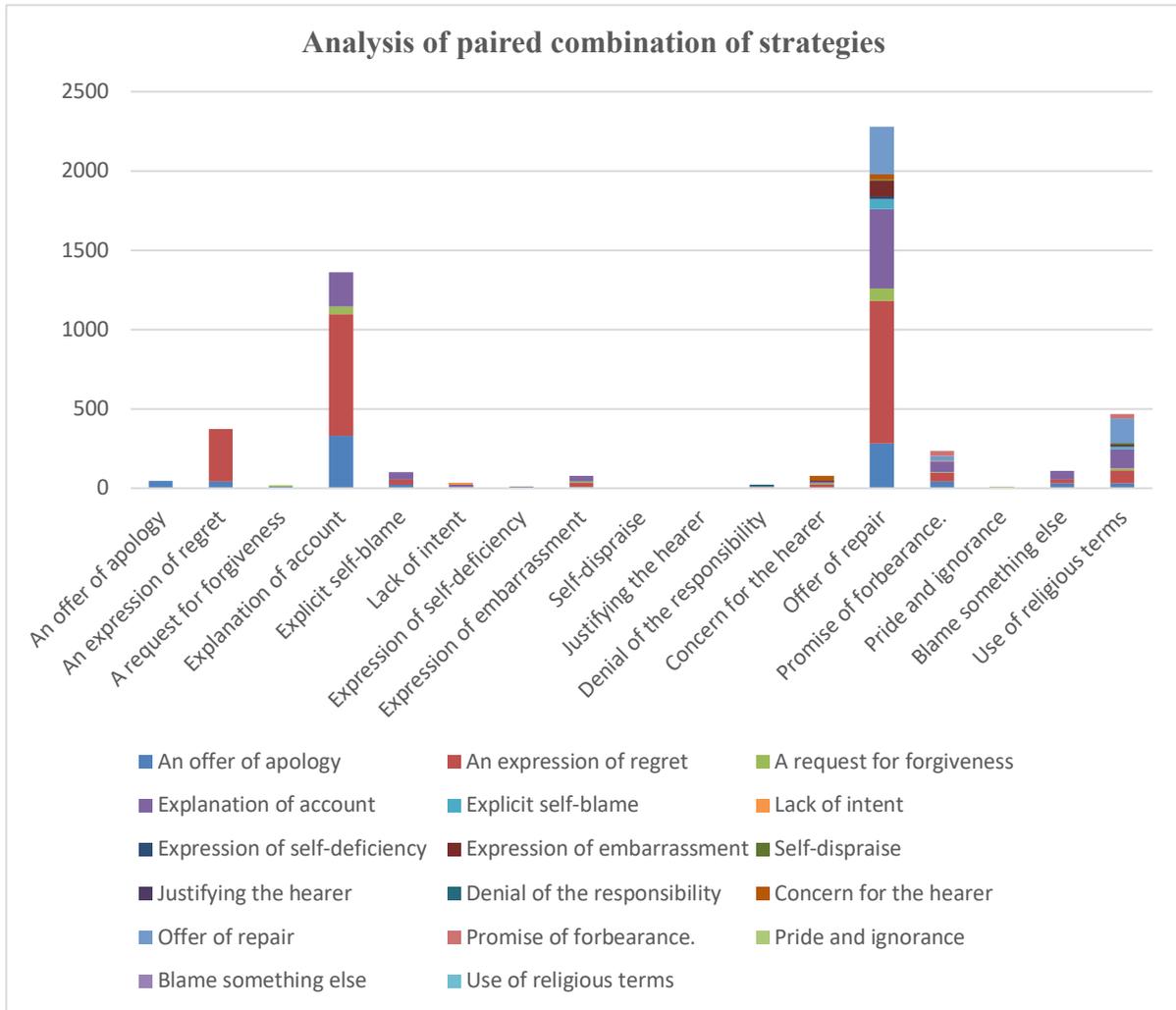
A further analysis was carried out on the two strategies combination in order to understand further the distinctive apology strategies that were highest in terms of their combination of utilisation. The results of the paired analysis of the combination of apology strategies is tabularly presented in Table 18 below and graphically depicted in Figure 37. The results showed that the apology strategies of an expression of regret (A2) and offer of repair (E) were most frequently used together (900) followed by the combination of an expression of regret (A2) and explanation of account (B) and then explanation of account (B) and offer of repair (E) combination with 768 and 498 occurrences respectively.

Table 18: Analysis of combination in utilisation of apology strategies

Analysis of combination of strategies																	
	A1	A2	A3	B	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	D	E	F	G	H	I
A1	48	42	12	330	24	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	282	42	0	30	30
A2		330	0	768	30	6	0	30	0	0	6	24	900	54	0	24	84
A3			6	48	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	6	78	6	0	0	12
B				216	48	18	6	36	0	0	6	12	498	66	0	54	120
C1					0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	66	0	0	0	18
C2						6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
C3							6	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	0	0	0
C4								0	0	0	0	0	102	0	0	0	12
C5									0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	6
C6										0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0
C7											12	0	0	0	6	0	6
D												30	36	6	0	0	0
E													300	30	0	0	150
F														30	0	0	30
G															6	0	0
H																0	0
I																	0

This table shows the frequencies of combination of different apology strategies. For instance, an expression of regret (A2) was used in combination with offer of repair (E) 900 times.

Figure 36: Analysis of paired combination of strategies



This figure shows the paired analysis of apology strategies, showing which combination of apology strategies had the highest and lowest paired combination.

#### 4.5 Summary

This chapter presented the results of the analysis of the apology strategies that are utilized by Saudi adults and showed that the frequently used apology strategy is an expression of apology, offer of repair and explanation or account across all the 15 DCT situations. The distribution of

the different apology strategies across the DCT situations was also discussed which showed, for instance, that an explanation or account was most used in situation 10 (Late for job interview)

The next chapter extends the analysis by discussing apology strategies and social and situational variables, highlighting, for instance, the influence of gender and age on the utilization of apology strategies.

## **Chapter Five: Apology Strategies and Social and Situational Variables**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter complements the discussion in chapter 4, section 4.2 by focussing on the distribution of the apology strategies according to gender. Thus, whilst section 4.3 discussed the apology strategies according to situations and noted the male and female composition, this section provides detailed discussion by concentrating on the apology strategies in order to understand their occurrences across the two gender groups, male and female. This analysis is then consolidated by further performing statistical analysis in order to highlight the significance differences (similarities) between the gender groups.

### **5.2 Apology strategies and gender**

This section discusses the results of the analysis according to gender while section 5.3 discusses the analysis based on age. The distribution of the apology strategies according to gender is given in Table 19 below, which is then graphically presented in Figure 38.

What is consistent across the distribution of the apology strategies is the high employment of three main apology strategies: an offer of repair (26.5%), an expression of regret (25.8%) and explanation of account (23.3%) across both male and female participants. This suggests that Saudi participants are more inclined to offer repair when apologising which could also be associated with an expression of regret. These results are consistent with Alhojailan (2019) study that showed that offer of repair and explanation of account were the second and third frequently used apology strategies by Saudi Arabic speakers respectively. Alhojailan (2019) employed role-

play tasks (RPTs) in investigating apology speech acts in six communicative contexts and the differences (if any) between males and females in their use of these strategies. However, Bagherinejad & Jadidoleslam (2015), Alsulayyi (2016) and Alhojailan's (2019) studies found that IFID was the most used apology strategy, contrary to the results in this study that show offer of repair as most used. On the other hand, Banikalef et al.'s (2015) study found that acknowledging responsibility was the most frequently used apology strategy in Jordanian Arabic. Huwari (2018) study found that explanation of account and offer of repair (compensation) were the most frequently used apology strategies by Jordanian and Asian learners, which is consistent with this research. Based on the results in this study, it can be construed that Saudi participants are more inclined to offer repair when apologising. In addition, there is a high usage of expressing regret in the apology in addition to giving explanation or account of the situation in apologising. As expression of regret, however, is part of the IFID strategy; in this respect, the frequency in the usage of IFID can be perceived as relatively consistent with other studies (Murad, 2012; Bagherinejad & Jadidoleslam, 2015; Alsulayyi, 2016; Jassim & Nimehchisalem, 2016; Alhojailan, 2019). Murad (2012), for instance, found that an expression of apology was the most used apology strategy among Israeli Arabic speakers. In order to understand the distinction between male and female in the usage of the apology strategies, a proportionate distribution is most illustrative. Thus, Figure 39 aims to show the proportional distribution of the apology strategies according to gender across all the situations.

Table 19: Apology strategies according to gender

Category	Strategy	Male	Female	Total
An expression of apology	An offer of apology	300	426	726
	An expression of regret	750	1,272	2,022
	A request for forgiveness	78	78	156
Explanation of account	Explanation of account	696	1,134	1,830
Taking or Acknowledgment of responsibility	Explicit self-blame	54	48	102
	Lack of intent	6	12	18
	Expression of self-deficiency	12	12	24
	Expression of embarrassment	72	54	126
	Self-dispraise	6	12	18
	Justifying the hearer	6	0	6
	Denial of the responsibility	6	18	24
	Blame the hearer	0	0	0
	Pretend to be offended	0	0	0
Concern for the hearer	Concern for the hearer.	18	72	90
Offer of repair	Offer of repair	942	1,134	2,076
Promise of non-recurrence	Promise of forbearance.	84	132	216
Pride and ignorance	Pride and ignorance	0	12	12
Blame something else	Blame something else	6	6	12
Religious considerations	Use of religious terms	108	192	300

This table shows the use of apology strategies across the 15 DCT situations between males and females. Thus, how males and females utilise the apology strategies across the 14 DCT situations is captured in the table by the identified number of occurrences.

Figure 37: Apology strategies according to gender

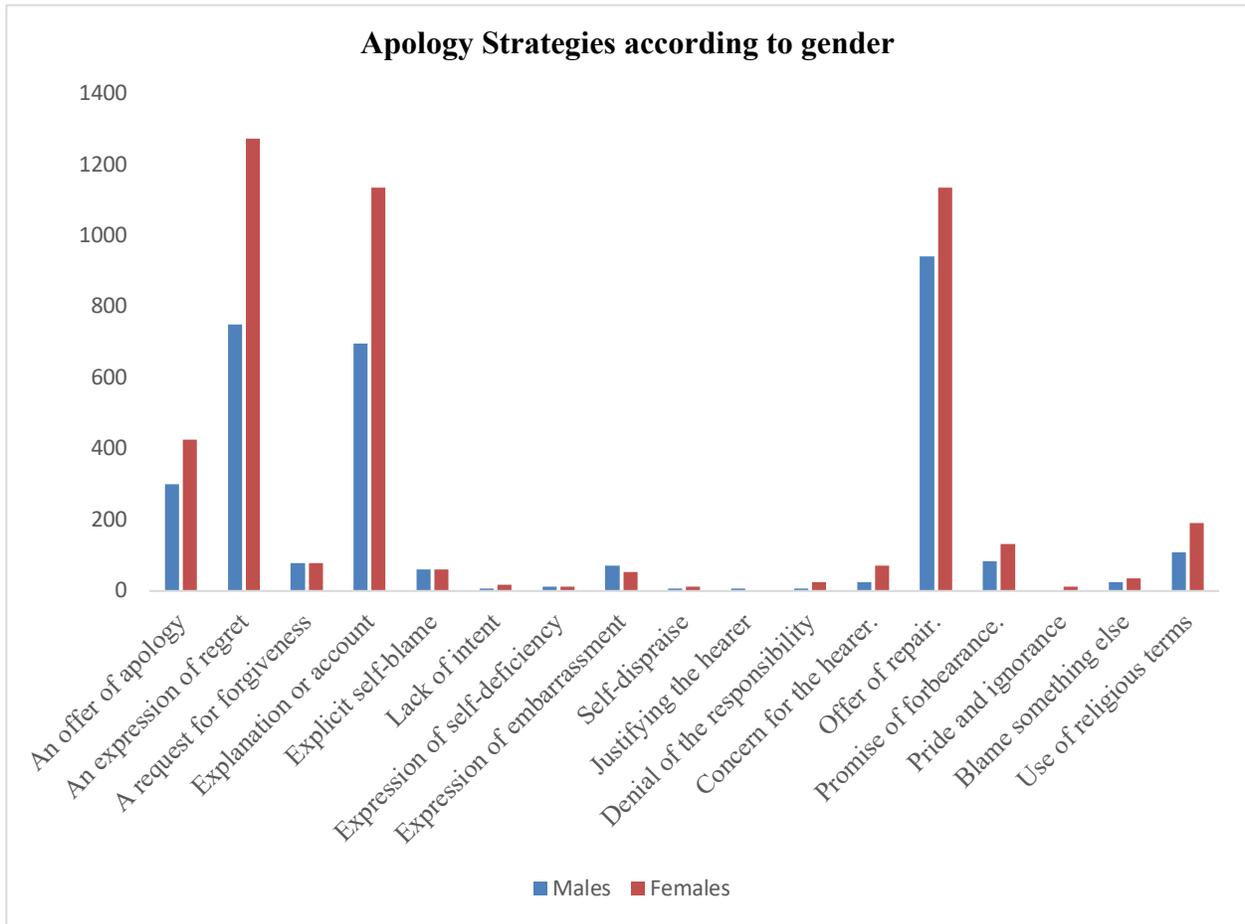
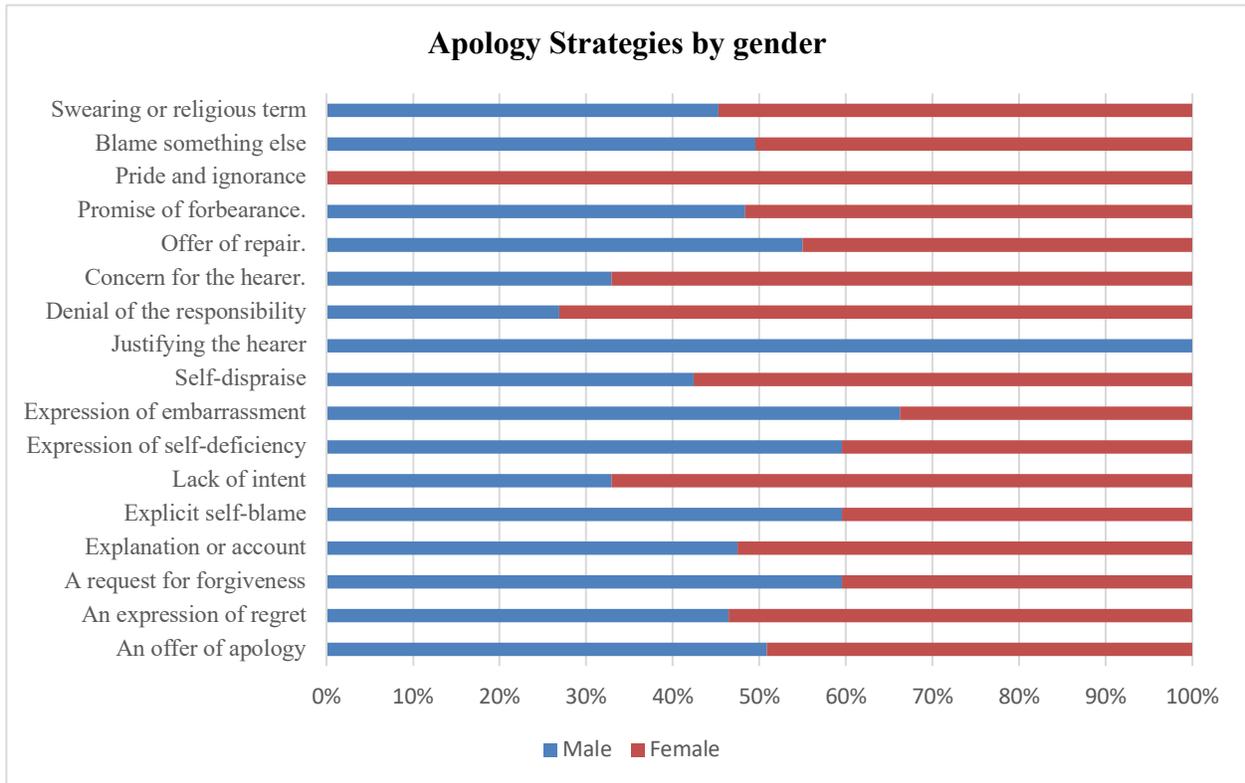


Figure 38 above graphically captures the results or findings shown in Table 19, showing how males and females used the apology strategies across the DCT situations.

Figure 38: Proportionate distribution of apology strategies according to gender



This figure shows the proportion usage of each apology strategy between males and females across the 15 DCT situations.

As highlighted in Figure 39, relatively more females used the apology strategies of an expression of regret, an explanation of account, a lack of intent, self-dispraise, denial of the responsibility, concern for the hearer and religious term. Unlike the other apology strategies, pride and ignorance, was the only apology strategy that was discretely used by females only. Similarly, only male participants used the justifying the hearer strategy. An offer of apology, promise of forbearance and blame something else were approximately equally distributed between male and female. In other words, male and female participants employed these three apology strategies in similar ways. This is inconsistent to El-Khalil (1998) study in respect of promise of forbearance that found Jordanian Arabic speaking males more inclined to use the apology strategy than females. The results are also inconsistent to Bataineh & Bataineh (2006) who highlighted

Jordanian males as more inclined to downgrade their responsibility and blame their interlocutors.

On the contrary, male participants employed the apology strategies of a request for forgiveness, explicit self-blame, expression of self-deficiency, expression of embarrassment and offer of repair more than female participants. In other words, male Saudi participants are more willing to offer repair for the offence than female Saudi participants which is consistent to Yeganeh (2012) findings of Iranian Arabic speakers. Similarly, male Saudi participants easily express embarrassment, self-deficiency and self-blame and are more willing to request for forgiveness than female Saudi participants. This is inconsistent to Gonzales et al.'s (1990) study that found women to be more inclined to show embarrassment and sorrow when apologising. On the contrary, male Saudi participants do not seem to express higher concern for the hearer than female Saudi participants. This is consistent with other studies (Holmes, 1995; Ogiermann, 2018). Further, the usage of religious terms (e.g. Wallah, Inshallah) is relatively most common female Saudi participants. This is consistent to the findings of Bagherinejad & Jadidoleslam (2015) that females tended to use intensifications twice as much as males. However, the distinctions between male and female participants highlighted in this research project are inconsistent to Ghanbari et al.'s (2015) study that did not find any significant relationship between gender and apology strategies among Iranian Kurdish speakers.

In order to highlight whether there is a significant difference in the apology strategies used between male and female Saudi participants, more statistical analysis was performed statistically in section 5.4.1 below. The next section analyses the apology strategies according to the age group of the participants. The aim of this facet of analysis is to highlight and give more detailed

insight on how the apology strategies are employed across the different age groups.

### **5.3 Apology strategies in relation to age groups**

In this section the apology strategies are analysed according to the age groups. This follows the literature that suggests that contextual factors (e.g. age) have an effect on the apology speech act. As highlighted in section 2.7, the act of apology is generally governed by universal rules; however, differences may exist in the type of apology that is employed due to contextual factors such as age, gender, educational level and socio-cultural settings (Yule, 1996; Wood, 2002; Lakoff, 2006; Roberts, 2018; Geurts, 2019). Therefore, in this section, the apology strategies are analysed according to the different age groups. This gives additional insight on whether age has an impact on the apology strategies employed by Saudi participants. The analysis of the significant difference across the age group is further statistically investigated in section 5.4.2.

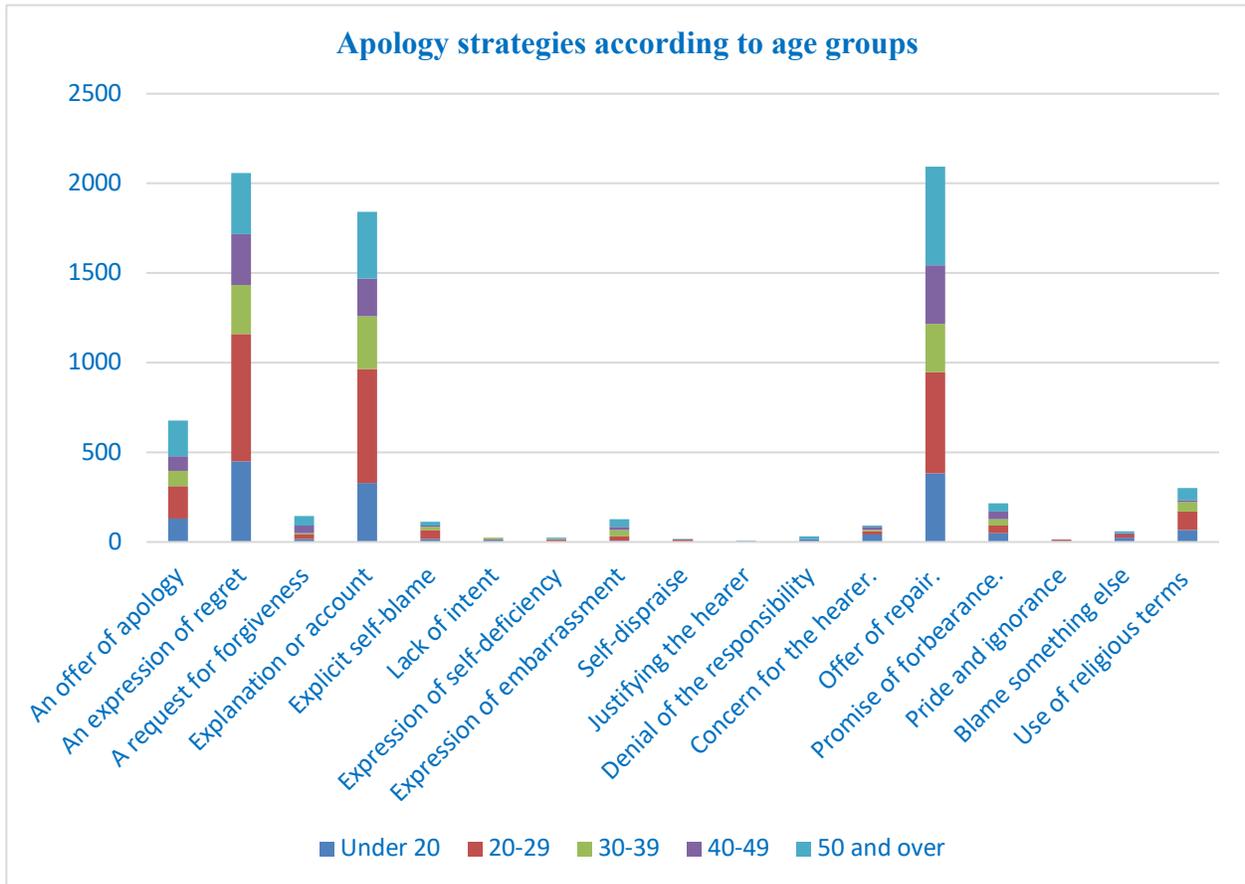
The incidences of the apology strategies across the different age groups is shown in Table 20 below and graphically depicted in Figure 39 below.

Table 20: Apology strategies according to age groups

Category	Strategy	Under 20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50 and over	Total	Percentage
An expression of apology	An offer of apology	132	180	84	84	198	678	9%
	An expression of regret	450	708	276	282	342	2,058	26%
	A request for forgiveness	18	24	6	42	54	144	2%
Explanation of account	Explanation of account	330	636	294	210	372	1,842	24%
Taking or Acknowledgment of responsibility	Explicit self-blame	18	42	12	6	18	96	1%
	Lack of intent	6	6	6	0	0	18	0.3%
	Expression of self-deficiency	0	12	6	0	6	24	0.3%
	Expression of embarrassment	6	24	36	18	42	126	1.6%
	Self-dispraise	0	12	0	0	6	18	0.2%
	Justifying the hearer	6	0	0	0	0	6	0.1%
	Denial of the responsibility	12	0	0	0	12	24	0.4%
Concern for the hearer	Concern for the hearer	42	18	6	12	6	84	1.1%
Offer of repair	Offer of repair	384	564	270	324	552	2,094	27%
Promise of non-recurrence	Promise of forbearance	48	42	36	42	48	216	3%
Pride and ignorance	Pride and ignorance	6	6	0	0	0	12	0.2%
Blame something else	Blame something else	12	0	0	0	0	12	0.8%
Religious considerations	Use of religious terms	66	102	54	12	66	300	4%

In this table, the use of apology strategies across the age groups (Under 20, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49, 50 and over) are shown. Thus, for each apology strategy, the table shows how each age group used it. For instance, ‘50 and over’ used ‘an offer of apology’ 198 times compared to Under 20s who used it 132 times.

Figure 39: Apology strategies according to age groups



This figure is a graphical representation of Table 15, which shows the use of each apology strategy across the four age groups.

As depicted in Figure 40, the age group ‘Under 20’ years old employed more apology strategies related to lack of intent, justifying the hearer, denial of the responsibility, concern for the hearer, promise of forbearance, pride and ignorance and blame something else. This is contrary to the age group ‘20-29’ years which was highest in an expression of regret, explanation of account, explicit self-blame, offer of repair and use of religious terms. The participants over 50 years old employed mostly an offer of apology, a request for forgiveness, an expression of embarrassment, an offer of repair and promise of forbearance. With respect to offer of repair, the over 50 years old group was almost similar to the ‘20-29’ years old group in utilising this apology strategy.

When compared to other apology strategies, the '30-39' years old group applied the expression of embarrassment (C4), expression of self-deficiency (C3) and lack of intent (C2) apology strategies proportionally more than other apology strategies. The age group '40-49' years, on the other hand, employed relatively more of a request for forgiveness (A3), concern for the hearer (D) and promise of forbearance (F) more than other apology strategies. Further, this age group (40-49 years) did not employ six of the apology strategies (i.e. lack of intent, expression of self-deficiency, self-dispraise, justifying the hearer, denial of the responsibility and pride and ignorance). Also, in relative terms, the over 50 years old group largely employed denial of the responsibility, a request for forgiveness, self-dispraise and expression of embarrassment apology strategies. On the other hand, this age group (over 50 years old) did not utilise lack of intent, justifying the hearer and pride and ignorance apology strategies.

Thus, another interesting insight from the age group analysis is the lack of utilisation of some apology strategies by some age groups. For instance, only the participants under 20 years old used the justifying the hearer (C6). The apology strategy of self-dispraise (C5), on the other hand, was only employed by participants aged 20-29 years old and over 50 years old. Denial of the responsibility (C7) was utilised by only under 20 years old and over 50 years old participants. Pride and ignorance (G) apology strategy was also only employed by age groups 'under 20' and '20-29' years old. This might suggest that, in general, the participants from different age groups use different types of apology strategies. Several studies have acknowledged the importance of considering age difference in apology speech acts (Bata ineh & Bataineh, 2006; Keshani & Heidari-Shahreza, 2017; Alhojailan, 2019) but have not empirically shown the impact of the age differences on the apology strategies. For instance, Alhojailan (2019, p. 13) suggested that

“comparing and contrasting the apology strategies used by various age groups is another area of potential exploration”. Similarly, Bataineh & Bataineh (2006, p. 1922) acknowledge that:

the fact that the use of speech acts may create major problems in communication between people from different cultures renders it imperative that further research be done in closely related matters such as: *comparing and contrasting the apology strategies used by participants from different age groups of the same culture to determine the potential differences between the strategies used by various social groups* (emphasis added)

Thus, this research makes a contribution to this identified gap in the literature by examining the utilisation of apology strategies across the different age groups. As differences have been observed in the distribution of the apology strategies across the age groups, a further statistical analysis is performed with results presented and discussed in section 5.4.2 in order to highlight whether the differences in apology strategy occurrences are significantly different across the age groups.

The next section builds on the discussions above by exploring statistically the relationships of the apology strategies across gender and age groups. An investigation is also performed to highlight whether there is a statistical difference between the DCT situations and apology strategies.

#### **5.4 Relationships between age, gender and strategies**

A statistical analysis was performed to investigate the apology strategies' occurrences across the aspects of gender and age groups. Since the categories for gender (male and female) are binary, the T-test was used to compare between the two groups. On the other hand, since categories based on age are more than two, ANOVA test was performed instead. In other words, applying a T-test, which is meant for two groups only, would not appropriate. Further, an association of the

different apology strategies across the DCT situations was performed in order to explore whether the occurrence of one apology is linked to other apology strategies. The next section presents results obtained from the investigation of the association across the gender groups.

#### **5.4.1 Relationship between gender**

Section 2.7.1 highlighted that gender is one of the key contextual factors that may affect apology strategies. Several studies have shown the factor of gender on the utilisation of apology strategies in different types of offences (Basow & Rubenfeld, 2003; Hogan, 2003 Al-Marrani & Sazalie, 2010; Qari, 2019; Makarova & Pourmohammadi, 2020). This section builds on the discussion in section 5.2 that showed the distinctive differences in the utilisation of apology strategies between male participants and female participants. The aim is to statistically examine whether the apology strategies' occurrences across the 15 situations categorised into gender groups of male and female show significant differences. The key assumption embodied in the parametric tests employed is that these two groups (male and female) are independent of each other, and so are the choices in the use of apology (and response) strategies. The assumption of independence embodied in the statistical analysis is that the choice of words employed, capturing speech acts, is not influenced by either group. In other words, each of the group is independent, not affecting the other in terms of word choices.

The first stage investigated the correlation of the occurrences of the apology strategies between male and female participants. The analysis of the 17 apology strategies' occurrences categorised into male and female produced the results discussed below. The 17 apology strategies are an

offer of apology (A1), an expression of regret (A2), a request for forgiveness (A3), explanation of account (B), explicit self-blame (C1), lack of intent (C2), expression of self-deficiency (C3), expression of embarrassment (C4), self-dispraise (C5), justifying the hearer (C6), denial of the responsibility (C7), concern for the hearer (D), offer of repair (E), promise of forbearance (F), pride and ignorance (G), blame something else (H) and use of religious terms (I).

The descriptive statistics for the number of occurrences of the apology strategies between male and female is shown in Table 21 below. The correlation metrics is also shown in Table 21 below between male and female regarding the number of apology occurrences across the 17 apology strategies.

Table 21: Correlation between male and female apology strategies

**Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Males	184.59	17	303.990	73.728
Females	271.41	17	446.570	108.309

**Correlations**

		Male	Female
Males	Pearson Correlation	1	.982**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	17	17
Females	Pearson Correlation	.982**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	17	17

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The mean occurrences across the 17 apology strategies for male participants was 184.59 whilst that of female was 271.41 with a corresponding standard deviation of 303.990 and 446.570

respectively. The mean in this case shows that the average frequency of apology strategies employed by males was relatively less than that of females. In other words, as the data suggests, the average number of apology strategies used by females seem higher than that of apology strategies used by males. Based on the standard deviation, the spread of the occurrences across the 17 apology strategies from the mean is higher for females than males. Further, as depicted in the correlation metrics, the Pearson correlation coefficient between male and female number of occurrences across the 17 apology strategies was positive at 0.982. As the significance value is less than 0.01 significance level, the correlation between male and female apology strategies' occurrences is significant at the 99% confidence level. In other words, there is a statistically significant relationship in the apology strategies used by male and female Saudi participants based on the sample.

Further, as comparison is being made between male and female categories only, the differences between these categories is investigated using a paired samples test to explore whether the mean values of the two categories are statistically different. The results of the paired samples test are shown in Table 22 below which gives the inferential statistics.

Table 22: Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Males – Females	-86.824	158.506	38.443	-168.320	-5.327	-2.258	16	.038

As shown in Table 21, the  $t$ -value, degree of freedom and  $p$ -value of the male to female categories of apology strategies occurrences are -2.258, 16 and 0.038 respectively. The critical value for two-tail test at 95% significance level and degree of freedom of 16 is  $\pm 2.120$ . As the  $p$ -value (0.038) is less than 0.05, the  $t(16)$  is -2.258 which is less than the critical value of -2.120, and then both the lower and upper confidence intervals are lower than 0, thus, the mean values of male and female are statistically significantly different. In other words, the sampled means between male and female apology strategies occurrences differed from each other. The male group (mean of 184.59, standard deviation of 303.99) was significantly different from the female group (mean of 271.41, standard deviation of 446.57) as the  $t(16)$  was -2.258, the  $p$ -value of 0.038, making this comparison a significant test. Therefore, as there is a significant difference observed, this suggests that the apology strategies employed by Saudi males participants do differ from the apology strategies observed for female Saudi participants. This is consistent with other studies (Gonzales et al., 1990; Bataineh & Bataineh, 2006; Bagherinejad & Jadidoleslam, 2015; Alsulayyi, 2016; Alhojailan, 2019; Qari, 2019) in that show that gender has a significant effect on the choice of apology strategies. However, it is important to consider the methodological differences. In these studies, the authors did not carry out the statistical.

The next section investigates the statistical differences between the age groups with respect to the number of occurrences across the 17 apology strategies.

#### **5.4.2 Relationships between age groups**

This section builds on the discussion in section 5.3 above in order to statistically examine whether the apology strategies' occurrences across the age groups are statistically different or not. The first step in this analysis is the investigation of the correlation between the age groups. The correlation between the age groups and the apology strategies is tested using Pearson's correlation. The results obtained from SPSS for Pearson correlation analysis are presented in Table 23 below.

Table 23: Apology strategies by age groups correlation

Correlations						
		Under 20 years	20 - 29 years	30 - 39 years	40 - 49 years	50 and over
Under 20 years	Pearson correlation	1	.989**	.979**	.979**	.945**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17
20 - 29 years	Pearson correlation	.989**	1	.992**	.960**	.932**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17
30 - 39 years	Pearson correlation	.979**	.992**	1	.962**	.954**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17
40 - 49 years	Pearson correlation	.979**	.960**	.962**	1	.976**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17
50 and over	Pearson correlation	.945**	.932**	.954**	.976**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	17	17	17	17	17

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results shown in Table 23 above highlight that there is a positive significant correlation at the 99% confidence level between age groups ‘under 20’ years, ‘20-29’ years, ‘30-39’ years and ‘50 and over’ years. In all the combination of age groups, the *p*-value obtained from the 2-tailed Pearson correlation was  $p < 0.001$ . Thus, since the *p*-value is less than 0.01, the correlations are significant. Also, the correlation values (i.e. 0.932, 0.945, 0.960, 0.962, 0.979, 0.989, 0.992) are close to 1 highlighting the strong level of correlation between the age groups. The highest correlation value was obtained in the age groups ‘20-29’ years and ‘30-39’ years with the correlation value of 0.992. This shows that the pattern of use of the apology strategies between these two groups is relatively the same. This might suggest that those in the age group 20-39 years have similar apology speech act use. On the other hand, the smallest relative correlation

was observed between the age groups ‘20-29’ years and ‘50 and over’ years old. This could also suggest that the wide age difference between these two groups has implications on the apology language use.

The next stage was the investigation of the significance difference in the occurrences of apology strategies across the age groups. In order to investigate this, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) test was conducted. The results obtained from SPSS are presented and discussed below. The descriptive statistics for the occurrences of the apology strategies across the age groups is presented in Table 24 below. As discussed in section 5.4.1 above, the comparison is based on the occurrences across the 17 apology strategies.

Table 24: Descriptives for apology strategies according to age groups

Descriptives								
Occurrences for each strategy								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Under 20	17	91.76	146.490	35.529	16.45	167.08	0	450
20 - 29 years	17	141.18	241.618	58.601	16.95	265.40	0	708
30 - 39 years	17	64.24	105.593	25.610	9.94	118.53	0	294
40 - 49 years	17	61.41	104.861	25.433	7.50	115.33	0	324
50 and over	17	102.35	164.597	39.921	17.73	186.98	0	552
Total	85	92.19	159.507	17.301	57.78	126.59	0	708

As shown in Table 24 above, the mean value for the age group 20-29 years was the highest at 141.18 whilst that of age group 40-49 years was lowest at 61.41. The mean values show that age groups 20-29 years and Over 50 years used more apology strategies on average than other groups. The results of the test for the homogeneity of variances using Levene’s test are shown in

Table 25 below. The Levene statistics based on the mean values is 0.031 which is lower than 0.05 and thus, the Levene test is significant. As such, the group variances are not equal or homogenous. In other words, the groups are statistically significantly different.

The ANOVA test results at  $F(4, 80)$  was 0.697 with a  $p$ -value of 0.596. Further, the Welch test for equality of means produced the  $p$ -value of 0.686. The Welch test was conducted as the Levene's test is significant which violated the assumption of equality of variances. This formed part of the robustness test which helps to show the appropriateness of the parametric statistical technique adopted in this study (Woods et al., 1986). Thus, at the 95% confidence level, the  $p$ -value are not statistically significant. In other words, there is no statistically significant difference in the variances between the age groups. The results of the non-significant differences between variances of the age groups is further highlighted in the Games-Howell Post Hoc Test results shown in Table 26 which shows the mean differences, standard error, significance values and 95% confidence interval. The results in Table 26 show that none of the age groups were statistically significantly different as the significant values ( $p$ -values) were all above 0.05.

Table 25: Test of homogeneity of variances for apology strategies according to age groups

**Test of Homogeneity of Variances**

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Based on Mean	2.806	4	80	.031
Based on Median	.618	4	80	.651

**ANOVA**

Occurrences for each strategy

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	71942.400	4	17985.600	.697	.596
Within Groups	2065222.588	80	25815.282		
Total	2137164.988	84			

**Robust Tests of Equality of Means**

Occurrences for each strategy

	Statistic <sup>a</sup>	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	.570	4	39.329	.686

a. Asymptotically F distributed.

Table 26: Post Hoc Tests for apology strategies according to age groups

**Multiple Comparisons**

Dependent Variable: Occurrences for each strategy

Tukey HSD

(I) Age groups	(J) Age groups	Mean	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
		Difference (I-J)			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Under 20	20 - 29 years	-49.412	55.110	.897	-203.22	104.40
	30 - 39 years	27.529	55.110	.987	-126.28	181.34
	40 - 49 years	30.353	55.110	.982	-123.46	184.16
	50 and over	-10.588	55.110	1.000	-164.40	143.22
20 - 29 years	Under 20	49.412	55.110	.897	-104.40	203.22
	30 - 39 years	76.941	55.110	.632	-76.87	230.75
	40 - 49 years	79.765	55.110	.599	-74.05	233.57
	50 and over	38.824	55.110	.955	-114.99	192.63
30 - 39 years	Under 20	-27.529	55.110	.987	-181.34	126.28
	20 - 29 years	-76.941	55.110	.632	-230.75	76.87
	40 - 49 years	2.824	55.110	1.000	-150.99	156.63
	50 and over	-38.118	55.110	.958	-191.93	115.69
40 - 49 years	Under 20	-30.353	55.110	.982	-184.16	123.46
	20 - 30 years	-79.765	55.110	.599	-233.57	74.05
	30 - 40 years	-2.824	55.110	1.000	-156.63	150.99
	50 and over	-40.941	55.110	.946	-194.75	112.87
50 and over	Under 20	10.588	55.110	1.000	-143.22	164.40
	20 - 29 years	-38.824	55.110	.955	-192.63	114.99
	30 - 39 years	38.118	55.110	.958	-115.69	191.93
	40 - 49 years	40.941	55.110	.946	-112.87	194.75

Further, since the age groups were found to be not statistically different from each other, the next test results aimed to show whether all age groups belong to one homogeneous subset. In other words, the subsets of the age groups that are statistically the same as each other.

Table 27: Homogeneous subsets - apology strategies according to age groups

<b>Occurrences for each strategy</b>		
Tukey HSD <sup>a</sup>		
Age groups	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05 1
40 - 49 years	17	61.41
30 - 39 years	17	64.24
Under 20	17	91.76
50 and over	17	102.35
20 - 29 years	17	141.18
Sig.		.599

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 17.000.

As shown in Table 27 above, there is only one subset to which all 5 age groups belong. This implies that all age groups are homogeneous or essentially the same. In this respect, the 5 age groups' utilisations of the 17 apology strategies is not statistically significantly different. The contextual factor of age, in the case of Saudi participants, suggests that this factor does not statistically significantly affect the apology strategies adopted. Thus, this is contrary to suggestions in the literature of the significance of age in apology speech acts (Trosborg, 1987; Hussein, 1995; Mills & Kádár, 2011). It is important to reiterate that this study extends the examination of frequencies of apology strategies to statistical examination of these frequencies in order to assess statistical significant differences.

Having established that the age groups are not statistically different in terms of their utilisation of the apology strategies, the next section focuses on the apology strategies and their distribution across the 15 situations in order to examine if there are any statistical differences.

### 5.4.3 Relationships between strategies

The distribution of the apology strategies across the 15 DCT situations was discussed in section 4.2. Some differences and similarities were observed in the distribution of these apology strategies. This section builds on the discussion in section 4.2 in order to establish any significant associations between the apology strategies. This is statistically analysed with the results shown in Table 28, Table 29, Table 30, Table 31, Table 32 and Table 33 below. The first stage of the analysis was aimed at showing the correlation between the apology strategies across the occurrences in the DCT situations. The 2-tailed Pearson correlation results are shown in Table 28. From Table 28 below, the Pearson correlation values and the significance levels are shown for the 15 DCT situations at 99% confidence level.

Thus, the first stage was aimed at highlighting the relationship between the apology strategies as they were utilised in the DCT situations. The next stage of the statistical analysis was focussed on identifying differences between the apology strategies. A one-way ANOVA test was conducted and results shown in Table 31 below. In Table 29 the descriptive statistics of the utilisation of the apology strategies across the DCT situations are presented. Consistent with the discussion in section 4.2, the highest mean and standard deviations are observed for offer of repair (mean 138.40, standard deviation 65.235), an expression of regret (mean 134.80, standard deviation 46.191) and explanation of account (mean 122.00, standard deviation 53.745) respectively. These three apology strategies had minimum number of occurrences of 24, 72 and 36 respectively unlike all other apology strategies that had 0 number of occurrences in some situations. Table 29 also shows the standard error and the 95% confidence interval for the mean.

Table 28: Correlation between apology strategies

		<b>Correlations</b>								
		An offer of apology	An expression of regret	A request for forgiveness	Explanation of account	Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	Concern for the hearer	Offer of repair	Promise of forbearance	Use of religious terms
An offer of apology	Pearson Correlation	1	-.483	-.197	.283	-.092	-.310	-.152	-.025	-.153
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.068	.482	.306	.744	.261	.588	.929	.587
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
An expression of regret	Pearson Correlation	-.483	1	.075	-.510	-.208	.023	-.245	-.472	-.068
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.068		.790	.052	.457	.934	.378	.076	.810
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
A request for forgiveness	Pearson Correlation	-.197	.075	1	.095	-.062	-.070	-.126	-.017	-.238
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.482	.790		.737	.827	.804	.655	.952	.392
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Explanation of account	Pearson Correlation	.283	-.510	.095	1	-.031	-.440	-.297	.317	-.272
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.306	.052	.737		.914	.100	.283	.249	.326
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	Pearson Correlation	-.092	-.208	-.062	-.031	1	.109	.426	-.090	.679**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.744	.457	.827	.914		.699	.113	.749	.005
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Concern for the hearer	Pearson Correlation	-.310	.023	-.070	-.440	.109	1	.324	-.157	.020
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.261	.934	.804	.100	.699		.238	.575	.942
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Offer of repair	Pearson Correlation	-.152	-.245	-.126	-.297	.426	.324	1	-.162	.296
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.588	.378	.655	.283	.113	.238		.564	.284
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Promise of forbearance	Pearson Correlation	-.025	-.472	-.017	.317	-.090	-.157	-.162	1	.258
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.929	.076	.952	.249	.749	.575	.564		.354
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Use of religious terms	Pearson Correlation	-.153	-.068	-.238	-.272	.679**	.020	.296	.258	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.587	.810	.392	.326	.005	.942	.284	.354	
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15	15

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 29: Descriptive statistics for apology strategies

<b>Descriptives</b>								
Occurrences per situation								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
An offer of apology	15	48.40	41.660	10.757	25.33	71.47	0	150
An expression of regret	15	134.80	46.191	11.926	109.22	160.38	72	222
A request for forgiveness	15	10.40	10.259	2.649	4.72	16.08	0	30
Explanation of account	15	122.00	53.745	13.877	92.24	151.76	36	234
Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	15	21.20	19.753	5.100	10.26	32.14	0	72
Concern for the hearer	15	6.00	7.171	1.852	2.03	9.97	0	24
Offer of repair	15	138.40	65.235	16.843	102.27	174.53	24	222
Promise of forbearance	15	14.40	20.511	5.296	3.04	25.76	0	72
Pride and ignorance	15	.80	2.111	.545	-.37	1.97	0	6
Blame something else	15	.80	2.111	.545	-.37	1.97	0	6
Use of religious terms	15	20.00	17.517	4.523	10.30	29.70	0	54
Total	165	47.02	62.650	4.877	37.39	56.65	0	234

The correlations that are significant have been highlighted with asterisks. A significant correlation is identifiable between taking or acknowledgement of responsibility and use of religious terms which had a correlation value of 0.679 and *p*-value of 0.005. Thus, as the *p*-value is less than 0.01, the relationship between the occurrences of taking or acknowledgement of responsibility and use of religious terms is positively statistically significantly correlated at 0.01 significance level. In other words, there is a statistically positively significant relationship

between the utilisation of the apology strategies taking or acknowledgement of responsibility and use of religious terms. These two apology strategies followed a relatively similar pattern in their utilisation across the DCT situations.

In Table 30, the results for the test of homogeneity of variances using the Levene statistics are presented. This test is necessary as it helps to understand whether the assumptions of the one-way ANOVA test have been violated (or not) and thus, the need for further tests. As depicted in Table 30, the Levene statistics based on mean, median, median with adjusted degree of freedom and trimmed mean were all significant. In other words, the Levene's test is significant which implies that variances are not equal. Thus, the variances of the incidences of the apology strategies are not homogenous. The occurrences of the apology strategies across the DCT situations are statistically significantly different. In short, the apology strategies do not have equal or homogeneous variances. This makes the relevance of other tests (i.e. the Post Hoc and Welch test) in this context as the equality of variances assumptions has been violated.

Table 30: Test of homogeneity of variances

Test of Homogeneity of Variances				
	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Based on Mean	12.864	10	154	.000
Based on Median	9.410	10	154	.000
Based on Median and with adjusted df	9.410	10	70.554	.000
Based on trimmed mean	12.269	10	154	.000

Table 31: Apology strategies ANOVA Test results

ANOVA					
Occurrences per situation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	471548.945	10	47154.895	42.183	.000
Within Groups	172152.000	154	1117.870		
Total	643700.945	164			

The ANOVA test results have been presented in Table 31 above. The results show the  $F(10, 154)$  value of 42.183 with a  $p$ -value less than 0.001. Thus, there is a statistically significant difference in the variances of the incidences of apology strategies across the 15 situations. Further, since the equality of variances assumption has been violated as depicted in Table 32, the robust tests of equality of means has shown the significance difference in the equality of means.

Table 32: Apology strategies Robust Tests of Equality of Means

<b>Robust Tests of Equality of Means</b>				
Occurrences per situation				
	Statistic <sup>a</sup>	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	31.123	10	59.412	.000

a. Asymptotically F distributed.

Further, since the ANOVA test showed a statistically significant difference in the apology strategies, the Games-Howell Post Hoc tests helps to identify which apology strategies are statistically difference. The Games-Howell Post Hoc test results are shown in appendix 6. The Post Hoc test results show the mean difference, the standard error and significance value and 95% confidence interval showing both the lower and upper bounds of the mean difference. In Table 33, the apology strategies are compared to other apology strategies in order to examine whether there are any the apology strategies that are significantly different. The results (see appendix 6) show that an offer of apology is statistically different to an expression of regret, explanation of account, concern for the hearer, offer of repair, pride and ignorance and blame something else. An expression of regret, on the other hand, is statistically different to all other apology strategies except explanation of account and offer of repair. A request for forgiveness has been found as statistically different to an expression of regret, explanation of account and offer of repair. Similarly, an explanation of account is statistically different to all other apology strategies except an expression of regret and offer of repair. Taking or acknowledgment of responsibility, on the other hand, is statistically different to an expression of regret, an explanation of account and offer of repair. This is similar to a request for forgiveness, promise of forbearance and use of religious terms apology strategies.

The analysis of the statistical differences in the apology strategies results in homogeneous subsets. In other words, the apology strategies that are similar to each other are grouped into subsets. The resultant subsets of these apology strategies are shown in Table 33 below.

Table 33: Homogeneous subsets for apology strategies

<b>Occurrences per situation</b>				
Tukey HSD <sup>a</sup>				
Apology strategies	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05		
		1	2	3
Pride and ignorance	15	.80		
Blame something else	15	.80		
Concern for the hearer	15	6.00		
A request for forgiveness	15	10.40	10.40	
Promise of forbearance	15	14.40	14.40	
Use of religious terms	15	20.00	20.00	
Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	15	21.20	21.20	
An offer of apology	15		48.40	
Explanation of account	15			122.00
An expression of regret	15			134.80
Offer of repair	15			138.40
Sig.		.848	.077	.959

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 15.000.

As depicted in Table 33, there are three identifiable subsets of homogeneous apology strategies. The first set of homogeneous apology strategies are pride and ignorance, blame something else, concern for the hearer, a request for forgiveness, promise of forbearance, use of religious terms and taking or acknowledgement of responsibility. The next set of homogeneous apology strategies is a request for forgiveness, promise of forbearance, use of religious terms, taking or

acknowledgement of responsibility and an offer of apology. An explanation of account, an expression of regret and offer of repair are homogeneous and form the third subset.

The use of religious term strategy occurred in two groups contributing to the highest combination of apology strategies, the results which are consistent with Banikalef et al. (2015, p. 91) study which suggests that the use of religious term “has genuine power to confirm the truth among interlocutors”. The three apology strategies of explanation of account, an expression of regret (IFID) and offer of repair have been identified as most frequently used in other Arabic language studies (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2006; Nureddeen, 2008). The results of three subsets in apology strategies highlights the use of a combination of apology strategies when apologising consistent with findings of other studies (Gonda, 2001; Alsulayyi, 2016; Alhojailan, 2019).

The next section investigates whether there are any associations between the DCT situations. This is important in order to highlight whether the incidences of the apology strategies across the DCT situations are significantly different.

#### **5.4.4 Relationships between situations**

In the first stage of analysis, the correlation between the situations was examined with the results shown in Table 34 below. The importance of this analysis is to help identify the extent to which the different situations are related with respect to frequencies of apology strategies. The results show that there is a positive significant correlation at 99% confidence level between situation one and 13 other situations. The significance correlation is observed at 95% confidence level between situation one and situation eight. Situation two also shows positive significant

correlation with all other situations at 0.01 significance level. The highest correlation of situation two is observed with situation four (0.988) and situation thirteen (0.964).

Situation three is positively significantly correlated with all other situations at 99% confidence level except with situations eight and ten. However, there is an observed positive significant correlation with situation ten at 95% confidence level whilst no correlation with situation eight. Similar to situation two, situation four is positively significantly correlated with all other DCT situations. The highest correlation was observed with situation thirteen, five and fourteen which had correlation values of 0.978, 0.918 and 0.911 respectively. Situation five was positively significantly correlated at 99% confidence level with situations six, eight eleven, thirteen, fourteen and fifteen. Situation five was also positively significantly correlated at 95% confidence level with situations seven, nine and twelve. However, there was no observed correlation with situation ten.

The other relationships which did not show any significant correlation were between situation seven and situation eight, between situation eight and situations eleven and twelve, and between situation ten and fourteen. Further, with respect to the strongest correlation, this was observed between situations six and eleven (0.954), between situations six and thirteen (0.945), between situations ten and fifteen (0.933), between situations thirteen and fourteen (0.925), between situations five and eight (0.916), and between situations nine and fifteen (0.915). These are depicted in Table 34 below.

Table 34: DCT situations correlation

		Correlations														
		Situation One	Situation Two	Situation Three	Situation Four	Situation Five	Situation Six	Situation Seven	Situation Eight	Situation Nine	Situation Ten	Situation Eleven	Situation Twelve	Situation Thirteen	Situation Fourteen	Situation Fifteen
Situation One	Pearson Correlation	1	.924**	.933**	.854**	.707**	.980**	.925**	.518*	.699**	.658**	.927**	.889**	.903**	.917**	.859**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.002	.000	.000	.033	.002	.004	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Situation Two	Pearson Correlation	.924**	1	.935**	.968**	.840**	.954**	.757**	.701**	.775**	.666**	.940**	.823**	.964**	.918**	.870**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.002	.000	.003	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Situation Three	Pearson Correlation	.933**	.935**	1	.885**	.711**	.967**	.741**	.470	.692**	.506*	.949**	.814**	.937**	.887**	.770**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.001	.000	.001	.057	.002	.038	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Situation Four	Pearson Correlation	.854**	.968**	.885**	1	.918**	.904**	.677**	.810**	.734**	.615**	.866**	.751**	.978**	.911**	.815**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.003	.000	.001	.009	.000	.001	.000	.000	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Situation Five	Pearson Correlation	.707**	.840**	.711**	.918**	1	.767**	.545*	.916**	.527*	.475	.667**	.545*	.888**	.855**	.659**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.001	.000		.000	.024	.000	.030	.054	.003	.024	.000	.000	.004
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Situation Six	Pearson Correlation	.980**	.954**	.967**	.904**	.767**	1	.853**	.557*	.668**	.576*	.954**	.847**	.945**	.949**	.818**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.020	.003	.016	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Situation Seven	Pearson Correlation	.925**	.757**	.741**	.677**	.545*	.853**	1	.429	.616**	.721**	.775**	.850**	.726**	.786**	.827**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.001	.003	.024	.000		.086	.008	.001	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Situation Eight	Pearson Correlation	.518*	.701**	.470	.810**	.916**	.557*	.429	1	.564**	.597*	.452	.435	.728**	.653**	.656**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.033	.002	.057	.000	.000	.020	.086		.018	.011	.069	.081	.001	.004	.004
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Situation Nine	Pearson Correlation	.699**	.775**	.692**	.734**	.527*	.668**	.616**	.564**	1	.893**	.661**	.813**	.712**	.524*	.915**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.002	.001	.030	.003	.008	.018		.000	.004	.000	.001	.031	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Situation Ten	Pearson Correlation	.658**	.666**	.506*	.615**	.475	.576*	.721**	.597*	.893**	1	.536**	.734**	.574*	.455	.933**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	.003	.038	.009	.054	.016	.001	.011	.000		.027	.001	.016	.067	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Situation Eleven	Pearson Correlation	.927**	.940**	.949**	.866**	.667**	.954**	.775**	.452	.661**	.536**	1	.836**	.881**	.899**	.768**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.003	.000	.000	.069	.004	.027		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Situation Twelve	Pearson Correlation	.889**	.823**	.814**	.751**	.545*	.847**	.850**	.435	.813**	.734**	.836**	1	.760**	.773**	.844**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.001	.024	.000	.000	.081	.000	.001	.001		.000	.000	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Situation Thirteen	Pearson Correlation	.903**	.964**	.937**	.978**	.888**	.945**	.726**	.728**	.712**	.574**	.881**	.760**	1	.925**	.805**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.001	.001	.001	.016	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Situation Fourteen	Pearson Correlation	.917**	.918**	.887**	.911**	.855**	.949**	.786**	.653**	.524*	.455	.899**	.773**	.925**	1	.701**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.004	.031	.067	.000	.000	.000		.002
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17
Situation Fifteen	Pearson Correlation	.859**	.870**	.770**	.815**	.659**	.818**	.827**	.656**	.915**	.933**	.768**	.844**	.805**	.701**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.004	.000	.000	.004	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.002	
	N	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17	17

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The next stage of the analysis aimed to highlight any significant difference between the situations. The one-way ANOVA test was performed on the number of occurrences of apology strategies across the 15 DCT situations. The descriptive statistics showing the mean, standard deviation, standard error, 95% confidence interval of the mean and minimum and maximum occurrences.

This is shown in Table 35 below with the highest mean recorded in situation two (36.35) and situation ten (35.29) with corresponding standard deviation of 67.131 and 63.600 respectively. This shows that the highest average frequency in usage of apology strategies was in situations two and ten. Situation two related to a damaged book involving friends while situation ten is where a person is late for a job interview.

Table 35: DCT situations descriptives

Descriptives								
Use of apology strategies in situations								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Situation One	17	29.65	56.264	13.646	.72	58.58	0	186
Situation Two	17	36.35	67.131	16.282	1.84	70.87	0	192
Situation Three	17	31.06	61.928	15.020	-.78	62.90	0	222
Situation Four	17	32.47	54.993	13.338	4.20	60.75	0	180
Situation Five	17	24.35	52.840	12.816	-2.82	51.52	0	204
Situation Six	17	34.59	59.568	14.447	3.96	65.22	0	210
Situation Seven	17	32.47	54.870	13.308	4.26	60.68	0	150
Situation Eight	17	21.88	53.663	13.015	-5.71	49.47	0	222
Situation Nine	17	26.82	52.698	12.781	-.27	53.92	0	198
Situation Ten	17	35.29	63.600	15.425	2.59	67.99	0	234
Situation Eleven	17	33.88	51.699	12.539	7.30	60.46	0	186
Situation Twelve	17	33.18	45.305	10.988	9.88	56.47	0	132
Situation Thirteen	17	28.94	56.294	13.653	.00	57.89	0	168
Situation Fourteen	17	31.06	56.772	13.769	1.87	60.25	0	192
Situation Fifteen	17	29.29	53.028	12.861	2.03	56.56	0	180
Total	255	30.75	54.849	3.435	23.99	37.52	0	234

Further, before interpreting the ANOVA test results, the assumption of equality of variances was checked using the Levene statistical test. The result of the Levene statistic test of homogeneity of variances is shown in Table 36 below. The Levene test for the homogeneity of variances was not

significant, but instead, quite high at  $p$ -values of 0.995 and 1.000 based on the mean and median values respectively. As the Levene test is not significant, that implies that the variances are not statistically different. In other words, the variances are equal. As such, since the equal variances assumption has not been violated, there is no need for the Welch test for the equality of means and the Games-Howell Post Hoc test. This is evident, for instance, in the case of the homogeneous subsets which show that the 15 DCT situations all belong to one subset and thus, are not statistically different (see Table 38).

Table 36: Test of homogeneity of variances for DCT situations

		<b>Test of Homogeneity of Variances</b>			
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Use of apology strategies in situations	Based on Mean	.285	14	240	.995
	Based on Median	.070	14	240	1.000
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.070	14	230.85 2	1.000
	Based on trimmed mean	.246	14	240	.998

Table 37: ANOVA test for DCT situations

<b>ANOVA</b>					
Use of apology strategies in situations					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3912.847	14	279.489	.088	1.000
Within Groups	760222.588	240	3167.594		
Total	764135.435	254			

The ANOVA test results from the analysis of the incidences of the apology strategies across the 15 situations is shown in Table 37 above. The  $F(14, 240)$  value is 0.088 with  $p$ -value equal to

1.000. This implies that the 15 DCT situations are not statistically significantly different. This is further evidenced in Table 38 that shows that the situations belong to one homogeneous subset.

Table 38: Homogeneous subsets for DCT situations

**Use of apology strategies in situations**

Tukey HSD<sup>a</sup>

DCT situations	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05 1
Situation Eight	17	21.88
Situation Five	17	24.35
Situation Nine	17	26.82
Situation Thirteen	17	28.94
Situation Fifteen	17	29.29
Situation One	17	29.65
Situation Three	17	31.06
Situation Fourteen	17	31.06
Situation Four	17	32.47
Situation Seven	17	32.47
Situation Twelve	17	33.18
Situation Eleven	17	33.88
Situation Six	17	34.59
Situation Ten	17	35.29
Situation Two	17	36.35
Sig.		1.000

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 17.000.

Having explored the relationship of the occurrences of apology strategies across the DCT situations and further investigated the significant differences according to gender and age groups,

it's necessary to highlight the usage of some apology terms across the participants' apology speech acts.

## **5.5 Analysis of commonly used words**

In this section, the focus is directed at understanding the commonly used words and phrases in the apology speech acts. The process of identifying these commonly used words/phrases was performed using an advanced text analysis software, AntConc. AntConc is a freeware corpus analysis toolkit for concordancing and text analysis (laurenceanthonyantconc, 2020). This text analysis process required the culmination of all the apology speech texts from all the DCT participants.

### **5.5.1 Common words/phrases**

The identification of the key words started with the word list search so as to sort the words in the speech acts according to their frequency. The word list search produced overall, the first most frequently used word related to apology speech act of 'sorry'. Sorry, in the vernacular or Saudi Arabic as used by DCT participants is 'أسف'. Sorry was used 2,160 times by the 276 DCT participants.

The other frequently used apology speech act word was 'apologise' which is 'يعتذر' in Arabic. What is interesting in this case is the literal usage of the actual word apologise in the apology

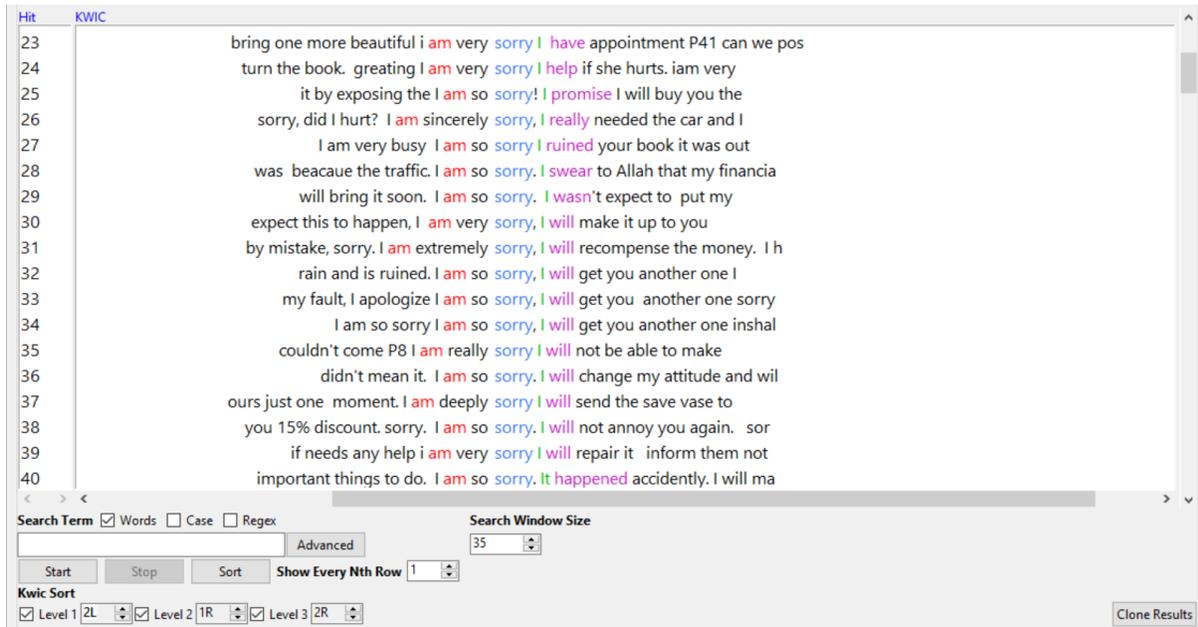
speech act. The word ‘apologise’ appeared 480 times in the transcribed apology texts from the DCT participants.

The word ‘please’ (رجاء) also appeared 240 times in the transcribed apology text whilst ‘excuse’ (عذر) appeared 144 times. The words ‘allah’ (الله), which is a religious term and ‘forgive’ (اغفر) appeared 126 times. A further examination of the word frequency showed that ‘inshallah’ appeared 108 times in the apology speech text whilst ‘wallah’ (والله) was used 102 times by the participants. There is also an explicit usage of the word ‘embarrassed’ (أحرجت) in the apology speeches as this was used 96 times by the participants.

The next phase of the text analysis was aimed at concordances, highlighting the context to the text utilisation. The ‘kwic Sort’ tool in AntConc was used in this respect. The results are discussed with respect to the commonly identified apology related words. These words were chosen for further analysis based on the frequencies of the words.

The first word search was for ‘sorry’ (أسف) with the results showing the combination of the word phrases of ‘I am very sorry’, ‘I am so sorry’, ‘I am really sorry’, ‘I am deeply sorry’, ‘I am sincerely sorry’, ‘I am extremely sorry’. Thus, the words ‘so’, ‘really’, ‘deeply’, ‘sincerely’ and ‘extremely’ are adverbs that signify the degree of the apology. These words have been identified in several studies as ‘upgraders’ that serve to add to the power of the apologetic expressions (Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Alsulayyi, 2016). In other words, ‘upgraders’ strengthen the apologetic expression, emphasising the intensity or seriousness of the apology. Figure 40 below shows the results obtained from AntConc on the word search of ‘sorry’.

Figure 40: Sorry and its intensifiers



In this figure which is an extract from AntConc, the word ‘sorry’ is analysed to identify some common intensifiers which include ‘really’, ‘deeply’, ‘very’.

A similar approach was taken to explore the phrases associated with the word ‘apologise’. However, this was expanded to include any word with the letters ‘apolog’ to cater for any spelling inconsistencies (e.g. apologise vs apologize). The results of this search process are shown in Figure 28. What is evident from the results in Figure 42 is firstly, the general request by the offender (who is apologising) to the hearer for acceptance of the apology. This is shown by phrases such as ‘I hope/please/wish you accept my apology’. Further, another common phrase is the intensification of the word ‘apologise’ by using adverbs of ‘sincerely’ ‘truly’ or ‘strongly’ observed in other studies also (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2006; Nureddeen, 2008; Al-Sobh, 2013; Bagherinejad & Jadidoleslam, 2015) . Thus, what is observed are phrases such as ‘I sincerely apologize’, ‘I truly apologize’ or ‘I strongly apologize’.

Figure 41: Apologise and its context

Hit KWIC

1 mean it I hope you **accept my apology**, but because of traffic police, I  
2 is mistake. I wish you **accept my apology** and here a gift for you. sorry  
3 apologize and I hope you **accept my apology** I am sorry this is my first  
4 it up for you. please **accept my apology**. I will order extra order to make  
5 will change it. please **accept my apology**. I will try to buy you the  
6 free dish, I wish you **accept our apologies** Heart you? Sorry please forgive me  
7 we hope from god you **accept our apologie** I apologized from you it was not  
8 mise it will never happen **again** I **apologize for** being late, Riyadh's traffic i  
9 . I will not do it **again**. I **apologize for** being late I was stuck in  
10 won't do it **again** I **apologies for** beginning late but there was a  
11 a long time it is **alright**. I **apologize to** you, but the traffic makes ever  
12 afford all the coast I **am so apology from** you there was messed up in  
13 sorry I lied to you **and** I **apologize very** much I apologize extremely fo  
14 upset you but I was **angry** I **apologize, there** was traffic Sorry, I forgot  
15 ion arrange **another appointment**. **Apologized and** compensate you I was busy but  
16 rom god you accept our **apologie** I **apologized from** you it was not in purpose  
17 on Tuesday, my **apologies neighbor**. **Apology: wallah** (by the name of god)I  
18 ill have it I **deeply apologized** I **apologized and** inform him I will repair the

Hit KWIC

57 e this Wednesday I **sincerely apologize** but your book fell on the floor  
58 a new doll today. Sir, I **sincerely apologize for** not bringing back you're  
59 ay of expressing love. I **sincerely apologize for** miscalculated the time needed  
60 . Sorry for that I **sincerely apologize will** get you another one soon plea  
61 ppened unintentionally I **strongly apologize for** the mix up and giving you  
62 how about next Wednesday? I **truly apologize for** dropping your book. I  
63 ay away from such behavior. I **will apologize via** text message. I apologize and  
64 ill repair the car I **introduce my apologized and** the bell paid and give you  
65 from where did you get it? I **apologies, I had** an urgent meeting at the  
66 u understand that I was **joking** My **apology's** I was stuck in traffic I  
67 that? I apologize and I **know my apology doesn't** change anything but can  
68 be sad Sorry for being **late** I **apologize and** I hope you accept my apology  
69 the nearest time. I would **like to apologize for** handing in the report late, I  
70 excuse my son I would **like to apologize for** breaking my promise to review  
71 behalf from my **love and friendship**. **apologized the** traffic was crowded even I was  
72 you be more patient with **me**. I **apologize it** was out of my control. You  
73 se, our deep apology. excuse **me** I **apologies it** was a joke man am sorry  
74 I had a very important **meeting**. I **apologize from** you but it happened suddenlv.

Search Term  Words  Case  Regex  Advanced Search Window Size 35

apolog\* Start Stop Sort Show Every Nth Row 1

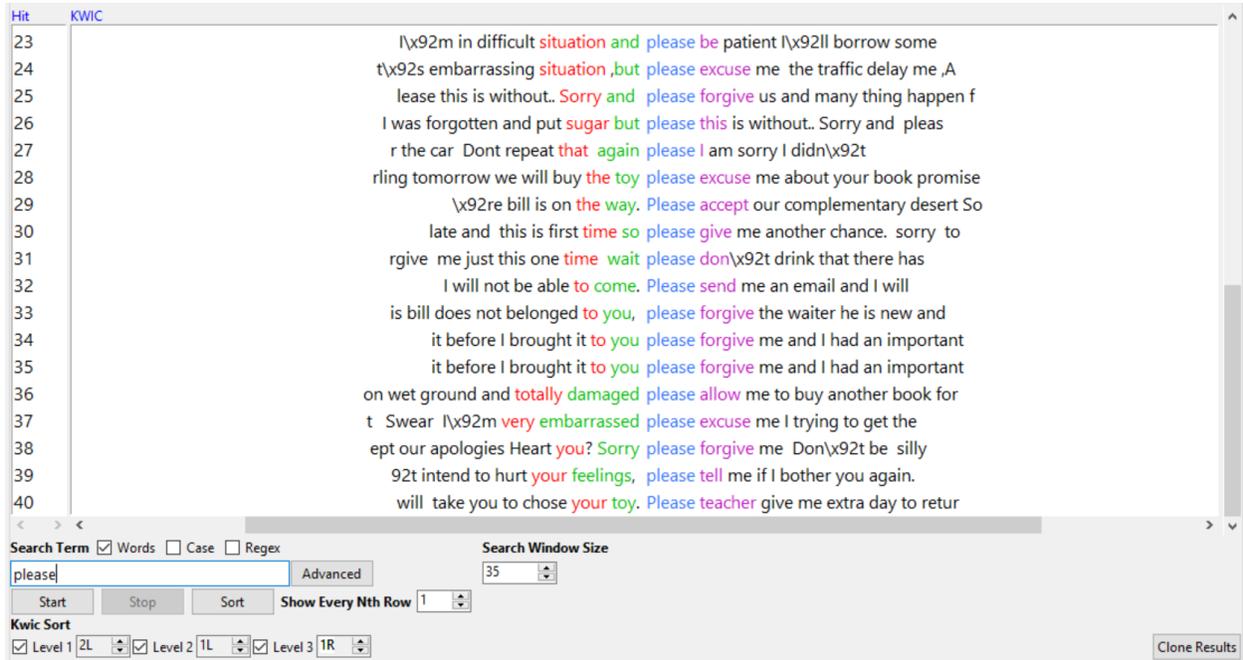
Kwic Sort  Level 1 2L  Level 2 1L  Level 3 1R Clone Results

In this figure, the aim was to give an example of the context within which the word 'apologise' or 'apologize' is used. This shows that the word is often followed by an explanation or request.

The context of 'please' is depicted in Figure 43 below. What is observed in the usage of 'please' is the combination with a request. Thus, phrases such as 'please accept', 'please forgive', 'please excuse' are prominent in the context of the word. Similarly, 'excuse' occurs with a request such and also the word please quite often. Phrases such as 'please excuse me', 'could you excuse me'

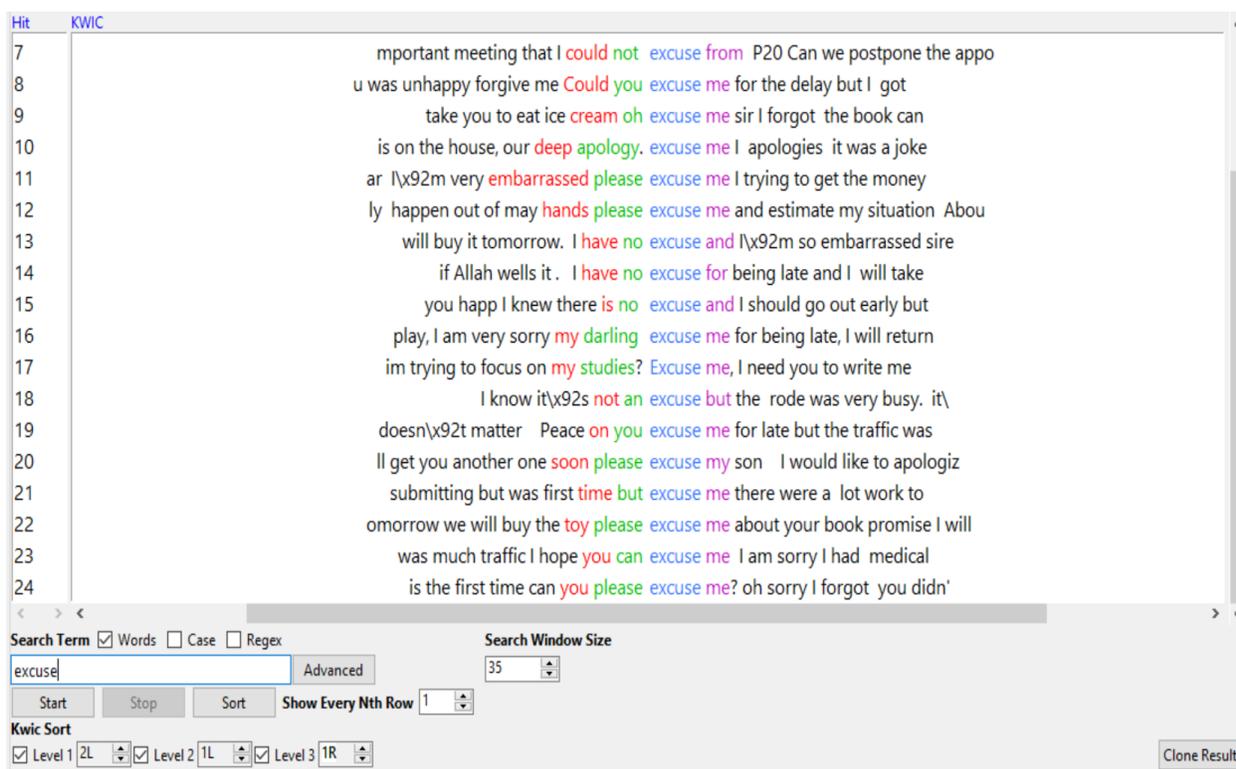
are common (see Figure 44).

Figure 42: Please and its context



In this figure, the aim was to give an example of the context within which the word ‘please’ is used. This shows that the word is often followed by a request.

Figure 43: Excuse and its context



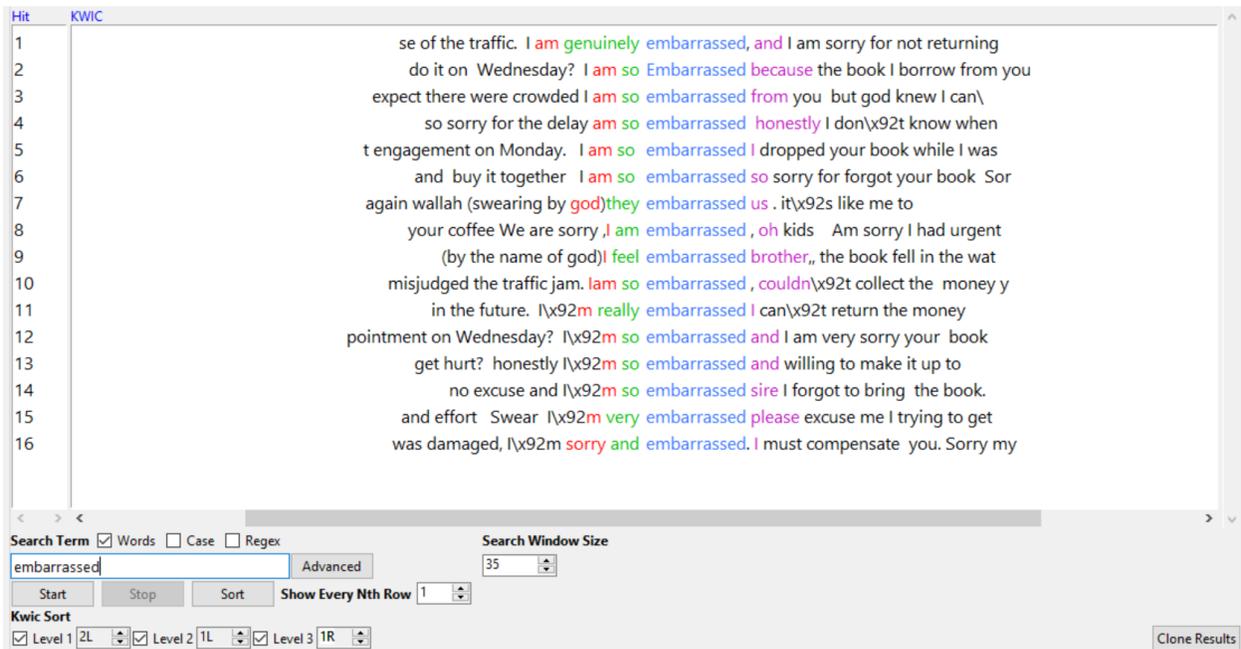
In this figure, the aim was to give an example of the context within which the word ‘excuse’ is used. This shows that the word is often followed by an explanation.

As discussed in section 5.4.4, the use of religious terms was found in 14 DCT situations. In this text analysis, the focus was to identify the context for the occurrences of religious terms. The results are depicted in Figure 45. The results highlight that the religious terms are used either at the beginning or end of apology sentences to amplify or show intensity of the apology act. For instance, ‘wallah’ is used often with sorry and apologise, such as ‘I am so sorry wallah’ or ‘I deeply apologise wallah’. Inshallah, unlike ‘wallah’ does not appear mostly at the start or beginning of sentences. As highlighted before, the use of religious terms is a common feature in Arabic culture (Al-Adaileh, 2007; Jehabi, 2010; Banikalef et al., 2015) which does not necessarily reflect the apologiser as being religious.



‘really embarrassed’ or ‘feel embarrassed’ which give more context to how the offender feels about the act the needs apologising for. In the use of the word, there is often an explanation that is given by the offender, for instance, in the expression ‘I am so embarrassed because the book I borrowed from you is damaged’.

Figure 45: Embarrassed and its context



In this figure, the aim was to give an example of the context within which the word ‘embarrassed’ is used. This shows that the word is often followed by an explanation.

Having explored the commonly used apology words or phrases, the next sections delves deeper to focus on guilt and shame, as a particular facet associated with apology speech acts.

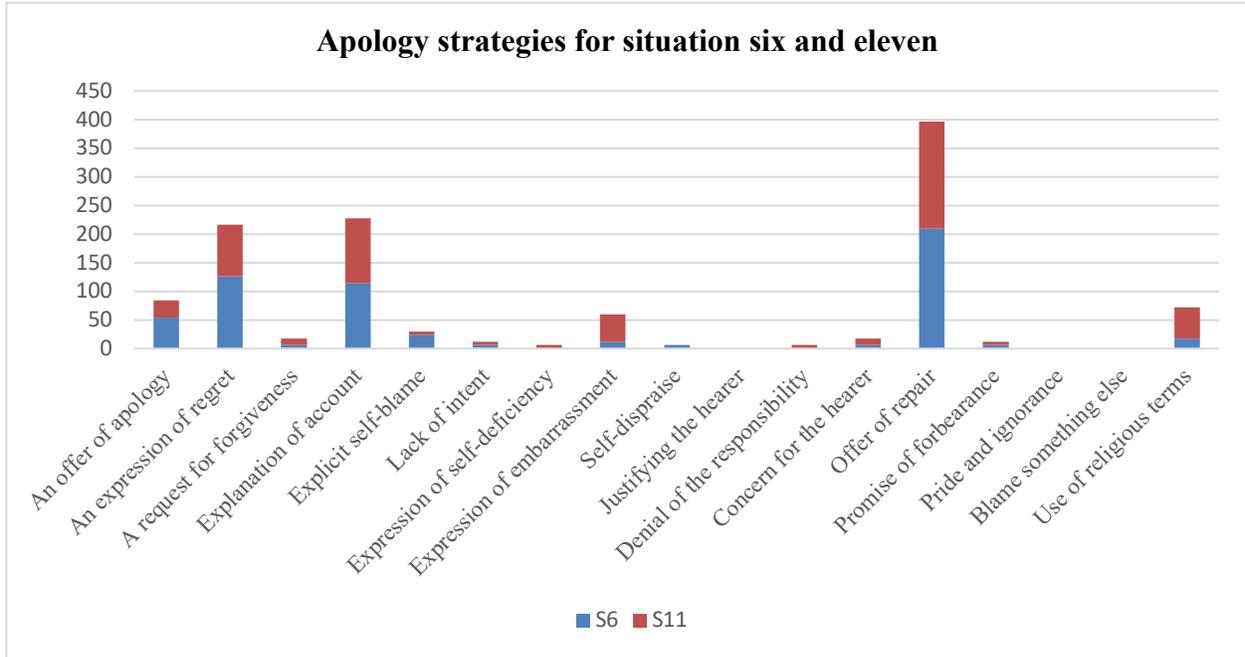
### 5.5.2 Guilt and Shame

Section 2.5 discussed the concept of guilt and shame and how these are culturally oriented. It was highlighted that there are distinctive cultural traits in the usage of the term. However, what is similar in most cultural contexts is the nature of the event that gives rise to guilt and shame (El Alaoui et al., 2018; Tangney, Miller, Flicker, & Barlow, 1996). Guilt and shame are essentially affective (emotional) phenomena which could be triggered by events such as cheating, lying and stealing (Stipek, 1998; Tangney et al., 1996). In order to highlight these affective or emotional terms in the apology speech acts, it is necessary to first identify the situation from the DCT situations that could trigger the phenomenon. This is relevant given that these terms refer to situations where personal traits or actions and their outcomes are perceived against generally acceptable personal or social standards (Stipek, 1998). In this case, the failure to meet the expected personal or social standards result in experiences of guilt (Gilbert, 2003; Izard, 2013). Shame, however, might also be used as a defensive response to the criticism of others, emanating from a person's fears of rejection and retraction of social support (El Alaoui et al., 2018). Guilt, on the other hand, could simply be an expression of self-criticism resulting from a person's failure to meet internalised standards (Bierbrauer, 1992).

With this understanding of guilt and shame, the DCT situations most likely to cause these emotions to arise are those that are socio-commitment and socio-religious offence types. Situation six and situation eleven are close to this criterion and thus, examined. The apology strategies for these two situations are shown in Figure 47 below. Critical in this examination are the apology strategies more inclined to expression of guilt and shame. In particular, the apology

strategies of explicit self-blame (C1), lack of intent (C2), expression of self-deficiency (C3), expression of embarrassment (C4) and self-dispraise (C5).

Figure 46: Apology strategies in situation six and situation eleven



Some connotations of guilt and shame as expressed in the apology speech acts in the two situations (six and eleven) include:

قل لي كيف يمكنني تعويضك؟ اشعر بالخجل. أعلم أن الاعتذار ليس كافياً

I know apology is not enough. I feel ashamed. Tell me how can I make it up to you?

أشعر بالحرج الشديد ، لكنني سأكون مسؤولاً عن إصلاح الأضرار

I am so embarrassed, but I will be responsible for repairing the damages

لذا من فضلك هل أنا محرجة منك لكن الله يعلم أنه لا يمكنني الحصول على كل الأموال المستحقة حتى الآن  
يمكن أن تعطيني المزيد من الأيام للحصول على أموالك

I am so embarrassed from you but God knows I can't get all money owed till now.  
So please could you give me more days to get your money

أشعر بالخجل من نفسي ، لكن ثق بي ، كل المبلغ سيكون في حسابك الأسبوع المقبل.

I am ashamed of myself but trust me, the whole amount is going to be in your account next week.

What is significant in these expressions of guilt and shame is the failure to meet social expectations and also the failure to take person responsibility. For instance, in the social commitment offence of failing to honour a debt (situation eleven), this violates the societal expectation of being trustworthy and reliable. On the other hand, driving a car without informing the owner of the lack of a valid driving licence is synonymous to basically ‘lying’, lack of respect and illegal. What is observed in this situation is that whilst an offer of repair for the damage caused can render the offence neutral, the trust or lack of honest in this instance, could be permanently impaired.

Further, the expressions of guilt and shame is often followed by an offer of repair. This is observable in Figure 47 above. The offer of repair following an expression of guilt and shame is consistent with Alsulayyi (2016) argument that Saudis tended to offer repair and used verbal redress when the perceived severity of the offence is highest. The next section explores the influence of cultural factors of social power and social distance on the apology strategies adopted.

## **5.6 Contextual variables and apology strategies**

Section 2.7.2 discussed the cultural factors of social power and social distance, highlighting that these are important contextual factors that need to be taken into account in speech acts besides gender/sex. As such, the utilisation of apology strategies based on social power and social

distance are analysed in this section. The analysis of the apology strategies based on social power distinctions is discussed first.

### **5.6.1 Apology strategies and power relationships**

In order to analyse the apology strategies based on social power, it was necessary that the DCT situations be appropriately categorised according to social power. The characteristics of the DCT situations were elaborated in section 3.6.1. The situations categorised based on social power are reproduced in Table 39 below. Two categories of social power were identified: equal social power and high social power. Situations two, five, six, eight, nine, eleven, thirteen and fourteen were characterised as equal social power situations. Situations one, three, four, seven, ten, twelve and fifteen were characterised as high social power situations.

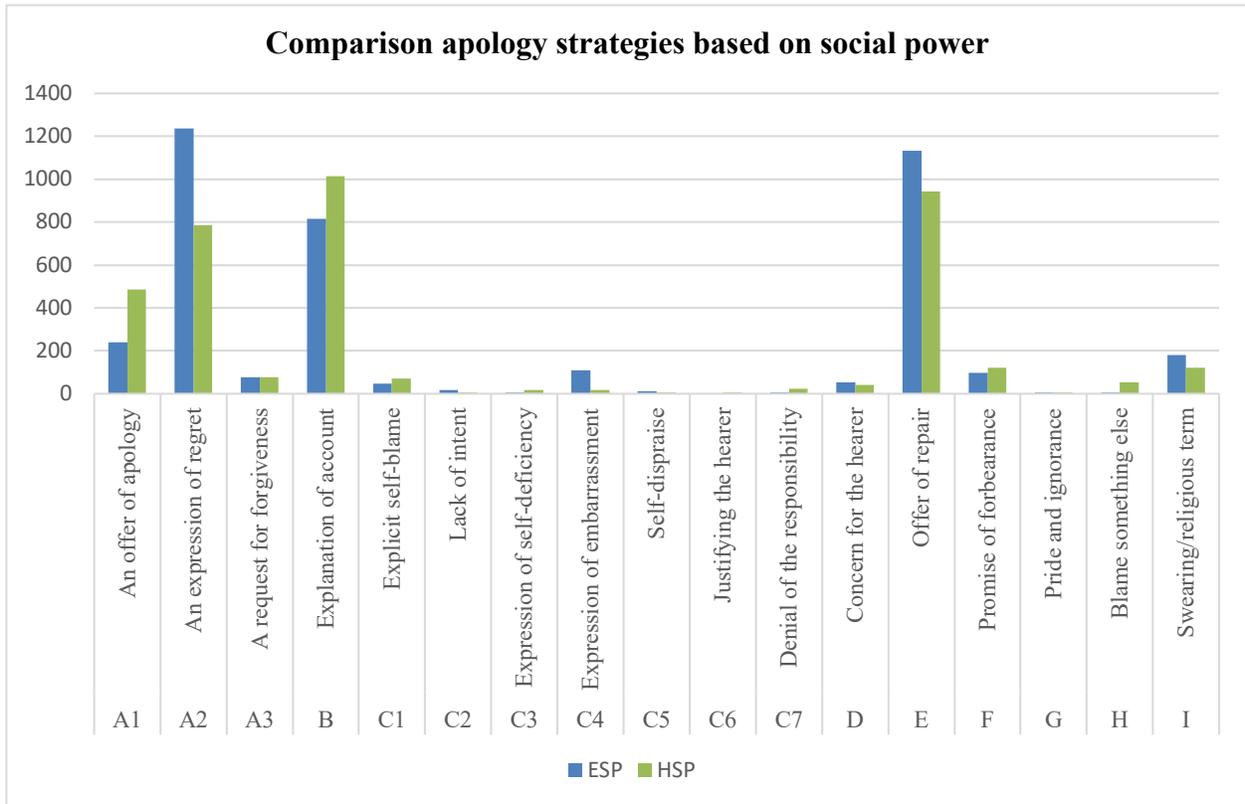
The focus of the analysis was to identify whether there are significant observable differences in the utilisation of apology strategies based on social power. The analysis of the apology strategies based on social power is graphically depicted in Figure 47 and Figure 49 below.

Table 39: Situations categorised based on social power

Social Power	Situation No.	Description (interlocutors)
Equal Social Power	S2	Damaged book (Friend vs Friend)
	S5	Bag falling on passenger (Stranger vs Stranger)
	S6	Damaged your friend car while driving without license (Friend vs Friend)
	S8	Accidentally stepping on a lady's toe (Stranger vs Stranger)
	S9	Upset and hurt a close friend (Close friend vs Close friend)
	S11	Unable to repay debt (Work colleague vs Work colleague)
	S13	Wrongly given cup of coffee with sugar to diabetic friend (Friend vs Friend)
	S14	Your child breaks a valuable vase in your friends' house (Mother vs New friend)
High Social Power	S1	Postponing Meeting (Teacher vs Student)
	S3	Promise to daughter (Parent vs Child)
	S4	Borrowed book (Student vs Tutor)
	S7	Wrong bill given to customer (Manager vs Customer)
	S10	Late for job interview (New employee vs Boss)
	S12	Failed to submit report to manager before due date (Employee vs Manager)
	S15	Missed student appointment due to another urgent meeting (Teacher vs Student)

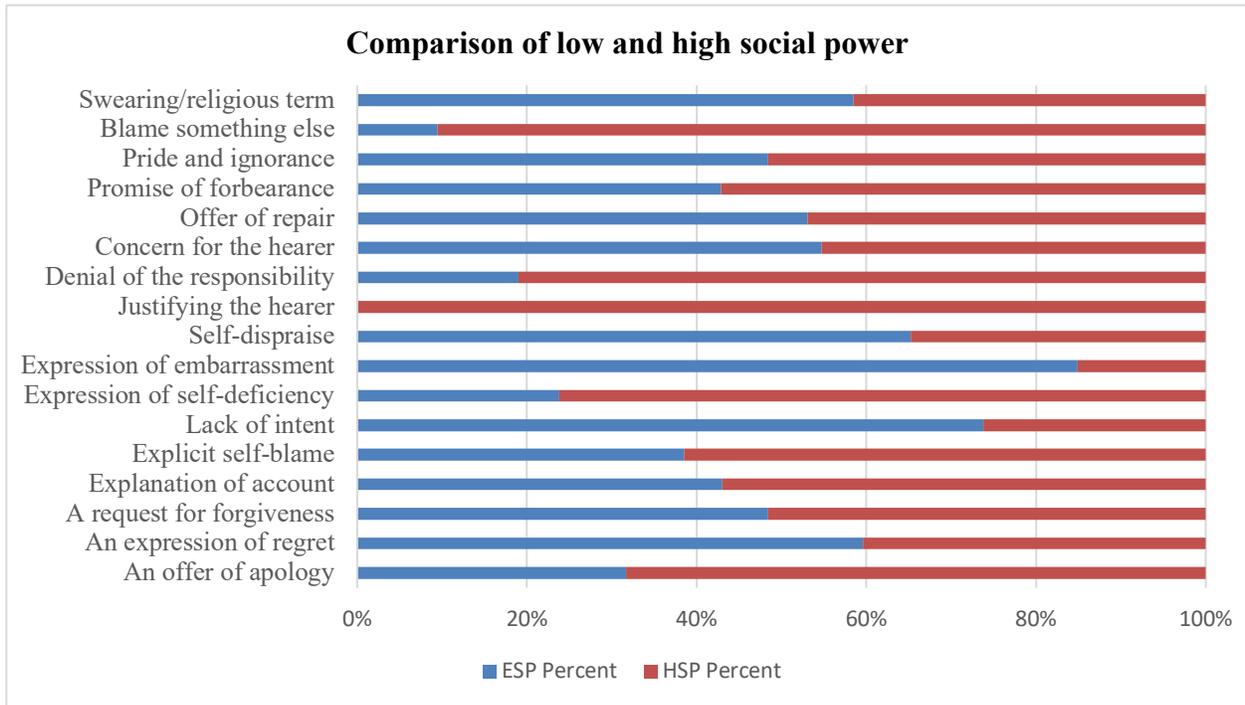
This table is a grouping of the situations based on social power. In this case, two social power categories were identified: equal social power and high social power, comprising 8 and 7 situations respectively.

Figure 47: Comparison of apology strategies based on social power



This figure shows a comparison of the use of apology strategies between the two categories of social power.

Figure 48: Comparison of apology strategies based on social power



This figure gives a proportionate comparison of the use of apology strategies between high and equal social power situations.

The results show that an offer of apology, explicit self-blame, expression of self-deficiency, denial of the responsibility, promise of forbearance and blame something else were most used in situations of high social power. The apology strategy justifying the hearer, on the other hand, was only used in high social power situations.

In contrary, the apology strategies of an expression of regret, lack of intent, expression of embarrassment, self-dispraise, concern for the hearer and use of religious terms were frequently employed in situations of equal social power. The other apology strategies of a request for forgiveness, offer of repair and pride and ignorance were relatively the same across the different social power categories.

In terms of which apology strategies had the relatively clear difference between the high and equal social power status of interlocutors, this was observed in the apology strategies of justifying the hearer (100%), blame something else (81%), expression of embarrassment (70%), denial of the responsibility (62%), expression of self-deficiency (52%), lack of intent (48%), an offer of repair (37%) and self-dispraise (31%). In these apology strategies, expression of embarrassment and lack of intent were employed more in equal social power situations whilst justifying the hearer, blame something else, denial of responsibility, expression of self-deficiency, an offer of repair and self-dispraise were utilised more in high power situations.

Given these observations of the differences in the apology strategies utilisation between equal and high social power situations, the next stage of the analysis was aimed at statistically demonstrating whether these differences are significant or not. A paired samples t-test analysis was conducted with results shown in Table 40, Table 41 and Table 42.

Table 40: Paired Samples Statistics for apology strategies based on social power

<b>Paired Samples Statistics</b>				
	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Equal Social Power	237.88	17	406.226	98.524
High Social Power	223.41	17	350.638	85.042

Table 41: Paired Samples Correlation for apology strategies based on social power

<b>Paired Samples Correlations</b>			
	N	Correlation	Sig.
Equal Social Power & High Social Power	17	.934	.000

Table 42: Paired Samples Test for apology strategies based on social power

Paired Samples Test								
	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Equal Social Power - High Social Power	14.471	148.220	35.949	-61.737	90.678	.403	16	.693

Table 40 shows the descriptive statistics of the occurrences of apology strategies in situations with equal and high social power. The means were 237.88 and 223.41 for equal social power and high social power occurrences across the 17 apology strategies respectively with associated standard deviations of 406.226 and 350.638 respectively. An examination of the correlation in the utilisation of apology strategies between the two categories of social power showed that there is a positive significant correlation. The Pearson correlation value of 0.934 is statistically significant as shown in Table 41 above.

Further, the results of the examination of the statistical differences in the utilisation of the apology strategies across the two social power categories is shown in Table 42 above. As the *p*-value (0.693) is higher than 0.05 and the *t*(16) of 0.403 is less than the critical value of 2.120, that implies that the mean values of the two social power categories are not statistically significantly different. In other words, whilst there are differences observed in the usage of apology strategies between equal social power and high social power, these differences are not statistically significant. Although the results of the correlation test has to be taken with caution because the mean is based on the number of the words, it is interesting to observe that there is no

significant differences between the number of words used by participants in relation to social power. These results seem to be different from the previous studies that support the influence of social power on the choice of apology strategies (Afghari, 2007; Alsulayyi, 2016; Holmes, 1995; Ogiermann, 2018). The disparity between this study and other studies will also need to be taken with caution. One may argue that the number of the words may be similar but the choice of the words can be different.

Having explored the influence of social power on the apology strategies, the next section examines the influence of social distance.

### **5.6.2 Apology strategies according to social distance**

In this section, the apology strategies are analysed based on the social distance. The categorisation of the 15 DCT situations based on social distance is shown in Table 43 below. The situations associated with low social distance are situations two, three, six, nine, thirteen and fourteen whilst the situations associated with medium social distance are situations one, four, eleven, twelve and fifteen. The remaining four situations are associated with high social distance (situations five, seven, eight and ten).

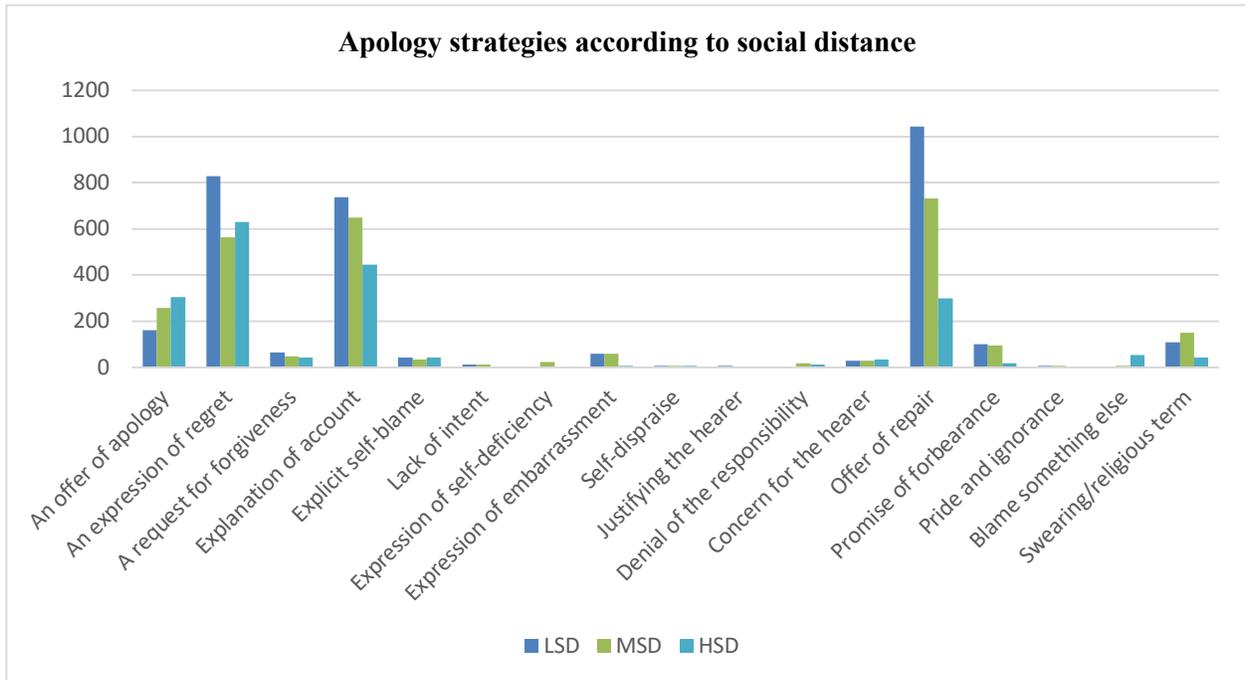
Table 43: Categorisation of situations based on social distance

Social Distance	Situation No.	Description (interlocutors)
Low Social Distance	S2	Damaged book (Friend vs Friend)
	S3	Promise to daughter (Parent vs Child)
	S6	Damaged your friend car while driving without license (Friend vs Friend)
	S9	Upset and hurt a close friend (Close friend vs Close friend)
	S13	Wrongly given cup of coffee with sugar to diabetic friend (Friend vs Friend)
	S14	Your child breaks a valuable vase in your friends' house (Mother vs friend)
Medium Social Distance	S1	Postponing Meeting (Teacher vs Student)
	S4	Borrowed book (Student vs Tutor)
	S11	Unable to repay debt (Work colleague vs Work colleague)
	S12	Failed to submit report to manager before due date (Employee vs Manager)
	S15	Missed student appointment due to another urgent meeting (Teacher vs Student)
High Social Distance	S5	Bag falling on passenger (Stranger vs Stranger)
	S7	Wrong bill given to customer (Manager vs Customer)
	S8	Accidentally stepping on a lady's toe (Stranger vs Stranger)
	S10	Late for job interview (New employee vs Boss)

This table is a grouping of the situations based on social distance. Three social distance categories were identified: low, equal and high social distance, comprising 6, 5 and 4 situations respectively.

The analysis of the apology strategies based on the three categories of social distance produced the results graphically presented in Figure 49 and Figure 51 below.

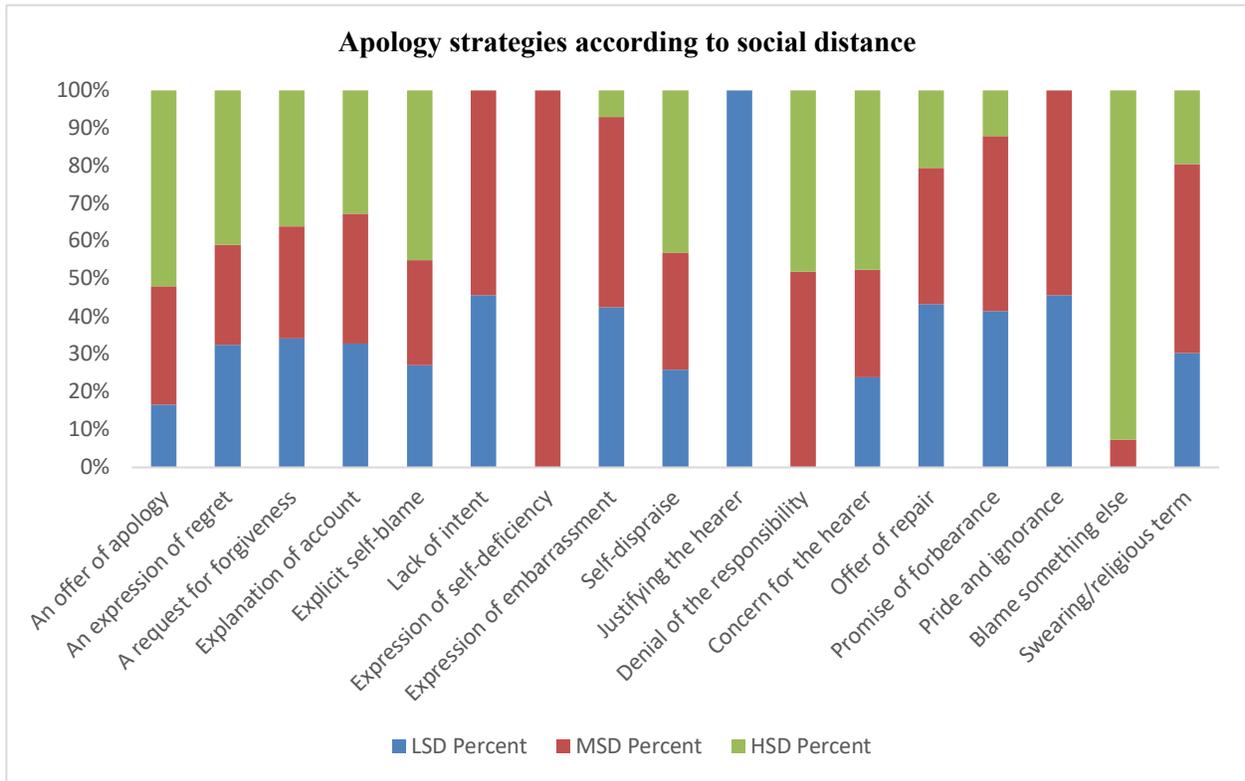
Figure 49: Comparison of apology strategies based on social distance



This figure shows a comparison of the use of apology strategies across the three categories of social distance.

The results showed that situations associated with high social distance had high utilisation of an offer of apology, explicit self-blame, self-dispraise, concern for the hearer and blame something else. On the contrary, situations with medium social distance had highest utilisation of apology strategies of lack of intent, expression of self-deficiency, expression of embarrassment, denial of the responsibility, promise of forbearance, pride and ignorance and use of religious terms. The low social distance situations had the highest usage of the justifying the hearer and offer of repair. Justifying the hearer apology strategy was only used in the low social distance situations. An explanation of account apology strategy, on the other hand, was used relatively even across the social distance categories.

Figure 50: Proportionate comparison of apology strategies based on social distance



This figure gives a proportionate comparison of the use of apology strategies across the three social distance situations.

The differences in the utilisation of the apology strategies across the social distance categories are statistically examined in order to identify whether these are significantly different or not. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 44, Table 45 and Table 46 below.

Table 44: Descriptives of apology strategies based on social distance

Descriptives								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Low Social Distance	17	188.82	332.906	80.742	17.66	359.99	0	1044
Medium Social Distance	17	158.47	244.238	59.236	32.89	284.05	0	732
High Social Distance	17	114.00	188.213	45.648	17.23	210.77	0	630
Total	51	153.76	258.557	36.205	81.04	226.49	0	1044

Table 45: Levene Statistics Test of homogeneity of variances

Test of Homogeneity of Variances					
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Occurrences of apology strategies	Based on Mean	1.385	2	48	.260
	Based on Median	.365	2	48	.696
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.365	2	39.134	.696
	Based on trimmed mean	.868	2	48	.426

Table 46: ANOVA Test for apology strategies based on social distance

ANOVA					
Occurrences of apology strategies					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	48152.471	2	24076.235	.351	.706
Within Groups	3294444.706	48	68634.265		
Total	3342597.176	50			

Table 47: Homogeneous subsets

<b>Occurrences of apology strategies based on social distance</b>			Subset for alpha = 0.05
Tukey HSD <sup>a</sup>	Social Distance Categories	N	1
	High Social Distance	17	114.00
	Medium Social Distance	17	158.47
	Low Social Distance	17	188.82
	Sig.		.685

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 17.000.

In Table 44, the descriptives of the occurrences of apology strategies based on social distance are provided which show mean values of 188.82, 158.47 and 114.00 for low social power, medium social power and high social power situations respectively with associated standard deviations of 332.906, 244.238 and 188.213 respectively.

In Table 45, the Levene Statistic test for the homogeneity of variances results are presented. The Levene test is non-significant which implies that group variances are equal. Further, in Table 46 the ANOVA test results are presented which reveal the  $F(2,48)$  value of 0.351 and  $p$ -value of 0.706. This implies that the mean differences are not statistically significantly different. In other words, the differences observed in the distribution of the 17 apology strategies across the three social distance categories are not statistically significant. This is further proved in Table 47 which highlights that the three social distance categories belong to one homogeneous subset. As such, the differences which exist on how apology strategies are utilised across the social distance categories are not significant statistically. As discussed in the previous sections, the result of this

statistic test will need to be taken with caution because the test was based on the number of words, rather than the choice of words. It may be possible that there is no significant difference within the number of words but there may be differences in terms of the choice of words. It is worth mentioning that several studies that highlight the importance of social distance in the choices of apology strategies employed (Al-Khaza'leh & Ariff, 2015; Almegren, 2018; Binasfour, 2014; Qari, 2019).

Having examined the utilisation of apology strategies across the DCT situations, taking different approaches to the analysis, the next section delves deeper into understanding the underlying reasons for the approach to apologising adopted by the apologiser.

## **5.7 Exploring perspectives of participants (apologisers)**

In this section, the results of the analysis of the perspectives of the participants obtained through semi-structured interviews are highlighted. The aim was to obtain a better understanding of the reasons underlying the choices of the apology strategies employed in the different situations. In this respect, this analysis complements the DCT analysis and textual analysis of the apology strategies above. The focus in this section is to highlight the key themes from the analysis of the interviews.

The key themes from the analysis of the interviews were captured as nature of offence, the position of the offended, the impact of words and the cultural upbringing. Some verbatim extracts of the interviewee responses are presented in the discussion of these themes.

### **5.7.1 The nature of the offence**

The interviewees highlighted the importance of the nature of the offence in choosing how to apology. In this respect, the nature of the offence can be captured in different ways but what was common among the interviews was the severity of the offence. What is classified as ‘severe’ offence is, nonetheless, subject. Some interviewees highlighted this point in stating that:

it really depends on the person and how they look at things. You can break my vase or my car, that won’t be a big issue for me. I can replace these. But for someone else, they might make this a big deal (Interviewee 5)

We are all different and what we value differs. To me, I have to try to put myself in the person’s shoes (so to speak) and think of the worst (Interviewee 7)

In this respect, there is a consideration of the severity of the offence in apologising. However, the judgment of what is severe and what is not is relative or subjective. Some aspects such as value, uniqueness, perception or sentimentality might come into consideration when there is something involved. One interviewee explained the aspect of perception in stating that:

I am more concerned of what the person might think of me when apologising. This definitely affects how I react and also how I will apology. In the case of breaking down someone car when driving without a licence, that was actually very embarrassing. I wouldn’t want to put myself in such a position. I will be more worried of what the person

will think of me in such a case. This is why I have to use the strongest possible words to express my embarrassment (Interviewee 3)

These depictions of the importance of the nature of the offence is consistent with the general argument in the literature regarding the severity of the offence (Banikalef et al., 2015; Gonda, 2001; Kim et al., 2004; Slocum, 2013). For instance, Kim et al (2004) argued that the type of offence and its physical and psychological impact determine the approach of apologising, the level of elaboration and the type of apology.

### **5.7.2 Position of the offended**

The position of the offended relates to their social status or social standing which has been shown in the literature to have an influence on the choice of apology strategies employed in different situations (Al-Musallam, 2016; Almegren, 2018; El-Dakhs, 2018). For instance, Al-Sobh (2013) found that intensifiers were often used in apologetic expressions whenever interlocutors held higher positions than the apologiser in the case of Jordanian Arabic speakers while Banikalef et al. (2015) study demonstrated that social status had a higher influence on the choice of the apology strategy adopted as compared to the severity of the offence. In this respect, the interviews aimed to explore whether participants explicitly considered the social status of the offended when apologising. The interviewee perspectives were mixed.

Some interviewees explicitly acknowledged the importance of the social status of the offended. For instance, an interviewee stated that:

Definitely, how I apologise to my friend or family is different to how I apologise at work to my boss. You have to show sincerity and also professionalism when apologising to your boss. The repercussions of you being fired are more serious than cancelling an appointment with your friend (Interviewee 1)

In Saudi Arabia, yes status matters. Its not just when apologising, but in a lot of other things. Look at the basic interaction between males and females. If we cant mix between non-family members of different gender, this will also affects also how we apologise between different status (Interview 9)

The comments from Interviewee 9 in this respect also captures the aspect of gender. However, Holmes (1995) study showed that men apologised to women regardless of status. This would suggest that it is the gender that is more significant than the status. This is contrary to Banikalef et al. (2015) findings.

On the contrary, one interviewee stated that social status does not matter by highlighting the principle of apologising instead as most important.

look, it doesn't matter who you are apologising to, whether a child or adult, boss or friend. The bottom line is that you have offended the person and that is why you are apologising. Show that you are sincere in your apology and mean it. That is what matters. No the person, but the act (Interviewee 7)

Thus, the act of apologising is prioritised in this case as apology is meant to maintain human relationships ( Scher & Darley, 1997; Hatfield & Hahn, 2011; Haugh & Chang, 2019;) It is an act to show that you acknowledge that an offence has occurred whether intentionally or not. Thus, the generic role of apology is to repair relationships when an offence has been committed

whereby one party (or both) to the interaction recognises that an offence has been committed and takes a degree of responsibility.

### **5.7.3 Impact of words**

Consistent with the argument by Interviewee 7 above that the act of apologising is what matters and not the status, interviewee 4 reiterated that sincerity is important in the act stating that,

The choice of words is key because it shows whether you are truly sincere in your apology or not. Its not just the words, but also the emotional and facial expressions when apologising. Can you be apologise and smiling at the same time? The person will think you are not taking the matter serious. So, the words you used and how how you show true expressions of being 'sorry' are important. (Interviewee 4).

Similarly, another interviewee highlighted the important of words used when apologising:

When I say 'I am very very sorry' or 'I am deeply sorry' or 'I am terribly sorry', I actually mean that. Its hard to express my feelings in words but when I show how deeply sorry I am that I offended the person, that carries more weight. So, yes, words do matter and can say a lot (Interviewee 2)

The argument by interviewee 2 is consistent with the findings highlighted in section 5.6.1 in which some apology intensifiers have been used. The use of apology intensifiers has been widely evidenced in the literature (Al-Hami, 1993; Hatfield & Hahn, 2011; Tahir & Pandian, 2016); Haugh & Chang, 2019; . The intensification as suggested by Al-Hami (1993) can be either through adverbials or repetition or a combination of adverbials and repetitions. Al-Sobh (2013), however, found that intensifiers were not used in apologetic expressions in less formal situations such as with relations among Arabic speakers.

#### 5.7.4 Cultural upbringing

Similar to the use of adverbials, repetition or a combination of these was the influence of cultural upbringing on the choice of the words being used when apologising. The words use of Inshallah, Wallah represent intensifications that are beyond the usual expressions of words in other setting. In the context of Saudi Arabia (other Islamic countries too), these words capture an attribute of explicit expression of apology (Tahir & Pandian, 2016). Importantly too, these apologetic expressions which involve the use of religious intensifies are context specific.

One interviewee commented that:

the words come out naturally. I don't have to think that now I have to state 'Inshallah or Allah yesahel'. These are dependent on the situation and I have grown up using these terms. You always have to show concern for the offended, no matter the circumstance (Interviewee 5)

while another interviewee reiterated the cultural upbringing also,

I have been raised to respect the elderly and people in general. I am a Muslim too and this is the most respectful way to apologise. You have to recognise that a lot of things are beyond our control and when I use phrases such as 'Allah yesahel' I am effectively indicating that matters are not always within our control (Interviewee 1)

This was consistent to interviewee 10 who also stated that:

mistakes, offences all before us. We are not perfect. Things are never always what we wish. But you have to recognise this and take responsibility too. In everything, thank Allah and know that He is involved (Interviewee 10)

The excerpts support the findings of (Soliman, 2003) in the context of Egyptian Arabic who “usually praise God for everything (whether good or bad)”. This has also been highlighted by other studies (Hussein & Hammouri, 1998; Bajri, 2005; Nureddeen, 2008; Al-Marrani & Sazalie, 2010; Jebahi, 2011). What is also particularly interesting is that such expressions are not restricted to those that are religious as interviewee 3 explained that:

it does mean that I am religious or a real muslim when I use the phrase (inshallah). To me its just being respectful

As such, it is the socio-cultural fabric that affects people’s upbringing that is portrayed in the speech acts. The social customs, expressed in part through speech acts, are intricately engraved into the social arrangements and interactions; retrojected into consciousness and seen as a normal way of life (Berger & Luckmann, 1991; Luckmann, 2013).

## **5.8 Summary**

This chapter was aimed at presenting and discussing results of the analysis of apology strategies. The chapter started by first identifying the apology strategies and the respective coding process to aid analysis. Then a discussion of the distribution of the apology strategies across the 15 DCT

situations was made. The results highlighted the significant usage of an expression of apology, offer of repair and explanation of account. Thus, the results show that Saudi participants are inclined to offer repair when apologising. Saudi participants also give explanation or account of what happened when trying to apologise. Further, in apologising, there is a high likelihood of expressing regret or showing regret in the apology speech acts. A further examination of the statistical difference in the apology strategies used showed that an explanation of account, an expression of regret and offer of repair were homogeneous and statistically different from other apology strategies. The results also showed that when apologising, Saudi participants often use two or more strategies combined instead of one strategy. The frequently used combination of apology strategies was an expression of regret and offer of repair.

An analysis of the utilisation of apology strategies between male and female showed that there is a statistically significant difference in the use of apology strategies. This was highlighted, for instance, in that females expressed more concern for the hearer than males. Similarly, males were more inclined to express embarrassment and offer repair than females.

A further exploration of the apology strategies across the age groups was performed which suggested that an offer of apology was more likely to be given by '50 and over' years than other age groups whilst more explanation in apologising was more expected 'n the '20-29' years group. The age group 'under 20'' and '20-29' years were more inclined to blame something else. However, whilst differences were observed, these differences were not statistically significantly different.

An examination of the commonly used words/phrases supported the high occurrence of the word 'sorry', an expression of regret. Further, the results highlighted the usage of religious terms (Allah, Wallah, Inshallah) which are culturally oriented. A further examination of the underlying motive in the usage of specific apology strategies highlighted the importance of the nature of the offence, position of the offended, impact of words and the influence of the socio-cultural fabric. The next chapter focusses on the response strategies in order to understand how these are employed in responding to apology by Saudi participants.

## **Chapter Six: Analysis of Response Strategies**

### **6.1 Introduction**

Chapter four presented the results of the findings from the analysis of the apology strategies across the 15 DCT situations. In this chapter, the results from the analysis of the response strategies across the situations will be presented. The first section gives an overview by analysing the response strategies across the 15 situations collectively and then an analysis of each response strategy is discussed in turn. Section 6.3 will then present the results of the analysis of the response strategies for each of the 15 situations. This will then be followed by an analysis of the occurrence of a combination of response strategies. In order to understand the response strategies further, I will examine the relationships between situational variables (e.g. social power and social distance) and the use of response strategies. This is in addition to the consideration of the social variables, such as gender and age on the use of response strategies. In investigating the influence of situational and social variables, statistical analysis was also performed with results discussed in Chapter Seven, section 7.4 and 7.6. In these cases, descriptive and inferential statistical results will be presented and discussed. A further section, section 7.7, explored some factors that respondents considered when offering their responses to apologies, which is then followed by a summary of the chapter.

## 6.2 Response strategies in all situations

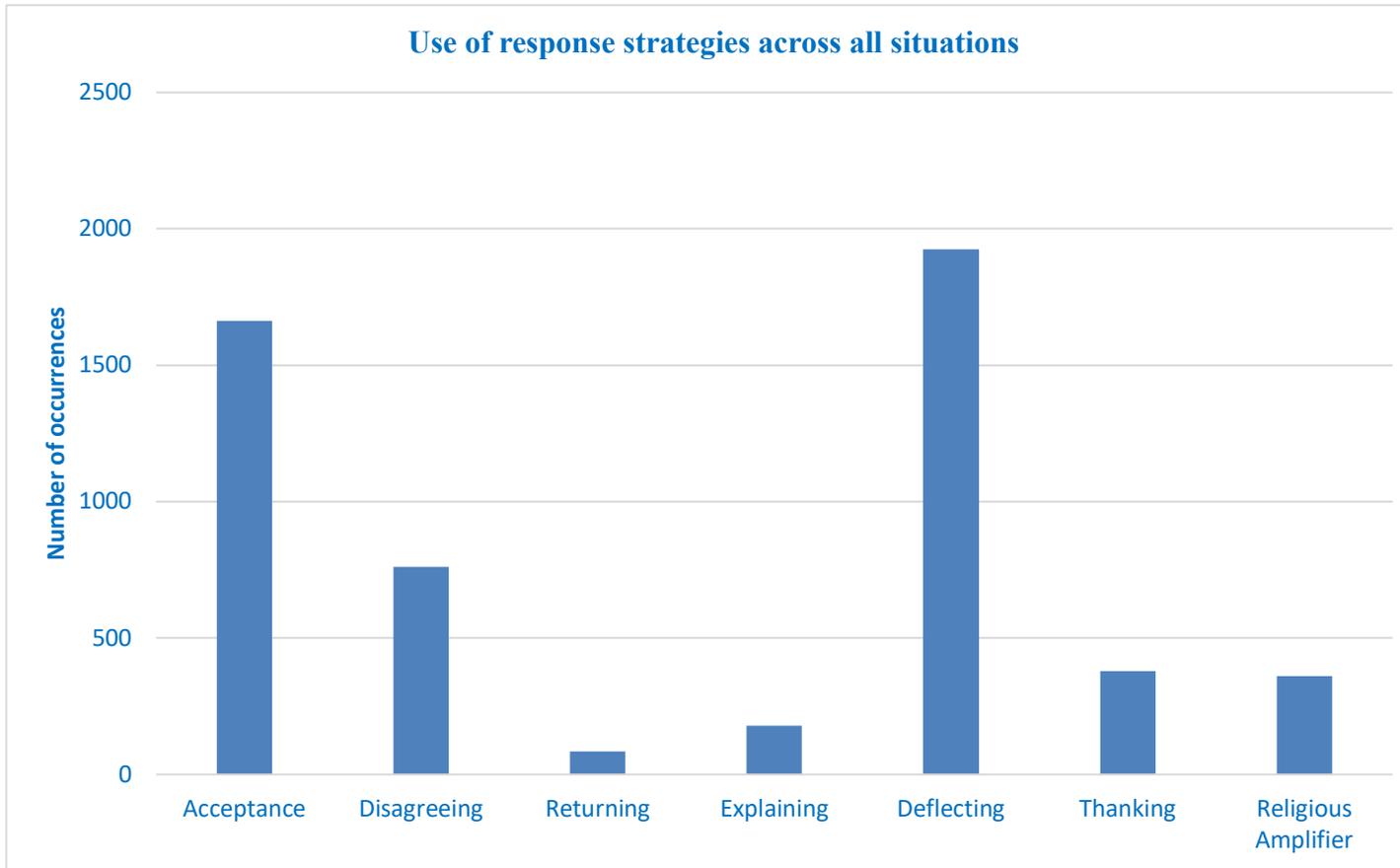
In this section, the results of the analysis of the response strategies across all the situations are presented and discussed. The use of the 7 response strategies across the 15 DCT situations is shown in Table 48 below and graphically depicted in Figure 52. As shown in Figure 51, the most frequently used response strategies are deflecting (36%) and acceptance (31%). Deflecting in this case refers to the deliberate attempt by the offended to redirect attention and thus deflecting the situation whilst acceptance is the offended accepting the apology (see section 3.7.2). Acceptance response strategy refers to the explicit expression of accepting the apology. In order to better understand the utilisation of the response strategies across the 15 DCT situations, each response strategy is analysed in turn below, highlighting also the occurrence across the 15 DCT situations.

Table 48: Response strategies for all situations

<b>Response Strategies</b>			
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Acceptance</b>	A	1,656	31%
<b>Disagreeing</b>	B	768	14%
<b>Returning</b>	C	78	1%
<b>Explaining</b>	D	174	3%
<b>Deflecting</b>	E	1,926	36%
<b>Thanking</b>	F	384	7%
<b>Religious Amplifier</b>	G	354	7%

This table shows the total frequencies of the response strategy across the 15 DCT and their respective percentages.

Figure 51: Response strategies in all situations



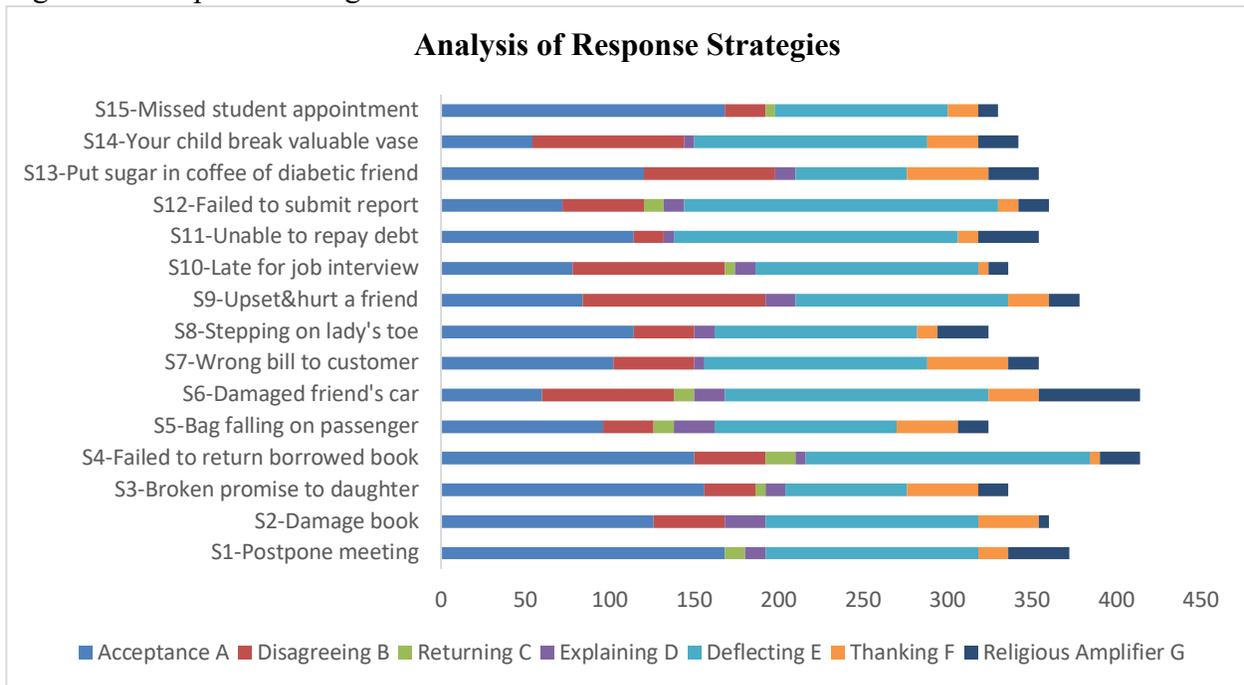
This figure shows the response strategies frequencies across the 15 DCT situations in their raw numbers.

As depicted in Table 48 and Figure 42, the most frequently used response strategy across the 15 DCT situations were deflecting (37%), acceptance (32%) and disagreeing (14%). These results are largely consistent with the extant literature that shows that acceptance is often the ‘default’ response strategy or that people are more inclined to accept an apology (Owen, 1983; Adrefiza, 1995; Bennett & Earwalker, 2001). However, the finding that is inconsistent with this literature (e.g. Bennett & Earwalker, 2001) is the highest utilisation of the deflecting response strategy in this study. Bennett & Earwalker (2001), for instance, found that apologies across languages are rarely rejected, but most often accepted. Thus, the most preferred response to apologies in the literature is acceptance or forgiveness category (Adrefiza, 1995; Holmes, 1995; Bennett &

Earwalker, 2001; Robinson, 2004 ) which is contrary to the findings in this research that shows that Saudi participants are more inclined to deflect or reduce the severity of the situation by diverting attention. Adrefiza (1995) argues that deflecting response strategy is most used in high context cultures, where speech styles is often ambiguous, implicit, and indecisive (Aziz, 2000; Wouk, 2006). This might partly explain the observation in this study as Saudi Arabia is a high context culture (Almutairi & McCarthy, 2012; Glowacki-Dudka, 2008).

In the next sections (6.2.1 to 6.2.7), the aim is to explore the distribution of each response strategy across the 15 DCT situations, highlighting where the occurrences are most used. Figure 53 below provides a summary of the proportionate distribution of the response strategies across the situations. The analysis of the occurrence of the acceptance response strategy is discussed next.

Figure 52: Response strategies for all situations

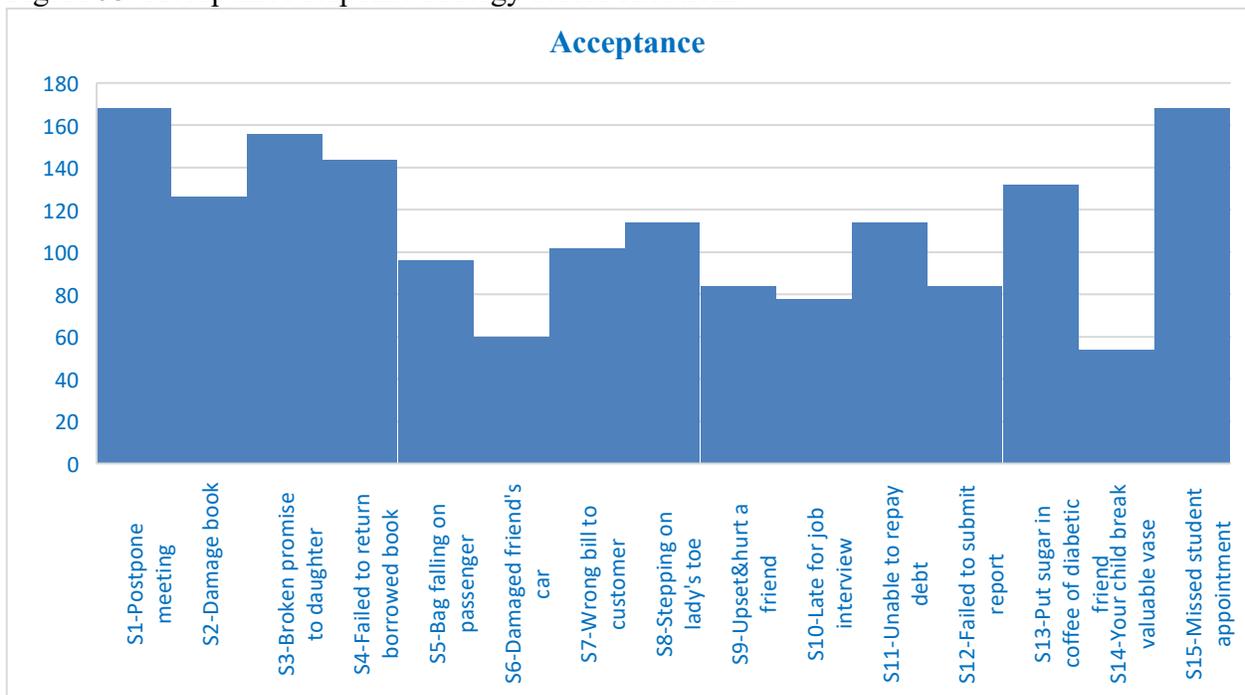


This figure shows the proportionate distribution of each response strategy across each situation.

## 6.2.1 Acceptance

Acceptance (A) of apology response strategy existed across all the 15 situations with occurrences ranging from a high of 10% to a low of 3% as depicted in Figure 54 below.

Figure 53: Acceptance response strategy across situations



This figure shows the distribution of the acceptance response strategy across the 15 DCT situations presented from the highest occurrence to the lowest occurrence.

The highest prominence of occurrence was observed in situations one and fifteen whilst the lowest in situation fourteen. A review of the two situations with the highest occurrence (situation one and situation fifteen) shows that they both had a time-related offence (e.g. returning borrowed book within specified period) which could be classified as of low severity. In addition, both situations had high social power (HP) and medium social distance (MD). This is contrary to situation fourteen which was associated with a high severity of possession damage (PD) offence,

equal social power (EP) and low social distance (LD). Some examples of acceptance of apology include:

لا بأس ولكن أتمنى أن تخبرني

It's okay but I wish you told me

In this case, two response strategies are observed, acceptance expressed as 'its okay' and returning response strategy expressed in the phrase 'but I wish you told me'. In the other two examples below, it was explicit acceptance only.

حسنا

It's okay

حسنا

Okay

In the example below, again two response strategies are noticed; acceptance ('its okay') and returning ('I will give you more time').

سأعطيك المزيد من الوقت. حسنا

Its okay. I will give you more time

Also, in this example, two response strategies are identifiable in the phrases 'I'm alright' for acceptance and 'next time make sure to put it in a safe place' for explaining response strategy.

أنا بخير ، في المرة القادمة تأكد من وضعها في مكان آمن

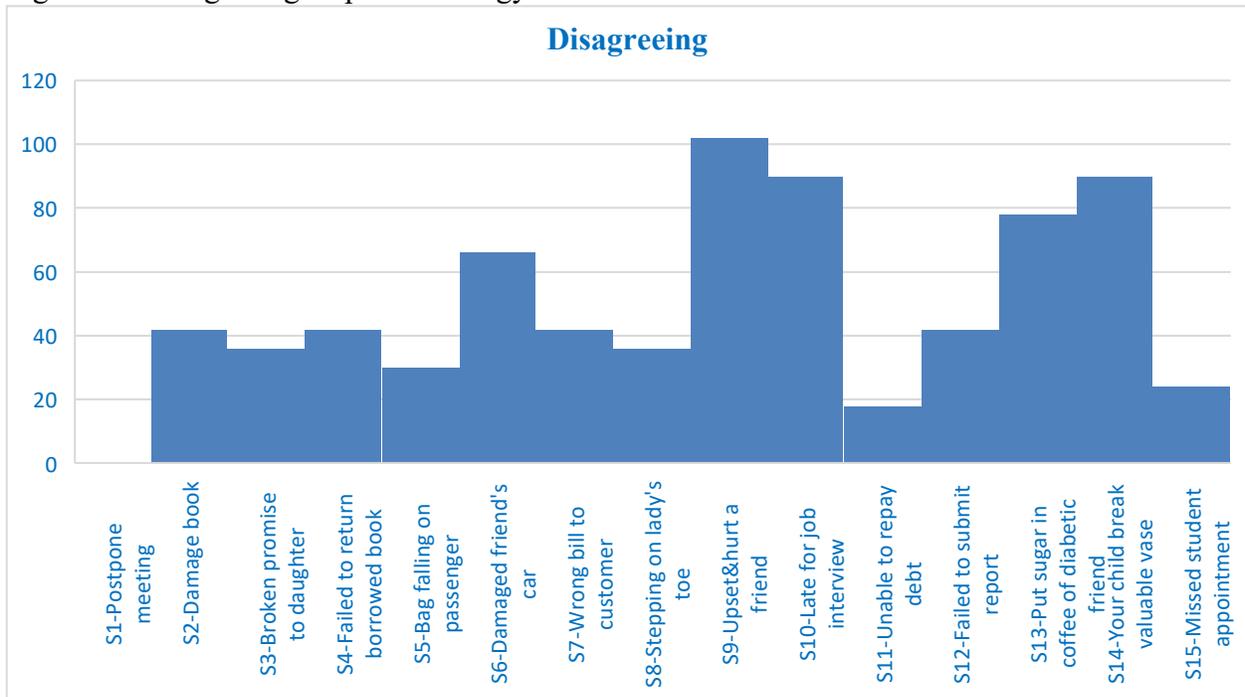
I'm alright, next time make sure to put it in a safe place

The use of these phrases 'it's okay', 'it's alright' have been shown as acceptance of apology in other language context. Goffman (1971), for instance, identified this phrase as a common remark in American speech to denote acceptance whilst Owen (1983) argues that when the words 'okay', 'alight' are used without the deictic 'that's' or 'it's', then that signifies an acknowledgement of the apology. In this research project, however, 'okay' and 'its okay' are classified as both acceptance responses. The disagreeing response strategy is discussed next.

### **6.2.2 Disagreeing**

The disagreeing (B) response strategy was utilised in 14 situations with occurrences in proportionate terms ranging from a high of 14% in situation nine to a low of 2% in situation eleven as shown in Figure 55.

Figure 54: Disagreeing response strategy across situations



This figure shows the distribution of the disagreeing response strategy across the 15 DCT situations presented from the highest occurrence to the lowest occurrence.

In situation one, participants did not utilise this response strategy. Situations ten and fourteen also had a relatively high proportionate usage of the disagreeing response strategy with 10% occurrence. An equal utilisation of this response strategy was observed between situations two, four, seven and twelve and also between situations three and eight.

A review of the situations with high prominence of this response strategy shows that these were characterised by a high severity of offence. In addition, the social distance and social power associated with situations nine and fourteen was low (LD) and equal (EP) respectively. Some examples of the use of the disagreeing response strategy include:

عذرا ، فاتك موعدك  
 Sorry, you missed your appointment

In this case, ‘sorry’ is disagreeing whilst ‘you missed your appointment’ is explaining response strategy. In the next example, this is an explicit disagreement response.

هل تمزح معي  
Are you kidding me!

In this example below, there is both disagreeing and explaining response strategies. Disagreeing response strategy is captured in the phrase ‘I am really disappointed with your actions’

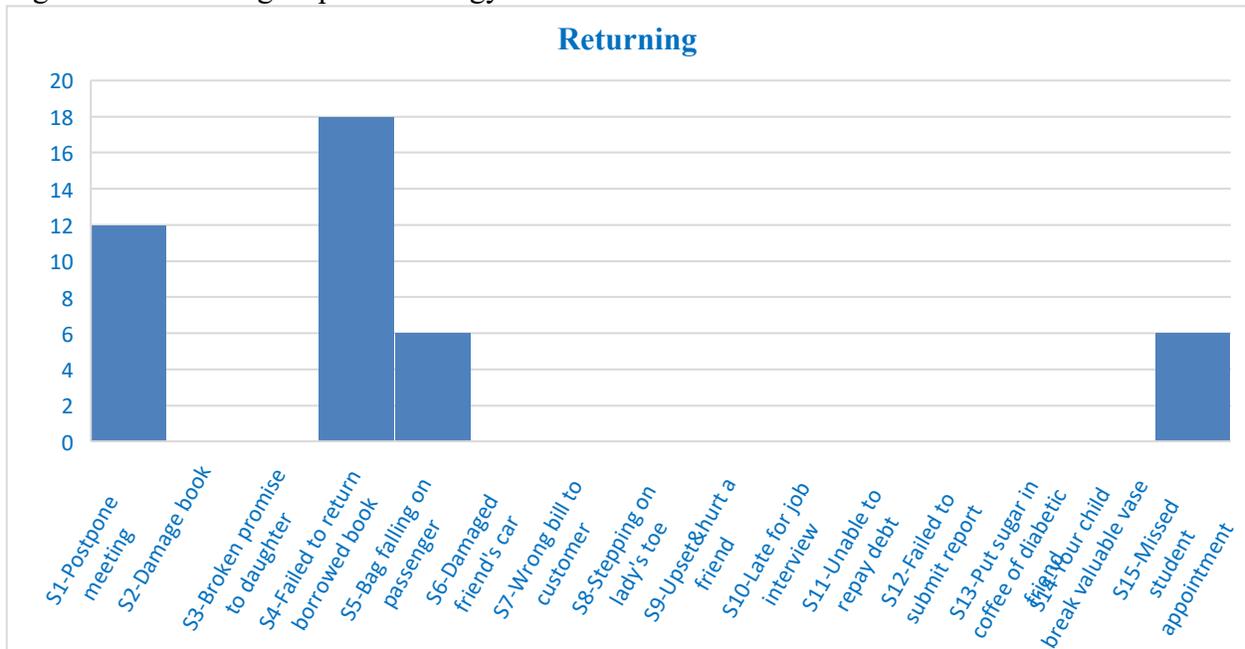
أشعر بخيبة أمل حقا من أفعالك وليس حول السيارة ؛ عني أتق بك وأعطيك سيارتي  
I am really disappointed with your actions and its not about the car; its about me trusting you and giving you my car

The returning response strategy is discussed next.

### 6.2.3 Returning

Unlike other response strategies, returning was the least utilised strategy with 0.9% relative occurrence across all the 15 situations. Figure 56 shows the results of the returning (C) response strategy.

Figure 55: Returning response strategy across situations



This figure shows the distribution of the returning response strategy across the 15 DCT situations presented from the highest occurrence to the lowest occurrence.

A further examination of this response strategy shows that it only occurred in four situations (four, one, five and fifteen). Situation four had the relatively high frequency of occurrence at 43% followed by situation one at 29%. What is common among these two situations (four and one) is the type of offence which is time related with associated high social power (HP) and medium social distance (MD). This suggests that the returning response strategy is more likely to be used when the social power is high and/or social distance is medium.

Some examples of the employment of this response strategy include:

لا تقلق ، لكنني بحاجة إليها على وجه السرعة

No worries, but I need it urgently (E, C)

In this example, 'no worries' expresses the deflecting strategy whilst the phrase 'but I need it urgently' reflects the returning strategy. However, the example below captures only the returning strategy.

عليك أن تعطيني إياه بحلول الغد

You have to give it to me by tomorrow

whilst the examples below have returning strategy in the expressions ‘anytime that suits your schedule and ‘please bring it back once you finish reading it’ respectively.

لا توجد مشكلة ، في أي وقت يناسب جدولك الزمني

No problem, anytime that suits your schedule

انا سعيد انها أعجبتك؛ يرجى إعادته بمجرد الانتهاء من قراءته

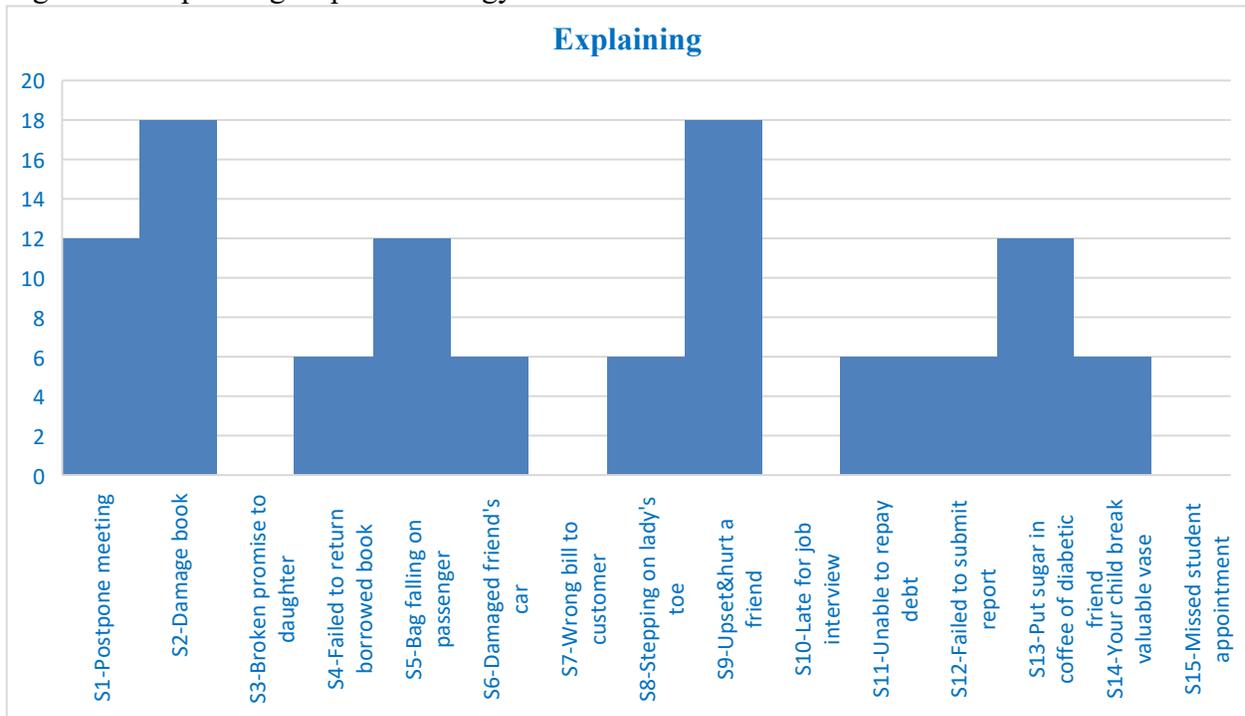
I am glad you like it; please bring it back once you finish reading it

The explaining response strategy is discussed next.

#### **6.2.4 Explaining**

The explaining (D) response strategy had an overall occurrence of only 2.3% across the 15 DCT situations and thus, was second least used response strategy by the participants. An examination of this response strategy revealed that it was employed in 11 out of the 15 situations as shown in Figure 67 below.

Figure 56: Explaining response strategy across situations



This figure shows the distribution of the explaining response strategy across the 15 DCT situations presented from the highest occurrence to the lowest occurrence

The highest usage was in situations two and nine which had both a proportionate percentage usage of 17%. Situations one, five and thirteen also had similar proportionate percentage occurrence of 11% while the lowest usage was in situations four, six, eight, eleven, twelve and fourteen each with 6% proportionate occurrence.

An examination of the two situations with the highest occurrence of the strategy (situations two and nine) revealed that these had both social commitment related offences which are perceived of high severity. In addition, both situations had low social distance (LD) and equal social power (EP). Thus, this suggests that situations characterised by equal social power and low social distance would most likely result in offering explanation when offender is apologising.

Some examples of the utilisation of this response strategy include:

لا تقلق ، لم يحدث شيء ؛ انتهيت بالفعل من قراءته

No worries, nothing happened; I already finished reading it

In this example, ‘no worries’ is a deflecting response strategy whilst the expression ‘nothing happened; I already finished reading it’ is an explaining response phrase. In the next example below, the phrase ‘sorry’ is a disagreeing response whilst ‘but everything has its limits’ is an explaining response phrase.

أسف ولكن كل شيء له حدوده

Sorry but everything has its limits

In the next example below, the explaining response strategy is captured in the phrase ‘this book is very important to me’ while the other phrase ‘please repair the damage before you return it’ reflects a returning response.

هذا الكتاب مهم جدًا بالنسبة لي ، يُرجى إصلاح الضرر قبل إعادته

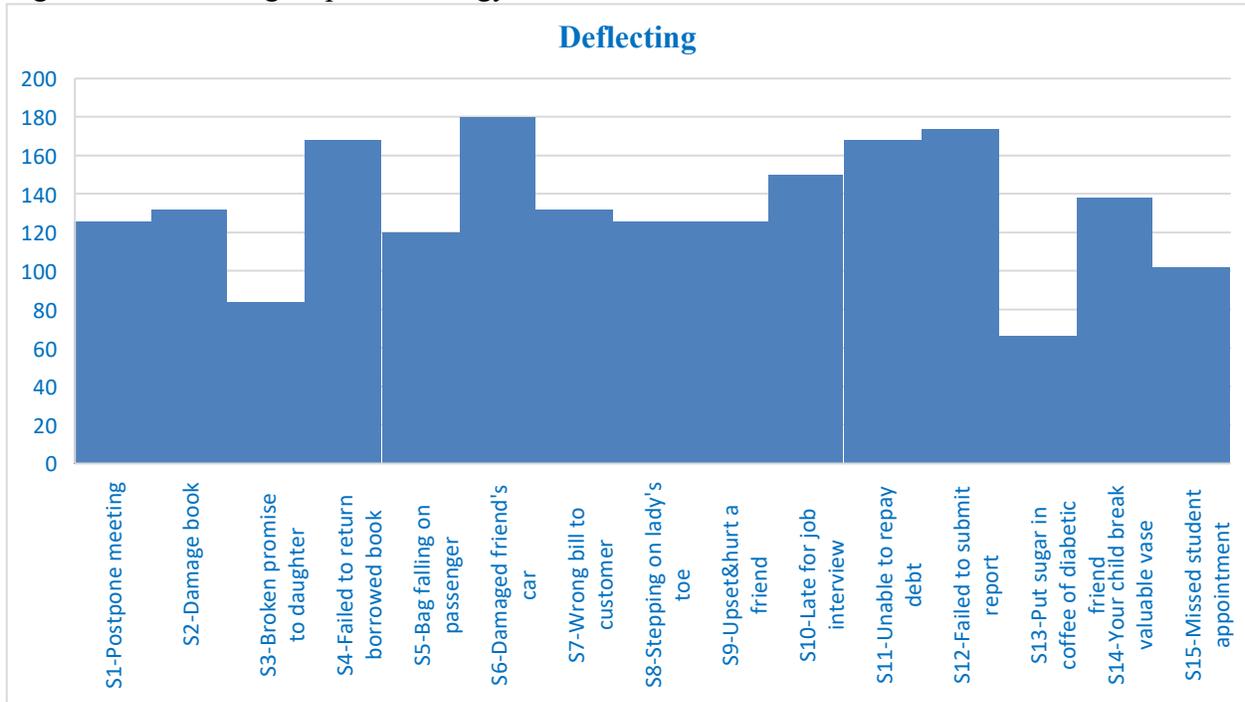
This book is very important to me, please repair the damage before you return it

The deflecting response strategy is discussed next.

### 6.2.5 Deflecting

Deflecting (E) response strategy was the most used response strategy across the 15 situations with an overall proportionate usage of 37%. The spread of the occurrence of the response strategy across the situations is graphically depicted in Figure 58 below.

Figure 57: Deflecting response strategy across situations



This figure shows the distribution of the deflecting response strategy across the 15 DCT situations presented from the highest occurrence to the lowest occurrence.

The highest occurrence of the strategy was in situation six with 9% while the lowest was in situation thirteen (3%). A further exploration of the first four situations with the highest frequency (situations six, twelve, four and eleven) revealed that the social power for these situations ranged from equal to high whilst the social distance ranged from low to medium. In general terms however, this response strategy was widely spread across the situations. Some examples of the usage of the deflecting response strategy are shown below. This response strategy is captured in the expression ‘no problem’, ‘its not a problem at all’, ‘no problem’ and ‘all is good’ in the examples below respectively.

ليس هناك أى مشكلة

No problem

ليست مشكلة على الإطلاق

Its not a problem at all

لا توجد مشكلة ، فقط لا تفعل ذلك مرة أخرى

No problem, just don't do it again

لا تقلق كلما استطعت. كل شيء بخير

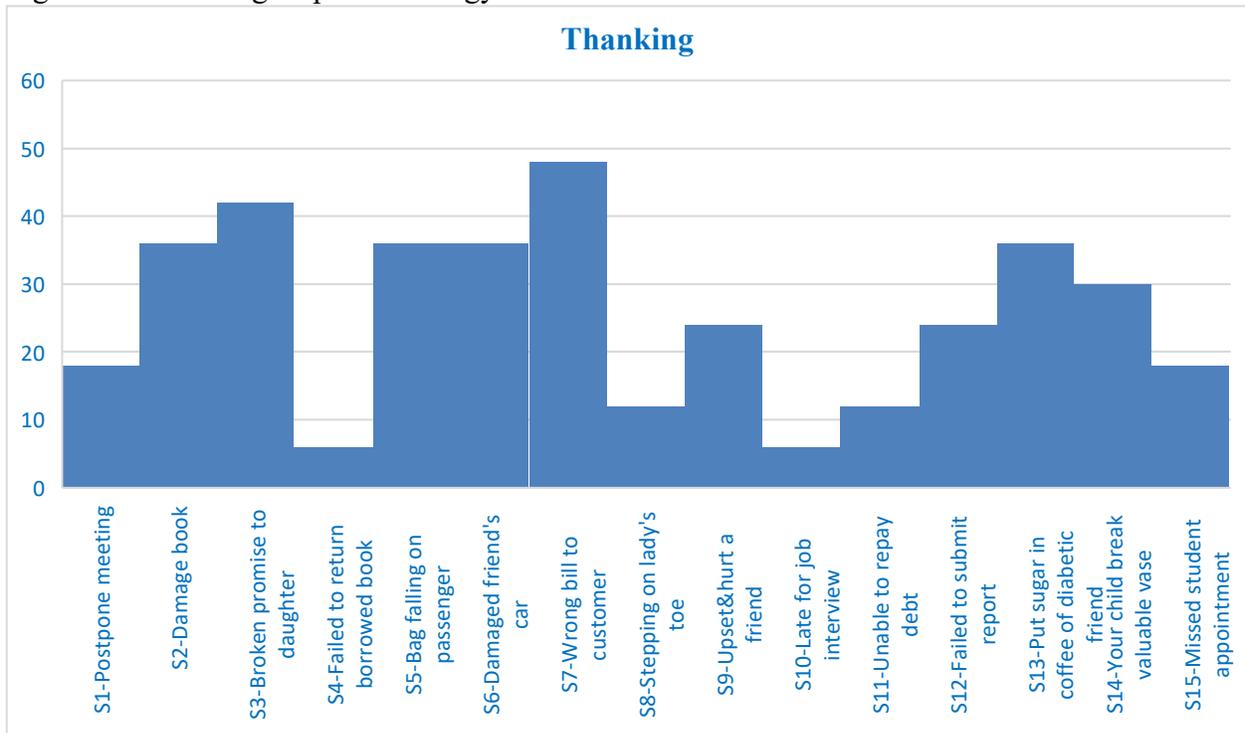
All is good. Whenever you can, don't worry

The next section discusses the thanking response strategy.

### **6.2.6 Thanking**

The thanking (F) response strategy had an overall proportionate usage of 7% across the 15 situations with results graphically depicted in Figure 59 below.

Figure 58: Thanking response strategy across situations



This figure shows the distribution of the thanking response strategy across the 15 DCT situations presented from the highest occurrence to the lowest occurrence.

When the response strategy is dissected further to understand its spread across the situations, the results highlight a high usage frequency of the strategy in situation seven (13%) and situation three (11%) and the lowest usage frequency in situations four and ten (2%). An examination of the situations with the highest usage rates (situations seven and three) showed some similarities in their characteristics of high social power (HP) and type of offence (i.e. social commitment). As such, it could be suggested that thanking the apologist is most likely to occur when there is high social power. Some examples of the thanking response strategy can be observed below in the phrases ‘thank you’, ‘thanks’, ‘thanks’ and ‘I appreciate’ respectively.

شكرا لاهتمامك

Thank you for your concern

شكرا لإخباري

Thanks for informing me

شكرا لطفك

Thanks for your kindness

لا بأس ، أقدر قلقك

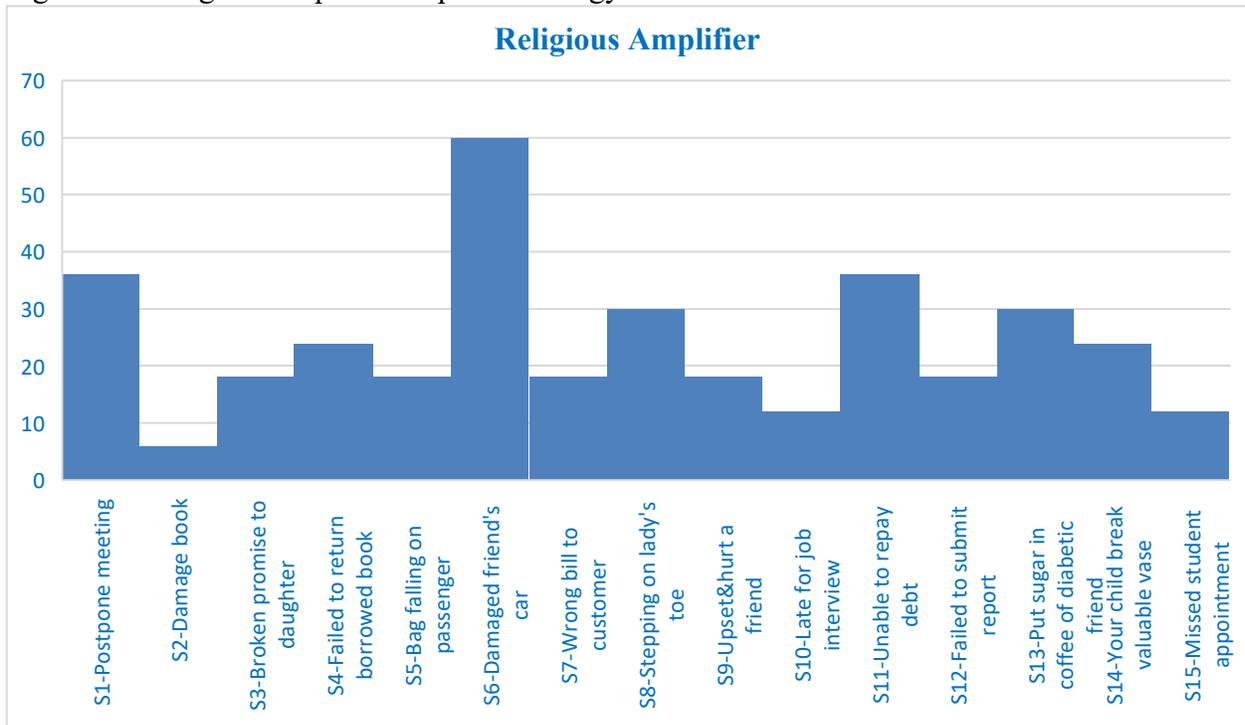
It's alright, I appreciate your concern

The use of religious amplifiers in response strategies is discussed next.

### **6.2.7 Religious Amplifier**

The use of religious amplifiers (G) when apologizing was also observed across the 15 situations and had the same overall prevalence of 7% as the thanking response strategy as shown in Figure 60 below.

Figure 59: Religious amplifier response strategy across situations



This figure shows the distribution of the religious amplifier response strategy across the 15 DCT situations presented from the highest occurrence to the lowest occurrence.

Some examples of the use of religious amplifiers in responses include:

ولكن من فضلك لا تفعل ذلك مرة أخرى. وفقنا الله

May Allah help us; but please don't do it again

The expression 'May Allah help us' captures this response strategy in this example while this is reflected in the phrase 'but Inshallah (by the will of God)' in the next example.

(كل شيء بإذن الله) هذا ليس عذراً ، كان يجب عليك التحقق قبل تسليم الفاتورة ؛ ولكن إن شاء الله

That is not an excuse, you should have checked before you handed the bill; but Inshallah (by the will of God), all is good

In the examples below, the religious amplifier response strategy is depicted in the phrases 'may

God give you strength' and 'Alhamdallah (Thank God)' respectively.

هذا جيد؛ وفقكم الله

That's fine; may God give you strength

نعم بالتأكيد. أنا جيد (أنا الحمد لله) الحمد لله

Alhamdallah (Thank God) I am good. Yes sure

Having discussed the occurrences of each response strategy across the 15 DCT situations, the next section examines closer at some selected situations and the associated response strategy distribution.

### **6.3 Analysis of response strategies in each situation**

An analysis of the response strategies in each situation is given. This helps to give some perspective to the uniqueness of each situation and to highlight how distinct the occurrence of response strategies is for each situation. The analysis of situation one is discussed first.

### 6.3.1 Analysis of Situation One

In situation one, which was characterised by high social power (HP) and medium social distance (MD), there was an observed high utilisation of religious amplifiers (36) besides acceptance (174) and deflecting (120) (see Table 49 below).

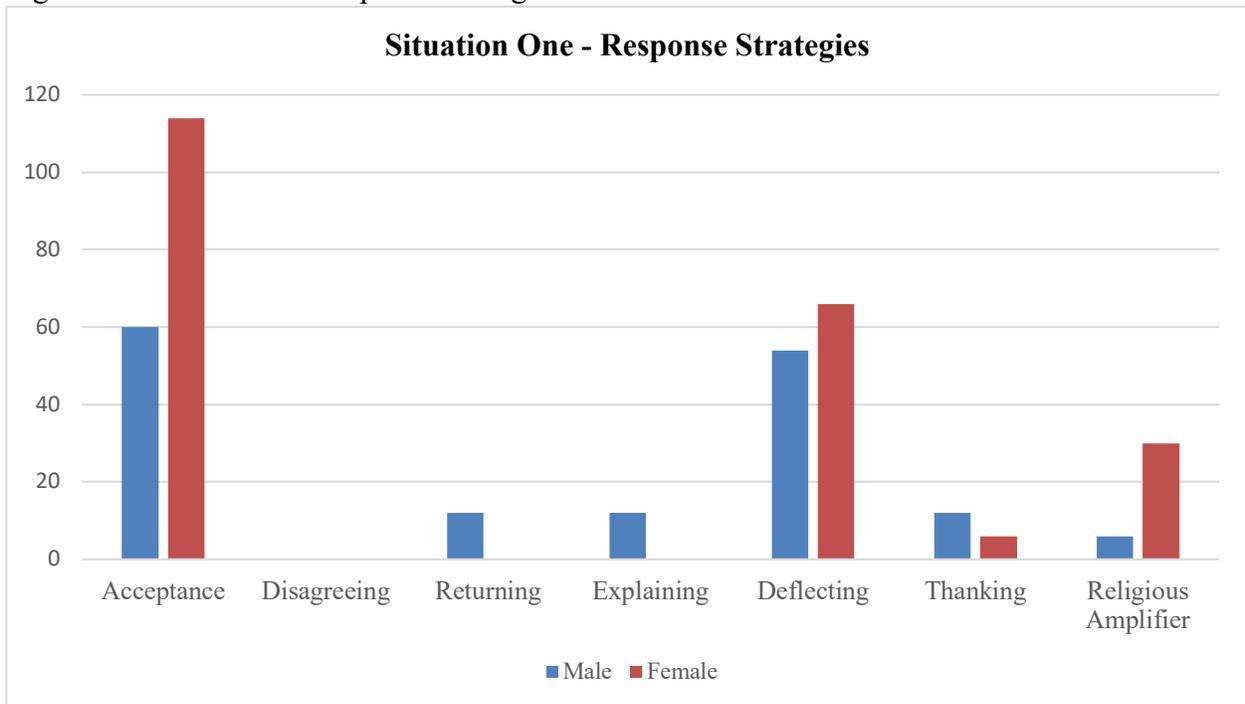
Table 49: Situation one response strategies

Strategy	Code	Male	Female	Total	Percent
Acceptance	A	60	114	174	47%
Disagreeing	B	0	0	0	0%
Returning	C	12	0	12	3%
Explaining	D	12	0	12	3%
Deflecting	E	54	66	120	32%
Thanking	F	12	6	18	5%
Religious Amplifier	G	6	30	36	10%

This table shows the response strategy occurrences across situation one. The occurrence for each response strategy is further split between male and female with the proportionate percentage shown in last column.

Figure 61 below graphically depicts the results presented in Table 49.

Figure 60: Situation one response strategies



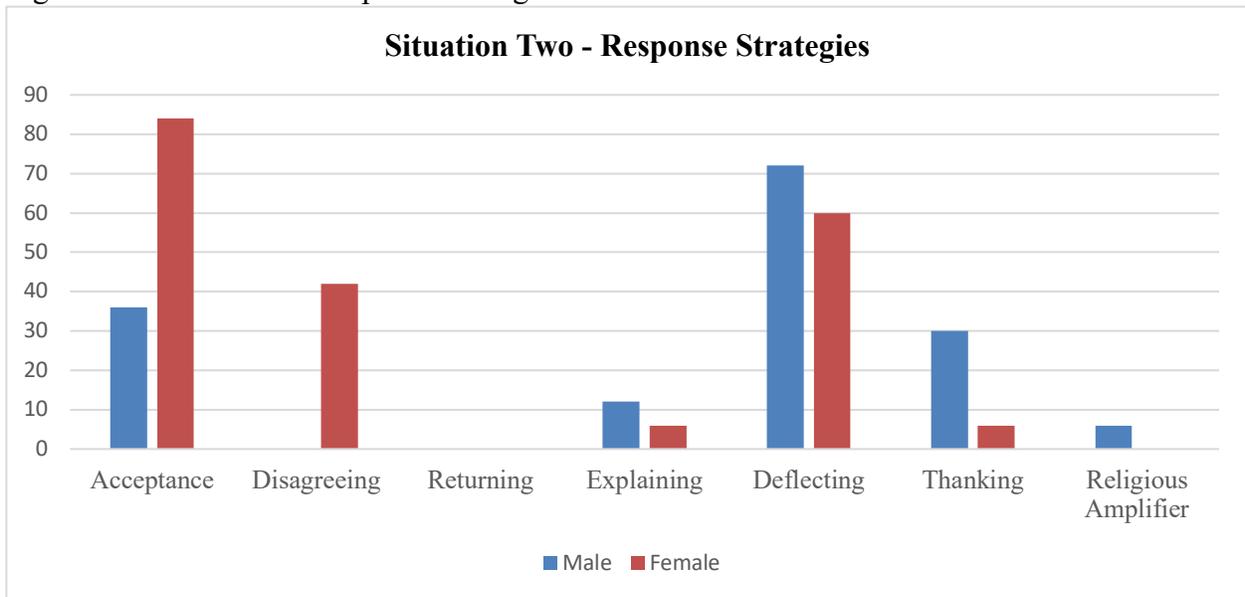
This figure shows the response strategies in situation one, based on their proportion and also their occurrence between male and female.

In this situation, there was a high proportion in the use of the acceptance of the apology (47%) response strategy, followed by deflecting of apology (32%) and religious amplifiers (10%). When the response strategies are further examined in terms of male and females, its observed that more females accepted the apology and used religious amplifiers than males. On the contrary, the results suggest that more males thanked the apologiser than females. While a further analysis is performed to understand the gender influence in section 7.2, the difference in the identified response strategies usage between male and female could be because of the high social power of the situation. Further, in this situation, only males utilised the returning (C) and explaining (D) response strategies.

### 6.3.2 Analysis of Situation Two

In situation two, contrary to situation one, deflecting was the most utilised response strategy (37%) followed by acceptance (34%), disagreeing (12%) and thanking (10%) as shown in Figure 62 below.

Figure 61: Situation two response strategies



This figure shows the response strategies in situation two, based on their proportion and also their occurrence between male and female.

Further, unlike situation one, religious amplifiers usage was low at 2% of occurrences only. These response strategies were observed in situation two which is characterised by equal social power and low social distance. Thus, it could be construed that deflecting is most used when the social power is equal and social distance is low. However, this needs further investigation and thus, the analysis in section 7.6 aimed at investigating the influence of socio-cultural factors. A further examination of the utilisation of the response strategies in this situation showed that more

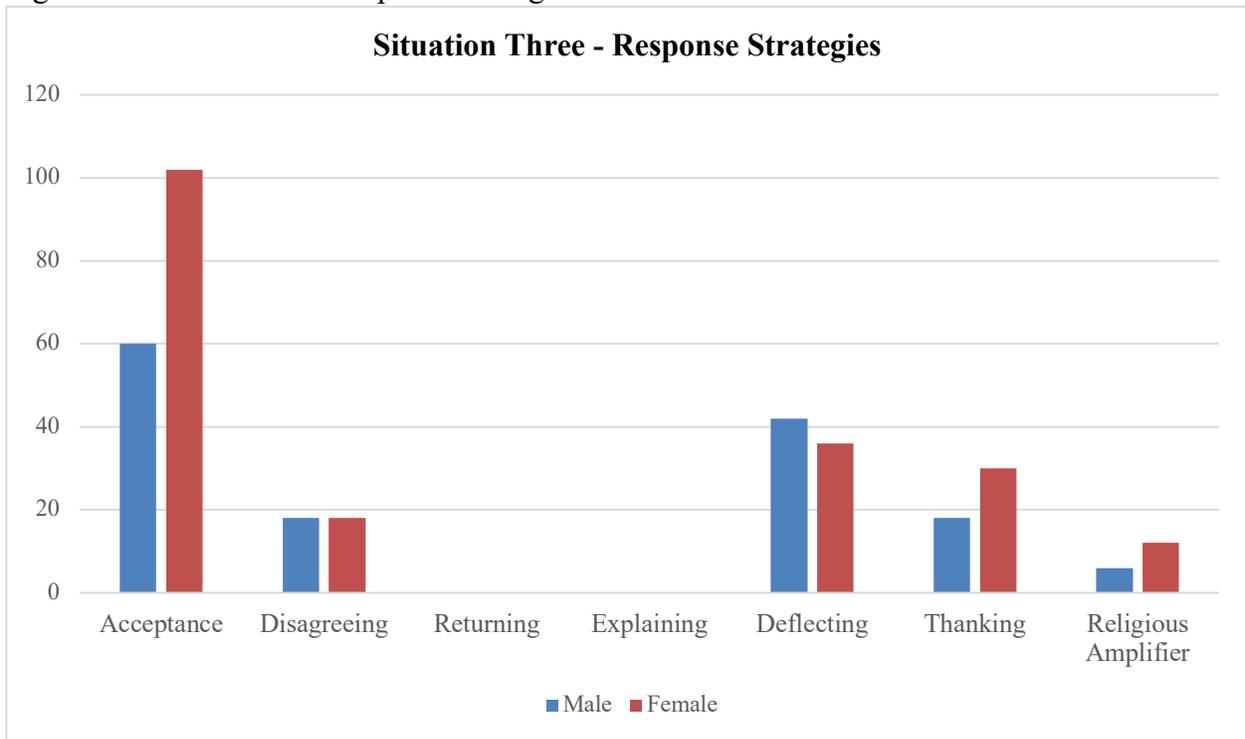
females were accepting apologies than males. On the other hand, more males were deflecting, thanking and explaining to apologisers than females. These observations could be attributed to the characteristics of the situation (equal social power and low social distance).

There are two additional observations in this situation regarding the distribution of response strategies. The first observation is with regard to disagreeing with the apologiser. This response strategy was only used by female participants. On the other hand, only male participants used religious amplifiers in this situation.

### **6.3.3 Analysis of Situation Three**

Situation three relates to a broken promise by a mother to her daughter which is characterised by high social power (HP) and low social distance (LD). In this situation, the hearers were more willing to accept the offender's apology. This is observed in the results graphically depicted in Figure 63 below.

Figure 62: Situation three response strategies



This figure shows the response strategies in situation three, based on their proportion and also their occurrence between male and female.

In this situation, acceptance response strategy was the most frequently used at 47% followed by deflecting (23%), thanking (14%) and disagreeing (11%). In further examination of the response strategies between male and female, the results showed that females were more willing to accept the apology, thanked the offender for apologising and used religious amplifiers more than males. Contrary, males deflected the apology more than females.

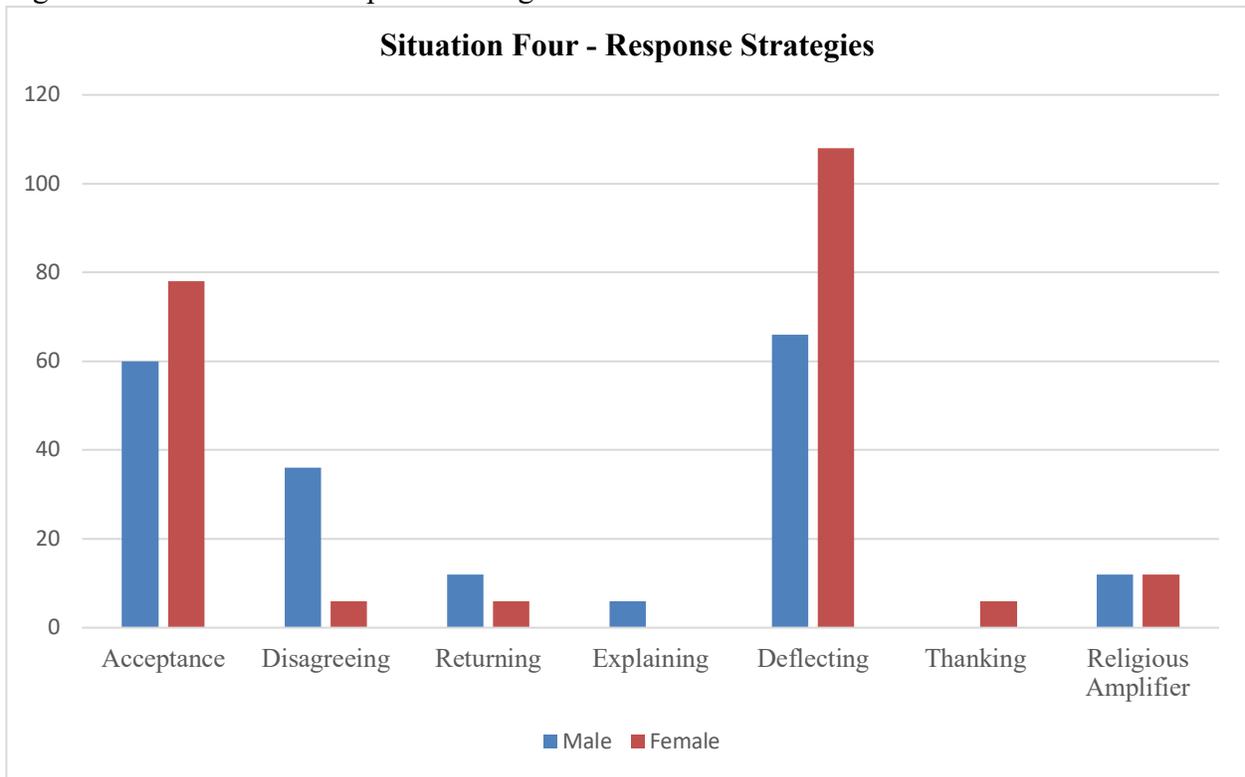
The disagreeing response strategy was equally used by both male and female participants. Further, there was no utilisation of the returning and explaining response strategies in this situation. This could be explained by the nature of the offender and hearer in the DCT situation since the apologiser is a parent and the hearer is the daughter (child). The results might be explained by the Saudi Arabic cultural context in which children are not supposed to generally

disagree with their parents (Dwairy et al., 2006).

#### **6.3.4 Analysis of Situation Four**

The results of the DCT analysis of situation four are shown in Figure 64 below. As shown in Figure 64, the most employed response strategy was deflecting (44%) followed by acceptance (34%), disagreeing (10%) in this situation which had high social power (HP) and medium social distance (MD). Some distinctions in the utilisation of the response strategies are observable with respect to male and females. The analysis showed that only females thanked the apologisee in this context whilst only males offered explanation to the offender. In addition, more female participants than male participants used both the deflecting and acceptance response strategies. On the other hand, more males than females used disagreeing and returning whilst religious amplifiers were equally employed.

Figure 63: Situation four response strategies

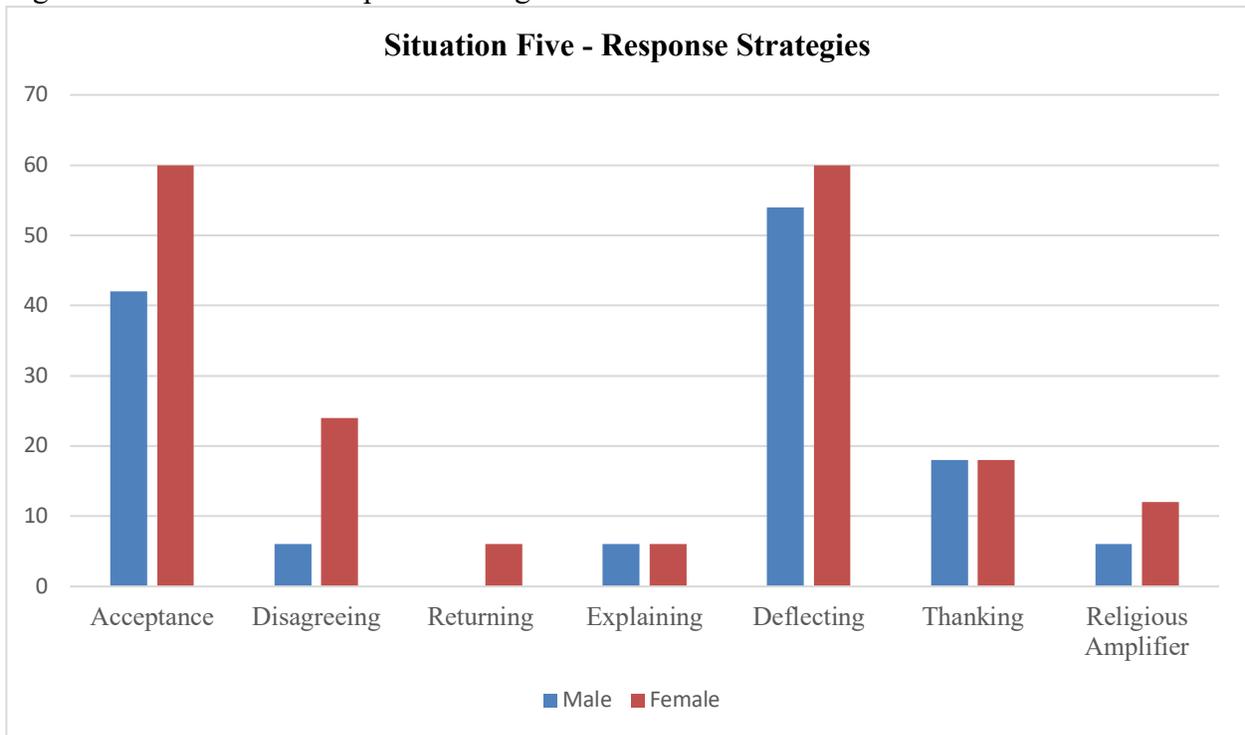


This figure shows the response strategies in situation four, based on their proportion and also their occurrence between male and female.

### 6.3.5 Analysis of Situation Five

In situation five, there was a high utilisation of deflecting (36%), acceptance (32%), thanking (11%) and disagreeing (9%) response strategies. Given the nature of the interlocutors as stranger to stranger in which social power is equal (EP) and social distance is high (HD), there is a high expectation of acceptance and deflecting of apology (Cai, 2012). A further analysis of the response strategies showed that only females employed the returning strategy. In addition, relatively more females than males utilised the acceptance, disagreeing, deflecting and religious amplifier. On the other hand, an equal proportionate of males and females used the explaining and thanking strategies. The results of situation five are graphically depicted in Figure 64 below.

Figure 64: Situation five response strategies

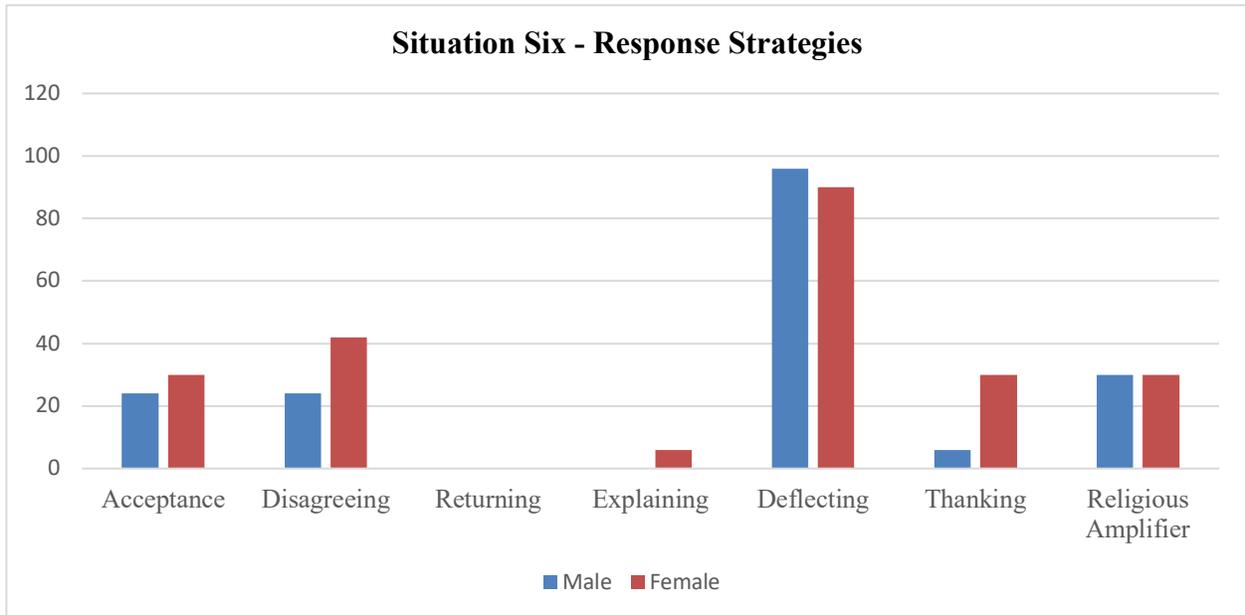


This figure shows the response strategies in situation five, based on their proportion and also their occurrence between male and female.

### 6.3.6 Analysis of Situation Six

The analysis of the response strategies in situation six are graphically represented in Figure 65 below. Unlike in situation five, disagreeing (16%) was second to deflecting (46%) in the utilisation of response strategies. There was also a considerable usage of religious amplifiers (15%) in the responses used by participants. These religious amplifiers were equally used by both male and females. However, more males (96) utilised the deflecting response strategy than females (90). On the contrary, more female participants employed the acceptance, disagreeing and thanking response strategies than male participants. In addition, only females provided explanations when responding to an apology.

Figure 65: Situation six response strategies



This figure shows the response strategies in situation six, based on their proportion and also their occurrence between male and female.

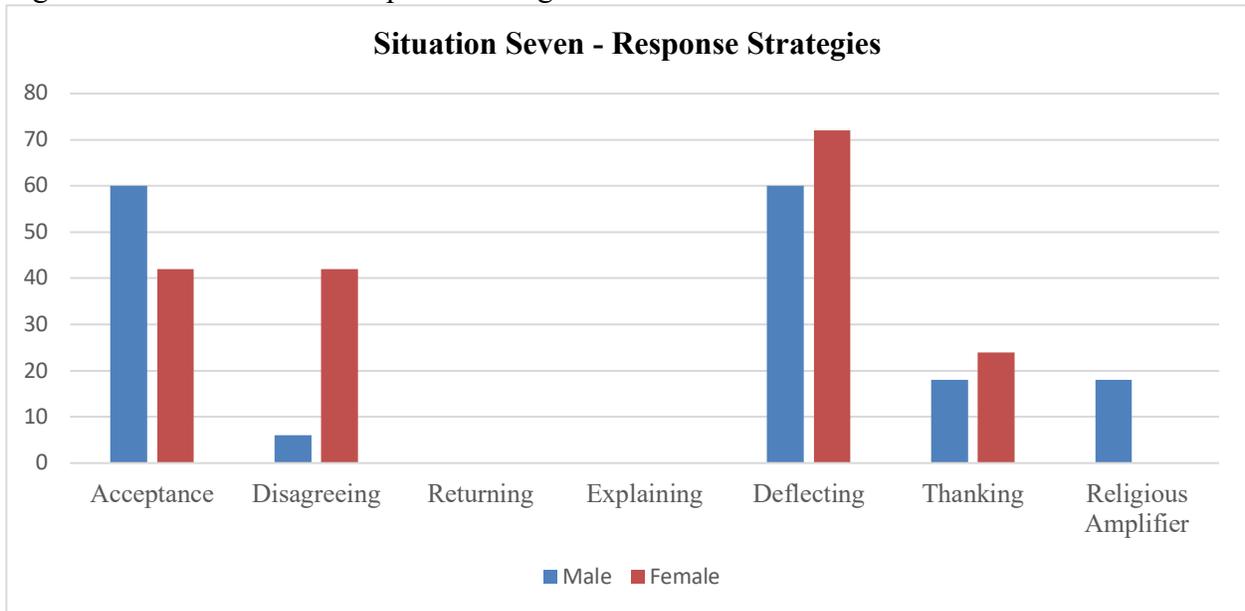
The high level of disagreeing observed in this structure could be related to the nature of the offence which involves possession damage and socio-religious commitment with its associated high severity. The high severity of the offence could be associated with the use of religious amplifiers. This aspect was explored statistically in section 7.4.

### 6.3.7 Analysis of Situation Seven

In situation seven, there is high frequency of deflecting (39%), acceptance (30%), disagreeing (14%) and thanking (12%). The employment of religious amplifiers was relatively low at 5%. However, what is observable is that only male participants used religious amplifiers in this situation. Further, males were more willing to accept an apology than females. On the contrary, more females were inclined to disagree with the offender's apology. Females were also more

inclined to deflect and thank the apologist than males. The association between response strategies was explored further in section 7.4. The results for situation seven are graphically depicted in Figure 66 below.

Figure 66: Situation seven response strategies



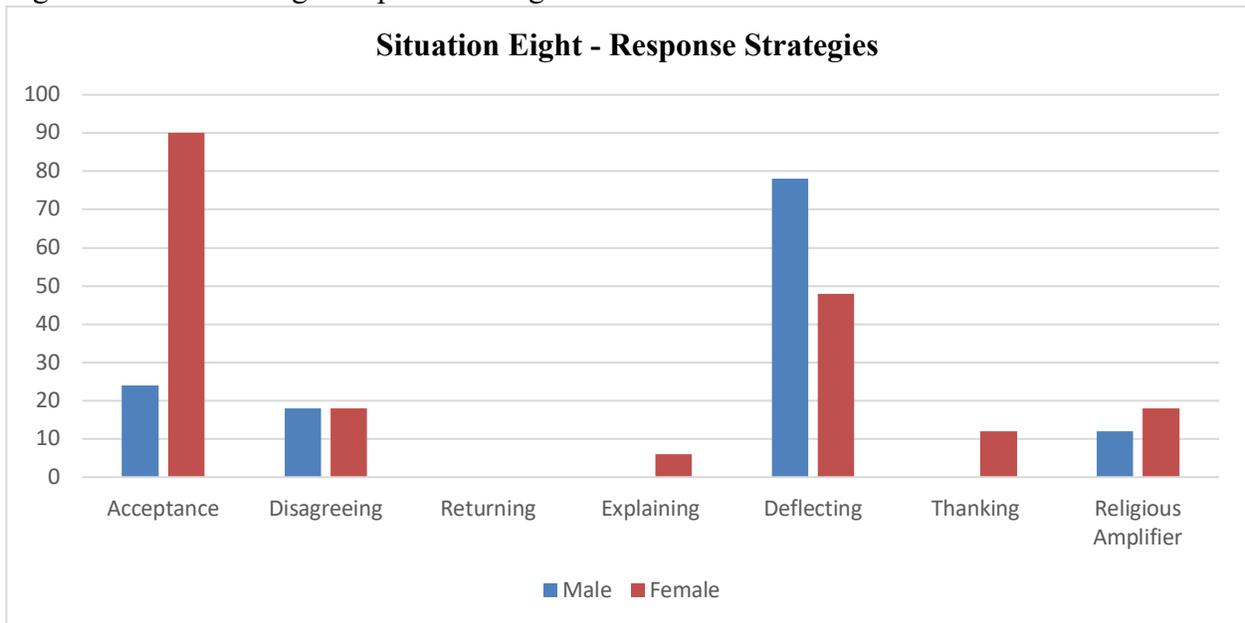
This figure shows the response strategies in situation seven, based on their proportion and also their occurrence between male and female.

### 6.3.8 Analysis of Situation Eight

In situation eight, characterised by equal social power (EP) and high social distance (HD), deflecting (39%) and acceptance (35%) response strategies had the highest frequency. Disagreeing had 11% occurrence whilst the use of religious amplifiers was identified in 9% of incidences. A further exploration of the response strategies revealed that only female participants used explaining and thanking response strategies in this situation. In addition, a relatively high

proportion of females accepted the apology than males, contrary to deflecting which had more males deflecting the apology than females. On the other hand, an equal proportion of males and females used the disagreeing response strategy. The analysis of the response strategies in this situation are graphically presented in Figure 68 below.

Figure 67: Situation eight response strategies



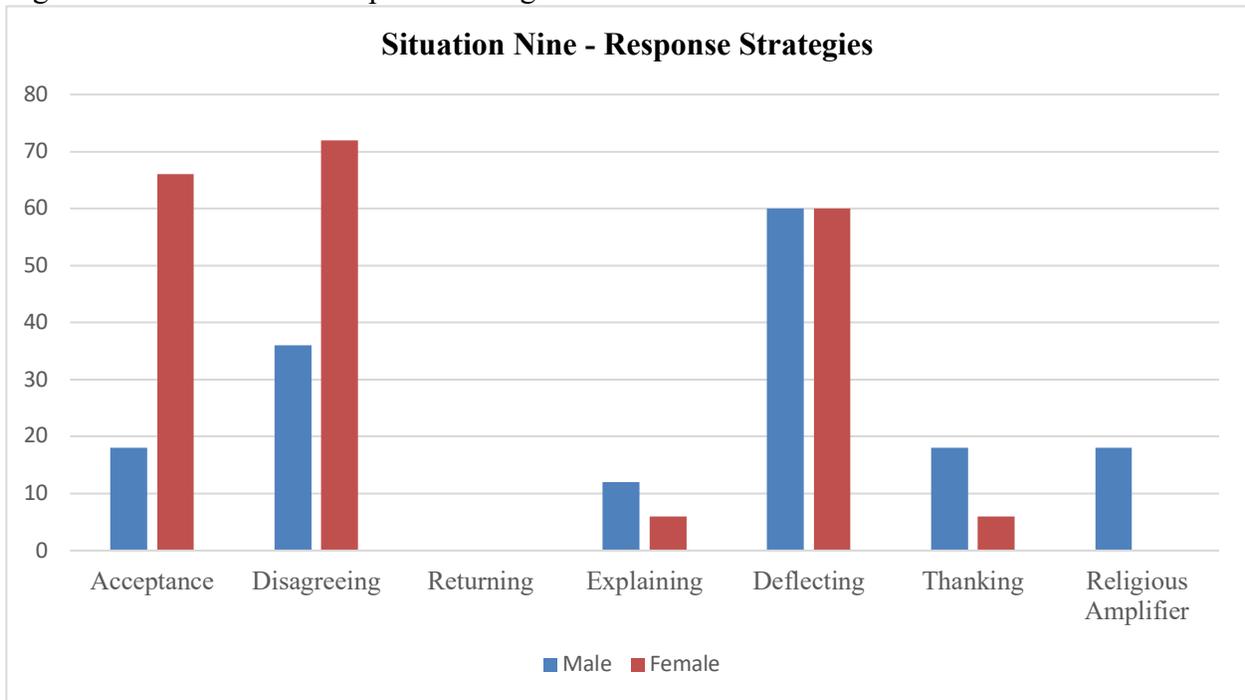
This figure shows the response strategies in situation eight, based on their proportion and also their occurrence between male and female.

### 6.3.9 Analysis of Situation Nine

In situation nine, there was a high frequency of disagreeing (29%) response strategy than acceptance (23%) of apology. This situation had high severity with low social distance (LD) and equal social power (EP) which could partly explain the usage of the disagreeing response strategy (Holmes, 1990; Saleem, Anjum, & Naz, 2018) . Deflecting response strategy had the

highest frequency at 32%. A further examination of the response strategies revealed that only male participants used religious amplifiers when responding to the apologise. This is contrary to deflecting response strategy that had an equal proportion of male and female usage. Accepting and disagreeing to the apology were used more by female participants contrary to explaining and thanking which were employed more by male participants. The results of the response analysis in this situation are graphically represented in Figure 68 below.

Figure 68: Situation nine response strategies

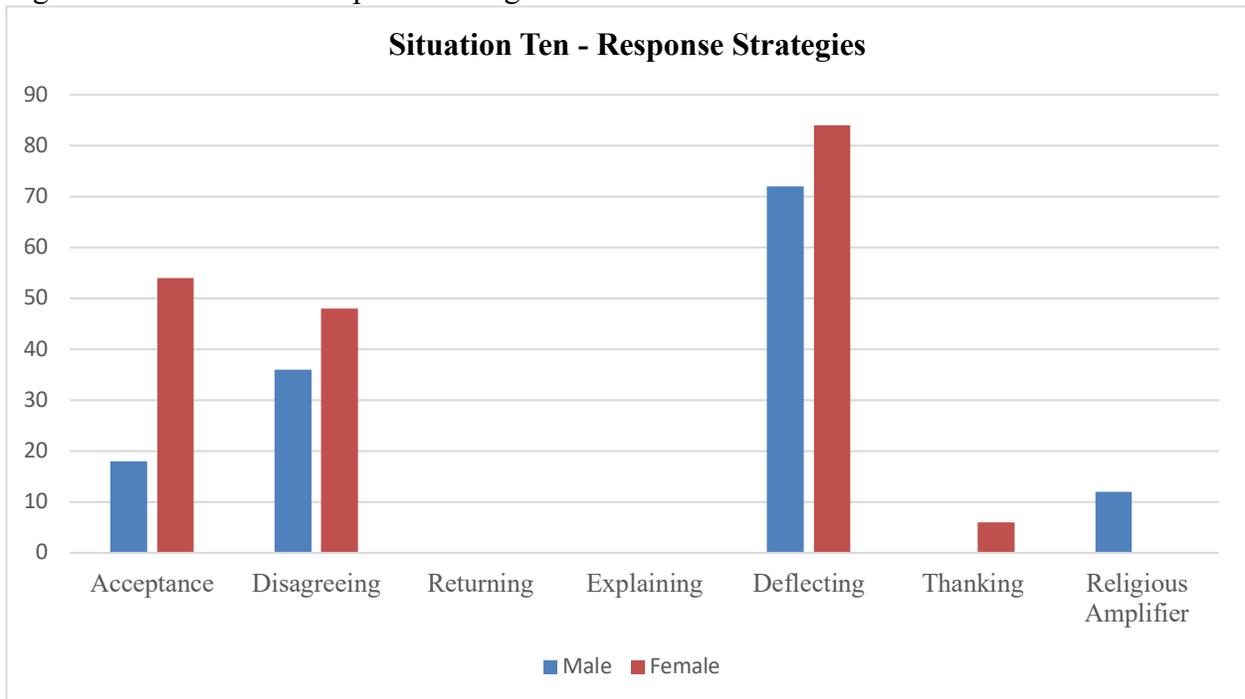


This figure shows the response strategies in situation nine, based on their proportion and also their occurrence between male and female.

### 6.3.10 Analysis of Situation Ten

In situation ten, characterised by high severity of offence, high social power (HP) and high social distance (SD), disagreeing response strategy had high frequency (25%) after deflecting response strategy which had the highest occurrence (47%). Acceptance of apology was also relatively high with 22% frequency. A further exploration of the distribution of the response strategies shows that more females than males used the acceptance, disagreeing and deflecting response strategies. On the contrary, only male participants had religious amplifiers in their responses whilst only female participants thanked the apologise. The results of the analysis of the response strategies in this situation are graphically shown in Figure 70 below.

Figure 69: Situation ten response strategies



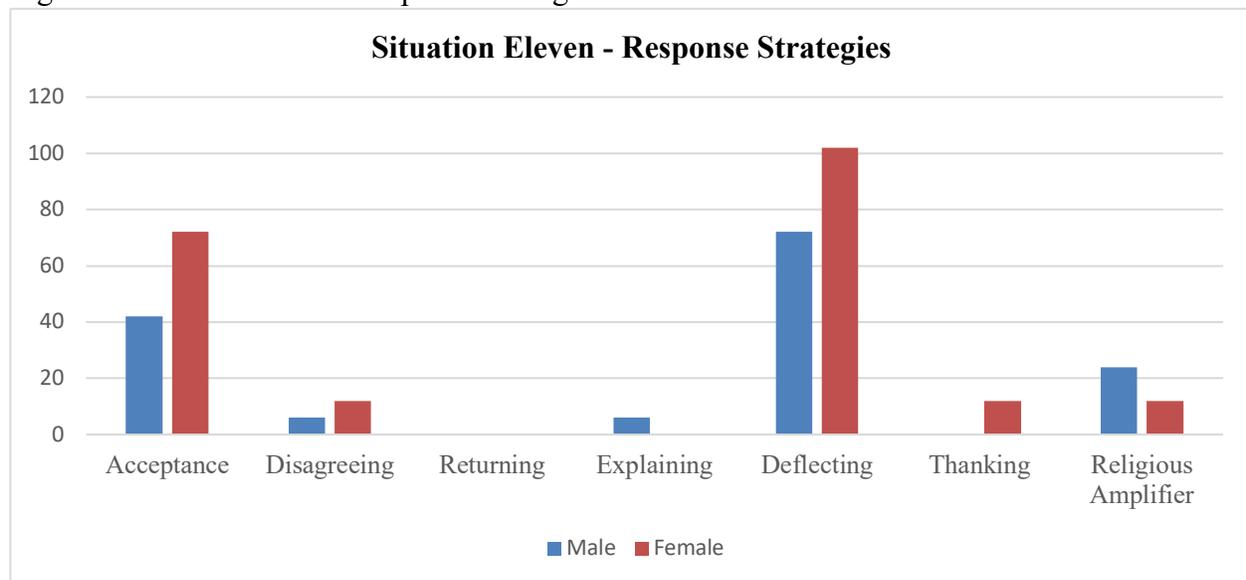
This figure shows the response strategies in situation ten, based on their proportion and also their occurrence between male and female.

### 6.3.11 Analysis of Situation Eleven

In situation eleven, acceptance of apology had a high frequency in utilisation of 32%, second to deflecting (48%). There was also a relatively high usage of religious amplifiers (10%) in the responses to apology. The offence that the apologiser was apologising for had high severity, relating to time and social commitment. In this situation, more female participants were willing to accept and deflect the apology than male participants. On the contrary, males used religious amplifiers more often than females in this context.

A further review of the response strategies showed that only females thanked the apologiser. On the other hand, only males explained to the apologiser following the apology. The proportionate distribution of the response strategies across this situation is graphically depicted in Figure 70 below.

Figure 70: Situation eleven response strategies



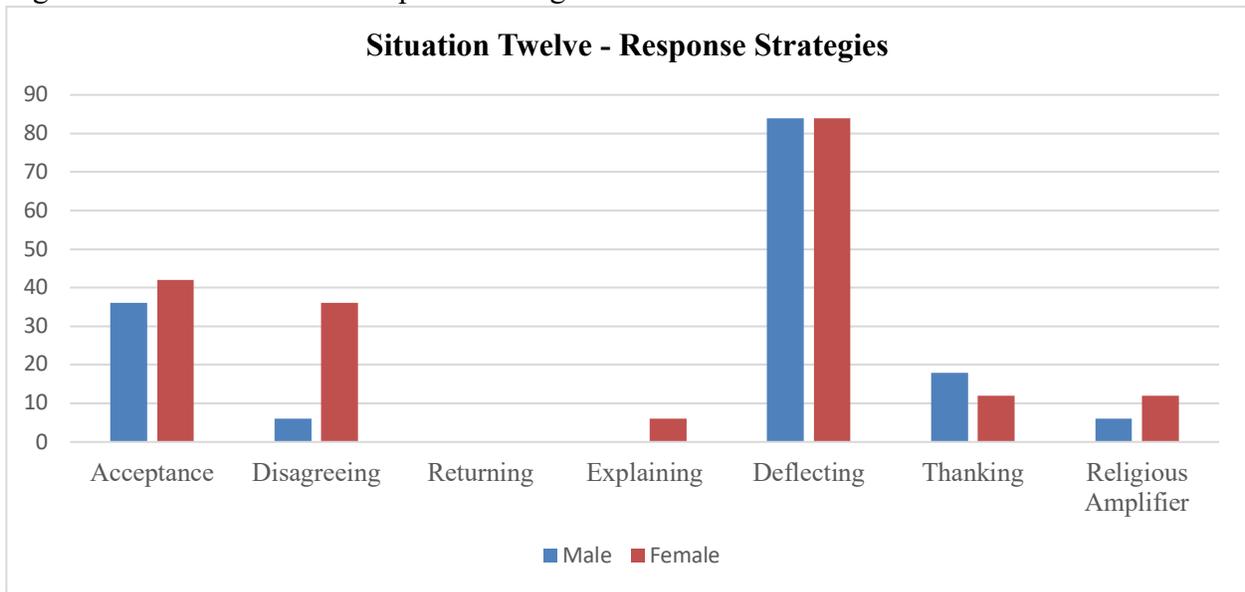
This figure shows the response strategies in situation eleven, based on their proportion and also their occurrence between male and female.

### **6.3.12 Analysis of Situation Twelve**

In this situation, there was a relatively high proportion of disagreeing the apology when compared to situation eleven which could be explained partly by the high social power (HP) and medium social distance (MD). The highest used response strategy was still deflecting (49%) followed by acceptance (23%) and then disagreeing (12%). In addition, the proportion of participants that thanked the apologisee was relatively high at 9% compared to situation eleven. A further examination of the thanking response strategy showed that male participants thanked the apologisee more than females.

On the other hand, more females than males disagreed the apology and used religious amplifiers. Also, only female participants offered an explanation to the apologisee. Deflecting and acceptance response strategies had relatively similar spread between male and female participants. Figure 72 is a graphical representation of the response strategies, categorised between male and female, in this situation that involved an employee and a manager as interlocutors.

Figure 71: Situation twelve response strategies



This figure shows the response strategies in situation twelve, based on their proportion and also their occurrence between male and female.

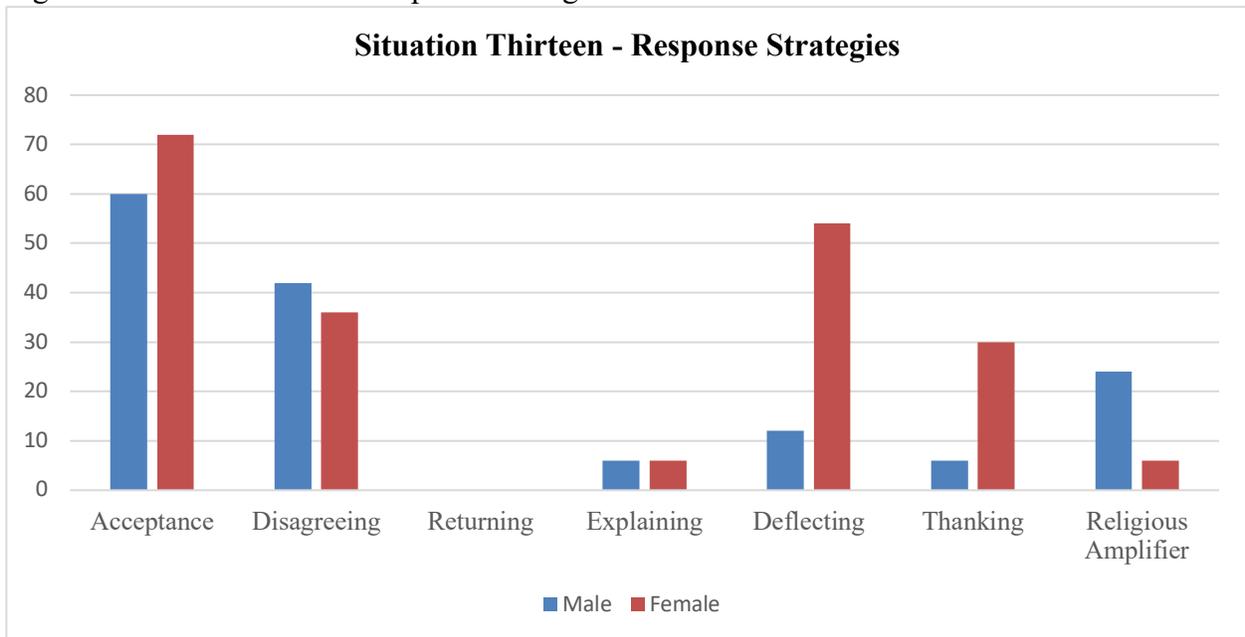
### 6.3.13 Analysis of Situation Thirteen

This situation involved a social commitment offence between friends which had low severity. The analysis of the response strategies employed showed a high acceptance of the apology (37%) compared to disagreeing (22%) and deflecting (19%). The occurrences of thanking the offender/apologiser was also high at 10% with religious amplifiers often appearing (8%) of the total response strategies in this situation.

A further examination of the responses showed that male participants were more inclined to disagree to the apologiser and used religious amplifiers more than females. On the contrary, more female participants than male deflected and thanked the apologiser. Acceptance of apology was also higher in females than males whilst the explaining response strategy was equally distributed between the gender. Figure 73 graphically depicts the response strategies in this

situation.

Figure 72: Situation thirteen response strategies

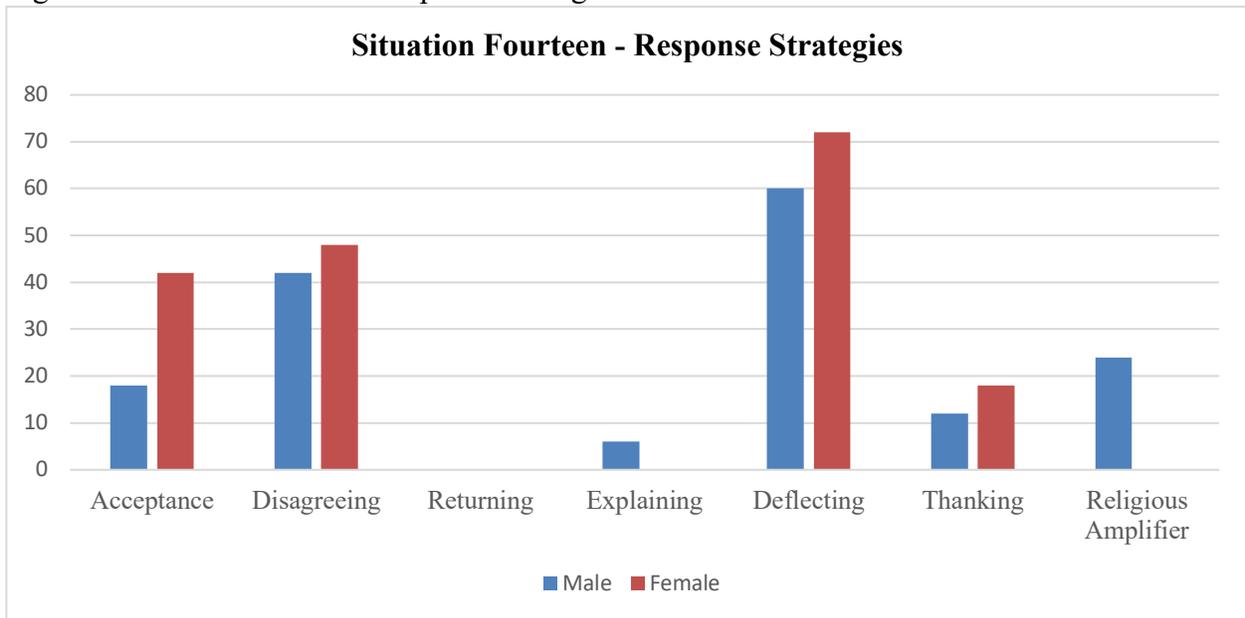


This figure shows the response strategies in situation thirteen, based on their proportion and also their occurrence between male and female.

#### 6.3.14 Analysis of Situation Fourteen

This situation involved a possession damage offence which had high severity. The deflecting response strategy was employed the most with 39% frequency followed by disagreeing (26%) and acceptance (18%). An examination of the distribution of the response strategies in this situation between males and females showed that only male participants offered an explanation when responding to an apology and employed religious amplifiers. On the other hand, more females than male participants used the acceptance, disagreeing, deflecting and thanking response strategies. The results of the analysis of the response strategies in this situation are graphically shown in Figure 74 below.

Figure 73: Situation fourteen response strategies



This figure shows the response strategies in situation fourteen, based on their proportion and also their occurrence between male and female.

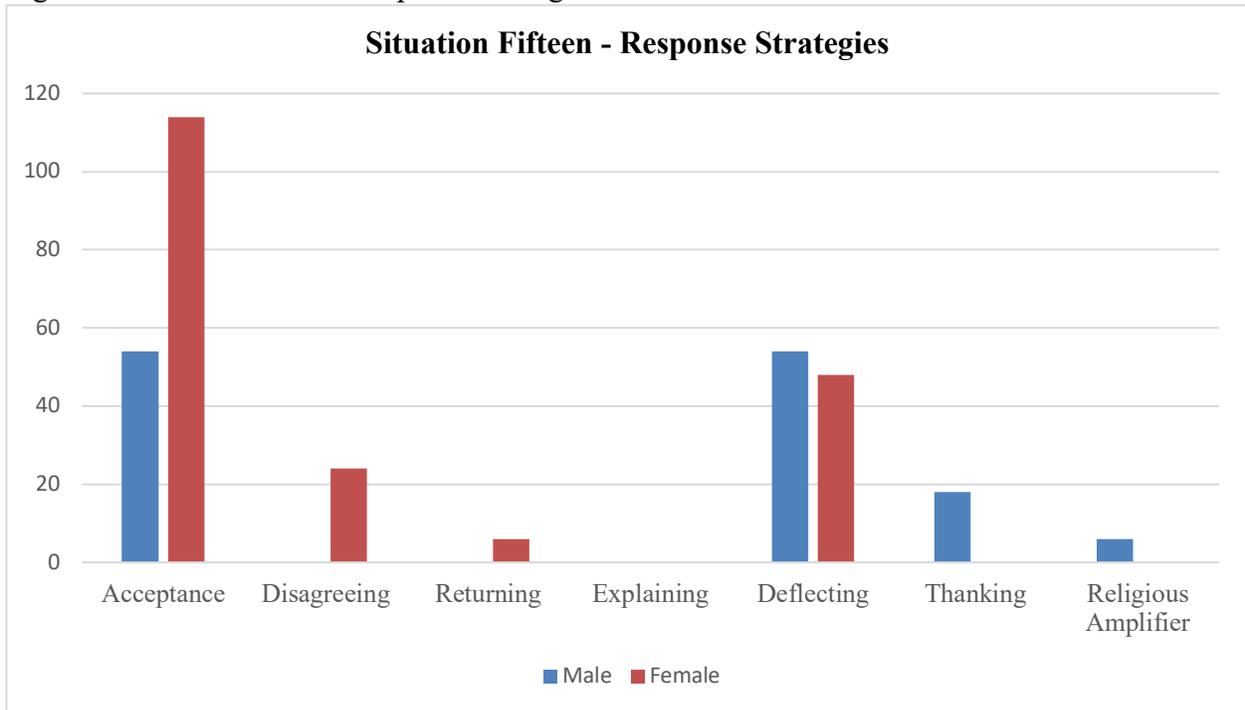
### 6.3.15 Analysis of Situation Fifteen

In this situation which was characterised by high social power (HP) and medium social distance (MD), the most used response strategies were acceptance (52%) and deflecting (31%). Comparing the response strategies employed in this strategy between male and female, the results showed that more females than males were inclined to accept the apology. On the contrary, more male participants deflected the apology than female participants.

Further, only female participants employed the returning and disagreeing response strategies whilst only male participants thanked the apologise and used religious amplifiers in responding to the apology.

Figure 74 below is a graphical presentation of the results of the analysis of the response strategies in this situation.

Figure 74: Situation fifteen response strategies



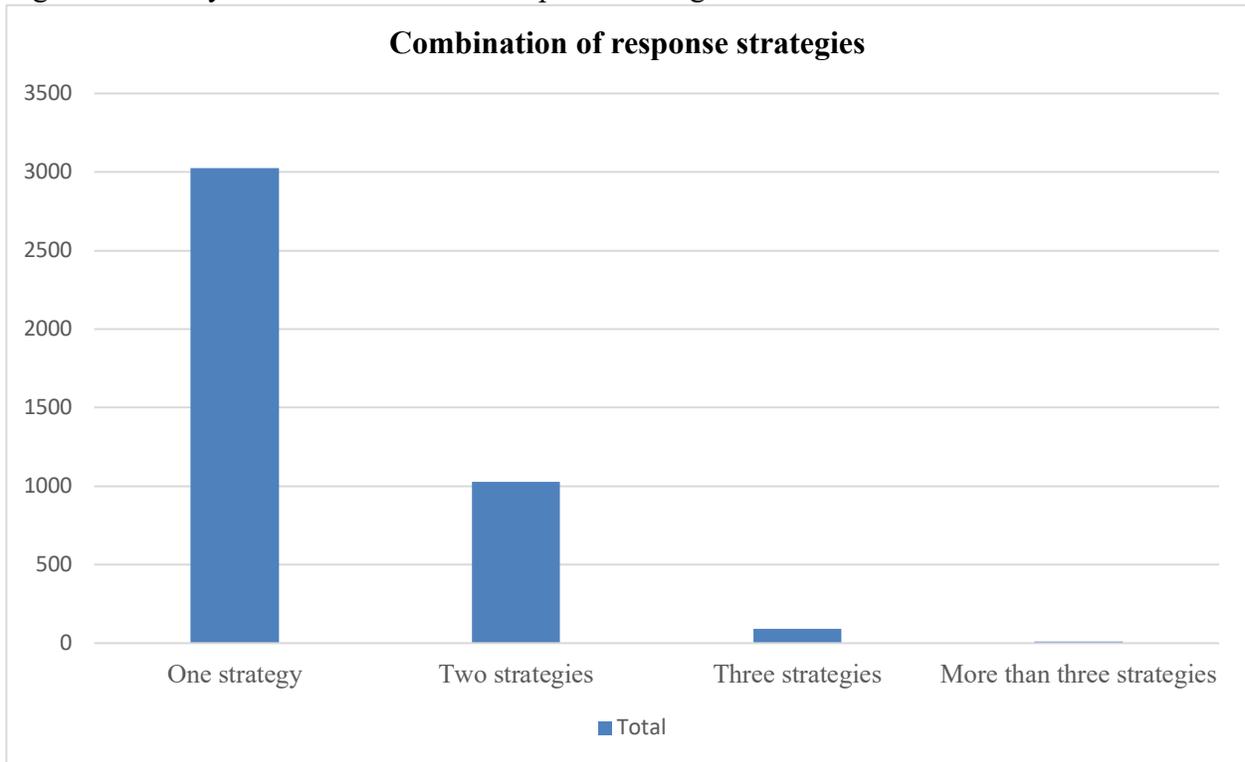
This figure shows the response strategies in situation fifteen, based on their proportion and also their occurrence between male and female.

In the next section, the aim is to give another perspective by examining the utilisation of a combination of response strategies.

#### 6.4 Analysis of combination of response strategies

Section 6.2 highlighted that response strategies were often used in combination. As such, in this section, an analysis was conducted in order to identify the use of the combination of response strategies. The first step examined the overall combination of the response strategies across the 15 DCT situations. The results are graphically shown in Figure 76 below.

Figure 75: Analysis of combination of response strategies



This figure shows the occurrence of the combination of response strategies across the 15 DCT situations. The proportionate occurrence is also highlighted in terms of percentages from one strategy (73%) to two strategies (25%) and balance of 3% for three and more than three combination of response strategies.

Figure 75 shows that, unlike apology strategies, the use of one response strategy was commonly employed accounting for 73% followed by two response strategies at 25%. A negligible number of occurrences for using three and more than three response strategies was observed.

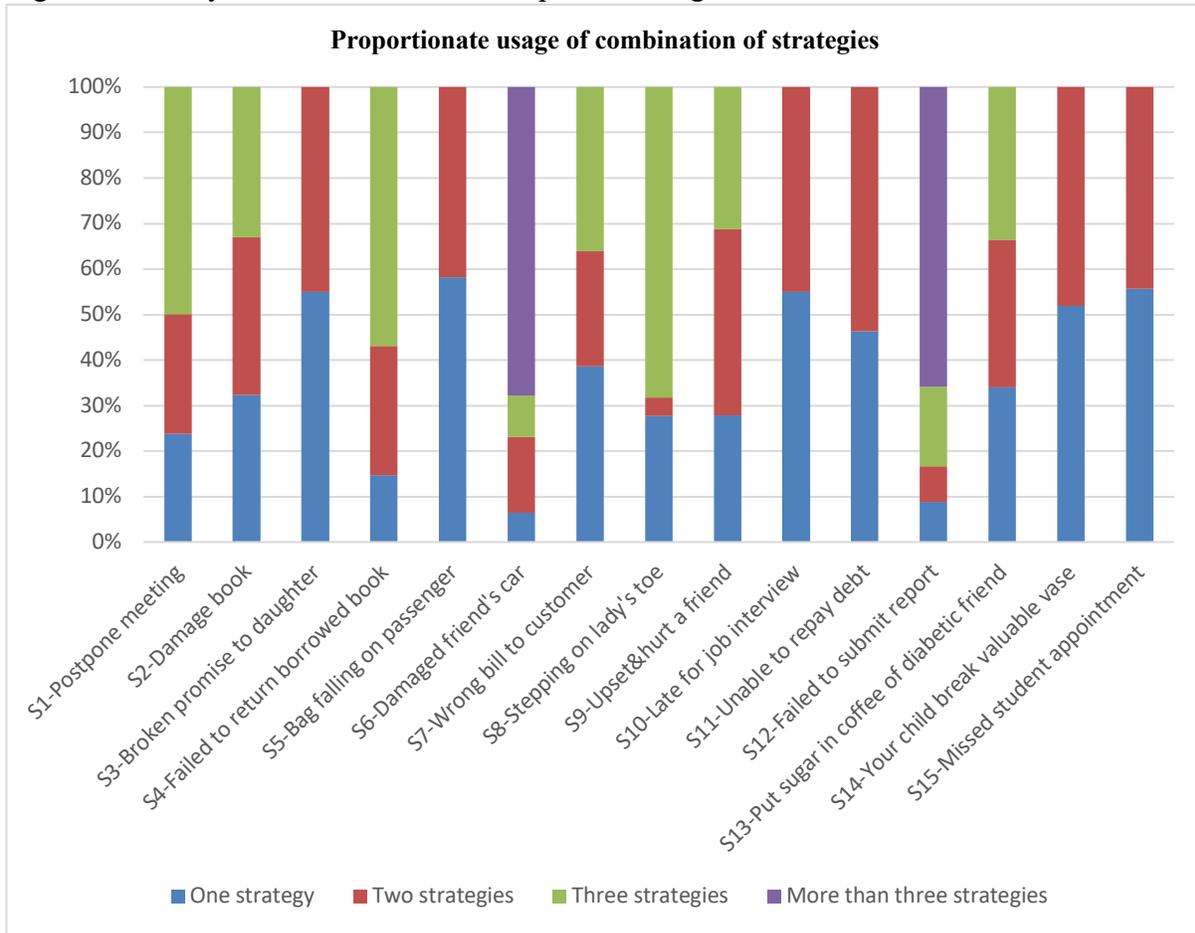
A further analysis of the distribution of these combinations across the 15 DCT situation was explored with results shown in Table 50 below and graphically depicted in Figure 77.

Table 50: Combination of response strategies for each situation

<b>Situations</b>	<b>S1*</b>	<b>S2</b>	<b>S3</b>	<b>S4</b>	<b>S5</b>	<b>S6</b>	<b>S7</b>	<b>S8</b>	<b>S9</b>	<b>S10</b>	<b>S11</b>	<b>S12</b>	<b>S13</b>	<b>S14</b>	<b>S15</b>	<b>Total</b>
One strategy	192	198	216	156	222	144	216	246	180	216	198	204	204	210	222	3024
<i>Percentage</i>	6%	7%	7%	5%	7%	5%	7%	8%	6%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	7%	100%
Two strategies	72	72	60	102	54	126	48	12	90	60	78	60	66	66	60	1026
<i>Percentage</i>	7%	7%	6%	10%	5%	12%	5%	1%	9%	6%	8%	6%	6%	6%	6%	100%
Three strategies	12	6	0	18	0	6	6	18	6	0	0	12	6	0	0	90
<i>Percentage</i>	13%	7%	0%	20%	0%	7%	7%	20%	7%	0%	0%	13%	7%	0%	0%	100%
More than three strategies	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	12
<i>Percentage</i>	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	100%

This table shows the results of the analysis of the combination of response strategies across the 15 DCT situations. The DCT situations are numbered S1 to S15 representing situation one to situation fifteen respectively.

Figure 76: Analysis of combination of response strategies across the 15 situations



In this figure, the proportionate distribution of the combination of response strategies across each DCT situation is presented in order to highlight which combination had lowest and highest occurrence in each situation.

A high proportion of use of one strategy is observable in situations 3, 5 and 10. On the other hand, the two strategies combination had a high proportionate usage in situations 9 and 11. The three strategies combination had a high proportionate usage in situations 1, 4 and 8. These three situations (1, 4 and 8) were characterised by equal to high social power and social distance. More than three strategies were used in situations 6 and 12 only. These two situations had low social distance.

In absolute terms, situations 6 and 4 had the highest use of two strategies combinations whilst

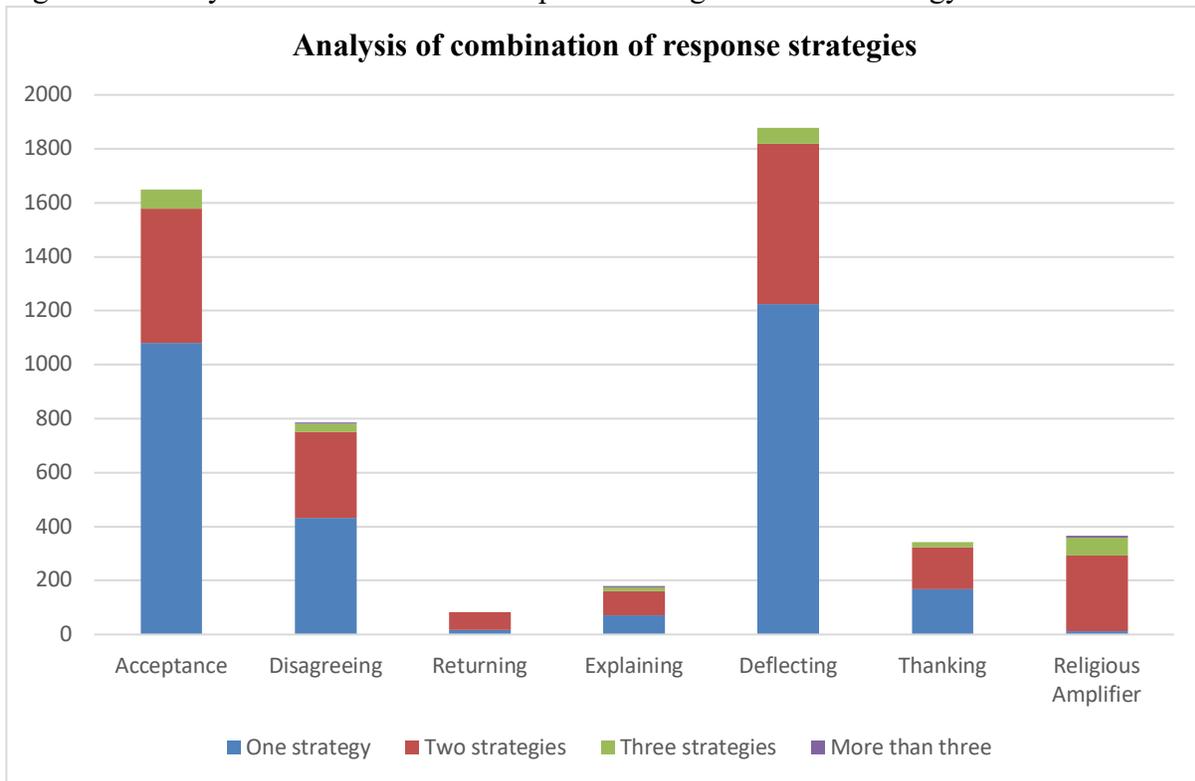
situations 4 and 8 had the highest use of three strategies combination (see Table 50). Situations 6 and 4 are both characterised by high severity of offence suggesting that the nature of the offence could influence the number of response strategies (Bennett & Earwalker, 2001).

A further examination of the combination of response strategies was aimed at highlighting the individual response strategies and their utilisation. The results of the analysis of the combination of response strategies is shown in Table 51 below and graphically depicted in Figure 78.

Table 51: Combination of response strategies for each situation

<b>Response Strategy</b>	<b>One strategy</b>	<b>Two strategies</b>	<b>Three strategies</b>	<b>More than three</b>	<b>Total</b>
A - Acceptance	1080	498	72	0	1650
B - Disagreeing	432	318	30	6	786
C - Returning	18	66	0	0	84
D - Explaining	72	90	12	6	180
E - Deflecting	1224	594	60	0	1878
F - Thanking	168	156	18	0	342
G – Religious Amplifiers	12	282	66	6	366

Figure 77: Analysis of combination of response strategies for each strategy



This figure shows how each response strategy was used on its own and also in combination with other response strategies.

As shown in Table 51, deflecting (E), acceptance (A) and disagreeing (B) had the highest one strategy and two strategies combination usage. Acceptance (A), on the other hand, had the highest combination usage in the three strategies combination (instead of deflecting strategy). On the contrary, only the disagreeing (B), explaining (D) and religious amplifiers (G) were used in more than three strategies combination. Interestingly too, returning (C), explaining (D) and religious amplifiers (G) were most used in the two strategies combination (more than the other categories of combinations). The use of religious amplifiers in combination with other strategies has been shown in other Arabic studies (Nureddeen, 2008; Jehabi, 2010; Al-Laheebi & Ya-Allah, 2014).

A further analysis of the two strategies combination was conducted to identify which response strategies occurred frequently together. The results are shown in Table 52 below. The results revealed that acceptance (A) and deflecting (E) were frequently used together (600 times) followed by deflecting (E) and religious amplifiers (G) with 198 occurrences.

Table 52: Combination of response strategies for each situation

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
<b>A</b>	1080	162	24	24	600	66	66
<b>B</b>		432	0	24	132	24	60
<b>C</b>			18	18	18	0	0
<b>D</b>				72	30	12	24
<b>E</b>					1224	18	198
<b>F</b>						168	72
<b>G</b>							12

This table shows the results of the analysis of the two strategy combination, showing the highest and lowest combinations.

Having discussed the combination of response strategies, the next section gives another perspective by examining the response strategies according to gender. This complements the discussion of sections 6.2 and 6.3 by highlighting the usage of response strategies according to gender.

## 6.5 Summary

This chapter was aimed at presenting the results of the analysis of the response strategies. Different approaches to the analysis of the response strategies were adopted in order to gain a better understanding of the responses to apology that Saudi participants employ. The analysis of the response strategies showed that the most used responses to apology are deflecting and

acceptance. Thus, the results suggest that in responding to apologies, Saudi participants often attempt to reduce the severity of the offence before accepting the offence. The least used response strategy was the returning strategy. A further examination of the combination of the response strategies showed that one strategy usage was most prominent when compared to two or more strategies combination. Acceptance and deflecting strategies were most used together.

The next chapter continues the analysis of response strategies by examining the influence of situational and social factors on response strategies.

## **Chapter Seven: Response Strategies and Social and Situational Variables**

### **7.1 Introduction**

This chapter extends the discussion in chapter six on the analysis of response strategies by presenting the findings of the influence of situational and social factors on response strategies. In addition, the findings from the statistical analysis of the relationship between response strategies are discussed. The chapter then presents the findings from the analysis of the perspective of the offended in order to understand the main considerations for responses to apology. The results of the analysis of response strategies according to gender are discussed in the next section.

### **7.2 Response strategies according to gender**

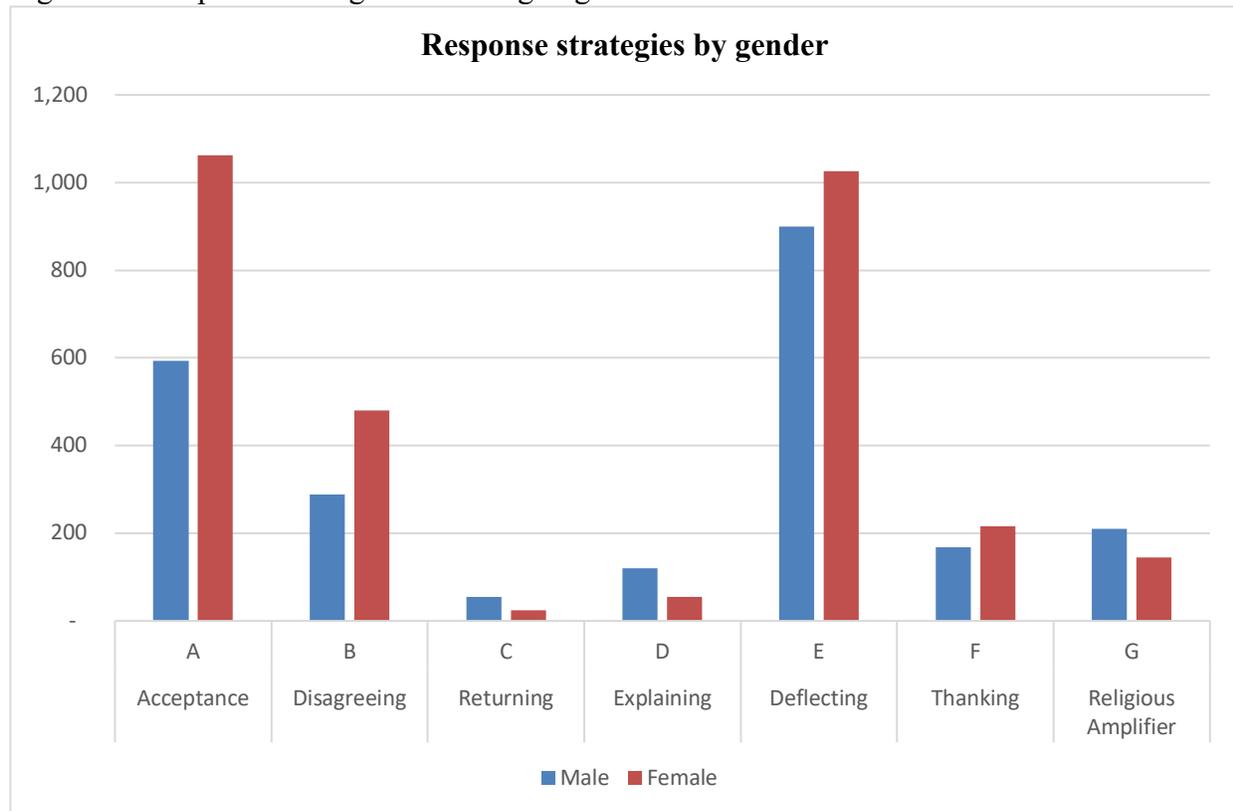
In this section, the response strategies are analysed according to gender of male and female. The summary distribution of the utilisation of the 7 response strategies according to the categories of male and female is shown in Table 53 below and graphically depicted in Figure 79 below. The summary distribution shows the number of strategies that were employed by both males and females across the 15 DCT situations.

Table 53: Response Strategies according to gender

Summary Response Strategy According Gender					
Strategy	Code	Male	Female	Total	Percent
Acceptance	A	594	1,062	1,656	31%
Disagreeing	B	288	480	768	14%
Returning	C	54	24	78	1%
Explaining	D	120	54	174	3%
Deflecting	E	900	1,026	1,926	36%
Thanking	F	168	216	384	7%
Religious Amplifier	G	210	144	354	7%

This table shows the distribution of response strategies according to gender (male and female)

Figure 78: Response strategies according to gender



This figure captures the results from Table 45 above in graphically showing the use of response strategies according to gender (male and female).

As depicted in Table 52, the most frequently used response strategy was deflecting (E), followed by acceptance (A) and disagreeing. The least used response strategy was returning (C). This

might suggest that participants were less willing to engage in confrontations, but instead, more willing to reduce the severity of the situation through diverting attention. A further exploration of the distribution of these response strategies according to gender revealed that relatively more females employed acceptance (64%), disagreeing (63%), deflecting (53%) and thanking (56%) response strategies. On the contrary, more males used the returning (69%), explaining (69%) and religious amplifier (59%) response strategies. In addition, the highest percentage difference (28%) was observed between male and female usage of the acceptance response strategy. Thus, it may be possible that female participants tend to accept the apology more often than male participants. Although setting in the different cultural contexts, these results seem to be consistent with Cai (2012) study that showed that female participants use more explicit and implicit acceptance response strategies than male participants in the case of Chinese nationals. This was also observed in the case of Jordanian speakers in Al Rousan (2016) study in which they found that females used acceptance strategies more frequently than males. Other studies also suggest that females are more accepting and polite than males (Brown, 1980; Golato, 2003; Holmes, 2008). For instance, Holmes (2008, p. 6) argues that “women tend to be more polite than men...in general, women are much more likely than men to express positive politeness or friendliness in the way they use language”. However, this is different from Adrefiza & Jones's (2013) study in that they did not find any gender differences in apology response strategies of Australian English and Bahasa Indonesia.

As my data shows, the difference between male and female participants in their use of the deflecting response strategy was low (7%). This seems to show that both male and female participants are willing to distract or lower the severity of the offence. The observation of the use

of this response strategy is also consistent with Heidari, Rezazadeh, & Eslami (2009) study on Iranian male and female use of response strategies.

Further investigation of the statistical difference in the utilisation of the response strategies between males and females will be discussed in section 7.4. The next section examines the distribution of the response strategies according to age groups.

### **7.3 Response strategies according to age groups**

The focus in this section is to investigate whether there are differences in the occurrences of response strategies across the different age groups. This forms the initial step before undertaking a statistical analysis with results discussed in section 7.4.2 below.

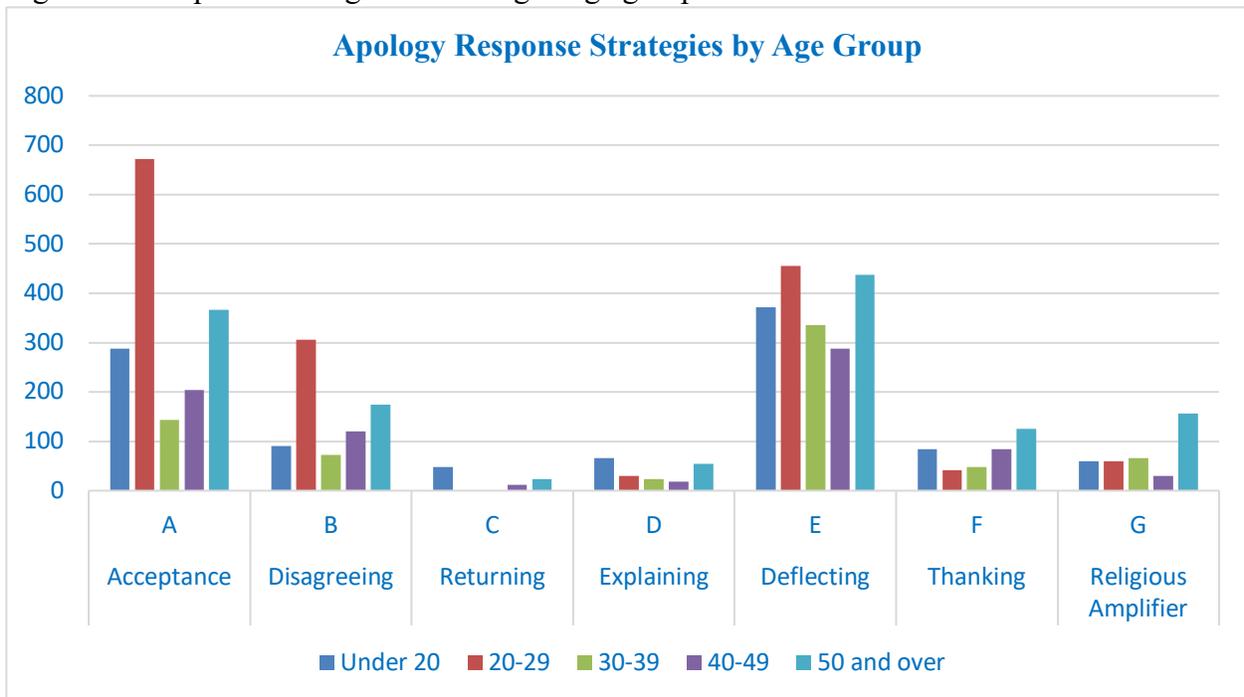
The number of occurrences of the response strategies across the age groups (under 20 years, 20-29 years, 30-39 years, 40-49 years, 50 and over years) is shown in Table 54 below which is then graphically depicted in Figure 80. A proportionate analysis of this distribution is also presented in Figure 81.

Table 54: Response Strategies according to age groups

Response strategies by age groups							
Strategy	Code	Under 20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50 and over	Total
Acceptance	A	288	672	144	204	366	1,674
Disagreeing	B	90	306	72	120	174	762
Returning	C	48	0	0	12	24	84
Explaining	D	66	30	24	18	54	192
Deflecting	E	372	456	336	288	438	1,890
Thanking	F	84	42	48	84	126	384
Religious Amplifier	G	60	60	66	30	156	372

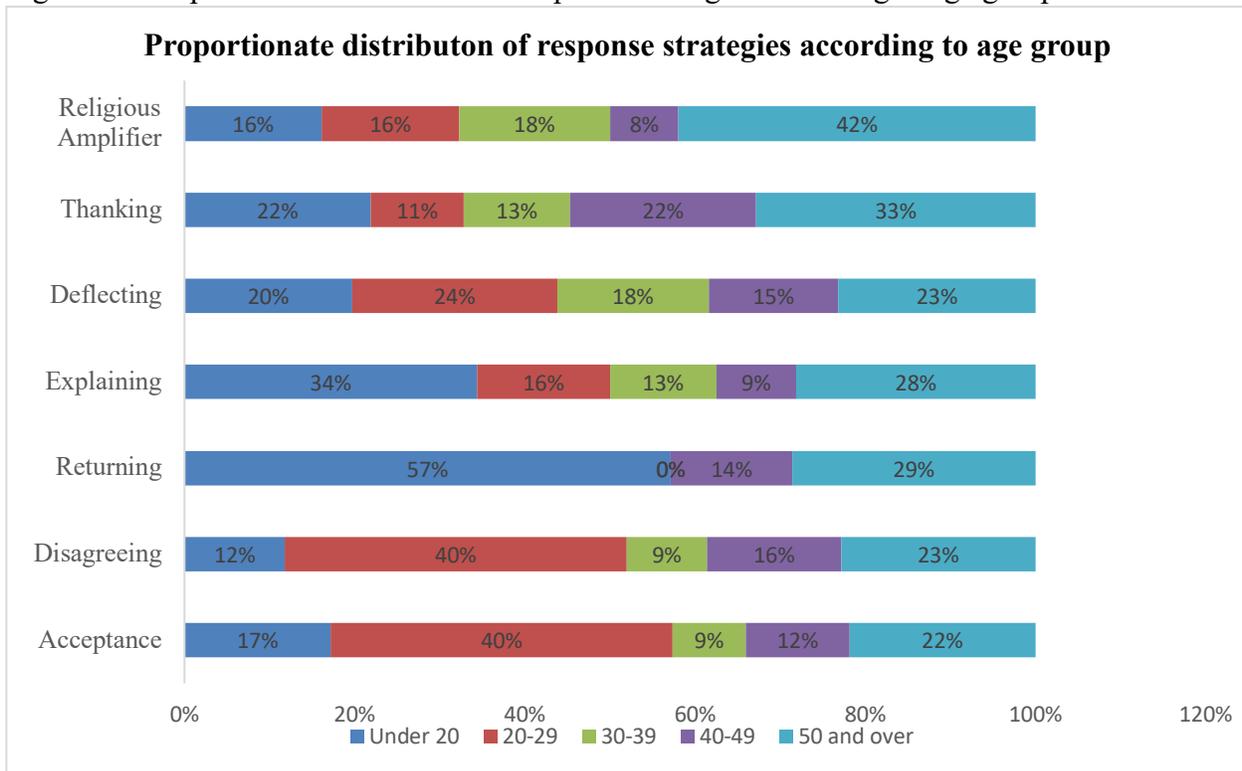
In this table, the response strategies are analysed according to the five age groups (under 20, 20-29, 30-39, 40-49 and 50 ).

Figure 79: Response strategies according to age groups



This figure graphically represented results of table 53 above showing the use of the response strategies according to the five age groups.

Figure 80: Proportionate distribution of response strategies according to age group



This figure is a graphical presentation of the proportionate use of response strategies across the 5 age groups.

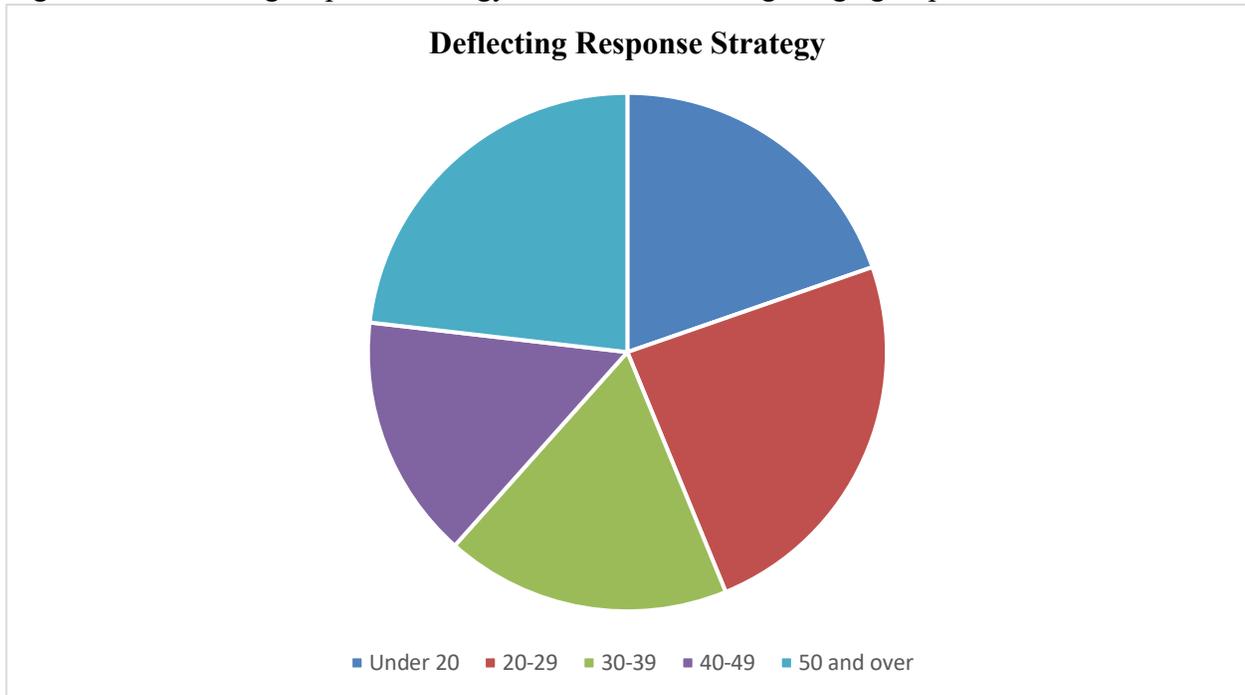
What is observable in terms of the utilisation of the acceptance response strategy across the age groups is the high frequency among the age groups 20-29 years old. This age group accounted for 40% of the total occurrences of acceptance in this response strategy. The age group 30-39 years old, however, used the response strategy the least with only 9% of the occurrences. In the disagreeing response strategy, a similar trend is observed with the age group 20-29 years, again, accounting for 40% of the occurrences of this response strategy. The under 20 age group, however, had a slightly higher proportionate occurrence of 17% in acceptance than disagreeing (12%). On the contrary, the 40-49 years age group had a higher utilisation of disagreeing response strategy (16%) than acceptance response strategy (12%).

The returning response strategy was utilised quite differently across the age groups when compared to acceptance and disagreeing. In particular, only the age groups, under 20 years, 40-49 years and over 50 years, employed the returning response strategy. A further examination shows that the under 20 years age group accounted for over half (57%) of the total occurrences of this response strategy and age group 40-49 years with lowest proportion of 14%. This might suggest that this age group is slightly more confrontation than the other age groups which seek to restore relationship more expediently.

The explaining response strategy, when compared to other response strategy, only accounted for 4% of the total occurrences across the 15 DCT situations. When analysed with respect to age group, its noticeable that under 20 years age group used this strategy more than other age groups. This might suggest that this age group provides more explanation when responding to apology than other age groups. In proportionate terms, the age group accounted for 34% of the occurrences in this response strategy. Over 50 age group also employed this response strategy relatively more accounting for 28% as compared to the 40-49 years age group that had the lowest utilisation of 9%. One possible explanation is that age groups under 20 and over 50 years old seem to have more time to explain something than other age groups.

The deflecting response strategy, the highest used response strategy across the DCT situations, was relatively well spread across the age groups as compared to the other response strategies. The highest usage of the response strategy is observed in the age group 20-29 years with a proportionate share of 24% followed by over 50 years age group with a 23% and the lowest 40-49 years age group with 15% share. This is simplified in the pie chart shown in Figure 82 below.

Figure 81: Deflecting response strategy utilisation according to age groups



This figure shows how the deflecting response strategy was used across the 5 age groups highlighting that the highest use was by 20-29 years age group.

The use of thanking and religious amplifiers in response to apologies were used more by the age group over 50 years. This age group accounted for 33% and 42% of the usage of thanking and religious amplifiers respectively across the 15 DCT situations. Further, the age group 40-49 years was more willing to thank the apologiser (22%) but with less use of religious amplifiers (8%). On the contrary, the age group 30-39 years was more inclined to use religious amplifiers (18%) than thanking the apologiser (13%). This observation is similar in the case of 20-29 years age group that employed more religious amplifiers (16%) than thanking the apologiser (11%), contrary to the under 20 age group that thanked the apologiser (22%) but employed fewer religious amplifiers (16%).

The thanking response strategy was used the least by age group 20-29 years whilst age group 40-49 years used religious amplifiers the least. In this respect, some differences are observable between the age groups. However, these needs to be statistically examined to show whether the differences are significant or not. The results of this process are presented and discussed in section 7.4.2.

## **7.4 Relationship of response strategies**

This section builds on the analysis above which presented and discussed the non-statistical results on the occurrences of response strategies according to each situation, distribution across all the 15 situations, based on gender and also age group. Some similarities and differences were observed in the analysis. In this section, the focus is on consolidating the results to show some statistical relationships, in particular, correlations and significant differences. The first discussion is on the investigation of the association of the response strategies according to gender.

### **7.4.1 Relationships of response strategies and gender**

Section 7.2 discussed the occurrences of the response strategies according to gender. It was observed for instance, that females employed the response strategies of acceptance, disagreeing, deflecting and thanking relatively more than males. On the other hand, more males than females used the returning, explaining and religious amplifier response strategies. However, these results do not provide evidence on whether the differences across all response strategies are significant or not; neither does it show that there is a relationship in how males and females use the response

strategies. These shortcomings of a non-statistical approach of analysis are addressed in this section. The first aspect is establishing whether the utilisation of these response strategies by males and females are statistically correlated.

The results of the analysis of the correlation of the occurrences of the response strategies in their utilisation between males and females is shown in Table 55 below. The descriptive statistics of these occurrences for male and female across the 7 response strategies is shown in Table 56 below.

Table 55: Descriptive statistics for response strategies according to gender

	<b>Descriptive Statistics</b>				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Male	7	24	936	328.29	329.576
Female	7	18	1062	427.71	451.979
Valid N (listwise)	7				

Table 56: Correlation of response strategies according to gender

		<b>Correlations</b>	
		Male	Female
Male	Pearson Correlation	1	.945**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	7	7
Female	Pearson Correlation	.945**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	7	7

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As shown in Table 55, the mean of the number of response occurrences for males was 328.29 whilst that for females was 427.71 with associated standard deviation of 329.576 and 451.979 respectively. This means that the average frequency in the use of the 7 response strategies was relatively higher among females than males. In addition, the spread/variations across these response strategies was higher for females than males.

The correlation of the use of response strategies according to gender showed that there is a significant positive correlation across the 7 strategies. The Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.945 which is significant at 99% confidence level. This implies that the employment of the response strategies by males significantly corresponds to the utilisation of the response strategies by females. In other words, the pattern in the usage of response strategies is similar among both males and females. The next statistical test was aimed at exploring whether the identified differences in the usage of response strategies between males and females was statistically significant.

The paired samples t-test results for the occurrences of the 7 response strategies for male and female participants are shown in Table 67 below.

Table 57: Response Strategies according to gender T-Test

Paired Differences								
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Male - Female	-99.429	177.275	67.004	-263.380	64.523	-1.484	6	.188

The inferential statistics in Table 57 show that the  $t$ -value was -1.484 for degrees of freedom, 6, and a  $p$ -value of 0.188. Essentially, this test is aimed at exploring whether the mean values of the response strategies' occurrences for males and females are statistically significantly different.

The critical value (CV) corresponding to 6 degrees of freedom at 5% significance level in student's  $t$  distribution table is 2.447. The  $t$ -value of 1.484 is less than the CV of 2.447. Further, the  $p$ -value of 0.188 is greater than the 5% (0.05) significance level. As such, the mean differences of the occurrences of response strategies between males and females are not statistically significantly different. It can be suggested that the utilisation of response strategies between male participants and female participants are not statistically different. In other words, the way male participants and female participants used apology response strategies in the DCT situations was not significantly different.

The next analysis is focussed on age groups and their usage of response strategies.

#### **7.4.2 Relationship of response strategies according to age groups**

This section builds on the discussion in section 7.3 to statistically analyse whether the differences observed in the utilisation of response strategies across the age groups are significant. The first investigation, however, is on whether there is a correlation in the occurrences of the response strategies across the age groups. The results obtained from Pearson's correlation test is shown in Table 58 below.

Table 58: Response Strategies correlation between age groups

Response Strategies Correlation between age groups						
		Under 20 age group	20-29 age group	30-39 age group	40-49 age group	50 and over age group
Under 20 age group	Pearson Correlation	1	.838*	.958**	.974**	.961**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.018	.001	.000	.001
	N	7	7	7	7	7
20-29 age group	Pearson Correlation	.838*	1	.696	.882**	.867*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018		.082	.009	.011
	N	7	7	7	7	7
30-39 age group	Pearson Correlation	.958**	.696	1	.928**	.928**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.082		.003	.003
	N	7	7	7	7	7
40-49 age group	Pearson Correlation	.974**	.882**	.928**	1	.966**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.009	.003		.000
	N	7	7	7	7	7
50 and over age group	Pearson Correlation	.961**	.867*	.928**	.966**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.011	.003	.000	
	N	7	7	7	7	7
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).						
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

The results showed a significant positive correlation between age groups ‘under 20’ years to ‘20-29’ years, ‘30-39’ years, ‘40-49’ years and ‘over 50’ years with correlation values of 0.838, 0.958, 0.974 and 0.961 respectively. The correlation between age group ‘under 20’ year to ‘20-29’ years, however, was statistically significant at 95% confidence level as compared to the other age groups that were statistically significant at 99% confidence level.

The age group '20-29' years was statistically significantly correlated to age group '40-49' years with a Pearson's correlation value of 0.882 at 0.01 significance level whilst the correlation with age group 'over 50' years was positively significant at 0.05 significance level. Further, the use of response strategies for age group '30-39' years was positive statistically significantly correlated with age groups '40-49' years and 'over 50' years at 99% confidence level with the same value of Pearson's correlation of 0.928.

Further, age group '40-49' years was positively significantly correlated with age group 'over 50' years at 99% confidence level with a Pearson's correlation value of 0.966. In relative terms, the highest positive correlation is observed between age groups 'under 20' years and '40-49' years which had the highest Pearson correlation value of 0.974. On the other hand, the correlation between age groups '20-29' years and '30-39' years was positive but not statistically significant. Interestingly, whilst the analysis of the apology strategies between these two age groups had shown similar patterns, the response strategies employed did not show a similar pattern. The results of the correlation analysis of response strategies across the age groups is shown in Table 59 below.

The next phase in the analysis of the response strategies across the age groups was to investigate whether the differences observed in the utilisation of these strategies across the age groups were statistically significantly different. For instance, it was observed that the age group '20-29' years employed more acceptance and disagreeing response strategies than other response strategies and did not use the returning response strategy. On the other hand, the age group 'over 50' years proportionately used more religious amplifiers and thanking response strategies than other

response strategies. It was also observed that age group ‘under 20’ years proportionately used more explaining response strategy than other age groups. In this respect, the aim of the investigation herein is to explore statistically whether these observed differences in response strategies utilisation among the age groups is statistically significantly different.

The descriptive statistics of the number of occurrences of responses strategies according to age groups is shown in Table 59. The table shows the mean occurrences for all age groups with age group ‘20-29’ years had the highest mean occurrences of 222.86 while age group ‘30-39’ had the least mean occurrences of 96.86 with corresponding standard deviations of 260.809 and 114.966 respectively. This indicates that the age group ‘20-29’ years relatively used more response strategies on average than other age groups. The descriptive statistics also show the standard mean error, lower and upper bounds for 95% confidence interval. The results highlight that age group ‘20-29’ years had the widest spread in terms of utilisation of the 7 response strategies.

Table 59: Descriptives for response strategies of age groups

Descriptives								
Occurrences for each strategy for age groups								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Under 20 years	7	141.43	142.865	53.998	9.30	273.56	36	402
20 - 29 years	7	222.86	260.809	98.576	-18.35	464.06	0	672
30 - 39 years	7	96.86	114.966	43.453	-9.47	203.18	0	336
40 - 49 years	7	108.86	109.458	41.371	7.63	210.09	6	294
50 and over years	7	188.57	178.085	67.310	23.87	353.27	0	474
Total	35	151.71	167.303	28.279	94.24	209.18	0	672

The next stage in the analysis is the test of the homogeneity of variances using the Levene statistics. This is an important step before interpreting the ANOVA test results. The results of the Levene statistic test of homogeneity of variances are shown in Table 60 below. The Levene test for the homogeneity of variances based on mean had significance value of 0.042 which is lower than 0.05. As such, the Levene test based on the mean was significant. However, the Levene test based on median and median with adjusted degree of freedom was not significant.

Since the Levene test based on mean is significant, that implies that the variances are statistically significantly different. In other words, the variances are not equal and thus, the assumption of equal variances has been violated. This makes the relevance of the Welch test for the equality of means and the Games-Howell Post Hoc test. As discussed in section 5.4, these tests help to justify the appropriateness of the statistical test employed. They are robustness tests which examine the underlying assumptions of the statistical analysis technique. The results of these tests are discussed below.

Table 60: Test of homogeneity of variances - response strategies according to age groups

		<b>Test of Homogeneity of Variances</b>			
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Occurrences for each strategy for age groups	Based on Mean	2.833	4	30	.042
	Based on Median	.892	4	30	.481
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.892	4	16.234	.491

The ANOVA test results are shown in Table 60 below. The results show that the  $F(4, 30)$  value is 0.685 and the  $p$ -value is 0.608 (higher than 0.05). Thus, there is no statistically significant

difference in the number of occurrences of response strategies across the age groups. In other words, whilst differences were observed in the employment of response strategies across the 5 age groups, these differences are not statistically significantly different.

Table 61: ANOVA - response strategies according to age groups

<b>ANOVA</b>					
Occurrences for each strategy for age groups					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	79601.143	4	19900.286	.685	.608
Within Groups	872064.000	30	29068.800		
Total	951665.143	34			

The results for the robust tests of equality of means or Welch’s ANOVA are shown in Table 62 below whilst the Games-Howell Post Hoc results in Table 62. The Welch’s ANOVA was not significant showing that differences in mean values for the age groups were not statistically significantly different. This can be observed from the post hoc test in which the different age groups are compared in turn to other age groups. As shown in Table 62, there was no significant value less than 0.05. Thus, no age group was observed to be statistically significantly different to the other age group in their use of the response strategies.

Table 62: Robust tests of equality of means - response strategies according to age groups

<b>Robust Tests of Equality of Means</b>				
Occurrences for each strategy for age groups				
	Statistic <sup>a</sup>	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	.556	4	14.760	.698

a. Asymptotically F distributed.

Table 63 shows the comparison of the age groups with other age groups in the usage of response strategies. This has revealed that there are no statistically significant differences in the utilisation of response strategies across the different age groups. This is further highlighted in Table 64 that shows that all 5 groups belong to one homogeneous subset. In other words, the differences observed in the utilisation of response strategies across the 5 age groups are not statistically significantly different. Thus, in their utilisation of response strategies, the age groups belong to one homogeneous subset.

Table 63: Tukey Post Hoc test - response strategies according to age groups

**Multiple Comparisons**

Dependent Variable: Occurrences of response strategies according to the age groups

Tukey HSD

(I) Age groups	(J) Age groups	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Under 20 years	20 - 29 years	-81.429	91.134	.897	-345.77	182.91
	30 - 39 years	44.571	91.134	.988	-219.77	308.91
	40 - 49 years	32.571	91.134	.996	-231.77	296.91
	50 and over years	-47.143	91.134	.985	-311.49	217.20
20 - 29 years	Under 20 years	81.429	91.134	.897	-182.91	345.77
	30 - 39 years	126.000	91.134	.643	-138.34	390.34
	40 - 49 years	114.000	91.134	.722	-150.34	378.34
	50 and over years	34.286	91.134	.996	-230.06	298.63
30 - 39 years	Under 20 years	-44.571	91.134	.988	-308.91	219.77
	20 - 29 years	-126.000	91.134	.643	-390.34	138.34
	40 - 49 years	-12.000	91.134	1.000	-276.34	252.34
	50 and over years	-91.714	91.134	.850	-356.06	172.63
40 - 49 years	Under 20 years	-32.571	91.134	.996	-296.91	231.77
	20 - 29 years	-114.000	91.134	.722	-378.34	150.34
	30 - 39 years	12.000	91.134	1.000	-252.34	276.34
	50 and over years	-79.714	91.134	.904	-344.06	184.63
50 and over years	Under 20 years	47.143	91.134	.985	-217.20	311.49
	20 - 29 years	-34.286	91.134	.996	-298.63	230.06
	30 - 39 years	91.714	91.134	.850	-172.63	356.06
	40 - 49 years	79.714	91.134	.904	-184.63	344.06

Table 64: Homogeneous subsets - response strategies according to age groups

Tukey HSD<sup>a</sup>

Age groups	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05 1
30 - 39 years	7	96.86
40 - 49 years	7	108.86
Under 20 years	7	141.43
50 and over years	7	188.57
20 - 29 years	7	222.86
Sig.		.643

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 7.000.

The next section investigates whether there is any relationship between the occurrences of the response strategies across the 15 DCT situations. In other words, whether the occurrences of the response strategies show any significantly observable relationship.

### 7.4.3 Relationship of response strategies across all situations

The previous section examined the relationship in the utilisation of response strategies across the different age groups. In this section, the focus is on analysing the 7 response strategies across the 15 DCT situations in order to highlight any significantly observable relationships.

The first step in the investigation was to highlight the correlation between the response strategies across the situations. The results of Pearson's correlation between the response strategies are shown in Table 65 below.

Table 65: Response strategies association across all situations

		<b>Correlations</b>						
		Acceptance strategy	Disagreeing strategy	Returning strategy	Explaining strategy	Deflecting strategy	Thanking strategy	Religious amplifier strategy
Acceptance strategy	Pearson Correlation	1	-.665**	.525*	-.046	-.507	-.129	-.195
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.007	.044	.871	.054	.646	.485
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Disagreeing strategy	Pearson Correlation	-.665**	1	-.435	.135	-.009	.080	-.066
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007		.105	.632	.974	.777	.815
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Returning strategy	Pearson Correlation	.525*	-.435	1	.046	.116	-.417	.035
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.044	.105		.870	.680	.122	.900
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Explaining strategy	Pearson Correlation	-.046	.135	.046	1	-.083	.102	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.871	.632	.870		.768	.719	1.000
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Deflecting strategy	Pearson Correlation	-.507	-.009	.116	-.083	1	-.383	.323
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.054	.974	.680	.768		.159	.241
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Thanking strategy	Pearson Correlation	-.129	.080	-.417	.102	-.383	1	-.015
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.646	.777	.122	.719	.159		.959
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15
Religious amplifier strategy	Pearson Correlation	-.195	-.066	.035	.000	.323	-.015	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.485	.815	.900	1.000	.241	.959	
	N	15	15	15	15	15	15	15

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results of the correlation between the response strategies showed that the acceptance response strategy was negatively correlated with disagreeing, explaining, deflecting, thanking and religious amplifiers response strategies. However, only the disagreeing response strategy was statistically negatively significantly correlated with Pearson correlation value of 0.665 at 99% confidence level. On the other hand, the acceptance response strategy was statistically positively correlated with the returning response strategy at 95% confidence level with Pearson correlation value of 0.525.

The disagreeing response strategy was weakly negatively correlated with the returning, deflecting and religious amplifiers response strategies with Pearson correlation values of 0.435, 0.009 and 0.066 respectively. However, these correlations are not statistically significant. Similarly, the weak positive correlation with the explaining and thanking strategies observed are not statistically significant.

The returning response strategy was weak positively correlated with explaining, deflecting and religious amplifiers response strategies and weak negatively correlated with thanking response strategy. However, these correlations were not statistically significant. The explaining response strategy was weakly negatively correlated with the deflecting response strategy and weakly positively correlated with the thanking response strategy; whilst no correlation was observed with the religious amplifier. None of these correlations were statistically significant. The deflecting response strategy was weakly negatively correlated with the thanking response strategy and weakly positively correlated with the religious amplifier response strategy. Similarly, none of these were statistically significant. The thanking response strategy was also

weakly negatively correlated with the religious amplifier response strategy, which was not statistically significant.

In this respect, only the moderately negative correlation between the acceptance strategy and the disagreeing strategy, and the moderately positive correlation of acceptance strategy with the returning strategy were statistically significant at 99% and 95% confidence levels respectively. The use of the acceptance response strategy could be perceived as the opposite to the disagreeing response strategy; hence, the negative correlation observed.

The next stage of analysis aimed to highlight whether the occurrences of these response strategies are statistically significantly different. This extends the discussion observed in section 6.2 which showed, for instance, a high occurrence of acceptance response strategy in situations one and fifteen as compared to thanking which was most used in situation seven. The aim is to highlight whether there are statistically significant differences in the occurrences or usage of the response strategies.

The descriptives of the occurrences of the response strategies across the 15 DCT situations is shown in Table 65 below. The highest mean occurrence can be observed with respect to deflecting and acceptance response strategies of 132.80 and 112 respectively with associated standard deviations of 32.538 and 36.824 respectively. Thus, the spread of occurrences across the 15 DCT situations was more for acceptance than deflecting response strategies. In addition, the mean scores show that the average utilisation of response strategies across the 15 DCT situations was higher for these two response strategies. Table 66 also shows the standard error,

95% confidence interval for mean and the minimum and maximum number of uses across the 15 situations.

The next test examines the homogeneity of variances using the Levene Statistic with results produced in Table 67 below. The results showed that the Levene test is significant based on mean, median, median and adjusted degree of freedom and trimmed mean. Thus, the group variances are not equal or homogenous, they are statistically significantly difference. This necessitated for the Welch test and Games-Howell Post Hoc test to identify the response strategies which are statistically significantly different.

Table 66: Descriptives of response strategies across all situations

<b>Descriptives</b>								
Occurrences across all situations								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Acceptance	15	112.00	36.824	9.508	91.61	132.39	54	168
Disagreeing	15	49.20	29.499	7.617	32.86	65.54	0	102
Returning	15	2.80	5.493	1.418	-.24	5.84	0	18
Explaining	15	7.20	6.085	1.571	3.83	10.57	0	18
Deflecting	15	132.80	32.538	8.401	114.78	150.82	66	180
Thanking	15	25.60	13.314	3.438	18.23	32.97	6	48
Religious Amplifier	15	24.00	13.223	3.414	16.68	31.32	6	60
Total	105	50.51	53.015	5.174	40.25	60.77	0	180

Table 67: Test of homogeneity of variances

**Test of Homogeneity of Variances**

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Occurrences across situations	Based on Mean	9.515	6	98	.000
	Based on Median	7.782	6	98	.000
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	7.782	6	55.574	.000
	Based on trimmed mean	9.686	6	98	.000

The ANOVA test results for the occurrences of the response strategies across the 15 DCT situations is shown in Table 68 below. The  $F(6, 98)$  was 75.729 with  $p$ -value less than 0.001 which implies that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean values of the occurrences of response strategies. In other words, there is a statistically significant difference observable in the response strategies across the DCT situations. A further test would aid to identify which response strategies are statistically significantly different.

Table 68: ANOVA Test Results

<b>ANOVA</b>					
Occurrences per situation					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	240445.029	6	40074.171	75.729	.000
Within Groups	51859.200	98	529.176		
Total	292304.229	104			

The Welch test results are shown in Table 69 below which shows  $p$ -value as less than 0.001 and thus, significant. This seems to support the interpretation above that the mean differences between the response strategies' occurrences are statistically significantly different. The detailed analysis of the response strategies that are statistically significantly difference to other response strategies is presented in Appendix 6.2 that shows the results of the Games-Howell Post Hoc test. The Post Hoc Test results show for each response strategy, which other response strategy that it was statistically significantly different. For instance, the acceptance response strategy was statistically significantly different to all other response strategies, except deflecting response strategy, at 0.05 significance level. On the other hand, the disagreeing response strategy was statistically significant different to acceptance, returning, explaining and religious amplifier

response strategies. The returning response strategy was statistically significantly different to all other response strategies except explaining. This is partly expected since explanation is often given when giving the apologizer some options of actions to take. Similarly, it is expected that disagreeing and acceptance response strategies would not occur together. The analysis of the significant differences in the means of the response strategies resulted in some identifiable homogeneous subsets as shown in Table 70 below. Three homogeneous subsets have been identified. The returning, explaining, religious amplifiers and thanking are in the first sub-set, religious amplifiers, thanking and disagreeing in the second subset while acceptance and deflecting in the third subset.

Table 69: Welch Test for equality of means

<b>Robust Tests of Equality of Means</b>				
Occurrences per situation				
	Statistic <sup>a</sup>	df1	df2	Sig.
Welch	64.836	6	41.925	.000

a. Asymptotically F distributed.

Table 70: Homogeneous subsets of response strategies

		<b>Occurrences across all situations</b>			
		Subset for alpha = 0.05			
	Response strategies	N	1	2	3
Tukey HSD <sup>a</sup>	Returning	15	2.80		
	Explaining	15	7.20		
	Religious Amplifier	15	24.00	24.00	
	Thanking	15	25.60	25.60	
	Disagreeing	15		49.20	
	Acceptance	15			112.00
	Deflecting	15			132.80
	Sig.			.106	.051

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 15.000.

In this section, the aim was to explore further and show statistically whether differences that exist in the utilisation of response strategies are statistically significantly different. The results have shown some differences in the employment of response strategies by Saudi participants in respect to gender and age though not statistically significantly different. The next section delves further in the analysis in order to identify some commonly used words in the responses. Thus, apart from identifying the response strategies, the analysis explores the word usage.

### 7.5 Analysis of commonly used words

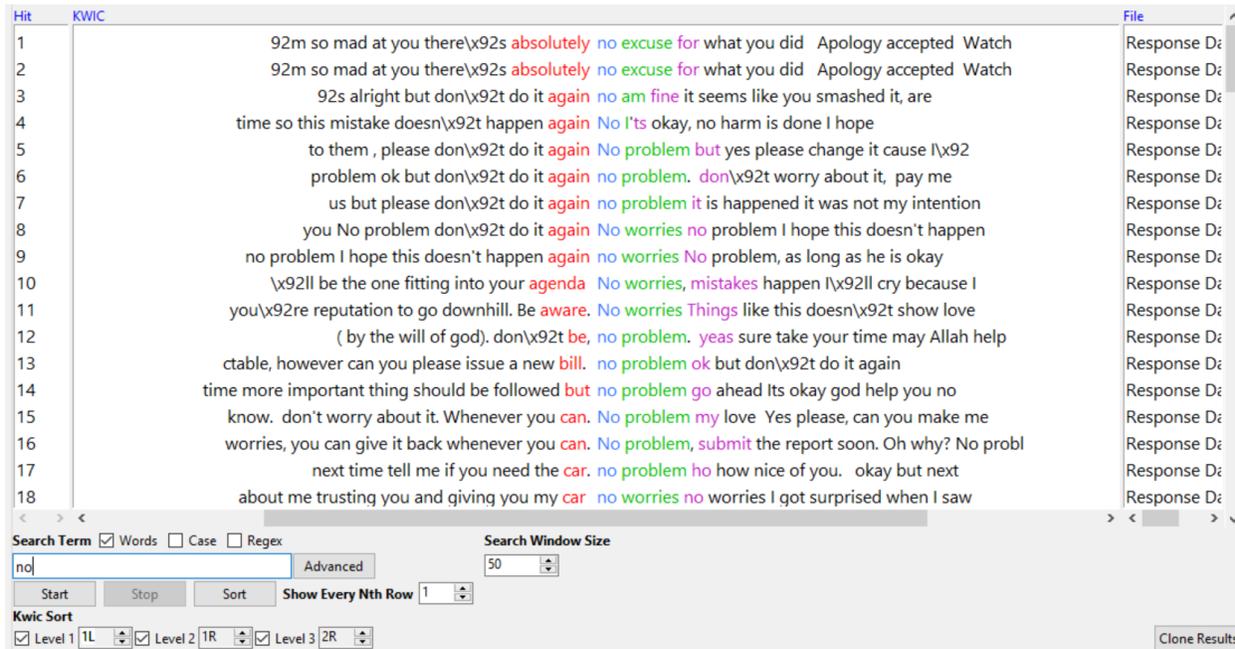
As elaborated in section 5.5, the process of identifying commonly used words/phrases was performed using an advanced text analysis software, AntConc (laurenceanthonyantconc, 2020). This text analysis process required the culmination of all the response to apology speech texts from all the DCT participants. Then, following changes to parameters (for instance, spread of

search and subsequent word search) in AntConc, the text analysis process produced the results discussed in the next subsection.

### 7.5.1 Commonly used words

The initial step in the analysis of the commonly used words for responding to apology identified the words ‘no’ (لا) (1032), ‘okay’ (حسنا) (792), ‘problem’ (مشكلة) (540), ‘God’ (الله) (276), ‘thank’ (شكرا) (276) and ‘worry’ (قلق) (24) as the most frequently used words respectively. The words in isolation without their context do not give much insight (Field, 2004) and the likelihood of misinterpreting them is high. For instance, the word ‘no’ (لا) at first glance denoted a disagreement and the response strategy word have been perceived as ‘disagreeing (B). However, when searched to include some contexts, the results showed that the word was used together with worries, problem or excuse e.g. ‘no problem’ or ‘no worries’. When used with worries or problem, it was actually a deflecting mechanism meant to reduce the severity of the offence or imply that offender did not need to apologize. Figure 83 below shows an extract for the context of the word ‘no’ (لا).

Figure 82: Context for the word ‘no’ (لا)

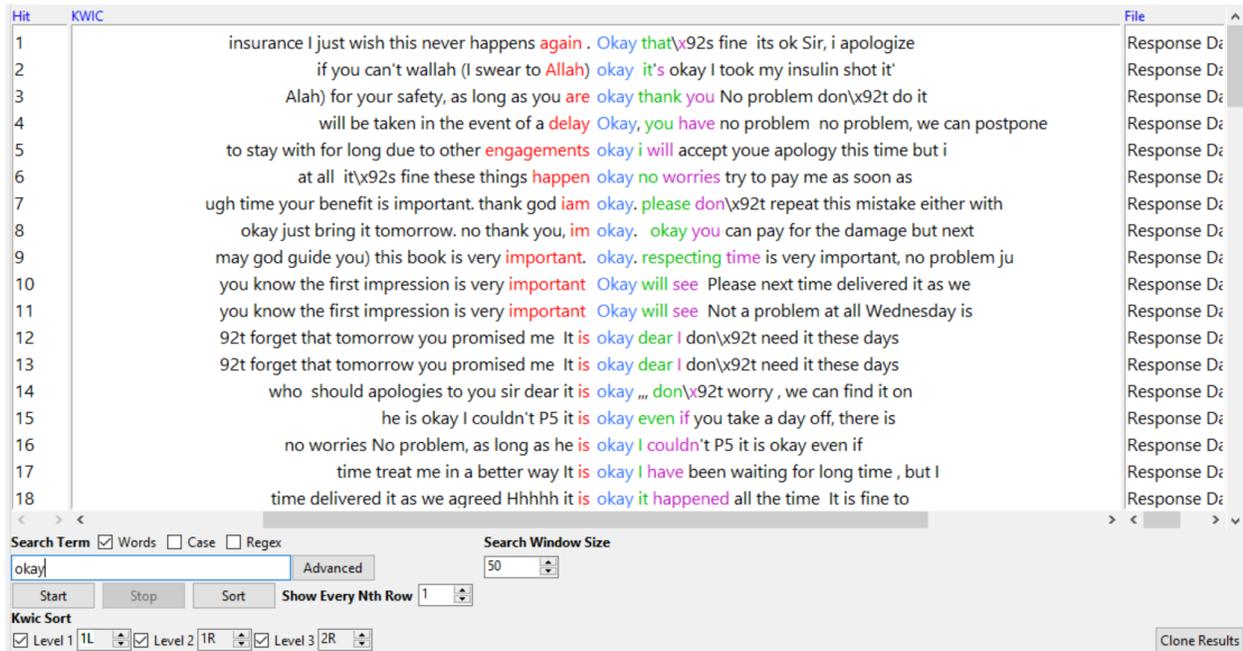


In this figure, the aim was to give an example of the context within which the word ‘no’ is used which gives the word different meanings depending on the context.

As revealed in Figure 84, when the word ‘no’ (لا) is used as ‘no problem’ it becomes a deflecting response strategy. However, in instances where its used as ‘absolutely no excuse for ..’ as in line 1 and 2, it becomes a disagreeing response strategy.

The word ‘problem’ (مشكلة), thus, was used often in conjunction with the word ‘no’ (لا). On the other hand, the word ‘okay’ (حسنًا) denoted mainly agreement and thus, agreeing response strategy. The context of the use of the word ‘okay’ (حسنًا) is depicted in the extract shown in Figure 85 below. This shows that the word is often used in phrases such as ‘it is okay’, ‘okay, thank you’, ‘okay, no worries’.

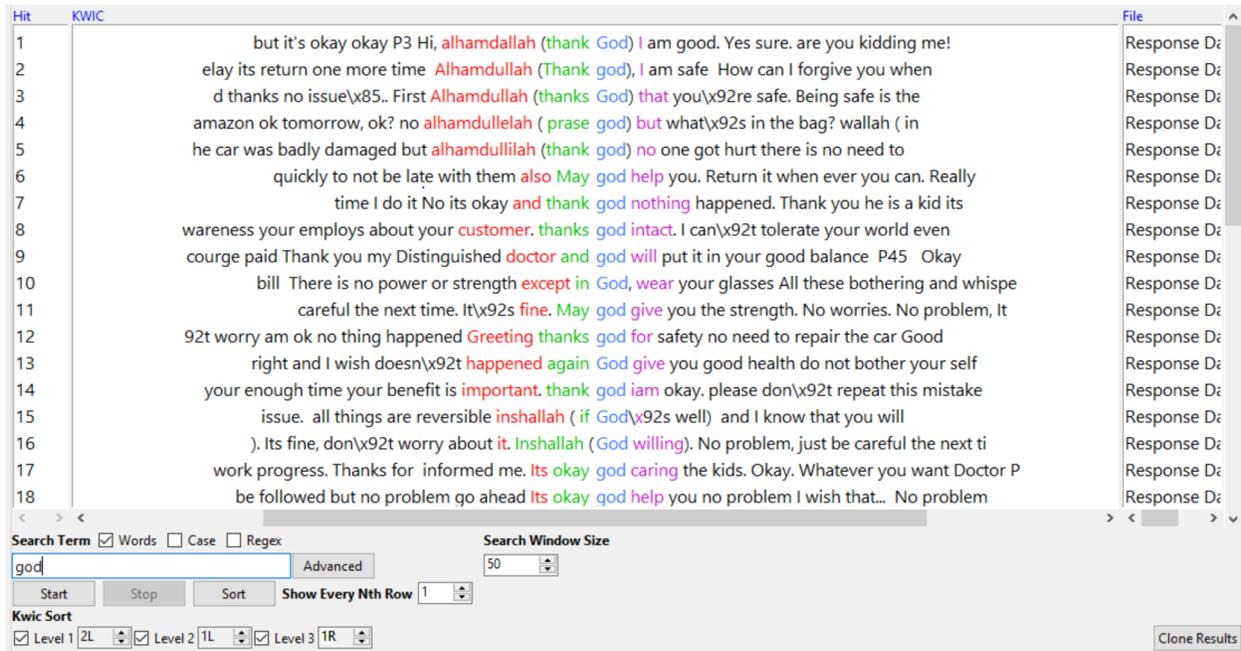
Figure 83: Context for the word ‘okay’ (حسنا)



In this figure, the aim was to give an example of the context within which the word ‘okay’ is used which mainly depicts agreeing response strategy.

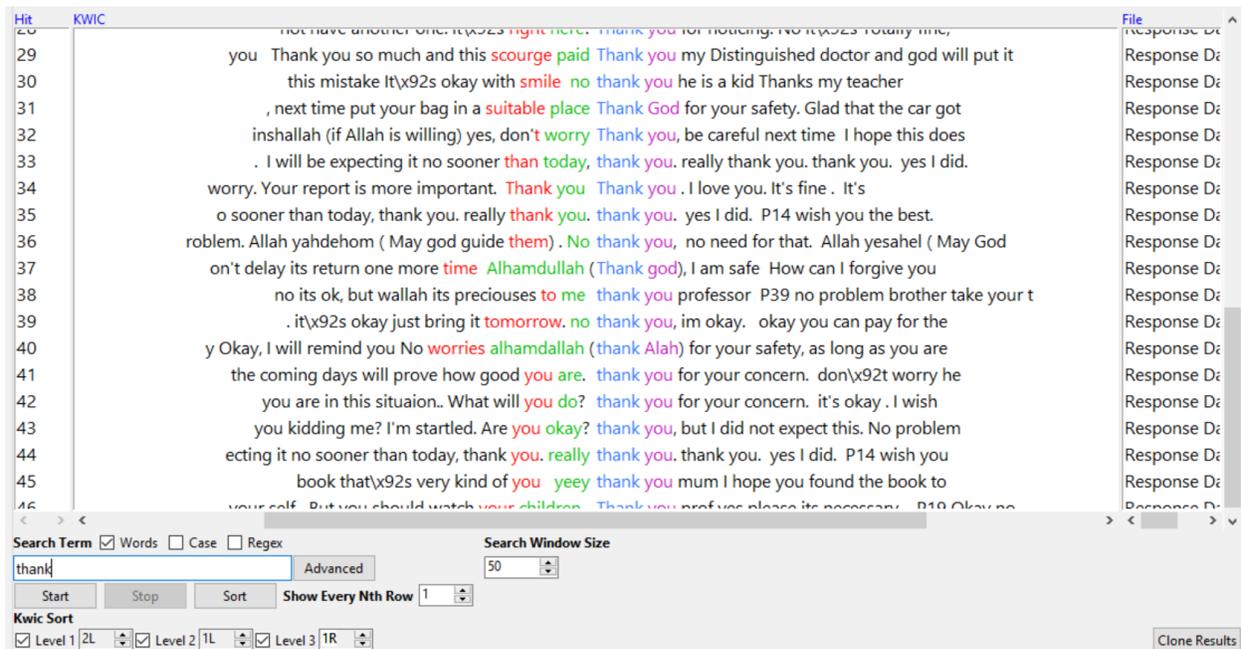
The reference to the name ‘God’ is in regard to religious amplifiers. The different contexts to which the noun is used are shown in the extract in Figure 84 below. This shows that the noun is used in different contexts which include phrases such as ‘thank God’ (الشكر لله) or ‘May God..’ (يا الهي). In other cases, it’s the Arabic phrases of ‘inshallah’ (إن شاء الله) or alhamdallah (الحمد لله) that refer to ‘God’. In addition, the word ‘God’ is used together with the word ‘thank’ (شكرا), for instance, in phrases such as ‘thank God’. The other contexts for the word ‘thank’ (شكرا) is shown in the extract in Figure 86.

Figure 84: Context for the word ‘God’ (الله)



In this figure, the aim was to give an example of the context within which the word ‘God’ is used which is associated with the religious amplifier strategy.

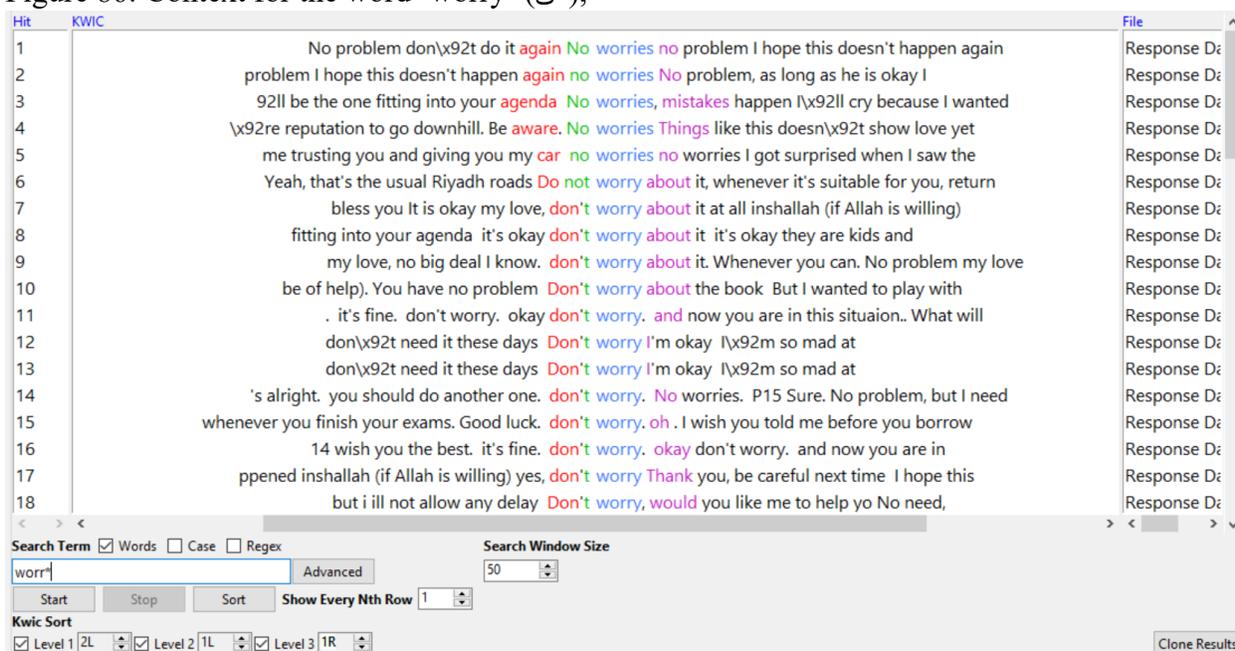
Figure 85: Context for the word ‘thank’ (شكرا)



In this figure, the aim was to give an example of the context within which the word ‘thank’ is used which captures different response strategies depending on the context.

With respect to the word ‘worry’ (قلق), this was searched in order to capture either ‘worries’ or ‘worry’ with the context of usage shown in the extract in Figure 87 below. The words ‘worry’ or ‘worries’ (هموم) were often used with the words ‘no’ and ‘don’t’ in phrases such as ‘no worries’ or ‘don’t worry’ which are responses meant to deflect the offence.

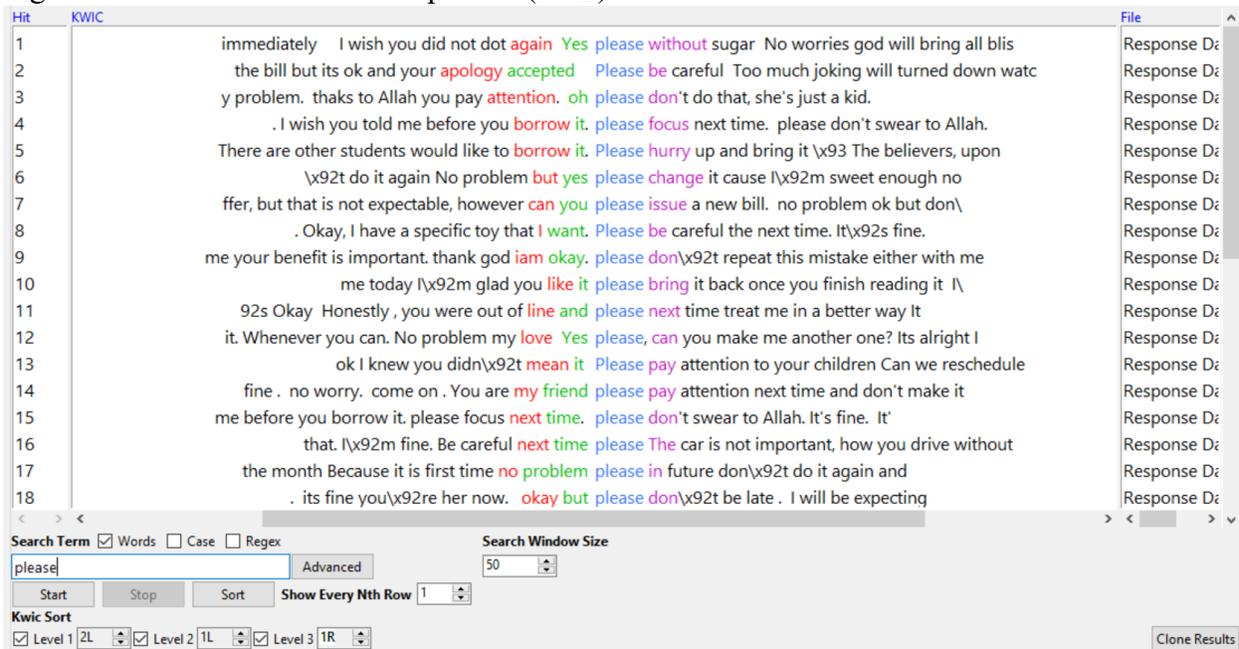
Figure 86: Context for the word ‘worry’ (قلق),



In this figure, the aim was to give an example of the context within which the word ‘worry’ is used which captures mostly the deflecting response strategy.

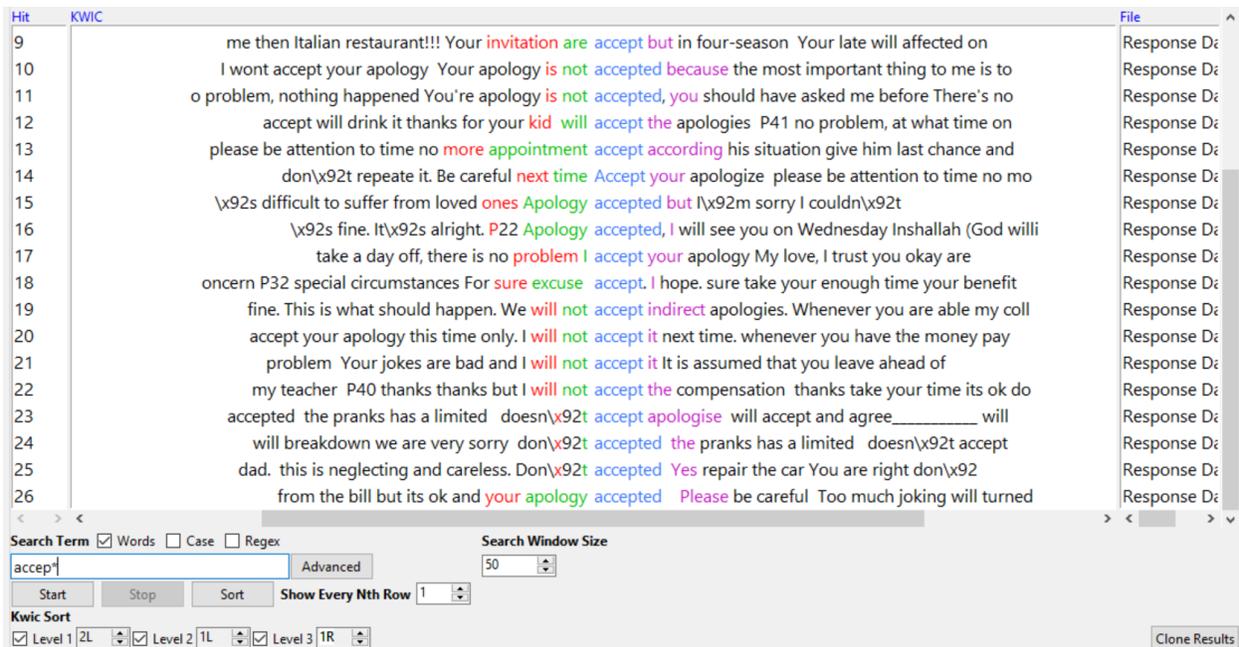
The usage of the word ‘please’ (رجاء) was also explored with the extract of the results shown in Figure 88 below. The word ‘please’ in this case can be observed as used in reference to explanation offered and thus, related to explaining response strategy. Further, the word ‘accept’ (قبول) was also searched with reference to related words such as ‘accept’ and ‘accepted’ with the results shown in the extract in Figure 89 below. The context highlight accept as mostly related to the acceptance response strategy unless accompanied by the word ‘not’ in the phrase ‘not accepted’ which relates to a disagreeing response strategy.

Figure 87: Context for the word ‘please’ (رجاء)



In this figure, the aim is to give an example of the context within which the word ‘please’ is used which captures different response strategies depending on the context.

Figure 88: Context for the word ‘accept’ (قبول)



In this figure, the aim is to give an example of the context within which the word ‘accept’ is used which mainly captures the acceptance response strategy.

This section was aimed at highlighting the commonly used words and phrases in responding to apologies. The next section moves to analyse the influence of socio-cultural factors on the response strategies adopted. In this regard, the response strategies are analysed based on social distance and social power.

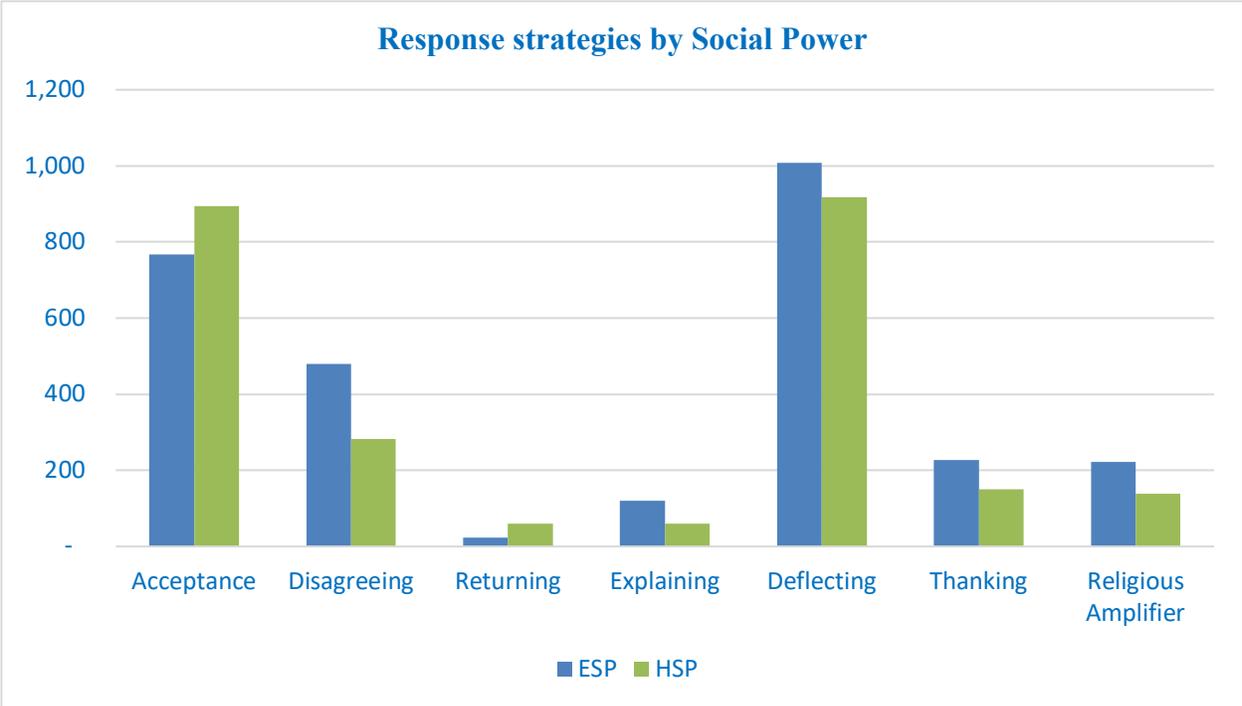
## **7.6 Influence of cultural factors on response strategies**

In this section, the response strategies are analysed with respect to two situational variables of social distance and social power. This is important in order to show whether these socio-cultural factors affected the response strategies. As discussed also in section 5.6, the process of capturing the influence of social distance and social power required the categorisation of the DCT situations into different levels of social power and social distance. This was shown in Table 38 and Table 42, which are also utilised in this section. The analysis of response strategies based on social power is discussed next.

### **7.6.1 Social power and response strategies**

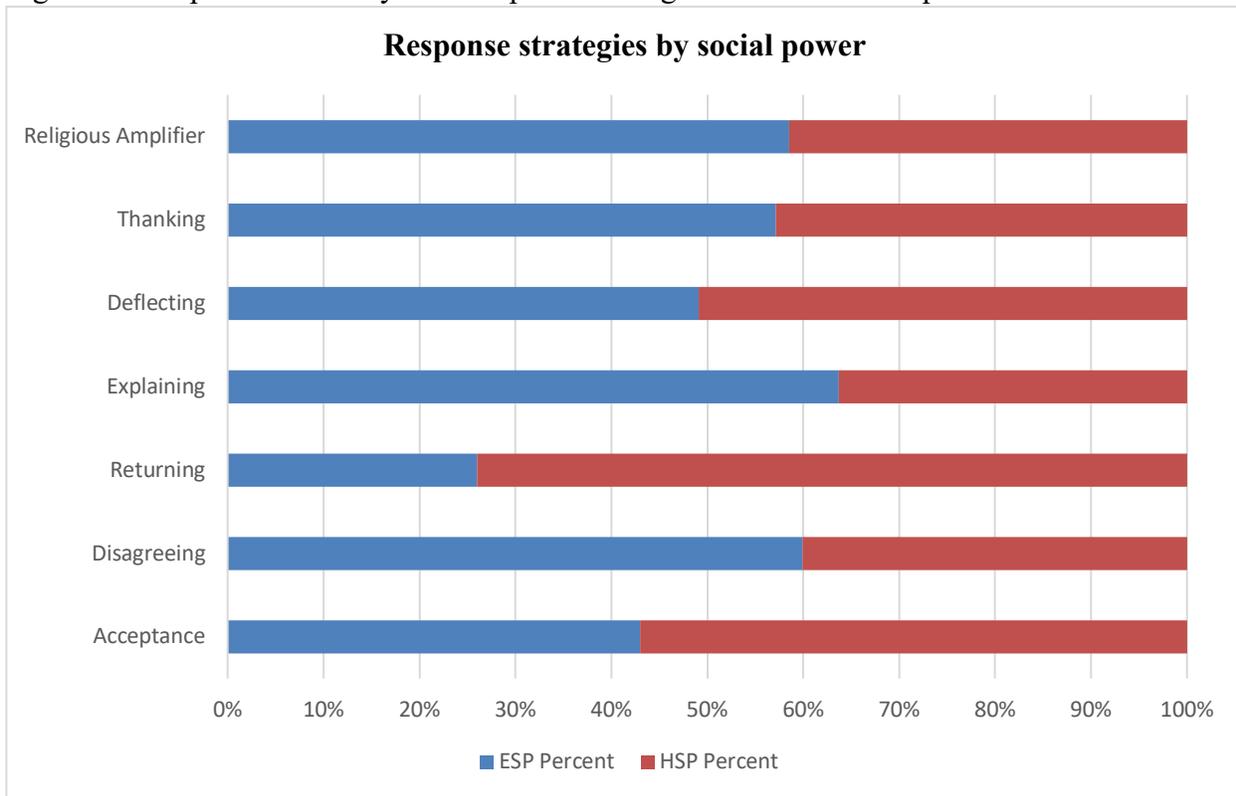
The aim of the analysis is to highlight whether the social power between the interlocutors affected the response to apology. The analysis of the response strategies based on social power produced the results shown in Figure 90 and Figure 91 below.

Figure 89: Analysis of response strategies based on social power



This figure shows a comparison of the use of response strategies between the two categories of social power.

Figure 90: Proportionate analysis of response strategies based on social power



This figure gives a proportionate comparison of the use of response strategies between high and equal social power situations.

The results suggest that there is high usage of the acceptance and returning response strategies when the social power is high whilst disagreeing, explaining, thanking and religious amplifiers are used relatively more in equal social power situations. On the other hand, the deflecting response strategy is used relatively the same across both equal and high social power situations. Considering these observed differences, it's important to examine statistically whether these differences are statistically significant.

The investigation of the statistical difference in the utilisation of the response strategies across the equal and high social power situations produced the results shown in Table 71, Table 72 and

Table 73 below. The descriptive statistics of the occurrences of response strategies in situations related to equal and high social power are shown in Table 71 whilst Table 72 shows the correlation between the two categories. The mean values of the occurrences of responses strategies in the equal social power situations was 407.14 (standard deviation 363.358) and in high social power 357.43 (standard deviation 382.087). The Pearson's correlation value was 0.963 with a *p-value* less than 0.001. This implies that the utilisation of response strategies across the equal social power situations and the high social power situations are positively statistically significant.

Table 71: Paired Samples Statistics of response strategies based on social power

<b>Paired Samples Statistics</b>				
	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Response Strategies in Equal Social Power	407.14	7	363.358	137.336
Response Strategies in High Social Power	357.43	7	382.087	144.415

Table 72: Correlation of response strategies based on social power

<b>Paired Samples Correlations</b>			
	N	Correlation	Sig.
Response Strategies in Equal Social Power & Response Strategies in High Social Power	7	.963	.000

In Table 73, the Paired Samples Test results are presented which revealed that the *p-value* (0.250) is higher than 0.05 and the *t*(6) of 1.274 is less than the critical value of 2.447, which implies that the mean values of the two social power categories are not statistically significantly different. In other words, whilst there are differences observed in the employment of response

strategies between equal social power and high social power, these differences are not statistically significant.

Table 73: Paired Samples Test for response strategies based on social power

Paired Samples Test								
	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Response Strategies in Equal Social Power - Response Strategies in High Social Power	49.714	103.211	39.010	-45.740	145.169	1.274	6	.250

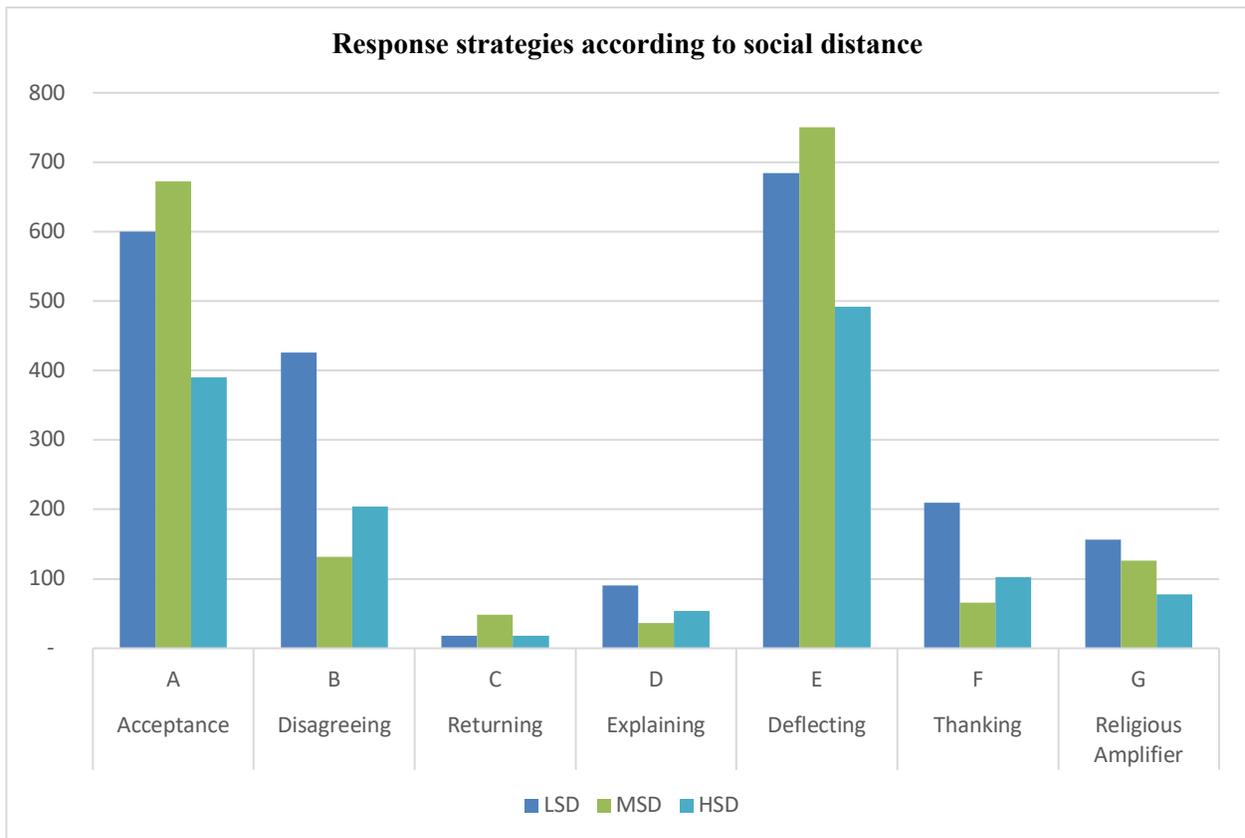
These results seem to support the literature in which social power may have an influence on the choice of response to apology (Hassani et al., 2011; Hedayatnejad, Maleki, & Mehrizi, 2015; Holmes, 1995; Saleem et al., 2018). For instance, Saleem et al. (2018) study found that Pakistan English speakers and Pakistan Urdu speakers used acceptance response strategy more when responding to apologies of higher status interlocutors; but preferred to acknowledge the apologies of interlocutors of equal and lower level social power. This suggests that it's easier to accept apology from a higher status person than a lower status person.

The next section examines the response strategies based on social distance, examining whether there are significantly observable differences in the usage of response strategies across different social distance categories.

## 7.6.2 Social distance and response strategies

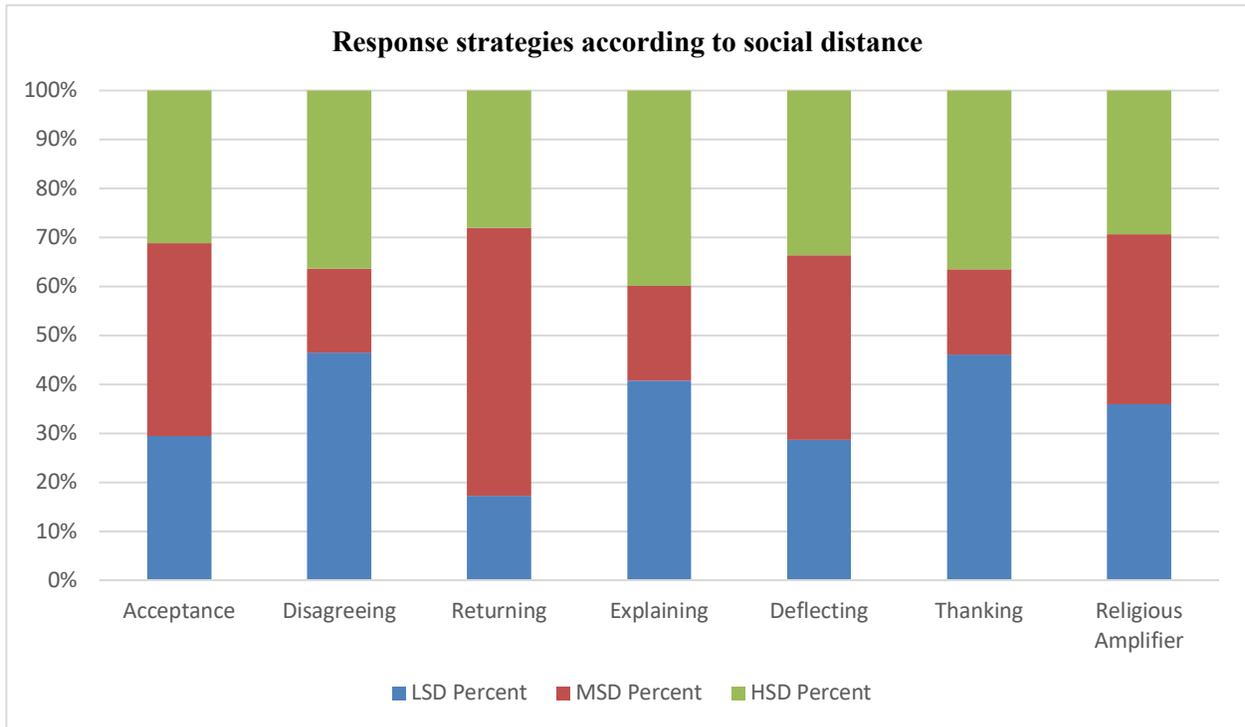
The results of the analysis of the response strategies based on social distance revealed the results shown in Figure 92 and Figure 93.

Figure 91: Analysis of response strategies based on social distance



This figure shows a comparison of the use of response strategies across the three categories of social distance.

Figure 92: Proportionate analysis of response strategies based on social distance



This figure gives a proportionate comparison of the use of response strategies across the three social distance situations.

The results reveal a high utilisation of the disagreeing and thanking response strategies in low social distance situations whilst the acceptance, returning and deflecting response strategies are most used in medium social distance situations. High social distance has more prominent usage of the explaining response strategy. The use of religious amplifiers was considerably well spread across the three social distance categories.

The next stage explored whether the identified differences were statistically significant or not. The statistical analysis of the distribution of the response strategies according to social distance categories produced the results shown in Table 74, Table 75, Table 76 and Table 77. The descriptive statistics are shown in Table 74 that revealed mean values of 312, 261.43 and 191.14 and standard deviations of 259.738, 310.088 and 182.464 for low social distance, medium social

distance and high social distance respectively.

Table 74: Descriptives of response strategies based on social distance

Descriptives						
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Low Social Distance	7	312.00	259.738	98.172	71.78	552.22
Medium Social Distance	7	261.43	310.088	117.202	-25.35	548.21
High Social Distance	7	191.14	182.464	68.965	22.39	359.89
Total	21	254.86	248.299	54.183	141.83	367.88

Table 75: Levene Test for response strategies based on social distance

Test of Homogeneity of Variances						
		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.	
Occurrences of response strategies	Based on Mean	1.763	2	18	.200	
	Based on Median	.281	2	18	.758	
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.281	2	14.102	.759	
	Based on trimmed mean	1.449	2	18	.261	

The Levene Test of homogeneity of variances results are shown in Table 75 above. The Levene Test of homogeneity of variances was not significant (as the *p*-value was less than 0.05) implying that variances of the three categories are homogenous (thus, no need for the Welch and Games-Howell Post Hoc Tests).

Table 76: ANOVA Test for response strategies based on social distance

<b>ANOVA</b>					
Occurrences of response strategies based on social distance					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	51576.000	2	25788.000	.393	.681
Within Groups	1181468.571	18	65637.143		
Total	1233044.571	20			

Table 77: Homogeneous subsets for response strategies based on social distance.

<b>Occurrences of response strategies</b>			Subset for alpha = 0.05
	Social Distance Categories	N	1
Tukey HSD <sup>a</sup>	High Social Distance	7	191.14
	Medium Social Distance	7	261.43
	Low Social Distance	7	312.00
	Sig.		.658

Means for groups in homogeneous subsets are displayed.

a. Uses Harmonic Mean Sample Size = 7.000.

The ANOVA test results shown in Table 76 above revealed the  $F(2,18)$  value of 0.393 and  $p$ -value of 0.681 which is not significant. Thus, the mean differences between the low social distance, medium social distance and high social distance are not statistically significantly different. In other words, despite the observed differences in the distribution of the response strategies between the three social distance categories, these differences are not statistically significant. As such, the influence of social distance on response strategies does not seem significant in this study. This is further shown in Table 77 that highlights one homogeneous

subset to which all three social distance categories belong.

In the next section, the motivation is to understand any significant factors that underlie the responses to the apology. This is achieved by exploring the perspective of the respondents.

### **7.7 Exploring perspectives of offended**

Similar to section 5.7, in this section, the results of the analysis of the perspectives of the participants in responding to apologies obtained through semi-structured interviews are discussed. The aim of interviewing some of the DCT participants was to obtain a better understanding of the underlying factors that influenced the choices of the adopted response strategies in the different situations. In this respect, this qualitative analysis complements the DCT analysis and textual analysis of the response strategies discussed in this chapter. The focus in this section is to highlight the key themes from the analysis of the interviews.

The thematic analysis process identified the key themes for the choice in response strategies as perceived sincerity of the apologizer, the nature of the offence, the position of the apologizer and religious/cultural influence. Some verbatim extracts of the interviewee responses are presented in the discussion of these themes.

### 7.7.1 Sincerity of the apologise

The sincerity of the person apologising was considered by most interviewees as one of the most important aspects on deciding on whether to accept, disagree, thank or deflect the apology. However, the judgement of whether an apology is sincere or not is context dependant and a matter of judgement on the part of the offended. Some interviewees explained for instance that:

Its always the question of whether the person is sincere or not. To me, this is very important. Its also a way to show whether you mean what you say. But definitely I judge the apology on whether its from the heart or not (interviewee 8)

You have to be genuine and mean what you say. You have offended me yes, that's part of life, but are you willing to say sorry genuinely? That's my concern. Are you sincere in your apology (interviewee 5)

The judgment of sincerity of apology has been acknowledged as dependent on a different factors such as the usage of words and emotions involved. Some interviewees highlighted the role of words in showing sincerity:

when a person is truly sorry, they is a way that I would expect the person to express that sincerity. Of course, the choice of words is very important. For example, the apologise, said 'I am really really deeply sorry', this shows to me that the person is out of words in showing that they are sorry (interviewee 9)

Word do carry a lot of impact. If you are sincere, you will definitely choose the appropriate words. Just saying 'I am sorry' wont be enough. How truly sorry are you? Show that you are sorry by the way you say it (interviewee 4)

The importance of emotions in showing sincerity in apologising was also acknowledged by interviewees. Some interviewees, for instance, stated that:

apologising is accepting responsibility and willing to make amends. It also means coming down from a position of pride to a position of humility. This becomes an emotional transition and for me as the offended, I can actually feel that humbleness in the speech itself (interviewee 2)

you don't have to cry to show that you are really sorry. But when apologising from the heart, emotions are involved and I do sense and feel that from the way the person is saying it (interviewee 6)

The perspective of the interviewees in this context can be related to the argument by (Searle & Searle, 1969) regarding the felicity conditions for speech acts. In particular, the felicity condition of sincerity in which the apologiser should be seen as showing regret (Owen, 1983; Thomas, 1995). The feelings/beliefs/emotions of the speaker are expressed in the apology acts (words) and therefore, affect the hearer's response. However, Holmes (1995) study highlights that challenging sincerity can thus, be perceived as a possible response strategy in the context where the sincerity of the apologiser is questioned.

### **7.7.2 Nature of the offence**

Similar to the theme identified in the choice of apology strategy, interviewees also highlighted in the case of response to apology that the nature of the offence had to be taken into consideration when responding to an apology. Some offences, for instance, were perceived to be of more

severity than others and thus, the response would differ. One interviewee, for instance, stated that:

There are some offences that you can ignore and really don't even expect the person to apologise. However, others go behind that and some kind of retribution is needed (Interviewee 3)

Similarly, it was highlighted that the nature of the offence also raised expectations regarding how the apology would be given and thus, the response to it. Interviewee 1 stated, for example, that:

I chose to inform the apologisee not to worry herself about it. It's a small thing to forget to bring a book or miss an appointment because of traffic. These things are common. However, when the person broke my car and had no driving licence, I was expecting more from them. A sorry would not be enough without offering to sort the problem (Interviewee 1)

In this case, not only is the nature of the offence, but also the expected action on the part of the apologisee to offer action as form of sincerity. However, other cases of offences would be perceived as trivial and response strategies such as deflecting would be expected. This is similar to Bennett & Earwalker (2001) argument that the extent of the desire to reject an apology is affected by the severity of the event. In addition, whether the apology was actually likely to be rejected was influenced, in part, by the degree of the offenders' responsibility for the event and, independently, by the severity of the event. In this respect, the severity of the offence, whether directly attributed to the action of the offender/apologisee has an influence on the response strategy adopted.

### 7.7.3 Position of the apologiser

The position of the apologiser was also identified as key in the choice of the response strategy adopted. This is in addition to other factors such as the nature of the offence and the perceived sincerity. One interviewee explained, for instance, that:

There are cases where you don't actually expect the person to apology even if they are wrong. They actually do it as some kind of courtesy to you even if they are wrong. In such cases, its in your interest to actually accept the apology or dismiss the offence (interviewee 10)

Similarly, interviewee 7 highlighted that some response to apology are much easier to give depending on the person who is apologising. The interviewee gave context in explaining that:

You see, when my friend apologises, I can easily reject the apology especially when I think she isn't sincere and when this is not the first time since I sort of know her well. However, when my boss apologises, accepting the apology is kind of automatic; its hard to reject the apology of your boss. (Interviewee 2)

In this case, the position of the apologiser makes a difference on what kind of response that the offended would offer. This is largely consistent with the literature that suggest that the social status or position of the both the offender and the offended matters in response strategies (Holmes, 1995; Hassani et al., 2011; Adrefiza & Jones, 2013; Hedayatnejad et al., 2015; Saleem et al., 2018). For instance, Hassani et al. (2011) found that refusal strategies were greatly impacted by the social status whereby more indirect refusal strategies were employed to someone of higher status while direct refusal strategies were used in equal or lower status situations. This is similar to Saleem et al. (2018) study that Pakistan English and Urdu speakers

employed more rejection strategies when responding to lower level interlocutors suggesting that Pakistan society is non-egalitarian.

#### **7.7.4 Religious/cultural influence**

Another key influence on the response strategies adopted was the role of culture or religion in the context of Saudi Arabia. This also explains the choice of some words used when responding as discussed in section 7.4.1. Thus, the first aspect in this theme was the use of religious terms such as inshallah (by the will of God) or alhamdulillah (thank God) in responding to apology acts. One interviewee explained that this showed concern for the apologiser than the apology itself.

You have to acknowledge that offences, mistakes, whatever you call it, come to everyone. In some cases, the impact or damage can be quite severe. You have to go beyond the offence/mistake to consider whether the person is actually okay or fine. That's humanity! (interviewee 10)

Similarly, interviewee 6 highlighted the importance of human life over materials in stating that:

...look, yes I care about the car and didn't like it that they damaged it and worse, had no driving licence. But the worst could have happened. The person could have died, and nothing is more important than human life (Interviewee 6)

Another aspect in this theme relates to cultural norms and upbringing, which also played a role in the response strategies that were adopted. One interviewee explained that:

its very rare that my parents would apologise to me. Its actually more polite for me to apologise to them even when they could be the one at fault. So, when a parent apologises to you, the natural instinct is to thank them that they can even do that and accept the apology. Again, you accept in such a way that you don't show that they are the ones at fault. That's respect. Its culture I guess (interviewee 7)

The socio-cultural influence on response speech acts have been demonstrated in several studies (Robinson, 2004; Hedayatnejad et al., 2015). What is observable in the case of Saudi Arabia, however, is the use of religious terms to deflect the severity of the offence and also show concern for the apologiser. This is also consistent with the literature that suggests positive politeness strategies in highly collective cultures (Wierzbicka, 1985; Mills & Kádár, 2011; Ogiermann, 2018) such as Saudi Arabia (Hofstede, 2012). In other words, there is a tendency to promote harmony and rebuild relationship through positive means which reduce the blame on the offender by distracting away from the offence.

## **7.8 Summary**

This chapter continued the analysis of the response strategies from chapter six. When the response strategies were examined statistically, the results showed that there is a statistically moderate negative relationship between acceptance and disagreeing, a statistically moderate relationship between acceptance and returning strategy. The other response strategies were not statistically significantly correlated. On the other hand, the differences in the utilisation of the response strategies were statistically significant. Acceptance and deflecting response strategies were often used together whilst explaining response strategy was often used with returning, thanking and religious amplifiers.

When the response strategies were analysed based on gender, the results showed that males employed returning, explaining and religious amplifiers than females. Relatively more females were willing to accept an apology and actually thank the apologiser than males. The statistical

analysis of the usage of the response strategies between males and females showed that there is a positive significant correlation in how the gender groups respond to apology. However, the observed differences in the usage of the response strategies are not statistically significantly different.

With respect to the use of response strategies based on age groups, the results showed that acceptance and disagreeing response strategies were used more by '20-29' years age groups whilst returning and explaining by 'under 20' years age group. The '50 and over' years old used more of thanking and religious amplifiers. When these differences were statistically analysed, the results showed that these were not statistically significant. However, the correlation in the usage of the response strategies was statistically significant between all age groups except '30-39' years age group and '20-29' years age group.

A further exploration of the response strategies based on social power and social distance revealed some differences, but these were not statistically significant. For instance, acceptance and returning response strategies were used more in situations of high social power whilst the explaining strategy. was used more in situations of high social distance. An exploration of the perspectives of the offended showed that the sincerity of the apologisee, nature of the offence, position of the apologisee and religious influence had an impact on the choice of the response strategy adopted in different situations. In the next chapter, the summary and conclusion of the project is given.

## **Chapter Eight: Conclusion**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter summarises and discusses the main findings of the study presented in chapter four and five with respect to the research objectives. The chapter starts with an overview of the research process, followed by a discussion of the key findings from the research. In order to highlight the achievement of the research aim, the key research findings from chapters four and five are discussed with respect to the research questions. In addition, the findings are discussed with reference to prior studies reviewed in chapter 2 so as to identify and highlight the contributions of this thesis. These findings represent crucial conclusions drawn from the analysis of both apology strategies and response strategies discussed in chapters four and five. Based on the research findings, the implications are highlighted, and contributions outlined. Further, the limitations of the present research are acknowledged, and the recommendations for future research presented.

### **8.2 Overview of the research process**

In order to investigate apology strategies and responses to apology employed by Saudi participants, this research adopted a mixed methods approach. The aim was to investigate the different apology strategies that are employed by Saudi participants when apologising. In addition, the study was interested in examining the different factors that could affect the apology strategies such as age, gender, social power and social distance. Further, the study was aimed at

investigating the response strategies that Saudis use for apology, highlighting also the significant factors which affect the choice of these responses.

The mixed methods approach employed discourse completing task (DCT), focus groups and semi-structured interviews. The epistemological perspective of the adopted mixed methods approach is grounded in speech act theory which provides an extension to the philosophy of language (Austin, 1962; Searle & Searle, 1969). In this respect, words used in social interactions are perceived to do actions rather than only transferring meaning (Searle, 1975). The use of focus aided the development and refinement of the DCT. It was through the focus groups that key apology strategies and responses to apology were identified. Further, development of the 15 DCT situations was aided by the understanding obtained from the focus groups with the context specific inclination to Saudi Arabia. The semi-structured interviews were adopted in order to obtain the perspectives of participants on some underlying factors for the choice in apology and response strategies. Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis processes were used. Microsoft Excel and SPSS were utilised in quantitative data analysis whilst thematic analysis and text analysis were used for the qualitative data analysis. The findings are presented and discussed in chapters four and chapter five. The key findings are summarised in the next section with reference to the research objectives.

### **8.3 Key findings**

The key findings of the research with particular reference to each research objective are discussed below. These findings are also referenced to prior studies in order to show any similarities or differences and thus, highlight the contribution of this research project.

### **8.3.1 RQ1: Apology strategies employed by Saudi adults**

The first research question was ‘what types of apology strategies do Saudi adults employ in different contexts, considering, for example, social distance, power relationships and seriousness of the addressed offence)?

The study found that the frequently used apology strategies are expression of apology (IFID), offer of repair and explanation of account. The highest occurrence of apology strategies was offer of repair (26.5%), an expression of regret (25.8%) and explanation of account (23.3%). These three apology strategies were also identified as statistically homogeneous, occurring across all 15 DCT situations. Thus, the results suggest that Saudi participants are more inclined to offer repair when apologising. In addition, Saudi participants prefer to explain or account of what happened when trying to apologise. In apologising also, there is a high likelihood of expressing regret or showing regret in the apology speech acts. These findings are consistent with other studies e.g. (Alhojailan, 2019) that showed that offer of repair and explanation or account were frequently employed by Saudi Arabian speakers. However, comparatively, other studies found that IFID was the most used apology strategy (Bagherinejad & Jadidoleslam, 2015; Alsulayyi, 2016; Alhojailan, 2019) while acknowledging of responsibility was identified by Banikalef et al. (2015) in the context of Jordanian Arabic.

Differences in apology strategies utilisation were also found between males and females which were statistically significantly different. For instance, females expressed more concern for the

hearer than males. On the other hand, males were more inclined to express embarrassment and offer repair than females.

The study also showed differences in the employment of apology strategies based on age groups. The 'under 20' years old group employed more apology strategies related to lack of intent, justifying the hearer, denial of the responsibility, concern for the hearer, promise of forbearance, pride and ignorance and blame something else. This is contrary to the age group '20-29' years which was highest in an expression of regret, explanation of account, explicit self-blame, offer of repair and religious terms. The participants over 50 years old employed mostly an offer of apology, a request for forgiveness, an expression of embarrassment, an offer of repair and promise of forbearance. The age group '30-39' years old used the expression of embarrassment, expression of self-deficiency and lack of intent apology strategies proportionally more than other apology strategies. The age group '40-49' years, on the other hand, employed relatively more of a request for forgiveness, concern for the hearer and promise of forbearance more than other apology strategies. Whilst these differences were observed, they were not statistically significantly different which is contrary to studies that suggest the significance of age in influencing speech acts (Trosborg, 1987; Hussein, 1995; Mills & Kádár, 2011).

The study also revealed that an offer of apology, explicit self-blame, expression of self-deficiency, denial of the responsibility, promise of forbearance and blame something else were most used in situations of high social power. The apology strategy justifying the hearer, on the other hand, was only used in high social power situations. On the contrary, the apology strategies of an expression of regret, lack of intent, expression of embarrassment, self-dispraise, concern

for the hearer and use of religious terms were frequently employed in situations of equal social power. However, whilst there was a statistically significant correlation between the social power categories, the observed differences in the employment of apology strategies were not statistically significantly different. Similarly, whilst differences were observed in the utilisation of apology strategies based on social distance, for instance, situations associated with high social distance had high utilisation of an offer of apology, explicit self-blame, self-dispraise, concern for the hearer and blame something else, these differences were not statistically significantly different. These results are inconsistent to several studies that suggest the importance of social distance and social power in the choices of apology strategies employed (Waldvogel, 2007; Binasfour, 2014; Al-Khaza'leh & Ariff, 2015; Almegren, 2018; Qari, 2019). While these differences have been found in this study when compared to previous studies, it is important to acknowledge that this study has performed statistical analysis (in addition to non-statistical analysis) which represent a methodological difference. Further, limitations that exist in identifying and categorising the interlocutors based on contextual factors (social distance and social power) might also contribute to the difference in the results obtained in this study as compared to previous studies.

### **8.3.2 RQ2: Response strategies used by Saudi adults**

The second research question was ‘what types of response strategies do Saudi adults use in answering to the apology strategies in research question 1?’. The study revealed that the most used responses to apology are deflecting (37%) and acceptance (32%). The acceptance and deflecting response strategies were often used together whilst explaining response strategy was

often used with returning, thanking and religious amplifiers. Thus, the results suggest that in responding to apologies, Saudi participants often attempt to reduce the severity of the offence before accepting the offence. The least used response strategy was the returning strategy.

These results are largely consistent with the extant literature that suggest that apologies are often accepted (Owen, 1983; Adrefiza, 1995; Bennett & Earwalker, 2001) . However, inconsistent with this literature is the highest utilisation of the deflecting response strategy in this study, for instance, found that apologies across languages are rarely rejected, but most often accepted. Thus, the most preferred response to apologies in the literature is acceptance or forgiveness category (Adrefiza, 1995; Holmes, 1995; Bennett & Earwalker, 2001; Robinson, 2004) which is contrary to the findings in this research project.

Differences in response strategies utilisation based on gender were observed, such as males used more religious amplifiers when apologising than females. Also, relatively more females were willing to accept an apology and actually thank the apologiser than males. However, the observed differences were not statistically significantly different.

The analysis of response strategies based on age groups showed that the acceptance and disagreeing response strategies were used more by '20-29' years age groups whilst returning and explaining by 'under 20' years age group. The '50 and over' years old used more of thanking and religious amplifiers. When these differences were statistically analysed, the results showed that these were not statistically significant. However, the correlation in the usage of the response strategies was statistically significant between all age groups except '30-39' years age group and

‘20-29’ years age group.

An examination of the response strategies based on social power and social distance found that differences existing based on these context-external factors. For instance, acceptance and returning response strategies were used more in situations of high social power whilst the explaining strategy was used more in situations of high social distance. However, these differences were not statistically significant contrary to other studies that highlighted the significant of these context-external factors in speech acts (Meier, 1998; Ahearn, 2012; Kashkouli & Eslamirasekh, 2013; Majeed & Janjua, 2014; Qari, 2019). Methodological differences exist with these studies which might explain the inconsistency. For instance, Qari (2019) employed only 3 DCT situations and had 80 participants. No statistical analysis was performed in her study, similar to Majeed & Janjua (2014).

Further, the study found that from the perspective of the apologisers/offenders, the nature of the offence, as captured by its perceived severity, was a key factor that influenced the apology strategy. The importance of the nature of the offence is consistent with the general argument in the literature regarding the severity of the offence (Gonda, 2001; Kim et al., 2004; Slocum, 2013; Banikalef et al., 2015). For instance, Kim et al. (2004) argued that the type of offence and its physical and psychological impact determine the approach of apologising, the level of elaboration and the type of apology. The position of the offended also mattered in how the apology was delivered. In this respect, the study highlights that the social status of the offended could have an influence on the perceived effectiveness of the apology adopted. This perspective from the apologiser is consistent with the extant literature that suggests that social status/social

standing has an influence on the effectiveness of apology strategies (Al-Musallam, 2016; Almegren, 2018; El-Dakhs, 2018).

In addition, the study revealed that the use of words and also cultural influences have an impact on the perceived relevance of the apology from the perspective of the apologiser. Apology intensifiers, impacted also by cultural upbringing, had an influence on the perceived relevance and significance of the apology. The perception of the impact of apology intensifiers on the effectiveness of apologies has been widely evidenced in the literature (Al-Hami, 1993; Hatfield & Hahn, 2011; Tahir & Pandian, 2016; Haugh & Chang, 2019) with intensification performed through adverbials or repetition or a combination of adverbials and repetitions. However, specific to this study was the observed use of religious terms (e.g. inshallah, Allah yesahel).

Further, from the perspective of the offended, the relevance and significance of the apology was judged based on the perceived sincerity of the apologiser. The nature of the offence, the position of the apologiser and cultural/religious impact had also an influence on the receptiveness of the apology. The sincerity of the offender has been identified in the literature as one of the felicity conditions for speech acts (Searle & Searle, 1969; Owen, 1983; Thomas, 1995). Similar to the perspective of the offender, the offended also highlighted the role of social status and cultural impact in influencing the receptiveness of the apology. With regards to the social status, this is largely consistent with the literature that suggest that the social status or position of both the offender and the offended matters in response strategies (Holmes, 1995; Hassani et al., 2011; Adrefiza & Jones, 2013; Hedayatnejad et al., 2015; Saleem et al., 2018). Further, with respect to cultural influence, the study highlights that religious terms are often used to deflect the severity

of the offence and also to show concern for the apologiser. This is consistent with the literature that suggests positive politeness strategies in highly collective cultures (Wierzbicka, 1985; Mills & Kádár, 2011; Ogiermann, 2018) such as Saudi Arabia (Hofstede, 2012).

### **8.3.3 RQ3: Contextual and social variables that influence apology strategies and responses to apology**

The third research question was ‘what contextual variables (e.g. social power and social distance) and social variables (e.g. gender, age) may influence apology strategies and the responses to apology?’

An investigation of the apology strategies based on gender found that relatively more females than males used an expression of regret, an explanation of account, a lack of intent, self-dispraise, denial of the responsibility, concern for the hearer and religious term. On the other hand, relatively more males employed the apology strategies of a request for forgiveness, explicit self-blame, expression of self-deficiency, expression of embarrassment and offer of repair. Pride and ignorance apology strategy was only used by female Saudi participants. These differences in apology strategies utilisation between males and females were statistically significantly different. These results are largely consistent with other studies that show that gender is an important contextual factor that affects the choice of apology strategies (Gonzales et al., 1990; Bataineh & Bataineh, 2006; Bagherinejad & Jadidoleslam, 2015; Alsulayyi, 2016; Qari, 2019; Alhojailan, 2019).

Further, with respect to response strategies, the study found that relatively more females employed acceptance, disagreeing, deflecting and thanking response strategies. On the contrary, more males used the returning, explaining and religious amplifier response strategies. In addition, the highest percentage difference (28%) was observed between male and female usage of the acceptance response strategy. Thus, it can be construed that relatively more females were willing to accept the apology than men. These results are consistent with Cai (2012) study that showed that female participants used more explicit and implicit acceptance response strategies than males. This was also observed in the case of Jordanians in Al Rousan (2016) study that found that females used agreement strategies more frequently than males. This is also consistent with other studies that suggest females are more accepting and polite than males (Brown, 1980; Golato, 2003; Holmes, 2008). However, this is inconsistent with Adrefiza & Jones (2013) study that did not find any marked differences in apology response strategies of Australian English and Bahasa Indonesia. This research also revealed that the relative difference between males and females in their use of the deflecting response strategy was low. This suggests that both males and females are more willing to deflect or lower the severity of the offence. The observation of the use of this response strategy is also consistent with Heidari et al. (2009) study on Iranian male and female use of response strategies.

However, the differences observed in the utilisation of response strategies between males and females were found not to be statistically significantly different as compared to the differences in the use of apology strategies which were statistically significantly different.

#### **8.4 Research contribution and implications of the findings**

This study has made a theoretical contribution in applying speech act theory to a non-western language and cultural context. Speech act theory and politeness theory have mainly been applied in the western cultural contexts such as United States and United Kingdom. The study contributes in exploring speech acts in the context of Saudi Arabia, a context which has received limited attention in the previous linguistic studies. Further, the influence of contextual and social variables on the utilisation of apology strategies and response strategies have been investigated. This has contributed to the empirical studies of how speech act of apology are employed locally and globally (Jung, 1994; Sugimoto, 1997; Tamanaha, 2003). As discussed previously that there are cultural-specific apologies, such as the use of religious terms as upgraders in apology, this makes the contextual contribution on Saudi Arabia significant.

In examining the apology strategies employed by Saudi, this study found that offer of repair, an expression of regret and explanation of account are the most used apology strategies. In addition, these apology strategies are homogenous and frequently used together. The implication of this finding in the respect of Saudi participants is that whilst expression of regret reflects an essential condition for apologising, it is not perceived as sufficient in the context of Saudi participants. Expression of regret for an offence occupies only one part to the process of restoring a relationship or repairing the damage to the relationship. It's essential that the offender also shows sincerity in apologising by offering to repair the damage that the offence has caused to the relationship. In addition, offering an explanation for the offence in apologising is an important

aspect in the context of Saudi participants which accompanies the offer of repair. These apology strategies can be perceived as indirect apology strategies (Searle, 1975; Fraser, 1981).

Further, the study found that the frequently used response strategies are deflecting and acceptance. These response strategies also frequently occurred together. Thus, in the context of Saudi participants, there is an inclination to reduce the severity of the offence. This could be construed as a face-saving mechanism aimed at making the offender less comfortable. The deflecting and then acceptance of apology can also be related to the desire to reduce the inclination of feeling guilt and shame by the offender. Thus, by reducing the severity of the offence, it becomes a natural mechanism to remove feelings of guilt and shame.

Further, the study has highlighted that sincerity of the offender/apologiser is perceived as important. In this respect, the use of religious terms and other intensifiers should be constructed as efforts to demonstrate the sincerity of the offender. Thus, religious terms as used in speech acts need to be understood as cultural constructs that are meant express the level of sincerity in the apology speech acts. This has important implications as non-native speakers should acknowledge the usage of religious terms as not literally showing the religious standing of the speaker but the speaker's attempt to show the seriousness and sincerity attached to the speech act.

In addition to the theoretical contribution, this study makes a methodological contribution by utilising three research instruments, namely, focus groups, Discourse Completion Tasks and semi-structured interviews. The focus group allows the research to validate the Discourse

Completion task and contribute to the design of the research study. The interviews contribute to in-depth analysis and interpretation of the research findings. The combination of these research instruments has rarely been used in the previous studies. Most studies (e.g. Al Ali, 2012; Al-Sulayyi, 2016; El-Dakhs, 2018) tend to use one data collection method, namely Discourse Completion Tasks, or two methods, Discourse Completion Tasks and interview. As far as I am aware of, very few studies have used focus groups to validate the research instrument, as in this study

Further, while other studies have focussed on one aspect of speech act (such as apology only), this study has investigated both the apology speech act and the response to apology. As far as I am aware, the combination of both apology and response to apology has rarely been used in linguistic and pragmatics research. The study showed that apology strategies and response strategies are highly influenced by gender. In the context of apology strategies, the use of apology strategies between males and females were statistically significantly different. The implication of this finding is that particular consideration needs to be taken into account in apologising to either males or females. On the contrary, responding to an apology does not significantly matter in the context of gender. Similarly, the utilisation of apology strategies and response strategies based on age group and social status (social distance and social power) were not statistically significantly different. The implication of these findings is that age group and social status do not significantly influence the choices of the strategies. As such, instead of focussing on the age group and social status when apologising, consideration should be directed at the nature of the offence and the sincerity of the apologisee.

## 8.5 Limitations of the study

There are limitations of the study that need to be acknowledged which might impact on the applicability of the findings to other contexts, despite every effort made to make the research project robust and relevant.

There is firstly, a methodological limitation that arises in capturing speech acts through utilising the DCT technique. As discussed in the literature, the adoption of the DCT is based on the argument that the data capture would relatively be similar to naturally occurring data as supported by literature (Billmyer & Varghese, 2000; Golato, 2003) and also the administrative advantages (such as enabling to yield large quantities of comparable and systematically varied speech act data) that make the DCT a valuable and effective data collection method. However, there is an inherent limitation that the method does not effectively capture the dynamic discourse features that occur in real-life situations such as conversational structure, turn taking and pragmatic features (Barron, 2003). The DCT was adopted to indirectly mirror the natural speech but recognisably cannot fully capture the cognitive processes that occur in natural speech. Thus, despite the merits of the process, its acknowledged in this study that DCTs do not promote the turn-taking and negotiation strategies found in natural conversations (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 1993) and thus could “obscure the sequential and co-constructed nature of talk” (Turnbull, 2001, p. 35).

In addition, this study focussed on actual acts of apologising or responding to apology as expressed in words. The expressions of apology and response to apology in words made it

possible to identify the strategies used in different types of situations involving varied levels of severity, offence types and familiarity of interlocutors. However, the expressions in words limits the capture of another aspect of response to apology involving ‘silence’. Holmes (1995), for instance, argues that apology responses can be expressed in different ways which range from silence to different other linguistics expressions. In this study, the apology response of silence, which could imply ‘rejection’ or ‘refusal’ (Holmes, 1995; Robinson, 2004) was not captured.

In addition to silence, the study has not captured other non-verbal speech acts. These non-verbal acts such as gestures, facial expression, tone of voice all have an aspect to play in influencing the speech acts in naturally-occurring communication between interlocutors (Válková, 2013; Domaneschi et al., 2017). The comprehension of speech acts depends on both verbal and non-verbal signals (Searle, 1975; Dresner & Herring, 2010; Esposito et al., 2010). Thus, non-verbal signals such as gestures (movement of the hands and body for example) or postural signs (folding arms for example) all have a role in communication and speech acts. This, however, was not captured in this research project.

The literature that draws on politeness theory argues that apology responses are highly face-threatening acts which place the speaker in a difficult situation (Holmes, 1995; Lakoff, 2001; Mills, 2003; Adrefiza & Jones, 2013). The analysis of speech acts in this study, however, did not focus on how the interlocutors addressed face-threatening behaviour. Thus, whilst the deflecting response strategy found as the most frequently used response strategy could be identified within the context of politeness theory as a face-saving act, the focus of the study was the apology and

response strategies and how contextual and social variables affected these in the context of Saudi Arabia.

The study has identified the importance of the sincerity condition in influencing the response to apology from the perspective of the offended. However, in the identification and categorisation of the response strategies, the strategy of challenging sincerity has not been sufficiently explored. Holmes (1995), for instance, identified the strategy of challenging sincerity as a response strategy. This research project, nonetheless, has shown that the use of intensifiers and religious terms demonstrates an aspect of sincerity from the perspective of the apologiser.

Another type of limitation concerns contextual factors and the analysis of apology acts and responses. As discussed in the previous chapters, categorising the contextual factors (e.g. social distance and social power) can potentially be problematic and can be considered as subjective to an extent. The use of focus group should have helped to mitigate the subjectivity of these categorisations. The categorisation was necessary in order to operationalize speech act analysis. Already in 1987, Brown & Levinson (1987) highlighted that such overlaps exists and that there will be problems in operationalising the categories.

Sampling is a further limitation, applicable to both the pilot focus group and DCT data collection. That is, firstly, the sample is not fully representative of the population of Saudi Arabia, and secondly, the numbers of participants are not equal among the age groups. The focus group sample was composed of Saudi students who are studying in Higher Education in the United Kingdom. This is only a narrow section of the Saudi population. Additionally, the DCT

sample of 276 participants (136 male and 140 female) from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia does not quite match gender distribution in the Saudi population, which consists of 55.2% of males and 44.8% of females (World Bank, 2021), and it also has a less varied age structure.<sup>9</sup> A further issue could be that use of a snowball sampling method depends very much on the social network of the participants.

Another area of limitation is related to the analysis of commonly used words using AntConc, as discussed in sections 5.5 and 7.5,. As the software does not support Arabic, the analysis was carried out in English. This may affect the results due to the translation process (from Arabic to English) and some meanings may be lost through the translation.

While this research has made methodological contributions by performing statistical analysis, there is, however, a potential limitation that arises in moving from qualitative data analysis (speech acts of words) to quantitative analysis of apology and response strategies. The choice in applying parametric or non-parametric quantitative analysis techniques could be considered as part of the limitations of this study because of the underlying assumptions of each approach. Parametric tests have been used based on the assumption of independence of the population participants in their choices of words. However, other properties of the population distribution from which the sample is drawn could not be determined such as the normal distribution of the population data. In applying Pearson's Correlation and ANOVA test, there was also an assumption that data has a linear relationship (Rietveld & Van Hout, 2010). For instance, that the

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<sup>9</sup> The age structure of Saudi Arabia is different to the DCT sample participants in this study. The Saudi age structure is 0-14 years is 24.84%, 15-24 years is 15.38%, 25-54 years is 50.2%, 55-64 years is 5.95% and 65 years and above is 3.63% (CIA Factbook, 2021).

direction of apologising or responding to apology is identifiable. In other words, there is an identifiable pattern or relationship that could be revealed through statistical analysis. There are limitations in such assumptions of linearity of the data.

## **8.6 Suggestions for future research**

Drawing on the limitations identified in this research project, some areas for further research could be explored. Firstly, the use of a mixed methods research approach employing discourse completing task (DCT), focus groups and semi-structured interviews helped to improve the reliability of the data collection process. However, further research could adopt other methodological choices for capturing speech acts. Other techniques could include role play, self-assessment and recordings of naturally occurring talk-in-interactions. With respect to recording naturally occurring talk, Golato (2003) argues that this could enable the researcher to study how language is organised and realised in natural settings.

Future research could also consider the role of non-verbal expressions in speech acts. In the case of non-verbal illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs). Domaneschi et al. (2017), for instance, acknowledges that more literature on non-verbal IFIDs is needed to complement the rich literature produced from research in linguistics and psycholinguistics that has focussed on linguistic IFIDS (i.e. semantic, syntactic and prosodical IFIDS). Thus, future research could focus on capturing the non-verbal actions in speech acts in order to produce more holistic understanding of speech acts as close to natural occurrences.

Also, future research could explore the use of silence or smiling as possible response strategy and also the socio-cultural implications of such responses. This is particularly significant given that such actions might be construed differently in different cultural contexts (Holmes, 1995; Robinson, 2004). For instance, Farashaiyan & Amirkhiz (2011) found that silence and avoidance of responses are valued more than objective and rational excuses in the case of Malaysia culture. Jandt (2004, p. 116) also argues that “eastern societies such as India, China, and Japan have valued silence more than western societies because silence is a sign of interpersonal sensitivity, mutual respect, personal dignity, affirmation, and wisdom” contrary to most western societies which perceive silence as a “lack of attention and initiative”. Thus, exploring this response strategy in the context of Saudi Arabia could be enlightening.

In addition, future research could investigate whether there are any distinct differences in the utilisation of apology and response strategies across different regions of Saudi Arabia and also between different versions of Arabic language use between countries. Further, future research could focus on the number of words used in apology or response strategies, including how the words are used in different situational and social contexts.

Future research could also utilise other statistical analytical approaches. This research applied parametric tools. Future research could highlight and examine the appropriateness of non-parametric techniques (e.g. Spearman correlation, Wilcoxon Rank sum Test, Kruskal Wallis Test) with supportive assumptions.

The study participants in the focus group were mostly educated. As such, the Saudis who are less educated (i.e. not receiving bachelor's degree) may be under-represented. Future studies could consider Saudis who are less educated than the participants in this study. In addition, the future research can also consider to adopt other probability sampling methods (e.g. systematic sampling) to represent the Saudi population.

## **8.7 Summary**

This study was aimed at investigating the apology strategies and responses to apology in the Arabic country context of Saudi Arabia. In investigating the apology strategies and responses to apology, the study makes an empirical, methodological and theoretical contribution to linguistic studies. The study has shown that speech acts are context specific, hence, the findings in the case of Saudi Arabic language show both differences and similarities as well as distinctive characteristics (e.g. use of religious terms). The study has also shown the importance of both context-internal and context-external factors on apology and response speech acts. The study, in this respect, highlights the need to take into consideration the particularities of the context under study.

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## Appendix

### Appendix 1.0: Summary of selected studies on Arabic countries

Author (Year)	Country	Aim	Methodology	Key findings
Qari (2019)	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and United Kingdom	Investigate the main cultural differences between Saudi and British participants making apologies with a focus on the role of the gender of the addressee in the selection of apology strategies in gender-segregated vs. coed societies.	Written questionnaires were used to collect data from 80 participants: 20 Saudi males, 20 Saudi females, 20 British males and 20 British females. Three apology situations were presented; in the first two situations the hearer (H) was a male, in the third, the H was a female. Data was analyzed based on Brown and Levinson's (B & L) politeness theory and according to the Cross Cultural Speech Act Research Project (CCSARP) apology strategy coding system.	Generally, the results of this study indicated differences between the Saudi and the British apology strategy selections. Moreover, in particular, there were significant differences between the mean scores of apology situations where the gender of the addressee was a male.
Al-Megren (2018)	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Research aims to find out the nonverbal communication tools used by the students with Arabic background which they use while talking in English to their counter parts. The aim of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of English teaching techniques used by the student whose mother tongue was Arabic. This research was particularly focused to find out the apology technique learned by such	The research uses Discourse Completion Test (DCT) techniques (Cohen, Olshtain and Rosenstein (1986) and the Apology Introspection Questionnaire (AIQ) (Ismail, 1998).	The findings in this respect revealed that the direct apology was effectively used in Arabic and English languages. However, there were some situations where indirect apologies were found effective in both languages as well as a mix of direct and indirect apologies was also used. The study proved that grammar, syntax, and spelling were not the only tools to articulate an apology.

		students.		
El-Dakhs (2018)	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Study examines the apologetic behavior of Saudi learners of English in a foreign language learning context. The study also investigates the influence of language exposure, gender, distance and dominance on the learners' apologies.	Discourse Completion Test was completed by (1) 411 Saudi learners of English, (2) 42 native speakers of Saudi Arabic and (3) 47 native speakers of English. The groups of native speakers provided the norms of apologetic behavior in the learners' first (L1) and second (L2) languages.	The results showed the Saudi participants' preference for face-saving strategies to both the speaker and hearer, and a positive influence for increased L2 exposure on the learners' pragmatic competence. The variables of gender, distance and dominance also proved influential but to varying degrees.
Al-Sulayyi (2016)	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)	Examines the apology strategies used by 30 Saudi EFL teachers in Najran, paying special attention to variables such as social distance and power and offence severity. The study also delineates gender differences in the respondents' speech as opposed to studies that only examined speech act output by native and non-native speakers of English.	30 Saudi EFL teachers participated. The study employs a Discourse Completion Task (DCT) that consists of 10 situations designed to test how the respondents would react if they imagine that they belong to different types of social status whether higher, lower or equal. In addition, social distance and power have been taken into consideration in designing the ten situations included in the test used in this study.	The results reveal that Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) is the most used apology strategy by the Saudi respondents followed by downgrading responsibility (DR), upgrader, offer of repair, taking on responsibility and then verbal redress. The results also reveal that gender has a great impact on the use of apology strategies in various ways. For instance, the IFID strategy and the upgrader strategy are used by males more than their female counterparts, whereas females

				use the DR strategy more than their male counterparts. It has been argued that some of the respondents' answers to the test were influenced by their mother tongue, as reported in previous studies conducted on apology strategies.
Al-Laheebi and Yalla (2014)	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA)	Examined the apologies of 370 Saudi Arabian undergraduate students proportionally selected from the five regional universities of the Kingdom to determine the types and sequencing of strategies they used most often to apologize.	The study relied on ethnographic observation and a version of the Discourse Completion Test "DCT," written in Standard Arabic, that contained 12 hypothetical situations in which a student had committed violations involving people of different social parameters.	The results revealed that apologies in Saudi Arabian culture typically shift responsibility away from the offender as Saudis do not like to apologize outright.
Al-Sobh (2013)	Jordan	This study aimed at finding and analyzing the apology expressions used by Jordanian university students. It also aimed at exploring the apology strategies Arabic native speakers used in different situations.	The participants of the study were eight university English majors at Irbid National University. Six Situations were prepared, distributed, then collected and analyzed.	The findings showed that the apology strategies used were apology and regret, explanation, offer of repair, equal – equal, low high and responsibility.
Abu-Humei (2013)	Iraqi	Study compares apology strategies of Iraqi EFL university students along with that of the American native speakers of English in terms of gender and status	As such, a discourse completion test has been designed and applied to Iraqi EFL university students and Americans native speakers of English.	The results show that Iraqi EFL male learners use more strategies with people of higher level, while the American males use more strategies with people of lower position. Moreover, unlike the Americans, Iraqi females use

				more apology strategies than Iraqi males.
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## Appendix 2.0: Informed Consent Form (English Version)

### Informed Consent Form

You are invited to participate in this research study. The following information is provided in order to help you to make an informed decision whether or not to participate. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to ask.

The purpose of this study is to investigate into the apology strategies and responses adopted by Saudis. If you agree to participate, you will fill out a background questionnaire, and a Discourse Completion Task (DCT). The whole process will take about 20 minutes of your time. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time. Upon your request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence. Any information you provide in this study will be confidential. The information obtained in the study may be published in academic journals or presented at scientific meetings, but your identity will be kept strictly confidential and your name remains anonymous. There is no known risk associated with this research. If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement below.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

#### **Voluntary Consent Form:**

I have read and understand the information on this consent form. I consent to participate in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this Informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3.0A: Discourse Completion Task (English Version)

### Dear Participant:

The purpose of this study is an investigation into the apology strategies and responses adopted by Saudis. This is not a test; there is no right or wrong answer. There are 15 situations in this questionnaire. Please read each situation carefully, and imagine that you are in the same situation. Then, respond naturally using the same language you would use in your daily interaction as if you are talking to a person in front of you. Please fill part (A) and leave part (B) to be filled by another participant, (the response).

If you have any questions about any of the situations, please don't hesitate to ask .

Thank you for your time.

### **Background Questions:**

Name (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Gender:        Male         Female

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Example**

You missed an appointment with your dentist.

What would you say to him/ her?.....

**A- *I'm so sorry! I completely forgot about the appointment as I was busy studying for my final exams.***

**B- (the response of the dentist) *It's alright we can reschedule it again.***

### **Situation 1**

**You have been helping your neighbour, a high school student, with his/her studies for two months now. Your next meeting with him/her is Monday evening. You have an important report on Tuesday and you want to postpone your appointment with your neighbour till Wednesday evening. You say...**

A \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

### **Situation 2**

**You borrowed a book from a friend. As you were walking in the rain, you dropped the book and it got damaged by the rainwater. What would you say to that friend?**

A \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

**Situation 3**

**Imagine you have a daughter. You promised to buy her a doll on your way back from work. You forgot to buy the doll. The girl was extremely disappointed, and she started crying as she saw you back home empty-handed. What would you say to her**

A \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

**Situation 4**

**You are a university student. You borrowed a book from your tutor and promised to return it next day. You remember that you have forgotten to bring the book back only when you meet the tutor two days later. What are you going to tell him/her?**

A \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

**Situation 5**

**While travelling, you placed your heavy bag on the bus shelf. The bus suddenly stopped, and the bag fell on a passenger. What would you say to that passenger?**

A \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

**Situation 6**

**You borrowed a friend's car without telling him/her that you do not have a valid driving licence. You had an accident on the road and the car was badly damaged. How are you going to apologise to your disappointed and angry friend?**

A \_\_\_\_\_

---

B \_\_\_\_\_

**Situation 7**

**You are the manager in a restaurant. One of the customers is extremely angry because he thinks he has been overcharged and cheated. You realise that you have given him the bill that belongs to another customer on the adjacent table. How are you going to handle the situation?**

A \_\_\_\_\_

---

B \_\_\_\_\_

**Situation 8**

**While in the marketplace, you accidentally step on a lady's toe. What are you going to say to her?**

A \_\_\_\_\_

---

B \_\_\_\_\_

**Situation 9**

**You have been abusive towards a close friend and you even used strong language and threatened him/her. That friend is extremely upset and hurt. How are you going to approach him/her?**

A \_\_\_\_\_

---

B \_\_\_\_\_

**Situation 10**

**You have a job interview with a bank manager. Because of heavy traffic on the road, you arrive 15 minutes late for the interview. What are you going to say to the manager who has been waiting for you?**

A \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

**Situation 11**

**You have a job. You borrowed some money from a work colleague and promised to pay it back within a week. Nearly two weeks have passed and you have not been able to pay back your debt. What are you going to tell that colleague?**

A \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

**Situation 12**

**You are an employee in a company and your new manager asked you to write a report. You did not submit the report on the due date. This is the first time you missed a due date. A few days later, he asked you to come to his office to discuss this issue. You are in her office now. What would you say?**

A \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

**Situation 13**

**You invite your friend to your house. After a while, you realised that you have given him/her a cup of coffee with sugar, despite the fact that she/he is diabetic. What would you say?**

A \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

**Situation 14**

**You are a mother/father and you have two kids. Your husband's /wife's friend invites you to their new house for the first time. You are sitting now in the guest room with some other guests. All the children are playing around the house, and suddenly your younger son breaks an expensive vase. The host's wife comes to see what is happening and says, "Oh, no, this was a gift from my sister." What would you say?**

A \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

**Situation 15**

**You are a teacher at a college, and you have an appointment with one of your students today. You are going to revise a paper that she is going to present in the class. You missed the appointment because you had to attend an urgent meeting. A day later, the student comes to your office. What would you say?**

A \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU

## Appendix 3.0B: Discourse Completion Task (Arabic Version)

### Informed Consent Form/Arabic Version

عزيمتي المشاركة / عزيمتي المشارك

انت مدعو للمشاركة في هذه الدراسة البحثية. الهدف الرئيسي من الدراسة هو استقصاء استراتيجيات الاعتذار والرد عليها من حيث السلوك الخطابى بين السعوديين. ان مشاركتكم في هذه الدراسة طوعية، حيث انه بإمكانك عدم المشاركة او الانسحاب في أي وقت . اذا وافقت وقررت المشاركة فسوف تقوم بتعبئة الاستبانة و التوقيع على الاقرار أدناه ، اضافة الى تعبئة بعض المعلومات المتعلقة بسيرتك الذاتية وكل المعلومات ستكون سرية و ستستخدم لغرض البحث العلمى فقط. مشاركتكم محل التقدير و الاحترام و نتائج الدراسة قد تكون مفيدة لك مستقبلا و للباحثين في المجتمع السعودى.

مع خالص شكرى و امتنانى

### اقرار

أقر بأننى قرأت و وافقت وعلى علم كامل بكل المعلومات المدرجة في هذا الاقرار. كما اننى أعى تماما بان أي معلومات أقدمها ستكون موضع السرية التامة ولى الحق الانسحاب أي وقت من الدراسة.

الاسم: \_\_\_\_\_

التوقيع: \_\_\_\_\_

التاريخ: \_\_\_\_\_

## Discourse Completion Task/English Version

عزيزتي المشاركة / عزيزي المشارك

تقوم الباحثة بعمل دراسة تحت عنوان " استراتيجيات الاعتذار المستخدمة بين السعوديين و الردود عليها" كجزء لنيل درجة الدكتوراه من جامعة نوتنجهام ترنت في بريطانيا. الاسئلة التي بين يديكم ليست اختبار ولا يوجد اجابة صحيحة أو خاطئة. هنالك خمسة عشر موقف في هذه الاستبانة. فضلا قراءتها بتمعن وتخيل انك انت الشخص الذي تعرض لهذا الموقف ثم اكتب اجابتك في الخانة A مستخدما لغتك الطبيعية اليومية (و ليس اللغة العربية الرسمية) . بعد ذلك اترك الخانة B ليتم تعبئتها من قبل مشارك آخر والعكس. و بما ان مصداقية النتائج تعتمد على اجاباتكم ، ارجو توخي الدقة والموضوعية عند كتابة الاجابات. علما بان أي من هذه البيانات ستكون سرية و ستستخدم لغرض البحث العلمي فقط.

مشاركتم محل التقدير و الاحترام

### البيانات الشخصية

الاسم ( اختياري): -----

الجنس:  أنثى  ذكر

العمر: أقل من 20  20-30  30-40  40-50  فوق ال 50

### مثال:

الموقف: تخلفت عن موعد طبيب الأسنان... ماذا ستقول له؟  
A -أنا مره آسف يا دكتور، نسيت الموعد لأنني كنت مشغول/مشغولة بالذاكرة للاختبارات النهائية

B - (رد الطبيب) مو مشكلة نعمل لك موعد ثاني

### الموقف 1

تساعد جارك طالب/ة المرحلة الثانوية منذ شهرين لأن. موعدكم القادم مساء يوم الاثنين القادم وأنت لديك كتابة تقرير مهم وتقديمه للعمل يوم الثلاثاء و تريد/ين تأجيل الموعد مع الجار للأربعاء . ستقول/ين له....

A

B

### الموقف 2

استعرت كتاب من لصديقك / صديقتك . وانت تمشي/ن في الطريق والمطر ينهمر ، سقط منك الكتاب وتلف بسبب مياه الأمطار. ماذا ستقول لصديقك / صديقتك؟

A

B

### الموقف 3

تخيل/ي ان لديك طفلة و وعدتها بشراء دمية عند عودتك من العمل. نسيت تماما ان تشتريها وأبنتك أصيبت بخيبة الأمل وشرعت بالبكاء عندما رأتك راجع/ة بيدين خالية. ماذا ستقول/ين لها؟

A

B

### الموقف 4

انت طالب/ة في الجامعة. قمت باستعارة كتاب من الأستاذة و وعدته بإرجاعه اليوم التالي . تذكرت انك نسيت ارجاع الكتاب في الموعد المحدد عندما رأيت الأستاذ بعد مرور يومين. ماذا ستقول له/ لها؟

A

B

### الموقف 5

أثناء سفرك بالباص وضعت حقيبتك الثقيلة على رف الباص و فجأة توقف الباص و سقطت الحقيبة على أحد الركاب . ماذا ستقول/ين للراكب؟

A

B

### الموقف 6

استعرت سيارة صديقك / صديقتك بدون ان تخبره/ها انك لا تملك/ين رخصة قيادة سارية. و انت بالطريق حصل لك حادثة وتضررت السيارة. كيف ستعتذر/ين لصديقك / صديقتك الغاضب/ة والمصاب/ة بخيبة الأمل؟

A

B

### الموقف 7

انت مديرة/ة في احد المطاعم. كان أحد الزبائن غاضب جدا بسبب اعتقاده بأنه تم غشه عندما طلب منه ان يدفع فاتورة باهظة الثمن. ادركت بعد ذلك ان الفاتورة تخص زبون آخر في الطاولة المجاورة. كيف ستتعامل/ين مع الموقف؟

A

B

### الموقف 8

اثناء وجودك بالسوبرماركت وطأت على طرف رجل سيدة بدون قصد. ماذا ستقول/ين لها؟

A

B

### الموقف 9

انت دائما تمازح/ين وتؤدي/ن صديقك / صديقتك المقرب/ة وتستخدم/ين معه/معها لغة قوية وتهدهه/تهدينيها مازح/ة . هذا الصديق/ة جدا متأثر/ة بتعاملك و متضايق/ة منه. ماذا ستفعل/ين للتقرب من صديقك / صديقتك؟

A

B

### الموقف 10

لديك موعد مقابلة عمل مع مدير إحدى البنوك. وبسبب زحمة المرور وصلت للمقابلة متأخره 15 دقيقة. ماذا ستقول/ين للمدير الذي كان في انتظارك؟

A

B

### الموقف 11

استلقت بعض المال من زميلك / زميلتك في العمل و وعدت بإرجاعه في خلال اسبوع . الآن مر تقريبا أسبوعين ولم تستطيع/ين جمع المال و الوفاء بوعدهك وتسديد الدين في موعده ماذا ستقول زميلك / زميلتك ؟

A

B

### الموقف 12

أنت موظف/ة في أحد الشركات. طلب منك مديرك الجديد كتابة تقرير و تسليمه في موعد محدد. أنت لم تقم بتسليم التقرير في الموعد المحدد وكانت هذه أول مرة تتأخر فيها عن تسليم التقارير في الوقت المحدد. بعد عدة أيام طلب منك مديرك الجديد مقابله في مكتبه لمناقشة الأمر. والآن أنت في مكتبه بالفعل. فماذا ستقول/ين؟

A

B

### الموقف 13

دعوت أحد الأصدقاء لزيارتك في المنزل .وبعد لحظة أدركت أنك قدمت له فنجانا من القهوة المحلاة بالسكر بالرغم من أنه يعاني من مرض السكري. فماذا تقول له؟

A

B

#### الموقف 14

تخيل أنك أنت أم أو أب لطفلين. أصدقاء زوجك / زوجتك وجهوا لكم دعوة لبيتهم الجديد لأول مرة. وبينما أنت جالس/جالسة في غرفة الاستقبال مع الضيوف الآخرين وجميع الأطفال يلعبون في أنحاء المنزل تسمع /ين فجأة أن طفلك الصغير حطم أنية زهور غالية جدا. السيدة المستضيفة تأتي لترى ما حدث وتقول بصوت محبط: " اووه كانت هذه المزهرية الثمينة هدية من أختي!!". ماذا ستقول/ين؟

A

B

#### الموقف 15

انت معلم/ة في أحد الكليات ولديك موعد مع أحد الطلاب/الطالبات اليوم لمراجعة ورقة سيقوم الطالب/ة بتقديمه/ها في الصف في اليوم التالي ولم تحضر الموعد لأنه كان يتحتم عليك حضور اجتماع طارئ. في اليوم التالي يأتي اليك الطالب/ة . ماذا ستقول له...؟

A

B

شكرا لمشاركتكم

## Appendix 4.0: Interview Guide (English Version)

### Interview questions

1. In your choice of apology, did you consider the person that you were apologizing to?
2. In what way would you have apologized differently if the person was a:
  - A friend or family member
  - Supervisor, manager or boss
  - older or younger than you?
3. You used the phrase ‘wallah’ (Inshallah) when apologising, when you could have just said ‘I am sorry’ or ‘forgive me’, any particular reason for this?
4. How did the offence itself affect how you apologized.
5. What is your view that apologizing shows politeness as compared to weakness?
6. What is your view that the words you use in apologizing makes a difference to the offended?
7. Why did you respond the way you did?
8. What did you consider the most when responding to the apology?

## Appendix 5.0: Apology strategies for each situation

Table 78: Apology strategies for each situation

Category	Apology Strategies		S1		S2		S3		S4		S5		S6		S7		S8		S9		S10		S11		S12		S13		S14		S15	
	Code	Strategy	Male	Female																												
An expression of apology	A1	An offer of apology	36	42	6	18	0	0	0	12	6	12	24	30	66	84	18	12	6	6	36	72	36	18	36	36	12	0	12	48	30	36
	A2	An expression of regret	30	72	66	114	48	60	72	108	66	138	54	72	36	42	84	138	18	84	48	78	48	66	30	42	72	90	60	90	42	78
	A3	A request for forgiveness	0	0	0	0	6	6	12	18	0	0	6	0	6	12	6	6	6	12	12	0	12	6	0	0	18	12	0	0	0	6
Explanation or account	B	Explanation or account	48	72	54	96	36	90	42	60	12	24	42	72	48	72	24	30	84	114	102	132	102	78	66	66	24	72	18	36	60	120
Taking or Acknowledgment of responsibility	C1	Explicit self-blame	0	0	0	0	6	6	6	0	6	0	12	12	0	12	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	6	6	0	0	0	6	6
	C2	Lack of intent	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	C3	Expression of self-deficiency	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	C4	Expression of embarrassment	0	0	12	24	0	0	12	0	0	0	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	12	0	0	0	0	6	6	0	0
	C5	Self-dispraise	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0
	C6	Justifying the hearer	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	C7	Denial of the responsibility	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	6
Concern for the hearer	D	Concern for the hearer.	0	6	0	0	12	6	0	6	6	18	0	6	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	0	6	0	6	0	0	0	0	0
Offer of repair	E	Offer of repair.	78	108	90	102	96	126	66	78	60	42	84	126	72	78	12	12	30	30	6	18	6	114	54	72	78	90	90	102	54	36
Promise of non-recurrence	F	Promise of forbearance.	0	6	6	0	0	12	0	12	0	0	6	0	0	6	0	0	24	30	6	6	6	6	36	36	0	12	6	6	0	0
	G	Pride and ignorance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	6
	H	Blame something else	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	I	Swearing	0	6	12	18	6	6	6	30	6	6	6	12	6	0	0	18	0	6	0	6	0	30	12	36	0	0	24	18	6	0

## Appendix 6.1: Post Hoc Tests for apology strategies across all situations

### Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Occurrences across situation

	(I) Apology strategies	(J) Apology strategies	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Tukey HSD	An offer of apology	An expression of regret	-86.400*	12.209	.000	-126.29	-46.51
		A request for forgiveness	38.000	12.209	.077	-1.89	77.89
		Explanation of account	-73.600*	12.209	.000	-113.49	-33.71
		Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	27.200	12.209	.489	-12.69	67.09
		Concern for the hearer	42.400*	12.209	.027	2.51	82.29
		Offer of repair	-90.000*	12.209	.000	-129.89	-50.11
		Promise of forbearance	34.000	12.209	.174	-5.89	73.89
		Pride and ignorance	47.600*	12.209	.007	7.71	87.49
		Blame something else	47.600*	12.209	.007	7.71	87.49
		Use of religious terms	28.400	12.209	.422	-11.49	68.29
An expression of regret	An offer of apology	An offer of apology	86.400*	12.209	.000	46.51	126.29
		A request for forgiveness	124.400*	12.209	.000	84.51	164.29
		Explanation of account	12.800	12.209	.993	-27.09	52.69
		Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	113.600*	12.209	.000	73.71	153.49
		Concern for the hearer	128.800*	12.209	.000	88.91	168.69
		Offer of repair	-3.600	12.209	1.000	-43.49	36.29
		Promise of forbearance	120.400*	12.209	.000	80.51	160.29
		Pride and ignorance	134.000*	12.209	.000	94.11	173.89
		Blame something else	134.000*	12.209	.000	94.11	173.89
		Use of religious terms	114.800*	12.209	.000	74.91	154.69
A request for forgiveness	An offer of apology	An offer of apology	-38.000	12.209	.077	-77.89	1.89
		An expression of regret	-124.400*	12.209	.000	-164.29	-84.51
		Explanation of account	-111.600*	12.209	.000	-151.49	-71.71

	Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	-10.800	12.209	.998	-50.69	29.09
	Concern for the hearer	4.400	12.209	1.000	-35.49	44.29
	Offer of repair	-128.000*	12.209	.000	-167.89	-88.11
	Promise of forbearance	-4.000	12.209	1.000	-43.89	35.89
	Pride and ignorance	9.600	12.209	.999	-30.29	49.49
	Blame something else	9.600	12.209	.999	-30.29	49.49
	Use of religious terms	-9.600	12.209	.999	-49.49	30.29
Explanation of account	An offer of apology	73.600*	12.209	.000	33.71	113.49
	An expression of regret	-12.800	12.209	.993	-52.69	27.09
	A request for forgiveness	111.600*	12.209	.000	71.71	151.49
	Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	100.800*	12.209	.000	60.91	140.69
	Concern for the hearer	116.000*	12.209	.000	76.11	155.89
	Offer of repair	-16.400	12.209	.959	-56.29	23.49
	Promise of forbearance	107.600*	12.209	.000	67.71	147.49
	Pride and ignorance	121.200*	12.209	.000	81.31	161.09
	Blame something else	121.200*	12.209	.000	81.31	161.09
	Use of religious terms	102.000*	12.209	.000	62.11	141.89
	Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	An offer of apology	-27.200	12.209	.489	-67.09
An expression of regret		-113.600*	12.209	.000	-153.49	-73.71
A request for forgiveness		10.800	12.209	.998	-29.09	50.69
Explanation of account		-100.800*	12.209	.000	-140.69	-60.91
Concern for the hearer		15.200	12.209	.976	-24.69	55.09
Offer of repair		-117.200*	12.209	.000	-157.09	-77.31
Promise of forbearance		6.800	12.209	1.000	-33.09	46.69
Pride and ignorance		20.400	12.209	.848	-19.49	60.29
Blame something else		20.400	12.209	.848	-19.49	60.29
Use of religious terms		1.200	12.209	1.000	-38.69	41.09
Concern for the hearer		An offer of apology	-42.400*	12.209	.027	-82.29
	An expression of regret	-128.800*	12.209	.000	-168.69	-88.91
	A request for forgiveness	-4.400	12.209	1.000	-44.29	35.49

	Explanation of account	-116.000*	12.209	.000	-155.89	-76.11
	Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	-15.200	12.209	.976	-55.09	24.69
	Offer of repair	-132.400*	12.209	.000	-172.29	-92.51
	Promise of forbearance	-8.400	12.209	1.000	-48.29	31.49
	Pride and ignorance	5.200	12.209	1.000	-34.69	45.09
	Blame something else	5.200	12.209	1.000	-34.69	45.09
	Use of religious terms	-14.000	12.209	.987	-53.89	25.89
Offer of repair	An offer of apology	90.000*	12.209	.000	50.11	129.89
	An expression of regret	3.600	12.209	1.000	-36.29	43.49
	A request for forgiveness	128.000*	12.209	.000	88.11	167.89
	Explanation of account	16.400	12.209	.959	-23.49	56.29
	Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	117.200*	12.209	.000	77.31	157.09
	Concern for the hearer	132.400*	12.209	.000	92.51	172.29
	Promise of forbearance	124.000*	12.209	.000	84.11	163.89
	Pride and ignorance	137.600*	12.209	.000	97.71	177.49
	Blame something else	137.600*	12.209	.000	97.71	177.49
	Use of religious terms	118.400*	12.209	.000	78.51	158.29
Promise of forbearance	An offer of apology	-34.000	12.209	.174	-73.89	5.89
	An expression of regret	-120.400*	12.209	.000	-160.29	-80.51
	A request for forgiveness	4.000	12.209	1.000	-35.89	43.89
	Explanation of account	-107.600*	12.209	.000	-147.49	-67.71
	Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	-6.800	12.209	1.000	-46.69	33.09
	Concern for the hearer	8.400	12.209	1.000	-31.49	48.29
	Offer of repair	-124.000*	12.209	.000	-163.89	-84.11
	Pride and ignorance	13.600	12.209	.989	-26.29	53.49
	Blame something else	13.600	12.209	.989	-26.29	53.49
	Use of religious terms	-5.600	12.209	1.000	-45.49	34.29
Pride and ignorance	An offer of apology	-47.600*	12.209	.007	-87.49	-7.71
	An expression of regret	-134.000*	12.209	.000	-173.89	-94.11

	A request for forgiveness	-9.600	12.209	.999	-49.49	30.29
	Explanation of account	-121.200*	12.209	.000	-161.09	-81.31
	Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	-20.400	12.209	.848	-60.29	19.49
	Concern for the hearer	-5.200	12.209	1.000	-45.09	34.69
	Offer of repair	-137.600*	12.209	.000	-177.49	-97.71
	Promise of forbearance	-13.600	12.209	.989	-53.49	26.29
	Blame something else	.000	12.209	1.000	-39.89	39.89
	Use of religious terms	-19.200	12.209	.891	-59.09	20.69
Blame something else	An offer of apology	-47.600*	12.209	.007	-87.49	-7.71
	An expression of regret	-134.000*	12.209	.000	-173.89	-94.11
	A request for forgiveness	-9.600	12.209	.999	-49.49	30.29
	Explanation of account	-121.200*	12.209	.000	-161.09	-81.31
	Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	-20.400	12.209	.848	-60.29	19.49
	Concern for the hearer	-5.200	12.209	1.000	-45.09	34.69
	Offer of repair	-137.600*	12.209	.000	-177.49	-97.71
	Promise of forbearance	-13.600	12.209	.989	-53.49	26.29
	Pride and ignorance	.000	12.209	1.000	-39.89	39.89
	Use of religious terms	-19.200	12.209	.891	-59.09	20.69
Use of religious terms	An offer of apology	-28.400	12.209	.422	-68.29	11.49
	An expression of regret	-114.800*	12.209	.000	-154.69	-74.91
	A request for forgiveness	9.600	12.209	.999	-30.29	49.49
	Explanation of account	-102.000*	12.209	.000	-141.89	-62.11
	Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	-1.200	12.209	1.000	-41.09	38.69
	Concern for the hearer	14.000	12.209	.987	-25.89	53.89
	Offer of repair	-118.400*	12.209	.000	-158.29	-78.51
	Promise of forbearance	5.600	12.209	1.000	-34.29	45.49
	Pride and ignorance	19.200	12.209	.891	-20.69	59.09
	Blame something else	19.200	12.209	.891	-20.69	59.09

Games-Howell	An offer of apology	An expression of regret	-86.400*	16.061	.000	-142.60	-30.20		
		A request for forgiveness	38.000	11.078	.085	-3.29	79.29		
		Explanation of account	-73.600*	17.558	.010	-135.29	-11.91		
		Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	27.200	11.904	.478	-15.80	70.20		
		Concern for the hearer	42.400*	10.915	.040	1.38	83.42		
		Offer of repair	-90.000*	19.985	.006	-160.89	-19.11		
		Promise of forbearance	34.000	11.990	.212	-9.21	77.21		
		Pride and ignorance	47.600*	10.770	.017	6.79	88.41		
		Blame something else	47.600*	10.770	.017	6.79	88.41		
		Use of religious terms	28.400	11.669	.397	-14.06	70.86		
		An expression of regret	An offer of apology	An offer of apology	86.400*	16.061	.000	30.20	142.60
				A request for forgiveness	124.400*	12.217	.000	78.73	170.07
Explanation of account	12.800			18.298	1.000	-51.29	76.89		
Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	113.600*			12.971	.000	66.45	160.75		
Concern for the hearer	128.800*			12.069	.000	83.37	174.23		
Offer of repair	-3.600			20.638	1.000	-76.41	69.21		
Promise of forbearance	120.400*			13.049	.000	73.07	167.73		
Pride and ignorance	134.000*			11.939	.000	88.75	179.25		
Blame something else	134.000*			11.939	.000	88.75	179.25		
Use of religious terms	114.800*			12.755	.000	68.12	161.48		
A request for forgiveness	An offer of apology			An offer of apology	-38.000	11.078	.085	-79.29	3.29
				An expression of regret	-124.400*	12.217	.000	-170.07	-78.73
		Explanation of account	-111.600*	14.128	.000	-164.59	-58.61		
		Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	-10.800	5.747	.723	-31.44	9.84		
		Concern for the hearer	4.400	3.232	.947	-7.01	15.81		
		Offer of repair	-128.000*	17.051	.000	-192.17	-63.83		
		Promise of forbearance	-4.000	5.921	1.000	-25.32	17.32		
		Pride and ignorance	9.600	2.704	.071	-.53	19.73		
		Blame something else	9.600	2.704	.071	-.53	19.73		

	Use of religious terms	-9.600	5.242	.751	-28.29	9.09
Explanation of account	An offer of apology	73.600*	17.558	.010	11.91	135.29
	An expression of regret	-12.800	18.298	1.000	-76.89	51.29
	A request for forgiveness	111.600*	14.128	.000	58.61	164.59
	Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	100.800*	14.785	.000	46.60	155.00
	Concern for the hearer	116.000*	14.000	.000	63.20	168.80
	Offer of repair	-16.400	21.824	.999	-92.92	60.12
	Promise of forbearance	107.600*	14.853	.000	53.26	161.94
	Pride and ignorance	121.200*	13.888	.000	68.56	173.84
	Blame something else	121.200*	13.888	.000	68.56	173.84
	Use of religious terms	102.000*	14.595	.000	48.18	155.82
	Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	An offer of apology	-27.200	11.904	.478	-70.20
An expression of regret		-113.600*	12.971	.000	-160.75	-66.45
A request for forgiveness		10.800	5.747	.723	-9.84	31.44
Explanation of account		-100.800*	14.785	.000	-155.00	-46.60
Concern for the hearer		15.200	5.426	.234	-4.70	35.10
Offer of repair		-117.200*	17.599	.000	-182.30	-52.10
Promise of forbearance		6.800	7.352	.997	-18.91	32.51
Pride and ignorance		20.400*	5.129	.035	1.02	39.78
Blame something else		20.400*	5.129	.035	1.02	39.78
Use of religious terms		1.200	6.817	1.000	-22.66	25.06
Concern for the hearer		An offer of apology	-42.400*	10.915	.040	-83.42
	An expression of regret	-128.800*	12.069	.000	-174.23	-83.37
	A request for forgiveness	-4.400	3.232	.947	-15.81	7.01
	Explanation of account	-116.000*	14.000	.000	-168.80	-63.20
	Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	-15.200	5.426	.234	-35.10	4.70
	Offer of repair	-132.400*	16.945	.000	-196.42	-68.38
	Promise of forbearance	-8.400	5.610	.902	-29.02	12.22
	Pride and ignorance	5.200	1.930	.280	-1.95	12.35
	Blame something else	5.200	1.930	.280	-1.95	12.35

	Use of religious terms	-14.000	4.887	.208	-31.81	3.81
Offer of repair	An offer of apology	90.000*	19.985	.006	19.11	160.89
	An expression of regret	3.600	20.638	1.000	-69.21	76.41
	A request for forgiveness	128.000*	17.051	.000	63.83	192.17
	Explanation of account	16.400	21.824	.999	-60.12	92.92
	Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	117.200*	17.599	.000	52.10	182.30
	Concern for the hearer	132.400*	16.945	.000	68.38	196.42
	Promise of forbearance	124.000*	17.656	.000	58.79	189.21
	Pride and ignorance	137.600*	16.852	.000	73.71	201.49
	Blame something else	137.600*	16.852	.000	73.71	201.49
	Use of religious terms	118.400*	17.440	.000	53.59	183.21
	Promise of forbearance	An offer of apology	-34.000	11.990	.212	-77.21
An expression of regret		-120.400*	13.049	.000	-167.73	-73.07
A request for forgiveness		4.000	5.921	1.000	-17.32	25.32
Explanation of account		-107.600*	14.853	.000	-161.94	-53.26
Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility		-6.800	7.352	.997	-32.51	18.91
Concern for the hearer		8.400	5.610	.902	-12.22	29.02
Offer of repair		-124.000*	17.656	.000	-189.21	-58.79
Pride and ignorance		13.600	5.324	.350	-6.52	33.72
Blame something else		13.600	5.324	.350	-6.52	33.72
Use of religious terms		-5.600	6.964	.999	-30.00	18.80
Pride and ignorance		An offer of apology	-47.600*	10.770	.017	-88.41
	An expression of regret	-134.000*	11.939	.000	-179.25	-88.75
	A request for forgiveness	-9.600	2.704	.071	-19.73	.53
	Explanation of account	-121.200*	13.888	.000	-173.84	-68.56
	Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	-20.400*	5.129	.035	-39.78	-1.02
	Concern for the hearer	-5.200	1.930	.280	-12.35	1.95
	Offer of repair	-137.600*	16.852	.000	-201.49	-73.71

	Promise of forbearance	-13.600	5.324	.350	-33.72	6.52
	Blame something else	.000	.771	1.000	-2.70	2.70
	Use of religious terms	-19.200*	4.556	.023	-36.40	-2.00
Blame something else	An offer of apology	-47.600*	10.770	.017	-88.41	-6.79
	An expression of regret	-134.000*	11.939	.000	-179.25	-88.75
	A request for forgiveness	-9.600	2.704	.071	-19.73	.53
	Explanation of account	-121.200*	13.888	.000	-173.84	-68.56
	Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	-20.400*	5.129	.035	-39.78	-1.02
	Concern for the hearer	-5.200	1.930	.280	-12.35	1.95
	Offer of repair	-137.600*	16.852	.000	-201.49	-73.71
	Promise of forbearance	-13.600	5.324	.350	-33.72	6.52
	Pride and ignorance	.000	.771	1.000	-2.70	2.70
	Use of religious terms	-19.200*	4.556	.023	-36.40	-2.00
Use of religious terms	An offer of apology	-28.400	11.669	.397	-70.86	14.06
	An expression of regret	-114.800*	12.755	.000	-161.48	-68.12
	A request for forgiveness	9.600	5.242	.751	-9.09	28.29
	Explanation of account	-102.000*	14.595	.000	-155.82	-48.18
	Taking or acknowledgement of responsibility	-1.200	6.817	1.000	-25.06	22.66
	Concern for the hearer	14.000	4.887	.208	-3.81	31.81
	Offer of repair	-118.400*	17.440	.000	-183.21	-53.59
	Promise of forbearance	5.600	6.964	.999	-18.80	30.00
	Pride and ignorance	19.200*	4.556	.023	2.00	36.40
	Blame something else	19.200*	4.556	.023	2.00	36.40

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

## Appendix 6.2: Post Hoc Tests for response strategies across the situations

### Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Occurrences across situations

Tukey HSD

(I) Response strategies	(J) Response strategies	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Acceptance	Disagreeing	62.800*	8.400	.000	37.51	88.09
	Returning	109.200*	8.400	.000	83.91	134.49
	Explaining	104.800*	8.400	.000	79.51	130.09
	Deflecting	-20.800	8.400	.179	-46.09	4.49
	Thanking	86.400*	8.400	.000	61.11	111.69
	Religious Amplifier	88.000*	8.400	.000	62.71	113.29
Disagreeing	Acceptance	-62.800*	8.400	.000	-88.09	-37.51
	Returning	46.400*	8.400	.000	21.11	71.69
	Explaining	42.000*	8.400	.000	16.71	67.29
	Deflecting	-83.600*	8.400	.000	-108.89	-58.31
	Thanking	23.600	8.400	.084	-1.69	48.89
	Religious Amplifier	25.200	8.400	.051	-.09	50.49
Returning	Acceptance	-109.200*	8.400	.000	-134.49	-83.91
	Disagreeing	-46.400*	8.400	.000	-71.69	-21.11
	Explaining	-4.400	8.400	.998	-29.69	20.89
	Deflecting	-130.000*	8.400	.000	-155.29	-104.71
	Thanking	-22.800	8.400	.106	-48.09	2.49
	Religious Amplifier	-21.200	8.400	.162	-46.49	4.09
Explaining	Acceptance	-104.800*	8.400	.000	-130.09	-79.51
	Disagreeing	-42.000*	8.400	.000	-67.29	-16.71
	Returning	4.400	8.400	.998	-20.89	29.69
	Deflecting	-125.600*	8.400	.000	-150.89	-100.31
	Thanking	-18.400	8.400	.310	-43.69	6.89
	Religious Amplifier	-16.800	8.400	.421	-42.09	8.49
Deflecting	Acceptance	20.800	8.400	.179	-4.49	46.09
	Disagreeing	83.600*	8.400	.000	58.31	108.89
	Returning	130.000*	8.400	.000	104.71	155.29
	Explaining	125.600*	8.400	.000	100.31	150.89
	Thanking	107.200*	8.400	.000	81.91	132.49
	Religious Amplifier	108.800*	8.400	.000	83.51	134.09

Thanking	Acceptance	-86.400*	8.400	.000	-111.69	-61.11
	Disagreeing	-23.600	8.400	.084	-48.89	1.69
	Returning	22.800	8.400	.106	-2.49	48.09
	Explaining	18.400	8.400	.310	-6.89	43.69
	Deflecting	-107.200*	8.400	.000	-132.49	-81.91
	Religious Amplifier	1.600	8.400	1.000	-23.69	26.89
Religious Amplifier	Acceptance	-88.000*	8.400	.000	-113.29	-62.71
	Disagreeing	-25.200	8.400	.051	-50.49	.09
	Returning	21.200	8.400	.162	-4.09	46.49
	Explaining	16.800	8.400	.421	-8.49	42.09
	Deflecting	-108.800*	8.400	.000	-134.09	-83.51
	Thanking	-1.600	8.400	1.000	-26.89	23.69

\*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.