

**Role of Monolingualism/Bilingualism on Pragmatic Awareness
and Production of Apology Speech Act of English as a Second and
Third Language**

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Abstract

The present study investigated the pragmatic awareness and production of Iranian Turkish and Persian EFL learners in the speech act of apology. Sixty-eight learners of English studying at several universities in Iran were selected based on simple random sampling as the monolingual and bilingual participants. Data were elicited by means of a written discourse self-assessment/completion test (WDSACT) with 10 situations asking the participants to evaluate the appropriateness of the given acts on a 5-point Likert scale. Participants were also required to produce the appropriate acts for the described situations when evaluated as being inappropriate. Native speakers evaluated as being inappropriate for the given situations. Alternatives were coded. Results provided almost insignificant differences between the 2 groups in terms of their perceptions of the appropriate and inappropriate acts and illustrated the monolingual/bilingual learners' tendency towards using all superstrategies of apology, except for the case of "Responsibility Expressions" and "Promises of Forbearance." Lack of cultural awareness and literacy in the Turkish language, the case of subtractive bilingualism in Iran, and insufficient pragmatic input may be sources of pragmatic failure on the part of the bilinguals.

Keywords: Pragmatic awareness, Pragmatic competence, Bilingualism, Apology, Monolingualism

1. Introduction

One of the challenging areas of research in L2 learning is that of interlanguage pragmatics (ILP), in general, and speech act performance, in particular. The study of intercultural rules governing language use in each society, or "the study of the nonnative speakers' comprehension, production, and acquisition of linguistic action in L2" (Kasper, 1989, p. 184) is the genus of research in ILP.

The cultural context of utterances is of paramount importance in understanding their meanings. Raising cross-cultural awareness can be a very important channel to learn

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about other languages and cultures as well as recognizing one's own sociocultural norms (Nuredeen, 2008). Therefore, effective intercultural communication requires the development of L2 learners' pragmatic awareness and their familiarity with one of the most important pragmatic features, namely speech acts, defined by Schmidt and Richards (1980) as all the acts performed through speaking or "all the things we do when we speak" (p. 129). Examples of these acts are requesting, apologizing, suggesting, and refusing.

Among others, apology is one of the face-saving speech acts for the hearer (Edmondson, House, Kasper, & Stemmer, 1984) in that it maintains the hearer's face. On the other hand, this act can be considered as a face-threatening act for the speaker because it threatens the speaker's positive face wants in a way that it causes the wrongdoers to take responsibility for the offenses made and try to recreate the social relations between the interlocutors (Holmes, 1995, as cited in Nuredeen, 2008). Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) claim that the linguistic realization of apology speech act can take place in one of two, or a combination of two, basic forms that could be grouped into five main superstrategies. The most direct superstrategy is done via an illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) that is "a routinized, formulaic expression of regret 'a performative verb'" (p. 206). Examples of this kind of strategy are *I'm sorry*, *I apologize*, and *Excuse me*. The remaining strategies are concerned with references to a set of specified propositions with or without an IFID. Then, utterances which make references to "Taking Responsibility for the Offense," "Explanation or Account of Cause," "Offer of Repair," and "Promise of Forbearance" are considered as other superstrategies to realize the apology speech act. In addition, some intensification markers such as intensifiers (e.g., *so*, *really*, *terribly*, or *very*), repetition of IFIDs, or double intensifiers that show "the speaker's explicit intention of intensification" (Nuredeen, p. 292) are used to mitigate the offense made.

Ignored in ILP is the study of the true nature of the (possible) relationship between L3, or another-language studies, bilingualism, and pragmatics. Being aware of this problem and regarding the universal pragmatic knowledge principles that highlight the universality of pragmatic knowledge and pragmatic strategies across different languages and cultures (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Cenoz, 2013), this study was an attempt to study the effects of bilingualism on pragmatic awareness and pragmatic production of English language learners within the following research questions:

1. Are there any significant differences between the Iranian-Turkish bilingual and Iranian-Persian monolingual EFL learners in their pragmatic awareness and recognizing the appropriateness of speech acts of English as a second and third language?
2. Are there any significant pragmatic differences between the Iranian-Persian and Turkish EFL learners in the realization of the request and apology speech acts of English as a second and third language?

2. Literature Review

Studying pragmatics from a bilingualism perspective started in the 1960s, and since then, so many scholars have addressed issues of interactional competence (Jessner, 1999) and language transfer from L1 or L2 to L3 in language acquisition studies. However, not so many studies have focused on bilingual pragmatics and advantages of bilinguals over monolinguals in the case of L3 pragmatic acquisition.

In the growing body of literature, most researchers, except for a few, (e.g., Genesee, Boivin, & Nicholadis, 1996; Cenoz & Genesee, 1998; Cummins, 2000; Fouser, 1997; SafontJordà, 2005; Silva, 2000) have focused on issues other than the pragmatic ability of bilinguals in learning an L3. For example, Baker (2002), Cummins (2000), and Hakuta (1990, as cited in Helot & de Mejia, 2008) acknowledged the linguistic, academic, and cognitive superiority of bilinguals over monolinguals. Furthermore, Ben-Zeev (1977), Cummins (1976), Kessler and Quinn (1982), Leopold (1939, 1949, as cited in Harmers & Blanc, 1989) and Lasagabaster (1997, as cited in SafontJordà, 2005) commented on the advantages of bilinguals over monolinguals in their metalinguistic activities. To be metalinguistically aware, in Malakoff's (1992) words, is to be able to solve comprehension and production problems "which themselves demand certain cognitive and linguistic skills" (p. 518). Cenoz and Valencia (1994) showed that the bilingual students involved in immersion programs of learning another language had a better performance than the monolingual students due to their intelligence, sociolinguistic status, and motivation.

Regardless of these significant abilities of bilinguals, as Cenoz and Genesee (2001, as cited in Safont Jordà, 2005) pointed out, little attention has been paid to communicative competence and the development of pragmatic skills in bilingual learners. These authors claimed that bilingual learners, who learn two linguistic codes, "acquire the same communication skills" (p. 240), just like monolinguals; simultaneously, they added that these learners acquire skills specific to bilingual communication that, in turn, leads them to acquire specific pragmatic skills.

In an attempt to investigate the role of bilingualism in EFL learners' pragmatic awareness of English as a second and third language, Safont Jordà (2005) focused on 160 female university students in an ESP course studying at the Universitat Jaume I in Castellon, Spain. Sixty per cent of these participants attended monolingual programs and 40% attended bilingual programs. A discourse evaluation test was used to elicit the data about the pragmatic awareness and pragmatic production of the learners for request speech act. The results indicated a higher pragmatic awareness on the part of the bilinguals and a better performance in their speech act realization patterns relative to the monolinguals. In justifying their judgments on the (in)appropriateness of the provided acts, the bilinguals made more references to sociopragmatic factors that depicted their concern with the contextual/situational variables of politeness. Furthermore, in contrast with the monolinguals, the bilinguals resorted more to conventionally indirect strategies when dealing with situations with different sociopragmatic factors.

Trying to investigate the realization and politeness perception of requests in Turkish-German bilinguals and Turkish monolinguals, Marti (2006) used a discourse completion test (DCT) to elicit requests in 10 different situations as well as a politeness questionnaire in order to examine the relationship between indirectness and politeness. She found that, in line with Huls' (1989) findings, the Turkish monolinguals preferred more direct strategies than the bilingual Turkish-German speakers that showed their inclination towards indirectness. She reported that the Turkish monolinguals were more reluctant towards making requests. As far as indirectness and politeness were concerned, she found that these two were related but not linearly linked concepts.

Yeganeh (2012) evaluated apology speech act and the type of apology strategies and apology terms used in different situations among Kurdish-Persian bilinguals. The DCT included 10 different social scenarios. Sixty people including 30 Persian speakers and 30 Persian-Turkish speakers participated in this study. The questionnaire was written in Persian, and the participants were asked to answer the questions in Persian. It was found that the patterns of using IFIDs for the bilingual speakers when apologizing in Persian were so eye-catching (i.e., 80% in eight situations). Moreover, almost no significant differences were found between the patterns of using "Explanations of the Cause." In case of "Repair Offers," except for the first situation (i.e., damaged car), the sixth situation (i.e., falling bag), and ninth situation (i.e., late for interview high-low), again no significant differences were observed. Also, the patterns of using "Concern for the Hearer" strategy were the

same for both groups. In general, it was found that, in contrast with the bilinguals, the monolinguals used a fewer number of apology strategies.

Shahidi Tabar (2012) studied the request realization patterns of Iranian Persian monolinguals and Turkish-Persian bilinguals according to the directness level of Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984). The data were collected via a DCT including 10 requesting situations. A politeness questionnaire was used to measure the degree of politeness perceived by both the bilingual and monolingual speakers. The results revealed different politeness strategies in different languages. For example, hints were regarded as a neutral strategy in Persian but a relatively politer area in Turkish. By and large, it was found that, in contrast with the Persian monolinguals, the Iranian Turkish bilinguals preferred a relatively high level of indirectness. He also found that the Iranian Turkish males and females resorted to different strategies when making requests, whereas the Persian males and females used the same strategies. The results showed that, in comparison with the males, the Persian females used more indirect strategies, and the Turkish bilinguals applied more direct strategies in making requests. Shahidi Tabar added that “Iranian speakers (at least the informants of this study) seem to prefer to use different strategies in making requests regarding to their mother tongue” (p. 242).

Zahedi and Mehran (2013) studied the effects of bilingualism on the strategies used in 10 speech acts including, among others, apology. The participants were 14 Persian-English bilinguals and 14 native speakers of Persian. The effect of formality on the performance of these acts was another matter of concern for the researchers. A DCT and a series of interviews were administered to elicit the data. It was discovered that both groups used formulaic expressions and sets of strategies in performing these acts. The formality of the situations was highly observed by the Persian-English bilinguals—but not gender differences. Also, both formality and gender differences did not make any significant difference in the Persian speakers’ responses. The results showed that, in some cases, however, the formulaic expressions were not recognized by a few number of respondents, and just an expression was employed to convey the meaning. With regard to the realization patterns of apology, the most frequent IFID by the Persian-English bilinguals was sorry with a frequency of 70 and a marked use of intensifiers very, so, and really. In more formal settings, other IFIDs like Please forgive me and I apologize were used more than others. Again, the most preferred IFID by the Persian native speakers was that of sorry (i.e., 75%) with a less frequent use of adjuncts to the head acts. The use

of some intensifiers such as really, so, very, and terribly was observed by the second group.

The vast number of studies in the field of L2 acquisition contrasts with the scarcity of multilingual studies. Unfortunately, it is one of the neglected issues in L2 learning/teaching studies and interlanguage pragmatics (Safont Jordà, 2005). Accordingly, this study was an attempt to be a part of the attempts made to bridge the gap between ILP and English as a second and third language acquisition studies.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

A total number of 68 graduate and undergraduate students of English randomly took part in this research. The Oxford Placement Test (OPT; Allen, 2004) was used to ensure the participants' proficiency level. Their scores were above 68. Therefore, they were considered as upper-intermediate EFL learners. Then, the participants were grouped into Persian monolinguals (i.e., 35 people) and Turkish-Persian bilinguals (i.e., 33 people) majoring in English Literature, English Translation, and TEFL, studying at several universities in Iran with the age range of 20-35.

3.2 Materials

One of the instruments employed was the OPT, the reliability of which measured through the Cronbach's alpha was found to be .81. The test was a measure to make sure about the participants' homogeneity in terms of their proficiency. Also, a personal profile questionnaire (see Appendix) asking questions about the participants' age, gender, educational background, L1, home language (i.e., the language they used at home), official language (i.e., the language they used at formal and educational establishments), and so forth was another information-gathering instrument. Also, a written discourse self-assessment/completion test (WDSACT) obtained from Liu's (2006) standard WDCT was used to elicit data about the participants' perception and production of apology acts. For time purposes and the extra task added to the test for the purpose of this study, 10 of the 14 apology acts available in Liu's test were selected. It is worthy of note that the three sociopragmatic factors of social relation, social power, and severity of the situation were used variably across all the situations. In order to obtain information about the participants' pragmatic awareness and production, the test was divided into two parts requiring the participants to read each situation and the provided apology acts. The participants were expected to evaluate the appropriateness of the provided acts with regard to the described situations on a 5-point rating scale—1 (*very inappropriate*)

and 5 (*very appropriate*). To finish, in cases the inappropriate acts were recognized, they were to write alternative expressions appropriate for those situations. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this test was found to be .77 which is acceptable. Besides, the content validity of the test was measured and confirmed by expert judgments including two TEFL professors and two M.A. TEFL graduates.

4. Procedure

At the outset, the OPT was administered to 102 undergraduate and graduate students of English literature, English translation, and TEFL. Based on the associated rating scale of the OPT advanced by Allen (2004), the EFL learners whose scores fell above 68 were rated as upper-intermediate. So, 68 upper-intermediate students formed the sample. Then, the respondents answered questions about their age, major, educational background, language background, home language, and official language to provide the researchers with some demographic information, helping them make a distinction between the monolingual and bilingual participants. So, those whose L1 was Turkish were regarded as the bilinguals, and those whose L1 was Persian were regarded as the monolinguals. Next, the WDCT was administered to the participants asking them to read each situation carefully and to examine the appropriateness of the suggested acts on a 5-point rating scale—1 (*very inappropriate*) and 5 (*very appropriate*). They were also required to suggest other apology acts based on their own perception of the contextual factors portrayed in the situations if the inappropriate acts were recognized. These contextual factors shed light on some of the sociopragmatic factors such as familiarity between the two interlocutors, their social distance, and so on to help them recognize the appropriate apology strategies for each situation.

To analyze the data obtained from the speech acts' appropriateness judgments, a *t* test was run. This test was used to find out the differences between the monolinguals and bilinguals in their ability to perceive the appropriateness of the acts. Then, in order to find out the differences between the two groups in terms of the frequency of apology superstrategies introduced by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), a series of chi-squares were conducted.

5. Results

To analyze the data, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 18.0) was employed. In order to see if the bilinguals were more likely to care for appropriateness of the given acts for the descriptions provided, an independent samples *t* test was run, the results of which are in Table 1. The findings demonstrate that the number of the bilinguals who cared for appropriateness of the given acts was

not significantly different from the number of the monolinguals who cared for the appropriateness of these acts. In other words, the mean scores of the monolinguals ($M = 64.42$, $SD = 3.76$) and bilinguals ($M = 66.84$, $SD = 3.97$; $t(66) = -1.512$, $p = .135$) in identifying the appropriate or inappropriate apology acts in the given situations were not significantly different. With regard to the low mean difference i.e., -2.42), it can be suggested that bilingualism makes no significant differences in pragmatic perception of the Iranian-Turkish and Persian EFL learners of this study.

Table 1. Results of Independent Samples t Test for Differences between Monolinguals and Bilinguals in Perception of Apology Acts' Appropriateness

	Language Background	N	Mean	SD	F	t	Sig.
Perception of Acts' Appropriateness	Monolinguals	35	64.42	3.76	1.2	-1.512	.135
	Bilinguals	33	66.84	3.97			

The second step in the analysis of the data dealt with the specific strategy types employed by the Persian and Turkish EFL participants. To find out the (possible) differences between the participants' use of different apology realization strategies in each situation, a series of chi-squares were performed. Table 2 illustrates the participants' strategy use for each of the given situation. In the followings, a general overview of the findings presented in Table 2 is provided which is, then, followed by a one-by-one analysis of apology strategies for each situation.

According to Table 2, none of the groups variably applied the superstrategies of apology introduced by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984). In other words, the chi-square results of the participants' strategy use revealed that almost all the strategy types including the IFID, "Explanation of the Cause," "Offer of Repair," and "Promise of Forbearance" along with some intensifiers used almost equally by both groups in all the given situations. However, a significant difference ($p = .006$) in the participants' inclination towards "Taking on Responsibility," or in the words of Suszczynskn (1999), self-strategies was observed in situation 7. Moreover, both groups showed marginally significant differences ($p = .08$) in the use of the IFIDs for situation 4 when the dominant sociopragmatic factors were =power, -distance, and +severity of the situation. Yet again, the bilingual and monolingual participants were marginally different ($p = .09$) in using direct apology strategies (i.e., the IFIDs) in situation 7, where -power, +distance, and +severity of situation were salient. It is worth noting that the IFID expressions were the most frequent apology head acts offered in all the situations with some frequency ranging from 0.0% to 68.6%.

To see if each situation would be significantly different in terms of each apology strategy, a one-by-one analysis of the alternative responses of the participants for each given situation is provided below:

In -power, -distance, and -severity (i.e., situation 1) with the suggested act evaluated as being inappropriate by English native speakers, the analysis of the data revealed that the bilinguals and monolinguals were not significantly different in using the IFIDs ($p = .642$) that were intensified ($p = .564$) by a few participants (i.e., 2.9% of the monolinguals and 9.1% of the bilinguals) and accompanied by “Explanation of the Cause” ($p = .568$) and “Offer of Repair” ($p = .444$). Also, a few number of respondents (i.e., 8.6% of the monolinguals and 9.1% of the bilinguals) tended to take on responsibility for the offense made that was not significant at all ($p = 1.0$).

In =power, +distance, and -severity of the situations (i.e., situations 2 and 6), when the suggested acts were judged as being inappropriate, the bilinguals’ tendency towards using intensified IFIDs (i.e., 6.1% for situations 2 and 6), “Explanation of the Cause” (i.e., 6.1% for situations 2 and 6), and “Offer of Repair” (i.e., 6.1% in situation 2 and 9.1% in situation 6) and, an additional expression of “Taking on Responsibility” (i.e., 9.1%) for situation 6 was noticed. On the other hand, the low frequency of “Explanation of the Cause” (i.e., 2.9%) in situation 2, and the notable but low-frequent use of IFIDs (11.4%), intensifiers (4.8%), “Offer of Repair” strategies (8.6%), and “Taking on Responsibility” expressions (2.9%) in situation 6 on the part of the monolinguals were observed.

An inspection of the results indicated that in cases where =power, +distance, and +severity of the situation that is the case for situations 3 and 10 (i.e., “bumping into a student” and “hitting the student’s forehead by the door”), the most preferred strategies among both groups was the use of following sequence: exclamations (*Oh*) + IFID (i.e., 61.7%) + intensifier (*I’m very sorry*; i.e., 49.9%) + “Explanation of the Cause” (*I’m late for my class* and *I’m in a hurry, I’m going to be late for my class, It was unintentional; I didn’t know you are behind the door*) (i.e., 35.2%) + IFID repetition (*Excuse me again* or *So sorry again*; i.e., 20.7%) with some others (i.e., 26.6% for situation 3 and 29.7% for situation 10) using “Offer of Repair” as an additional strategy, though the chi-square values revealed that the frequency of the use of these strategies by the monolinguals and bilinguals for both of the above situations were not significantly different.

In situations 4, 5, and 9 with the sociopragmatic variables of =power, -distance, and +severity of the situation, both groups resorted to intensified IFIDs, “Explanation of the Cause,” “Offer of Repair,” “Taking on Responsibility” strategies as well as double intensifiers, or repetitions of the IFID. The frequency of the strategies used by the bilinguals and monolinguals in situation 4 such as the IFIDs (i.e., 18.2% and 40%, respectively), intensifiers (i.e., 15.2% and 31.4%, respectively), “Explanation of the Cause” (i.e., 15.2% and 25.7%, respectively), “Offer of Repair” (i.e., 9.1% and 25.7%, respectively), “Taking on Responsibility” expressions (i.e., 6.1% and 11.4%, respectively), and repetitions of IFIDs (i.e., 13.2% and 17.1%, respectively) were notable although relatively low-frequent. In situation 5, the bilinguals preferred to use intensified IFIDs (i.e., 12.1% and 9.1% respectively) along with “Explanation of the Cause” (i.e., 3.0%) and “Offer of Repair” expressions (i.e., 9.1%) without “Taking on Responsibility” for the offense. On the other hand, the monolinguals applied intensified IFIDs (i.e., 28.6% and 20.0%, respectively), “Explanation of the Cause” (i.e., 14.3%), and “Offer of Repair” (i.e., 11.4%) along with “Taking on Responsibility” expressions (i.e., 5.7%). However, the difference seemed not to be significant ($p = .49$) for “Taking on Responsibility” expressions between the two groups. In addition, the repetition of IFIDs in situation 5 was notable for the monolinguals (i.e., 17.1%)—but not in a significant way ($p = .13$). As for situation 9, the preference of both groups in using intensified (i.e., 18.3% for the monolinguals and 12.5% for the bilinguals) IFIDs (36.7% for the monolinguals and 25.3%), along with “Explanation of the Cause” (i.e., 38.7% and 26%, respectively), “Offer of Repair” expressions (i.e., 18.9% and 15.6%, respectively), and double IFIDs (i.e., 16.5% and 14.2%, respectively) was observable, though not significantly different in using these strategies.

Situation 7 that seemed to be a serious offense context led the participants to use more intensified IFIDs (i.e., 68.8% IFID, 45.7% intensification marker, and 45.7% IFID repetition by the monolinguals; 45.5% IFID, 30.3% intensification marker, and 27.3% IFID repetition by the bilinguals), along with “Explanation of the Cause” (i.e., 40% by the monolinguals and 25% by the bilinguals) and a notable frequency (i.e., 25.7%) of use of “Taking on Responsibility” expressions on the part of the monolinguals. However, “Promise of Forbearance” expressions were not favored so much by both groups in this situation (i.e., 2.9% by the monolinguals and 3% by the bilinguals).

The results related to situation 8 with +power, -distance, and -severity of the situation indicated that both groups tended to use intensified IFIDs and “Explanation

of the Cause” (i.e., 40% and 33.3%, respectively) with relatively low “Offer of Repair” expressions (i.e., 22.4% and 10%, respectively). Yet again, the differences were not significant between the groups. In such a condition, the participants did not have a tendency to use the remaining apology strategies. A few monolinguals (i.e., 4%) took responsibility for the offense and a few others applied double IFIDs (i.e., 3% of the monolinguals and 2.9% of the bilinguals) to intensify their apologies.

Table 2. Chi-Square Values of Apology Strategy Types Used by the Participants

Situations	Language Background		IFID	Intensifiers	Explanation of the Cause	Offer of Repair	Responsibility Acceptance	Promise of Forbearance	Double IFID	Exclamations	Double Intensifier
Situation 1	Monolingual/Bilingual	Chi-Square Value	.216	.332	.197	.586	.000	.001	.001	.000	-
		<i>df</i>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	-
		<i>Sig.</i> (2-sided)	.642	.564	.658	.444	1.000	.976	.976	1.000	-
		Per cent (Monolingual)	8.6	2.9	11.4	11.4	8.6	.0	.0	5.7	-
Situation 2	Monolingual/Bilingual	Chi-Square Value	.578	.578	.003	.578	-	-	-	.003	-
		<i>df</i>	1	1	1	1	-	-	-	1	-
		<i>Sig.</i> (2-sided)	.447	.447	.958	.447	-	-	-	.958	-
		Per cent (Monolingual)	0	.0	2.9	.0	-	0	-	2.9	-
Situation 3	Monolingual/Bilingual	Chi-Square Value	.000	.000	.042	.009	.000	-	.007	.000	.003
		<i>df</i>	1	1	1	.924	1	-	1	1	1
		<i>Sig.</i> (2-sided)	1.000	1.000	.837	1	1.000	-	.934	1.000	.958
		Per cent (Monolingual)	31.4	25.7	20.0	11.4	5.7	-	8.6	29.2	2.9

		Per cent (Bilingual)	30.3	24.2	15.2	15.2	3.0	-	12.1	24.2	6.1
Situation 4	Monolingual/ Bilingual	Chi-Square Value	2.915	1.678	.603	2.187	.124	-	.000	.000	.124
		<i>df</i>	1	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	1
		<i>Sig.</i> (2-sided)	.088	.195	.437	.139	.725	-	1.000	1.000	.725
		Per cent (Monolingual)	40.0	31.4	25.7	25.7	11.4	-	17.1	5.7	11.4
		Per cent (Bilingual)	18.2	15.2	15.2	9.1	6.1	-	15.2	3.0	6.1
Situation 5	Monolingual/ Bilingual	Cchi-Square Value	1.895	.859	1.459	.000	.457	-	2.294	.578	.000
		<i>df</i>	1	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	1
		<i>Sig.</i> (2-sided)	0.169	.354	.227	1.000	.499	-	.130	.447	1.000
		Per cent (Monolingual)	28.6	20.0	14.3	11.4	5.7	-	17.1	.0	2.9
		Per cent (Bilingual)	12.1	9.1	3.0	9.1	.0	-	3.0	6.1	3.0
Situation 6	Monolingual/ Bilingual	Chi-Square Value	.124	.000	-	.000	.332	-	.001	-	-
		<i>df</i>	1	1	-	1	1	-	1	-	-
		<i>Sig.</i> (2-sided)	.725	1.000	-	1.000	.564	-	.976	-	-
		Per cent (Monolingual)	11.4	4.8	-	8.6	2.9	-	.0	-	-
		Per cent (Bilingual)	6.1	0	-	9.1	9.1	-	3.0	-	-
Situation 7	Monolingual/ Bilingual	Chi-Square Value	2.826	1.118	1.093	.083	7.669	.000	1.755	.000	.000
		<i>df</i>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
		<i>Sig.</i> (2-sided)	.093	.290	.296	.773	.006	1.000	.185	1.000	1.000
		Per cent (Monolingual)	68.6	45.7	40.0	14.3	25.7	2.9	45.7	17.1	11.4
		Per cent (Bilingual)	45.5	30.3	25.0	9.1	.0	3.0	27.3	18.2	9.1
Situation 8	Monolingual/ Bilingual	Chi-Square Value	.525	1.118	1.093	1.083	.120	-	.000	.000	-
		<i>df</i>	1	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	-
		<i>Sig.</i> (2-sided)	.445	.295	.363	.103	.955	-	1.00	1.000	-
		Per cent (Monolingual)	21.1	45.7	40.0	22.4	4	-	3	6.1	-

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		Per cent (Bilingual)	15	30.6	33.3	10	.0	-	2.9	5.7	-
Situation 9	Monolingual/ Bilingual	Chi-Square Value	1.826	1.218	1.003	.335	.145	-	.000	.123	.000
		<i>df</i>	1	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	1
		<i>Sig.</i> (2-sided)	.157	.244	.320	.856	.829	-	1.000	.905	1.000
		Per cent (Monolingual)	18.3	36.7	38.7	18.9	4.8	-	16.5	2.5	3.4
		Per cent (Bilingual)	12.5	25.3	26.0	15.6	.0	-	14.2	0	4
		Chi-Square Value	.035	.125	.001	.000	.178	-	.023	.259	.000
Situation 10	Monolingual/ Bilingual	<i>df</i>	1	1	1	1	1	-	1	1	1
		<i>Sig.</i> (2-sided)	.805	.855	.976	1.000	.900	-	.925	.870	1.000
		Per cent (Monolingual)	39	45.7	28.8	14.5	3.0	-	11	28.6	4
		Per cent (Bilingual)	45.5	40	25.6	15.2	.0	-	13.1	23.4	5.5
		Total (Frequency)/Monolingual	267	258.6	221.8	138.6	71.8	2.9	119	97.2	36
Total (Frequency)/Bilingual	206.5	189.9	167.6	119.7	27.3	6.0	93.8	92.8	33.8		

6. Discussion

The main goal of this study was to evaluate the pragmatic awareness and apology speech act realization ability of the Iranian Turkish and Persian EFL learners. Having reported and presented the findings of the research, no significant differences, except for a few cases, were found between the monolinguals' and bilinguals' pragmatic awareness and speech act realization abilities. With regard to the data presented in the related literature, it was expected to observe a better performance on the part of the bilinguals. For instance, Safont Jordà (2005) claimed that experiencing two or more languages provides a developed interactional competence on the part of bilinguals or multilinguals, leading them to "have a highly developed ability to communicate and interpret communication" (Jessner, 1997, as cited in Safont Jordà, 2005, p. 160) as well as a higher degree of pragmatic awareness and pragmatic competence (Fouser, 1997, as cited in Safont Jordà, 2005). However, the data here revealed the reverse results that are somehow in contrast with most of the data in the literature and showed almost no significant differences between the bilinguals and monolinguals in their pragmatic awareness and apology speech act productions. It

could be argued that both groups were equally able to recognize the appropriate and inappropriate speech acts in different situations. Also, they were both equally politeness-wised and concerned with politeness issues and social factors when dealing with speech acts as one of the pragmatic features. Therefore, the findings are in line with Marti's (2006) findings who did not find any significant difference between the Turkish monolinguals and the Turkish-German bilinguals in the realization and politeness perception of requests.

Regarding the strategy use by the participants in the responses given for the contexts that called for apology, it can be argued that the high percentage of using the IFIDs, intensifiers, "Explanation of the Cause," and "Offer of Repair" expressions illustrates the high tendency of both groups, especially the monolinguals, towards using these strategies when dealing with apology situations. The low frequency of the IFIDs in situations 1, 2, 6, and 8 could be attributed to the fact that these situations, in contrast with others, are mild offense contexts that consequently were followed only by a few "Offer of Repair" or "Taking on Responsibility" expressions. Differences in the amount of intensifying devices reflect the speakers' attempts to adjust IFIDs to the demands of the situation. In other words, the more offensive the situation, the more intensifying devices were used. The use of intensifiers such as intensification markers, IFID repetitions, and double intensifiers seem to have a linear relationship with the three sociopragmatic factors; in other words, in more offensive contexts where more social distance and social status differences exist between the interlocutors (i.e., situations 3, 4, 5, and 7), more intensifiers were registered and applied by the respondents. Furthermore, in situations 7, 9, and 10 with the most severe offenses, the respondents resorted to more intensifying devices such as IFID repetitions and double intensifiers to intensify the apology expression. As the total frequency of strategy usage depicted in Table 3 suggests, both bilinguals and monolinguals, to keep their face wants, tried to be ritualistic and resorted to "Explanation of the Cause" and "Offer of Repair" strategies. This led them avoid sticking to a solely direct and explicit apology strategy that could consequently mitigate the offense made and put the focus on what just happened rather than on the wrongdoer (Yeganeh, 2012). More "Explanations of the Cause" were supplied where the apologizer was in a lower or equal rank with the hearer and was strange to him or her. In addition, where more serious offenses were committed (i.e., situations 3, 4, 7, 9, and 10), more "Explanations of the Cause" were provided by the offenders. The low frequencies of "Promise of Forbearance" and "Taking on Responsibility" expressions on the part of the bilinguals indicate that they were particularly not keen on taking responsibility and did not incline to threaten their face by adding such

external face-threatening modifiers. As Suszczynskn (1999) puts it, “admitting one’s deficiency can be quite embarrassing, discrediting, and ultimately unnecessary in a society that values personal preserves and egalitarianism” (p. 1063). Hence, personal, or self-preserving, can be of high consideration, at least, for the bilingual participants of this study. As Table 2 shows, the monolinguals elicited “Taking on Responsibility” expressions in low frequencies for all the situations except for situation 7 due to its relative severity. However, when the respondents did not feel responsible for the offense, a ritualistic use of IFIDs (Fraser, 1981) was more observable—just like the case for situations 3, 4, and 10. Moreover, only two situations (i.e., situations 1 and 7) elicited noteworthy but very low-frequent “Promises of Forbearance,” probably due to the power relation differences between the two interlocutors. In other words, the higher status of the hearer caused the speakers feel the need to promise forbearance.

Presumably, the findings can also be interpreted in terms of cross-cultural pragmatic awareness. On this account, Kachru (1994) claimed that being aware of cultural differences and various cross-cultural pragmatic rules across different languages cause L2 learners to use the L2 in an appropriate manner. House-Edmondson (1986) also argued that the role of different features of social contexts such as the social distance, power relations of the interlocutors, and the imposition level of the situation to be dealt with is of utmost importance in what and how to conventionally express utterances. These factors have to do with pragmatic awareness of L2 learners in cross-cultural communication. In fact, one of the reasons why the bilingual participants of this study did not significantly outperform the monolinguals in their pragmatic awareness could be attributed to their lack of cultural awareness and unfamiliarity with the conventional/contextual rules of the English language use, as well as their inability to perceive the situational/contextual norms of the L2 society. Indeed, it seems that they did not effectively tap the pragmatic knowledge and the so-called interactional competence acquired, owing to their experience in and exposure to their L1 and L2 due to the wide cultural gap between their own culture and the English culture, on the one hand, and the likeness of the Turkish culture to the Persian culture in Iran, on the other hand.

Moreover, the status of the English language in Iran as a foreign language provides the Iranian EFL learners with a context in which the “L2 input is primarily restricted to what the curriculum offers” (Schauer, 2006, p. 312). This insufficient L2 input directs the EFL learners to “insufficient recognition of pragmatic issues in FL curricula” (Schauer, p. 312), and, therefore, leads to their pragmatic failure when

communicating in other languages. On this account, Jalilifar (2009) also comments that “it is likely that Iranian EFL learners are not taught how to perform appropriate speech acts under varying situational features. So, they may produce grammatically correct utterances, but inauthentic performances in terms of real language use” (p. 52). Consequently, not having the necessary sociopragmatic knowledge to realize speech acts appropriate to different contexts with different contextual/social factors may be another matter of concern for the performance of the bilingual and monolingual participants of the current study.

Moreover, Thomas (1983) claimed that literacy skills in L1 and L2 in bilingual learners lead them to have a better performance when dealing with tests that require manipulation of the language. Put it this way, it can be claimed that the failure of the bilingual participants of the study may be due to their lack of academic literacy in Turkish because Turkish as an L1 in Iran is learned only orally in natural settings without academic training. Academic training causes bilingual speakers to internalize the knowledge and the underlying perceptions of their L1. Also, not receiving any education in their L2 “has created a problem of bilinguality of home and school for the non-Persian speaking populations” (Khadivi & Kalantari, n.d.). This, in turn, creates a case of subtractive bilingualism in Iran where the learning of an L2 subtracts the L1 (Arefi & Alizadeh, 2008). Arefi and Alizadeh added that this subtractive context reduces the chance of bilinguals to enjoy the potentialities of bilingualism in cognitive development. Therefore, in line with some scholars (e.g., Keshavarz & Astaneh, 2004; Merrikhi, 2012; Safont Jordà, 2005), introducing bilingual education programs from early years of schooling is recommended. This would be beneficial for both bilinguals and monolinguals to benefit from the advantages of bilingualism in terms of learning an L3. It is worth pointing out that, following Fouser (1997) and Safont Jordà (2005), further studies are needed to shed more light on the different aspects of pragmatic competence of bilingual EFL learners.

7. Conclusion

This study was an attempt to address the pragmatic awareness and pragmatic production of Iranian Turkish and Persian EFL learners in the case of the speech act of apologizing. As the results indicated, almost no significant differences were found between the two groups with regard to their ability to evaluate the appropriateness of the acts and their apologizing strategies for different situations. So, both groups seemed to exercise equal pragmatic awareness. In the case of social variables, the findings suggest that both groups noticed the social power of the interlocutors and

almost ignored the social distance and familiarity between the two speaking parties. The overall findings can be revealing to TEFL in the sense that it recommends that L2 teachers and educators provide sufficient and more practical English pragmatic input for L2 learners to improve their pragmatic awareness while taking into account the potentialities of bilingualism in terms of L3 acquisition, and encourage bilingualism to avoid providing a case of subtractive bilingualism for Iranian bilinguals.

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Appendix A

Pragmatic Awareness Questionnaire

Directions: Please fill in the blanks and tick the description that best fits you.

Age:

Gender:

Major:

Semester:

What is your home language (i.e., the language you use at home)?

Persian

Turkish

What is your official language (i.e., the language you use at university, formal settings, and etc.)?

Persian

Turkish

Which option is suitable for you?

- I solely understand Turkish language and cannot speak it.
- I understand Turkish language but speak it with difficulty.
- I both understand and speak Turkish language well.
- I neither understand nor speak Turkish language.

Directions: Please read the following requesting situations carefully and give an overall rating of the given acts on the 5-point scale. This scale assesses the appropriateness of acts for each situation from very inappropriate to very appropriate. You are expected to provide an alternative expression if you rated the acts based on numbers 1 (*very inappropriate*) to 4 (*slightly appropriate*). Remember you are apologizing to English native speakers. Make sure that the information obtained in the course of this study will be kept confidential and used only for the purposes of academic research.

Situation 1:

You are a student. You forgot to do the assignment for your Human Resources course. When your teacher whom you have known for some years asks for your assignment, you apologize to your teacher. You tell your teacher:

Pardon me, sir, I forgot about that. Shall I do the assignment at once? So sorry! It's my fault!

Very inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 Very appropriate

If inappropriate, provide an alternative expression:

Situation 2:

You are now in a bookstore. While you are looking for the books you want, you accidentally find a book that you have been looking for a long time. You are so excited that you rush out of the bookstore with the book without paying it. When the shop assistant stops you, you realize that you forgot to pay for it. You apologize. You tell the shop assistant:

Oh, I'm so sorry. I was so excited about finding this book that I have been looking for for ages that I just plain forgot to pay. I really am very sorry, how much do I owe you?

Very inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 Very appropriate

If inappropriate, provide an alternative expression:

Situation 3:

You are a student. You are now rushing to the classroom as you are going to be late for the class. When you turn a corner, you accidentally bump into a student whom you do not know

and the books he is carrying fall onto the ground. You stop, pick the books up, and apologize. You tell the student:

Oh, I'm very sorry. I'm going to be late for my class, and if I'm late, I won't be allowed to enter the classroom. But I like this course very much. So, sorry again!

Very inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 Very appropriate

If inappropriate, provide an alternative expression:

Situation 4:

A few days ago, you put one of your classmate's books into your bag without knowing it when you were in the classroom with him. You knew your classmate had been looking for it and felt very upset about losing the book, because he needed the book to prepare for an important exam. Yesterday, he took the exam, and did not seem to have done well. Today, when you look for a pen in your bag, you find the book in your bag. You give the book to your classmate and apologize. You tell your classmate:

I'm sorry. I didn't know the book was in my bag. You haven't done well in the exam. I'm sorry.

Very inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 Very appropriate

If inappropriate, provide an alternative expression:

Situation 5:

You are now in the classroom. When you go out of the classroom, you accidentally knock over a cup on the desk and spill water over the books of a student whom you do not know. You apologize. You tell the student:

I'm very sorry for my behavior, I was so careless to knock over your cup and spilled water on your books. I didn't mean to do it. I do hope you can forgive me.

Very inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 Very appropriate

If inappropriate, provide an alternative expression:

Situation 6:

You are a cashier in a bookstore. One customer comes to you to pay for a book. The price of the book is \$12.8. The customer gives you a \$20 note, but you give only \$6.20 change back to the customer. The customer says he should get \$7.2 back. You realize the mistake, and apologize to the customer. You tell the customer:

Sorry, my mistake. Here you are sir. Here's the extra \$1 change. My apologies. Enjoy the rest of the day.

Very inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 Very appropriate

If inappropriate, provide an alternative expression:

Situation 7:

You are playing football on the playground with your classmate. You take a shot and the ball hits a teacher on the back of the head very hard. You go up to the teacher and apologize. You tell your teacher:

Are you all right? I'm sorry I hit you!

Very inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 Very appropriate

If inappropriate, provide an alternative expression:

Situation 8:

You are a teacher. You promised your students to teach them a French song on Thursday afternoon. But you forgot. The students waited for you in the classroom for one hour. Today is Friday, now you are in the classroom and apologize to the students:

I have wasted your time, I feel sorry about that. Could you give me a chance/

Very inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 Very appropriate

If inappropriate, provide an alternative expression:

Situation 9:

Yesterday morning, you received a call from a company. The call was for one of your classmates, but he was out. The caller asked you to deliver a message telling him to go for a job interview at 2:00 in the afternoon. But you forgot. Today, you suddenly remember it and realize that your classmate has lost a chance because of your mistake. Now, you tell your classmate the message, he feels very upset, because he has been looking for a job for a long time. You apologize.

I'm really sorry about it, I know it's my fault.

Very inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 Very appropriate

If inappropriate, provide an alternative expression:

Situation 10:

You want to study in the classroom. You push the door of the classroom very hard. A student whom you don't know is standing just behind the door reading a poster posted on the wall of the classroom. The door hits very hard on the student's forehead making it bleed. The student cries because it is very painful. You don't know the student. You apologize to him:

Oh, dear me. Please forgive my rudeness. I'll call for an ambulance right now. Please wait for a moment.

Very inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 Very appropriate

If inappropriate, provide an alternative expression: