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THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST: THE TRUE ART OF APOLOGY

MA Paper

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THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST: THE TRUE ART OF APOLOGY

This MA paper is submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the degree of the MA in English Philology

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I declare that this study is my own and does not contain any unacknowledged work from any source.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to look at speech acts of apology used in linguistic, social, and cultural settings and to answer the question, “Do people overuse and/or misuse them?” The research was conducted on the speech act of apology and its strategies used in American, Chinese, and Lithuanian cultures with 113 total respondents. The method chosen was the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) via a web-based questionnaire. The results revealed that Americans tend to overuse apologies while Chinese and Lithuanian, on the contrary, use them less. It also revealed that the dominant apology strategy in American culture is earnest politeness with an account/explanation; when the Chinese apply such a strategy, it is the same as the American style. Lithuanians most commonly employed the strategies of expected politeness/norm and earnest politeness with an account/explanation. Recommendations are that further research be conducted in the field of apology and its strategies in Lithuanian culture. In addition, an investigation into whether or not a shift in linguistic politeness and the speech act of apology in Chinese and Lithuanian cultures has occurred due to Western influence and globalization.
I. INTRODUCTION

The act of apologizing is one of the basic functions of language (Ziesing, 2000). In fact, when used appropriately, it can restore relationships and prevent conflicts. No doubt, “an ability to understand how and when to apologize in a cross-cultural context can, indeed, help bring peace to an ever shrinking world, reduce culture shock, and help us be happier, more productive individuals” (Ziesing, 2000, p. 70). Successful and effective communication is greatly needed and often valued in our fast-moving, ever-shrinking world. This is especially true when a person’s time is limited and there is a sense of urgency. “On the whole people are much more strict in their time management and much less willing to give it away or indulge in leisured conversation” (Hoffman, 2009, p. 6). In fact, the stress of time and urgency result in having fewer conversations, more misinterpretations between speakers, and sometimes a complete breakdown in communication. In other words, today more than ever, it is vitally important to understand what is being said and to make oneself understood. For after all, communication is a two-way street and with the added element of cross-cultural communication, the problem only increases.

This study is based on the branch of linguistics called pragmatics. Pragmatics examines how the transmission of meaning depends not only on structural and linguistic knowledge (e.g., grammar, lexicon, etc.) of the speaker and listener, but also on the context of the utterance, any pre-existing knowledge about those involved, cultural differences, the inferred intent of the speaker, and other factors (Kaburise, 2005). Yule (2006, p. 112) defines pragmatics as “speaker meaning”. The scholar also adds that pragmatics is the use of socially appropriate language for the context and situation. Pragmatic competence, or the ability to use language appropriate to a particular context or situation, is as important as grammatical structures or knowing vocabulary in the target language (Bardovi-Harlige, 1996). The demand for pragmatic competence and knowledge is increasing due to travel, technology, and the widespread use of social and mass media. Pragmatics has become front and center on the stage of global communication. What is meant by the speaker and what is said must be clearly understood. In other words, speakers who may be considered ‘fluent’ in a second language due to their mastery of the SL grammar and vocabulary, must also be fluent in the rules and regulations for politeness strategies in that language. It is absolutely necessary for effective communication in a global context.

Speech acts are one of the key areas of linguistic pragmatics. As pointed out by Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989, p. 160), speech acts are “one of the most compelling notions on the study of language use.” Olshtain and Cohen (1983) claim that the study of speech acts
can provide us with better understanding and new insights into the interdependence of linguistic forms and sociocultural context.

In general, over the past ten years much research has been carried out in the field of speech acts across languages and as this paper particularly deals with the speech act of apology, it is essential to mention that it is the second most studied speech act in cross-cultural pragmatics after requests (Ogiermann, 2009; Chaemsaiithong, 2009; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983). In fact, their “vital social function of restoring and maintaining harmony could account for such popularity” (Ogiermann, 2009, p. 45). Norrick explains,

It is essential to the smooth working of society that there be standard means of admitting responsibility, implicating remorse, and forgiving. Without these we would probably be at one another’s throats much of the time. In this sense, acts of apologizing and forgiving are more basic and important to society than such acts as thanking and congratulating, which by comparison are its pleasant byproducts rather than functional principles. (Norrick, 1978, p. 284 as cited in Ogiermann, 2009, p. 45).

The theory of face-saving model of politeness by Brown and Levinson is relevant in the illocutionary act of apology; or, in other words, it relates politeness during apologizing. It is face-threatening (Brown & Levinson, 1987), and thus demands a full understanding in order to avoid miscommunication. It is vital to know how to apologize when an invitation cannot be accepted, because the apology is what makes the refusal gracious, kind, and good-mannered.

**Research questions**

Apologies, though found in all major languages, have nuances that can separate them linguistically, socially, and culturally according to each language. This research will answer the following questions. Are there significant differences (and similarities) within apology speech acts in Lithuanian, English, and Chinese languages? And are the significances relevant enough to reveal culturally significant differences within these language groups? Can pragmatic speech acts reveal cultural norms—both similarities and differences?

**The significance of the research**

As our planet is shrinking, metaphorically speaking, cross-cultural communication worldwide is becoming more and more frequent as well as more and more important. Business, politics, education, and social interaction between cultures is now almost inevitable. By looking at speech acts, such as the apology, this research can help shed light on effective communication, understanding of cross-linguistic communication, and reveal insights into native speakers’ understanding of the world around them. In addition to this, this paper might
contribute greatly in future research conducted on the topic of intracultural apology, namely the speech act of apology and its strategies in Lithuanian. Finally, no language is ever learned, not really learned, in isolation. Pragmatics is as important to language learners of this generation as vocabulary memorization was to generations past. (Note: during the Soviet occupation and even in the Chinese systems of the 1970s and ‘80s people believed they could learn a language simply by memorizing the dictionary).

The aims of the study

The aims of this study are to look at speech acts of apologies used in linguistic, social, and cultural settings, and answer the questions of why people overuse and/or misuse them. The objectives of the present research are as follows:

- To discover the similarities and differences of apologies used within the Lithuanian, English, and Chinese languages;
- To study apologies used by men vs. women (gender differences) within and without those cultural norms;
- To look at apologies within different social/professional situations (hierarchy, familiarity, deferment);
- To evaluate apologies used while refusing an invitation.

Research methodology

The study is based on qualitative and quantitative approaches. For qualitative results, discourse completion test (DCT) was applied. It was slightly transformed such that instead of short dialogues with empty slots for the speech act of apology, a broad range of ready-made answers were provided for participants. As for the quantitative approach, the examples were gathered by interviewing Chinese, English, and Lithuanian native speakers; the relative frequency of occurrences of apologies used in conversations was calculated, the results are reflected statistically. It should be mentioned that the survey was designed and uploaded to a social network via SurveyMonkey.com and then linked to Facebook.

The scope of research

In the area of pragmatics, no other language item is more misunderstood or perhaps misused than the apology. The usage of the speech act of apology and its strategies were examined across American, Chinese, and Lithuanian cultures. America was chosen because English is a dominant language in the world today and the USA is a major exporter of English. It has the status of being a global language because it is recognized in every country
If current trends continue, all predictions are that China will be the next world power and namely Chinese the future global language (Pak, 2012). The choice of Lithuanian is based on the fact that I wanted to learn more about my country, from the language and culture point of view. These three nations were significant for these reasons.

After reviewing the literature and examining dozens of politeness strategy surveys, (and after discussion with my academic advisor), I designed a survey that would give appropriate situations for all three cultures. The questionnaire included 10 situations where people are normally expected to apologize and 4 possible answers to each situation. The answers were designed on the basis of strategies of apologies. The results were tabulated and the relative frequency of occurrences was calculated by the system itself. It is worth mentioning this web-based survey program is a great help for a researcher. The survey was designed so that it would give appropriate situations for all three cultures. For example, all three cultures have in common public transportation. So an everyday scenario based on use of the public transportation was included. Also, all three cultures have majority aspects of urbanization: business, working relationship. Because rural residents were not being surveyed, scenarios that would be common to city dwellers and urban landscapes were looked at. Finally, the most important to mention here that different discourse situations in the questionnaire were used to elicit information on:

1. Apology strategies used within American, Chinese, and Lithuanian cultures;
2. Evaluation of social distance, familiarity and the apology in A/C/L;
3. Apology strategies used while refusing an invitation in A/C/L;
4. Gender differences in the usage of the illocutionary act of apology in A/C/L.

Using the book, Guidelines for Best Practices of Cross-cultural Surveys (2008) as an aid, I believe the survey highlights best practices for the conducting of comparative survey research across cultures and countries. This book is written for practitioners like myself who desire to engage in cross-cultural or cross-national research. Since very little has been researched on Lithuanian politeness strategies, I had to rely on sources from abroad. Paraphrasing Trosborg, language truly is culture and culture truly is language (Trosborg, 2010). The two are intertwined and shape one another just as they shape their speakers. As Kecskes (2010, in press) has argued, “Participants bring prior knowledge into intercultural interactions that influences the communicative process. In the case of apologies, such prior knowledge includes understandings of both pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic norms of apologizing that are presumed by participants” (p. 3). It has been my goal in this paper to look at those presumptions in regards to apologizing across three linguistic landscapes.
II. THE REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Linguistic pragmatics

Grenze (2000) writes, “Language…provides the conceptual tools through which we construct the world we inhabit, as well as the vehicles through which we communicate and thereby share meaning with others” (p. 305). The branch of linguistics which specifically deals with “speaker meaning,” as Yule (1996, p. 3) puts it, is called pragmatics. Generally speaking, this branch of linguistics is relatively new (Valeika & Buitkienė, 2006; Leech, 2002) and rapidly gaining in popularity. Evidence of this is the increased number of works which have been published to date (Huang, 2011; Valeika & Verikaitė, 2010). Despite pragmatics becoming a centre of interest in linguistics, some scholars agree that it is rather difficult to provide one correct definition of linguistic pragmatics (Grundy, 2008; Huang, 2011; Leech, 2002). However, a near-majority of linguists whose field of interest is pragmatics states that pragmatics is a speaker’s meaning within a communicative act. According to Crystal (2007), pragmatics studies the elements that determine our selection of language items in social and cultural communication and it looks at the influences that help us to make those choices. He goes on to define pragmatics in the following way:

. . . . the study of language from the point of view of the users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction, and the effects their use of language has on the other participants in an act of communication. (Original emphasis)” (as cited in Barron, 2003, p. 276)

Portner (2006) states that pragmatics deals with sentence meaning and the context of use, as well as the relationships between sentence-speaker meaning and the context of use. Yule (1996) in his work Pragmatics distinguishes four definitions of this branch of linguistics. These are the following:

- Pragmatics is the study of meaning.
- Pragmatics is the study of contextual meaning.
- Pragmatics is the study of how more gets communicated than is said.
- Pragmatics is the study of the expression of relative distance (p. 3).

In addition, Yule (1996) explains that these are the main domains dealt with by pragmatics. Grundy (2008) cited Levinson (1983) in Doing Pragmatics and provides several explicit explanations of pragmatics too. For example,

- The study of language from a functional perspective;
- The study of the context-dependent nature of language use and language understanding;
• The study of the effects of language use on the grammar of language;
• The study of non-conventional, or, more narrowly perhaps, non-truth conditional meaning, possibly to be understood as speaker- or utterance-meaning rather than sentence-meaning (pp. 5-35).

In a broad sense, using this definition of pragmatics, it becomes clear that pragmatic data mainly consists of everyday utterances and underlying ideas might vary greatly according to speaker, culture, and context.

It could be even considered as a drawback, because human concepts of meaning or, to put it more simply, the ideas and images people have in their minds are really hard to interpret and analyze in a consistent and objective manner (Yule, 1996; Huang, 2011). Yule (1996) masterly generated and then illustrated this idea in the following way: “I heard the speakers, I knew what they said, but I had no idea what was communicated.” (p. 4).

*Her:* So – did you?

*Him:* Hey – who wouldn’t?

Pragmaticians mainly distinguish several central topics in the study of pragmatics, namely, implicature, presupposition, speech acts, and deixis (contextualization). In general, as this thesis deals with apologies and politeness, the concept of implicature is relevant as it refers to polite intentions or to the inference of polite intentions (Song, 2012, p. 26). Implicature, or an implicit meaning, is considered to be as one of the major subdomains of pragmatics. It mainly deals with speaker’s meaning which is not conveyed by semantic meaning of a sentence (Yule, 1996; Grundy, 2008; Cruse, 2011). Grice’s theory of implicature in general states that there is a gap between what is literally said and conveyed via an utterance, thus the notion of implicature being a pragmatic inference bridges this particular gap (Marmaridou, 2000; Levinson, 1983). The following example helps to illustrate Grice’s theory.

\[a. \text{Are you coming to John’s party on Friday night?}\]
\[b. \text{Oh, sorry.}\]

The speaker’s meaning in \(b\) is not conveyed literally. The ‘extra’ or implied meaning is that of “I’m not coming”. In fact, Marmaridou (2000), Cummings (2005) and Huang (2011) as referred to Grice (1975) provide a schema to present Grice’s theory of meaning:

\[S \text{ means } p \text{ by uttering } U \text{ to } A \text{ if and only if } S \text{ intends:}\]
\[i. \text{ A to think } p\]
\[ii. \text{ A to recognize that } S \text{ intends (i), and}\]
\[iii. \text{ A’s recognition of } S’s \text{ intending (i) to be the primary reason for } A \text{ thinking } p.\]
Where $S$ stands for the speaker, $A$ for the audience, $U$ for the utterance, and $p$ for proposition. The provided schema illustrates how effective and successful communication can be achieved as, to quote Marmaridou (2002, p. 226), “the speaker’s communicative intention becomes mutual knowledge to both speaker and addressee.”

Grice distinguished four major maxims or rules for efficient, clear and relevant communication. It does not necessarily mean that a speaker should obey them strictly as laws, but they are considered to be more like a guide to try to figure out what people say. Following Grice’s work (1975), Yule (1996), Grundy (2008), and Leech (2002) show the following distribution of maxims:

*The maxim of Quantity as it relates to apology speech acts*

1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purposes of the exchange.)
2. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

*The maxim of Quality -* try to make your contribution one that is true.
1. Do not say what you believe to be false.
2. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

*The maxim of Relevance -* be relevant.

*The maxim of Manner -* be clear.
1. Avoid obscurity of expression.
2. Avoid ambiguity.
3. Be brief (avoid unnecessary wordiness.)
4. Be orderly.

The maxims need illustration for a comprehensive understanding. The maxim of quantity deals with the amount of information within an utterance. Cruse (2011, p. 418) provides a representative example of a conversation between two passengers (P1) and (P2):

A. P1: You stepped on my foot.
B. P2: Oh, I’m sorry, I haven’t noticed.
C. P2: Yes!
D. P2: I’m so very sorry that I stepped on your foot on the bus and I had a terrible morning and I wasn’t concentrating and I didn’t mean to hurt you can you forgive me? Please!

It is obvious that answer C is not informative enough whereas D provides too much unnecessary information; then the maxim of quality concerns truth-telling. In the example *He is sorry for his behavior* the speaker believes what he/she is saying is true; the speaker has
evidence to make such statement. As for maxim of relevance, the following could be suggested:

*I’m so sorry, Mum; I forgot to congratulate you. Will you be able to ever forgive me?* (after the Mother’s Day) (Huang, 2011).

As the scholar explains, this utterance is only relevant if it is produced after the Mother’s Day and it implicitly states that *I forgot to congratulate you on Mother’s Day*. In addition, if a speaker to his/her question *Will you forgive me for this?* receives an answer *I have met Alan, you know*. It is clear that the reply does not answer the speaker’s question, is irrelevant, or simply not suitable to the situation. Finally, the maxim of manner is responsible for clarity and subsequent events in linguistic expressions as in *I apologized to him and we shook hands*. This was the exact order the speaker followed and the utterance conveys the message intended by the speaker. In general, the violation of maxims gives rise to implicatures (Cruse, 2011). As mentioned before, the maxims are not rigid rules which have to be obeyed perfectly, but in the case A the maxim of manner is violated and it is not very difficult to understand what the addressee means:

A: *Are you sorry for what you have done, dear?*

Well, it depends. *(If you have in mind the punishment, then yes, I’m sorry for punishing him but I needed to teach our son a lesson so I’m calm.)*

OR

B: *I apologized to her and left the room.*

The addressee makes an assumption that the speaker apologized to her before leaving the room, but the conjunction *and* does not contain the meaning *before*. Still the addressee is aware of a speaker's intended meaning, despite the fact that the maxim of manner was broken.

There are several types of implicatures, namely conversational implicatures which are further subdivided into generalized conversational implicatures and particularized conversational implicatures; and conventional implicatures (Valeika & Verikaitė, 2010). To start with, “conversational implicatures are a set of non-logical inferences which contains conveyed messages which are meant without being part of what is said in the strict sense” (Huang, 2011, p. 27). On the contrary, particularized conversational implicatures require a particular context for the meaning to be conveyed. As Yule (1996) states, particularized conversational implicatures are simply referred to as implicatures as they are the most common. For instance,

Mary: *Have you apologized to Lily yet?*

John: *Well, it’s almost noon.*
In this particular case Mary has to make an assumption that Lily has gone for lunch as it is almost 12 p.m. and considered to be an ordinary working day “procedure.” Shortly, for both particularized conversational implicatures and implicatures, a special context of a communication is required. As for conventional implicature, they are “non-truth-conditional inferences that are not derived from superordinate pragmatic principles like the maxims, but are simply attached by convention to particular lexical items or expressions” (Levinson, 1983, p. 127). It is worthwhile mentioning, that ritual apologies could be viewed as conventional implicatures because their production could be associate with a habit resulted by certain daily situations or routine when an apologizer is not charge of the offense (Ogiermann, 2009).

In the case of presupposition, the term itself is quite self-explanatory in nature - having prior knowledge about something. In pragmatic terms, “presupposition is constituted of assumptions or inferences implied in the utterance” (Cummings, 2005, p. 29). The following example: “Oh! I’m really sorry this time.” “Oh!” presupposes I have new information; “really” presupposes that my last apology wasn’t valid (Cummings, 2005). A graphical representation is achievable too. “Please forgive me again”—a specific act of something wrong to a specific person could be marked as y and presupposition - the speaker was sorry before as z; meaning presupposes - >>, so the relationships could be shown as in:

\[ z >> y \] (Yule, 1996, p. 26)

However, Huang (2012) argues that this particular linguistic element “balances on the edge between semantics and pragmatics” and is a topic of debate (p. 7), thus linguists like Cruse (2011) and Leech (2002) in their works exclude this issue.

Deixis is a linguistic phenomenon “whereby features of context of utterance or speech event are encoded by lexical and/or grammatical means in a language” (Huang, 2012, p. 7). In fact, scholars Yule (1996), Grundy (2008), and Cruse (2011) provide a more simplified definition of deixis which is “pointing or indicating through a language.” Apology speech acts in every language are normally deictic in nature and the specificity of the apology creates the deictic property (Ogiermann, 2009). Moreover, the pragmatic element of deixis is divided into three major categories: person, space, and time deixis. Person deixis is usually determined by the first person (I) – the speaker, the second person (you) – the addressee and the third person (she, he, it) which can be referred to as being neither the speaker nor the addressee (Grundy, 2008; Cruse, 2011). “The referent point or deictic centre here is a speaker” (Marmaridou, 2000, p. 75). Shortly, person deixis deals with the role of the speaker. The phenomenon of space deixis refers to the distance where people and things are indicated in relation to a speech event (Yule, 1996; Huang, 2011). This phenomenon is evidenced in the apology speech act in two ways: I’m sorry about that (implying inauthentic apology) and I’m sorry
about *this* (inferring sincerity), (Webber, 1988, p. 116). Time deixis deals with the relevant
time of an utterance and deictic expressions which help to identify the moment of the
utterance are considered to be *yesterday, now, today, tonight, tomorrow, last week, next
month*, and etc. (Yule, 1996). To be more precise, “*now* means some span of time including
the moment of utterance, *today* means that diurnal span in which the speaking event takes
place, and *is* predicates a property that holds at the time of speaking” (Levinson, 2004, p. 37-
38).

As this paper particularly deals with the speech act of apology, the speech act theory
introduced by J. L. Austin will be discussed in-depth in the following chapter.

Pragmatics is closely related to cross-cultural communication because it “aims at
studying the meaning of the language used in a certain context by interlocutors” (Zhu & Bao,
2010, p. 848). In addition to this, the authors point out that cross-cultural differences lie at the
heart of speech acts (play an important role) due to the fact that language users employ their
own culture as a standard and judge on other people’s behavior from this perspective.
Trosborg (2010) makes a claim that all elements of pragmatics cloud be attributed to cross-
cultural communication. Then, Huang (2012) explains that, “cross-cultural pragmatics is the
systematic study of language in use, especially pragmatic differences across different cultures
and languages” (p. 78). The scholar also adds that since 1980s the main concern in this
domain of linguistics has been shown to speech acts where such face-threatening acts like
apologies, requests, and complaints, and their realization across different cultures and
languages, are examined.

2.2 Apologies and Politeness

Following Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 8th edition apology is “a word or a
statement saying sorry for something that has been done wrong or that causes a problem” (p.
social norms are violated by certain behavior. Garcia (1989) views an apology as “an
explanation offered to a person affected by one’s action that no offense was intended, coupled
with the expression of regret for any that may have been given; or a frank acknowledgment of
the offense with expression of regret for it, by way of reparation” (p. 44). Truesdale (2012)
argues that an apology contains more than a plain expression of regret *I’m sorry* and identifies
it as containing four key aspects: remorse, responsibility, resolution, and reparation. In fact,
these four elements are referred to as “four R’s” (Truesdale, 2012, p. 84). Following
Truesdale (2012) it becomes clear that apologizing fulfills “social and moral work” thus being
a “social action that can only be done with words, and, by corollary, if it is not done in words, it has not been done” (p. 84). In other words, the speech act of apology does the reparation or maintenance work between the offender and the hearer. So, the speech act of apologizing involves both an apologizer and a recipient. As Olshtain and Cohen (1983) put it, an apologizer takes partial responsibility for the offense and regrets having done something wrong, whereas a recipient is simply worth an apology. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986) state there are three prior conditions that “hold true for the apology act to take place:

a. S did X or abstained from doing X (or is about to do it).

b. X is perceived by S only, by H only, by both S and H, or by a third party as a breach of a social norm.

c. X is perceived by at least one of the parties involved as offending, harming, or affecting H in some way” (p. 206).

These three preconditions should be taken into account if an offender is about to issue an apology, and if an apologizer performs it, he/she fulfills social norms. Or, to put it in other words, recognizes precondition b and calms the hearer down as in precondition c (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1986).

Olshtain and Cohen (1989), Cohen (1998) discuss five major apology strategies or semantic formulas:

1. An expression of an apology - a speaker uses a formula of an apology which consists of several sub-formulas such as:

   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., “Excuse me.” “Please forgive me.” or “Pardon me.” (p. 56)

However, these formulas may vary from language to language and some performative verbs like be sorry, pardon, excuse, or apologize might be used randomly by speakers or with their direct purpose as suggested by Olshtain and Cohen (1989, p. 56). In fact, a number of apologizers use apology intensifiers which strengthen the meaning of an expression of regret as in Oh, I’m really very sorry! or Please, forgive me. Furthermore, Ogiermann (2009) discusses the types of intensification which are the following: “(a) an intensifying expression within the IFID, (b) expressing explicit concern for the hearer - external to the IFID or the other strategies used and (c) the use of multiple strategies” (p. 121). Finally, Olshtain and Cohen (1983) noticed that in English, I’m sorry is the most common expression used to show regret.
2. An explanation or account of the situation which caused an apologizer to offend a recipient. The degree of an apology depends mainly on the environment. In some cultures, if a speaker is late and explains him/herself as “The bus was late”, this excuse would be accepted as an apology (if transportation is rarely on time) but in others it would not (if transportation runs as scheduled). Thus, the degree of apology is situation and culture specific.

3. Acknowledgement of responsibility is non-language specific and the strategy is chosen when an offender admits his/her responsibility for the offense. Here four sub-formulas are distinguished:
   a. Accepting the blame, e.g., “It’s my fault.”
   b. Expressing self-deficiency, e.g., “I was confused.” or “I wasn’t thinking.” or “I didn’t see you.”
   c. Recognizing the other person as deserving an apology, e.g., “You’re right!”
   d. Expressing a lack of intent, e.g., “I didn’t mean to.” (p. 56)

Olshtain and Cohen (1989) also state that accepting the blame is the highest level of intensity when b, c, and d are less intensive.

4. An offer of repair is situation specific and valid only if actual damage has been done by an offender. For example: “Here. Let me help you to get up.”

5. A promise of forbearance is situation specific too. An offender commits him/herself not to repeat the same offence again. “I promise I won’t do that again.” (p. 56)

Furthermore, Olshtain and Cohen (1983) discuss the cases when an offender does not admit the need of apologizing or the offender may not react at all. Under the circumstances of verbal reaction, there can be:

1. A denial of the need to apologize, e.g., “There was no need for you to get insulted.”

2. A denial of responsibility:
   a. Not accepting the blame, e.g., “It wasn’t my fault.”
   b. Blaming the other participant for bringing the offense upon him/herself, e.g.,
      “It's your own fault this happened” (p. 23).

In light of this, one may describe this as a lack of politeness or “impoliteness” as defined by Lakoff (1989) who describes impoliteness as “not utilizing politeness strategies where they would be expected in such a way that the utterance can only almost plausibly be interpreted as intentionally and negatively confrontational” (103). In fact, Culpeper (1996) views impoliteness as attacking the hearer’s positive or negative face-wants in the sense that utterances or actions used while attacking the hearer cause disharmony and social disruption rather than maintaining it. Impoliteness occurs when a speaker/a hearer, an offender/a receiver
or an apologizer/a recipient intends or perceives a face-threatening act (Bousfield, 2008). To put it in other words, impoliteness has not occurred or happened if the other person does not even notice it; then it is just an expression. Impoliteness has not really taken place until the person on the receiving end has understood it. Following Bousfield (2008), there are degrees of intention and perception of impoliteness:

i. If a Speaker (or someone in a producer role) intends face-damage and the Hearer (or someone in a receiver role) perceives the Speaker’s (Producer’s) intention to damage face, then impoliteness is successfully conveyed.

ii. If the Speaker/Producer intends face-damage, but the Hearer/Receiver fails to perceive the speaker’s intent/any face-damage, then the attempt at impoliteness fails.

iii. If the Speaker/Producer does not intend face-damage but the Hearer/Receiver constructs the Speaker’s/Producer’s utterance as being intentionally face-damaging then this could be Accidental face-damage (as opposed to Intentional or Incidental face-damage), which could be caused by one or more of the following: Rudeness (e.g. inadequate levels of politeness); Insensitivity (on the part of the Speaker/Producer); Hypersensitivity (on the part of the Hearer/Receiver); a clash of expectations; a cultural misunderstanding; misidentification (by the speaker or the hearer) of the Community of Practice or Activity type in which they are engaged; some combination of these, or some other hitherto unidentified means of inadvertently causing offense or of perceiving offence when none was intended.

iv. If the Speaker/Producer does not intend face-damage but the Hearer/Receiver constructs the Speaker’s/Producer’s utterance as being unintentionally face-damaging then this could be Incidental or Accidental face-damage (as opposed to Intentional face-damage), which could be caused by one, or more of the following: Rudeness (e.g. inadequate levels of politeness); Insensitivity (on the part of the Speaker/Producer); Hypersensitivity (on the part of the Hearer/Receiver); a cultural misunderstanding; misidentification (by the speaker or the hearer) of the Community of Practice or Activity Type in which they are engaged; some combination of these, or some other hitherto unidentified means of inadvertently causing offense or of perceiving offense when none was intended (Bousfield, 2008, pp. 72-73).

In the light of this, if an offender does not see the necessity for an apology, thus utilizing impoliteness, or uses politeness strategies and apologizes, some experts state it like this, “the words only become an apology when [the hearer] H chooses to take them as such” (Thomas, 1983, p. 101) and Lakoff claims that “if the hearer has no intention to accept an
apology, no matter how sincere, elaborate and convincing it is, this does not mean that no apology has taken place” (2003, p. 208).

The illocutionary act of apology is mainly related to closure as the offender or apologizer seems to want to forget about the past and move on (Somani, 2011). So it is at this point that the various types of apologies should be discussed to see how scholars distinguish them differently. According to Koehn (2012), there are private/interpersonal, corporate/CEO, and nation-state/collective apologies. The author views private/interpersonal apologies as ethically good because they usually occur straight after the offense is done to a hearer and the circumstances of the wrongdoing are clear to both the speaker and the addressee as well. Private apologies involve remorse towards the recipient of an apology.

In the case of corporate/CEO apologies, the scholar states that they are ethically sound or accurate apologies because essentially, they are public and legalistic speech acts because that are mainly written by lawyers as well as they tend to offer repair in order to restore trust for the recipient. Finally, Koehn (2012) defines nation-state/collective speech acts of apology as public statements issued by a representative of a nation with the aim of amending the wrongdoings in the past and the repair might be only offered after a decade or more (the author provides an example of the American government’s apology to the Japanese-Americans interred during the second world war). In addition to this, Ogiermann (2009) discusses the growing popularity of public apologies and their “effectiveness in image restoration” (p. 51). It is worth mentioning that formal apology expressions are better for establishing an emotional bond with the hearer or the audience (Koehn, 2012). However, together with Brown and Levinson (1987) Ogiermann places an emphasis on remedial apologies as the means of restoring and maintaining relationships, but if uttered reluctantly they may not be successful:

[remedial apologies] allow the participants to go on their way, if not with satisfaction that matters are closed, then at least with the right to act as if they feel that matters are closed and the ritual equilibrium has been restored (Goffman 1971, p. 140 as cited in Ogierman, 2009, p. 47).

The scholar also distinguishes substantial/genuine apologies from ritual ones in the sense that the type of substantial apology is used expressing regret about the offense when the ritual apology is understood as the tool for fulfilling social expectations, thus attributing them to conventional implicatures. Finally, Ogierman (2009) speaks on formal and informal apology expressions just as Gonda (2001) and Olshtain and Cohen (1983) who state that in English I apologize is considered to be more formal than I’m sorry, thus the choice of IFID depends on the degree of formality (private vs. professional). Aijmer (1996) states that there are retrospective and anticipatory apologies; remedial or softening, respectively. Smith (2005)
and Schmidt (2010) contrast sincere/authentic and insincere/inauthentic speech acts of apology. In the former case an offender sincerely and in good faith apologizes to an offended person but in the latter case the IFID “I said I apologize,” would sound insincere and non-apologetic as it has a weaker illocutionary force. In addition, an apology for using a wrong fork at the dinner table to a host would be insincere as well, because host’s reaction and demand for an apology might seem unreasonable (Smith, 2005). It is essential to mention, that sincerity/authenticity while apologizing is considered to be dependent on authority because if following Searle’s felicity conditions of a successful speech act production a speaker, in this case an apologizer, should be sincere in his/her intentions and have the authority for realization of an illocutionary act of apology (Schmidt, 2010). Finally Smith (2005) and Schmidt (2010) make a distinction between sympathy and an apology. “I am sorry that you had a terrible day at work” has nothing to do with the speech act of apology as it is purely an expression of sympathy because in the provided example no offense or violation of social norm was done and a speaker is not making an apology.

As stated before, an apology is a speech act which is a part of pragmatics. The founding fathers of the speech act theory are J. Austin and J. Searle and, according to them, pragmatics involves people’s apologies, promises, invitations, requests, warnings, complaints, and other linguistic acts (Demeter, 2000). However, Austin (1962) called speech acts as performative sentences or performative utterances and defined them as “the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action” (p. 6). To put it in other words, while communicating or using a language, people perform an action or their communicative intention. The classical example for illustrating speech acts is as follows: I now pronounce you husband and wife (Yule, 1996). After accomplishing this action via language, the situation or reality becomes different than prior to this particular speech act (Valeika & Verikaitė, 2010).

Austin divided all sentences into two types namely constatives and performatives. Constatives are defined as utterances which are used for making statements; they do not intend to perform any action, whereas performatives are considered to be speech acts for their feature of performing things actively (Huang, 2011). As Searle (1989) explains, Austin introduced the term performatives to contrast it with constatives, defining performatives as actions and constatives as sayings. The following examples illustrate the differences between actions and sayings or, in Austin terminology, performatives and constatives. Utterances a-c do not perform any action, they are simply declarative sentences but d-f instances carry out speech acts and in the case of d the sentence constitutes an action of promising, in e - the action of sentencing and in that of f - the action of apologizing:

a. Oh, sorry, it’s good afternoon not good evening!
b. Sorry, but my dog is called Lordas, you have probably confused him with someone else.

c. Sorry to say, but my sister is an alcohol abuser.

d. I’m really sorry, I promise to help you next time.

e. I sentence you to three years in prison.

f. I’m sorry for the misunderstanding. (Huang, 2011, p. 105)

In addition to this, in the case of performative utterances, namely sentencing, pronouncing, naming, baptizing, etc. usually other participants or institutional framework is required by law; but considering speech acts of apologizing, complaining, promising, thanking, and others, it is obvious that they do not have to undergo any legal activities (Goddard, 2011). What is more, Austin distinguished performative utterances into implicit and explicit, those which do not contain performative verbs and those which do, respectively (Austin, 1962). However, Searle (1989) criticized this distinction saying that “in the sense in which the explicit performatives are performatives the implicit cases aren’t performative at all” (p. 536), because in the utterance “Well, sorry, I intend to come next time” (implicit) there is a statement expressed while in “I’m really sorry, I promise to come tomorrow” (explicit) it is clear that a speech act of promising is performed. Finally, the speech act of apology is regarded as performative rather than constative because it contains a performative verb such as apologize, forgive, excuse, and be sorry (Cohen & Olshtain, 1996; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983).

A classification of speech acts should be discussed. After criticizing Austin’s taxonomy of speech acts stating that he rather classified illocutionary verbs but not acts, Searle distinguished five types of speech acts, or illocutionary acts, according to what they communicate to an addressee: representatives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations (Searle, 1989). According to the scholar, representatives are the kind of speech acts which represent the way things are or, in other words, the speaker represents the world as he or she believes it to be. Here belong general truths or fact statements, descriptions, assertions, claims, and conclusions as in the examples:

*The earth is flat.* (Yule, 1996, p. 53) (general truth)

*He is sorry for behaving so rude with Betty.* (description)

*The domain of pragmatics is on its peak.* (claim)

Yule (1996) argues that directives are used with intention of a speaker to impose on a hearer that he/she did something. These speech acts include orders, requests, suggestions, commands, and pieces of advice and, as Huang (2011) believes, while using a directive
speech act “the speaker intends to elicit some future course of action on the part of the addressee, thus making the world match the words via the addressee” (p. 107) For instance,

Say sorry to your sister, I mean it. (command)
Let’s apologize to her, I feel really bad for what we did. (suggestion)
Can you forgive me? (request)

As considered by Searle (1976), commissives express a speaker’s intention to do something in the near future; simply a speaker makes a commitment for some future action. This category of speech acts includes promises, vows, threats, offers, and refusals (Searle, 1976). The examples below help to illustrate this illocutionary act.

I’m sorry and I promise it will never happen again. (promise)
I’m sorry I’m busy now but do you want me to help you with your homework tomorrow? (offer)
I’m sorry, but I can’t attend the meeting. (refusal)

From Levinson’s (1983) point of view, expressives help to indicate the speaker’s psychological state such as apologizing, thanking, congratulating, welcoming, blaming, and praising.

I apologize for hurting your feelings. (apology)
Well done class! (praise)
Come in and make yourself at home. (welcoming)

As for declarations, Searle (1989) mentions that a speaker brings changes into reality while performing this kind of speech act adding the importance of institutional role, because firing from employment, declaring a war, nominating a candidate, and bidding in bridge one must have certain authorities for accomplishing this kind of speech act.

I declare a state of national emergency. (Huang, 2011, p. 108) (declare)
Jury Foreman: We find the defendant guilty. (Yule, 1996, p. 53) (sentence)
I now pronounce you husband and wife. (marry)

Following this classification, Yule (1996) further explains that if a speaker uses representatives he/she makes words fit the world (of belief); in the case of directives a speaker tries to make the world fit the words via addressee; while using commissives a speaker intends to make the world fit the words (via the speaker); in using expressives, a speaker makes words fit the world (of feelings); and finally when declaring, a speaker changes reality via words. Yule based his explanation on Searle because as mentioned before after criticizing Austin’s typology of speech acts, Searle proposed an alternative taxonomy of illocutionary acts where he took an illocutionary point, direction of fit and expressed psychological state as the basis for classification (Searle, 1975). What is more, it is essential to mention that Leech
Leech (2002), questioning the possibility of a creation of speech act taxonomy, made a distinction of speech acts on the basis of verbs which express them particularly. Following this idea, the scholar defined assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and rogative verbs. Leech (2002) also explained that the category of rogative verbs include verbs introducing question such as *ask, inquire, query,* and *question* and the latter are not easy to attribute to another class of verbs; thus they are recognized as a separate category of rogative verbs.

The whole speech act consists of three linguistic acts that are performed simultaneously (Yule, 2006). The first act, locution, is the basic as it carries the meaning of an utterance, composes a string of words following grammar of some language, and physical act of speaking; the second - illocution is responsible for performing an act while making an utterance; the third - perlocution deals with the effect it may have on the addressee and here speaker’s intentions are understood by the addressee (Grundy, 2008; Cruse, 2011). Huang (2011) defines the aspects of speech act in the following way:

(i) **Locutionary act**: the production of a meaningful linguistic expression.

(ii) **Illocutionary act**: the action intended to be performed by a speaker in uttering a linguistic expression, by virtue of the conventional force associated with it, either explicitly or implicitly.

(iii) **Perlocutionary act**: the bringing about of consequences of effects on the audience through the uttering of a linguistic expression, such consequences or effects being special to the circumstances of the utterance (p. 102).

In apologizing the whole speech act would look in the following way:

A **locutionary act** S utters the words: I apologize (explicit performative) or I'm sorry (primary performative)

An **illocutionary act** S apologizes

A **perlocutionary act** S placates the hearer (who accepts the apology and forgives) (Ogiermann, 2009, p. 45).

An illocutionary act is commonly taken as a speech act because this intermediate element accomplishes an action while producing an utterance (Leech, 2002). Then, an illocutionary force typically accounts for a speech act being as it is and such actions as apologizing, complaining, complimenting, accepting, congratulating, disagreeing, interrupting, inviting, persuading, suggesting, threatening, warning, refusing, and others, are referred to as illocutionary force/verbs or Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices or (IFID) (Yule, 1996). It is worth while mentioning that it is easier for the addressee to respond to the speaker appropriately if he/she uses performative verbs or IFIDs. If the performative verb is not indicated in the sentence, additional devices such as word order, stress, intonation, and
situation help the addressee not to fail in communication (Cruse, 2011). In the examples \(a\) and \(b\) the IFID or illocutionary force is very clear; in \(c\) and \(d\) it is vague, because they do not contain performative verbs and speaker’s intentions are not that clearly expressed as in \(a\) and \(b\).

\[a.\] I’m so sorry, I promised to call you, but I didn’t.
\[b.\] I’m sorry I can’t accept your invitation this time.
\[c.\] Sorry to say, but I guess he is right.
\[d.\] Sorry dear teacher, but Tom is absent again. (Cruse, 2011)

It is important to mention that the most common IFID in the English language while apologizing in both formal and informal settings is \textit{to be sorry} (Holmes, 1990; Aijmer 1996).

Searle distinguished several conditions for a successful performance of speech acts which are called felicity conditions (Yule, 1996). It is assumed that a speaker obeying these rules in his/her linguistic communication will perform a speech act properly (Valeika & Verikaitė, 2010). There are five conditions distinguished namely, \textit{general, content, preparatory, sincerity, and essential} (Yule, 1996; Cruse, 2011; Huang, 2011). Yule (1996) states that the first condition requires that people present in a communicative act would be able to understand the language being used as well, as it is preferable that a speaker and a hearer would speak the same language. As for the second condition, the content of the utterance must go hand in hand with the intention of the speaker (Yule, 1996) as in the example \textit{I warn you, I will come now} where a warning can take place only in the future, but not in the present. The preparatory conditions state that a person carrying out a speech act must have specific authorities and a situation must be appropriate too (Cruse, 2011). It could be illustrated as follows. Only a priest can marry a couple, i.e. has authority to do that as well as marriage takes place only in a church, but not in a street or a bus stop; a random person having no license to be a priest cannot produce a speech act as \textit{Do you take Philip as your husband?} A speaker must satisfy a sincerity condition in order to show that he/she genuinely intends to fulfill a speech act (Huang, 2011). If a speaker promises to come to a party, he/she should sincerely carry out the act of promising or if a speaker apologizes for something he/she should sincerely mean that. The last but not least is an essential condition which basically defines a speech act being performed (Huang, 2011). The scholar provides an explanation that if a promise was made to come to a party, it means a speaker created an obligation to complete the promise. To quote Yule (1996), “essential condition thus combines with a specification of what must be in the utterance content, the context, and the speaker’s intentions, in order for a specific speech act to be appropriately (felicitously) performed” (p.51). However, if they are just grammatically correct but do not fulfill felicity conditions, in
most cases speech acts will not valid (Huang, 2011; Yule, 1996). In the case of apologizing, the felicity conditions are adopted in the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Propositional content</th>
<th>Past act A done by S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory condition</td>
<td>S believes that A is an offense against H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sincerity condition</td>
<td>S regrets act A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential condition</td>
<td>Counts as an apology for act A (Ogiermann, 2009, p. 4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The speech act theory, and particularly apologies, is closely linked to phenomena of linguistic politeness because an apology is considered as being “strictly a politeness strategy” (Holmes, 1990, p. 155). In fact, in this case the concept of politeness should not be confused with etiquette or politeness in general, which deals with such ideas as being tactful, modest, and nice to other people. To quote Thomas (1995), “politeness as a real-world goal has no place within pragmatics” (p. 150). It is as well essential to mention that deference is connected with politeness in a way that they both show respect to people of elder age, higher social status, etc. In addition, these two concepts are visible in social behavior, for instance, deference in demonstrated by standing up when a superior person enters a room or holding doors while someone is passing through is considered as polite behavior (Thomas, 1995). Furthermore, deference is expressed linguistically as well. Many languages have deictically marked expressions to address interlocutors who have a higher social status, are elder, or not familiar with a speaker (Valeika & Verikaitė, 2010). In the Russian language there is человек, in French – tu/vous, in German – du/Sie, in Norwegian - du/Dere, in Lithuanian – tu/Jūs, Chinese -您 nín – second person singular formal—there is no difference for the plural/你们 nǐmen for both (McCarthy, 2000) and in Spanish – tu/Usted. The honorific language use mainly concern different speaker-addressee roles. In American culture emphasis is not put on class distinction, whereas in Chinese the honorifics and politeness principle is preferred in showing social rank relationship (Zhu & Bao, 2010). According to Levinson (2004), “systems of address of any kind – pronouns, titles, kin-terms and the like – are systems guided by the socially deictic contrasts made by alternate forms” (pp. 53-54). Despite that, apology being the essential concern of this paper, it is vital to mention that deference will not be examined as it is a sociolinguistic phenomenon whereas the speech act of apology is a pragmatic concept (Trueblood, 2012.; Nunberg, 2002).

As Huang (2011) explains, there are now four main theoretical patterns of linguistic politeness:

(i) the “social norm” model.

(ii) the “conversational maxim” model.
(iii) the “face-saving” model.

(iv) the “conversational contract” model (p. 116).

The scholar also adds that the “face-saving” model by Levinson and Brown is the most influential in the field of pragmatics and much research on the speech act of apology has been influenced by the Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory (Chaemsaiithong, 2009). In addition to this, apologizing is closely linked to politeness as “the apology is quintessentially a politeness strategy” (Holmes, 1998, p. 217). In Levinson and Brown’s politeness theory, the key concept is face. It is a person’s public self-image or the emotional and social sense of self that everyone has and expects everyone else to recognize. Thus, politeness can be defined as showing awareness of and consideration for another person’s face (Yule, 2006). Simply, people want to be respected or they want their faces to be safe. The fundamental concept of face is classified into positive and negative. A note should be made here because “negative” in this case does not mean “bad”, it is just the opposite to “positive” (Valeikia & Verikaite, 2010). As for positive face it is the need to be connected, to belong, to be a member of the group and to be supported by people when appropriate whereas negative is the need to be independent, free from imposition and social/material debts/obligations (Brown, 2007). Furthermore, speech acts such as apologies basically threaten face and that’s why they are referred to as face-threatening acts (FTA’s) (Trosborg, 1995). In general, mainly in everyday life communication, most communicative acts are FTAs because people disagree with others, make complaints, warnings, etc. (Zhu & Bao, 2010).

The social norm model is another pattern of linguistic politeness. In general, as Haugh (2003) explains one or another behavior is taken as im/polite by people due to the fact a person on the receiving end thinks so. In addition, a person is neither rude nor polite until the other person (the recipient) thinks it. An impolite or polite act is neither until the receiver understands it to be so. The social norm model states that politeness is perceived as a socio-cultural aspect and is determined by cultural norms (Song, 2012). From Fraser’s (1990) point of view “the social norm view of politeness assumes that each society has a particular set of social norms consisting of more or less explicit rules that prescribe a certain behavior, a state of affairs, or a way of thinking in a context” (p. 220). To put it in other words, the mentioned social norms are expectations in the way that something is thought to be necessary or in general a person’s understanding of the phenomenon of linguistic politeness. In addition, it is obvious that these expectations or social norms might be different across cultures and as Song (2012) states, “because of differences in social norms or conventions across cultures, polite speech acts tend to be implemented differently” (p. 40). Furthermore, when linguistic politeness is implemented, it has to coincide with expectations of a certain social group in a
society, learned through the process of socialization (Song, 2012). However, Haugh (2003) expresses the view that speech acts which are considered to be polite not necessarily communicate “real” intentions or feelings towards the interlocutor but rather express “contextually-expected concern for face” (p. 1). It seems that polite utterances are expected by an interlocutor or in another way are considered as a norm. Finally, it could be stated that social norms mainly depend on the situation, culture, and a person too.

There are other approaches to linguistic politeness. From Lakoff’s point of view “don’t impose” - leave personal space for the hearer, “give options” - be courteous with the addressee and “be friendly” - creates a fellowship between the participants of a social interaction, are the three politeness principles (Pan, 2000). There is no sequence for these rules; they are more referred to as guidelines for a speaker and a hearer to have polite conversation.

Leech (2002) states that politeness refers to a relationship between interlocutors, or self and other where self concerns a speaker and other is an addressee. In addition to this, he distinguished the maxims of Politeness Principle and explained that there is no need to apply all the maxims at the same time in a conversation and they are not on equal terms.

(I) TACT MAXIM
   (a) Minimize cost to other
   [(b) Maximize benefit to other]

(II) GENEROSITY MAXIM
   (a) Minimize benefit to self
   [(b) Maximize cost to self]

(III) APPROBATION MAXIM
   (a) Minimize dispraise to other
   [(b) Maximize praise of other]

(IV) MODESTY MAXIM
   (a) Minimize praise of self
   [(b) Maximize dispraise of self]

(V) AGREEMENT MAXIM
   (a) Minimize disagreement between self and other
   [(b) Maximize agreement between self and other]

(VI) SYMPATHY MAXIM
   (a) Minimize antipathy between self and other
   [(b) Maximize sympathy between self and other] (p. 123)

It is clear that the specificity of linguistic politeness depends on cultural backgrounds and cultural values which by all means are influenced by historical, social, and geographical
values (Gu, 1992) as well as it is situation-sensitive (Pan, 2000). Finally, one of these aspects is apology and as this paper particularly deals with it, focusing on the speech act of apology and its cultural distinctives is essential.

2.3 Cultural Difference

There are a great number of cross-cultural apology studies in comparison with English: Hebrew (Olshtain, 1989; Olshtain & Cohen, 1989), Danish (Trosborg, 1995), Japanese (Sugimoto, 1998), Korean (Kim, 1993), Romanian (Demeter, 2000), Thai (Thijittang, 2008), Chinese (Yi, 2006) and others. In fact, the CCSARP (A Cross-Cultural Study of Speech Act Realization Patterns) project conducted by Blum-Kulka Olshtain (1989) is considered as the most ambitious, well-known and in-depth analysis of speech acts behavior namely apologies and requests (Yi, 2006). Data was collected from English native and non-native undergraduate students by means of Discourse Completion Test where sixteen situations eight for requests and eight for apologies were included. Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1989) made the following conclusions concerning apologies: “(a) in apologies it is possible to delimit linguistic markers of pragmatic force (IFIDs); and (b) additionally (or alternatively) to IFIDs, apologies can be realized by reference to a set of specified propositions“ (p. 209) What is more, in the majority of instances apologies were as reactions to a prior offence. Then, Aijmer (1996) and Deustchmann (2003) in their papers focused on the use of different IFIDs of apologies in the English language. According to the scholars, to be sorry is the most common unit in both formal and informal settings. In addition, they state that British National Corpus in its spoken data contains 59.2 % of the token sorry when in London-Lund Corpus I’m sorry is the most common IFID and takes up 83.7 %.

Owen (1983) focused on apology IFIDs and its strategies in English and made the conclusion that apologies mainly do not go in isolation but occur with explanations as in [apology (sorry) but [account]. Furthermore, Tsai (2007) claims that in Chinese, apologizing IFIDs (22.6%) are less frequently used than the apology strategy offer of repair (34.6%). In addition to this, the acknowledgement of responsibility (17.5%), an account and a promise of forbearance are less frequently used, according to Tsai. Bataineh and Bataineh carried out a research on the usage of apology strategies by male and female genders of American University students. The results of the study revealed that both genders used the strategies of remorse, an explanation, a promise of forbearance, and self-deficiency, but females tend to apologize more than male respondents and this fact was reflected by the overt usage of expression of regret by female counterparts. Unfortunately, the situation concerning the
speech act of apology in the Lithuanian language is worse, little research has been done in this field due to the fact that linguistic pragmatics is a relatively new subject in Lithuanian linguistics (Hilbig, 2009). However, Čepaitienė (2009) conducted a research on apologies in Lithuanian texts under the circumstances when a teacher does not bring back corrected quizzes on time. The results revealed that respondents use IFIDs such as *I apologize* (atsiprašau), *pardon me* (dovanokit, atleiskit) and *I’m sorry* for expressing sympathy (apgailestauju); they also acknowledge responsibility and offer repair (Čepaitienė, 2009). In other words, basically respondents followed the five apology strategies introduced by Olshtain and Cohen (1983).

The need for an apology is specific to culture and situation and “we need to know what behavior may bring about a violation of social norms in a given culture” (Olshtain & Cohen, 1989, p. 57). Sugimoto (1998) argues that U.S Americans mainly apologize for doing something wrong to their partner, children, and even pets. In addition, Gao et al (1998) points that apologies are considered to be as a part of Americans everyday talk and carried out daily on social interaction. Song & Liu (2002) explain the extensive usage of the illocutionary act of apology as an outcome of being individual-oriented society because the phenomenon of individualism also dominates in everyday life activities and individual interests, feelings, space and time since well-being is essential for American society. Therefore, in the case of offense towards an interlocutor, this fact gives rise to the speech act of apology. To quote Song & Liu (2002), “high frequency of apology is observed among them, with strategies of open apology (IFID) and taking on responsibility the most commonly used” (p. 140). What is more, Bilmes (1993) explains that a refusal to an invitation, reasoning that it would be inconvenient for the invited person to accept, is a quite weak excuse. On the other hand, the fact that an invitee at that time has to be at someone’s funeral is a strong excuse. Therefore, if “one gives weak grounds for refusing an invitation, it may be inferred that a stronger grounds are not available; and on the contrary, the fact that one has provided strong grounds does not imply that weaker grounds are absent” (Bilmes, 1993, p. 392). As stated before, apology is what makes a refusal gracious and good mannered.

However, in the case of Chinese culture, it exists in a collectivist society and its members feel the need to belong to a group. Thus their social interactions with strangers are rare and in the need for an apology, they even might not use any apologizing strategies, thus seeming cold and rude. But in comparison with family members or close friends “overt expressions of apology are believed to signify formality, detachment, and relational distance rather than informality, attachment, and relational closeness” (Gao et al, 1998, p. 74).

The latter quote distinguishes the difference between East and Western cultures in the case of apology - Americans use apologies overtly whereas Chinese not. Then, the research
conducted by Song & Liu (2002) revealed that in Chinese and American cultures apologies are situation-specific and different apology strategies are used for the realization of this particular speech act. The scholars indicate that Chinese tend to use fewer apologies in the same situations in comparison with American culture and Song/Liu illustrate it by providing an example of being late to a meeting with a friend where Chinese mainly do not apologize for such behavior because unpunctuality is thought to be not severe. Then, while considering the issues of social distance and hierarchy, Chinese use the strategy of acknowledgement of responsibility less than Americans. In addition, Chinese have a tendency of using more apology strategies than Americans. What is more, Chinese usually apologize formulaically for the trouble it might cause if they cannot accept an invitation as *I’m very sorry* (Kasper, 1995). From Yi’s (2006) point of view, both Americans and Chinese mainly tend to use the strategy of acknowledgement of responsibility and IFIDs while making an apology.

Considering the speech act of apology, it is a face saving act for the hearer and face threatening act for the speaker (Ogiermann, 2009; Gonda, 2001). It is essential to mention, that individualistic and collectivist societies have a different view towards face. Gao *et al* (1998) state that individualists appreciate the non-imposition by others and try to leave personal space to others; also, the concept of face is understood as self-value or self-worth. Collectivists tend not to impose on others and the personal space is not emphasized; the content of face is assigned to the value and worth of the group rather than individual. Furthermore, apologies, namely remedial ones, are attributed to negative politeness strategy in the way they express respect, deference, and distance, thus acknowledging the speaker's face desire not to be offended (Brown & Levinson, 1987). On the other hand, as pointed by Olshtain and Cohen (1989), the illocutionary act of apologizing is culture-specific and in positive politeness orientation cultures such as Chinese, speakers tend to apologize less whereas in negative-oriented cultures it is the opposite. If, for example, a speaker is late to a meeting in positive-oriented culture he/she might say: “You know me. I’m never on time” and in fact this utterance would be accepted as an apology; but in that of negative-orientation culture in the same situation a speaker would say: “I’m sorry I caused you so much inconvenience” and he/she would “expect less accommodation from the hearer and would respect the hearer’s need for an apology more” (Olshtain & Cohen, 1989, p. 60). It becomes clear that an indirect explanation would sound rude in negative politeness oriented culture and it would not be considered as an apology. Shortly, both a speaker and an addressee should try to maintain their faces in order to achieve efficient and successful social interaction; basically politeness assists in expressing a speaker’s desire to protect his/her public self-image.
On the other hand, scholars Trosborg (1995), Cheng (2003) and Pan (2000) argue if the Brown and Levinson’s politeness theory could be applied universally, because in their research they dealt only with Tamil and Tzeltal languages besides English and in fact the concept “face” is believed to be culture specific.

In Western cultures redressive language is usually generated with a help of negative politeness strategies, i.e. negative face, because their culture is highly individualistic; as for Asian cultures, positive face or positive politeness strategies are employed because, being a collectivist society and attached to a group like family, work place, or friends circle, for them harmony of interaction and sustainment of existing relationships is at the heart of communication (Cheng, 2003).

It is also essential to mention that in Chinese culture negative face is never threatened due to the fact that Chinese tend to give face to others thus improving their own faces and in the case of damaging others’ faces they threaten their own in parallel (Gao et al, 1998). Chinese people mainly say “yes” to everything even if they disagree, so to protect the other person’s self-image. “The Chinese are obsessed with saving face”(Gries & Peng, 2002, p. 174). However, recently a shift has been noticed in Chinese politeness due to educational reform based on a Western model, the democracy movement, the one-child only policy and the influence of Western culture (McCarthy, 2000; Zhu & Bao, 2010; Chang & Haugh, 2011). In fact, as McCarthy (2000) states, the mandate of the English language brought those Western ideas and they resulted in a change in Chinese society namely from collective to individual. If considering the one-child only policy and its impact on politeness, it should be noted that society in China plays an important role in children’s growth as well as the development of personality and intellect (Chen, 2003). Chen explains that this historically rare policy affects children in a social way because they tend to show superiority due to the massive attention they receive at home and their role in the family. In addition, children in China start attending kindergartens at a young age, so social interactions and socialization process is utilized. In fact, recent research suggests that children in China are growing more pessimistic, less conscientious and less trusting thus being called “little emperors” (Reilly, 2013). Consequently, as the policy of one-child was introduced in 1979, today’s Chinese society is dominated by those born in single-child families (Reilly, 2013) and it could explain the fact that an apology as such and its strategies are used less because of these societal impacts on culture. Obviously, Chinese people are not so obsessed with saving face any more and it of course has affected the use of the speech act of apology strategies. Moreover, Chang and Haugh (2011) mention, that today’s China could be called a “no apologizing culture” explaining that the illocutionary act of apology was frequently used by Chinese (p. 5).
However, in modern China apology speech acts are materialized “by means other than linguistic expressions, such as taking redressive action or doing something for the person offended to mend the relationship” (Pan & Kadar, 2011, p. 99 as cited in Chang & Haugh, 2011; p. 5). It could be said, that the use of apology IFIDs is decreasing in modern China. Finally, Trosborg (2010) state that the idea of East and West cultures, namely Chinese and American, being fundamentally similar is gaining popularity.

In Lithuanian culture, as Hilbig (2009) puts it, in general, linguistic politeness is referred to as etiquette and it does not raise associations with the official or upper-class society; language and etiquette is thought to be a better term for defining communicative relationships not only in publicity but in daily situations too, such as conversations in a market, academic environment, or sports circuit. As for face saving, so far there has not been a research carried out on the issues of Lithuanian culture, face-saving, or the speech act of apology in the Lithuanian language in comparison with others, as the domain of pragmatics, namely speech acts has not been explored much (Hilbig, 2009). However, there were researches conducted in the field of Lithuanian identity, society, and cultural values (Liubinienė, 1999; Baltrimienė, 2005). The scholars suggest that Lithuanian society, namely way of thinking, understanding, and behavior, is facing a change from collectivist to an individualistic under the influence of Western culture. This shift was noticed after Lithuania gained independence from the Soviet Union. Liubinienė (1999) states that collectivism still prevails, especially in country sides where traditions are deep-rooted. A conclusion could be made here that Lithuanians do not use FTAs or, in other words, there is no threat to other person’s face and it means they are a positive politeness orientation culture similar to Chinese. An assumption could be made here as well. Lithuanians do not overuse apologies just as Chinese because these two cultures are considered as being collective ones; and the facts above support that.

2.4 Summary

As this paper focuses on intercultural apology there has been an emphasis on the speech act of apology as such and the treatment of its strategies by English, and Lithuanian cultures. In addition, the illocutionary act of apology is examined from several perspectives as the face-saving model of politeness by Brown and Levinson (1987) which revealed that Americans are a negative politeness orientation culture and they use FTAs, whereas Chinese are cautious about saving others’ “face”, so they avoid FTA’s. But, both scholars and researchers alike have noticed a growing tendency of Chinese to employ redress due to the influence of
Western culture. In the case of Lithuanians, they avoid “losing face” and that is what makes them a positive politeness culture. Just as with the Chinese, Lithuanian is also facing a shift in the usage of FTAs. Moreover, the classical view on apologies as speech acts (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1976) treat them as performative utterances which have to undergo felicity conditions in order for a speech act to be successful. Finally, Americans tend to use the illocutionary act of apology overtly, while Lithuanians and Chinese are the opposite.
III. FINDINGS

3.1 Description of Procedure

There are many methods of data collection in linguistic pragmatics but observation of authentic speech, role plays, and discourse completion test (DCT) is considered as the most significant (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). It is obvious that for the study of intercultural apology the best way of data collection would be observation of authentic production of speech acts where occurrences of natural speech are recorded directly and immediately. According to Kasper and Dahl (1991), the observation of authentic discourse has a high internal validity because the illocutionary acts which occurred spontaneously are described in detail. However, the author states this method is time consuming, as well as intrusive on individuals and institutions and is almost impossible to execute. In the case of the role play method it is considered as an attempt to gather “more naturalistic data” (Kasper & Dahl, 1991, p. 226). On one hand, role play interactions are semi-authentic and contextualized, but on the other they might be produced unnaturally thus sounding exaggerated (Yi, 2006). Finally, the discourse completion test is defined as “written questionnaires including a number of brief situational descriptions, followed by a short dialogue with an empty slot for the speech act under study” (Kasper & Dahl, 1991, p. 221). In fact, this type of data collection is chosen by a vast majority of linguists (Yi, 2006). The scholar argues although it is not spontaneous natural speech, it is responses to scenarios based on participants’ intuitions of what they might say in that particular situation. What is more, while applying DCT, a large amount of data can be gathered quickly because there is no need for the interviewer to be present directly. That is why DCT was chosen for obtaining data for this research. However, the survey was slightly transformed. Instead of short dialogues with empty slots for the speech act of apology, a broad range of ready-made answers was provided for participants.

The questionnaire was designed on the basis of the review of the literature. Research questions were planned while focusing on the specific interest in analyzing the illocutionary act of apologizing. The apologetic response research questions (or no apology at all) which underlie this particular paper are as follows:

- Are there significant differences (and similarities) within apology speech acts in Chinese, English, and Lithuanian languages?
- And are the significances relevant enough to reveal culturally significant differences within these language groups?
- Can pragmatic speech acts reveal cultural norms—both similarities and differences?
The multiple choice questionnaire consisted of background information about the participant, ten situations when a person is expected to apologize, and four possible answers to each situation. The situations are listed below:

S1  You have stepped on a person's foot on the bus. What do you say?
S2  You are late for a meeting with your friend. When you finally arrive, how do you apologize for being late? Or do you apologize at all?
S3  You are late for a meeting in your workplace with your business partners. What type of apology do you offer, if at all?
S4  Walking side-by-side on the sidewalk with a friend, you accidentally bump his/her hand. How would you respond?
S5  You have been invited to your best friend's birthday party, but you can't go because you will be out of town.
S6-A You have been asked by a local/national for directions (on the street) to a particular place, but you definitely do not know how to get there. You respond.
S6-B You have been asked by a foreigner for directions (on the street) to a particular place, but you definitely do not know how to get there. You respond.
S7  Your friend complains to you about the hard day s/he had at work.
S8  You have been invited to your boss’s house for Sunday brunch, but you simply do not want to go. You respond.
S9  You were supposed to take out the trash at your home, but you simply forgot about it. What do you say to your Parent/Spouse/Partner/Roommate?
S10 Your boss asked you to complete an important report by the end of the week, but you did not manage to do it. What do you say to him/her?

The choice of situations was grounded on the behavior, relationships, and social distance between:

1. Two friends;
2. A boss and employee;
3. Peers;
4. Familial relations;
5. Two strangers.

The key aim of the selection of these people groups was to prove or reject the prevailing knowledge about the social hierarchy and culturally mandated apology used by Americans, Chinese and Lithuanians. In addition to this, different discourse situations in the questionnaire were used to elicit information on:

1. Apology strategies used within American, Chinese, and Lithuanian cultures;
2. Evaluation of social distance, familiarity and the apology in A/C/L;
3. Apology strategies used while refusing an invitation in A/C/L;
4. Gender differences in the usage of the illocutionary act of apology in A/C/L.

The explanation on the choice of responses in the survey is the following. In order to make valid comparisons of American, Chinese, and Lithuanian cultures, the responses were designed on the basis of the politeness strategies—positive or negative—common in the chosen cultures, namely American, Chinese, or Lithuanian. To put it in other words: the research is examining whether or not any of the investigated cultures uses Face Threatening Acts (FTAs). The first option in the answer sheet corresponds to impoliteness, the second corresponds to expected politeness/norm, the third - earnest politeness with an account/explanation, and the forth option - earnest politeness with an intensifier. In addition to this, the IFID I’m sorry/sorry was chosen because it is the most common expression of apology (Cohein & Olshtain, 1983). Finally, the last question in the survey was left open-ended for the subjects to express their opinions, make comments, or add thoughts regarding tendencies toward apologies.

3.2 Validity and Limitations of the Study

“The 21st century is the age of information technology entering all spheres of the human activity” (The Korean IT Times, 2005). It is essential to mention that today surveys are more effective due to social media, namely technology that enables researchers to access a global community. In fact, the research conducted in 2001 by Roztocki revealed that Internet based surveys are an effective and intelligent tool for gathering, processing, and analyzing the primary data. Roztocki puts it this way, “Modern Internet-Based Surveys are not traditional paper-and-pencil surveys simply mapped into HTML format and posted on the Web; they are intelligent user interfaces supported by efficient database systems” (2001, p. 5). In the case of this particular research, with the help of the social network Facebook, two distant countries thousands of kilometers from Lithuania – China and USA—were accessed for the survey. Moreover, the survey was uploaded on a specialized webpage called Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com) which means there is no need to print, distribute, and then collect surveys personally; everything is done with the help of the Internet; results, statistics, and charts are all tabulated by the website, and then exported to PDF documents when the survey is finished. Needless to say that as results of the survey could be obtained quickly, the time of a researcher is saved and it adds to the effectiveness of the survey too. Fortunately, an online survey does not take much time for the respondent. He/She just needs to tick the best suitable
answer and they are able to complete the survey from the convenience of their computers. It is obvious, that today, due to technology, surveys are convenient for both the interviewer and the subject as well.

The choice of Survey Monkey website was based on the fact that this particular website is sponsored by Harvard University as well as being chosen by a majority of academic communities around the world for today’s academic research. Survey Monkey is also chosen by 99% of Fortune 500 companies, the world’s largest and most successful multinational companies (Fortune Magazine, 2013). Finally, Survey Monkey has almost twelve years of extensive experience in the field of web-based surveys and they received the APP award in 2012 for most user-friendly online questionnaires. These facts were used to evaluate the choice of Survey Monkey. In addition, the website’s security, privacy encryption, and IP validation allowed me to carry out ethical, verifiable and dependable research.

An equally important aspect is the size of sampling. It is clear that the bigger the sampling the more validity it adds to the paper. As mentioned before, due to social media the researcher can actually get a sufficiently large sampling size in a short time span. In the case of this study the size of sampling is relatively small – 38 Lithuanians, 37 Chinese, and 38 Americans, but the effort was focused in order to prove the theory and validate the findings carried out previously. However, a question might arise, if a survey is done online, “How does the researcher ensure that one person fills out the survey only once and not more?” Well, in the case of Survey Monkey a questionnaire can be filled only one time from a computer as its IP address is registered and the system does not allow multiple responses from the same computer.

It is worthwhile answering one more possible question concerning the validity of the collected data. How can you be sure whether the respondents provide genuine answers and whether they are sincere in their intentions? Thomas (1995) writes, “We can have no access to speakers’ real motivation for speaking as they do… as linguists we have access only to what speakers say and to how hearers react (p. 150).” It is obvious that linguists are not mind readers; they simply have to rely on what subjects say. In fact, concerning the validity of the respondents’ answers of this study it should be mentioned that they match and correspond to much of what was revealed in the literature review. What is more, at the end of the survey a space was provided for comments, thoughts, feedback, and additional ideas thus allowing the respondent to fill in any gaps in the questionnaire.
3.3 Results

The survey was designed and uploaded to the Internet webpage Survey Monkey. The link to it was added to the social network Facebook. Again, in total there were 112 respondents of whom 38 were Americans, 37 Chinese and 38 Lithuanians. The age of the subjects varied from 18 to 75 and older, but the majority is comprised of 18 to 24 year olds, that makes up 38.60% of all the total respondents. Then, the majority of those who filled in the survey were female and males took up almost half less, 64.03% and 35.96% respectively. All of the respondents had at least a university education, but 42.98 % of them were still university students. The rest of the subjects were educators – 17.54%, managers – 10.53%, and self-employed – 10.53% comprised bigger portions of the subjects. If reviewing each language group separately, it should be mentioned that in the Lithuanian group there were only 15.79 % male respondents, in American – 28.95 %, whereas in Chinese 64.86 % males filled in the survey. Finally, taking into consideration a generation time which is calculated to be an average of twenty-five - thirty years (Wong, 2012), it is important to say, that in the American group the age of respondents varied from 18 to 75 and older; it means at least three generations took part in the survey and this fact adds to the validity of the results of the survey. In the Chinese group, the subjects were 18-34 years of age, and the Lithuanian ranged from 18-44 years old. This means that two generations filled in the survey and the shift, namely in using the strategies of apology might be observed better due to the fact that Chinese society is dominated by one-child families and the respondents themselves belong to the generation which underwent the one-child policy. In the case of Lithuania, more than twenty years have passed since it gained the independence from the Soviet Union and is a republic.

Considering the essential focus of this paper is the use of apology strategies in American, Chinese, and Lithuanian, close attention was paid to a cultural overview of this particular speech act. Possible differences and/or similarities in the choice of apology strategies governed by gender factor was also noted. Due to the limitations of the study, I chose not to include age as a parameter to be examined.

Situation 1. You have stepped on a person’s foot on the bus. What do you say?

It was designed because it is a typical everyday life situation all around the world and anyone of us might experience it. Stepping on a person’s foot is considered as a violation of a social norm and also might involve physical pain; thus the hearer expects the illocutionary act of apology to be used by the offender. The results of a survey revealed that 71% of Americans answered the more intense “An earnest communication with eye-to-eye contact, Please, forgive me; I’m so sorry!” 18% of Lithuanians would answer like this as well. 81% of
Lithuanians answered the less intense “Excuse me” while in the case of Americans 29% would use this simple response. And the Chinese were divided 46%/48% between these two answers. None of the respondents would say nothing to a person in this particular situation. Then, 5% of Chinese respondents would enter into a conversation with an apology which may include a comment like “I’m so clumsy” or “I’m an idiot” while none of American or Lithuanian respondents would do the same. Therefore from this survey we can see that Americans are on one extreme, the Lithuanians are on the other extreme and the Chinese are right in the middle when it comes to apologies to strangers in a public setting and when it was an accident. It is worth while mentioning that when stepping on someone’s foot the vast majority of American males (81.82 %) chose an earnest communication with eye-to-eye contact just as 67% of American females whereas in Lithuanian group both males and females would respond simply “Excuse me“ and that even makes up more that 80% of respondents of both genders. Of the Chinese respondents, both male and female responses were of equal terms.

Figure 1.
Situation 2. You are late for a meeting with your friend. When you finally arrive, how do you apologize for being late? Or do you apologize at all?

Just as the first situation, this one is common too. There might occur a number of obstacles that prevent a person from coming on time. In other cases, a person is simply not punctual and the fact of being late could be considered as normal and even not worthy of an apology to a waiting friend. The responses to this question revealed that when dealing with friends and being late for an appointment with a friend, all three cultures responded almost identically. More than 81% of US respondents said they would choose the earnest communication with eye-to-eye contact, “I am so sorry, but…with an explanation.” Nearly 87% of Lithuanian respondents also chose the earnest communication while 81% of Chinese respondents chose this as well. However, in all the three cultures the respondents would only say “Sorry, I’m late” and that makes up 10% in China and Lithuanian, and 13% in USA. In fact, 3% of US respondents would give no explanation to a waiting friend. Then, USA and Lithuania polled 3% for “Please, please forgive me for being late. I am late because I am not good at planning my time” while 10% of Chinese respondents would say so. In addition, the answers of both genders coincided and it seems that when dealing with friends and apologizing for inconveniencing a friend all cultures polled would agree that it is important to be earnest and to give some sort of an explanation.
Situation 3. *You are late for a meeting in your workplace with your business partners. What type of apology do you offer, if at all?*

Although all three cultures responded almost identically in their apology acts to friends, when it came to business partners (co-workers), there was a difference among Lithuanians. Lithuanians were evenly divided between a simple response of “Sorry I’m late” and no explanation and the more earnest response, usually reserved for friends of “I am so sorry I’m late, but…with an explanation.” The results were exactly the same: 47.37% for the simple response and 47.37% for the apology with an explanation. This is interesting because for both the Chinese and the American respondents, their answers were the same as when dealing with friends: 68% of American respondents said they would explain to their colleagues why they were late and the Chinese were nearly 68% as well. Twenty-four percent of Americans said they would simply apologize to their waiting colleagues. Then, Chinese were evenly divided 18%/18% between simple response “Sorry I’m late” and “Please, please forgive me for being so late! I’m late because I’m not good at time management.” The latter response would be chosen by 8% of Lithuanians. Just as dealing with a waiting friend, 3% of US respondents
would give no explanation. From this survey we can surmise that in dealing with both colleagues and friends, both the Chinese and the Americans felt an explanation was necessary when late and wanted to give an earnest apology to both groups. Then, it becomes clear from the survey that Lithuanian males, almost 67%, tend to use simple response “Sorry, I’m late” while females used this type of response less than half time. It reflects the fact that women are more engaged, more concerned for others, and see the need of giving an explanation for being late for a meeting. In the case of Chinese and American male/female respondents there is no difference, the vast majority would use an earnest communication with eye-to-eye contact.

Figure 3.

Situation 4. Walking side-by-side on the sidewalk with a friend, you accidentally bump his/her hand. How would you respond?

Situation 4 may be dealing more with proxemics than apology strategies. According to Sorrells (2006) Americans have the largest proxemics (personal space) in the world. That might be due to their craving for individuality, or because Americans believe they have “the
right to this space,” according to Sorrells. Whatever the reasons, Americans tend to prize independence and privacy. Situation 4 shows there is some difference in how Americans respond to accidently entering into a friend’s personal space and the responses of Lithuanians and Chinese. Chinese with 1.4 billion people, may feel they do not have the luxury of large proxemics. Following the responses to this particular situation, it becomes clear that nearly 57% of Americans said they would earnestly apologize while Lithuanians (32%) and Chinese (26%) felt it was not a significant reason to apologize; 31% of Chinese respondents and 40% of Lithuanian would react simply by using an intensifier “Oh.” Then, 31% of Chinese would enter into a conversation and say “Did I hurt you? I’m so sorry, please, forgive me. Are you okay?” when Lithuanians would do that three times less and only 3% of US respondents in comparison with Chinese. Then, some of the respondents from all the three cultures would not respond at all and that makes up 24% of Americans, 13% of Chinese and 16% of Lithuanians. However, American males, even 80% would use eye-to-eye contact while females would do that only half as often and would not react at all and simply use an apology intensifier “Oh.” Moreover, Lithuanian males would not use an earnest response. They would give no explanation for accidentally bumping a friend’s hand or would simply respond “Oh.” Lithuanian female respondents actually clashed between a simple response “Oh” and an earnest eye-to-eye contact response, “I’m sorry, ooops”, 38%/38% respectively. Finally, Chinese male/female groups would evenly enter into a sincere conversation, 38%/16% respectively.
Situation 5. You have been invited to your best friend's birthday party, but you can't go because you will be out of town.

As mentioned before, an apology is what makes a refusal gracious, kind, and good-mannered. The survey showed that 99% of the respondents would not simply say “No, I can’t come,” to their best friends without providing an explanation. Furthermore, Chinese (62%), American (76%) and Lithuanian (61%) groups would reply earnestly and provide an authentic real reason for not attending the best friend’s birthday party, not just an excuse. Then, 31% of Chinese would enter into an earnest conversation “I’m so sorry. Please forgive me. How can I make it up to you?” when 23% of Lithuanian respondents and 16% of American would do the same. Finally, 9% of Americans, 5% of Chinese and 13% of Lithuanian respondents do not see the need of explanation for not attending best friend’s birthday party and simply say “I’m sorry, I can’t make it.” Considering gender role in this particular situation, it seemed that both males and females felt the explanation was important to provide as 61% females/67% males Lithuanians, 82% females/64% males Americans and 62% females/63% males Chinese chose the option of an earnest reply with an explanation “I’m sorry, I can’t make it because I’ll be
out of town for business.” It is obvious, that all three cultures, despite gender, see the necessity to explain being absent from a birthday party of a close friend.

![Chart showing responses to Q4 for USA, Chinese, and Lithuanian cultures]

**Figure 5.**

**Situation 6a.** You have been asked by a local/national for directions (on the street) to a particular place, but you definitely do not know how to get there. You respond.

**Situation 6b.** You have been asked by a foreigner for directions (on the street) to a particular place, but you definitely do not know how to get there. You respond.

Situations A & B were designed with a purpose to check whether the responses to a local/national and foreigner would differ. A note could be made here that Americans never say, “I don’t know” and walk off—whether it’s a national or a foreign visitor—they just do not do it. But Chinese and Lithuanians say “I don’t know” and walk off when it is someone from their own country—8% of Chinese and nearly 3% of Lithuanians who responded said
that for fellow countrymen, they are on their own. 77% of Lithuanians, 58% of Americans and 67% of Chinese express regret and add an explanation to a local/national as in “I’m sorry, I don’t know that place,” and then walk on. In the case of Americans, they express regret, add an explanation and then tend to offer repair and help in finding the place as in “I’m so sorry; I’m not familiar with that place, can I help you find it?” That makes up 34% of all American respondents. Chinese (18%) and Lithuanians (13%) offered to find a certain place too. Finally, all the three cultures evenly (8%) stated they would like to help and find a certain place together. However, when it comes to helping foreigners, both Chinese and Lithuanians get a bit more softhearted: 31% of Lithuanian and 34% of Chinese respondents say they would help a foreigner to find the place, thus offering repair. In addition, 55% of American respondents would do the same. But still, 53% of Chinese, 54% of Lithuanians and 34% of Americans would respond “I’m sorry, I don’t know that place,” and walk on.” What is more, 3% of Lithuanians would say “I don’t know,” and walk on to a foreigner when none of the Chinese and American respondents would react this way. Fewer respondents from the three cultures, would help in finding a certain place and that makes up 11% of Americans, 13% of Chinese and 13% of Lithuanian. Following the answers of respondents to situations 6 A and 6 B the picture becomes clear that locals tend to apologize and offer help to foreigners more than to their fellow countrymen. Finally, while comparing the responses of males/females, gender differences within the choice of apology strategies were not reflected but the usage of apology strategies by both genders reflected the culture to which respondents belonged.
Figure 6a.

Figure 6b.
Situation 7. Your friend complains to you about the hard day s/he had at work.

This particular situation is expected to provoke sympathy from the hearer as it has nothing to do with the illocutionary act of apology because social norms are not violated and there is no need for a hearer to apologize to a speaker. In this survey, none of the respondents would keep silent without any response. However, the choice of the apology strategy differs among the three language groups. 63% of Americans said they would use the response “Oh. I’m sorry. Do you want to talk about it?” The apology intensifier oh was used as well as IFID I’m sorry and an offer of repair. In fact, it was the dominant strategy from the four possible in the American culture because “That’s too bad” and “Oh. That’s terrible. I’m so sorry. Can I help you in anyway?” took up 10% and 26% respectively. Chinese respondents actually struggled between three responses, but the majority 42% would say “Oh. That’s terrible. I’m so sorry. Can I help you in anyway?” The responses “That’s too bad” (26%) and “Oh. I’m sorry. Do you want to talk about it?” (32%) were less frequent. Furthermore, just as Chinese, the answers of Lithuanian respondents varied among the three strategies: 38% for “That’s too bad”, 28% - “Oh. I’m sorry. Do you want to talk about it?” and 33% - “Oh. I’m sorry. Do you want to talk about it?” Considering male/female responses, it should be noted that Americans of both genders evenly responded to his/her friend complaining about the hard day at work “Oh. I’m sorry. Do you want to talk about it?” just as Chinese, where both genders almost evenly reacted “Oh. That’s terrible. I’m so sorry. Can I help you in anyway?” But in the case of Lithuanian culture, 50% of males would respond “That’s too bad,” and females were divided between “That’s too bad,” and “Oh. That’s terrible. I’m so sorry. Can I help you in anyway?” accounted for 37% of each response. It seems that Lithuanian males in comparison with American and Chinese males do not tend to express sympathy as much.
Situation 8. You have been invited to your boss’s house for Sunday brunch, but you simply do not want to go. You respond.

This situation is quite delicate as a boss is involved. Usually, considering an employee and boss relationships, it should be said that some sort of social distance and social hierarchy is felt among them and in this particular case a refusal to an invitation should involve an apology. It is essential to mention, that nearly 5% of respondents would say “No thank you,” without providing any kind of explanation for a refusal or expression of regret. Moreover, 3% of US respondents would say something that is not genuine, whereas nearly 49% of Chinese respondents would say “I’m so sorry, but my family is going to an art exhibit (not true, but detailed),” and 31% of Lithuanians would do that as well. However, 58% of Americans offer repair and suggest trying for another time as well as Chinese (39%) and Lithuanians (26%). Then, the survey revealed that 10% of Chinese respondents and 39% of Lithuanians simply apologize and state the fact that they have plans thus avoiding saying something that is not true. When it comes to apologizing for not being able to attend Sunday brunch at your boss’s, it is obvious that Americans would not provide excuses which are not genuine and would perhaps offer another time; not as Chinese and Lithuanians who would not like attending Sunday brunch and would use a response which is not true, but detailed. It is essential to mention this particular aspect that nearly 34% of Lithuanian males would say “No thank you”
to a boss, when none of the Lithuanian female respondents would answer in this way. In Chinese and American cultures this percentage between male/female is almost ten times less.

Figure 8.

Situation 9. You were supposed to take out the trash at your home, but you simply forgot about it. What do you say to your Parent/Spouse/Partner/Roommate?

It might be considered as a typical everyday life situation. A person might forget to take out the trash due to loads of work, lack of free time, or just simply forgetfulness. Basically, it depends on the person-- how he/she reacts for not carrying out his/her responsibility. The survey showed that nearly 53% of Americans would express regret for their forgetfulness and then take the trash out, but 33% of Lithuanians and 36% of Chinese would do the same. In addition, the two distant cultures, Chinese and Lithuanian, do not express regret for forgetting to take out the trash. In fact, the answers of Lithuanian respondents showed that “I’ll take it now” took up 31% and 21% of Chinese. While expressing regret for not taking out the trash, the Chinese would add “Did I forget it again?” (23%) or “I’m so forgetful and keep forgetting things. Please forgive me.” (21%) as well as an apology intensifier “Oh,” would be used. If concerning this particular apology strategy utilized in Lithuanian culture, 10% of respondents would choose it. In addition, 13% of Americans would employ this strategy too. Finally, 67%
of Lithuanian males would not use any apology intensifiers or expressions of regret. They would simply say “I’ll take it now,” thus completing their duty, while this was not true to Lithuanian females who would apologize first and then take the trash out (38%). Both male and female groups from China and USA would use FTAs thus apologizing. In general, Chinese and Lithuanian responses were more or less evenly divided between all the four options. It might mean there is no one culture specific answer not as in the case of Americans.

![Figure 9.](image)

**Situation 10.** Your boss asked you to complete an important report by the end of the week, but you did not manage to do it. What do you say to him/her?

Typically when considering deadlines in general, bosses mainly say reports should be due yesterday, but not tomorrow. To put it in other words, reports are expected to be done earlier than a deadline comes. As mentioned before, social distance and hierarchy between a boss and employee usually motivates the latter to complete works on time, thus not disappointing the boss. Interestingly, when it comes to a boss and employee relationships, 67% of Lithuanian males would express regret, account for their being late and offer repair to their bosses “I’m sorry. I got behind in some work and I’ll have it to you ASAP. ,” In general, Americans and Lithuanians (despite gender) mainly would say “I’m sorry. I got behind…,”
and that makes up 50% of respondents of each culture. However, the Chinese struggled between “I’m sorry. I got behind in some work and I’ll have it to you ASAP,” and “I’m so sorry. I won’t leave work today until it’s done! I hate letting you down,” where the percentage was divided almost evenly 37%/34% respectively. Then, Americans (42%) saw the necessity of completing the report the same day and replied “I’m so sorry, I won’t leave work today until it’s done! I hate letting you down.” Actually, 21% of Lithuanians who filled the survey had the same opinion and chose this particular answer. However, the survey revealed that 16% of Lithuanian and Chinese respondents would not provide their bosses with an explanation and would simply say “I’ll get it to you as soon as possible.” In the case of Americans, 3% would leave their apologies without expression of regret and explanation. It is obvious that the vast majority of respondents (despite gender) would not want to let their bosses down and would use apology IFID I’m sorry to express regret.

![Figure 10](image)

The last question in the survey was left for comments, ideas and thoughts on apologies. Well, the majority of respondents who answered this question were Chinese; fewer Lithuanians and Americans responded to it. A short summary of the answers could be made. Four Chinese mentioned “sincere” or “sincerity” in apology context. One Chinese said
“authentic” but it was misspelled; one said “heart and soul” which means sincere. Then, two Chinese and one Lithuanian believe apologies are “polite.” Moreover, the word “different” was used eight times. Two Lithuanians said “it depends” on the situation and their moods; one American said “depends” but it was misspelled. Three respondents said they “try” to be polite (2 American/1 Lithuanian). 3 Chinese say they want to do “better” or “improve” their manners.

3.4 Discussion of Results

S1 You have stepped on a person’s foot on the bus. What do you say?

The results of the survey showed that in Situation 1 all the three cultures, namely Lithuanian, American, and Chinese expressed their concern for other person’s face as the speech act of apology was used by the majority of respondents of the survey. The survey also revealed that in this particular situation, USA and Lithuania have their dominant apology strategies. If an American stepped on a person’s foot he/she would use the strategy of earnest politeness with an intensifier because a person’s individual space would be entered, while Lithuanian would choose the apology strategy of expected politeness considered as a norm. In other words, a Lithuanian would reply as it is thought to be necessary in order to fulfill social expectations of the receiving end or simply the hearer. In the case of Chinese culture, the almost even division of Chinese answers between the two strategies of expected politeness and an earnest politeness with an intensifier could be explained in the following. Firstly, Chinese society is considered as being a collective one, thus they feel the need to be a member of a group, to be connected, so their social interactions with strangers are rare in comparison with friends, colleagues and family members. This is way, the strategy of expected politeness was chosen by Chinese respondents, because they did not feel it was necessary to enter into an earnest communication. Secondly, as Chinese culture is facing a shift in politeness due to the influence of Western culture, the strategy of earnest politeness with an intensifier was adopted following the American model.

S2 You are late for a meeting with your friend. When you finally arrive, how do you apologize for being late? Or do you apologize at all?

American, Chinese and Lithuanian respondents chose the apology strategy of earnest politeness with an account/explanation and in fact, it was the dominant strategy in the three cultures. However, considering the Chinese culture, they basically do not see the need of apologizing for a waiting friend as an expression of regret or saying “sorry” is thought to express formality and detachment. It means that the theory does not coincide with these
findings just as in the case of Lithuanian culture which is considered as being a collectivist one (Chinese too) and apologies to close friends or family members are used less in comparison with Americans who are highly individualistic and saying “sorry” is frequent in their culture. Then, considering the face wants, it could be stated that the respondents from the three language groups felt the need to save the face of a waiting friend by utilizing the speech act of apology. Finally, Lithuania and China are facing the influence of Western culture and the choice of the apology strategy of earnest politeness with an account/explanation might be mainly based on the latter phenomenon.

S3 You are late for a meeting in your workplace with your business partners. What type of apology do you offer, if at all?

Just as in the case of a waiting friend, Americans and Chinese felt that the explanation was necessary when late to a meeting in a workplace, thus the dominant apology strategy was an earnest politeness with an explanation/account. This particular aspect should be stressed that Chinese have the inclination to be a member of a group and supported by other people thus are cautions of using apology FTAs. But when dealing with business partners it seemed the explanation or account was provided in order to maintain social harmony, show respect, and maintain social rank relationships. According to the theory, that is typical of Chinese whereas in American culture, emphasis is not placed on social rank relationships but rather on individuality. It is socially accepted that being late especially for a meeting with business partners is a violation of a social norm; thus Americans felt an earnest apology was necessary for this particular misbehavior and for disturbing personal time of business partners. Then, the results of the survey revealed that Lithuanian respondents struggled between expected politeness and an earnest politeness with an explanation/account. As mentioned already, the influence of western culture is observed in Lithuania, and it has affected the way Lithuanians think, understand and behave resulting in the change in society from collectivist to individualistic. It becomes clear that almost half of the subjects of Lithuanian nationality think that it is not enough to simply say “Sorry, I’m late” as it would be expected in a collectivist society. Consequently, redressive language was employed by Lithuanian subjects in order to provide an explanation.

S4 Walking side-by-side on the sidewalk with a friend, you accidentally bump his/her hand. How would you respond?

As this particular situation deals with individual/personal space consequently Americans apologized earnestly with an account for entering it because as already mentioned they are a highly individualistic society and personal space is greatly valued and appreciated. In addition, it was the dominant strategy in this language group. Then, the respondents from
China clashed between expected politeness and an earnest politeness with an intensifier when Lithuanians did the same, but the strategies were a norm and an earnest politeness with an account/explanation. Both, China and Lithuania are considered to be as positive politeness orientation cultures and they are cautious about saving the hearer’s face, thus apologies are used less than in negative politeness orientation cultures such as American. In addition, in positive politeness orientation cultures the usage of apology IFIDs in this particular situation would express formality and relational distance. Actually, the latter fact was illustrated in the selection of apology strategy of expected politeness by Chinese and Lithuanian subjects and these findings prove the theory. Furthermore, it seems that the western influence was felt in the choice of earnest politeness with an account/explanation by Lithuanian respondents.

S5 You have been invited to your best friend’s birthday party, but you can’t go because you will be out of town.

The respondents from the three cultures chose the apology strategy of earnest politeness with an intensifier. In fact, just as in the situation with a waiting friend, this particular strategy was dominant in Lithuanian, Chinese, and American cultures. Although the theory states that people from collective societies, in this case China and Lithuania, tend not to apologize to their close people like family and friends because it might sound superficial and formal, it seems that these findings do not coincide with the theory. A conclusion could be made here that the answers of Chinese and Lithuanian respondents reflect the western influence and one more time prove the change in society in the latter two countries, namely from collective to individual, thus influencing apology strategies.

S6-A You have been asked by a local/national for directions (on the street) to a particular place, but you definitely do not know how to get there. You respond.

While giving directions to a national/local, the strategy of expected politeness is dominant with Chinese and Lithuanian cultures as according to the theory, conversations or social interactions are rare in collective society cultures and the respondents expressed socially expected speech act of apology. However, American respondents struggled between expected politeness and an earnest politeness with an account/explanation because on one hand their personal time was disturbed and it resulted in the usage of a norm, but on the other, American respondents employed redress in order to save the hearer’s face by apologizing and providing an explanation/account.

S6-B You have been asked by a foreigner for directions (on the street) to a particular place, but you definitely do not know how to get there. You respond.

The choice of apology strategies while giving directions to a foreigner differs from that of to a local/national. Actually, it could be even stated that there is no dominance in apology
strategies in this situation. The cultures of Chinese, Lithuanian and American struggled between the strategies of expected politeness and an earnest politeness with an account/explanation. Nevertheless, it could be stated that the apology strategy of expected politeness in collective societies, namely Lithuania and China, was employed more often than that of earnest politeness with an account/explanation. So these findings illustrated the prevailing knowledge that social interactions are uncommon among collectivists, but on the other hand, the usage of the apology strategy of earnest politeness with an account/explanation by Chinese and Lithuanians demonstrates their desire for communication which could be accounted for the influence of Western culture and the shift in politeness. In the case of Americans, the choice of apology strategies swapped in comparison with Situation 6A. In the previous conditions (Situation 6A) American respondents, being highly individualistic, did not want any imposition on their personal time and space by a local/national; but while dealing with foreigners they felt the explanation/account was necessary and the strategy of earnest politeness with an account/explanation was chosen more frequently than that of expected politeness.

S7 Your friend complains to you about the hard day s/he had at work.

The results of the survey revealed that the apology strategy of earnest politeness with an account/explanation is dominant in American culture when it comes to expressing sympathy. Although, there was no need to apologize in this situation, as social norms were not violated, these findings prove the theory that apologies are used frequently among Americans and are a part of their daily social interactions. Considering Chinese and Lithuanians, they struggled between expected politeness, an earnest politeness with an account/explanation, and an earnest politeness with an intensifier. It is obvious that the latter two cultures do not have significant apology strategies for expressing sympathy. However, following the results of the survey to this particular question, it could be stated that Lithuanians chose expected politeness and Chinese an earnest politeness with an intensifier fewer times more than the other strategies of apology.

S8 You have been invited to your boss’s house for Sunday brunch, but you simply do not want to go. You respond.

As this situation involves social distance between the boss and his/her employee, an explanation/account is thought to be necessary for not attending the brunch, because more power is held by a boss over his/her employee; thus the latter should show concern for boss’s face by saving his/hers. To put it in other words, an employee is expected to apologize and explain his/her refusal. What is more, in this particular situation an explanation/account indicated in the option was not genuine. The results of the survey revealed that Americans
chose the apology strategy of earnest politeness with an intensifier more frequently than expected politeness which was not true in the case of Lithuanians who decided on a norm more times than on the strategy including apology intensifier. The Chinese respondents said they would earnestly apologize and explain their refusal more intensely than apologize with an intensifier. Although, collectivists, namely China and Lithuania, feel the need to be connected and to belong to a group, they followed the Western model by choosing the apology strategies of earnest politeness with an intensifier and an account/explanation. The latter fact speaks about the shift in linguistic politeness which results in a different choice of apology strategies by Chinese and Lithuanian respondents. Finally, it is obvious that the three cultures fail in having a dominant strategy when it comes to social distance and refusal to an invitation.

S9  You were supposed to take out the trash at your home, but you simply forgot about it. What do you say to your Parent/Spouse/Partner/Roommate?

This situation involves family members and close friends. The results of the questionnaire showed that Americans adopted the strategy of expected politeness and, in fact, it was dominant in their culture. These findings prove the theory that Americans apologize to their family members, close friends for their misbehavior. It is as well essential to mention that Chinese and Lithuanians quite often employed the strategy of impoliteness meaning they failed to apply apology strategies and in this particular situation an apology would be expected by the hearer. However, it was not the main strategy used by these two cultures; simply, being collectivist societies, they felt that apology was not necessary because it might sound rather formal and detached. In addition, considering this particular situation, in positive politeness orientation cultures such as Chinese and Lithuanian, the reply “I’ll take it out now” is taken as an apology due to the fact that this way collectivists feel connected to the group and save the hearer’s face by avoiding apologies. Then, a number of Chinese respondents clashed between apology strategies of earnest politeness with an account/explanation and earnest politeness with an intensifier. Lithuanians chose the apology strategy of expected politeness more often than that of earnest politeness with an intensifier. Actually, it is clear that there is no dominant apology strategy within Chinese and Lithuanian language groups, but collectivism prevails while choosing impoliteness which is understood as an absence of apology and individualism arises in the choice of expected politeness.

S10  Your boss asked you to complete an important report by the end of the week, but you did not manage to do it. What do you say to him/her?

Just as Situation 8 this one also deals with social distance and social power. The questionnaire revealed that USA and China respondents struggled between earnest politeness
with an account/explanation and earnest politeness with an intensifier. Lithuanians chose the strategy of earnest politeness with an explanation/account. It could be stated that the respondents of the three cultures aim at restoring and/or maintaining relationships with their bosses by apologizing as well as prove the importance of respecting someone in a higher rank, in this particular situation - the boss. In pragmatic terminology, the respondents of the survey stated that they wanted their bosses’ faces to be safe and thus threaten their own.

Finally, dealing with gender differences in the usage of apology and its strategies it should be stated that both males and females utilized them almost on equal terms. This fact needs a further explanation. As shown in Table 1 and Table 2 the choice and the frequency reflected in the percentage of the strategies of expected politeness, earnest politeness with an account/explanation and earnest politeness with an intensifier by male/female groups coincided. A remark could be made here that apology strategies are not employed differently by male/female groups. However, while dealing with the issue of impoliteness that is the failure of application of apology strategies, it becomes clear that men employed this particular strategy almost one and a half times more than their female counterparts; that accounts for 7.56% for male and 5.95% for female genders. Then, Lithuanian men applied the strategy of impoliteness the most times in comparison with the respondents from USA and China. Considering female group, Chinese female respondents did not utilize apology strategies thus chose impoliteness more frequently than their American and Lithuanian counterparts. Finally, after the comparison of the usage of the apology strategy of earnest politeness with an intensifier by Lithuanian male/female groups, the results of the survey revealed that it was employed almost three times less by men than women. It could be stated that Lithuanian women are more engaged and concerned for the hearer when it comes to apologies with an intensifier. In addition, the frequency of application of earnest apology with an intensifier by male/female groups was not significantly different in American and Chinese cultures. Finally, the gender factor did not have any impact on the results of the survey and corresponded to the results obtained from the three cultures. In fact, it could be stated that the latter statement even more supported the findings, because as revealed in Table 1 and Table 2 apology strategies were applied not by the gender but according to the culture of a respondent.
Table 1. The apology strategies utilized by males in American, Chinese, and Lithuanian cultures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Impoliteness</th>
<th>Expected politeness (norm)</th>
<th>Earnest politeness with an account/explanation</th>
<th>Earnest politeness with an intensifier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>23.13%</td>
<td>52.72%</td>
<td>19.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>4.23%</td>
<td>30.41%</td>
<td>42.31%</td>
<td>23.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>15.15%</td>
<td>39.39%</td>
<td>39.39%</td>
<td>6.06%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. The apology strategies utilized by females in American, Chinese, and Lithuanian cultures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Impoliteness</th>
<th>Expected politeness (norm)</th>
<th>Earnest politeness with an account/explanation</th>
<th>Earnest politeness with an intensifier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>4.71%</td>
<td>26.96%</td>
<td>52.86%</td>
<td>15.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td>25.17%</td>
<td>44.75%</td>
<td>22.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>5.45%</td>
<td>40.87%</td>
<td>38.11%</td>
<td>15.73%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To sum up, 113 respondents from Lithuania, China, and USA were surveyed on the choice of apology strategies. Table 3 shows the average percentage of each apology strategy used by culture, namely Lithuanian, Chinese, and American. First, it is essential to mention, that all the three cultures did utilize politeness strategies and employed the speech act of apology in the eleven situations provided above. What is more, it became obvious that each culture adopted a prevailing apology strategy which as reflected in Table 3 had the highest percentage. The latter fact needs explaining. The apology strategy of earnest politeness with an intensifier was employed 52.76% by American respondents. In fact, it was the highest figure from all the possible strategies of apology. It even could be stated that Americans exclusively chose the mentioned apology strategy, because expected politeness, earnest politeness with an intensifier and impoliteness made up 16.75%, 25.87% and 4.6% respectively. The choice of the strategy of earnest politeness with an account/explanation in the majority of situations mainly strengthens the fact that Americans tend to use the speech act of apology in their everyday conversations with partners, bosses, and friends and thus
these findings prove the theory that Americans tend to use apologies overtly. Furthermore, according to Brown and Levison’s theory of face-saving model of politeness American culture is taken as negative politeness orientation, thus they used face-threatening acts or IFIDs by apologizing. This fact is reflected in the choice of apology strategy of earnest politeness with an account/explanation more times in comparison with Chinese and Lithuanian cultures. As apologies were highly issued by American respondents, it supports the theory they tend to express regret for entering an individual’s personal space, for the wrongdoing, or saying “sorry” while refusing an invitation more often than Chinese and Lithuanians.

Then, while dealing with the results of the Chinese respondents, it is essential to mention that the apology strategy of earnest politeness with an account/explanation was instrumental and as reflected in Table 3 chosen more frequently than the apology strategies of impoliteness, expected politeness and earnest politeness with an intensifier. It is clear that almost 44% of Chinese who filled up the questionnaire would apologize earnestly and provide an explanation for the offense. Then, nearly 29% of Chinese subjects employed the strategy of expected politeness/norm, 22% - earnest politeness with an intensifier, and impoliteness was chosen by 5% of Chinese respondents. The division of the figures between the mentioned apology strategies could be defined in the following. According to the theory, conversations and social interactions with strangers are not common within Chinese people and they tend to offer repair for their offense done to the hearer by other means rather than the use apology IFIDs. In addition, Chinese people are thought to provide an explanation for the offense not frequently and in fact modern China is even referred to as a no apologizing culture. However, the latter fact and the theory provided in the literature review does not coincide with these findings due to the fact that the apology strategy of earnest politeness with an account/explanation was dominant in the Chinese language group. As mentioned earlier in the paper, Chinese society is gradually changing from collective to individual under the influence of Western culture which resulted in the shift in politeness, including the strategies of apology. It should be stated that collectivism prevails and is reflected in the use of apology strategy of expected politeness/norm in the way that by choosing it, Chinese respondents do not engage into a conversation with strangers or do not express regret and provide an explanation to friends, partners, family members as it might be understood and sound as serious and detached by the hearer. Considering the face wants, China is taken as a positive politeness orientation culture and use face-saving acts in order to protect the hearer’s self-image; or to put it in other words, Chinese do not use redressive language.
After reviewing the results of Lithuanian respondents it became clear that there were two dominant apology strategies, namely expected politeness/norm which takes up 40.65% and earnest politeness with an account/explanation - 38.30%. Then, earnest politeness with an intensifier was chosen almost three times less than the apology strategy including an intensifier and it makes up 14.24%. Furthermore, 6.79% of Lithuanian subjects employed impoliteness. The choice of expected politeness in the Lithuanian language group could be explained as follows. According to the theory, this culture is considered to be as positive politeness orientation culture because of collectivism and the usage of FTAs is quite rare or, to put it in other words, Lithuanians do not overuse pragmatic speech acts, in this particular case apologies. However, the tendency of the decision on the expected politeness more than on the other apology strategies shows, that Lithuanian respondents fulfilled social expectations of the hearers and in the Brown and Levinson’s face-saving model of politeness terminology - expressed contextually-expected concern for face. In addition, this way the theory was illustrated because Lithuanians being collectivists, established earnest communication with strangers infrequently. What is more, the use of apology IFIDs with close friends or family members might sound formal. On the other hand, the apology strategy of earnest politeness with an account/explanation was employed almost equally by Lithuanian subjects just as expected politeness. These findings support the theory, that Lithuanian society is changing from collective to individual one by following the Western model and this transformation made an impact on linguistic politeness in general and the choice of apology strategies in particular. It could be said that individualism is becoming important for the Lithuanian respondents as the strategy of earnest politeness with an account/explanation was utilized almost on equal terms with expected politeness.

It is essential to stress that all the three cultures employed the strategy of impoliteness or, that is to say, the respondents from China, Lithuania, and USA did not use apology strategies as well as apologies. As indicated in Table 3, the percentage of the application of the strategy of impoliteness by American, Lithuanian and Chinese cultures is relatively small in comparison with the strategies of apology. It could be claimed that despite culture, the subjects did not utilize apology and its strategies where they would be anticipated by the hearer, thus not fulfilling social expectations of the interlocutor. From Brown and Levinson’s face-saving model of politeness point of view, by choosing the strategy of impoliteness, the hearer’s face, namely positive or negative is threatened. In fact, as the three cultures did use this particular strategy, the Americans used it the least.
Table 3. The percentage of the apology strategies utilized by Americans, Chinese, and Lithuanians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apology strategies</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Impoliteness</th>
<th>Expected politeness (norm)</th>
<th>Earnest politeness with an account/explanation</th>
<th>Earnest politeness with an intensifier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.6%</td>
<td>25.87%</td>
<td>52.76%</td>
<td>16.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.06%</td>
<td>28.68%</td>
<td>43.79%</td>
<td>22.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.79%</td>
<td>40.65%</td>
<td>38.30%</td>
<td>14.24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IV. CONCLUSIONS

This paper dealt with the speech act of apology and the realization of its strategies in American, Chinese, and Lithuanian cultures. Apologies used in linguistic pragmatics were observed and social and cultural nuances of apologies were examined. Then, the frequency of usage of apologies in American, Chinese, and Lithuanian cultures was estimated and compared. The desired and stated objectives were accomplished by carrying out research on the utilization of apology strategies in American, Chinese, and Lithuanian cultures. As the survey was designed to elicit information on apology strategies used within American, Chinese, and Lithuanian cultures; evaluation of social distance, familiarity and the apology in A/C/L; apology strategies used while refusing an invitation in A/C/L; and gender differences in the usage of the illocutionary act of apology in A/C/L. It can be said that the findings of the study on the aforementioned issues answered the research questions.

In the first place, it is essential to mention that the respondents from USA, China, and Lithuania utilized the strategies of apology. However, the choice and the frequency varied among the investigated cultures. The dominant strategy and the most commonly chosen by American subjects was earnest politeness with an account/explanation. Chinese subjects employed this particular strategy more than the others too. In the case of Lithuanian respondents they chose expected politeness and earnest politeness with an account/explanation almost equally. If considering and comparing the findings of previous research carried out in this field with the results of the present study, it could be stated that they do coincide. Americans tend to use apologies overtly and this fact was supported with the findings, namely with the choice of apology strategy of earnest politeness with an account/explanation. The notion that Americans are a negative politeness orientation culture is illustrated too as apology IFIDs was used. The results from the Chinese mainly illustrated the fact that the society in this Eastern culture is changing from collective to individual, thus greatly influencing linguistic politeness and the usage of apology strategies too. Chinese, following the Western model, employed redressive language, apology IFIDs and its strategies more often than before the influence. While dealing with Lithuanian culture, the respondents showed a tendency of using an apology strategy that is of a norm. The latter fact confirmed the prevailing knowledge that Lithuania is a positive politeness orientation culture and thus used apologies less. In addition, the influence of Western culture is felt because the respondents from Lithuania chose the strategy of earnest politeness with an account/explanation almost as equally as a norm. It seems that there are two dominant apology strategies in Lithuanian culture: one expresses the socially expected concern for the
hearers face and reflects collective behavior, thinking and understanding; the other suggests an earnest apology followed by an explanation and reminds about the importance of individualism for Lithuanian respondents.

After evaluating social distance and familiarity while issuing an apology, the following tendencies were exhibited: When dealing with friends, peers and familial relations, Americans mostly used the strategy of earnest politeness with an account/explanation. Chinese employed the strategies of expected politeness and earnest politeness with an intensifier. The Lithuanian respondents used the strategy of expected politeness. If taking into consideration strangers, Americans adopted a strategy of earnest politeness with an account/explanation. But in the poll, Lithuanians and Chinese chose expected politeness. Finally, there were situations included in the questionnaire related to social distance between a boss and an employee. The results showed that the investigated cultures utilized the same strategy - earnest politeness with an account/explanation.

As for refusing an invitation, there were differences observed among the three cultures. Although Americans, Chinese, and Lithuanians polled in earnest politeness with an account/explanation when a refusal was initiated to a friend, the findings revealed the situation was different when a boss was involved. Americans answered by using the strategy of earnest politeness with an intensifier; Chinese used the strategy reserved for friends - earnest politeness with an account/explanation; and Lithuanians chose expected politeness.

And last but not least is the gender factor in relation to apologies and their strategies. The findings disclosed that the influence of gender was not seen in the choice of apology strategies and a conclusion could be made that strategies were applied according to the culture of a respondent, but not necessarily by the gender. There was no significant difference.

Further research should be carried out in the field of the speech act of apology and its strategies in Lithuanian culture. A study on proving a shift in linguistic politeness and its influence on the usage of speech acts would be essential too.

All things considered, it could be claimed that apologies and their strategies in American, Chinese, and Lithuanian are specific to culture and situation. Actually, the latter statement reinforces the idea that language use is sensitive to context and culture, thus pragmatic and cross-cultural competence is essential for successful, effective communication. In fact, “getting the pragmatics wrong, might be offensive” (Yule, 1996, p. 6); this is why in our fast-moving world. an appropriate use of language is so vitally important. Finally, using earnest and appropriate apologies suitably in a cross-cultural context adds to successful communication, helps to minimize cultural misunderstandings, and avoids misinterpretations.

Šio tyrimo tikslas buvo pažvelgti į atsiprašymus naudojamus lingvistinėje pragmatikoje ištiriant jų kultūrinius atspalvius Amerikiečių, Kinų ir Lietuvių kultūrose. Dar vienas šio darbo tikslas yra atsakyti į klausimą Ar atsiprašymai yra vartojami per dažnai/retai minėtose kultūrose? Įvardintiems tikslams pasiekti, buvo nustatyti šie siekiniai: aptarti atsiprašymų panašumus ir skirtumus Amerikiečių, Kinų ir Lietuvių kultūrose; įvertinti vyrų/moterų naudojamus atsiprašymus; pažvelgti į atsiprašymus naudojamus atsisakant kvietimo ir įsiaiškinti kokie atsiprašymai naudojami skirtingose socialinėse ir profesinėse situacijos atsižvelgiant į santykių familiarumą ir hierarchiją. Tyrimo klausimai yra šie: Ar yra daugiau skirtumų ar panašumų atsiprašymo šnekos aktuose Anglų, Kinų ir Lietuvių kalbose? Jei yra skirtumų, ar jie yra pakankamai svarbūs atskleisti kultūrinių skirtumų tarp šių kalbų grupių? Ar pragmatiniai šnekos aktai gali atskleisti kultūrinius panašumus ir skirtumus?


Atlikus tyrimą paaškėjo, kad Amerikiečių, Kinų ir Lietuvių kultūrų atstovai naudojo atsiprašymus, tačiau jie priklausė nuo situacijos ir nuo kultūros, kuriai priklausė respondentas. Taip pat reikia paminėti, kad lyties faktorius neįtakojo atsiprašymų pasirinkimo, jie atspindėjo kultūros, kuriai respondentas priklausė tendencijas. Visų trijų kultūrų atstovai atsiskyrë įvairiems kvietimo vartojo nuoširdaus atsiprašymo su paaškinimu strategijų. Apklausos rezultatai parodė, kad Amerikiečiai linkę dažnai naudoti atsiprašymus, o Kinai ir Lietuviai šiuos šnekos aktus vartoja mažiau. Verta paminėti, kad Amerikiečių grupėje dominavo nuoširdaus
REFERENCES


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APPENDICES