

The Effect of Meta pragmatic Instructions on the Interpretation and Use of Apology Speech Acts of English as a Foreign Language Learner (EFL) at Intermediate Level

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Abstract

This study dealt with the application of the pragmatics research to EFL teaching. The study explored the effect of explicit metapragmatic instructions on the interpretation and use of apology speech acts of intermediate EFL students. The speech act of apologizing was selected as the focus of teaching. Teacher-fronted discussions, cooperative grouping, role plays, and other pragmatically oriented tasks were used to promote the learning of speech acts. A total number of 60 Iranian students based on OPT (Oxford Placement Test) test were selected for this study. Discourse Completion Test and Multiple Choice Questionnaire were developed as a pretest and posttest to measure the effects of instruction on the pragmatic awareness of the students. The results of the data analysis revealed that students' interpretation and use of speech acts improved significantly.

Keywords: *sociolinguistics, pragmatics, metapragmatics, speech acts, apology*

1. Introduction

One of the most compelling notions in the study of language is the notion of speech acts (Blum-Kulka and Kasper), (1989). A speech act is created when speaker/writer S makes an utterance U to hearer/reader H in context C. It is agreed upon that speech act theory is built on the foundation laid by Wittgenstein and Austin. Speech act theory Originated directly from the work of J L Austin, and particularly from the William James' lectures that he delivered at Harvard in 1955, published later as *How To Do Things With Words* in 1962. John Searle then improved this theory. According to Searle (1979), to understand a language one must understand the speaker's intention. The speech act is an utterance that expresses an intention. The speech act can be a sentence, a phrase or even a word. When one speaks, one performs an act. Therefore, speech does something and speech act stresses the intent of the act as a whole. Searle believes that understanding the speaker's intention is essential to realize the meaning. Without the speaker's intention, it is impossible to understand the words as a speech act.

Searle proposes that there are five basic kinds of action that one can perform in speaking, by means of the following five types of utterances:(1) representatives (example: asserting, concluding, etc), (2) directives (example: requesting, questioning), (3) commissives (example: promising, threatening, offering), (4) expressives (example: thanking, apologizing, welcoming, congratulation), (5) declarations (example: declaring war, christening, firing from employment). Likewise, apologizing is one of the specific form of utterances, has taken a lot of attention among the linguists and those who deal with pragmatic studies.

In fact, most works of apologizing up to now have been done in the field of cross-cultural pragmatics, as a part of the CCSARP (Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns) project. The project was done by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), aiming at investigating the realization patterns of two speech acts (requests and apologies) in different languages and cultures. It was conducted in order to establish

similarities and differences in these patterns linguistically and between native and non native usage to the same social constraints. The investigated languages were English, French, Danish, German, Hebrew, and Spanish.

The development of communicative competence should be the goal of language teaching, (Bouton, 1996). He proposes three major directions that researchers can take in order to further contribute to the theory of communicative competence: (1) the refinement of the study of speech acts as they occur in different cultures, (2) an investigation to determine the extent to which explicit instruction can increase the rate at which nonnative speakers develop different factors of their pragmatic competence, and (3) the contribution of pragmatics can make the presentation of different functions of a language in textbooks designed for second language learners.

Apologizing is one type of speech acts. The act of apologizing is used when an interlocutor's behavior violates social norms. The offender needs to apologize when an action or utterance (or the lack of either one) has resulted in offense. As a result, we deal with two parties: an apologizer and a recipient of apology. The act of apologizing requires an action or an utterance which is intended to set things right. Whether a specific discourse situation calls for an apology and whether a certain utterance qualifies as such an apology will depend on both linguistic and socio-cultural norms.

2. Review of related literature

The language philosopher Austin (1962) was the first who introduced the concept of 'speech act', and his theory of speech acts was initially further developed by Searle (1969). Austin (1962, p.12) pointed out that, in their ordinary use of language, people not only produce utterances to merely say things about the world but also people produce utterances in order to do things.

Developing further Austin's (1962) speech act theory, Searle (1969, p.16) considered speech acts as the basic or minimal units of all linguistic communication. Searle preferred to use the term "speech act" to refer to what Austin calls "illocutionary act". In addition, according to Searle (1969, p.24), a speaker's performance of a speech act involves three different acts which make up the complete speech act. These three acts are "utterance act" (uttering words), "propositional act" (referring and predicating) and "illocutionary act" (e.g., stating, commanding, or requesting).

Olshtain (1983) investigated how native speakers of English and Russian, both learners of Hebrew, apologized in Hebrew and their native languages. She used the same procedure used in an earlier study in Cohen and Olshtain (1981) which examined the realization patterns of apology by native speakers of Hebrew to compare native usage and nonnative usage. Taking the results into consideration, she concluded that "the data indicates an overall higher level of use for all five semantic formulas of the apology speech act set for speakers of English than for speakers of both Hebrew and Russian, and an overall lower level of frequency for speakers of Hebrew". Moreover, she found that the English speakers, who apologized most often in their native language, actually tended to apologize considerably less in Hebrew, while the Russian speakers apologized more in Hebrew.

Another study done by Olshtain (1989) compared strategy preference of apology by speakers of four different languages (English, French, German, and Hebrew) and found remarkable similarities in selection of IFIDs (Illocutionary Forces Indicating Device) and expression of responsibility. Taking the result together, she concluded that at the global level of analysis, "different languages will realize apologies in very similar ways".

Vollmer and Olshtain (1989) studied apology realization preference of two hundred speakers of German. They focused on the relationship between their realization patterns of apology and social/situational parameters such as social status, social distance the hearer's expectation of an apology, and severity of

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offence. Mainly they found the following two points: First of all, the subjects used IFIDs and responsibility in all situations in rather high percentage. Secondly, the use of intensification of apology was highly related to situational parameters (e.g. the lower the speaker's social status, the more he/she used intensifiers).

Holmes (1995) looked at gender differences in apologies and found both similarities and differences between males and females. The most obvious differences of the study were the following three points:

1. Women used significantly more apologies than men did.
2. Women used most apologies for the hearers of equal power, while men apologized to women of different status.
3. Women used most apologies for female friends, whereas men used most for socially distant women.

Flowerdew (1988) and Blum-Kulka (1982) have shown that language users across languages and cultures do not use the same grammatical forms or structures in order to perform a same speech act. For instance, Blum-Kulka's (1982) study demonstrated that speech acts are performed differently, in direct or indirect ways, according to particular cultures. The way or the choice for a specific way (in terms of grammatical structure and direct or indirect form) of realizing a given speech act in a given culture is conventionalized; hence, Blum-Kulka (1982, p. 32) states that conventions of usage of speech acts depend on culture and not just on knowledge of language.

One of the studies that displayed the transfer of first language (L1) norms into second language (L2) was conducted by Cohen & Olshtain (1981) on the Hebrew learners of English as L2, concerning the speech act of apology. The study showed that the L2 learners transferred the Hebrew feature of using less apology semantic expressions into their apologies in English language. Another study was conducted by Olshtain (1983) on apology in Hebrew as L2. Her participants who were English and Russian showed different degrees of transfer. The English participants conveyed the highest degree of transfer, and then came the Russians. Also, the English participants transferred their language styles and formulaic expressions in using the speech act of apology. These forms were not used in the same context by the Hebrew. Therefore, this documented the claim of negative pragmatic transfer because of the learners' L1 influence on the production of L2 speech acts.

A study by Eslami-Rasekh, Z; Isfahan, A; Fatahi, A (2004) dealt with the application of the pragmatics research to EFL teaching. The study investigated the effect of explicit metapragmatic instructions on the speech act comprehension of advanced EFL students. The speech acts of requesting, apologizing, and complaining were selected as the focus of the teaching. Teacher-fronted discussions, cooperative grouping, role plays, and other pragmatically oriented tasks were used to promote the learning of the intended speech acts. A pretest-posttest control group design was used. The subjects included Iranian undergraduate students in their last year of study in the field of teaching English as a foreign language. A group of American students were used to provide the baseline for the study. A multiple choice pragmatic comprehension test was developed in several stages and used both as a pretest and posttest to measure the effect of instruction on the pragmatic comprehension of the students. The results of the data analysis indicated that students' speech act comprehension improved significantly and the pragmatic competence was affected by the instruction, even in EFL settings.

A research was conducted by Eslami-Rasekh, A and Mardani, M (2010) at the university of Isfahan. In this study sixty subjects were homogenized and classified into two groups, and then they were exposed to an explicit apology strategy instruction. Two questions were proposed. The first question was to examine the effect of explicit teaching of apology speech act. The Analysis revealed that the subjects in the explicit teaching group gained significantly in terms of apology speech act. The second question was to measure the application of the intensifying devices. To answer the second question, the results of the frequency of the occurrence of intensifiers of apologetic exchanges were calculated and compared across

Iranian EFL learners. The result of the frequency demonstrated that learners who received explicit apology strategy instructions used intensifiers more appropriately than another group.

3. Method

Participants

The participants who took part in this study were 60 EFL students from 4 branches of Shokouh English Institute in Rasht. Participants of all classes were all above 18 years old, and they were all Persian native speaker. All participants passed OPT test in order to be documented that they are homogeneous. In addition, 60 participants answered all the required discourse completion questionnaires in written English.

Materials

Three research instruments were used in this study. The first was the grammar part of the OPT (Allan, 2004), administered at the beginning of the study to determine the proficiency levels of the participants. The test included 50 items and the scores above 25 was the average score of participants were chosen for the purpose of this study.

The second instrument was information papers prepared by the researchers from different sources taken from internet and also from original English text books. During 10 treatment sessions the participants were taught to become familiar with different ways in which they can apologize in different situations (formal and informal) and useful words and expressions can be used in their role plays.

The third instrument was questionnaire including two sections: the first one was Discourse Completion Test (hereafter DCT), for the use of apology speech act and the other was Multiple Choice Questionnaire for the interpretation of apology speech act. As a result, the DCT-questionnaires (Appendix A) and Multiple Choice Questionnaire (Appendix B) consisted 20 situations altogether.

Research Design

The researchers of this study employed a quasi experimental design. In this design there are a control group and an experimental group and the manipulation of three basic characteristics: 1) a pre-test, 2) a treatment during the course of study, and 3) a final measurement of the treatment (post test). In this study, teaching metapragmatic instructions as an independent variable divided the participants into two groups, the experimental group that received instructions and the control group that was just taught the institute's syllabus. The interpretation and use of apology were measured by the extent to which participants answered the twenty given questions. Each correct item was awarded one mark; the maximum score a participant could achieve on the test was 20.

Procedure

The participants of this study were given an OPT test to determine their proficiency level and 60 out of 100 students above the overall average score of participants, that was 25, were selected for the study. Then, a test was given to assess their apology speech act awareness. The two questionnaires included a total number of 20 items, including discourse completion items for the use of speech act of apology and appropriate items for the interpretation of apology speech act were adapted for this study from the questionnaires which developed by Cohen, Olshtain, and Rosenstein (1986). Discourse completion test had 10 items, each including a setting and a brief dialogue. The setting gave a brief introduction of the speaker, the hearer, and the social situation. Following the setting was a dialogue in which the speaker's response was left blank. Therefore, the subjects were given the full descriptions of the apology situations and apology- responses situations and asked to respond to each situation as realistically as possible. Multiple choice questionnaire had 10 items too. Each one described a situation and under each question there were some choices which the subjects had to pick up the best one as an acceptable respond.

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Before the subjects started to fill in the questionnaires, the objective of this investigation was explained in detail, as well as how to answer each question.

The participants were randomly assigned to control group and experimental group. Each group included 30 participants. The experimental group received teaching materials, covering ten classroom sessions of 30 minutes.

The explicit metapragmatic instruction for the experimental groups was given by a teacher-fronted discussion.

After teacher started discussion, students were divided into different groups and asked to come up with examples of the apology speech acts in their L1 (Persian) and L2 (English) and to discuss the differences and similarities in the realization patterns of the speech acts in L1 and L2. Volunteer students were asked to do role play of the apology speech acts for the whole class. Next, the students were provided with dialogues in English and asked to extract the apology speech acts performed by native speakers in those dialogues to compare them with their own strategies. In the control group classrooms, no explicit metapragmatic instruction was given. The students were just taught in accordance with the usual instructional programs of the institute.

The post-teaching questionnaire was given after the ten weeks of teaching sessions and it was as same as the pre-teaching questionnaire. During the investigation, the subjects were asked to keep silent and were not allowed to communicate with others, and no time limit was set for the participants.

Data Collection Procedure

The research was conducted based on the teaching apology speech act for the experimental group and just instructing the syllabus of the institute (not teaching apology speech act) for the control group. During 10 sessions students became familiar with different aspects of apology and their questions were answered by the researchers. This process helped the participants to have a correct understanding of apology speech act. Also, data was collected by the researchers in the same classes where participants studied in the institute after 10 sessions of practicing. This familiar environment helped the learners to feel that everything is normal. They were given the test that they received at the beginning of the study and answered them under the same conditions that they had experienced.

Data Analysis

In this research two dependent and independent factors were considered. The independent variable is the explicit teaching materials and apology speech act awareness is the dependent variable. A set of independent t-tests were utilized to compare the mean scores of the two groups in the pretest and posttest. It also clarified the effect of instructions on the experimental group. The test and retest were taken at the beginning and at the end of the semester.

4. Results

First, it was really important to document that participants are at the same (intermediate) level. Therefore, all the subjects had to participate in OPT test. After it was proven, participants were randomly assigned to control and experimental group. Next, a pre-test was administered and groups of the study, control group and experimental group took part in this test while they were asked to complete the DCT to evaluate their apology speech act awareness and use.

In terms of apology use, the mean of control group and experimental group were 16.30 and 17.10 respectively. In relation to apology interpretation, the mean of control group and experimental group were 16.56 and 16.76 in order. The p value which is a predetermined significance level to be compared with observed level was 0.05 in this study. The p value (0.070) >0.05 indicated that the two groups were

not significantly different at 0.05 level in terms of the use and awareness of apology. It illustrated that the two groups were not significantly different in both pre-tests for the use and interpretation of apology speech act at the beginning of the study prior to the treatment. It was shown that the two groups were homogeneous. The following table shows the means of the two groups.

Group (pretest)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control(use)	30	16.3000	1.93248	.35282
Experimental	30	17.1000	1.91815	.35021
Control(interpretation)	30	16.5667	1.86960	.34134
Experimental	30	16.7667	2.12835	.38858

In terms of the use of apology speech act, the means for the control and experimental groups were 14.63 and 18.30 respectively. There was a significant difference between the two groups in terms of mean. In addition, the p value of $0.00 < 0.05$ indicates that the two groups were different significantly. In all of the posttest of the use of apology speech acts, the observed t (9.299) exceeds the critical t (2.00) (observed t > critical t = $9.299 > 2.00$) as well. So by 95% confidence it can be said that there are differences between control group and experimental group.

In relation to the interpretation of apology speech act, the means for the control and experimental groups were 14.03 and 17.73 respectively. There was a mean difference of 3.66 between the experimental and the control group. The level of significance or P value is 0.000 that is less than 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$). In all of the posttest of interpretation speech acts, the observed t (8.071) exceeds the critical t (2.00) (observed t > critical t = $8.071 > 2.00$) as well. Therefore, by 95% confidence it can be said that there are differences between control group and experimental group. The results can be seen in the following tables.

Group(posttest)	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Control(use)	30	14.6333	1.75152	.31978
Experimental	30	18.3000	1.26355	.23069
Control(interpretation)	30	14.0333	2.00832	.36667
Experimental	30	17.7333	1.50707	.27515

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Use posttest score	Equal variances assumed	1.682	.200	9.299	58	.000	3.66667	.39431	4.45596	2.87737
	Equal variance not assumed			9.299	52.75	.000	3.66667	.39431	4.45764	2.87570

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Interpretation posttest score	Equal variances assumed	1.961	.167	8.071	58	.000	3.70000	.45842	4.61764	2.78236
	Equal variance not assumed			8.071	53.79	.000	3.70000	.45842	4.61971	2.78083

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The results from the data analysis of this study supported the claim that explicit metapragmatic instruction facilitates interlanguage pragmatic development. Although this study ignored the 'sequence' of acquiring speech act patterns and strategies, it showed that explicit metapragmatic instruction in these patterns and strategies makes significant contributions to the learners' speech act comprehension processes. The results displayed that pragmatic competence develops as a result of explicit metapragmatic instruction.

The results of this thesis support the claim that L2 learners may not detect relevant input features in purely meaning-based L2 use (c.f., Schmidt, 1983; Schmidt & Frota, 1986). It is claimed that in order for noticing to happen, input might have to be made salient through input enhancement, which will raise the learners' consciousness about the target features.

The findings of this study shed light on the rather controversial issue about the effects of explicit instruction on interlanguage development in an EFL setting like Iran. As was shown, results of the data analysis of this study showed that explicit metapragmatic instruction by providing input enhancement in the L2 classroom, raising L2 learners' awareness about the input features, and entangling students in productive class activities can promote precipitated and facilitated interlanguage pragmatic development to a considerable degree. The study illustrated the essential role that explicit instruction can play in Iranian EFL settings.

The study was a part of the theory of interlanguage pragmatic development. Pragmatic ability in another language is an important part of an ELL's (English Language Learners) communicative competence and must be incorporated in a model of communicative ability. Although Schmidt (1993, p. 21) shows that 'there has been little discussion of how pragmatic abilities are acquired in a second language', lots of studies have been done in interlanguage pragmatics development. A lot of studies have been conducted within this field with the final aim of providing answers to such important issues as teachability of pragmatic competence, the need for teaching L2 pragmatics and, the best instructional measures to develop pragmatic competence. These issues have received far too little attention in ELT contexts. This study can have very valuable theoretical and pedagogical implications and applications for these underestimated topics.

The results of the pretest showed that intermediate learners of English did not have pragmatic awareness of apology speech acts in the absence of any pertinent instruction. This indicates that some forms of metapragmatic instructions (deductive, inductive, implicit, or explicit) are necessary. According to Kasper (1999), L2 classrooms afford L2 learners the opportunity to reflect on their communicative encounters and to experiment with different pragmatic options. For Iranian EFL learners; however, the classroom may be the only available setting where they can try out these pragmatic options of the language, and the extent to which they are comfortable with various aspects of L2 pragmatics.

Moreover, a prerequisite for pragmatic instruction is the availability of especially prepared and appropriately tuned materials, like books, speech act scenario, cassettes, etc. Unfortunately, there is the

scarcity of materials suited for pragmatic development of students. Therefore, material developers can, following Bardovi-Harlig (1996), adopt a "speech acts framework" in planning, developing, or writing instructional materials. Many of the recent language textbooks have attempted to incorporate sociocultural information as an integral part of language functions. However, they often fail to base their selections on theoretical descriptions and research evidence on language functions. There is a vast amount of literature on most speech acts, documenting and revealing how they are performed by native speakers of English with various features in different social contexts. Based on the available literature, materials could be developed in order to teach students the patterns, rules, strategies, and linguistic forms by means of which the important speech acts are interpreted and realized in different contexts. Therefore, it is necessary for textbooks and teaching syllabuses to reflect the constantly widening scope of sociocultural research related to the speech acts.

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Appendixes

Appendix A

Background Information

Name

Age..... Sex..... Mother Tongue.....

If non-native English speaker, rate your speaking ability:
Excellent... Good... Fair... Poor ...

Time spent in English-speaking community, if any:..... years, months

Previous use of English with native speakers:
Frequent..... Occasional..... Rare

Current use of English with native speakers:
Frequent..... Occasional..... Rare

PART I-INSTRUCTIONS:

Please put yourself in the following situations and assume that in each instance the speaker will, in fact, say something. Write down what you think would be said (in English), in the space provided. Make sure that you read the whole situation carefully before you respond.

1) Ann missed a class the day before and would like to borrow Judith's notes.

Ann:

2) You are running to catch a bus. You unintentionally bump into an older woman causing her to drop some packages.

You: _

3) You forgot to call a close friend on her birthday. The next day you go to visit her.

You: _

4) Your car has been in the garage for repairs for the past two weeks. You are a regular customer at the garage and the owner had promised you that the car would be ready today. In the afternoon the owner informs you that the car won't be ready after all, even though he knows that you need it urgently that evening.

You:

5) This is not the first time that your neighbor has played loud music late at night, and you have to get up early the next morning.

You phone him:

6) A friend arranged to meet you in order to get some notes from you to study for an exam. S/he waited for an hour but you didn't show up. S/he calls you up Friend: You know, I waited for you for an hour yesterday.

You:

7) The meeting has just ended. Bob's bus has just left and the next one will not be along for another hour. The couple sitting next to him live on the same street and have come by car. He'd like a ride with them:

Bob:

8) You promised you'd buy your neighbor medicine for her sick child while in town, but you forgot.

Neighbor: Were you able to get the medicine?

You: _

9) A friend who studies with you at the university refuses to share important notes s/he has managed to get hold of before the final exam. You are quite upset because you've often helped him/her in the past.

You: _

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10) A boy is trying to pick up a girl on the street.
Boy: Excuse me, can you tell me what time it is?
Girl: Half past three.
Boy: Are you in a hurry?
Girl: That's none of your business.
Boy: How about having coffee with me?
Girl: No.
Boy: What about tomorrow?
Girl: Listen, _

Appendix B

PART II-INSTRUCTIONS:

Each of the following questions will provide a description of a situation. Following the situation there are a number of responses. Please choose two acceptable responses.

- 1) Ruth, a friend of yours at the university, comes up to you after class and tells you that she has finally found an apartment, but that she must pay \$300.00 down payment immediately. At present she only has \$200.00. She turns to you and says:
- How about lending me some money?
 - So do me a favor and lend me some money.
 - I'd appreciate it if you could lend me the money.
 - Could you possibly lend me the money?
 - Do you think you could lend me the money?
 - I promise I'll pay you back right away.
 - Lend me the money, please.
- 2) You have just finished cleaning the house when your children walk in with dirt and mud all over their shoes. You say:
- OUT!
 - Haven't I told you a thousand times to take off your dirty shoes before you come in?
 - Why do you have to make a mess all the time?
 - I can't believe you. I just got through cleaning in here!
 - I'm fed up! Clean this mess up!
- 3) A student forgets to return a book to the professor:
- I'm terribly sorry. I forgot it.
 - Oh, damn! I forgot it.
 - Sorry. I forgot.
 - Oh, I'm very sorry. I completely forgot.
 - I'm really sorry but I forgot to bring it.
- 4) An applicant for a job has been waiting for quite some time, although s/he had been called in for an appointment for an interview. The manager finally comes out and says:
- Sorry to have kept you waiting.
 - Sorry I'm late. I hope I didn't keep you waiting too long.
 - Have you been waiting long?
 - I was unavoidably held up in a meeting.
 - I'm sorry. I was help up.
- 5) You bought an expensive watch at an exclusive jewelry store. After a few months the watch stops working, so you take it back to the store. They tell you that this is an imported watch which they cannot fix. You say:
- If you can't fix it, then I expect my money back!
 - I would have expected better service from your store.
 - You haven't heard the end of this!
 - I'm really surprised.

- e. You'll be sorry about this.
- f. This is the last time you'll catch me buying anything here!
- g. Can't you do anything???
- h. I can't believe this.

6) You are at a restaurant with a friend. You want to see the menu in order to decide what you'd like to order. The waiter is nearby, and you turn to him and say:

- a. We'd like a menu, please.
- b. Could we have a menu, please?
- c. Bring us a menu, please.
- d. We need a menu.
- e. How about a menu for this table?
- f. May we have a menu, please?

7) A young man/woman bumps into you at the supermarket and some of your groceries spill onto the floor. He/she turns to you and says:

- a. Sorry.
- b. I'm sorry.
- c. Terribly sorry.
- d. I'm terribly sorry. Did I hurt you?
- e. I'm really sorry. Here, let me help you.
- f. I'm sorry but you were in my way and I couldn't help bumping into you.
- g. Are you all right?
- h. Please forgive me.

8) A student forgets to return a book to the professor:

- a. I'm terribly sorry. I forgot it.
- b. Oh, damn! I forgot it.
- c. Sorry, I forgot.
- d. Oh, I'm very sorry. I completely forgot.
- e. I'm really sorry but I forgot to bring it.

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- c. Have you been waiting long?
- d. I was unavoidably held up in a meeting.
- e. I'm sorry. I was held up.

10) A young man/woman bumps into you at the supermarket and some of your groceries spill onto the floor. He/she turns to you and says:

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- d. I'm terribly sorry. Did I hurt you?
- e. I'm really sorry. Here, let me help you.
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