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The Impact of Contextual Variables on Internal Intensification of Apology Speech Acts in Persian: Social Distance and Severity of Offense in Focus

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Abstract: The current paper primarily provides an account of how apology speech acts are internally intensified in Persian. Moreover, the study checks to what extent contextual variables, namely social distance and severity of offense, may motivate the internal intensification of apology speech acts. To these ends, the study collected the required speech acts through a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) from among Persian male native speakers. The data was analyzed based on the coding scheme developed by Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989). The results revealed that apology speech acts are intensified in Persian in most cases through universal strategies of internal intensification. Moreover, the Persian speakers are sensitive to severity of the offense, as a context-internal variable, which motivates more internal intensifications of apologies. The findings, however, revealed that social distance as a context-external variable does not prompt the use of internal intensifications differently in situations where there is social distance between interlocutors compared to situations where there is no social distance between interlocutors.

Keywords: Apology, Intensifier, Contextual Variables, Social Distance, Severity of Offense.

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