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THE ROLE OF POLITENESS IN APOLOGY SEQUENCES: HOW TO MAINTAIN HARMONY BETWEEN SPEAKERS

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The goal of the present paper is to provide a discourse-based teaching approach for the integration of the speech act of apologies from a communicative perspective. In so doing, special attention is paid to how sociocultural norms affect language use. The rationale behind the selection of this speech act is based on the fact that the realisation of this pragmatic aspect might be complex for learners of English as a Second/Foreign Language (SL/FL) not only when selecting appropriate utterances, but also in assessing what an offense involves and its severity (Bergman and Kasper, 1993). Taking these aspects into account, this paper provides first a review of politeness theory, then, a description of the speech act under investigation is presented, and finally, pedagogical implications regarding the integration of apologies in the second/foreign language classroom are suggested.

Key words: *Politeness, pragmatic competence, speech acts, apologies, discourse-based teaching approach, foreign language didactics*

El objetivo de este trabajo es presentar un enfoque instructivo desde una perspectiva discursiva para la integración del acto de habla de la disculpa desde una perspectiva comunicativa. De este modo, se da especial atención a cómo las normas socioculturales afectan al uso del lenguaje. Se ha seleccionado este acto de habla puesto que su realización podría ser compleja para los estudiantes de inglés como segunda lengua/lengua extranjera (SL/LE) no sólo en la selección de estrategias apropiadas, sino también en cuanto a la evaluación de lo que una ofensa implica y cuál es su severidad (Bergman y Kasper, 1993). Teniendo en cuenta los aspectos mencionados, este trabajo presenta en primer lugar una revisión de la teoría de la cortesía, en segundo lugar, una descripción del acto de habla objeto de estudio, y finalmente se proponen sugerencias pedagógicas respecto a la integración de disculpas en el aula de segundas lenguas/lenguas extranjeras.

Palabras clave: *Cortesía, competencia pragmática, actos de habla, disculpas, enfoque pedagógico desde una perspectiva discursiva, didáctica de la lengua extranjera.*

1. Introduction

Performing speech acts appropriately involves having a good command of pragmatic expertise in order to succeed in communication. Some of the major aspects that should be taken into account when dealing with speech acts are the pragmalinguistic sources that are available for the realisation of semantic formulae as well as the sociopragmatic features that affect an appropriate language performance (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). Specifically, pragmalinguistics refers to the linguistic strategies which constitute a given speech act, while sociopragmatics involves particular contextual aspects such as social distance, power and rank of imposition and/or severity of offense (Brown and Levinson, 1987). The aforementioned social variables, which are related to politeness theory, might have an effect

on how language is employed as well as on the interlocutors' interaction. Thereby, it seems necessary to teach learners of a given second/foreign language (SL/FL) how to realise speech acts appropriately so as to help them to communicate successfully.

With that consideration in mind, the goal of the present paper is to provide a teaching approach for the integration of the speech act of apologies from a communicative perspective. In this particular instructional approach we attempt to highlight the importance of sociocultural norms and how these can affect language performance. This speech act has been selected because realising its utterances and assessing what an offense implies as well as its severity might be difficult for learners of English as a SL/FL (Bergman and Kasper, 1993). Bearing these aspects in mind, this paper is structured as follows: it first provides a review of politeness theory, followed by a working definition of the speech act of apologies, and finally, it describes the instructional approach for integrating the speech act of apologies in the language classroom.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Towards a Definition of Politeness Theory

The phenomenon of linguistic politeness has been the inquiry of research since the 1970s and different approaches have been put forward. Some authors (Grice, 1975; Lakoff, 1973; Leech, 1983) view the notion of politeness according to the Gricean maxims, while others (Brown and Levinson, 1987) have tackled with this particular phenomenon from Goffman's (1969) definition of face. Providing an accurate definition of politeness, however, appears to be a rather complex issue, and thus, most researchers tend to agree with the idea that politeness is part of the affective aspects of interaction, relating this concept to the notion of face (Brown and Levinson, 1987; Kasper, 1990; 2009). In line with this, LoCastro (2003: 274) argues that politeness "has to do with the addressee's expectations that the speaker will engage in situationally appropriate behaviour" and

therefore, knowing how to behave politely in social encounters is a key factor within communication (Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan, 2007).

Brown and Levinson (1987) provide a remarkable and comprehensive theory of politeness which combines aspects of the speech act theory, Grice's maxims and Goffman's (1967) notion of *face*. This notion is first introduced by Goffman (1967: 5), who states that this term can be defined as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact". In this regard, Hickey and Vázquez (1994) indicate that Brown and Levinson's (1987) interpretation comes from Goffman's definition of this term as well as from the English folk *losing face* (i.e. being humiliated) and *saving face* (i.e. being saved from humiliation). Brown and Levinson (1987: 61) point out that face has to do with "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself". Furthermore, these same authors (1987) suggest that this notion consists of a person's feeling of self-worth or self-image. Specifically, they (1987: 61) indicate that face "can be lost, maintained, or enhanced, and must be constantly attended to" when speakers are involved in an interaction. Consequently, maintaining one's face might depend on the maintenance of speakers' face and on participants' aim of preserving each other's face.

This particular view of politeness, based on the notion of *face*, is closely linked to directive speech acts given the fact that this particular group of speech acts intrinsically threaten face and, thus, are called *face-threatening acts* (FTAs). Therefore, in an interaction participants must engage in some form of face-work, in relation to which they may behave in two ways: either they seek to avoid the FTA or they decide to do the FTA. Then, following Brown and Levinson (1987), the options which can be employed to mitigate an FTA are: (1) not performing the FTA; (2) doing the FTA either *off-record* or *on-record*. The latter option involves two different actions, either *badly on record without redressive strategies* or *face-saving politeness with redressive strategies* (i.e. either *positive politeness strategies* or *negative politeness strategies*). Accordingly, the risk of the loss of face varies depending on the type of strategies used: choosing *badly on record* without *redressive* action is the least polite strategy, whereas *not*

doing the FTA will be seen as the most polite action. The degree of risk relies on three universal variables, and participants' choice of strategies is closely related to those variables which can also determine the seriousness of the FTAs.

Since speakers are expected to adopt certain strategies to preserve hearers' face, Brown and Levinson (1987) indicate that the choice of which strategy to use might depend on the speakers' assessment of the size of the FTA, which is somehow constrained by specific contextual factors. This particular assessment is based on three main variables or sociopragmatic factors. The first variable refers to the *social distance* between the speaker and the hearer, that is, the degree of familiarity that exists between the interlocutors. Therefore, as social distance increases, politeness also increases. Regarding the second parameter, that of the relative power of the speaker with respect to the hearer, it is assumed that the more powerful the hearer is, the more polite the speaker will be expected to be. The third factor is the ranking of imposition, which addresses the third contextual factor, and implies that the greater the imposition on the hearer, the more polite the speaker is required to be. Finally, another factor that can be taken into account is the severity of offense when assessing, for example, the speech act of apologies.

The politeness theory developed by Brown and Levinson (1987), which distinguishes between on record and off record strategies when performing an FTA, has been claimed to be universal. These strategies seem to be related to the two pragmatic ones of direct and indirect realisation strategies, which, according to Kasper and Schmidt (1996), are also universally available in all speech acts. However, as White (1993) states, when dealing with FL learners, particular care has to be taken, since these learners know the rules of politeness of their own language and culture. Thus, if they attempt to transfer their native conventions to the target language, a pragmalinguistic failure may occur (Thomas, 1983) and they may be misunderstood or even interpreted as being rude, arrogant, pushy or offensive. For this reason, as suggested by Thomas (1995: 157) "it is not the linguistic form alone which renders the speech act polite or impolite,

but the linguistic form + the context of utterance + the relationship between the speaker and the hearer”.

Considering therefore the principles proposed in the politeness theory, it is essential to appropriately select the most suitable formulae when performing a particular speech act. The one selected in this paper is that of apologies which is explained in the next subsection.

2.2. The Speech Act of Apologies

According to Austin's (1962) classification of illocutionary acts, apologies fall into the category of behabitives, and Searle (1979) assigns this particular speech act within to the category of expressives. Searle (1979: 15) indicates that apologies “express the psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content”. Leech (1983), however, classifies this particular speech act within the convivial speech act type since its illocutionary goal coincides with the social goal, specifically, that of maintaining harmony between the speaker and the hearer in which there is some benefit for the hearer and some cost for the speaker. Aijmer (1996) indicates that apologies are strategies that are used to convey a particular communicative goal, which requires an utterance whose purpose is to “set things right” (Olshtain and Cohen, 1983:20) and more recently Márquez-Reiter (2000) suggests that an apology is employed when a speaker commits an action that damages another person.

From the above definitions, it is assumed that this type of speech act involves at least two participants, the apologetiser, offender or speaker and the offended or hearer. In line with this, Holmes (1995) suggests that apologetic strategies are addressed to the offended participant whose face is hurt and the purpose of those semantic realisations is that of rectifying the error committed. Therefore by apologetising, speakers might restore problems between interlocutors as well as re-establish harmony between them (Holmes, 1995). In this regard, apologies are moves which are mainly

employed to solve a problem between the speaker and the hearer, which is usually created by the speaker since he or she has committed an offensive action that has damaged the hearer.

Considering all the previous assumptions, it seems that the speech act of apologising might be placed within the domain of politeness in which an apology is mainly viewed as a communicative move where the apologiser might take into account the other participant's face as an attempt to repair or restore damage to face (Brown and Levinson, 1987). A similar view is shared by other researchers such as Fraser (1981), Olshtain and Cohen (1983) and Olshtain (1989), who also focus on the benefit of the offended person. Apologising reflects the apologiser's understanding of the situation together with his/her acceptance of the rule. Apparently, the offender could be seen as the beneficiary of the remedial move since by apologising he/she might restore harmony. In line with this, Olshtain and Cohen (1983) suggest that there are some factors which can have an influence on offenders' assumption of responsibility. On the one hand, the perception of the degree of the severity of the offense can play a crucial factor. On the other hand, other influential factors can be age, degree of social distance and power between the participants. However, the offender can deny apologising (Olshtain and Cohen, 1983; Trosborg, 1987). In fact, he or she might not necessarily see a violation of a social norm or an inappropriate act in his or her behaviour (Olshtain and Cohen, 1983) or perhaps the offender might choose to emphasise his or her innocence (Trosborg, 1987).

2.3. Politeness and Apologies

The notion of face previously explained is particularly interesting for the speech act of apologies since they involve cost to the speaker and support for the hearer. More specifically, Olshtain (1989, cited in Deutschmann, 2003) points out that:

An apology is basically a speech act which is intended to provide support for the H (hearer) who was actually or potentially malaffected by a violation

X. In the decision to carry out the verbal apology, the S (speaker) is willing to humiliate himself or herself to some extent and to admit to fault and responsibility for X. Hence, the act of apologizing is face viewing for the H and face-threatening for the S, in Brown and Levinson's (1978) terms. (Olshtain, 1989: 156-157, cited in Deutschmann, 2003: 39)

Therefore, the speech act of apologising is face-saving for the hearer and face-threatening for the speaker. In fact, according to Leech (1983), apologies are performed in order to maintain harmony, which is beneficial for the hearer and has a cost for the speaker. Márquez-Reiter (2000: 45) also notes that "apologies are a clear example of a speech act whose main purpose is that of redressive action, that is to say, they redress face-threatening behaviour and in so doing they acknowledge the addressee's need not be imposed upon and/or offended". Holmes (1995) defines remedial apologies as negative politeness based on the fact that their purpose is redressive action. The author also proposes that apologies are face-supporting acts for both the hearer and the speaker since they mutually benefit from such action. Moreover, Holmes (1995) points out that despite the fact that apologies are utilised when the hearer's face is damaged, and thereby they are considered as negative politeness strategies (Brown and Levinson, 1987), some of the elements which are included within the realisation of the speech act of apologies might focus somehow on speaker's positive face needs. In line with this, Deutschmann's (2003) study reveals that most of the remedial apologies identified in his corpus show positive politeness, which, according to the author, implies that "this important function of apologising has been entirely overlooked by B&L and many other scholars, who have primarily classed apologising as an example of negative politeness" (Deutschmann, 2003: 71).

Then, the speech act of apologies might be associated with the issue of politeness and face, either by taking into account exclusively the perspective of considering apologies as a negative politeness communicative event (Brown and Levinson, 1987) or by considering that it could also be seen as a face-supporting act in which both participants could benefit from such realisation (Holmes, 1995). In this regard, Deutschman (2003: 39) argues that "both negative and positive face needs should be taken into

account when we consider different uses of this speech act” and then, as the author indicates, “these should be viewed from both hearer and speaker perspectives”.

In short, apologies might be understood as pure tools which might serve to show respect to the hearers for having violated a particular social norm. Furthermore, it should also be taken into consideration that when the speaker apologises, the situation might be somehow restored and possibly both participants can be mutually benefited, since both might receive a positive reward. On the one hand, if the speaker apologises, it is because he or she assumes the culpability and the hearer can appreciate that particular action. On the other hand, however, it seems that it is not only the hearer who might benefit from such an apologetic action, but also the speaker who somehow could achieve the purpose of apologising and then he or she can restore the situation of recovering his or her self-face.

Considering therefore the importance of paying attention to politeness principles when performing apologies in an appropriate way, it seems fundamental to address this specific knowledge in the SL/FL classroom. In so doing, learners can learn how to employ them accurately in communicative situations. Hence, taking the aforementioned aspects into account, the following section presents the elaboration of a discourse-based teaching approach whose purpose is to expose learners to the use of apologies not only by paying attention to the pragmalinguistic aspects of this speech act, but also by focusing on the sociopragmatic parameters which are involved in communicative interactions, that is to say, the politeness rules which govern language performance.

3. A Discourse-based Teaching Approach

The proposed discourse-based instructional framework has been designed drawing on previous research in interlanguage pragmatics (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Washburn, 2001; Eslami-Rasekh, 2005; Kondo, 2010; Martínez-Flor, 2010; Beltrán-Palanques, 2012). These authors have

presented and developed a series of activities whose purpose is twofold: to foster learners' pragmatic consciousness on various pragmatic issues and to provide them with opportunities for communicative practice. Taking some of the techniques proposed by these interlanguage pragmatic (ILP) scholars into account, we have developed a particular discourse-based teaching approach that consists of five main stages: (1) introduction: input presentation; (2) awareness-raising activities; (3) metapragmatic explanations; (4) communicative practice activities; and (5) final revision: feedback.

3.1. Introduction: Input Presentation

The purpose of the first stage is to make learners aware of what apologies involve and how they work. To do so, learners are provided with authentic-like input (i.e. film scene) in which the speech act of apologies is employed in contextualised situations. We have chosen audiovisual material as research has shown its potential value when integrating speech acts in the instructed setting (Washburn, 2001; Rose, 2001; Alcón, 2005; Martínez-Flor, 2007; Beltrán-Palanques, 2011, 2012). Therefore, learners are presented with an audiovisual scene in which the speech act of apologies is employed and they are asked to reflect on the context and the strategies employed (see Appendix A). This particular scene shows two strangers interacting at a press conference and one of them seems to damage the other's reputation by the comments made. Hence, an apology is elicited in order to restore harmony and show repentance for the damage caused. After that, a whole class discussion ensues regarding learners' perceptions of the situation in which the apology strategies are used.

3.2. Awareness-raising Activities

The second stage focuses on drawing learners' attention to how sociopragmatics affects language use (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Then, the film scene used in the first stage is watched again, and learners

are asked to complete a short audiovisual answer worksheet, which includes questions about the type of strategies employed, the setting, the participants' characteristics such as gender and age, participants' role, status, relationship, and intentions when communicating. Moreover, it contains questions related to the speakers' social distance and power, and the severity of the damage caused by the offense (see Appendix B). Once they have completed it, learners are given the transcript of the film scene so that they can read the dialogue in order to better understand the situation. After this, learners are provided with a different scene in which the speech act of apologising also appears (see Appendix C). This second scene is taken from a sitcom and shows two young characters interacting after their first date. Differently to the first film scene, participants know each other as they have previously met and they also share the same status. After watching the scene, learners are provided again with the audiovisual worksheet followed by the transcript. Then, learners are asked to compare and see the differences between the two scenes. Finally, a whole class discussion takes place in order to comment on learners' responses to the answer worksheet by paying special attention to the sociopragmatic features of each situation.

3.3. Metapragmatic Explanations

Having completed the first two stages, learners are now provided with metapragmatic explanations about what pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics are in general (Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983) as well as about the speech act of apologies in particular. To that end, the teacher presents learners a classification of apology strategies so that they can see the variety of pragmalinguistic formulae that can be employed when apologising (see Table 1).

Table 1. Classification of apology strategies (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 289).

Strategy	Example
1. Illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs)	<i>Sorry</i>
2. Taking on responsibility a. Explicit self-blame b. Lack of intent c. Justify the hearer d. Expression of embarrassment e. Admission of facts but not responsibility f. Refusal to acknowledge guilt	<i>My mistake</i> <i>I didn't mean to upset you.</i> <i>You're right to be angry</i> <i>I feel awful about it.</i> <i>I forgot about it.</i> <i>It wasn't my fault.</i>
3. Explanation or account	<i>The traffic was terrible.</i>
4. Offer of repair.	<i>I'll pay for the damage.</i>
5. Promise of forbearance	<i>This won't happen again.</i>

Additionally, learners are also explained the importance of the sociopragmatic variables involved in Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory, namely those of social distance, power and severity of offense, and how they influence the appropriate choice of the particular apologetic strategy to be used. To do so, they are presented with a clarifying worksheet that explains these factors (see Table 2).

Table 2. Sociopragmatic aspects.

Sociopragmatic aspects	Explanation
Social distance	It refers to the degree of familiarity between the interlocutors.
Power	It refers to the relative power of the speaker with respect to the hearer.
Severity of offense	It refers to the severity of offense involved in the communicative event.

Once learners have become familiar with the strategies that can be used when apologising and how social variables can affect an appropriate language use, they are engaged in communicative activities to put the knowledge acquired into practice.

3.4. Communicative Practice Activities

Two different communicative activities, written and spoken, are prepared to engage learners in practice. The first production activity involves learners working in pairs in order to elaborate a written dialogue in which the speech act of apologies has to be elicited. To perform this activity successfully, learners need to examine each scenario carefully, paying attention to the setting, to the relationship between participants, as well as to the severity of the offense implied. This particular activity is performed in pairs so each learner plays a role and they are encouraged to take as many turns as needed in order to negotiate speech acts appropriately. To facilitate learners' performance and teachers' collection of the written production, this activity can be done using any social network which allows them to write. Example 1 (taken from Beltrán-Palanques, 2013: 122) shows the type of scenarios that learners are presented with.

Example 1

Student A:

You have registered in a language course at the university. You have attended from the very first sessions so you have taken all the notes. One day, a student that you do not know sits next to you. At end of the session he/she suggests going for a coffee. While you are showing him/her the notes, he/she accidentally drops his/her coffee on them.
What would you say?

Student B:

You have registered in a language course at the university but you have not attended any session so you do not have the notes. The first day you go to class, you sit next to another student. After the session, you suggest going for a coffee. While he/she is showing you his/her notes, you accidentally drop your coffee on them. *What would you say?*

The second production activity consists of a series of purposefully role-plays that provides learners with spoken opportunities to perform apologies in different communicative situations. Specifically, in this activity learners have to create spoken dialogues based on the given scenarios paying attention to the different sociopragmatic features involved in each scenario. Moreover, they can also take all the different turns that they need to reach their communicative goal and, unlike the previous production task, their interaction is recorded so that it can later be employed to provide learners with feedback on their performance. Example 2 (taken from Beltrán-Palanques, 2013: 129) illustrates two different situations that can be used at this stage.

Example 2

Student A:

You are the language coordinator at the language centre of a university. You have to interview a boy/girl for a job. However, he/she is late and you have been waiting for about 25 minutes. *What would you say?*

Student B:

You have finished your English Studies degree. You have an interview with the language coordinator of the language centre of a university at 10 am, but since you are caught in a traffic jam you arrive around 25 minutes late. *What would you say?*

After the completion of each production activity, learners are given a short questionnaire that includes questions related to their performance, such as (1) *Which aspects did you pay attention to when performing this*

situation?; (2) Did you find any difficulties when performing the situation?; (3) Was your performance influenced by any aspect of the context? The aim of these questions is to obtain further information concerning their perception of the situations and which social variables affected their production.

3.5. Final Revision: Feedback

In the last stage, learners are provided with feedback on their apologetic performance from both their peers and teachers. To do so, it is important to provide each pair with the transcripts of the different communicative activities they have done and examine them carefully. This can be carried out focusing on the pragmalinguistic strategies used, as well as on the sociopragmatic aspects involved in each activity. Then, learners reflect and discuss on the appropriateness of the pragmalinguistic formulae and how they are affected by sociopragmatic features. Moreover, each pair is encouraged to read aloud the transcripts of their performance and explain why they have selected such strategies. In so doing, not only the teacher but also the peers can provide other learners with feedback. Learners' explanation concerning their performance can be corroborated with the responses provided in the short questionnaire distributed at the end of the fourth phase. After having provided them with feedback, a brief whole class discussion takes place in order to solve any possible doubts concerning the use of apologies.

In short, all the suggested activities proposed in the discourse-based teaching approach explained above are aimed at developing the learners' sensibility towards the use of apologies from a sociopragmatic perspective, that is, by emphasising the role of politeness. It presents activities which range from language awareness to language production at the discourse level. In so doing, special care has been taken to select both input and output activities. On the one hand, it is suggested that learners should be provided with authentic-like examples (i.e. audiovisual input) in which the speech act under study appears in contextualised situations.

On the other hand, learners are provided with opportunities for performing apologies in a communicative and purposefully way in a variety of contextualised situations. Finally, learners are provided with feedback on their performance by paying special attention to how social variables affect language use, thereby emphasising the importance of performing this speech act at the discourse level.

4. Concluding Remarks

The major objective as language teachers is to prepare learners to become communicatively competent in a target language and culture. This is the reason why the discourse-based teaching approach presented in this paper relies mainly on how politeness features can affect speech act performance. In this particular case, since the speech act selected is that of apologies, the aspects which might influence such production are those of social distance, power and severity of offense. By integrating those aspects in the language classroom, teachers can meet learners' pragmatic needs and better assist their students' ILP development. Taking these aspects into account, the suggested instructional model, distributed into five different stages, has included the three necessary conditions for the acquisition of their pragmatic ability when apologising in the target language, namely, exposure to input, opportunities for practice in a written and an oral mode, and provision of feedback. As a final remark, it is worth pointing out that despite the fact that the approach taken here has focused on the speech act of apologies, it might also serve to integrate other pragmatic aspects (i.e. other speech acts, implicature or pragmatic formulas) in the SL/FL classroom in order to help learners develop their pragmatic awareness.

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APPENDIX A

Film scene taken from *The Constant Gardener*.

Situation 1: Tessa attends a conference given by Justin, a British diplomat. Tessa, who is a very impulsive woman, attacks some of the comments made by Justin.

Tessa: Excuse me. Excuse me.

Justin: Yeah? Yeah, sorry. Excuse- Excuse me.

Tessa: Sir, I've just got one question. I just wondered whose map, um, is Britain using...when it completely ignores the United Nations and decides to invade Iraq? Or do you- do you think...it's more diplomatic to bend to the will of a superpower...and-and politely take part in Vietnam, a sequel?

Justin: Well, uh, I- I can't speak for Sir Bernard-

Tessa: Oh, I thought that's why you were here.

Justin: I mean, diplomats have to go where they're sent.

Tessa: So do Labradorers.

[Audience: Ooh]

Justin: Ouch.

Well, I think that, no, Sir Bernard would no doubt argue... that when, um, peaceful means are exhausted, then

Tessa: Exhausted? Mr. Quayle, they're not exactly exhausted, are they I mean, they're just- they're just- No, they are just lying in the way of the tanks. No, I-I-let's face it. We've taken sixty years...to build up this international organization called the United Nations, which is meant to avoid wars, and now we just blow it up because our car's running out of petrol.

[A journalist: Sit down, Tessa, for Christ's sake.]

Justin: L- I think- - Hold on a minute. Let's see what he says.

I think the questioner is making a valid point, and that a nation's foreign policy...should not be determined by narrow commercial interests.

Tessa: That's bullshit. That's bullshit. You have to take responsibility. You are being paid to apologize for this pathetic country, Britain, and he can explain to us why we've burned our diplomatic credentials... and why we're killing, you know, thousands of innocent people... just for-just for some barrels of oil...and a photo opportunity on the White House lawn. Why?

Justin: Are you all right?
 Tessa: Yes, thanks.
 Justin: You were courageous.
 Tessa: No. No, *I was completely rude. It was just bad behavior, and I*
 Justin: You were impassioned.
 Tessa: *I'm so embarrassed. Sorry.*
 Justin: Please don't be embarrassed.
 Tessa: *I'm really sorry. And, uh, thanks very much. You... tried to protect me.*
 Justin: Very feebly.
 Tessa: No, you were-you were- You weren't feeble. I just-
 Justin: Anyway, it was a very dull lecture.
 Tessa: It was a dull lecture, but even so I shouldn't have-
 Justin: Well, look, can I- can I buy you a coffee or-
 Tessa: *I owe you a drink.*
 Justin: All right. You can buy me a drink.
 Tessa: Come on.
 Justin: I'm Justin, by the way.
 Tessa: Tessa. How do you do?
 Justin: Pleased to meet you.
 Tessa: Yeah, yeah. Pleased to meet you.

Note: In the two film scenes included in the Appendices, apology strategies are in italics for reader's quick identification.

Appendix B

Data-collection worksheet for examining apology strategies (adapted from Martínez-Flor and Usó-Juan, 2006: 52)

Audiovisual data-collection worksheet

Answer the following questions:

1. Which strategies are employed?
2. Describe the participants in terms of gender and age.
3. Where are they?
4. Which is the role played by each participant?

5. Which status is represented by each participant?
 6. How would you describe their relationship?
 7. Which are participants' intentions?

Select the option you think is suitable:

1. Speakers' social distance: stranger, acquaintance and intimate
 2. Speakers' power: S*>H** S=H S<H
 3. Severity of offense: low and high

Note: *S= Speaker and **H=Hearer

Appendix C

Sitcom scene taken from *How I Met your Mother*.

Situation 2: Ted meets Robin in a bar and asks her for a date. Once they are in front of Robin's place, a colleague goes there to pick her up to cover a piece of news.

Ted: [Ted enters the apartment.]
 Mom, Dad, I have found the future Mrs. Ted Mosby. Marshall, how have I always described my perfect woman?

Marshall: Ah, let's see, she likes dogs?
 [Flashback to date with Robin.]

Robin: I've got five dogs.
 [Scene returns to the apartment with Marshall, Lily, and Ted.]

Marshall: She drinks Scotch?
 [Flashback to date.]

Robin: I love a Scotch that's old enough to order its own Scotch.
 [Scene returns to the apartment.]

Marshall: Can quote obscure lines from Ghostbusters?
 [Flashback to date.]

Robin [quoting a line from the movie Ghostbusters]: Ray, when someone asks you if you're a god you say "Yes!"
 [Scene returns to the apartment.]

Ted: And, I'm saving the best for last.
 [Flashback to date.]

Robin	[offering Ted her olives from dinner]: Do you want these? I hate olives. [Scene returns to the apartment.]
Marshall:	She hates olives, awesome! Lily: The Olive Theory. [Flashback to date.]
Ted	[to Robin]: The Olive Theory is based on my friends, Marshall and Lily. He hates olives, she loves them. In a weird way, that's what makes them such a great couple, a perfect balance.
Robin:	You know, I've had a jar of olives just sitting in my fridge forever.
Ted:	I can take them off your hands.
Robin:	They're all yours. [Scene returns to Marshall, Lily, and Ted at the apartment.]
	Marshall: Oh, it is on! It is on [does the "Robot (dance)"] till the break of dawn.
Lily	[noticing that Ted's home early]: But wait, it's only the break of ten-thirty. What happened? [Flashback to Ted walking Robin home after dinner.]
Robin:	I've got to get one of those blue French horns for over my fireplace. It's got to be blue, it's got to be French.
Ted:	No Green Clarinet?
Robin:	Nope.
Ted:	Come on, no purple tuba?
Robin:	It's a Smurf penis or no dice. [A Metro News 1 van pulls up to Robin's home.]
Producer	[to Robin, from inside the van]: There you are! We've got a jumper, some crazy guy on the Manhattan Bridge. Come on, you're covering it!
Robin	[responding]: Um, alright. I'll be right there. [To Ted] <i>I'm sorry. I had a really great time tonight.</i>
Ted	[smiling]: Yeah, well...

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