

The Level of Directness in Turkish Apology Forms in Relation to the Level of Education

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Abstract

This study aims at investigating the directness level of the apology strategies used by adult Turkish native speakers having different educational backgrounds in different apology situations. Thus, the educational level of the speakers is taken as the variable in this study. It is hypothesized that subjects having high and low educational backgrounds behave differently in different apology situations. It is also hypothesized in this study that high education group subjects use more direct apology strategies whereas low education group subjects prefer to use the more indirect formulas. In order to uncover the norms of apologizing in both low education and high education groups, 80 native speakers of Turkish, who were delivered a discourse completion test with different apology situations, were used. 40 of this population constituted the low education group whose education level varied between primary and junior high school whereas the other 40 constituted the high education group with the education level that varied between university graduation and PhD. The discourse completion test, which was a written role-play questionnaire consisted of eight apology situations, which were designed to elicit appropriate strategies to apologize. Relative status, familiarity and severity of offence were considered to be the factors affecting the choice of apology strategies. The data obtained from the discourse completion tests of both groups are compared and contrasted in terms of a directness scale developed for this purpose. Data analysis is carried out in terms of Pearson Chi-Square and Mann Whitney U tests. All the formulas in the scale emerged from the data and are represented hierarchically from the most direct to the indirect. The scale is also tested by 40 Turkish native speakers who were interviewed about the hierarchy of the apology strategies. The results of this study indicate that the responses of the low education and high education groups differ in terms of the directness level in different apology situations. It is found out in this study that direct apology strategies are preferred by the high education group subjects. Conversely, the indirect apology strategies are used more by the low education group subjects.

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Thus, the analysis of the data clearly show us that the level of education is an important factor that influence the level of directness in apologies in Turkish.

Keywords: Apology, high education group, low education group, the level of directness, apology situation

Öz

Bu çalışma farklı eğitim seviyelerine sahip ve Türkçeyi anadili olarak konuşan yetişkin deneklerin farklı özür durumlarında kullandıkları özür stratejilerinin dolaylılık derecesini ortaya çıkartmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmada katılımcıların eğitim seviyesi değişken olarak alınmıştır. Bu çalışmada ayrıca, düşük eğitim ve yüksek eğitim seviyesi gruplarındaki deneklerin farklı durumlarda farklı özür davranışları sergileyecekleri varsayılmıştır. Bunun da ötesinde, yüksek eğitim seviyesine sahip deneklerin dolaysız özür stratejilerini, düşük eğitim seviyesine sahip deneklerin ise dolaylı özür stratejilerini daha fazla tercih edecekleri ileri sürülmüştür. Hem düşük ve hem de yüksek eğitim seviyesine sahip deneklerin özür davranışlarını ortaya çıkarabilmek amacıyla, Türkçeyi ana dili olarak konuşan 80 deneye farklı özür durumları içeren söylem tamamlama testi dağıtılmıştır. Bu deneklerden 40 tanesi düşük eğitim grubunu oluşturmakta ve eğitimleri ilkokul ile ortaokul seviyesi arasında değişmektedir. Diğer 40 denek ise yüksek eğitim grubunu oluşturmakta ve eğitimleri üniversite ile doktora seviyesi arasında değişmektedir. Bir olayı yazılı olarak tekrar canlandırma anketi olan söylem tamamlama testi, farklı özür durumlarında uygun şekilde özür dileme eylemini ortaya çıkartmak üzere tasarlanmış sekiz farklı durumdan oluşmaktadır. Göreceli statü, yakınlık ve kabahatin şiddeti, özür seçimi stratejilerini etkileyen faktörler olarak düşünülmüştür. Her iki grubun söylem tamamlama testlerinden elde edilen veriler bu çalışma kapsamında geliştirilen bir dolaylılık ölçeği çerçevesinde karşılaştırılmıştır. Verilerin çözümlenmesinde Pearson kare ve Mann Whitney U testleri kullanılmıştır. Ölçekte yer alan bütün özür formülleri veriler içerisinden alınmış ve en dolaysız formülden en dolaylı olanına doğru aşamalı bir biçimde sunulmuştur. Bu ölçek içerisinde yer alan aşamalı dolaylılık sıralaması, Türkçeyi ana dili olarak konuşan 40 denek ile yapılan görüşmeler ile de test edilmiştir. Bu çalışmanın bulguları yüksek ve düşük eğitim seviyesi gruplarının farklı durumlardaki özür davranışlarının dolaylılık derecesi açısından farklılık gösterdiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, bu çalışmada dolaysız özürlerin yüksek eğitim seviyesine sahip denekler tarafından daha fazla tercih edildiği, dolaylı özürlerin ise düşük eğitim seviyesine sahip denekler tarafından daha fazla kullanıldığı da bulunmuştur. Verilerin çözümlenmesi bize, eğitim seviyesinin Türkçe özürlerde dolaylılık derecesini etkileyen önemli bir faktör olduğunu göstermektedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Özür, yüksek eğitim grubu, düşük eğitim grubu, dolaylılık derecesi, özür durumu

Introduction

In the last two decades, many studies on speech acts have been carried out. The majority of these studies have been conducted with native speakers of English or with groups of mixed nationalities studying English as a second or foreign language. However,

in order to provide more insights for improved intercultural communication, speech act studies should be carried out within and across cultures and countries, especially with respect to the generalizability and significance of the results.

Research on various speech acts such as compliments (Manes and Wolfson, 1981), invitations (Wolfson, D'amico-Reisner and Huber, 1983), apologies (Fraser, 1981; Edmondson, 1981 ; Holmes, 1989) and expressions of gratitude (Eisenstein and Bodman, 1993) in English have revealed the formulaic nature of speech acts. The studies about Turkish apologies have also revealed the fact that native speakers' realizations of apologies are highly patterned (Erçetin, 1997 ; Hatipoğlu, 2003 ; Erden and Özyıldırım, 2000 ; Gökçora, 1998).

Apologies were chosen as the focal speech act for this study as they are considered to be face-threatening speech acts which have serious implications for miscommunication across cultures.

Background Information about Apologies

What is an Apology ?

'Apology' can be defined as 'regretful acknowledgement of fault or failure; assurance that no offence was intended' (The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1980, p.43-44). Therefore, apology always carries with it the will to be forgiven. Apologies are a means of maintaining the social order; they are called for when social norms are violated (Olshtain and Cohen, 1983), thus, being 'face-supportive' acts (Holmes, 1989, p.195). They are very good indicators of distance and dominance in relationships, hence reflecting cultural norms (Wolfson, Marmor and Jones, 1986).

In order for an apology to take place, expression of an apology by the offender, and a reply with silent gesture or words by the victim are called for. However, it is also possible that the offender may deny the responsibility, not perceiving himself/herself responsible for the act (Goffman, 1971). There are indeed factors which make the offender deny the responsibility, such as the offender's own perception of the degree of severity of the offence, the recipient's point of view, age, familiarity and social status.

Olshtain and Cohen (1983) in their study compared and contrasted apologies in English, Russian and Hebrew and presented some semantic formulas. According to them, strategies used to apologize can generally be classified as a) an expression of an apology e.g. 'I apologize', 'I'm sorry', 'please forgive me', 'excuse me' or 'pardon me'; b) an explanation of the situation ; c) an acknowledgement of responsibility e.g. 'It's my fault', 'I was confused', or 'I didn't see you', 'You're right'; d) an offer of repair, e.g. 'I'll pay for the vase'; e) a promise of forbearance, e.g. 'It won't happen again'.

Apology strategies are, in fact, not used on their own, but a combination of several strategies is usually the case. The choice of apology strategy depends on the nature of offence, the severity of the offence, the situation of the interaction, the familiarity of the individuals involved and the sex of the individuals (Fraser, 1981).

The Level of Directness in Apologies

Apologies are hard to identify, define, or categorize, a difficulty that arises directly out of the functions they perform. Hence too, they occur in a range of forms from canonically explicit to ambiguously indirect; the functions served by those forms range from abject abasement for wrongdoing, the conventional greasing of the social wheels, to expressions of sympathy, advance mollification for intended bad behavior, and formal public displays of currently 'appropriate' feeling (Lakoff, 2001, p. 201).

Apology (Lakoff, 2001, p. 201) more than most speech acts, places psychological burdens both on its maker and less seriously, on its recipient. That is the reason for the plethora of indirect forms that, in appropriate contexts, we recognize as apologies. There does exist an unambiguous apology form, seen in :

-I apologize for eating your hamster.

This form can be considered as the most direct apology form. However, we usually resort to any of a set of forms that involve one or another of the presuppositions or assertions of apologies, either blurring it or explicitly stating it (allowing other aspects of the act of apology to be passed over in silence). For instance, speaker's responsibility for the act can be downplayed in favour of an explicit statement conveying regret :

-I'm sorry about your hamster

or in extreme cases responsibility may be explicitly assigned elsewhere :

-Well, someone left the hamster in the refrigerator

or the utterance may deny that wrongdoing occurred at all:

-Well, that's what hamsters are for, right ?

It can be stated that as apologies, these utterances are not fully satisfactory and that the addressee's goodwill is required to make them function appropriately.

Some forms of apologies refer specifically to one of their functions, perhaps as a way to minimize the utterer's responsibility for the others :

- I admit I ate the hamster (responsibility)

- It was wrong of me to eat the hamster (wrongdoing)

- Can you find it in your heart to forgive me for eating the hamster (wish for forgiveness)

- I'll never eat a hamster again as long as I live (abjuration of bad behaviour)

Lakoff (2001, p. 202) states that these cases illustrate the many forms available for the performance of the single act of apology. One advantage to having all these choices for apologizers, is that they are thus enabled to calibrate the self-abasement to the perceived seriousness of the offence.

Different Perspectives in Apology Studies

Lakoff (2001) in her article "Nine Ways of Looking at Apologies: The Necessity for Interdisciplinary Theory and Method in Discourse Analysis" points out the interdisciplinary

nature of apologies and claims that apologies should be considered as contributions to a larger discourse, viewing them from a variety of perspectives, formal and functional, cognitive and interactive, individual and group, intralanguage and societal; to examine the apology from the perspective of phonology, syntax, lexical semantics, speech act pragmatics, conversational analysis, narratology, and sociolinguistics.

For the purposes of this study, we will deal with three of the nine different perspectives presented by Lakoff (2001). These are namely 1) lexical semantics, 2) speech act pragmatics and 3) sociolinguistics

Lexical Semantics of Apology

The semantics of apology deals with what we mean when we talk about apologizing. It studies how apology differs from explanation, excuse, justification, etc. in terms of their meanings. For instance, the utterance ‘I apologize for X’ according to Fillmore (1971) involves several presuppositions and at least one assertion. The presuppositions are : 1) X is bad for A (addressee) ; 2) Sp regrets X ; 3) Sp undertakes not to do X ; 4) Sp (or someone under Sp’s control) is responsible for X and 5) Sp could have done otherwise. Assertion is ‘ Speech act puts Sp one-down vis-a-vis A’. According to Lakoff (2001, p. 205), at least one of these conditions is missing in excuses, justifications and explanations. In an excuse the speaker denies either his or her own responsibility as in the sentence ‘The cat made me do it ‘. In a justification, the speaker denies that the action was bad, if properly understood as in ‘Everybody else gets to do it’. In an explanation, however, the speaker takes responsibility for the action, but suggests that the addressee finds it bad because he or she does not understand it. For example, ‘I did it for your own good’. Thus, it can be said that after apologies and excuses, the speaker ends up one-down, after justifications, both parties may be equal ; and after an explanation, it is the recipient who ends up losing face as someone who does not get it. Explanations benefit their speakers, apologies their addressees.

The Pragmatics of Apology : Speech Acts

Pragmatics is the study of communication – the study of how language is used. In other words, pragmatics occupies a realm intermediate between language autonomous, decontextualized approaches and more complex theories entailing the consideration of the linguistic context and extralinguistic circumstances in which utterances occur. Brinton (2001, p.140) states that pragmatics is frequently equated with speech act theory. According to Austin’s ‘speech act theory’, language as action serves a range of different functions such as promising, asserting, describing, complaining, apologizing, etc.

In the light of the speech act theory, it can be said that to apologize is an illocutionary act, which is achieved through the uttering of the performative verb ‘apologize’. Performative verbs carry an action in themselves. In other words, in performatives, the saying of the words constitutes the performing of an action. In such a case, for example, no one can prevent someone from apologizing except by refusing to listen.

Searle (1975, p.59) introduced a distinction between direct and indirect speech acts which depends on a recognition of the intended effect of an utterance on a particular occasion. Searle makes this distinction between two cases of meaning : 1) the case when the speaker utters a sentence and means exactly and literally what he says. In this case, what the speaker intends is to produce an illocutionary effect in the hearer 2) the case when the speaker's utterance meaning and the sentence meaning diverge in hints such as insinuations, irony and metaphor. In such cases, the speaker utters a sentence, means what he says, but also means something more. Searle (1980, p.226) further states that "in indirect speech acts, the speaker communicates to the hearer more than he actually says by way of relying on their mutually shared background information, both linguistic and non-linguistic together with the general powers of rationality and inference on the part of the hearer".

Pilkington (1996, p.158) explains the same fact as follows : the addresser in fashioning his or her utterance takes into account what he or she considers to be the concepts and assumptions that are most accessible to the addressee. The addressee follows a route of least effort in using the most accessible concepts and assumptions until a range of contextual effects that the addresser could rationally have intended is derived. Context is extended until such effects are achieved. These effects then constitute the interpretation. Thus, it is necessary to distinguish what is implied, suggested or meant by a sentence or group of sentences and what is actually said.

Gricean conversational maxims and implicatures can also contribute to the understanding of the implied meanings in utterances. Grice distinguishes between what is implied, suggested or meant by a sentence or group of sentences and what is actually said. Grice explains the cooperative principle in the following way : The participants should make their conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which they are exchanged. If the speaker's words convey other than their literal meanings, the situation characteristically gives rise to a conversational implicature (1975, p. 45).

In the light of the information given above, it is possible to make a distinction between direct and indirect apologies. Direct apologies are realized by the use of appropriate performatives whereas indirect apologies consist of linguistic forms which include verbs other than the performative ones. Thus, it is clear that the hearers can understand an indirect apology by relying upon their knowledge of speech acts, along with the general principles of cooperative conversation, mutually shared factual information, and a general ability to draw inferences.

Sociolinguistic Considerations

The discipline sociolinguistics, which is defined as 'the study of language in relation to society' deals with how people use language differently in different social contexts, and also tries to find out how language operates in society. Furthermore, it studies how language is affected by sociolinguistic factors such as income level, education, age and

gender. Consequently, it is the job of a sociolinguist to find the correlation between language use and sociolinguistic factors (Hudson, 1980, pp. 4-5).

Sociologists try to assign social class distinctions, group definitions to individuals. In attempting to form a group definition, they make use of two types of classifications. They either undergo socioeconomic ranking or they take into consideration other factors and produce different social scales (Wardhaugh, 1990, p.121). The first group definition in terms of socioeconomic ranking includes factors such as income level (dealing with how much money people earn), educational level (graduate or professional education, college or university degree, attendance of college, etc.), occupational scale (major professionals, unskilled workers, etc.) or other ranking systems such as sex, age, race, residential area and ethnicity. The second group definition includes a social class designation according to factors such as church membership, leisure-time activities, or community organizations.

Lakoff (2001, p. 211) states that sociolinguistic analysis directly links the social group memberships of the pair involved in the apology and their options and expectations in the event. Larger cultural background plays a significant role in the understanding of the need for apologies and the determination of their appropriate form. As Brown and Levinson (1987) state, apology is always face-threatening for the speaker ; but not making a necessary apology may occasion more serious face loss in the long run. The weightiness of a contemplated apology as a face threat must be computed by giving consideration to the intimacy and power relationships of the parties involved, and the seriousness of the misdeed that occasioned it.

Other extralinguistic issues are also equally relevant. As Tannen (1994) suggests, women tend to use different apology strategies than men, so that the genders will misunderstand each other. Similarly, other factors such as education, age, income level, occupation, ethnicity, etc. may influence the ways we apologize. Apologies raise the important question of when, how much, and in what way we divulge our 'real self' to the world via language.

Aim and Method

Aim

The aim of this paper is to investigate the directness level of the apology strategies used by adult Turkish native speakers having different educational backgrounds in different apology situations. The educational level of the speakers is taken as the variable in this study.

The claim is that low education group(LEG) and high education group(HEG) subjects use different apology strategies in different apology situations. Moreover, it is also claimed that high education group subjects use more direct apology strategies whereas low education group subjects prefer to use the more indirect formulas. Thus, the research questions addressed are :

- 1) How do the groups having high and low educational backgrounds behave in different apology situations ?
- 2) Do the apology behaviour of the two groups change in terms of the directness level of the apologies ? If yes,
- 3) In what ways do the apology behaviour of the high education and low education groups differ ?

Methodology

Subjects

In order to test the hypotheses mentioned above, 80 subjects were used in this study. Thus, the data were collected from 80 adult native speakers of Turkish : 36 male, 44 female.

40 of this population elicited the low education group whose level of education changed between primary school graduation and junior high school graduation. Since the age of the subjects varied between 20 and 50, all primary school graduates in the data received only five years of formal education in those years. However, in the year 1998, the obligatory primary school education for every citizen in Turkey was extended to eight years. The other 40 of the population elicited the high education group whose level of education changed between university graduates and PhD. graduates.

Age and gender were not taken into consideration in this study.

Materials and Procedure

Discourse Completion Test

In order to uncover the norms of apologizing in both low education and high education groups in Turkish, a controlled elicitation procedure was used. All subjects were asked to fill out a 'Discourse Completion Test', which was a written role-play questionnaire (Appendix). The test consisted of 8 apology situations, which were designed to elicit appropriate strategies to apologize. Relative status (boss at higher status than the informant, friend at equal status and son at lower status), familiarity (from the least familiar to the most familiar, i.e. from a stranger to a son) and severity of offence were considered to be the factors affecting the choice of apology strategies.

Each situation included a short description of the situation, specifying the setting, the social distance, status, and a blank space for subject's response. There were four other situations used as controls, two of which elicited compliments and the other two elicited thanks. Subjects were asked to respond to situations by writing what exactly they would say in those situations. A questionnaire which included questions about age, gender and educational level of the participants was also given to each subject.

The Scale of Directness in Turkish Apology Forms

For the analysis of the responses obtained from the Discourse Completion Test in terms of the directness level, a scale of directness (coding scheme) was developed (Table 1):

Table 1: The Scale of Directness in Turkish Apology Forms : Hierarchy of Strategies Presented from Direct to Indirect

1.Direct Apologies (speaker-oriented)	- <i>özür dilerim</i> ‘I apologize’; <i>affınızı istiyorum</i> ‘ I beg for forgiveness’
2. Degraded apologies (hearer-oriented)	- <i>kusura bakma</i> ‘overlook my offense’ ; <i>affedersin</i> ‘excuse me’
3. Pardon (light apology)	- <i>pardon</i> ‘pardon me’
4. Indirect apologies	
4a. statement of an excuse	- <i>trafik vardı</i> ‘there was traffic’
4b. acknowledgement of responsibility	- <i>benim hatam</i> ‘it’s my fault’
4c. offer of repair/help	- <i>zararınızı ödeyeyim</i> ‘let me pay for the damage’
4d. promise of forbearance	- <i>bir daha olmayacak</i> ‘it won’t happen again’
4e. self-deficiency	- <i>çok dikkatsizim</i> ‘That was very careless of me’
4f. lack of intention	- <i>isteyerek olmadı</i> ‘it wasn’t intentional’
4g. an expression of sorrow	- <i>üzgünüm</i> ‘I feel sorry’
4h. calling for tolerance	- <i>biraz tolerans gösterseniz</i> ‘Couldn’t you be a bit tolerant ?’
4i. Searching for the damage/offense	- <i>canınızı acıttım mı?</i> ‘Did I hurt you?’
5. Remaining silent (no response)	
6. Minimizing the offense/responsibility	- <i>Ufak bir çizik işte, abartmayın!</i> ‘It’s just a little scratch, don’t make fuss about it!’
7. Accusing/blaming the other party	- <i>Şu ayaklarına bak! Tam yolumun üzerinde!</i> ‘Look at your legs. They’re just on my way’

This scale is developed in the light of the approaches put forward by Austin(1962), Grice(1975), Searle(1975, 1980), Levinson(1992), Pilkington(1996) and Fillmore(1972). The scale is also tested by 40 Turkish native speakers who were interviewed about the hierarchy of the apology strategies. All the formulas in the scale emerged from the data and are presented hierarchically from the most direct to the indirect. Moreover, the scale can be considered as having three parts. The first three categories include apology words with varying directness levels and form the positive end of the scale. The last three categories, on the other hand, are not considered as apologies ; however, they are used as negative responses in apology situations. Thus, this part can be considered as the negative

end of the scale. In between these two ends, there are indirect apologies where there is no apology word, but the message is transmitted indirectly.

The most direct apology strategy is developed in the light of Austin's performative formula (I + performative verb) and thus, is always speaker-oriented. The use of the first person singular as the subject of the sentence always indicates that the speaker is the doer of the action and the action is carried out on his/her own will.

Degraded apologies have a lower degree of directness level when compared with the first group. The subject of the sentence is not the first person, but the second person. Thus, this strategy is hearer-oriented. As Fillmore(1972) states, the semantic role assigned to the subject NP has the highest status in the sentence, and a shift in the pronoun use will cause an important semantic change in the interpretation of the sentence. The use of the second person as the subject of the sentence decreases the level of directness in this strategy as the speaker does not consider himself/herself as the doer of the action; but wants to be forgiven by the other party. Thus, the message becomes more indirect. This group includes expressions such as *affedersin* 'excuse me' or *kusura bakma* 'overlook my offense/don't take the offense seriously'.

The third apology strategy includes the borrowed word *pardon* 'pardon me' and is considered as 'light apology' by the native speakers of Turkish who were interviewed. Moreover, the interviews also suggested that the participants did not feel themselves actually apologizing by using 'pardon'.

The fourth group includes a set of indirect apology strategies. This group does not contain any verb of apology, but the message is transmitted indirectly by way of indirect strategies or implicatures as suggested by Searle(1975, 1980), Grice (1975) and Pilkington(1996). As emerged from the data, this group consisted of nine sub-categories coded between 4a and 4i.

The last three groups cannot be considered as apologies; however, they existed in the data as negative responses in different apology situations. Some subjects gave no response at all in certain situations whereas some of them preferred to minimize the responsibility. The last category in the scale 'accusing/blaming the other party' is considered to be the most negative apology strategy found in the data, and thus, placed at the end of the scale.

The data also consisted of intensifiers such as *çok* 'very' as in 'I'm very sorry' or *çok çok* 'very very' as in 'I'm very very sorry'. These intensifiers are also categorized together with the main formulas and are analyzed separately.

Data Analysis

The apologies elicited in the data were analyzed as consisting of a set of semantic formulas. These formulas are arranged hierarchically in the form of a directness scale (Table 1). The apology strategies are presented hierarchically from the most direct to the indirect and coded accordingly from 1 to 7. The data analysis in this study is carried out in terms of this directness scale. The apology strategies presented in this scale, however, are not used on their own, but a combination of several strategies is usually the case. For

example, if a respondent apologized for forgetting to buy a book for his child (Situation 4), saying *özür dilerim* ‘I apologize’; *bu benim hatam* ‘it’s my fault’; *şimdi gidip alalım* ‘let’s go and get it now’, this sequence of formulas are analyzed as (direct apology + acknowledgement of responsibility + offer of repair/help) and coded as (1 + 4b + 4c) in terms of the directness scale. The eight apology situations (Situations 1,2,4,5,7,8,10,11) are analyzed separately for both low education and high education groups in order to see whether a statistically significant difference exists in their choice of apology strategies. Thus, the frequency of each strategy is calculated by dividing that number by the total number of formulas appearing within a particular situation.

In this study, SPSS 11.5 statistical program is used. Data analysis is carried out in terms of Pearson Chi-Square and Mann Whitney U tests.

Analysis and Discussion

General Comparisons

The results of the statistical analysis regarding the choice of apology strategies indicate that there are some differences between the high education and low education groups.

To begin with, it can be stated that high education group subjects use a higher number of words than the low education group subjects in expressing their apologies. To be more precise, high education group subjects used 2265 words in their apologies whereas this number is only 1499 in low education group. The number of the words used by the two groups are compared in terms of Mann Whitney Test and the difference between the high education and low education groups is found to be statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This means that as the level of education increases, the number of the words used in apologizing also increases. The high education group is also marked by the higher number of apology strategies used in apology situations. This difference is also statistically meaningful ($p < 0.05$). Furthermore, there are intensifiers such as *çok* ‘very’ or *çok çok* ‘very very’ used together with the apology formulas in the data. Our statistical comparison between the two groups indicated that the number of the intensifiers used in high education group is significantly higher than the low education group ($p < 0.05$).

The data obtained from the Discourse Completion Tests also indicate that the low education group exhibits less and shorter sentences, grammar mistakes, spelling mistakes, etc. However, these characteristics are not taken into consideration in our analysis.

The Comparison and Analysis of the Eight Apology Situations in Terms of High Education (HEG) and Low Education (LEG) Groups

The eight apology situations that are presented to the subjects in the Discourse Completion Tests are analyzed in order to see how the adult Turkish subjects behave in different apology situations. The responses given to those situations in the Discourse Completion Tests are also compared and contrasted in terms of low education and high education groups. The comparisons of the responses of both groups in terms of the directness scale in eight different apology situations are given in Table 2 :

Table 2: The Comparisons of the Apology Strategies in LEG and HEG in terms of the Directness Scale.

Situations	The level of education	1.Direct apologies	2.Degraded apologies	3. Pardon	4.Indirect apologies	5.Remaining silent	6.Minimizing the offense	7.Accusing the other party	Total	χ^2	p
1	LEG	11(17.2%)	17(26.6%)	11(17.2%)	11(17.2%)			14(21.9%)	67	7.302	p>0.05
	HEG	24(32.4%)	9(12.2%)	10(13.5%)	14(18.9%)			17(23%)	96		
2	LEG	8(12.7%)	20(31.7%)	0(0%)	34(54.0%)			1(1.6%)	63	10.352	p<0.05
	HEG	26(31.3)	15(18.1%)	1(1.2%)	41(49.4%)			0(0%)	83		
4	LEG	6(9%)	5(7.5%)		52(77.6%)	1(1.5%)	2(3%)	1(1.5%)	67	13.885	p<0.05
	HEG	27(28.1%)	5(5.2%)		64(66.7%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	96		
5	LEG	16(23.2%)	21(30.4%)	6(8.7%)	25(36.2%)	1(1.4%)			69	14.010	p<0.05
	HEG	38(44.7%)	12(14.1%)	2(2.4%)	33(38.8%)	0(0%)			85		
7	LEG	13(17.3%)	13(17.3%)	4(5.3%)	41(54.7%)		4(5.3%)		75	12.978	p<0.05
	HEG	27(30%)	5(5.6%)	0(0%)	54(60%)		4(4.4%)		90		
8	LEG	20(24.7%)	15(18.5%)	7(8.6%)	38(46.9%)	1(1.2%)			81	10.888	p<0.05
	HEG	38(38%)	9(9%)	2(2%)	51(51%)	0(0%)			100		
10	LEG	14(19.2%)	12(16.4%)	3(4.1%)	39(53.4%)	1(1.4%)		4(5.5%)	73	7.864	p>0.05
	HEG	26(28%)	12(12.9%)	2(2.2%)	50(53.8%)	3(3.2%)		0(0%)	93		
11	LEG	17(25%)	9(13.2%)		40(58.8%)			2(2.9%)	68	7.026	p>0.05
	HEG	35(40.2%)	6(6.9%)		46(52.9%)			0(0%)	87		

Considering the situations in the Discourse Completion Test, it can be said that situations 1,5 and 8 are designed to elicit responses in a similar situation with increasing seriousness degree in the offense. The aim was to examine whether an increase in the seriousness degree of an offense influenced the apology behaviour of the subjects in both groups.

In Situation 1, the speaker slightly steps on the foot of a woman in a bus who extended her legs too much towards the front seat. So, it can be said that the lady also shares some of the responsibility in the situation. When the responses given to this question are analyzed in terms of the directness scale, we observe two important results. As Table 2 indicates, one of these results is that high education group(HEG) subjects preferred the most direct form *özür dilerim* ‘I apologize’ in their responses. HEG subjects used this form 24 times(32.4%) in this situation whereas this number is only 11(17.2%) for the LEG subjects. Another important finding is that, this situation is almost reversed for the second category in the directness scale. That is to say, hearer-oriented degraded apologies with lower directness level such as *kusura bakma* ‘overlook my offense’ or *affedersin* ‘excuse me’ are mostly preferred by the low education group(LEG) subjects. 17 subjects (26.6%) used this formula among LEG whereas this number is 9(12.2%) for HEG. For the other categories in the scale, both groups used similar strategies in their apology behaviour for Situation 1. The mostly preferred indirect formula for both groups in this question is 4f ‘lack of intention’, as in the example *isteyerek olmadı* ‘It wasn’t intentional’. However, when the results of Situation 1 in both groups are compared for all categories in general, a significant difference is not observed in terms of their apology behaviours ($p>0,05$). This is mostly due to the fact that the responses of the HEG subjects are higher than the LEG in the 7th category ‘accusing/blaming the other party’ only in this question. The reason for this is that only in this question the interlocutor is also the cause of the wrongdoing. Thus, most HEG subjects preferred to state the fact that the woman in Situation 1 was also guilty. Another interesting point that is worth dwelling on is the way HEG and LEG subjects put the blame on the other party. Low education group’s responses included very impolite and aggressive forms such as *Sen oturmasını bilmiyorsun!* ‘You don’t know how to sit!’ ; *Çek şu ayaklarını!* ‘Pull your legs back!’ or *Sen de evinde gibi oturmuşsun!* ‘You sit like you’re at home!’. HEG subjects, on the other hand, used polite forms like *Siz de biraz dikkatli olsanız!* ‘You should also be careful!’ or *Siz de ayaklarınızı çok uzatmışsınız!* ‘You extended your legs too much!’. This finding indicates that people who have high education prefer socially accepted forms in their apologies and do not want to threaten the face of the others.

Second situation is about a meeting with a friend where the speaker is half an hour late and makes his/her friend wait standing in a very crowded street. When the results of the two groups are compared for this situation in terms of the directness scale, similar findings as in Situation 1 is observed for the first two categories. That is to say, high education group subjects preferred direct forms more than the low education group subjects. As indicated in Table 2, the percentage of the use of the most direct formula in HEG is 31.3% whereas it is only 12.7% in LEG. On the other hand, the use of the hearer-

oriented degraded apologies is 31.7% in LEG whereas it is only 18.1% in HEG indicating that the low education group used degraded apologies more than the high education group. Another important finding for this situation is that more indirect formulas are used by both groups in making an apology to a friend who has an equal status with the speaker. In other words, an equal status interlocutor increased the number of indirect apologies in both groups. The most commonly preferred indirect formula in Situation 2 by both groups is 4a, 'statement of an excuse', as in the example *Trafik vardı* 'There was traffic'. Statistical comparison between the apology strategies of both groups for Situation 2 also supports the hypotheses put forth in this study. It is observed that there is a statistically meaningful difference between the apology behaviours of the two groups ($p < 0,05$). This difference is due to the higher frequency of the direct apologies used by the HEG subjects and the higher frequency of the degraded apologies selected by the LEG subjects. Any statistical difference is not observed in the comparison of the use of other categories in the scale. Thus, this finding indicates that high education increases the use of the most direct formula whereas low education decreases the level of directness in the selections of the apology strategies.

Situation 4 is designed to elicit responses for making an apology to one's child who has a lower status than himself/herself. In the situation, the speaker forgets to buy a book to be used in a homework for his child. The comparison of the apology strategies used by the HEG and LEG subjects in Situation 4 indicates one important finding. There is a considerable difference in the use of the most direct formula *özür dilerim* 'I apologize' between the two groups. 27 subjects (28.1%) in HEG used this formula in their apologies to children. However, only 6 subjects (9%) in LEG selected the most direct formula. This is the lowest frequency of the use of the direct formula for the LEG when compared with the other situations. Thus, it is possible to state that subjects with low education do not prefer to use direct apologies for their children since they do not want to lose face in front of a lower status interlocutor. However, subjects with high education treated children as adult individuals and did not change their apology behaviour towards their children. Another finding for this situation is that the presence of a familiar and lower status interlocutor increased the number of the indirect apologies in both groups. As seen in Table 2, indirect strategies occupy the highest frequencies of use in terms of the directness scale. 66.7% of the apologies used in HEG and 77.6% of the apologies used in LEG belong to this category. The high frequency of the use of indirect formulas is due to the occurrence of many different indirect strategies used by the same person for the same situation. However, the most common strategy used for this situation is 4c, 'offer of repair/help', in both groups as in the example *Hemen gidip alalım* 'Let's go and buy it now' or *Yarın mutlaka alırım* 'I'll definitely buy it tomorrow'. When we compare the results in the negative end of the scale, we also observe some differences between the two groups. LEG subjects used 5th, 6th and 7th categories in their selections. One subject remained silent (no response); two subjects minimized the responsibility using the sentences *Daha önemli işlerim var* 'I have more important things to do' and *Günler çuvala mı girdi? Alırız* 'Did the days of the week end? We'll buy it'; and one subject

put the blame on the child by saying *Bana bu işi bırakmasaydın ! Ne kadar meşgul olduğumu bilmiyor musun ?* ‘You should’t have given me this responsibility! Don’t you know how busy I am?’ These categories are not selected by any of the HEG subjects. As for the statistical comparison of the results for this situation in general, it is possible to state that there is a significant difference ($p < 0,05$) between the apology behaviours of the two groups. However, this difference is mostly due to the higher frequency of the direct strategy used by the high education group.

Situation 5 is designed in accordance with Situation 1 and 8. In Situation 5, there is an increasing degree of offense when compared with Situation 1. In this situation, the speaker steps on the foot of a woman harshly and hurts her foot. This time, the woman does not share the responsibility ; and thus, this is definitely the fault of the speaker. The analysis of the responses of the HEG and LEG subjects for this situation indicate that the most frequently used formula among HEG subjects is the ‘direct apology’ category. The use of the direct formula in HEG (44.7%) is significantly higher than LEG (23.2%) in this situation. The use of the ‘degraded apologies’, on the other hand, increases in LEG (30.4) but decreases in HEG (14.1%) significantly. This finding supports the claim that high education level increases the use of the direct apologies whereas low education decreases the level of directness in apology strategies. In accordance with this claim, the most frequently used category for LEG in this situation is the ‘indirect apology’ strategy (36.2%) ; and the most frequently used indirect formula is 4f ‘lack of intention’ in both groups. The use of the light apology ‘pardon’ is also higher in LEG (8.7%) than HEG (2.4%). The statistical comparison of the responses of HEG and LEG subjects also indicate a statistically significant difference between the apology behaviors of the two groups ($p < 0.05$). This difference is mostly due to the higher frequency of ‘direct apology’ strategy in HEG and the higher frequency of the ‘degraded apology’ strategy in LEG. The frequencies of the use of the other categories in the scale is statistically similar. Moreover, when Situation 1 and 5 where there is an increase in the offense are compared, we also observe a statistically significant difference. The median values in Situation 5 are significantly higher than the medians of Situation 1 ($p < 0.05$) in both groups indicating that both groups increased the level of directness in their apology strategies in accordance with the increase in the seriousness degree of the offense. This result also contributes to the claim that the more serious the offense the longer and more complicated the apologies used by the offender are (Bharuthram, 2003 ; Deutshmann, 2003 ; Holmes, 1989, 1993 ; Marquez Reiter, 2000 ; Olshtain, 1989 ; Wolfson, 1989). It can be said that the apologies also become more direct in the case of an increase in the seriousness degree of an offense.

Situation 7 in which the speaker dents somebody else’s car is designed to elicit responses of both groups in the case of an offense to a stranger. Comparison of the responses of the HEG and LEG subjects indicates that high education group subjects used the most direct formula *özür dilerim* ‘I apologize’ more than the other group towards strangers. 30% of the total apology strategies is ‘direct apology’ in HEG whereas the use of this category is only 17.3% in LEG. Another significant finding is the higher use

of the 'degraded apologies' in LEG. The percentage of this category in LEG is 17.3% ; however, this number drops to 5.6% in HEG for the same category. Low education group also selected the light apology 'pardon' in their responses. The percentage of the use of this category is 5.3 in LEG whereas this category is not selected by any of the subjects in HEG. These findings support the claim that high education increases the level of directness in apologies. The general statistical comparison of the responses of the two groups for Situation 7 also indicates a significant difference between the apology behaviours of the HEG and LEG ($p < 0.05$). As for the indirect strategies used in this situation, it can be said that a high frequency of occurrence is observed in both groups. They are used one after the other in making an apology to a stranger. The most frequently used indirect formula in this situation by both groups is 4c 'offer of repair/help'.

Situation 8 is the last one to be related with Situation 1 and 5. This situation has the highest degree of seriousness in the offense. In Situation 8, the speaker steps on the foot of a woman so harshly that she feels pain in her foot. Additionally, the speaker also causes the woman to drop her packages. When we analyze Situation 8, we observe a similar distribution of the most direct formula and degraded apologies as in the previous situations. That is, the use of the most direct formula is higher in HEG (38%) than LEG (24.7%) and the use of the degraded apologies is higher in LEG (18.5%) than HEG (9%). Moreover, the light apology 'pardon' is also selected by the LEG (8.6%) more than the HEG (2%). High education group did not prefer to use the light apology in a situation where the seriousness degree of the offense is high. As for the indirect apologies, it can be said that they are frequently used one after the other by the HEG (51%) and LEG (46.9%) subjects. The most frequently used indirect formula is 4c 'offer of repair/help' in both groups. One subject selected the 5th category 'remaining silent(no response)' in LEG. The general statistical comparison of the responses of HEG and LEG subjects also indicates a statistically meaningful difference ($p < 0.05$) in the apology behaviours of the two groups. This difference is mostly due to the higher frequency of the use of the 'direct apology' category by HEG, and the higher frequency of the use of the 'degraded apologies' by LEG indicating that there is a relationship between education and the level of directness in apologies. When the responses of the HEG and LEG subjects in Situation 5 and Situation 8 are compared in terms of the directness level, however, any statistical difference is not observed between the two groups ($p > 0.05$). That is, an increase in the seriousness degree of an offense in Situation 8 did not change the apology behaviours of HEG and LEG subjects. This is due to the fact that causing the lady in the bus to drop her packages increased the use of the 'offer of repair/help' strategy.

In Situation 10, there is an angry neighbour at the door who is bothered by the high volume of the music at night. This situation is designed to elicit responses in the case of a familiar interlocutor who is very angry and shouting. In the comparison of HEG and LEG subjects in Situation 10, there is a difference between the two groups in the use of the most direct formula. The occurrence of this category is higher in HEG (28%) than LEG (19.2%). However, we also observe that a shouting interlocutor made some changes in the distribution of the use of apology strategies when compared with the other situations. For

example, the percentage of the use of the direct strategy relatively decreased (28%), but the use of degraded apologies increased (12.9%) in HEG. Additionally, 3 subjects in HEG gave no response. 5.5% of the responses in LEG belonged to the 7th category ‘accusing/blaming the other party’ whereas no subjects in HEG attempted to blame the interlocutor. Indirect apologies that are used one after the other are equally frequent in both groups (53%). ‘Offer of repair/help’ is the most widely used formula by both groups. In sum, the statistical comparisons of the responses of both groups indicate that the differences in the apology behavior of the two groups are not statistically meaningful ($p > 0.05$). Thus, it can be said that the presence of a shouting interlocutor influenced the apology behavior of both groups. However, one interesting difference between the two groups showed itself in the responses of the low education group for the 7th category ‘accusing/blaming the other party’. The responses of the low education group contained rather aggressive and socially unacceptable sentences such as *Her gece biz senin gürültünü dinledik! Biraz da sen dinle!* ‘We listened to your making noise every night! Now, it’s your turn!’; *Beğenmiyorsan git villaya taşın!* ‘If you don’t like this, move to a separate villa!’ or *Başka apartmana taşın!* ‘Move to a different building!’. These remarks clearly indicate that low education group subjects might produce very rude and socially inappropriate sentences at times and threaten the face of the others even when they are guilty.

In Situation 11, the speaker is half an hour late to a business meeting with his/her boss. In this situation, we aimed to observe whether the subjects belonging to HEG or LEG behave differently in the case of a higher status interlocutor. The comparison of the responses of the HEG and LEG subjects for Situation 11 indicates that there is a considerable difference in the use of the most direct formula between the two groups. The use of the direct apology strategy is higher in HEG (40.2%) than LEG (25%). 40.2% is one of the highest occurrences of this category in HEG after Situation 5 (44.7%). In fact, we did not observe a significant change in the apology behaviour of the HEG in comparison with the other situations. Their selections of the direct apology are always higher than LEG; and their selections of the ‘degraded apologies’ are always lower than LEG as in this situation. However, the presence of a higher status interlocutor made some changes in the apology behaviour of the low education group. That is, this situation increased their use of the ‘direct apology’ strategy to 25%. This percentage is the highest for LEG among their direct apology selections in the other situations. Their selections of the ‘degraded apologies’, however, decreased to 13.2% which is one of the lowest percentage for LEG when compared with the other situations. Thus, it is possible to state that low education group subjects become more direct in their apologies in the case of a higher status interlocutor and behave similarly with the HEG subjects in this respect. In accordance with this finding, the general statistical comparison of the responses between the two groups was not found to be statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). The light apology ‘pardon’ is not selected by any of the groups in this situation. The most frequently used indirect formula by both groups is 4a ‘statement of an excuse’. As for the negative end of the scale, it is observed that 5th and 6th categories are not selected by any of the groups. However, the 7th category ‘accusing/blaming the other party’ is selected by two LEG

subjects, and these responses contained socially inappropriate forms to be uttered in an offense towards a boss as *Hesabımı kes kardeşim! Siz hep böylesiniz!* ‘Fire me man! You’re always like that!’ and *Her zaman ben bekliyorum! Bizim bir şey söylediğimiz var mı ?* ‘I always wait for you ! Do I tell you anything?’.

Conclusion

This study tried to uncover the different apology behaviours of the people in different situations who had low education and high education levels. The claim was that these two groups exhibited different apology strategies and that the level of education played an important role in their strategy selections. As the level of education increased, the directness level of the apology strategies also increased. In order to test these hypotheses, a directness scale whose categories directly emerged from the data is developed and questionnaire responses for each situation are analyzed in terms of this directness scale.

The results of our analysis indicated that high education and low education groups differed in the use of their apology strategies in different situations. When all the responses of both groups are statistically compared in terms of the directness scale, the difference between their apology behaviours is found to be statistically meaningful ($p < 0.05$). The general findings of this study regarding the differences between the apology strategies of the high education and low education groups in terms of the directness scale can be summarized as follows :

1.The differences between the apology behaviours of HEG and LEG are mostly due to the differences in the positive end of the scale. There are three categories in this part which include apology words and have different levels of directness. As for the most direct category, it can be said that there is a significant difference between the two groups. HEG uses the direct strategy significantly more than LEG as hypothesized in the beginning of this study. Conversely, the use of this category is very low in LEG. The reason for this difference is that people with low education find the most direct formula *özür dilerim* ‘I apologize’ as face-threatening so that they avoid using this strategy in their apologies. High education group, on the other hand, uses this formula so frequently that they even use this strategy in the presence of a lower status interlocutor. In sum, it can be stated that as the level of education increases, the use of the most direct formula also increases accordingly. The second category in the scale which we call ‘degraded apologies’ is mostly preferred by the low education group since they are found to be more face-saving by this group. This preference also supports our claim in the opposite direction that as the level of education decreases, the subjects tend to lower the degree of directness in their apologies. The use of this category is significantly lower in the high education group. Lastly, the same preference is also observed in the use of the light apology ‘pardon’. The use of this category is higher in the low education group in almost all situations indicating that low education decreases the level of directness in the apology strategies. This category is not even considered as a proper apology by the native speakers who were interviewed in the preparation of the directness scale. Thus, the analysis of the

first three categories clearly shows us that the level of education is an important factor that influences the level of directness in apologies.

2. The indirect apology category takes place between the positive and negative ends of the directness scale. This category does not contain apology words, but transmits the message indirectly by way of implicatures or inferences. Our analysis about the use of the indirect apologies indicates that this category is frequently used by both groups in all situations. However, it is also observed in this study that the use of indirect apologies does not directly influence the level of directness since they are not used as independent devices in the apology behaviour of the subjects. They are usually used as complementary formulas and are added one after the other in a situation together with the other strategies. Thus, indirect apologies serve a number of different functions as explained in the sub-categories of this formula.

3. The negative end of the scale includes three categories where there are no apologies but negative responses. These categories are ‘remaining silent’, ‘minimizing the responsibility’ and ‘accusing/blaming the other party’. The results obtained in these last three categories do not indicate a significant difference between the apology behaviours of the two groups. However, the use of these categories is slightly higher in the low education group. What is significant about these categories is the way the subjects in the low education group present their ideas. For example, the responses of the low education group contained aggressive, impolite and socially unacceptable sentences in accusing/blaming the other party in different situations. These unusual responses observed in the low education group clearly indicate that formal education does not only provide us with the necessary information about the world but it also teaches us how to behave in socially acceptable ways in different situations

4. It is also found out in this study that there is a relationship between the seriousness degree of an offense and the directness level of the apology strategies. As the seriousness degree of an offense increased, the level of directness also increased in both groups.

5. The number of the words used and the number of the semantic formulas are significantly higher in the high education group than the low education group.

6. There are also intensifiers such as *çok* ‘very’ or *çok çok* ‘very very’ used in the apologies of both groups. However, the number of the intensifiers used in high education group is significantly higher than the low education group. The frequent use of the intensifiers by the high education group also contributed to the directness level of the apologies in the positive way.

As concluding remarks, it can be said that the level of education is an important factor that affects our lives in many ways, including our apology behaviour.

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Appendix

The Translated Version of the Discourse Completion Test

There are 12 situations given below. What would you say if you were the person involved in those situations ? Write your responses exactly as they would come out of your mouth.

1. You stepped on the foot of a woman in a bus slightly while you were trying to sit down; but it was impossible to avoid this as the woman extended her legs too much towards the front seat. Still, you felt the need to apologize.

The woman : “Ah! Be careful !”

You : _____

2. You were half an hour late to a meeting with a friend and made him/her wait standing in a crowded street.

Your friend asks : “Where have you been ?”

You : _____

3. You liked the computer that your boss bought very much. It is just like the one you wanted.

Your boss asks : “Did you like my computer ?”

You : _____

4. When you came back home in the evening, your child asked whether you bought the book he/she wanted for his/her homework. You suddenly remembered that you forgot all about it and felt very sorry about this situation.

Your child asks : “How can you forget to buy such an important thing ?”

You : _____

5. You accidentally stepped on the foot of a woman in a bus harshly and hurt her foot. This was definitely your fault and you wanted to apologize.

The woman : “Ah! Be careful !”

You : _____

6. You had a new style of hair-cut. It looked very nice. Your friend saw you and said : “You look so beautiful!”

You : _____

7. You were late at stopping at the red lights while you were driving in heavy traffic and dented slightly the car in front of you. The driver of the car came out angrily and said: “Don’t you see what you did ? You damaged my car!”

You : _____

8. You accidentally stepped on the foot of a woman in a bus so harshly that she felt pain. In addition, you also caused her to drop her packages. It was definitely your fault and you wanted to apologize.

The woman : “Ah! Be careful! You hurt my foot!

You : _____

9. You liked your friend’s new dress very much and thought that it suited her very well. Your friend asked : “How is my new dress?”

You : _____

10. While you were giving a party at home one night, one of your neighbours knocked at the door and shouted in a very angry manner that the volume of the music was too high. Your neighbour :“Be more respectful at this hour ! Our heads are ringing because of the volume!

You : _____

11. You were half an hour late to a business meeting with your boss and made him/her wait for you.

Your boss asked : “Where have you been?”

You : _____

12. You were back at home in the end of a tiring day. Your ten year old daughter made coffee for you after the dinner and said : “Here is your coffee my dear Mom and Dad!

You : _____

