Humanities and Social Sciences Letters
2021 Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 122-151.
ISSN(e): 2312-4318
ISSN(p): 2312-5659
DOI: 10.18488/journal.73.2021.92.122.151

THE RELATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT INSTRUCTION IN THE LEARNING OF EFL APOLOGIES

Dina Abdel Salam El-Dakhs[1+]
Fouzia Phyllis Amroun[2]

[1]*College of Humanities, Prince Sultan University, Saudi Arabia.*
Email: ddakhs@psu.edu.sa Tel: 00966553909978
[2]*Deanship of Educational Services, Prince Sultan University, Saudi Arabia.*
Email: famroun@psu.edu.sa Tel: 00966554464622

(+ Corresponding author)

Article History
Received: 22 January 2021
Revised: 3 March 2021
Accepted: 5 April 2021
Published: 28 April 2021

Keywords
Instructional pragmatics
Speech act
Apology
Explicit
Implicit
Pragmatic competence
Interlanguage pragmatics.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to compare the influence of explicit versus implicit teaching on the learning of apology realization strategies in a foreign language context. To this end, 86 Arab elementary learners of English were divided into three groups: (1) a group that was introduced to the target realization strategies explicitly, (2) a group that was introduced to the target strategies implicitly, and (3) a comparison group that did not receive any instruction on the target strategies. Using a pre-/posttest design, the three groups completed a discourse completion task as a pretest, immediate posttest and delayed test. The apology-specific strategies the students produced in these tests were compared using mixed ANOVA and Bonferroni pairwise comparisons. The results revealed a positive influence for both the explicit and implicit teaching approaches with relatively more gains for explicit teaching. The effectiveness of the two approaches varied based on a number of factors including the time of test (i.e., immediate or delayed posttest), the learners' prior knowledge, and the cultural acceptability of the apology-specific strategy. The results are interpreted in light of the existing literature and relevant theoretical hypotheses.

Contribution/Originality: This study is one of very few studies which have compared the influence of explicit versus implicit teaching on the learning of speech acts in a foreign language context. Research in this area is imperative to enhance our understanding of effective approaches to increase language learners' pragmatic competence.

1. INTRODUCTION

Instructional pragmatics (IP), which is aimed at developing and utilizing the most advantageous teaching methods for improving learners' second language (L2) interlanguage pragmatic competence (Ishihara, 2010; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; Vallenga, 2008) has recently gained increasing attention. In fact, "learning sociocultural conventions and norms of language use – what to say or not to say in a certain situation, how to convey intentions in a contextually fitting manner, and how to achieve a communicative goal collaboratively with others – is a crucial part of becoming a competent speaker in L2," (Taguchi, 2019). This is further emphasized by the research finding that pragmatic competence does not necessarily develop parallel to lexico-grammatical proficiency (e.g., Kasper (2001); Soler (2002)). In fact, L2 learners often develop grammatical competence without parallel development of their pragmatic competence, which can lead to communicative failure (Bardovi-Harlig & Dörnyei, 1998; O'Keeffe, Clancy, & Adolphs, 2011).

In the IP context, and similar to other language teaching areas, a debate has ensued between explicit and implicit teaching methods. While explicit instruction entails directly explaining the pragmatic elements or the use of metapragmatic knowledge, implicit instruction encourages learners to draw their own conclusions about pragmatic elements (Borer, 2018; Bu, 2012; Ishihara, 2010; Rose, 2005; Taguchi, 2015). The question is: Which method is more effective in the IP domain? The current study aims to contribute to this debate through comparing the influence of explicit versus implicit teaching methods on the learning of the realization strategies of the speech act of apologizing, which can be defined as "a speech act addressed to [the victim's] face to remedy an offence for which [the apologist] takes responsibility, and thus to resolve the equilibrium between [the apologist] and [the victim]," (Holmes, 1989).

The current study has multiple purposes. First, as mentioned earlier, it contributes to the ongoing debate in the IP field regarding the efficacy of explicit and implicit instruction, which is generally an under-researched area. Second, it examines the efficacy of the two methods on the teaching of a speech act. It is widely acknowledged that speech acts, which refer to the acts we perform through speaking (Schmidt & Richards, 1985), provide a reliable and valid basis for teaching pragmatic patterns (e.g., (Al Aamri, 2014; Yi-xuan, 2016; Zayed, 2014)). The realizations of speech acts vary greatly across languages and cultures and are likely to suffer from negative transfer from the native language (Al Aamri, 2014). Third, the study is implemented in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context. It is widely acknowledged that EFL learners find it challenging to develop their pragmatic competence because they receive relatively little exposure to authentic language use and enjoy fewer opportunities to practice the L2 outside the classroom (Cook, 2001; Webb, 2013). In fact, a number of studies have highlighted that EFL learners' apologies are inadequate (e.g., (Aydin, 2013; Canli & Canli, 2013; El-Dakhs, 2018; Válková, 2013)). Finally, the current study will share data from a new population since Arab learners of English are relatively underrepresented in the literature of instructional pragmatics. This will be particularly interesting because of the evident linguistic and cultural differences recurrently documented in the literature in the use of realization strategies of speech acts by native speakers of Arabic and English (e.g., (Al-Mansoob, Patil, & Alrefaee, 2019; Al-Zumor, 2011; Alhaidari, 2009; El-Dakhs, 2018; Jasim, 2017)).

In order to situate the current study within the IP literature, the following section will present a brief survey of relevant studies. This will be followed by stating the research question, describing the methodology, presenting and discussing the results, and drawing final conclusions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Interlanguage pragmatics literature has repeatedly called for linking interlanguage pragmatics research findings to classroom teaching in order to help students overcome their interlanguage pragmatic challenges (e.g., (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Borer, 2018; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010)). In fact, research in L2 pragmatics has increasingly focused on instruction and assessment of pragmatic competence since the 1990s. A strong research direction has emerged in L2 acquisition research that shifts from the dominant morpho-syntax studies and focuses on exploring ways to apply formal instruction to the area of sociocultural and sociolinguistic abilities (Taguchi & Roever, 2017). This direction was supported by various studies that have highlighted EFL learners' poor pragmatic competence across a variety of speech acts (e.g., (El-Dakhs, Rahman, Muhammad, & Amroun, 2019; Glaser, 2009; Maíz-Arévalo, 2014; Mehrpour, Ahmadi, & SabourianZadeh, 2016; Safdarian & Afghari, 2011)). Additionally, it was found that teachers often hesitate to teach pragmatics for several reasons (Jianda, 2006; Minh Vu, 2017) including having no adequate knowledge, having an overloaded curriculum, using textbooks that neglect the pragmatic component, and having no access to pragmatic research or findings. Hence, it is hoped that the field of instructional pragmatics will provide the necessary support for teachers through linking pragmatic research with actual teaching models and classroom practices.

Research in interlanguage pragmatics has demonstrated that pragmatics can be taught in the classroom from beginning levels of language instruction (e.g., (Bardovi-Harlig, 1996; Félix-Brasdefer & Barker, 2012; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010; A. Martínez-Flor, 2006; Rose, 2005)). Félix-Brasdefer & Cohen (2012) explain that, "Like phonology, morphology and syntax, which are necessary for learning a second language, pragmatics should be integrated in the language curriculum from the beginning levels of language instruction" (p.650). In fact, instruction of pragmatics in foreign language learning contexts has been generally commended. Instructional pragmatics helps raise learners' pragmatic awareness and facilitate learning (Erton, 2007; Guerra & Martínez-Flor, 2006; Alicia Martínez-Flor & Fukuya, 2005; Murray, 2010; Rose & Kasper, 2001; Soler, 2005; Takimoto, 2006a, 2009a, 2009b). It has even been suggested that without the intervention of instruction, many pragmatic aspects of the target language are not acquired or are acquired at a slow pace (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001).

With the general consensus that teaching pragmatics in the classroom has a positive impact, the question remains regarding the best type of instruction. The two styles of instruction most often researched in language teaching are implicit and explicit instruction (Borer, 2018; Taguchi, 2015). Implicit teaching, which does not require overt discussion about the rules and norms associated with appropriate language behavior, is often welcomed in many language learning environments because it encourages problem-solving, student–teacher and student–student interaction, and a more communicative classroom (Parrish, 2006). Explicit teaching, which entails direct explanation of the rules and norms related to the target language, has also been beneficial as it has helped prepare L2 learners to make appropriate choices in the target language (Spada & Tomita, 2010). Although the literature on teaching pragmatics is rich with studies showing the advantages of instructional intervention (e.g., (Bataineh, Al-Qeyam, & Smadi, 2017; El-Shazly, 2017; Félix-Brasdefer., 2008; Halenko & Jones, 2011; Moody, 2014; Nguyen, Do, Pham, & Nguyen, 2018; Sarani & Talati-Baghsiahi, 2017)), relatively few studies have compared the influence of implicit versus explicit teaching of speech acts.

In this context of comparison, the majority of studies have found advantages for the explicit teaching of speech acts (see Takahashi (2010)) among EFL learners of different language backgrounds, such as Spanish high-school students (Soler, 2005), Chinese undergraduates (Xiao-le, 2011), Iranian undergraduates (Ahmadian, 2020), students at English language institutes (Ghobadi & Fahim, 2009), and Vietnamese pre-service teachers (Nguyen, Pham, & Pham, 2012). Interestingly, these advantages have persisted despite the variety of teaching methods (e.g., metapragmatic instruction, strategy identification, metapragmatic judgement and exemplification of strategies for the explicit approach versus input enhancement, meaning-focused tasks, provision of recast and implicit awareness-raising for the implicit approach) and measurement tools (e.g., written discourse completion tasks, role plays, and peer feedback tasks). These advantages for the explicit approach have generally been interpreted in line with Schmidt (1993) and Schmidt (2001) Noticing Hypothesis, which postulated that learning requires awareness at the level of noticing and what learners notice in input is what becomes intake. Hence, no learning will happen without attention, which is obviously enhanced through explicit instruction.

Despite these findings, some researchers have cast doubt on the absolute superiority of explicit teaching. For instance, after a review of previous research on pragmatic intervention, Takahashi (2010) expressed her viewpoint that "positive effects of explicit intervention are not always assured; moreover, some forms of implicit intervention are equally effective," (p.127). This conclusion comes in line with a number of studies that either found no significant differences between explicit and implicit teaching on the development of students' pragmatic competence (e.g., (Rezvani, Eslami-Rasekh, & Vahid Dastjerdi, 2014; Takimoto, 2006b, 2009a, 2009b)) or found mixed results among variations based on the use of different practice tasks or measurement tools (e.g., (Hosseini & Safari, 2018; Takimoto, 2012a, 2012b)). It is worth noting that researchers casting doubt on the superiority of explicit teaching may adopt instructional practices in line with Schmidt (1993); Schmidt (2001) Noticing Hypothesis, such as different forms of input enhancement. However, their instructional practices seem to reflect a belief that the main determining factors for learning pragmatics are the rich comprehensible inputs (Krashen, 1993; Krashen, 1989)

(e.g., well-selected model videos or dialogues) and social interaction (Long, 1996) (e.g., role-plays) (please, see Taguchi (2015)) for a review of studies on instructional pragmatics).

3. RESEARCH QUESTION

The current study is designed to address the following research question:

In what ways do explicit and implicit instruction, respectively, contribute to the successful performance of EFL apologies?

The authors expect a positive effect for the two teaching approaches with some advantage for explicit teaching. This will be in line with some earlier studies (e.g., (Ahmadian, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2012; Soler, 2005; Xiao-le, 2011)), and in support of Schmidt (1993); Schmidt (2001).

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Participants

A total of 86 female EFL learners participated in the study. The participants were students in six intact classes. Two classes were assigned to explicit teaching (E) (n = 29) and two classes were assigned to implicit teaching (I) (n= 33). The other remaining classes acted as a comparison group (C) (n = 24). All the participants were native speakers of Arabic with ages ranging between 18 and 21. Their nationalities varied to include Egyptians, Jordanians, Syrians, Palestinians, and Saudis. They were graduates of the Saudi public school system in high school. They were recruited from a private Saudi university in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. The university admits both male and female students; however, male students are taught by male teachers on a separate campus to female students, who are taught by female teachers. This segregation is in line with the higher education policy in Saudi Arabia. Since the researchers were faculty members at the female campus, they found it more feasible to conduct the study with only female students. It is worth noting that, originally, the six intact classes included 120 female EFL learners, but 34 students were later excluded from the study for either (a) submitting incomplete tests, (b) missing one of the two treatment sessions, or (c) completing the tests carelessly and in a way that may not sound natural in real life.

Since English is the medium of instruction in this Saudi university, all applicants were required to score a minimum of 5.5 on IELTS (or its equivalent score on TOEFL) in order to join their majors. Students who could not submit evidence of this score or attain a similar score on the university admission test joined an intensive English language program (known as the preparatory English program), which provided students with English language training for 20 hours per week. The program placed students into three groups; namely beginners, who joined the program for three academic semesters; elementary students, who joined the program for two academic semesters; and pre-intermediate students, who joined the program for one semester only. The participants of the current study were recruited from six intact classes among the elementary students who were assessed at level A2/ B1 in terms of the Common European Framework. It is worth noting that this level of proficiency is rarely addressed in the existing literature since most earlier studies involved learners with intermediate to advanced levels of proficiency. The current study can thus show if findings in earlier studies apply to low-proficiency learners, particularly as some recent voices claim that higher levels of linguistic proficiency may be a prerequisite for maximally enhancing pragmatic teachability (Takahashi, 2010).

4.2. Teaching Materials

The current study examined the effective methods of teaching the realization strategies of speech acts, with special focus on the speech act of apologizing. The teaching materials that were used in the treatment consisted of eight dialogues (see Appendix A), which were devised for this purpose. The dialogues were prepared by two English teachers who were teaching at the preparatory year program and are native speakers of British English. The dialogues varied along a number of dimensions, including topic (see Table 1), length (96–163 words) and the target

apology strategies practiced. The topics were selected to match the students' proficiency level and the target apology strategies varied across the dialogues in order to help students recognize and produce different strategies.

Table 1. Topics of dialogues used in the treatment sessions.

Treatment Session	No.	Dialogue Topic
1	1	Rude Behavior
	2	Cancelled Lunch
	3	No-show Homework
	4	Broken Glass
2	1	Lost Book
	2	Late from Shops
	3	Traffic Jam
	4	Lateness

4.3. Instrument

A discourse completion task (DCT) was used as the pretest, immediate posttest, and delayed posttest. The DCT was adopted from the first author's earlier study on the speech act of apologizing (El-Dakhs, 2018). This DCT was already validated in the previous study and was used by other students at the same level of the preparatory year program as the students participating in the current study. For further validation, a group of five teachers at the English preparatory year program reviewed the DCT and verified that it suited the target students' proficiency level. The DCT (see Appendix B) included 12 imaginary scenarios which were adapted from Cohen & Olshtain (1981), Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984), and Hussein & Hammouri (1998). The 12 scenarios were balanced for social distance (distant vs. intimate) and dominance (higher, equal, and lower status). The students were asked to read the scenarios and then complete the following mini-dialogues through apologizing to the interlocutor. In order to ensure the students' comprehension of the scenarios, the scenarios were provided in both English and Arabic. The mini-dialogues, however, were only provided in English.

4.4. Procedure

The current study was conducted over six weeks (see Table 2). All students took the pretest in week 1, the immediate posttest in week 3, and the delayed posttest in week 6. The students completed the test in 10–15 minutes.

Table 2. Study Design.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6
Pretest	None	Treatment 1 + 2 Immediate posttest	None	None	Delayed posttest

The treatment took place in week 3 over two sessions, each lasting for 45 minutes, and was implemented only in the four classes that represented the experimental groups (i.e., E and I). Group C received no treatment. The experimental groups included a group that learned the apology strategies explicitly (E) and a group that learned the apology strategy implicitly (I). The aim of having these three groups was to identify which teaching method will more effectively help students learn the different realization strategies.

In order to ensure consistency among the experimental groups, a detailed lesson plan was prepared by the researchers. The same lesson plan was implemented in the two treatment sessions. With the E Group, the teacher told the students that the session would focus on apology strategies and showed them the main eight apology-specific strategies found in the Olshtain & Cohen (1983) model of apology (see full details under section 4.4. Data Coding) on the screen along with relevant examples. Then, the teacher displayed dialogue #1 on the screen and the whole class identified all the apology strategies used. After that, the students read dialogue #2 in pairs, identified

the apology strategies used and compared them with another pair of students, and a whole class review followed. This was followed by pairs of students completing gaps in dialogue #3 from a box including apology phrases. The apology strategies were mentioned to them underneath the gaps to guide their answers. Finally, the students completed missing parts in dialogue #4 using their own language and identified the strategies they used while reviewing their answers as a whole class.

With the I Group, the teacher informed the students that they would be discussing apology strategies for two sessions and asked them to share some recent situations where they had to apologize. Then, the students read dialogue #1 aloud in pairs twice through switching roles and the teacher asked a couple of comprehension questions. After that, the students had to put dialogue #2 in order since it was given to them in a jumbled form. The students worked in pairs and then reviewed the correct answers with the whole class. This was followed by a gap-fill task in which the students completed the missing parts in dialogue #3 from the box which contained different apology phrases. Revision was done as a whole class. Finally, the students completed missing parts in dialogue #4 using their own language.

It is worth noting that the students across the two experimental groups had access to every dialogue for an equal time. They also had an equal balance between working in pairs and participating in teacher–class discussions. It is also worth noting that all the groups were taught by native speakers of English who hold a master's degree in English language teaching and with teaching expertise ranging between 10 and 20 years. The main difference between the experimental groups is that the E Group were introduced to the eight apology-specific strategies found in Olshtain & Cohen's (1983) model of apology explicitly, while the I Group were not. That is, the students in the E Group learned what these strategies were called and were trained to identify and name them in dialogues. On the contrary, the students in the I Group practiced the dialogues and completed the tasks they had at hand without any reference to Olshtain & Cohen's (1983) model of apology.

4.5. Data Coding/Analysis

Varied classifications of apology strategies have been proposed in previous literature (e.g., (Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Holmes, 1990; Sugimoto, 1997; Trosborg, 1995)) to facilitate research into the realization patterns of the apology speech act. Analysis of the students' responses in the pre-, immediate post- and delayed posttests in the current study relies on Olshtain & Cohen's (1983) model, a model which is frequently used in the literature for a variety of languages including English and Arabic (e.g., (Chang, 2016; El-Dakhs, 2018; Salehi, 2014; Shariati & Chamani, 2010; Tajeddin & Pirhoseinloo, 2012)). In their model, Olshtain & Cohen (1983) identify the following strategies when the offender recognizes the need to apologize:

1. An expression of apology.
    a. An expression of regret, e.g., *I'm sorry.*
    b. An offer of apology, e.g., *I apologize.*
    c. A request for forgiveness, e.g., *Forgive me.*
2. An explanation or account of the situation, e.g., *The bus was late.*
3. An acknowledgement of responsibility.
    a. Accepting the blame, e.g., *It was my fault.*
    b. Expressing self-deficiency, e.g., *I was confused.*
    c. Recognizing the other person as deserving of an apology, e.g., *You are right.*
    d. Expressing lack of intent, e.g., *I didn't mean to.*
4. An offer of repair, e.g., *I'll help you get up.*
5. A promise of forbearance, e.g., *It won't happen again.*

When the need to apologize is rejected, the offender is likely to apply the following strategies:

6. No response/apology.
7. A denial of the need to apologize, e.g., *There was no need for you to get insulted.*
8. A denial of responsibility.
   a. Not accepting the blame, e.g., *It wasn't my fault.*
   b. Blaming the other participant, e.g., *It's your own fault.*

It is worth noting that the strategies associated with speech acts used to be called *semantic formulas* (Cohen & Olshtain, 1981) and were also referred to as *a speech act set* (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983).

5. RESULTS

In order to answer the research question, it was important to ensure that there was no significant difference between the three groups across the main eight apology-specific strategies in the pretest. Hence, a one-way ANOVA was run for the pretests and the results confirmed that there were no significant differences among the three groups in the pretest across the eight strategies (i.e., F = 0.074 and P = 0.929 for an expression of apology; F = 0.773 and P = 0.465 for an explanation or account of the situation; F = 0.315 and P = 0.731 for an acknowledgement of responsibility; F = 1.930 and P = 0.152 for an offer of repair; F = 0.823 and P = 0.443 for a promise of forbearance; F = 1.103 and P = 0.337 for no response or apology; F = 1.138 and P = 0.325 for a denial for the need to apologize; F = 1.218 and P = 0.301 for a denial of responsibility). These results allow us to safely assume that the differences in the posttest and the delayed posttest reflect the effect of the treatment.

After ensuring that the three groups behaved similarly in the pretest, the apology strategies the participants used in the pre- and posttests were compared with mixed ANOVA, which examined the influence across instructional type (i.e., explicit, implicit, and control) as a between-subject factor and time of test (pre-, immediate post-, and delayed post) as a within-subject factor. The mixed ANOVA results were also supplemented with Bonferroni-corrected post hoc pairwise comparisons. The results are reported in this section categorized by apology strategy in line with Olshtain and Cohen (1983).

5.1. An Expression of Apology

Comparisons of instructional type reflected a significantly better performance for the E and I Groups over the C Group, and an advantage for the E Group over the I Group in the immediate posttest. The only significant difference in the delayed test, however, was for the I Group over the C Group in favor of the I Group. As for test time, the E Group used more instances of this strategy in the immediate posttest than in the pretest and the delayed test, while no significant difference was found between the pre- and delayed tests. The I Group showed a slightly different pattern with students producing more instances of this strategy in both the immediate and delayed posttests than in the pretest, while no significant difference was found between the immediate and delayed posttests. Tables 3, 4 and 5 summarize the results in relation to the "expression of apology" strategy. Table 3 shows the mean and standard deviations for all groups at all time points, Table 4 summarizes the mixed ANOVA results, and Table 5 shows additional findings based on the Bonferroni comparisons.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics for an expression of apology.

Strategy 1				
Descriptive Statistics				
Test	**Group**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Number**
Pretest	Control	10.625	1.813	24
	Explicit	10.448	1.744	29
	Implicit	10.636	2.523	33
Posttest	Control	9.875	2.802	24
	Explicit	15.897	2.554	29
	Implicit	13.455	3.890	33
Delayed test	Control	11.083	1.767	24
	Explicit	11.897	3.668	29
	Implicit	13.758	3.783	33

Table 4. Mixed ANOVA results for an expression of apology.

		Comparison Between Groups			**Comparison Within Subjects**		
		Mean Difference	**Standard Deviation**	**P-value**	**Mean Square**	**F-test**	**P-value**
Overall ANOVA	Control Vs Explicit	-2.219*	0.527	0.000	120.327	10.983	0.000
	Control Vs Implicit	-2.088*	0.513	0.000			
	Explicit Vs Implicit	0.131	0.486	1.000			

As shown in Olshtain & Cohen (1983) above, the strategy "an expression of apology" consists of three sub-strategies. While the C Group showed almost no difference across the three tests with an absolute dominance of strategy 1(a) – an expression of regret (i.e., 95% in the pretest, 97% in the immediate post, and 96% in the delayed posttest of the total expressions of apology), a large difference was noted in the use of the experimental groups. In the E Group, the sub-strategy "expression of regret" constituted 92% of the total expressions of apology in the pretest. This percentage was reduced to 60% in the immediate posttest and 70% in the delayed posttest, which reflected that the students were using the other two sub-strategies after the treatment. A similar pattern was observed in the I Group with the use of expressions of regret reduced from 92% in the pretest to 71% in the immediate posttest and 75% in the delayed posttest. Hence, the students in the experimental groups varied their use of the sub-strategies after the treatment.

5.2. An Explanation or Account of the Situation

The results in relation to the apology strategy "an explanation or account of the situation" showed no significant differences across groups of participants and times of tests. This is shown in Table 6, which includes the mean and standard deviations for all groups at all time points, and Table 7, which summarizes the mixed ANOVA results.

5.3. An Acknowledgement of Responsibility

The results showed that the experimental groups produced significantly higher instances of this strategy than the C Group in the immediate and delayed posttests. The E Group outperformed the I Group only in the immediate posttest. As for the test times, significant differences were noted only for the experimental groups. Both groups produced more instances of the target strategy in the immediate and delayed posttests than the pretest. However, the students produced fewer instances of the strategy in the delayed than the immediate posttest in the E Group. Tables 8, 9 and 10 summarize these results. Table 8 shows the mean and standard deviations for all groups at all time points, Table 9 summarizes the mixed ANOVA results, and Table 10 shows additional findings based on the Bonferroni comparisons.

Table 5. Bonferroni comparison for an expression of apology.

Comparison Between Groups						Comparison between Time Points of Test					
Test	**Groups**	**MD**	**SD**	**P-value**	**Eta2**	**Group**	**Tests**	**MD**	**SD**	**P-value**	**Eta2**
Pretest	Control Vs Explicit	0.177	0.578	1.000	0.002	Control	Pretest Vs Posttest	0.750	0.629	0.713	0.05163
	Control Vs Implicit	-0.011	0.562	1.000			Pretest Vs Delayed Test	-0.458	0.629	1.000	
	Explicit Vs Implicit	-0.188	0.533	1.000			Posttest Vs Delayed Test	-1.208	0.629	0.177	
Posttest	Control Vs Explicit	-6.022*	0.882	0.000	0.361	Explicit	Pretest Vs Posttest	-5.448*	0.727	0.000	0.417453
	Control Vs Implicit	-3.580*	0.857	0.000			Pretest Vs Delayed Test	-1.448	0.727	0.149	
	Explicit Vs Implicit	2.442*	0.813	0.011			Posttest Vs Delayed Test	4.000*	0.727	0.000	
Delayed test	Control Vs Explicit	-0.813	0.912	1.000	0.108	Implicit	Pretest Vs Posttest	-2.818*	0.851	0.004	0.145768
	Control Vs Implicit	-2.674*	0.887	0.010			Pretest Vs Delayed Test	-3.121*	0.851	0.001	
	Explicit Vs Implicit	-1.861	0.841	0.089			Posttest Vs Delayed Test	-0.303	0.851	1.000	

Table 6. Descriptive statistics for an explanation or account of the situation.

Strategy 2				
Descriptive Statistics				
Test	**Group**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Number**
Pretest	Control	4.542	1.382	24
	Explicit	4.379	1.208	29
	Implicit	4.061	1.784	33
Posttest	Control	4.500	1.865	24
	Explicit	3.828	1.671	29
	Implicit	4.121	1.635	33
Delayed test	Control	4.667	1.736	24
	Explicit	3.931	1.580	29
	Implicit	4.000	1.920	33

Table 7. Mixed ANOVA results for an explanation or account of the situation.

		Comparison Between Groups			**Comparison Within Subjects**		
Overall ANOVA		**Mean Difference**	**Standard Deviation**	**P-value**	**Mean Square**	**F-test**	**P-value**
	Control Vs Explicit	0.523	0.263	0.142	6.907	2.541	0.081
	Control Vs Implicit	0.509	0.255	0.142			
	Explicit Vs Implicit	-0.015	0.242	1.000			

Table 8. Descriptive statistics for an acknowledgement of responsibility.

Strategy 3				
Descriptive Statistics				
Test	**Group**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Number**
Pretest	Control	1.708	0.908	24
	Explicit	1.862	1.529	29
	Implicit	2.000	1.500	33
Posttest	Control	1.417	1.381	24
	Explicit	10.414	2.758	29
	Implicit	6.333	3.295	33
Delayed test	Control	1.208	1.141	24
	Explicit	6.345	4.220	29
	Implicit	6.667	4.036	33

Table 9. Mixed ANOVA results for an acknowledgement of responsibility.

		Comparison Between Groups			**Comparison Within Subjects**		
Overall ANOVA		**Mean Difference**	**Standard Deviation**	**P-value**	**Mean Square**	**F-test**	**P-value**
	Control Vs Explicit	-4.762*	0.575	0.000	474.285	36.406	0.000
	Control Vs Implicit	-3.556*	0.559	0.000			
	Explicit Vs Implicit	1.207	0.530	0.071			

Similar to the strategy "expression of apology," the strategy "acknowledgment of responsibility" consists of sub-strategies. The sub-strategy "expressing lack of intent" dominated the scene in the pretests representing 63% for the C Group, 61% for the E Group, and 56% for the I Group of the total use of the target strategy. While the C Group maintained this dominance in the immediate post- (81%) and delayed post- (81%) tests, the percentages decreased dramatically for the other two groups. For the E Group, students expressed lack of intent with percentages of 27% in the immediate posttest and 30% in the delayed posttest. Likewise, the I Group expressed lack of intent (35%) of the occurrence of the target strategy in the immediate posttest and 31% in the delayed posttest. This shows that the increase in the use of the target strategy was a result of students varying their production after the treatment and employing more of the strategies they were not used to producing earlier.

Table 10. Bonferroni comparisons for an acknowledgement of responsibility.

Comparison Between Groups						Comparison between Time Points of Test					
Test	**Groups**	**MD**	**SD**	**P-value**	**Eta2**	**Group**	**Tests**	**MD**	**SD**	**P-value**	**Eta2**
Pretest	Control Vs Explicit	-0.154	0.379	1.000	0.008	Control	Pretest Vs Posttest	0.292	0.335	1.000	0.031613
	Control Vs Implicit	-0.292	0.368	1.000			Pretest Vs Delayed Test	0.500	0.335	0.419	
	Explicit Vs Implicit	-0.138	0.349	1.000			Posttest Vs Delayed Test	0.208	0.335	1.000	
Posttest	Control Vs Explicit	-8.997*	0.745	0.000	0.638	Explicit	Pretest Vs Posttest	-8.552*	0.799	0.000	0.577303
	Control Vs Implicit	-4.917*	0.724	0.000			Pretest Vs Delayed Test	-4.483*	0.799	0.000	
	Explicit Vs Implicit	4.080*	0.687	0.000			Posttest Vs Delayed Test	4.069*	0.799	0.000	
Delayed test	Control Vs Explicit	-5.136*	0.981	0.000	0.318	Implicit	Pretest Vs Posttest	-4.333*	0.771	0.000	0.322286
	Control Vs Implicit	-5.458*	0.954	0.000			Pretest Vs Delayed Test	-4.667*	0.771	0.000	
	Explicit Vs Implicit	-0.322	0.905	1.000			Posttest Vs Delayed Test	-0.333	0.771	1.000	

5.4. An Offer of Repair

The results showed no significant differences across groups of participants and times of tests with respect to the apology strategy "an offer of repair". This is shown in Table 11, which presents the mean and standard deviations for all groups at all time points, and Table 12, which presents the mixed ANOVA results.

Table 11. Descriptive statistics for an offer of repair.

Strategy 4				
Descriptive Statistics				
Test	**Group**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Number**
Pretest	Control	4.458	1.285	24
	Explicit	5.172	1.891	29
	Implicit	5.364	1.950	33
Posttest	Control	4.500	2.359	24
	Explicit	5.379	1.971	29
	Implicit	4.818	2.113	33
Delayed test	Control	4.208	2.187	24
	Explicit	4.862	2.475	29
	Implicit	5.121	2.421	33

Table 12. Mixed ANOVA results for an offer of repair.

		Comparison Between Groups			**Comparison Within Subjects**		
		Mean Difference	**Standard Deviation**	**P-value**	**Mean Square**	**F-test**	**P-value**
Overall ANOVA	Control Vs Explicit	-0.749	0.334	0.077	13.839	3.155	0.051
	Control Vs Implicit	-0.712	0.324	0.087			
	Explicit Vs Implicit	0.037	0.308	1.000			

5.5. A Promise of Forbearance

Regarding the apology strategy "a promise of forbearance", the results showed no significant differences across groups of participants and times of tests. This can be seen in Table 13, which includes the mean and standard deviations for all groups at all time points, and Table 14, which summarizes the mixed ANOVA results.

Table 13. Descriptive statistics for a promise of forbearance.

Strategy 5				
Descriptive Statistics				
Test	**Group**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Number**
Pretest	Control	0.667	0.702	24
	Explicit	0.724	0.702	29
	Implicit	0.909	0.843	33
Posttest	Control	0.542	0.658	24
	Explicit	1.345	0.974	29
	Implicit	1.152	1.176	33
Delayed test	Control	0.958	0.908	24
	Explicit	1.103	1.012	29
	Implicit	1.000	1.031	33

Table 14. Mixed ANOVA results for a promise of forbearance.

		Comparison Between Groups			**Comparison Within Subjects**		
		Mean Difference	**Standard Deviation**	**P-value**	**Mean Square**	**F-test**	**P-value**
Overall ANOVA	Control Vs Explicit	-0.335	0.148	0.072	2.614	3.042	0.052
	Control Vs Implicit	-0.298	0.144	0.117			
	Explicit Vs Implicit	0.037	0.136	1.000			

5.6. No Response/Apology

With reference to the "no response/apology" strategy, the E Group used more instances of this strategy than the other two groups in the delayed test. Please refer to Tables 15, 16 and 17 for relevant details. Table 15 shows the mean and standard deviations for all groups at all time points, Table 16 summarizes the mixed ANOVA results, and Table 17 shows additional findings based on the Bonferroni comparisons. It is worth noting that no scores were found for the I Group in Table 17 because the mean of the strategies across the three tests is nil.

Table 15. Descriptive statistics for no response/apology.

Strategy 6				
Descriptive Statistics				
Test	**Group**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Number**
Pretest	Control	0.042	0.204	24
	Explicit	0.069	0.258	29
	Implicit	0.000	0.000	33
Posttest	Control	0.042	0.204	24
	Explicit	0.034	0.186	29
	Implicit	0.000	0.000	33
Delayed test	Control	0.000	0.000	24
	Explicit	0.207	0.491	29
	Implicit	0.000	0.000	33

Table 16. Mixed ANOVA results for no response/apology.

		Comparison Between Groups			**Comparison Within Subjects**		
		Mean Difference	**Standard Deviation**	**P-value**	**Mean Square**	**F-test**	**P-value**
Overall ANOVA	Control Vs Explicit	-0.076	0.035	0.089	0.259	5.493	0.005
	Control Vs Implicit	0.028	0.034	1.000			
	Explicit Vs Implicit	0.103*	0.032	0.004			

5.7. A Denial of the Need to Apologize

The results in relation to "a denial of the need to apologize" revealed that the E Group produced more instances of this strategy than the other two groups in the immediate and delayed posttests. As for times of tests, the E Group denied the need to apologize in the delayed test more than the pretest. The relevant figures are presented in Tables 18, 19 and 20. Table 18 shows the mean and standard deviations for all groups at all time points, Table 19 summarizes the mixed ANOVA results, and Table 20 shows additional findings based on the Bonferroni comparisons.

5.8. A Denial of Responsibility

The E Group denied responsibility significantly more than the other two groups in the delayed posttest. Additionally, the E Group denied responsibility in the delayed test significantly more than in the pretest. These results are presented in Tables 21, 22 and 23. Table 21 shows the mean and standard deviations for all groups at all time points, Table 22 summarizes the mixed ANOVA results, and Table 23 shows additional findings based on the Bonferroni comparisons. It is worth noting that this strategy consists of two sub-strategies in Olshtain & Cohen's (1983) model. However, no further analysis of numbers of each sub-strategy is needed here due to the minimal number of instances produced for the target strategy as a whole across the three groups as shown in Table 21.

Table 17. Bonferroni comparisons for no response/apology.

Comparison Between Groups						Comparison Between Time Points of Test					
Test	**Groups**	**MD**	**SD**	**P-value**	**Eta2**	**Group**	**Tests**	**MD**	**SD**	**P-value**	**Eta2**
Pretest	Control Vs Explicit	-0.027	0.051	1.000	0.026	Control	Pretest Vs Posttest	0.000	0.048	1.000	0.014286
	Control Vs Implicit	0.042	0.049	1.000			Pretest Vs Delayed Test	0.042	0.048	1.000	
	Explicit Vs Implicit	0.069	0.047	0.436			Posttest Vs Delayed Test	0.042	0.048	1.000	
Posttest	Control Vs Explicit	0.007	0.042	1.000	0.015	Explicit	Pretest Vs Posttest	0.034	0.089	1.000	0.047945
	Control Vs Implicit	0.042	0.041	0.932			Pretest Vs Delayed Test	-0.138	0.089	0.371	
	Explicit Vs Implicit	0.034	0.039	1.000			Posttest Vs Delayed Test	-0.172	0.089	0.166	
Delayed test	Control Vs Explicit	-.207*	0.079	0.031	0.109	Implicit	Pretest Vs Posttest				
	Control Vs Implicit	0.000	0.077	1.000			Pretest Vs Delayed Test				
	Explicit Vs Implicit	.207*	0.073	0.017			Posttest Vs Delayed Test				

Table 18. Descriptive statistics for a denial of the need to apologize.

Strategy 7				
Descriptive Statistics				
Test	**Group**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Number**
Pretest	Control	0.083	0.282	24
	Explicit	0.000	0.000	29
	Implicit	0.061	0.242	33
Posttest	Control	0.000	0.000	24
	Explicit	0.207	0.491	29
	Implicit	0.030	0.174	33
Delayed test	Control	0.000	0.000	24
	Explicit	0.345	0.769	29
	Implicit	0.000	0.000	33

Table 19. Mixed ANOVA results for a denial of the need to apologize.

		Comparison Between Groups			**Comparison Within Subjects**		
		Mean Difference	**Standard Deviation**	**P-value**	**Mean Square**	**F-test**	**P-value**
Overall ANOVA	Control Vs Explicit	-0.156*	0.055	0.014	0.690	5.881	0.003
	Control Vs Implicit	-0.003	0.053	1.000			
	Explicit Vs Implicit	0.154*	0.050	0.008			

5.9. Combinations of Strategies

It is important to examine how students used combinations of strategies in the three groups. Table 24 shows the five most frequently employed combinations for the three groups. As shown in the table, the C Group's most frequent combinations constituted a large percentage of the total combinations for the three tests. In fact, the C Group produced a total of 41 combinations in the pretest and the immediate posttest and 46 in the delayed posttest. Much more variation was noted in the experimental groups with combinations representing smaller percentages in the posttests, which reflects the students' use of a variety of combinations of strategies after the treatment. In fact, the E Group produced 69, 204, and 156 combinations of strategies in the pretest, immediate posttest and delayed posttest, respectively. Likewise, the total number of combinations rose from 81 in the pretest to 157 in the immediate posttest and 153 in the delayed posttest for the I Group.

Table 20. Bonferroni comparisons for a denial of the need to apologize.

Comparison Between Groups						Comparison Between Time Points of Test					
Test	**Groups**	**MD**	**SD**	**P-value**	**Eta2**	**Group**	**Tests**	**MD**	**SD**	**P-value**	**Eta2**
Pretest	Control Vs Explicit	0.083	0.058	0.471	0.027	Control	Pretest Vs Posttest	0.083	0.047	0.243	0.057143
	Control Vs Implicit	0.023	0.057	1.000			Pretest Vs Delayed Test	0.083	0.047	0.243	
	Explicit Vs Implicit	-0.061	0.054	0.790			Posttest Vs Delayed Test	0.000	0.047	1.000	
Posttest	Control Vs Explicit	-.207*	0.084	0.048	0.083	Explicit	Pretest Vs Posttest	-0.207	0.138	0.416	0.069725
	Control Vs Implicit	-0.030	0.082	1.000			Pretest Vs Delayed Test	-.345*	0.138	0.044	
	Explicit Vs Implicit	0.177	0.078	0.077			Posttest Vs Delayed Test	-0.138	0.138	0.965	
Delayed test	Control Vs Explicit	-.345*	0.123	0.019	0.121	Implicit	Pretest Vs Posttest	0.030	0.042	1.000	0.020833
	Control Vs Implicit	0.000	0.120	1.000			Pretest Vs Delayed Test	0.061	0.042	0.469	
	Explicit Vs Implicit	.345*	0.114	0.010			Posttest Vs Delayed Test	0.030	0.042	1.000	

Table 21. Descriptive statistics for a denial of the need to apologize.

Strategy 8				
Descriptive Statistics				
Test	**Group**	**Mean**	**Standard Deviation**	**Number**
Pretest	Control	0.083	0.282	24
	Explicit	0.000	0.000	29
	Implicit	0.152	0.566	33
Posttest	Control	0.083	0.282	24
	Explicit	0.310	0.806	29
	Implicit	0.212	0.485	33
Delayed test	Control	0.000	0.000	24
	Explicit	0.759	1.455	29
	Implicit	0.030	0.174	33

Table 22. Mixed ANOVA results for a denial of the need to apologize.

		Comparison Between Groups			**Comparison Within Subjects**		
		Mean Difference	**Standard Deviation**	**P-value**	**Mean Square**	**F-test**	**P-value**
Overall ANOVA	Control Vs Explicit	-.301*	0.104	0.013	2.023	4.731	0.010
	Control Vs Implicit	-0.076	0.101	1.000			
	Explicit Vs Implicit	0.225	0.096	0.060			

Table 23. Bonferroni comparisons for a denial of the need to apologize.

Comparison Between Groups						Comparison Between Time Points of Test					
Test	**Groups**	**MD**	**SD**	**P-value**	**Eta2**	**Group**	**Tests**	**MD**	**SD**	**P-value**	**Eta2**
Pretest	Control Vs Explicit	0.083	0.105	1.000	0.029	Control	Pretest Vs Posttest	0.000	0.067	1.000	0.029
	Control Vs Implicit	-0.068	0.102	1.000			Pretest Vs Delayed Test	0.083	0.067	0.644	
	Explicit Vs Implicit	-0.152	0.097	0.367			Posttest Vs Delayed Test	0.083	0.067	0.644	
Posttest	Control Vs Explicit	-0.227	0.159	0.471	0.024	Explicit	Pretest Vs Posttest	-0.310	0.252	0.666	0.098
	Control Vs Implicit	-0.129	0.155	1.000			Pretest Vs Delayed Test	-.759*	0.252	0.010	
	Explicit Vs Implicit	0.098	0.147	1.000			Posttest Vs Delayed Test	-0.448	0.252	0.238	
Delayed test	Control Vs Explicit	-.759*	0.235	0.005	0.149	Implicit	Pretest Vs Posttest	-0.061	0.109	1.000	0.029
	Control Vs Implicit	-0.030	0.229	1.000			Pretest Vs Delayed Test	0.121	0.109	0.803	
	Explicit Vs Implicit	.728*	0.217	0.004			Posttest Vs Delayed Test	0.182	0.109	0.293	

Table 24. Highly frequent combinations of strategies.

Pretest	Immediate Posttest	Delayed Posttest
Control Group		
1a + 2 (22.2%)	1a + 2 (18.4%)	1a + 2 (21.2%)
1a + 4 (17.7%)	1a + 4 (14.9%)	1a + 4 (15.6%)
1a (6.3%)	1a (11.1%)	1a (14.2%)
1a + 3d (5.6%)	1a + 2 + 4 (7.3%)	1a + 2 + 4 (5.9%)
4 (4.9%)	1a + 3d (6.3%)	1a + 3d (4.9%)
Explicit Group		
1a + 2 (14.7%)	1a + 4 (4.6%)	1a + 4 (10.3%)
1a + 4 (14.4%)	1a + 2 (4.3%)	1a + 2 (7.5%)
1a (9.8%)	1a + 3d (3.4%)	1a + 2 + 4 (7.2%)
1a + 2 + 4 (7.5%)	1a + 5 (2.3%)	1a + 3d (4%)
4 (5.7%)	1a + 2 + 4 (1.7%)	1a (3.4%)
Implicit Group		
1a + 4 (14.9%)	1a + 4 (11.1%)	1a + 2 (12.1%)
1a + 2 (11.9%)	1a + 2 (8.8%)	1a + 4 (11.4%)
1a + 2 + 4 (7.6%)	1a + 2 + 4 (6.1%)	1a (7.3%)
1a (6.3%)	1a (4.5%)	1a + 3d (4.5%)
4 (4.5%)	1a + 3d (3%)	1a + 2 + 4 (3.5%)

Note:
*The numbers and letters represent the strategies and sub-strategies of the Olshtain & Cohen (1983) model.
** The percentages between brackets represent the frequency of occurrence of the target combination with reference to the total number of combinations of strategies.

Sample participants' responses:

Student: Can I have my term paper, please?

Professor: *Sorry* [expression of regret], dear, but I haven't finished it. *I had several meetings yesterday* [explanation or account of the situation].

Professor: Can I have the book now, please?

Student: Oh, *I'm terribly sorry* [expression of regret]. *I got confused* [expressing self-deficiency] and *thought that I should bring it tomorrow* [explanation or account of the situation]. *Please, forgive me* [request for forgiveness].

Brother: Turn down that noise!! I'm studying here!!

You: *I'm sorry* [expression of regret]. *I didn't mean to disturb you* [expressing lack of intent]. *I won't do it again* [promise of forbearance].

Father: That was rude! You kept cutting me off every minute.

You: *I'm really sorry* [expression of regret], Dad, but *I really didn't mean to* [expressing lack of intent]. *The discussion was so interesting* [explanation or account of the situation].

Customer: Excuse me, I ordered beef, not chicken.

Waiter: *I'm truly sorry* [expression of regret], Sir. *I'll change it right away* [offer of repair].

Mother: Oh, what's that bottle?! I can't see the screen.

Daughter: *Sorry* [expression of regret], Mom! *I didn't mean to* [expressing lack of intent].

6. DISCUSSION

The current study employed a pre- post- delayed posttest design to compare the influence of explicit versus implicit teaching on EFL learners' use of apology realization strategies. The students' performance on the three tests was compared for each realization strategy as well as for their combinations of strategies. The results can be classified under three categories. The first category includes the apology-specific strategies "an explanation or account of the situation", "an offer of repair", and "a promise of forbearance". The three strategies were commonly used by the students in the pretest and the students continued to use them in the immediate and delayed tests without any significant differences across groups or test times. Since students were already aware of these

strategies before the treatment and were regularly using them, the students did not seem to pay special attention to them. The introduction of these apology strategies in class just confirmed the students' prior knowledge. Therefore, the students' behavior did not show much influence from instructional intervention.

The second category of strategies included "an expression of apology" and "an acknowledgement of responsibility". In these strategies, the experimental groups produced significantly more instances of these apology-specific strategies than the comparison group in the immediate posttest, with a special advantage for the E Group over the I Group. As for the delayed test, the I Group outperformed the C Group in the two strategies, while the E Group outperformed the C Group only in the "acknowledgement of responsibility" strategy. These findings can be interpreted based on the fact that the two strategies are classified into sub-strategies. The strategy "expression of apology" consists of three sub-strategies, only one of which was commonly used in the pretest. The strategy "an acknowledgement of responsibility" featured four sub-strategies, only one of which was common in the pretest. This means that the students found a real chance to learn new realization strategies and thus enlarge their repertoire of acceptable pragmalinguistic forms to be used within their apologies. This can explain why instructional intervention was effective in these two strategies contrary to the strategies discussed in the previous paragraph. It is worth noting that explicit teaching was more effective than implicit teaching in the immediate posttest. However, the effect of implicit teaching seemed more sustainable. While the I Group sustained the learning gains in the immediate and delayed posttests, the E Group regressed. In other words, the E Group produced more instances of these apology-specific strategies in the immediate posttest than in the delayed posttest. In fact, the delayed posttest for the E Group showed a similar pattern to the pretest. This reflects a short-lived effect for explicit teaching on the use of these apology-specific strategies.

The third category of strategies included "no response/apology", "a denial of the need to apologize", and "a denial of responsibility." In these strategies, minimal differences were noted. The E Group denied the need to apologize significantly more frequently than the C Group in the two posttests and did not respond and denied responsibility significantly more frequently than the C Group in the delayed test. As for differences across test times, significant differences were only noted between the pretest and the delayed test in the E Group with more instances of the realization strategies produced in the delayed test. These minimal differences seem to reflect the special difficulty the students faced using these strategies. A number of earlier studies comparing the use of apology realization strategies by native speakers of Arabic and English have highlighted that Arabs tend more strongly to acknowledge responsibility than native speakers of English (e.g., (Al-Zumor, 2011; El-Dakhs, 2018)). Hence, the use of these three strategies, which entail either a denial of the need to apologize or a denial of responsibility, may not be generally culturally preferred among Arabs. Hence, it seems that explicit teaching is needed when introducing and/or practicing culturally incompatible strategies.

It is important here to consider the students' use of combinations of strategies in the three tests. As shown in the results section, the experimental groups enhanced the students' confident use of the different strategies and allowed them to manipulate combinations of strategies more effectively. In fact, the number of combinations the students produced in the posttests were double and once treble the number of combinations in the pretest for the experimental groups. This was in stark contrast with the comparison group which used almost the same number of combinations in the three tests. This finding further supports the effectiveness of instructional intervention in the teaching of realization strategies of speech acts.

The results of the current study are in line with earlier research (e.g., (Félix-Brasdefer & Barker, 2012; Ishihara & Cohen, 2010)) that highlights the effectiveness of instructional pragmatics. As for the comparison between explicit and implicit teaching, the current results support earlier findings that both explicit and implicit teaching of realization strategies can be effective, although some advantage for explicit teaching is noted (Ahmadian, 2020; Nguyen et al., 2012). The advantage of explicit teaching was most obvious in the present study when the target strategies were incompatible with the learners' cultural norms and when immediate testing was the focus. In fact,

implicit teaching failed to show any influence on the current study when the target strategies did not match the cultural preferences of the learners, while explicit teaching maintained only little effect.

It must be noted that these findings may have changed if the treatment period was longer than 90 minutes as was the case in the current study. Most probably, a longer intervention would have increased the conspicuousness of the apology-specific strategies to be learned. These findings are generally in line with Schmidt (1993); Schmidt (2001) Noticing Hypothesis, which emphasizes the importance of attention in learning, but it does not overrule the importance of comprehensible input (Krashen, 1993; Krashen, 1989) or social interaction (Long, 1996) since the I Group proved somehow effective in certain contexts. The current study also provides clear support to the inclusion of instructional pragmatics in the EFL classroom from the beginning levels of EFL instruction (Félix-Brasdefer & Barker, 2012) because the study sample benefited from the instructional intervention despite being elementary EFL learners.

7. CONCLUSION

The current study was designed to compare the relative contribution of explicit and implicit instruction respectively to the successful performance of EFL apologies. The study showed that both methods of instructional intervention can be effective, although explicit teaching has proved relatively more advantageous, particularly when learning is measured immediately and when the strategies are less preferred in the students' first language culture. In the current study, the strategies of denying the need to apologize and denying responsibility were less preferred by the Arab participants, who are known to prefer acknowledging rather than denying responsibility while apologizing (e.g., (Al-Zumor, 2011; El-Dakhs, 2018)). The current study thus lends support to Schmidt (1993); Schmidt (2001) Noticing Hypothesis, which outlines attention as a pre-requisite to learning while partially matching the requirements for comprehensible input and social interaction. The current study also comes in line with the view that the superiority of explicit teaching may be influenced by a variety of determinants (Takahashi, 2010). Three relevant determinants were the learners' prior knowledge, cultural background, and the time of testing.

The current study thus has pedagogical implications and recommendations for future research. In terms of pedagogy, the study supports the implementation of instructional pragmatics in the EFL classroom from beginner levels of proficiency. It also supports the use of both explicit and implicit teaching methods in the EFL classroom since both have proved effective when the target strategies seemed culturally common in both the source and target languages. As for culturally uncommon strategies, explicit instruction will be more effective. Regarding future research, further research on the explicit–implicit instruction debates in the IP domain should involve longer treatment periods, collect data from native speakers to serve as a baseline for the study, and use multiple instruments to assess the effects of the intervention. It is also recommended to supplement the tests with verbal reports from a subsection of the participants as to why they responded the way they did in the DCTs.

Funding: The researchers would like to thank Prince Sultan University for funding this research project through the research lab [Applied Linguistics Research Lab RL-CH-2019/9/1].
Competing Interests: The authors declare that they have no competing interests.
Acknowledgement: The researchers extend their special thanks to Ms. Aiysha Siddika, a lecturer at Prince Sultan University, for her invaluable help devising the study materials and collecting data. The researchers also thank Ms. Nurah Ureka Washington and Ms. Somayya Bibi, lecturers at Prince Sultan University, for their support with data collection.

REFERENCES

Ahmadian, M. J. (2020). Explicit and implicit instruction of refusal strategies: Does working memory capacity play a role? *Language Teaching Research, 24*(2), 163-188. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168818783215.

Al-Mansoob, N. T., Patil, K., & Alrefaee, Y. (2019). A Cross-cultural study of the speech act of compliments in American English and Yemeni Arabic. *LANGKAWI Journal*, *5*(1), 1-12. Available at: https://doi.org/10.31332/lkw.v5i1.1271.

Al-Zumor, A. W. Q. G. (2011). Apologies in Arabic and English: An inter-language and cross-cultural study. *Journal of King Saud University-Languages and Translation*, *23*(1), 19-28. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jksult.2010.02.001.

Al Aamri, R. (2014). *Teaching speech acts to EFL college-level Omani learners: Requests and refusals*. A Master's Paper at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, USA.

Alhaidari, A. A. (2009). *The art of saying no: A cross-cultural pragmatic comparison of Saudi and Australian refusal appropriateness applied in academic settings*. MA Dissertation at the University of Adelaide.

Aydin, M. (2013). *Cross-cultural pragmatics: A study of apology speech acts by Turkish speakers, American English speakers and advanced non-native speakers of English in Turkey*. Theses, Dissertations, and Other Capstone Projects. Paper 269.

Bardovi-Harlig, K. (1996). Pragmatics and language teaching: Bringing pragmatics and pedagogy together. In L.F. Boufon (ed.), Pragmatics and language learning (Vol. 7, pp. 21-39). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign.

Bardovi-Harlig, K. (2001). Evaluating the empirical evidence: Grounds for instruction in pragmatics. In G. Kasper and K. Rose (Eds.), Pragmatics and language teaching (pp. 11-32). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bardovi-Harlig, K., & Dörnyei, Z. (1998). Do language learners recognize pragmatic violations? Pragmatic versus grammatical awareness in instructed L2 learning. *Tesol Quarterly*, *32*(2), 233-259. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/3587583.

Bataineh, R. F., Al-Qeyam, F. R., & Smadi, O. M. (2017). Does form-focused instruction really make a difference? Potential effectiveness in Jordanian EFL learners' linguistic and pragmatic knowledge acquisition. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education*, *2*(1), 1-11. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-017-0040-0.

Bergman, M., & Kasper, G. (1993). Perception and performance in native and non-native apologizing. In G. Kasper & S. Blum-Kulka (Eds.), Interlanguage Pragmatics (pp. 82-107). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Blum-Kulka, S., & Olshtain, E. (1984). Requests and apologies: A cross-cultural study of speech act realization patterns (CCSARP). *Applied Linguistics*, *5*(3), 196-213. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/5.3.196.

Borer, B. M. (2018). *Teaching and learning pragmatics and speech acts: An instructional pragmatics curriculum development project for EFL learners*. A Master's Capstone at Hamline University, USA.

Bu, J. (2012). A study of the effects of explicit and implicit teachings on developing Chinese EFL learners' pragmatic competence. *International Journal of Language Studies*, *6*(3), 57-80.

Canli, Z., & Canli, B. (2013). Keep calm and say sorry!: The use of apologies by EFL teachers in Turkish and English. *Educational Process: International Journal*, *2*(1-2), 36-46. Available at: https://doi.org/10.12973/edupij.2013.212.3.

Chang, Y.-F. (2016). Apologizing in Mandarin Chinese: A study on developmental patterns. *Concentric: Studies in Linguistics*, *42*(1), 73-101.

Cohen, A. D., & Olshtain, E. (1981). Developing a measure of sociocultural competence: The case of apology. *Language Learning*, *31*(1), 113-134. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1981.tb01375.x.

Cook, H. M. (2001). Why can't learners of JFL distinguish polite from impolite speech styles. In K. Rose, & G. Kasper (Eds.), Pragmatics in language teaching (pp. 80-102). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

El-Dakhs, D. A. S. (2018). Investigating the apology strategies of Saudi learners of English: Foreign language learning in focus. *Pragmatics & Society*, *9*(4), 601-628.

El-Dakhs, D. A. S., Rahman, M., Muhammad, M., & Amroun, F. (2019). The Saudi EFL learners' complaint behavior: A study on interlanguage pragmatics. *Asian EFL Journal*, *24*(4), 295-324.

El-Shazly, R. F. (2017). *The role of pragmatics instruction in language learning in the context of English as a foreign language*. Doctoral Thesis at Cardiff Metropolitan University, UK.

Erton, İ. (2007). Applied pragmatics and competence relations in language learning and teaching. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, *3*(1), 59-71.

Félix-Brasdefer, J. C., & Barker, M. H. (2012). Compliments and compliment responses: From empirical evidence to pedagogical application. In M.L. R. de Zarobe and Y.R. de Zarobe (Eds.), Speech acts and politeness across languages and cultures (pp. 241-247). Bern: Peter Lang.

Félix-Brasdefer, J. C., & Cohen, A. D. (2012). Teaching pragmatics in the foreign language classroom: Grammar as a communicative resource. *Hispania*, *95*(4), 650-669. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1353/hpn.2012.0124.

Félix-Brasdefer., J. C. (2008). Teaching pragmatics in the classroom: Instruction of mitigation in Spanish as a foreign language. *Hispania*, *91*(2), 479-494. Available at: https://doi.org/10.2307/20063733.

Ghobadi, A., & Fahim, M. (2009). The effect of explicit teaching of English "thanking formulas" on Iranian EFL intermediate level students at English language institutes. *System*, *37*(3), 526-537. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2009.02.010.

Glaser, K. (2009). Acquiring pragmatic competence in a foreign language–Mastering dispreferred speech acts. *Topics in Linguistics*, *1*(4), 50-57.

Guerra, A., & Martínez-Flor, A. (2006). Is teaching how to suggest a good suggestion? An empirical study based on EFL learners' accuracy and appropriateness when making suggestions. *Porta Linguarum*, *5*(1), 91-108.

Halenko, N., & Jones, C. (2011). Teaching pragmatic awareness of spoken requests to Chinese EAP learners in the UK: Is explicit instruction effective? *System*, *39*(2), 240-250. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2011.05.003.

Holmes, J. (1989). Sex differences and apologies: One aspect of communicative competence1. *Applied Linguistics*, *10*(2), 194-213. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/10.2.194.

Holmes, J. (1990). Apologies in New Zealand English. *Language in Society*, *19*(2), 155-199.

Hosseini, S. M. B., & Safari, M. (2018). Exploring the potential of explicit/implicit teaching through plays for EFL learners' pragmatic development. *The Journal of AsiaTEFL*, *15*(4), 1065-1082. Available at: https://doi.org/10.18823/asiatefl.2018.15.4.12.1065.

Hussein, R. F., & Hammouri, M. T. (1998). Strategies of apology in Jordanian Arabic and American English. *Grazer Linguistische Studien*, *49*(1), 37-50.

Ishihara, N. (2010). Instructional pragmatics: Bridging teaching, research, and teacher education. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, *4*(10), 938-953. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-818x.2010.00242.x.

Ishihara, N., & Cohen, A. D. (2010). *Teaching and learning pragmatics: Where language and culture meet*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

Jasim, M. T. (2017). *Refusals of requests and offers in Iraqi Arabic and British English*. Doctoral Thesis at the University of Manchester.

Jianda, L. (2006). Assessing EFL learners' interlanguage pragmatic knowledge: Implications for testers and teachers. *Reflections on English Language Teaching*, *5*(1), 1-22.

Kasper, G. (2001). Four perspectives on L2 pragmatic development. *Applied Linguistics*, *22*(4), 502-530. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/22.4.502.

Krashen, S. D. (1993). *The power of reading: Insights from the research*. Englewood, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited, Inc.

Krashen, S. (1989). We acquire vocabulary and spelling by reading: Additional evidence for the input hypothesis. *The Modern Language Journal*, *73*(4), 440-464. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1989.tb05325.x.

Long, M. (1996). The role of the linguistic environment in second language acquisitio. In W. Ritchie & T. Bhatia (Eds.), Handbook of second language acquisition (pp. 413-468). San Diego: Academic Press.

Maíz-Arévalo, C. (2014). "I'm sorry I don't agree with you": Can we teach nonnative students pragmatic competence when expressing disagreement? *Spanish Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *27*(2), 433-453. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1075/resla.27.2.09mai.

Martínez-Flor, A. (2006). A comprehensive pedagogical framework to develop pragmatics in the foreign language classroom: The 6Rs approach. *Applied Language Learning*, *16*(2), 39-64.

Martínez-Flor, A., & Fukuya, Y. J. (2005). The effects of instruction on learners' production of appropriate and accurate suggestions. *System*, *33*(3), 463-480. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2005.06.007.

Mehrpour, S., Ahmadi, M., & SabourianZadeh, N. (2016). Cross-linguistic comparison of refusal speech act: Evidence from trilingual EFL learners in English, Farsi, and Kurdish. *Iranian Journal of Applied Language Studies*, *8*(2), 159-188.

Minh Vu, N. (2017). *Teaching pragmatics in English as a foreign language at a Vietnamese university: Teachers' perceptions, curricular content, and classroom practices*. A Doctoral Thesis at the University of Sydney, Australia.

Moody, S. J. (2014). Should we teach rules for pragmatics? Explicit instruction and emergent awareness of Japanese plain and polite forms. *Japanese Language and Literature*, *48*(1), 39-69.

Murray, N. (2010). Pragmatics, awareness raising, and the cooperative principle. *ELT Journal*, *64*(3), 293-301. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/ccp056.

Nguyen, M. T. T., Do, H., Pham, T., & Nguyen, A. (2018). The effectiveness of corrective feedback for the acquisition of L2 pragmatics: An eight month investigation. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, *56*(3), 345-375.

Nguyen, T. T. M., Pham, T. H., & Pham, M. T. (2012). The relative effects of explicit and implicit form-focused instruction on the development of L2 pragmatic competence. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *44*(4), 416-434. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2012.01.003.

O'Keeffe, A., Clancy, B., & Adolphs, S. (2011). *Introducing pragmatics in use*. London: Routledge.

Olshtain, E., & Cohen, A. A. (1983). Apology: A speech act set. In N. Wolfson & E. Judd (Eds.), Sociolinguistics and Language Acquisition ed. (pp. 18-35). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

Parrish, B. (2006). *Teaching adult ESL: A practical introduction*. New York: McGraw-Hill ESL/ELT.

Rezvani, E., Eslami-Rasekh, A., & Vahid Dastjerdi, H. (2014). Investigating the effects of explicit and implicit instruction on Iranian EFL learners' pragmatic development: Speech acts of request and suggestion in focus. *International Journal of Research Studies in Language Learning*, *3*(7), 1-12.

Rose, K. R. (2005). On the effects of instruction in second language pragmatics. *System*, *33*(3), 385-399. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2005.06.003.

Rose, K. R., & Kasper, G. (2001). *Pragmatics in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Safdarian, R., & Afghari, A. (2011). Performance of Iranian EFL learners on compliment response speech acts in English. *The Asian EFL Journal: Professional Teaching Articles*,, *55*(October 2011), 21-45.

Salehi, R. (2014). A comparative analysis of apology strategy: Iranian EFL learners and native English speakers. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *98*, 1658-1665. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.03.590.

Sarani, A., & Talati-Baghsiahi, A. (2017). Explicit instruction of pragmatic features: Its impact on EFL learners' knowledge of hedging devices in academic writing. *Issues in Language Teaching*, *6*(1), 29-53.

Schmidt, R. (1993). Consciousness, learning, and interlanguage pragmatics. In G. Kasper & S. Blum-Kulka (Eds.), Interlanguage pragmatics (pp. 21-42). New York: Oxford University Press.

Schmidt, R. (2001). Attention. In P. Robinson (Ed.), Cognition & second language instruction (pp. 3-33). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Schmidt, R., & Richards, J. (1985). *Speech acts and second- language learning. In J. Richards (Ed.), The context of language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Shariati, M., & Chamani, F. (2010). Apology strategies in Persian. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *42*(6), 1689-1699. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2009.10.007.

Soler, E. A. (2002). Relationship between teacher-led versus learners' interaction and the development of pragmatics in the EFL classroom. *International Journal of Educational Research*, *37*(3-4), 359-377. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/s0883-0355(03)00010-7.

Soler, E. A. (2005). Does instruction work for learning pragmatics in the EFL context? *System*, *33*(3), 417-435. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2005.06.005.

Spada, N., & Tomita, Y. (2010). Interactions between type of instruction and type of language feature: A meta-analysis. *Language Learning*, *60*(2), 263-308. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9922.2010.00562.x.

Sugimoto, N. (1997). A Japan-US comparison of apology styles. *Communication Research*, *24*(4), 349-369. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/009365097024004002.

Taguchi, N. (2015). Instructed pragmatics at a glance: Where instructional studies were, are, and should be going. *Language Teaching*, *48*(1), 1-50. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1017/s0261444814000263.

Taguchi, N. (2019). Second language acquisition and pragmatics: An overview. In Naoko Taguchi (ed.), The Routledge handbook of second language acquisition and pragmatics (pp. 1-14). New York: Routledge.

Taguchi, N., & Roever, C. (2017). *Second language pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tajeddin, Z., & Pirhoseinloo, M. (2012). Production of apologies in English: Variation by L2 proficiency and apology situations. *Teaching English Language*, *6*(2), 129-160.

Takahashi, S. (2010). The effect of pragmatic instruction on speech act performance. In A. Martínez-Flor & E. Usó-Juan, Speech act performance: Theoretical, empirical and methodological issues (pp. 127-142). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

Takimoto, M. (2006a). The effects of explicit feedback and form-meaning processing on the development of pragmatic proficiency in conscious-raising tasks. *Science Direct*, *34*(4), 601-614.

Takimoto, M. (2006b). The effects of explicit feedback on the development of pragmatic proficiency. *Language Teaching Research*, *10*(4), 393–417.

Takimoto, M. (2009a). The effects of input-based tasks on the development of learners' pragmatic proficiency. *Applied Linguistics*, *30*(1), 1-25.

Takimoto, M. (2009b). Exploring the effect of input-based treatment and test on the development of learners' pragmatic proficiency. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *41*(5), 1029-1046.

Takimoto, M. (2012a). Assessing the effects of identical task repetition and task type repetition on learners' recognition and production of second language request downgraders. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, *9*(1), 71–96.

Takimoto, M. (2012b). Metapragmatic discussion in interlanguage pragmatics. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *44*(10), 1240–1253.

Trosborg, A. (1995). *Interlanguage pragmatics: Requests, complaints & apologies*. New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

Válková, S. (2013). Speech acts or speech act sets: Apologies and compliments. *Linguistica Pragensia*, *2*(23), 44-57.

Vallenga, H. E. (2008). *Instructional effectiveness and interlanguage pragmatics*. ProQuest Dissertation and Theses Global. (275902800).

Webb, C. (2013). Teaching pragmatics to international students in private language schools in the UK. *Contemporary English Teaching and Learning in Non-English-Speaking Countries*, *2*(2), 27-41.

Xiao-le, G. (2011). The effect of explicit and implicit instruction of request strategies. *Intercultural Communication Studies*, *20*(1), 104-123.

Yi-xuan, F. (2016). Teaching speech acts in EFL classroom: An implicit pedagogy. *Sino-US English Teaching*, *13*(7), 515-520. Available at: https://doi.org/10.17265/1539-8072/2016.07.002.

Zayed, N. M. (2014). Jordanian EFL teachers' and students' practice of speech acts in the classroom. *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature*, *2*(5), 1-10.

APPENDIX (A) – TREATMENT DIALOGUES

Treatment Session 1

Dialogue 1 – Rude Behavior

Sara: Mary, can I speak to you for a moment?

Mary: What about?

Sara: I know you are still angry with me since that argument we had the other day.

Mary: You're right, I am. You were so rude to me.

Sara: *I know. I was really out of line* [accepting the blame], and *I want to apologize for how I spoke to you* [an offer of apology].

Mary: I don't mind if someone disagrees with me. But you shouldn't have turned it into a personal attack.

Sara: *That's fair* [recognizing the other person as deserving apology]. *I apologize* [an offer of apology]. It's no excuse, but *I was having a really bad day, and I guess I took it out on you* [an explanation or account of the situation].

Mary: I understand. Don't worry about it.

Sara: *Let me know if I can make it up to you somehow* [an offer of repair].

Mary: That's all right. The main thing is that you apologized. *I'm sorry* [an expression of regret] if I've been mean to you since it happened.

Sara: That's alright. I'm just glad we can be friends again.

Mary: Me too

Dialogue 2 – A Cancelled Lunch

Sheila: I was waiting to eat lunch with you.

Connie: *Sorry,* [an expression of regret] *I didn't know that you were hungry* [an explanation or account of the situation]. I ate lunch already.

Sheila: That's too bad. Can you have dinner this evening?

Connie: *I'm sorry* [an expression of regret] I can't. *I'm working late tonight* [an explanation or account of the situation].

Sheila: Mm, okay (sounding upset).

Connie: *Please do forgive me* [a request for forgiveness], *I have a project deadline to complete for tomorrow* [an explanation or account of the situation].

Sheila: Not to worry, maybe next time then.

Connie: Mmm, *how about lunch tomorrow? I can come pick you up from work* [an offer of repair].

Sheila: That sounds great! Have you got any place nice we could go?

Connie: Mmm, you choose.

Sheila: How about that new pizza place around the corner from my work? They have an excellent lunch menu and the drinks are free!

Connie: Brilliant! See you then.

Dialogue 3 – No-show Homework

Ms. Robinson: Sara, you didn't show me your homework.

Sara: *I'm sorry* [an expression of regret]. I haven't done it.

Ms. Robinson: Oh, and why not?

Sara: *I wasn't well yesterday* [an explanation or account of the situation].

Ms. Robinson: What was wrong with you?

Sara: *I had a headache* [an explanation or account of the situation].

Ms. Robinson: But I saw you playing tennis yesterday evening on the school field as I was leaving work late yesterday.

Sara: Mm… (looking guilty) *Extremely sorry* [an expression of regret] madam.

Ms. Robinson: You are the head girl. Shouldn't you set an example to others?

Sara: *Please forgive me* [a request for forgiveness], madam. *I now regret having told a lie* [accepting the blame]. *I assure you I won't lie again* [a promise of forbearance].

Ms. Robinson: I am glad that you have realised it. Please bring your completed homework tomorrow.

Dialogue 4 – Broken Glass

Mother: What was that terrible noise? Did you drop anything?

Emmy: *I'm sorry* [an expression of regret], mum. I dropped a glass on the floor and it broke. *I didn't mean to* [expressing lack of intent].

Mother: Were you hurt?

Emmy: No, but *I am really sorry* [an expression of apology]. I know it was a part of your dinner set.

Mother: I'm glad that you aren't hurt, but why did you drop it?

Emmy: *It was too wet after I washed it and I accidently dropped it as I was drying it* [an explanation or account of the situation].

Mother: I have told you to be careful many times, Huda!

Emmy: *I couldn't help it* [expressing self-deficiency], mum, *you are right* [acknowledging the other person deserving an apology]! *Please let me buy you another glass set* [offer of repair].

Mother: There's no need to, it's okay, but you've got to be careful next time!

Emmy: *I will be* [promise of forbearance], mum.

Treatment Session 2

Dialogue 1 – Lost Book

Sara: *I'm awfully sorry* [an expression of regret], but I seem to have lost your Q Skills book.

Ms. Johnson: Oh, that's not like you.

Sara: I just don't know what to say. I remember I had it with me yesterday at lunch.

Ms. Johnson: Can you remember where you left it last?

Sara: I think I must have left it in the canteen.

Ms. Johnson: Did you go back to look for it?

Sara: I did but, unfortunately, I couldn't find it.

Ms. Johnson: (looking worried)….Oh

Sara: Listen, *I'll get you another one* [an offer of repair].

Ms. Johnson: No, that's out of the question, thanks for letting me know though.

Sara: I have already ordered it online for you, *I am really sorry* [an expression of regret] about what's happened.

Dialogue 2 – Late from Shops

Ureka: Where have you been?

Jessica: *I'd like to apologize* [an offer of apology] for being late. *The bus didn't arrive on time* [an explanation or account of the situation].

Ureka: Did you bring back my magazine?

Jessica: Oh, I meant to, but *I forgot* [expressing self-deficiency]. *I bumped into our neighbor and we got talking about the new houses they are building up the road* [an explanation or account of the situation].

Ureka: How is Mrs. Smith doing? She seemed off color when I saw her last.

Jessica: Yeah, she's been to hospital for some tests.
Ureka: Well, I hope she feels better, she is such a lovely lady. What a shame. What about my magazine, eh?
Jessica: *I'll bring it tomorrow* [an offer of repair] when I go out to the shops again.
Ureka: Well, please don't forget, will you.
Jessica: *I am sorry* [an expression of apology]. *I won't* [promise of forbearance].

Dialogue 3 – Traffic Jam
Kat: Tina, you're 20 minutes late!
Tina: Yeah, *I'm sorry* [an expression of apology], Kat. *I got stuck in traffic* [an explanation or account of the situation].
Kat: Are you sure you just didn't leave late?
Tina: Honestly! I take the motorway to work and it was completely gridlocked. *It's because I have to travel in the rush hour* [an explanation or account of the situation].
Kat: Hm...Well, I still think that you should be leaving earlier. This is the sixth time this month that you've been late and it's not acceptable.
Tina: Come on, Kat, what can I do about the traffic? *It's not my fault* [not accepting the blame].
Kat: That's true, but please try to plan ahead for traffic changes in the future. Google maps should help.
Tina: Okay, *I will get up earlier and check Google maps for a different route* [promise of forbearance].
Kat: That sounds good, Tina, thank you.
Tina: You are welcome, Kat.

Dialogue 4 – Lateness
Sofia: *Sorry* [an expression of regret] I'm late, Alice!
Alice: Sofia, again? This is becoming a habit.
Sofia: *It's my messed up alarm clock. Every night I set it for 7 o'clock in the morning, but sometimes it just decides to not go off. It's got a mind of its own* [an explanation or account of the situation]*!*
Alice: Then just buy another alarm clock! Yours clearly doesn't work!
Sofia: I know, *I will buy another one later. It has to be done* [promise of forbearance].
Alice: Good! But you've said that a few times now. Make sure you stick to your word this Sofia.
Sofia: *I will, I promise* [promise of forbearance].

Appendix (B)

Dear Participant,

The current survey aims to investigate apology strategies in English as a foreign language. There are 12 situations given below which possibly require apologies. You do not have to provide an apology if you feel like it is not appropriate. Please read the situations carefully and try to provide the closest responses to your natural spoken English.

Thank you for providing support to the current study.

1. A university professor promised to return the student's term paper that day, but she didn't finish reading it.
   Student: Can I have my term paper, please?
   Professor:

2. A student borrowed her professor's book, which she promised to return that day, but forgot to bring it.
   Professor: Can I have the book now, please?
   Student:
3. While your brother is studying, you switch on the radio causing a loud noise. Your brother hates being disturbed while studying.
   Brother: Turn down that noise! I'm studying here!
   You:

4. Your kid invites you to her room to show you her expensive clock she has just got for her birthday. When she hands it to you, it falls down and smashes.
   Kid: Oh, no! (Starts crying)
   You:

5. While you are sitting with your father and his guests, you interrupt him a lot. When the guests leave, your father blames you a lot.
   Father: That was rude!! You kept cutting me off every other minute.
   You:

6. A staff manager has kept a student waiting for half an hour for a job interview because he was called to an unexpected meeting.
   Staff Manager: Good afternoon.
   Student: Good afternoon, Sir.
   Staff Manager:

7. You have placed a shopping bag on the luggage rack of a crowded bus. When the bus brakes, the bag falls down and hits another passenger.
   Passenger: Ouch! Oh, that hurts!
   You:

8. The waiter in an expensive restaurant brings fried chicken instead of beef to a surprised customer.
   Customer: Excuse me. I ordered beef, not chicken!!
   Waiter:

9. You offended a colleague during a discussion at work. After the meeting, the colleague mentions this fact.
   Colleague: What you said in the meeting was offensive. It was not appropriate at all.
   You:

10. You forget a get-together with a friend. You call him to apologize. This is the second time you've forgotten such a meeting. Your friend asks over the phone.
    Friend: What happened?
    You:

11. You call from work to find out how things are at home and your kid reminds you that you forgot to take him shopping as you had promised, and this is the second time that this has happened. Your kid says over the phone:
Kid: Oh, you forgot again and you promised!
You:

12. You mother is watching TV in her room. When you enter the room, you place a bottle of water on a table obstructing your mother's view.
Mother: Oh, what's that bottle?!! I can't see the screen!!
You: