

# **‘Oh, I am sorry’: The Realization Patterns of Apologising in Urdu in Pakistan**



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IN PAKISTAN**

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**Dedication**

I dedicate my dissertation to my respected teacher Mr. M. Saleem whose precious guidance supported me in my determination to realize my potentials and utilize them.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.1 Background and motivation**

"Culture is more often a source of conflict than of synergy. Cultural differences are a nuisance at best and often a disaster." - Dr. Geert Hofstede

The world is being shrunk rapidly with the ever-growing access to media, comfort of world travel, and increase in communication technology. The geographical boundaries are going to be blurred in the formation of global community. But the cultural discrepancies pose a threat

to smooth cross-cultural communication which is at the heart of modern globalization. The case of cultural values can be presented as the best example of cultural discrepancies. It is a common phenomenon that a value which is esteemed in one culture is frowned upon in the other culture. This divergence of cultures can lead to communication breakdown. Hence, the study of cultural values and social norms has become potential to provide insight into the cultural divergences which is an essential prerequisite to establish frictionless cross-cultural communication. Raising cultural awareness is not only a source of gaining knowledge about other languages and cultures, but it is also considered essential for recognizing one's own socio-cultural norms (Nureddeen, 2008). The increasing opportunities in cross-cultural communication have triggered interest in the researchers to focus on pragmatic rules and their role in speech behavior.

More than any other aspect of language, speech acts are probably the easiest way for getting access to the cultural values. The speech act of apologizing along with thanking is the most routinized formula in routine life. It has been a focal point in cross-cultural studies since decades as there is hardly a day when the societal members feel no need to apologize to restore their relationships. That's why, the speech act of apology has been extensively studied in numerous languages and cultures of the world. The CCSARP project initiated by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) focused on eight main western languages to study the realization patterns of different speech acts including apology. They claimed the surprising similarities in some formulae of apology. Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) also invited the future researchers to launch such studies in non-western languages and cultures to investigate the matter deeply. Since then, numerous non-western languages and cultures are focused to study the performance of apology. The present research is also a response to this call by taking a non-western language, Urdu, in its scope.

## **1.2 Research questions**

As a prerequisite, the description of the research questions is essential as the whole study is set out to provide answers to these questions. The research questions of the current study are the following:

- What are the realization patterns of apology in Urdu in Pakistan?
- What type of socio-pragmatic variables influence the realization patterns of the speakers of Urdu?
- Is the realization of the speech act of apology universal or culture specific?
- What type of politeness is reflected in the realization patterns of apology in Urdu?

### **1.3 Significance of the study**

Pakistani culture is bedrock of different sub-cultures. These sub-cultures are exhibited in the diverse cultural values and social norms. The study of their attitudes, traditions, and lifestyles is indispensable for creating harmony among masses. The current study would be helpful to make the inhabitants of different regions of Pakistan understand and give space to one another. On international level, the Pakistanis have to go abroad for educational, economic, tourist, and diplomatic purposes. The lack of awareness of Pakistani culture in foreign countries can become a source of friction for cross-cultural communication. The present study would, hopefully, guide the foreigners to get insight into the attitudes of men and women, the concept of status, and the consideration of familiarity held in Pakistani society. Apart from the awareness of culture of Urdu speech community, this research would provide empirical evidence from a non-western language to resolve the controversy of universality/culture specificity of speech acts and theory of politeness to some extent.

### **1.4 Structure of the study**

The structure of this dissertation is erected on six chapters. The division is made on the basis of relevance of the content of the study. The first chapter (ongoing) is devoted to providing background of the study. The objectives and significance of the under-conducted research are also part of this chapter. The second chapter begins with the review of related literature. It comprises of two parts: theoretical issues and empirical works. The field of pragmatics including cross-cultural pragmatics, theory of speech acts, and the theory of politeness is discussed. The latter section takes a view of the empirical works done in the sphere of apology strategies. These studies are classified into single language studies, inter-language studies, and cross-cultural studies. So far as the third chapter is concerned, it deals with the methodological issues found in pragmatic studies. The population and subjects selected for data collection are discussed here. The questionnaire as an instrument for data collection with short description of the scenarios and socio-pragmatic variables is taken into account. This chapter is further marked with the description of the procedure of data collection. The coding scheme of different apology strategies used by the Urdu speaking informants is discussed at the end of chapter three. The findings of the data analysis, being the most important component of this study, are described in chapter four. In the beginning of the chapter, the overall distribution of apology strategies with percentage frequencies, mean, and standard deviation is illustrated. Afterwards, the correlation among different socio-pragmatic variables is sought with the help of Cross-tabulation, Chi-square value and statistical significance. The fifth chapter of this socio-pragmatic study is reserved for the discussion on the findings listed in the preceding chapter. Along with the discussion on speech acts via the study of apology strategies, the status of politeness in Pakistan is also investigated. After discussing the theoretical issues of speech acts and politeness, cultural norms, social values, and contextuality of Pakistani culture are discussed in the light of the

production and selection of different apology strategies by the speakers of Urdu. The summary of the whole study, delimitations, and suggestions for the future researches are given in chapter six.

### **1.5 Important abbreviations**

There are various terms in the present study which are usually abbreviated. It is very important to give the full description of these abbreviations to make them easy to understand.

The following words are frequently used as abbreviations:

FTA	Face Threatening Act
IFID	Illocutionary Force Indicating Device
DCT	Discourse Completion Task
L1	First language
L2	Second language
NS	Native speakers
NNS	Non-native speakers