

# A Socio-pragmatic Study of Apology in Iraqi Non-standard Arabic

## دراسة اجتماعية تداولية للاعتذار في اللهجة العراقية

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### المخلص:

يعد الاعتذار من الأفعال الكلامية التعبيرية المهمة في الاداء الاجتماعي لأي مجموعة، وله دور في حفظ العلاقات الاجتماعية للمجتمع. تهدف هذه الدراسة الى كشف الابعاد التداولية والاجتماعية لأساليب الاعتذار في اللهجة العامية العراقية مع الاخذ بالنظر عوامل عدة مثل رتبة الشخص الاجتماعي في تعيين نوع الاسلوب المنطوق. لم يتم التركيز في الدراسات السابقة على هكذا موضوع في دراسات اللهجة العراقية، ف جاء هذا البحث تكميلاً لما بدأ به مجموعة من الباحثين العرب من دراسة تداولية للهجات العربية المعاصرة كالمصرية والاردنية وغيرها. ووصل البحث الى ان النساء اكثر اهتماماً بأساليب التلطف في الاعتذار و باستعمال الاعتذار المباشر .

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى كشف الابعاد التداولية والاجتماعية لأساليب الاعتذار في اللهجة العامية العراقية مع الاخذ بالنظر عوامل عدة مثل رتبة الشخص الاجتماعي في تعيين نوع الاسلوب المنطوق. اقرا المواقف الاتية بعناية، ثم اكمل الحوار مستعملاً اللهجة العامية وان تكون اجابتك واقعية. لا تكتب ما ستفعله، بل اسرد ما ستقوله:

1. وعدت ابنك بهدية بوحدة من المناسبات، بس ما جبتله أي شي  
فراح تعتذر و تقول:

2. طلبت جهاز من صديق، لكن عطل الجهاز عندك

فراح تعتذر و تقول:

3. طلبت كتاب من استاذك، بس تلف او تمزق

فراح تعتذر و تقول:

DCT 'APOLOGY STRATEGIES BY IRAQI MALES AND FEMALES':

You have promised your son of bringing a gift in some occasion, but you did not bring it,

You apologize saying:

You asked your friend for a device, it was disabled

You apologize saying:

You borrowed a book from your teacher, but it was torn off

You apologize saying:

## **Abstract**

Apology has been the focus of many studies in west and east. Some of these studies have focused on Arabic, but none of which have dealt with the use of apology in Iraqi non-standard Arabic. Besides, none has concentrated on the social value or gender differences in the use of such a speech act in Arabic. This study is an attempt to outline the most commonly existent differences between Iraqi males and females in the use of apology strategies. The corpus consists of responses to Discourse Completion Test, which includes three different situations. The informants have been 30 subjects: 15 males and 15 females. The sample is randomly selected from different places in Najaf to be more representative. The survey is written in Arabic to elicit responses that approximate verbal apologies for each different situation.

## **1.Introduction**

Phatic communion, which is related to the maintenance of social relations among humans, is one of the main functions of language. In interaction, the participants' assumptions and expectations about people, events, places, etc. play an important role in the performance and interpretation of linguistic expressions. The choice of such expressions to convey certain communicative purpose is controlled by social conventions and the individual's assessment of the situation (Nureddeen, 2008). According to Van Dijk (1977: 155) language users employ various speech acts to achieve their communicative aims.

A speech act is an utterance that serves a communicative function such as greeting, apologizing, warning and the like (see Hatch, 1992: 22). In the current paper, the speech act of apology in Iraqi Arabic will be investigated. Apology is defined as a speech act which is intended to provide support for the hearer who was actually or potentially malaffected by a violation (Olshtain, 1989: 156). Generally, apologies fall under expressive speech acts, where the speaker tries to indicate his own state or attitude. In order for an apology to have an effect, it should reflect true feelings.. Gooder and Jacob (2000; 272) points out that the proper apology acknowledges the fact of wrong deed, accepts ultimate responsibility, expresses sincere regret and sorrow, and promises not to repeat the offense. Moreover, the effectiveness of apology includes certain principles: familiarity with the victim since intimacy determines the style of apology; intensity of the act warranting the apology since the more trivial it is, the less of an apology it needs, and vice versa; the relative authority of the offender and the victim since the styles of apology reflect how superior or inferior the victim is to the apologizer; the relative ages of the two participants; sex of both participants since females tend to apologize more than males; and place of exchange since it influences the formality and strategy of apology (Soliman,

2003). The main characteristics of apology are summarized by Edmondson (1981: 144 ) as follows (key: S=speaker; H=hearer):

S wishes H to believe that S is not in favour of an act (A) performed by S as against the interests of H.

In 'apologize', S may be held to regret that he did A, and to discredit himself socially for having done so.

Apology can be used strategically in the speech act set of other acts such as 'complain' and so on. In addition, apologies are clearly H-supportive, such that its tokens (and strategies) are highly conventionalized.

## **2. Studies on apology**

Sociolinguistic studies of apology have been limited. However, most studies aim to indicate evidence of pragmatic transfer in the order, frequency, and content of the semantic formula (or strategy) used in apologies. Thus, the goal is somehow pedagogical. The paper will chronologically sketch some of these investigations.

Fraser (1981: 263) conveys that in order for an apology to be convincing, the offender has to use a combination of two or more of the following strategies: (1) announcing that apology is achieved by clauses such as I (hereby) apologize...; (2) stating the offender's obligation to apology with words like I must apologize;(3) offering to apologize to show the sincerity of the act with sentences like Do you want me to apologize?; (4) requesting the acceptance of the given apology with clauses like Please accept my apology; (5) expressing regret for the offense through the use o intensifiers like very, so, and extremely; (6) requesting forgiveness for the offense; (7) acknowledging responsibility for the wrong act; (8) promising not to repeat the action; and (9) showing readiness for compensation.

Olshtain and Cohen (1983: 20-24) indicate that the speech act set of 'apologize' contain the following acts: 1. An expression of apologizing (a. Expressing regret; b. An offer of apology; c. A

request for forgiveness), 2. An explanation or account of the situation, 3. An acknowledgement (a. Accepting the blame; b. Expressing self-deficiency; c. Recognizing the other person as deserving 'apologize'; d. Expressing lack of intent), 4. An offer of repair, and 5. A promise of forbearance (see Gass & Neu, 2006: 193).

Similarly, Trosborg (1987: 150) supposes that the offender determines which apology strategy to use from the following ones: (1) minimizing the degree of offense through ( discussing the preconditions of the offense, and blaming another person for the offense); (2) acknowledging responsibility for which he lists the following six types depending on the degree offender accepts the blame: (implicit acknowledgement, explicit acknowledgement, expression of lack of intent, expression of self-deficiency, expression of embarrassment, and explicit acceptance of the blame); (3) explicit or implicit explanation as a kind of mitigation; (4) offer of repair through ( a literal offer in which the offender states s/he will pay or the damage, and a compensation which might balance the offense); (5) promise not to repeat the act; and (6) expression of concern for the offended person to calm him.

Barr (1989) shows another notion of apology concerning the Japanese culture. Apologies are important and should be sincere. They even are rituals that should be adhered to. Even criminals must apologize for their mistakes.

Rizk (1997) examines apology strategies used among Arab non-native speakers of English, studying the answers of 110 Egyptian, Saudi, Jordanian, Palestinian, Moroccan, Lebanese, Syrian, Tunisian, Yemeni, and Lybian speakers of English to a questionnaire he designed. His results prove the conformity of apology strategies between native and non-native speakers of English in all situations that warrant an apology except for one. Unlike the natives, Arabs do not

apologize to children; instead they try to make the child forgive them through sentences like Do not feel sad, baby.

Hussein and Hammouri (1998) have investigated the use of apology by Americans and Jordanian speakers of English. They conclude that Jordanians use more strategies to apologize than Americans; while both groups resort to the expression of apology, the offer of repair, the acknowledgement of responsibility, and the promise of forbearance, only Jordanians use strategies like praising Allah (God) for what happened, attacking the victim, minimizing the degree of offense and interjection.

Another study on apology is Lev's (2001) in which he shows that apologies in China are less ritualistic and more goal-oriented. In the Chinese culture, apology is used to solve problems. If a person acts wrongly, s/he should first apologize, and then talk with the victim about what is to be done next. Apologies in China do not necessarily come with the risk of losing face or feeling humiliated. Unlike Americans, the Chinese are not afraid of litigation and, thus, are ready to apologize to wipe off a multitude of sins.

Soliman (2003), in his contrastive study of apology in Egyptian and American, discovered the following similarities and differences: (1) intensifiers are used in both cultures to show sincerity; (2) interjections like oh are important to convey the offender's care about what happened; (3) people in both cultures tend to express embarrassment for the wrong act; (4) Egyptians tend to attack the victim when the offender thinks the victim cannot justify his position as in the incident where the headmaster blames the janitor he bumped into for the incident instead of apologizing to him; (5) Egyptians praise Allah (God) for everything that happens, whether good or bad.

## **1. Problem and Aims of the study**

This study is concerned with the speech act of apology. It should be mentioned that one should not lump all Arabic speaking countries. Arabic in Iraq, like Arabic all over the Arab world, is of a diglossic nature. There are two varieties used: a 'formal variety' (Fusha) which is similar to classical Arabic and a 'colloquial variety' (Ammiyya) which is used in everyday communication. Various dialects of Arabic are distinguished in that they reflect the social norms that are specific to those speech communities. Thus, by looking at the speech acts of apology in Iraqi Arabic reflect fundamental cultural values that may be specific to Iraqi speech community.

Whereas all previous studies have looked at the interaction between non-native speakers and native speakers of English in the form of comparative studies discussing the differences in the performance of speech acts., there is no single study done on the performance of Arabic native speakers and more specifically Iraqis, as far as the speech act of apology is concerned. Moreover, the study will look at the strategies used in a dialect language, i.e. Iraqi Arabic. Moreover, there will be a comparison of a sociolinguistic type concerning gender differences in the use of apology. The research questions are:

1. What are the frequently used strategies by Iraqis when apologizing?
2. How do Iraqis realize the speech act of apology in terms of the three dimensions of semantic formulas: the order, frequency, and content in each of the three situations?
3. How do Iraqi males and females realize the speech act of apology when the offender is lower, equal, or higher in status to the victim?

## **2. Subjects**

Fifteen Iraqi males and same females from al-Najaf city from various sectors participated in the study. Participants were native

speakers of Arabic and were pooled from one community in Iraq. All participants were natives of Iraq, shared the same regional dialect. Their ages ranged from 25 to 40 years.

### **3. Data Elicitation**

The primary data collection tool for this study was a Discourse Completion Test (DCT). The DCT consists of three different situations designed to elicit the speech act of apology. The situations were set to be familiar to the Iraqi life and culture. Each situation aims to find out the distinction between the relationships of the participants, i.e. when the speaker is of lower, equal or higher status. Since the study aimed to collect responses that are as close to naturally occurring conversation as possible, it seemed more realistic and valid to ask informants to produce responses in the everyday language they speak although it is not common to use that variety in writing. Thus, subjects were encouraged to write in the low variety, and to put the informant in the required mood, the situations themselves were written in colloquial Arabic. Respondents mostly responded using the Najafi dialect ( Iraqi Arabic).

### **4. Data analysis**

Data was classified into semantic formulas in terms of the order (sequences), frequency, and content of semantic formulas. The number of each semantic formula was counted and the frequently used semantic formulas in each item.

#### **6.1 Classification of apology strategies**

In this research, Sugimoto's (1997) strategies will be used as a model for the data analysis since they are the most comprehensive although it will be kept in mind that the other strategies surveyed above may be useful or some examples. This depends on how the data will drive the analysis on. These strategies are as follows:

1. Primary strategies are those strategies frequently used by offenders when attempting to apologize, which include:
  - a. statement of remorse (regret), in which the wrongdoer shows that s/he has done something wrong,
  - b. accounts. In which the wrongdoer tells of what has happened (taking into consideration the fact that this is highly subjective depending on the way one tells the story and the role s/he played in it),
  - c. description of damage, in which the wrongdoer describes what changes have been incurred on the object in discussion or the repercussions of a certain deed on others, and
  - d. reparation, in which the wrongdoer tries to repair the damage s/he has incurred on others by offering words that may cause the harm done to be forgotten.
2. Secondary strategies which include:
  - a. compensation, which differs from reparation in that the wrongdoer offers to replace the damaged object or pay for it, and
  - b. the promise not to repeat offense, in which the wrongdoer does his/her utmost to assure the injured party that what has taken place will not occur in the future.
3. Seldom used strategies which includes:
  - a. explicit assessment of responsibility, in which the wrongdoer tries to describe his/her role in what has happened and whether or not s/he was responsible,
  - b. contextualization, in which the wrongdoer gives the whole context of the injury and what has happened in order to make the injured party see the whole picture,
  - c. self-castigation, in which the wrongdoer claims his/her responsibility for what has happened and is harsh in his/her rendition of his/her character, and

d. gratitude, in which the wrongdoer shows how grateful s/he is that the injured person is even giving him/her the time to speak and finding it in his/her heart to forgive.

## 5. Results and discussion

This section presents the results and discussions obtained in the three apology situations. Results and discussion will include the realization of the speech acts of apology of males and females in terms of the three dimensions of semantic formulas: the order, frequency, and content in each of the three situations will be analyzed. In addition to that, the realization of the speech act of apology when the offender is lower, equal, or higher in status to the victim will also be examined.

### 7.1 Semantic formulas

Table (1) shows the descriptive number of the main semantic formula employed by the subjects (males and females) in the three situations. The most distinguished semantic formula used by the females is “compensation” (45). Another distinguished feature is that females utilized "statement of remorse" (regret) (30) in the first position of their apologies. On the other side, males adopt the strategy "explicit assessment of responsibility" (50) and "reparation" (33) more than other strategies. In addition, subjects employed a number of direct and indirect strategies concerning the achievement of their apologies.

Strategy (semantic formula)	Males	Females
statement of remorse (regret)	20	30
Accounts	6	8
description of damage	7	5
Reparation	33	10
Compensation	10	45

the promise not to repeat offense	6	9
explicit assessment of responsibility	2	3
Contextualization	4	6
self-castigation	3	2
Gratitude	4	3

Table (1): Frequencies of the semantic formulas o apology used in all situations

### 7.1.1 Primary strategies

They are four strategies, two of which (statement of remorse (regret) and reparation) are used more than other primary strategies. Some examples will be given below to illustrate the case:

a. Statement of remorse (regret):

اني اسف جدا للي صار  
Aani aasef jiddan lilli saar  
I am so sorry for what happened  
ما اقدر اعبرلك عن اسفي واعتذاري  
Maa aghdar a'abberlak an asafi wi'tethaari  
I can't express my regret and apology to you  
والله اني حيل متاسفة  
Wallah aani heal mit'asfa  
By Allah, I am very sorry  
اقدملج اعتذاري  
Aqaddemlich e'itithaari  
I express my apology to you  
اعتذر والله عن اللي حصل  
Aatither wallah an illi hesal  
By Allah, I apologize for what happened  
اشما اعتذر اعتقد ميكفي  
Shma aatither a'teqid mayekfi

All my apology is insufficient

أسف أسف هواي أسف

Aasif assif hwaaya aasif

Sorry, sorry, I'm so sorry

متأسفة عيني

Mitasfa aeni

Sorry, my dear

Regret is often stated in Iraqi Arabic with the phrase Aasef or Aatither. In other words, it seems that Iraqis tend to use direct apology using words translated into 'sorry and apology' to express their regret and remorse. These strategies refer to verbal messages that embody and invoke speaker's true intentions in terms of their wants, needs and discourse process. This corresponds to Brown and Levinson's on record politeness strategy (1987) with respect to the precision and clarity of the communicative intention. Besides, one can note that females use friendly vocatives more than males to be more tactful and intimate.

b. Accounts:

This strategy is used less than the other ones. Some illustrations from the data are given as follows:

الكهرباء جائت مو شي فخربت الجهاز

Ilkahrabaa chaanat mu shee fakharbat eljihaaz

Power was idle so it disabled the device.

ما لكيت هدية زينه

Melgeat hadiyya zeana

I didn't find a good present.

الكتاب جان بيدي ومطرت

Elkitaab chan beedi w-matrat

It rained when the book was in my hand.

This strategy is called 'explanation', 'justification' or 'motivation' by some pragmaticians. The resort to motivations or justifications for

issuing speech acts is usually regarded as a sign of politeness (see Brown and Levinson, 1978: 194, Van Dijk, 1977: 215). Similarly, Ferrara (1980: 240) argues that justifications have an essential extra-conditional role where the subordinate speech act must relate to a state of affairs which counts as an adequate, plausible reason for the performance of the main (component) speech act.

In other words, a speech act functions as a condition for appropriately or effectively carrying out a next speech act. This is the main function of 'accounts'.

c. Description of damage:

This strategy is also used by both males and female less than some other ones. Here, the offender describes the nature of the damage or the wrong deed, in general. Here are some instances;

الكتاب شوية اتأثر

Elkitaab shwayya it'ethar

The book was slightly affected

الجهاز بس كام يتأخر بالشغل

Eljihaaz bas gaam yit'ekhar bilshughul

The device became only somewhat slow in work.

It can be seen that function of this strategy is 'explication'. Explicative speech acts are those acts which are performed by the speaker to show that s/he more explicitly indicates the particular speech act s/he is making (Van Dijk, 1980: 61-62). In sum, it can be concluded that it is possible that speakers redefine the pragmatic context by becoming more specific and more general with a next speech act.

d. Reparation:

The data show that males used this strategy to reinforce the degree of apology. Males tend to amend things rather than compensation. Some examples are below;

ان شاء الله اصلحك الجهاز

Inshaa'allah asallehlak eljihaaz  
God's will, I will amend your device.

اوعدك اني راح اجلد الكتاب

Awe'dak aani raah ejallid elkitaab  
I (hereby) promise that I'll bind the book.

عندي ادوات تفيدالجهاز

Indi adawaat etfeed eljihaaz  
I've tools which may be useful for the device.

It can be said that many examples concerning this strategy indicate the use of direct speech act of 'promise'. This act can be considered as a pragmatic realization of 'reparation'.

### 7.1.2 Secondary strategies

They are two strategies. The analysis shows that 'compensation' (45) is the mostly used strategy by females. The following are examples for illustration.

a. Compensation:

ان شاء الله اعوضك بكتاب جديد

Insha'Allah a'awthak bkitaab jideed  
God's will, I will compensate you with a new book.

راح اشتريلك جهاز غيره

Raah ashtereelak jihaaz gheara  
I will buy another device for you.

اني اوعدك بهدية كلش حلوة

Aani awe'dak bhadiyya kullish hilwa  
I promise I bring you a very nice present.

راح اجيب جهاز نوعيته افضل

Raah ajeeb jihaaz naw'eeta afdhal  
I will bring you a device of a better quality.

In this strategy, it is found that the speech act of 'promise' is also one of the realizations. In addition, the use of 'Insha'Allah' reflects the

cultural context of the Iraqi conventions as a mirror of the Islamic community.

b. The promise not to repeat offense:

This strategy conveys that apology can be achieved by 'promise'.

This strategy is used by females more than males. This may mean that woman consider this as prestige-observation or a sign of politeness.

The following examples illustrate the situation;

هلشي بعد ميكرر

Halshi ba'ad mayitkarrar

This will not happen again.

الصار بعد ميصير

Elsaar ba'ad maiseer

What happened will not be repeated.

الكذلك هاذي آخر مرة

A'akkidlak haathi aakhir marra

I assure you that this will not happen again.

### 7.1.3 Seldom used strategies

These strategies are the least used strategies by both males and females.

a. Explicit assessment of responsibility

this strategy can be also said to be functioning as an 'explanation' or 'justification'.

طبعاً. ما جان قصدي

Tab'an maa chaan qasdi

Of course, I didn't do it on purpose.

السبب مو مني

Issabab mu minni

It is not my fault

مو اني اللي عطل الجهاز

Mu aani illi attal eljihaaz

It was not me who disabled the device.

b. contextualization:

This is another type of 'justification'. It gives the physical context of the offense in order to mitigate the situation and support the apology. We notice that the speaker uses the speech act of 'telling' which has the following features (key: S=speaker, H=hearer);

1. S wishes H to gain information about him/herself and thus create or cement a social bond between self and H.
2. In performing a 'telling', S may be held to assume that H may be interested to gain the acquaintance of or further familiarity with his/her person.
3. S believes that H cannot be expected to know whether the information is true or not. When H thinks that what is told is false, s/he will regard S as 'liar' not 'ignorant' or 'misinformed'. 'Telling' can be sub-categorized into other speech acts such as 'identification'.

(Edmondson, 1981:

144-45)

اخوية شغل الجهاز وسكت

Akhuya shaghal eljihaaz w-sakat

My brother switched the device on and it was disabled.

المحلات جانت معزلة

Ilmahallaat chaanet m'ezla

The shops were closed.

الكتاب جان بجنطتي اللي نسيته بالسيارة

Ilkitaab chaan bjanitti illi niset-ha bissayyaara

The book was in my bag which I forgot in the car.

c. self-castigation:

Here, the speech act of 'admitting' as a reflection of self-responsibility of the offense.

الصوج مني

Issuch minni

It is my fault.

اني السبب بالعطل

Aanissabab bil'atal

Idleness was my wrong.

d. Gratitude

It is found from the analysis that speakers use the speech act of 'thanking' as a sign of gratitude. The speech act of 'thanking' has the following characteristics(key: S=speaker, H=hearer);

1. S wishes H to believe that S is in favour of an act A, performed by H as in the interests of S.
2. In 'thank', S may be held to believe that H did A knowingly, and that benefits to S consequent to A were known by H to be involved at the time of his/her doing A.
3. Thanks are clearly H-supportive, and the verbal strategies of performing this illocutionary speech act are explicit.

(ibid.: 144)

اشكرك لان اقبلت اعتذاري

Ashkurak li'an qbalit l'itithaari

Thank you since you have accepted my apology.

شكرا لان سمعتني

Shukran li'an sma'itni

Thanks for listening.

## 7.2 Semantic formulas according to apologizer's status

Apologies are made up of different selections from these formulas in accordance with the status and power relationship between speaker and hearer. In apology, someone with lower status, Iraqi males who are in a higher status do not use direct apology or remorse (regret). On the contrary, females use this strategy with the lower victims. Besides, in apologizing persons with higher status, Iraqis, both males and

females, use more mitigation strategies than in addressing persons with lower status. Table (2) below shows the frequency of the semantic formula according the apologizer status.

Strategy (semantic formula)	Male high	Male Equal	Male low	Female High	Female equal	Female low
statement of remorse (regret)	4	6	10	10	10	10
Accounts	2	1	3	2	2	4
description of damage	2	2	3	3	1	1
reparation	8	12	13	1	5	4
Compensation	1	2	7	15	10	20
the promise not to repeat offense	1	2	3	2	3	4
explicit assessment of responsibility	0	0	2	0	0	3
Contextualization	1	1	2	4	1	1
self-castigation	0	0	3	0	0	2
Gratitude	0	2	2	0	1	2

Table (2): Frequency of semantic formula according to apologizer's status

The role of status in relation to the realization of speech act is addressed in the third research question 'How do Iraqi males and females realize the speech act of apology when the offender is lower, equal, or higher in status to the victim?'. According to Table (2), it can be seen that when the apologizer is higher than the victim, males tend to use reparation (8), statement of remorse (regret) (4), accounts (2), and description of damage (2). There is no resort neither to explicit assessment of responsibility, self-castigation, nor gratitude. The case in females is similar to the males', but the former use statement of remorse (regret) (10) more than males. In addition, females use compensation (15) instead of reparation of males. This reflects the fact that females take more care of their kids' emotional side.

When the apologizer is of equal status of the victim, the analysis shows that males use reparation (12), statement of remorse (regret) (6), description of damage (2), compensation (2), the promise not to repeat offense (2) and gratitude (2). Females tend to use statement of remorse (regret) (10), compensation (10), reparation (5), the promise not to repeat offense (3), accounts (2). It seems that females use compensation more than males when the victim is of equal status. In addition, they are similar in the lack of explicit assessment of responsibility and self-castigation in their apologies. Moreover, it can be said that the extreme use of statement of remorse (regret) (10) by females reflects their opinion and attention to this polite sign more than males.

Finally, when the apologizer is equal in status to the victim, males are found to use reparation (13), statement of remorse (regret) (10), compensation (7), accounts (3), description of damage (3), the promise not to repeat offense (3) and self-castigation (0). On the other side, females seemed to use compensation (20), statement of remorse (regret) (10), Accounts (4), reparation(4), the promise not to repeat

offense (4), explicit assessment of responsibility (3), self-castigation (2), gratitude (2) and contextualization (1).

These results show that Iraqi females try to use similar strategies of apology with all types of victim's status. On the contrary, males used more strategies with victims with higher status, such as the use of reparation, compensation and direct statement of remorse.

### 7.3 Sequence of the Semantic formulas

Throughout analysis, it is founded that the most repeated sequence in apology is as follows:

statement of remorse (regret) + reparation + compensation

This means that this speech act set or semantic formula is the most used one among both males and females.

## 6. Conclusions

It can be concluded that both Iraqi males and females have been tactful with the victim in apology situations, but females try to be more tactful by insisting on using the strategy of compensation rather than reparation. Besides, one can note that females use friendly vocatives more than males to be more tactful and intimate. In addition, females try to be at the same strategy level or type although victims belong to various social statuses. On the contrary, males have been more prestige-conscious and rank-conscious. They rely on different strategies according to each status of the victims. Therefore, males can be said to be selective according to the tenor of the situation. Concerning the semantic formula, which can be called ' pragmatic collocation' since certain speech acts tend to be used altogether in certain situations, seem to be generalized to both males and females. This formula reflects a great deal of carefulness to the explicit use of regret and additional use of supportive strategies of justification and explanation such as those of compensation and reparation.

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