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Apology Strategies in Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: A Comparison of Filipino ESL Learners and American English Native Speakers

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Abstract The study investigates cross-cultural variations in apology strategies among Filipino English as a Second Language (ESL) learners and native speakers of American English, with particular attention to pragmatic choices and cultural orientations. This study employed A written discourse completion task (WDCT), developed from participant-generated scenarios and validated by Filipino and American ESL teachers. Responses from 35 Filipino learners and 35 American speakers were classified according to recognized categories of apology strategies and analyzed using descriptive statistics and chi-square testing. Strategies examined included illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs), explanations or accounts, offers of repair, promises of forbearance, showing concerns, acknowledgement of responsibility, offering help, gratitude, amusement, and exclamations across varying social situations. Findings reveal that Filipino ESL learners generally produced longer, multifaceted apologies, while American participants preferred concise, direct forms. Significant differences emerged in explanations, promises of forbearance, and acknowledgement of responsibility. These disparities reflect culturally grounded pragmatic strategies. The study underscores the importance of integrating pragmatic competence, alongside linguistic proficiency, in second language education and intercultural communication.

Keywords: *Context, Communication, Competence, Culture, Politeness*

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1. Introduction

Pragmatics investigates how speakers and listeners, in acts of communication, rely on context to convey meaning beyond literal interpretation (Griffiths, 2006). Context is a comprehensive and diverse perspective encompassing social, cultural, physical, cognitive, and linguistic dimensions (Mercer, 2000; Sperber & Wilson, 1995). Thus, context encompasses all the information utilized to interpret linguistic utterances. Building on this, cross-cultural pragmatics (CCP) is a linguistic domain that underscores the need to analyze communications within their cultural context (Akbulut, 2023). It examines natural language usage from a comparative perspective of cultural influences (Gladkova, 2023) and the differences and trends in language use across speakers from other languages and cultures

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(Kecskes, 2016). In doing so, cross-cultural pragmatics enhances our comprehension of the interplay between context and culture, improving successful communication in varied cultural settings.

Established in 1980, the idea of cross-cultural pragmatics has had a significant impact on interpersonal communication (House & Kádár, 2021). Cross-cultural communication involves comprehending the subtle distinctions in speech acts across many cultural contexts (Usmani & Almashham, 2024). Speech acts are regarded as the most fundamental components of pragmatics (Mey, 1993). The context of a speech act is closely linked to the speech act itself since how the context of a speech act is conceived contributes to what the speech act is supposed to be (Sbisa, 2002). Cross-cultural comparisons of speech acts have elucidated the origins of misunderstandings (Bauler, 2019). Hence, grasping cultural subtleties in speech acts is essential for efficient cross-cultural communication, as misinterpretations may result in misunderstandings or offenses (Usmani & Almashham, 2024). Therefore, effective cross-cultural communication fundamentally relies on comprehending the subtle differences in speech acts, which are central to pragmatics and closely linked to their cultural contexts. Executing speech acts in a second language presents challenges, as individuals may erroneously assume that the rules and customs of their native language are applicable to the second language; additionally, they may lack awareness of the colloquial expressions or social conventions pertinent to the language they are learning (Usmani & Almashham, 2024). Many L2 learners frequently require assistance with employing speech acts appropriately due to limited exposure to real language use and cultural differences (Zhong et. al., 2023). Specifically, for L2 learners, mastering the speech act of apology might be difficult (Haristiani & Christinawati, 2024). Language learners instinctively depend on strategies that are effective in their native language; thus, every action they undertake in that country reflects what can be translated (Alghazo et al., 2021). Effectively performing speech acts in a second language needs not only linguistic competence but also an awareness of the social customs and cultural subtleties inherent to that language.

Although apology strategies have been widely examined across various Asian contexts (e.g., Abedi, 2016; Chen et al., 2022; Huwari, 2018; Jassim & Nimehchisalem, 2016; Jones & Adrefiza, 2017), Filipino ESL learners have received insufficient attention. Prior work has assessed their pragmatic competence (Budeng & Merza, 2023) and workplace apologies in call center interactions (Sienes & Catan, 2022), yet these investigations focused on comprehension, production, or problem resolution rather than systematic analysis of apology production. A substantial body of research has examined cross-cultural and interlanguage behavior across various cultures (Abedi, 2016; Akbulut, 2023; Alghazo et al.; Farenkia, 2014; Houk & Tatsuki, 2010; Jianda, 2006), contesting the discourse on universality versus cultural specificity, and asserting that deeply ingrained cultural evaluations significantly influence pragma-linguistic and sociopragmatic behavior in second language contexts. Importantly, the strategies of Filipino learners have not been documented in direct comparison with native English speakers. This gap underscores the need for the present study to provide empirical evidence and deepen understanding of Filipino learners' pragmatic performance in cross-cultural contexts. Filipino ESL learners may experience pragmatic transfer from their native language and cultural norms, influencing their apologies in English and perhaps diverging from the expectations of native English speakers (Abedi, 2016). Comprehending these distinctions enhances ESL education by augmenting learners' pragmatic competency, hence assuring the use of suitable apology strategies in various social contexts (Ramlah & Sartini, 2023). This research also enhances broader dialogues on intercultural communication, promoting mutual understanding and mitigating communication failures in global contexts (House & Kádár, 2021). In light of the scarcity of research on speech acts, specifically apology strategies in the Filipino context, this study endeavors to address the following research questions:

1. What types of apology strategies are employed by Filipino ESL learners?
2. What types of apology strategies are employed by American native English speakers?
3. How do Filipino ESL learners and American native English speakers vary in terms of using apology strategies?

2. Theoretical Framework

From the perspective of pragmatics theory, challenges in communication are best understood through the study of speech acts, which highlight how meaning is shaped by context, culture, and social norms.

Apology is one of the most prevalent speech acts and has been the subject of numerous studies (e.g., Chen et al., 2022; Kulsawang & Ambele, 2024). People in society must be able to apologize for unacceptable behavior (Abedi, 2016). Apologizing necessitates an action or statement aimed at setting things right (Olshtain, 1989) since it is employed when a speaker engages in conduct that harms another individual (Márquez-Reiter, 2000). People frequently apologize when they make a mistake. In the context of interpersonal communication, apologizing primarily emphasizes the responsibility of the speaker (Lubis, 1993). Consequently, the responsibility of maintaining politeness in language predominantly lies with the speaker, as they must safeguard the listener's feelings (Ramlah & Sartini, 2023). Thus, apologies are not just remedial acts, but they are also an important theoretical construct of politeness, connecting accountability with keeping social harmony. Building on this theoretical foundation, apologizing is further recognized as a fundamental communicative act essential for preserving societal relationships by acknowledging accountability and striving to repair interpersonal connections. However, producing a suitable act of apology in the target language may provide difficulty for many learners (Jassim & Nimehchisalem, 2016), as their lack of awareness of the expression of apology can result in communication breakdowns, even with proficient English speakers (Khorshidi & Nimchahi, 2013).

In this regard, Holmes (1990) argues that an apology is essentially an act of politeness, aimed at maintaining good relations among participants. Maruti (2016) emphasizes that an apology needs to incorporate linguistic politeness to be accepted as a sign of responsibility for maintaining harmony in communication. Linguistic politeness encompasses sophisticated and respectful communication that conforms to politeness norms to satisfy the interlocutor (Tubi et al., 2021). Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory offers a hierarchical framework for comprehending apologies as face-threatening acts alleviated by strategies of positive and negative politeness. This theoretical framework elucidates the analytical function of politeness in apology research, advancing from mere description to explanation.

Extending this discussion, apologies may utilize either a singular strategy or numerous strategies simultaneously (Salgado, 2011). An apology is a multifaceted speech act, and the selection of one or several strategies is contingent upon various contexts, including the severity of the error, the degree of remorse, the relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor, and the cultural norms regarding the acceptability of apologies (Haristiani & Christinawati, 2024). This contextual variability underscores the need for a coherent theoretical prioritization: politeness theory frames the act, while cultural values shape its realization. The realization of the apology speech act is often culturally specific; hence, it poses challenges for many second-language learners in mastering the tactics (Jones & Adrefiza, 2017). Inappropriate speech act realization generates a significant gap, resulting in substantial effects, such as misconceptions and unfavorable perceptions from native speakers (Haristiani & Christinawati, 2024). Therefore, a comprehensive awareness of apology traditions across cultures is crucial for efficient and polite communication.

This cultural dimension is further emphasized by the fact that culture is fundamentally represented through speech, and it plays an important societal role in building a feeling of collective identity and cohesion by serving as a vehicle for conveying beliefs, opinions, and practices (Usmani & Almashham, 2024). In line with this, research on cross-cultural pragmatics and communication problems between cultures has garnered much interest, and so far, various research studies have focused on the speech act of apologizing (Abedi, 2016). For example, speech acts such as apologies vary throughout cultures regarding directness and politeness techniques (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Kulsawang & Ambele, 2024). Certain cultures prioritize direct expressions of apologies, while others prefer more indirect or mitigated forms (House & Kádár, 2021). Additionally, apologies differ with directness, the employment of intensifiers, and the incorporation of reparative strategies, including explanations or compensation offers (Abedi, 2016). Rather than reiterating cultural specificity, these studies critically demonstrate how politeness norms and face concerns interact with apology strategies, highlighting the theoretical integration of culture and pragmatics. Cross-cultural pragmatics examines such integration, emphasizing the likelihood of misinterpretation during interactions between individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds (House & Kádár, 2021). Indeed, cross-cultural pragmatics is important in comprehending the variations of speech acts, especially apologies, across different cultures to further

understand the influence of cultural norms on communication and the possibility of misinterpretation in intercultural interactions.

Supporting this line of inquiry, research studies have sought to identify the differences in apology strategies across a variety of languages and cultures (Ramlah & Sartini, 2023). Research has aimed to discern the distinctions in apology strategies among diverse languages and civilizations (Ramlah & Sartini, 2023). Abedi (2016) examined the apology strategies employed by Iranian EFL learners in relation to those of native English speakers to discern potential differences and similarities. The collected data revealed both similarities and some statistically insignificant differences in the application of apology strategies between EFL learners and American English speakers. Ismagilova et al. (2020) investigated the motivational aspects of genuine apology and the variety of its expression across English and Tatar communicative cultures. The research demonstrated that the efficacy of apologies across various language and cultural communities is shaped by cultural attributes and the conventions governing communicative interactions. In addition, Ramlah and Sartini (2023) analyzed the methodologies of Javanese and Madurese cultures. Results indicated that Javanese chose direct techniques for younger persons and explanations for peers and elders, while Madurese preferred explanations for both younger and older individuals. Zainuddin and Yaqin (2024) explored linguistic politeness techniques in apologies among Bruneian and Indonesian university students from various universities, revealing that positive politeness strategies are the most prevalent. Collectively, these findings reinforce the theoretical claim that apology strategies are not random but systematically shaped by politeness principles and cultural values.

In light of these findings and the growing globalization of communication, understanding cross-cultural pragmatics is essential for fostering diplomatic ties, economic negotiations, and multicultural coexistence (Ramlah & Sartini, 2023). Studies indicate that human language behavior is shaped and altered by cultural beliefs, values, and attitudes (Archer et al., 2012). Moreover, speech acts often encapsulate deep cultural importance and symbolism, reflecting the values, beliefs, and socioeconomic structures unique to each community (Usmani & Almashham, 2024). The act of apologizing is crucial to examine as it constitutes a form of social interaction that necessitates consideration of sociocultural identity, the subject of discourse, situational context, and the applicable standards of politeness within a speech society (Maruti, 2016). It is imperative to conduct a comprehensive examination of the phenomenon of apology, as it is possible for any individual to make communication errors that could potentially sully the relationship between the speaker and the listener (Nabilah & Aliah, 2016). Examining apologies offers insights into overarching cultural values and norms, underscoring the significance of language in defining identity and relationships (Usmani & Almashham, 2024).

3. Methodology

This study employed written discourse completion tasks (WDCTs). They were developed from authentic, participant-generated scenarios and validated by Filipino and American ESL teachers to ensure cultural appropriateness. Responses from Filipino ESL learners and American native speakers were then coded according to established categories of apology strategies (Cohen & Olshtain, 1981; Prachanant, 2016), allowing for qualitative identification of pragmatic features. To complement this, descriptive statistics (frequency counts and percentages) were used to illustrate distributional patterns, and chi-square testing with adjusted residuals was applied to determine whether differences between groups were statistically significant. This methodological integration ensured both contextual richness through qualitative coding and rigorous generalizability through quantitative analysis, thereby addressing cultural and pragmatic subtleties while grounding findings in empirical evidence.

3.1. Participants

The study employed a three-stage sampling design to balance breadth and depth of data. In the first stage, 100 Filipino ESL learners were recruited to generate authentic apology scenarios, ensuring diversity of contexts and maximizing ecological validity in the development of WDCT items. In the second stage, 35 American English native speakers participated in the likelihood investigation questionnaire, rating the probability of scenarios occurring in their own culture. In the third stage, a balanced subsample of 35 Filipino ESL learners and 35 American English native speakers was selected

for WDCT administration. These subsample sizes were determined based on pragmatic constraints (participant availability, feasibility of data collection, and comparability across groups) and were consistent with sample sizes commonly used in pragmatics research (e.g., Budeng & Merza, 2023; Xu & Wannaruk, 2015). The participants were university students from diverse disciplines, generally aged 18–25, and had sufficient English proficiency to provide reliable data.

3.2. Instrument

The instruments were developed in accordance with Budeng and Merza (2023). The study employed three primary instruments: an open-ended questionnaire for creating speech act scenarios, a likelihood investigation questionnaire, and a WDCT. Prior to the administration of the open-ended questionnaire for generating speech act scenarios, the likelihood investigation questionnaire, and the WDCT, all participants were informed of and asked to provide consent. Participants were directed to refrain from including their names or any personal information on the questionnaires and WDCT, ensuring their participation remains anonymous.

3.2.1. The Open-Ended Questionnaire for Creating Speech Act Scenarios

The open-ended questionnaire for generating speech act scenarios (Appendix A) includes three sample situations for apologizing. The questionnaire requires participants to write their own scenarios grounded in actual experiences. This questionnaire seeks to create a context of situations in which Filipino ESL learners express apologies.

3.2.2. The Likelihood Investigation Questionnaire

The likelihood investigation questionnaire (Appendix B) requires native English-speaking respondents to assess the likelihood that situations produced by Filipino ESL learners occur within their own culture. This questionnaire aims to identify speech act scenarios typical of both Filipino ESL learners and American English native speakers in the context of apologizing.

3.2.3. The WDCT

The WDCT (Appendix C) included 15 scenarios for the speech act of apologizing. Every scenario is preceded by a description. WDCTs are written questionnaires where participants are asked to provide a response they think is appropriate in the given context (Jianda, 2006). WDCTs offer systematic and comparable data among participants; however, they are constrained in ecological validity as responses are written and hypothetical rather than naturally occurring. To address this issue, the current study established content validity by deriving WDCT scenarios from participant-generated real-life situations and corroborating them with both Filipino and American ESL educators. This triangulation with real-life scenarios makes the data more relevant to the context, but it does not completely replace naturalistic interaction. Participants were instructed to envision conversing with someone and to compose the initial, appropriate response they would give to each scenario.

3.3. Procedure

3.3.1. Data Collection

Several steps were followed, which were adapted from Xu and Wannaruk (2015) and Budeng and Merza (2023). Step 1 generated speech act situations from 100 Filipino ESL learners who were instructed to write one situation for apologizing to a person of superior status, a stranger, or a friend of equal status that they mostly encounter in real-life events. The situations were differentiated according to social power, social distance, and the extent of imposition between interlocutors (Brown & Levinson, 1987), thereby elucidating the levels of directness in apologizing used by various speaker groups (Daskalovska et al., 2016). Step 2 investigated the likelihood that American English native speakers encounter situations generated by Filipino ESL learners in their own culture. They were invited to rate the likelihood of the situations occurring in their daily lives on a scale from “1” (impossible) to “5” (most likely). Step 3 organized the situations typical of both Filipino ESL learners and American English native speakers with their original contexts. The top 5 situations for apologizing to a person of superior status, a stranger, and a friend of equal status were selected for the development of the WDCT.

Step 4 checked the content validity of the WDCT developed in the study. The WDCT was content-validated by 2 Filipino ESL teachers and 2 American teachers. Following Intaraprasert (2000), the tools were content-validated for appropriateness, familiarity, and level of detail. The goal of doing this is to get the information needed to answer the following questions: (1) Are the expressions of the items appropriate? (2) Could each situation lead to the expected speech act? (3) Are the situations common in both the US and the Philippines? (4) Are the situations familiar to the students? Step 5 involved the administration of the WDCT to 35 Filipino ESL learners and 35 American English speakers. The participant's task was to employ appropriate apology strategies for each situation. The data collected from the participants of the WDCT was compiled.

3.3.2. Data Analysis

To ensure systematic analysis, the respondents' responses were coded on a scale of 1 to 10, corresponding to the ten identified apology strategies by Cohen and Olshtain (1981) and Prachanant (2016). The strategies were illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs), explanations or accounts, offers of repair, promises of forbearance, showing concerns, acknowledgement of responsibility, offering help, gratitude, amusement, and exclamations. Each occurrence of a strategy was assigned its respective code, allowing for both frequency tabulation and comparative ranking across groups. This coding scheme provided methodological rigor by aligning qualitative discourse features with quantifiable categories, thereby enabling statistical comparison while preserving the contextual richness of the responses.

The results were presented in percentages in the form of tabulated categories to identify which strategies were mainly used. To strengthen the analysis, chi-square testing was conducted to determine whether the observed differences between Filipino ESL learners and American English native speakers were statistically significant. The data was further content analyzed to determine the features appearing in the strategies of apologies made. The results were presented and supported by interpretation. The identification, description, and discussion of the apology strategies employed in the responses of the participants were provided. The basis for the identification and description of apology strategies was based on Cohen and Olshtain (1981) and Prachanant (2016).

4. Results

This section presents the results of the study, focusing on the frequency and distribution of apology strategies used by Filipino ESL learners and American English native speakers (see Table 1).

Table 1
Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Apology Strategies Used by Filipino ESL Learners and American English Native Speakers

Apology Strategies	Filipino ESL Learners (n = 35)			American English Native Speakers (n=35)		
	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank
1. IFID	511	39.67%	1	645	44.51%	1
2. Explanation or account	362	28.11%	2	244	16.84%	2
3. Offering repair	104	8.07%	3	138	9.52%	3
4. Showing concerns	77	5.98%	5	93	6.42%	6
5. Promise of forbearance	99	7.69%	4	41	2.83%	8
6. Acknowledgement of responsibility	38	2.95%	7.5	67	4.62%	7
7. Offering help	38	2.95%	7.5	107	7.38%	4
8. Gratitude	11	0.85%	9	9	0.62%	9
9. Amusement	1	0.08%	10	0	0.00%	10
10. Exclamation	47	3.65%	6	105	7.25%	5
TOTAL	1288	100.00%		1449	100.00%	

The data reveal how Filipino ESL learners and American English native speakers, each with 35 participants, employed different apology strategies. The *IFID* was the most popular approach among

Filipino ESL learners, with 511 uses, or 39.67% of the total responses. Next came *explanation or account*, which had 362 instances, or 28.11%, and was ranked second. *Offering repair* was the third most used strategy, with 104 instances and 8.07% of the total. The *promise of forbearance* was the fourth most popular technique among Filipino learners. It had 99 responses or 7.69% of all responses. *Showing concern* came in fifth with 77 times, or 5.98%. *Exclamation* was the sixth most common approach, used 47 times or 3.65% of the time. Two strategies, *acknowledgment of responsibility* and *offering help*, came in eighth place with 38 occasions each, or 2.95%. *Gratitude* was used 11 times, which is 0.85% of the total and puts it in ninth place. *Amusement* was the least used approach, showing up only once and making up 0.08% of the data.

For American English native speakers, the most common strategy was also IFID, which occurred 645 times or 44.51% of the time. In the second place was *explanation or account*, with 244 occasions (16.84%), and in third place was *offering repair*, with 138 instances (9.52%). *Offering help* was the fourth most common strategy, used 107 times (7.38%), while *exclamation* was the fifth most common, used 105 times (7.25%). *Showing concern* appeared sixth, with 93 cases (6.42%). Seventh position went to *acknowledgement of responsibility* with 67 occasions (4.62%), and eighth place went to *promise of forbearance* with 41 instances (2.83%). *Gratitude* was used 9 times (0.62%) and came in ninth place. No one in this group utilized the strategy *amusement*, which means it happened 0 times. Overall, Filipino ESL learners used apology strategies 1,288 times, while American English native speakers used them 1,449 times.

Table 2

Comparative Significance of Apology Strategies between Filipino ESL Learners and American English Native Speakers

Apology Strategy	Filipino ESL Learners (n= 35)	American English Native Speakers (n=35)	Significance (Adj. Residuals)
1. IFID	511 (39.7%)	645 (44.5%)	**S*** ($p < .05$)
2. Explanation / Account	362 (28.1%)	244 (16.8%)	**S*** ($p < .001$)
3. Offering Repair	104 (8.1%)	138 (9.5%)	NS (not significant)
4. Showing Concerns	77 (6.0%)	93 (6.4%)	NS
5. Promise of Forbearance	99 (7.7%)	41 (2.8%)	**S*** ($p < .001$)
6. Acknowledgement of Responsibility	38 (2.9%)	67 (4.6%)	**S*** ($p < .05$)
7. Offering Help	38 (2.9%)	107 (7.4%)	**S*** ($p < .001$)
8. Gratitude	11 (0.9%)	9 (0.6%)	NS
9. Amusement	1 (0.08%)	0	NS
10. Exclamation	47 (3.6%)	105 (7.2%)	**S*** ($p < .001$)
Total	1288	1449	
χ^2	123.96		
Cramer's V	0.213		

Overall Test Results:

- Chi-Square (χ^2) = 123.96, df = 9, $p < .001$ → Highly significant differences between groups.
- Cramer's V = 0.213 → Moderate association between nationality and apology strategy choice.

Table 2 shows that Filipino ESL learners and American English native speakers used different strategies in apologizing. The *IFID* was the most common tool used by both groups. Filipinos used it 39.67% of the time, while Americans used it 44.51% of the time. Chi-square testing confirmed this difference as statistically significant ($p < .05$), indicating that American speakers consistently favor direct apology markers slightly more than Filipino learners. *Explanations or accounts* were the second most frequent strategy among Filipinos (28.11%), compared to only 16.84% among Americans. This difference was very important ($p < .001$), which means that Filipino learners are more likely to put their apologies in

context or explain why they did something. Both groups ranked *offering repair* as the third best option (8.07% vs. 9.52%), but the difference was not statistically significant, which shows that this strategy is similar in both cultures.

Filipino students used *promise of forbearance* more often (7.69%) than Americans (2.83%). This difference was very important ($p < .001$), showing that Filipinos are more likely to promise not to make the same mistakes again. On the other hand, Americans used *offering help* (7.38%) and *exclamations* (7.25%) more often than Filipinos (2.95% and 3.65%, respectively). Both of these differences were statistically significant at $p < .001$, showing that Americans prefer proactive and emotionally expressive strategies. *Acknowledgement of responsibility* was also more common among Americans (4.62%) than Filipinos (2.95%), which was a statistically significant difference ($p < .05$). There were no significant differences between groups for minor strategies like *gratitude* and *amusement*. The chi-square test ($\chi^2 = 123.96$, $df = 9$, $p < .001$) showed that there were very significant differences in strategy use. Cramer's $V = 0.213$ showed that there was a moderate link between nationality and apology strategy choice.

The results reveal clear differences in how Filipino ESL learners and American English native speakers employ apology strategies, and these differences are statistically significant. Both groups rely most heavily on *IFIDs* and direct apologies such as "*I'm sorry*," but Americans use them slightly more frequently than Filipinos. This indicates that while explicit apology markers are universally central, native speakers lean on them more consistently. Beyond this shared tendency, the groups diverge in their secondary strategies. Filipino respondents are more likely to provide *explanations or accounts* and to make a *promise of forbearance*, reflecting a tendency to justify the offense or assure future avoidance. These strategies suggest a cultural orientation toward face-saving and humility. In contrast, American respondents more often employ *offering help* and *exclamations*, which highlight a proactive, solution-oriented approach and a preference for emotional expressiveness. Americans also show higher use of *acknowledgement of responsibility*, signaling a direct acceptance of fault, whereas Filipinos rely more on contextual explanations. Minor strategies such as *gratitude* and *amusement* are rare in both groups and do not differ significantly. Overall, the chi-square test confirms that nationality is moderately associated with strategy choice (Cramer's $V = 0.213$), meaning cultural background influences how apologies are framed. In essence, Filipinos tend to mitigate and contextualize their apologies, while Americans emphasize responsibility, emotional intensity, and practical repair. This reflects broader cultural communication styles: collectivist, face-sensitive norms in the Filipino group versus individualist, direct norms in the American group.

5. Discussion

The study aimed to examine three primary objectives: to ascertain the types of apology strategies employed by Filipino ESL learners, to determine the types of apology strategies employed by American native English speakers, and to compare the strategies employed by the two groups. The results show that both groups use *IFIDs* extensively, but there are significant differences in secondary strategies such as *explanation*, *promise of forbearance*, *offering help*, and *exclamation*. These differences highlight the influence of cultural orientations, such as collectivist, face-sensitive norms in the Filipino ESL learners, contrasted with individualist, direct norms in the Americans, on apology strategies.

The results of how Filipino ESL learners and American English native speakers apologize reveal substantial cultural and practical differences in how each group handles the difficult task of apologizing. This study builds on Cohen and Olshtain's (1981) groundbreaking work on speech acts, especially apologies. It shows that while both groups mostly use the *IFID*, there are significant differences in how often they use it, how they combine it, and how they explain their strategies in different situations. These differences can be traced back to cultural norms, social expectations, and language skills.

The IFID strategy was very popular with both Filipino ESL learners and American English native speakers. This shows that everyone agrees that apologies are a way to express regret and acknowledge offense. Prachanant (2016) claimed that IFIDs serve the important purpose of protecting the speaker's face while lowering the threat to the hearer's negative face.

Filipino ESL learners used *explanation or account* as their second-most-used strategy, which was far higher than the time American participants used it. This preference fits with important Filipino cultural values like *pakikisama* or smooth interpersonal relations (Isamu, 2010), *pakikiramdam* or empathetic sensitivity to others (Mataragnon, 1987), and *hiya* or sense of shame (Lasquety-Reyes, 2016), which all encourage indirectness, careful speech, and a strong desire to keep the peace and save face. These values are internalized social expectations that pressure the speaker to explain themselves, not only to express regret but also to justify behavior in ways that prevent or mitigate social shame. This result is comparable to that of Ramlah and Sartini (2023), who examined Javanese speakers. Their participants apologized not just by saying they were sorry, but also by telling the story of how they came to recognize their faults, often with elaborate explanations to show that they knew they were wrong and that it was socially acceptable. Filipino ESL learners also gave extensive, thorough answers that put the offense in context and tried to repair their confidence by telling a detailed account, as in the following examples:

Situation 2: *Good morning, sir. I would like to apologize for being late for our scheduled appointment this morning. I didn't hear my alarm go off. I was so tired last night. I overslept. I know your time is very valuable, and I'm really sorry for wasting it. Is it okay if we reschedule? Please and thank you.*

Situation 3: *Oh no! I am so sorry, ma'am. I did not mean to step on your foot as I was focused on finding a seat. I was also rushing. I didn't see you. I really am sorry, ma'am. I will be careful next time.*

Situation 15: *Hey, friend. I am sorry for reacting and speaking that way. I let my frustration take control of me; I shouldn't have. I am sorry for hurting your feelings as I was experiencing stress and emotional overload, but that's not an excuse. I am so sorry. I hope you understand.*

Americans also use *explanation* as their second-most-common way to apologize. In this approach, the individual who committed an offense provides an explanation of their actions, which may include additional details about the circumstances or their motivations. This may seem like a way to protect oneself, but it typically has a vital social role. As Shafa et al. (2017) point out, when a perpetrator freely admits to the mistake, it not only acknowledges wrongdoing but also relieves the victim of the mental burden of assigning blame. This lowers the perceived desire for retaliation and encourages forgiveness. This behavior is similar to what occurs in cultures that value dignity, such as the US, where self-worth is seen as built in rather than based on social standing (Leung & Cohen, 2011). In these situations, apologies are less about restoring the balance of power and more about restoring respect and peace between people. According to Sugimoto (1997), Americans often use accounts, whether they are about contextual factors, misunderstandings, or unintended consequences, to explain their actions in order to fix relationships. These accounts help to show that the offense does not define their character, rebuild trust, and show that they are honest. Offering an explanation is also in line with Americans' tendency toward clear, straightforward communication when problems arise (Ting-Toomey & Tenzin, 2019). This directness not only meets cultural standards of honesty but also provides the victim with cognitive closure, an important step toward emotional healing. In this sense, American apologies use explanations to protect the offender's reputation and restore the injured parties, all in the name of repairing the relationship.

The fact that Americans employed *offering repair* and *offering help* more than the Filipino participants can be explained by the way that apologies are seen in a society that values dignity. In American English, simply "I'm sorry" is often not enough. An apology also includes an undertaking to make things right, which may involve providing practical help, money, or emotional support. This shows that people in this culture consider responsibility to mean not only acknowledging the harm but also taking action to address it (Shafa et al., 2017). People in dignity cultures believe that self-worth is inherent and not based on social standing (Leung & Cohen, 2011). In these cultures, such offers are seen as a proactive method to restore balance in a relationship and reinforce one's integrity. Helping or fixing something shows that you are sincere, responsible, and eager to put time and effort into making the relationship better.

Filipino ways of communicating, on the other hand, are shaped by collectivist beliefs and conventions that protect people's feelings. They tend to focus on keeping the peace and preventing further shame (*hiya*). Filipinos also value repairing relationships, though they may prefer less obvious ways, such as giving implicit reassurance or promising that the mistake will not be repeated. This cultural difference helps explain why Americans were more likely to use techniques that required direct action, whereas Filipinos preferred strategies that preserved their positive face.

To demonstrate that Filipinos favor resolving relationships through subtle methods, such as providing implicit comfort or pledging non-recurrence of errors, Filipino participants were notably more inclined to use a *promise of forbearance* in their responses, whereas American participants relied on this strategy far less. This further explains the cultural inclination to reassure the listener and suggest a shift in behavior. It focuses on future behavioral change, which aligns with remedial discourse aimed at rebuilding trust (Guo & Mi, 2020). In societies where *hiya* and *pag-igalang*, or respect (Nadal, 2011) are important social currencies, these kinds of promises are particularly important. Lasquety-Reyes (2016) claims that *hiya* is a deeply ingrained feeling that arises when someone believes they have broken social or moral rules. In Filipino culture, where interpersonal harmony and the preservation of social standing are essential, *paggalang* assures that the offender recognizes the dignity and worth of the other individual. When the Filipinos promise forbearance (e.g., "I will not do it again" or "I will be more careful"), they are not merely conveying remorse but also showing respect for the affected party's emotions, authority, and social standing. Promising not to do it again helps fix one's social image and takes responsibility without having to face the person directly. This is similar to what Bataineh and Bataineh (2005) found in their study on apology strategies used by Jordanian learners. The promise is both an emotional and a moral contract intended to fix the relationship.

Americans used *acknowledgment of responsibility* more often than Filipino ESL learners. This disparity shows how people from different cultures communicate differently. In cultures that value dignity, like the US, people believe that self-worth is inherent and not based on social status. This means that people can apologize when they are wrong without feeling like they are losing honor (Sugimoto, 1997). In this context, saying sorry is generally seen as taking responsibility and showing respect for the sentiments of the person who was hurt (Maddux et al., 2011). On the other hand, Filipino culture is based on interdependence and sensitivity to relationships; thus, people do not usually admit wrongdoing directly to avoid *hiya* (shame) and protect both their own and the other person's social face. This preference is more in line with indirect or softened apology tactics that keep the peace within a group, even if they lack the directness that is important in cultures that respect dignity. Thus, whereas Americans might see taking blame as a way to move on morally and make amends, which promotes forgiveness (Shafa et al., 2017), Filipinos might choose ways to soften self-blame to keep social harmony and prevent upsetting the balance of relationships.

Interestingly, *showing concern* was more popular among Filipino learners than *gratitude* or *amusement*. The fact that Filipino participants hardly ever used *amusement* could be because they are culturally serious about apologizing and avoiding humor or lightness that could be seen as disrespectful or fake. Filipino ESL learners may also not use certain expressive phrases very often, as they have limited English words for conveying amusement (e.g., "I'm a disaster" or "I'm a mess"). Many Filipino learners are proficient in formal and transactional English, but they mostly learn the language in academic and professional contexts, where idiomatic and colloquial phrases are less important (Bautista & Gonzalez, 2006). Because of this, their vocabulary might not include the casual, figurative, and often exaggerated terminology that native American speakers employ to make things more fun or to make a mistake less serious. This gap is what Thomas (1983) calls "pragmatic failure," meaning that a speaker may know how to communicate grammatically but not how to choose words that conform to the norms of the target culture. Also, the Filipino way of communicating, which values *hiya* (a sense of propriety or avoiding humiliation) and face-saving, may make it less typical, making overt self-ridicule less common in public or semi-formal settings. These cultural and linguistic elements may work together to explain why Filipino ESL learners are less likely to use fun, self-deprecating language when apologizing.

On the other hand, the American participants did not employ *amusement* either, but they did use *exclamations* to add lightness or an oblique emotional tone from time to time, which demonstrates that

they were more comfortable with expressing their feelings. Wierzbicka (2003) says that American English has a culture of emotional openness that allows, and even encourages, people to use words that show how they feel, especially when working with others to fix things. The Americans in the study may have avoided using amusement, such as lighthearted jokes or humorous self-deprecation, because, in many American English communication standards, comedy can be dangerous when making an apology. In high-stakes or face-threatening circumstances, especially when honesty and responsibility are important, *amusement* may be seen as minimizing the transgression or shifting blame (Holmes, 1995). In cultures that respect dignity, like the United States, where taking personal responsibility is important (Maddux et al., 2011; Sugimoto, 1997), it is better to be serious, explain, or offer support than risk coming off as dismissive with comedy. Additionally, research on apologies indicates that when people are in formal or unfamiliar situations, such as talking to strangers or authority figures, they tend to use more serious, accountability-focused strategies to make their apologies seem more sincere (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). Thus, the American participants' decision to omit *amusement* may stem from both the situation and their culture, which values honesty and accountability over humor when addressing offenses.

Moreover, American participants used exclamatory phrases such as "Oh my gosh!" and "Oh no!" frequently, whereas Filipino ESL learners rarely used them. Cultural standards and language habits are two reasons for this discrepancy. Filipinos are generally good at English, but exclamations like these are not very common in their native language or everyday speech. In American English, showing more emotion is seen as a sign of sincerity and commitment (Ting-Toomey & Tenzin, 2019). The Filipino participants may have also chosen not to utilize their local exclamations, such *Ay*!, *Naku po!, Diyos ko*!, or *Grabe*!, on purpose because they were in an academic study setting that only allowed English responses. This made it less likely that they would make spontaneous emotional comments. This restraint illustrates a crucial idea from cross-cultural pragmatics: apologizing is not just about word choice; it is also a culturally ingrained act in which pragmatic norms shape how emotions, responsibility, and interpersonal alignment are conveyed (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). The fact that Filipinos do not use many English exclamations in this situation shows how cultural knowledge of speech acts and discourse markers affects not only what an apology says but also how it makes the person feel.

Furthermore, the least common strategy employed by both cultures is *gratitude* as a way to end things and calm down conflicts (e.g., "Thank you for understanding"). This method does not really fit the definition of an apology, but it does serve as a conversational closure, discreetly announcing the end of the remedial sequence and thanking the person for their patience or forgiveness. In both cultures, saying thank you is a common way to defuse tension and keep relationships peaceful after a conflict, especially when the apology is accepted without saying anything. Its limited use here may suggest that participants prefer to resolve the offense more explicitly before transitioning to gratitude.

The American participants employed apology strategies more frequently overall, while the Filipino participants used them slightly less but still substantially. At first, this disparity in numbers might seem strange, especially as Filipino responses were longer on average. However, it reflects deeper cultural orientations toward directness, expression, and the pragmatics of politeness. American participants used more strategies, but they were more straightforward and to the point. This could be because American culture tends to value clear, efficient communication and individualism. Hall's (1976) theory of high-context versus. Low-context communication asserts that Americans are low-context communicators who value clarity and directness. They like to use mixtures of apology strategies. This suggests that they are straightforward and action-oriented. These tactics not only admit fault but also repair the relationship right away by offering a remedy or showing emotional concern. The samples below show that Filipino learners tended to provide longer responses, whereas American participants used a wider range of ways to apologize, even in their shorter replies.

Filipino ESL learners

Situation 9: *I'm so sorry. It was not my intention to bump my bag into you. I was rushing and I was not looking. I hadn't realized how close the space was.*

Situation 11: *I'm so sorry I could not attend your birthday. I'm currently swamped with assignments, and I need to finish them before the deadline. Right now, there are impending due dates for these numerous assignments. I was so busy during the last few weeks. I had no time for these activities.*

American Participants

Situation 9: *Oh my gosh! I'm so sorry. It's my fault. Are you hurt? How can I help you?*

Situation 11: *Oh, I'm sorry. I have no excuse. My bad. I'll treat you to lunch.*

In relation to the pragmatics of politeness, the results reveal that for Americans, politeness is closely linked to being clear, getting things done quickly, and making real repairs. This aligns with Hall's (1976) notion of low-context communication. They came up with more ways to apologize overall, but their answers were shorter and more to the point. This shows that politeness in American pragmatics often means getting to the point while still addressing multiple issues, such as admitting fault, offering repair, and showing empathy. This further indicates a focus on action and finding a solution that aims to quickly fix the relationship. On the other hand, Filipino learners seem to associate politeness with clarity, explanation, and maintaining peace among people, which is more typical of high-context communication. Even though they used fewer methods overall, their answers were longer and probably included relationship clues, indirectness, and contextual depth. These kinds of behaviors are based on cultural values like *hiya* and *paggalang*, which stress keeping the dignity of both the speaker and the listener when apologizing. In a practical sense, "more strategies" does not always mean "more politeness" in a universal sense; instead, politeness is defined by culture. Americans see diversity and efficiency as courteous, but Filipinos see relational elaboration and careful language as signs of politeness.

In addition, the fact that Americans employ more apology strategies suggests that they are not only culturally aware but also adept at using language in real life. As native speakers, Americans probably know more about the social and linguistic acceptability of different technique combinations. This makes them better equipped to switch *between IFID, offering help,* and *exclamations* as needed. Filipino learners, on the other hand, may still be limited by their L1 cultural norms, which can make them rely too much on a small number of strategies, such as IFID and *explanation*. Eliza (2019) agrees with this observation, stating that when people are trying to understand complicated speech acts in a second language, they often use familiar phrases like "I'm sorry."

Furthermore, Ugla and Abidin's (2016) results support the idea that learners tend to use clear displays of regret, especially when they think about the social position of the person they hurt. The findings from this study showed that Filipino responses commonly included repeated apologies and formal address terms like "sir" or "ma'am." This showed not only linguistic politeness but also respect rooted in cultural hierarchies.

Filipino learners may have given longer, more detailed apologetic responses to make up for language and cultural differences with native speakers. According to Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of politeness, speakers perform more complex speech acts when they perceive a greater gap in social distance or authority. Filipino students, who grew up in a culture that values *paggalang* and *pakikiramdam*, probably see apology situations as potentially hazardous to their face and consequently use more complex techniques to lessen the damage they think is happening. This is confirmed by Gastardo-Conaco (2009), who claims that *pakikiramdam* serves as a silent guidance for socially acceptable behavior, especially in situations that need emotional sensitivity.

Finally, the results for the Filipino ESL students in this study are consistent with those found in previous studies. The Filipino learners, compared with the participants in Al-Sobh (2013) and Huwari (2018), likewise choose IFID, explanation, and the *promise of forbearance* as their main strategies for expressing apology. This commonality suggests that second language learners may generally choose these methods to maintain peace with others. For Filipino ESL learners, their selections probably reflect a mix of their English language skills and the cultural and practical rules of their first language. This mixed pattern shows that, even when speaking a second language, learners tend to use cultural schemas

they already know to navigate social situations. This leads to apologies that are both linguistically correct in English and culturally suitable in Filipino communication.

The varying quantities and types of apology strategies employed by Filipino ESL learners and American native speakers demonstrate the dynamic interplay between language, culture, and communication. Hofstede's (1984) framework shows that the Philippines scores low on Individualism, indicating a collectivist culture. On the other hand, the USA scores very high on Individualism, indicating a culture that values independence and personal responsibility. This means that Filipinos value loyalty and harmony in groups, while Americans value independence and directness. Americans usually prefer direct, action-oriented, and emotionally open techniques. This is because they come from a culture that values low-context and individualism. Filipino learners, on the other hand, generally use collectivist, relationship-oriented methods that involve explaining, deferring, and being indirect. These results support the idea that cultural and pragmatic competence are two sides of the same coin within the broader field of second language acquisition research. They add to the growing body of research (for example, Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Cohen & Olshtain, 1981; Taguchi, 2011) that shows how L2 speakers often bring sociopragmatic norms from their original language with them, producing new ways of communicating. This makes two essential points for teaching ESL. First, teaching should go beyond grammar and vocabulary to include sociopragmatic awareness. This will help students learn how to adapt speech acts, such as apologies, to different cultural norms. Second, the results show how important it is to train people in intercultural communication who understand and respect the different ways that cultures handle responsibility and emotional expression. As globalization makes people from different cultures interact more, knowing the cultural logics behind speech acts is more than just an academic exercise. It is an important skill for building respect, reducing misunderstandings, and making communication more effective in multilingual and multicultural settings. Future research might examine multiple speech acts to see how cultural norms affect overall communicative competence in second-language use. This would help language teachers teach better intercultural communication skills.

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Appendices

Appendix A

The Open-Ended Questionnaire for Creating Speech Act Scenarios

Objective: The aim of this questionnaire is to generate situations where you apologize.
Instruction: Please write **one** (1) situation for each act of apologizing. **The situations you write about should be based on your real-life experiences.** Each situation should be written in one to three sentences only.

APOLOGIZING TO A PERSON OF SUPERIOR STATUS
Here are two examples: 1. I accidentally knocked over my coffee cup, and it spilled on my supervisor's printed report. 2. I made an appointment with my teacher. Unfortunately, I arrived almost half an hour late for the meeting. My teacher is already leaving. Your example:
APOLOGIZING TO A STRANGER
Here are two examples: 1. While trying to find balance on a crowded bus, I accidentally step on a fellow passenger's foot. 2. I'm standing in front of a store display entrance without realizing someone is trying to pass. Your example:
APOLOGIZING TO A FRIEND OF EQUAL STATUS
Here are two examples: 1. I borrowed my friend's book and forgot to return it for a long time. 2. I didn't attend my friend's performance when he expected my support. Your example:

Appendix B
The Likelihood Investigation Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,
The undersigned is conducting a study entitled, "***Apology Strategies in Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: A Comparison of Filipino ESL Learners and American English Native Speakers.***"
I kindly ask for your support in sincerely completing the questionnaire, with the assurance that all your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Very truly yours,

RINAROSE B. BUDENG
Researcher

Objective: The aim of this questionnaire is to identify apologizing situations typical to both **Filipino ESL learners** and **native English speakers**. The following situations for the speech acts of apologizing were generated from Filipino ESL learners.
Instruction: Please indicate how likely each situation is to occur in your culture by placing a check mark in the column that best reflects your perception.

1- Impossible
2- Possible but unlikely
3- Moderately likely
4- Fairly likely
5- Most likely

APOLOGIZING TO A PERSON OF SUPERIOR STATUS	1	2	3	4	5
1. I accidentally bumped into our college dean while walking through the hallway.					
2. I woke up late because I didn't hear my alarm and had an important appointment with my boss.					
3. I arrived late for my class because there was unexpected traffic on the way.					
4. I accidentally knocked over my coffee cup, and it spilled on my supervisor's printed report.					
5. I made an appointment with my dermatologist but completely forgot to go. As soon as I realized it, I called the clinic.					
6. While rushing into the classroom, I accidentally stepped on my teacher's foot.					
7. I unintentionally sent my adviser a message meant for our friend group chat. It was a bit embarrassing.					
8. I accidentally bumped into my instructor while rushing because I was running out of time.					
9. I accidentally knocked over my teacher's soda, and it spilled everywhere on the table.					
10. I shouted out of exhaustion while on lunch break, and my supervisor was nearby.					
11. I misbehaved in front of my teacher and immediately realized I acted inappropriately.					
12. My teacher noticed that I wasn't paying attention during class.					
13. I didn't double-check the list of papers thoroughly, and as a result, my boss scolded me for being careless.					
14. I was late for my dentist appointment, and I realize that it may have caused inconvenience.					
15. I unintentionally sent an incomplete message to my teacher, and upon reading it, I realized it sounded rude and disrespectful.					
16. I was supposed to submit a report to my manager by the end of the day, but I missed the deadline due to unforeseen circumstances.					
17. I mistakenly sent an incomplete report to my boss and only realized it after they returned it.					
18. I submitted a project report to my manager with a critical error that required significant revisions.					
19. I unintentionally interrupted my professor during the lecture.					
20. I was supposed to submit my report to my manager by noon, but I missed the deadline by an hour due to an oversight.					
21. I unintentionally shared sensitive information that should have remained private, and it caused my superior to become upset.					
APOLOGIZING TO A STRANGER	1	2	3	4	5
1. I accidentally bumped into an elderly woman whom I had overlooked walking in front of me because I was distracted by my phone.					
2. I was standing in line to buy some food, but I didn't realize that someone was already in front of me.					
3. I was in the canteen when someone was trying to buy their snack, but I didn't realize I was blocking the order station.					
4. While trying to enter a bus, I accidentally lost my balance and stepped on a fellow passenger's foot.					

5. While trying to find a vacant seat on the bus, I accidentally knocked over a stranger's coffee cup.					
6. I unintentionally grabbed the hand of a stranger, mistaking him for my friend.					
7. I made a bit of noise in the library and saw the guy next to me get distracted.					
8. I was in a crowded place and mistakenly started talking to a stranger, thinking he was my friend.					
9. I was standing at the entrance, not realizing people were trying to come in. When I noticed, I quickly moved.					
10. I was walking down the aisle of the bus and accidentally swung my shoulder bag into someone.					
11. While playing volleyball, I accidentally threw the ball and hit a stranger who was walking by.					
12. I mistakenly took someone else's shopping cart at the supermarket, thinking it was mine.					
13. I grabbed someone else's umbrella on public transport, thinking it was mine.					
14. I sneezed suddenly while walking and forgot to cover my mouth.					
15. I unknowingly sat at a restaurant table that had already been claimed by someone who had briefly stepped away, leaving their belongings as a placeholder.					
16. I parked too close or inconvenienced someone with my vehicle.					
APOLOGIZING TO A FRIEND OF EQUAL STATUS	1	2	3	4	5
1. I made plans with my friends, but unfortunately, I'm too busy studying for an upcoming exam.					
2. I borrowed money from a close friend and, unfortunately, forgot to pay it back for a long time.					
3. My friend and I had planned to go to the beach for some peace and relaxation, but unfortunately, my family had already made vacation plans for that same time.					
4. I promised my friend I would play online games with her, but unfortunately, I can no longer play with her.					
5. I failed to show up for my friend's birthday, even though she was expecting me to attend.					
6. My brother was looking forward to my attending his basketball game, but unfortunately, I couldn't make it because I was caught up in projects.					
7. I completely overlooked my friend's birthday and forgot to wish him a happy one.					
8. I cracked a ridiculous joke at my friend and completely forgot to clarify that it was just a joke.					
9. I accidentally damaged the screen of my classmate's phone.					
10. I accidentally broke my friend's makeup kit.					
11. I failed to acknowledge my friend's effort after he planned everything for my birthday.					
12. I helped myself to my friend's food without asking for her permission.					
13. I made a promise to my friend but couldn't keep it due to circumstances beyond my control.					
14. I ended up trash-talking my friend during a Mobile Legends match because of a big mistake he made.					
15. I used my sister's laptop and forgot to give it back.					

16. I had plans to meet my friend at the café, but I totally forgot and failed to inform her that I wouldn't make it.					
17. I unintentionally forgot to reply to my friend's message.					
18. I forgot to give back my classmate's book.					
19. I unintentionally revealed something my friend told me in confidence.					
20. I borrowed something from my friend and returned it damaged.					
21. I reacted harshly or angrily in a moment of stress and hurt my friend's feelings.					
22. During our conversation, I said something without thinking, and it turned out to be hurtful to my friend.					

Appendix C
The WDCT

Dear Respondent,
The undersigned is conducting a study entitled, "Apology Strategies in Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: A Comparison of Filipino ESL Learners and American English Native Speakers."
I kindly ask for your support in sincerely completing the Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT), with the assurance that all your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Very truly yours,

RINAROSE B. BUDENG
Researcher

Thank you for helping me with my research. The following task contains situations. Each situation is introduced by a description. Read along. Imagine that you are talking to someone. When you see "you say", speak to the person. Write the first thing you think of.

Write clearly.

Here are two examples:

Situation 1: You borrowed money from your friend. You can't pay it back on time. You apologize.

You say: I'm really sorry. I don't have the money to pay you back right now, but I promise I will as soon as I can.

Situation 2: You were supposed to meet your classmate to work on a group project, but you forgot and didn't show up. You apologize.

You say: I'm so sorry I forgot about our meeting. I know your time is valuable, and I really feel bad for wasting it. Can we reschedule?

Now, let's begin:

APOLOGIZING TO A PERSON OF SUPERIOR STATUS

1. While hurrying through the hallway on your way to class, you accidentally bump into your college dean. You immediately apologize.

You say:

2. You woke up late this morning because you didn't hear your alarm go off. To make matters worse, you have an important appointment scheduled with my boss. You apologize to your boss for being late.

You say:

3. In your haste to enter the classroom before the lecture began, you accidentally stepped on your teacher's foot as you hurried past the doorway. You were so focused on finding a seat quickly that you didn't notice how close you were. Startled, you quickly apologize.

You say:

4. While reaching for your notebook during class, you accidentally knocked over your teacher's soda. The can was tipped and spilled everywhere on the table, soaking some papers and causing a bit of a mess. You quickly rushed to grab some tissues and apologize.

You say:

5. You had scheduled an appointment with your doctor, but amidst a hectic day, it completely slipped your mind. It wasn't until hours later that you realized you had missed it. Feeling embarrassed and a bit guilty, you immediately call the clinic to apologize and reschedule.

You say:

APOLOGIZING TO A STRANGER

1. While walking through a busy walkway, you were momentarily distracted by a message on your phone and failed to notice an elderly woman walking just ahead of you. Before you could react, you accidentally bumped into her. You apologize for my carelessness.

You say:

2. As you approached the food counter and took your place in what you thought was the end of the line, you failed to notice that someone was already standing just ahead of you. Caught up in scanning the menu above, you didn't realize you had unintentionally cut in front. When you become aware of the mistake, you quickly step back and apologize.

3. As you boarded the crowded bus and scanned for a vacant seat, you maneuvered through the narrow aisle with your bag in hand. In the process, you accidentally knocked over a stranger's coffee cup. The cup tipped, spilling coffee onto the floor. Embarrassed, you immediately apologize.

4. As you made your way down the narrow aisle of the crowded bus, your shoulder bag unintentionally swung to the side and bumped into a seated passenger. You hadn't realized how close the space was, and the sudden jolt clearly caught the person off guard. You quickly turned around to apologize.

5. While playing volleyball at the park, you miscalculated a serve and accidentally launched the ball in the wrong direction. To your dismay, it struck a passerby who happened to be walking nearby. Startled and concerned, you immediately rushed over to apologize and check if they were alright and apologize.

APOLOGIZING TO A FRIEND OF EQUAL STATUS

1. Despite having promised to attend, you failed to show up for your friend's birthday celebration, and he had clearly been expecting you to be there. Caught up in an unexpected personal commitment, you lost track of time and missed the event entirely. When you realize what has happened, you apologize.

You say:

2. Your brother had been eagerly looking forward to your attending his basketball game and had promised that you would be there to support him. Unfortunately, you ended up overwhelmed with school projects and looming deadlines that you simply couldn't postpone. You apologize to your brother.

You say:

3. You had borrowed an item from your friend—a gesture of trust you truly appreciated, but unfortunately, when you returned it, it was already damaged. Despite your best efforts to take care of

it, something went wrong, and you felt terrible upon realizing its condition. You immediately apologized.

You say:

4. While handling your classmate's phone, something he had briefly handed to you, you accidentally dropped it, and to your dismay, the screen cracked upon hitting the floor. You quickly apologize.

You say:

5. You were experiencing stress and emotional overload when you were speaking to your friend, and you let your frustration get the better of you and reacted harsher than you should have. You unintentionally hurt your friend's feelings by speaking in a harsh and rude manner. You apologize to your friend.

You say: