

Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Apology Strategies by Libyans

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Abstract : In the last thirty years, studies on cross-cultural pragmatics in general and apology strategies in specific have focused on western and East-Asian societies. A small volume of research has been conducted in investigating speech acts production by Arabic dialect speakers. Therefore, this study investigated the apology strategies used by Libyan Arabic speakers using an online Discourse Completion Task (DCT) questionnaire. The DCT consisted of six situations covering different social contexts. The survey was written in Libyan Arabic dialect to help generate vernacular speech as much as possible. The participants were 25 Libyan nationals, 12 females, and 13 males. Also, to get a deeper understanding of the motivation behind the use of certain strategies, the researcher interviewed four participants using the Libyan Arabic dialect as well. The results revealed a high use of IFID, offer of repair, and explanation. Although this might support the universality claim of speech acts strategies, it was clear that cultural norms and religion determined the choice of apology strategies significantly. This led to the discovery of new culture-specific strategies, as outlined later in this paper. This study gives an insight into politeness strategies in Libyan society, and it is hoped to contribute to the field of cross-cultural pragmatics.

Keywords : apologies, cross-cultural pragmatics, language and culture, Libyan Arabic, politeness, pragmatics, socio-pragmatics, speech acts

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