Introduction Studies concerned with cross-cultural comparative discourse (e.g., Gumperz and Tannen, 1979, Blum-Kulka, 1982, Cohen and Olshtain, 1981, Olshtain and Cohen, 1983, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984) have shown that different cultures possess different rules of appropriateness. Thus, if our goal is to make our learners truly effective communicators in a second language, they require to be aware of these rules of appropriateness in addition to mastering the phonology and grammar of that language. The emphasis in second language teaching and learning theories has shifted in recent years from a ‘grammatical’ or ‘structural’ approach to a ‘communicative’ one regarding as their ultimate goal providing the learners with knowledge about and experience in using the socio-cultural rules of the new language. This socio-cultural competence has been shown to be an important component of communicative competence. The emphasis on this kind of competence has underscored the importance of cross-cultural speech act studies. The study of speech acts can provide us with better understanding and new insights into the interdependence of linguistic forms and socio cultural context. The objective of this paper is to investigate how the performance of Arab learners of English differs from their performance in their Arabic L1 and from the way native speakers of British English and American English realise an apology speech act. In other words, the main aim of this paper is to explore the inter-language pragmatics of Arab learners of English, when they produce the speech act of apology in the target language. Therefore, the study answers the following questions: What are the realization patterns of apology speech act in Arabic. To what extent the strategies used by the Arab learners of English deviate from those of the native speakers. To what extent the strategies used by the Arab learners of English deviate from those produced by them in their first language. 2. Definition and research into apology: general Goffman (1971) views apologies as remedial interchanges serving to re-establish social harmony after a real or virtual offence or in Olshtain and Cohen terms whether the offence is real or potential (1983, p. 20). Apology is a communicative act in the production of which an apologiser has to act politely, both in the vernacular sense and in the more technical sense of paying attention to the addressee’s face wants (Brown and Levinson, 1978, Brown and Levinson, 1987). In the discussion of human interaction, the avoidance based negative politeness and solidarity based positive politeness tenets of Brown and Levinson’s theory (1987) are necessary for cross-cultural analysis or (studies of speech acts). However, the application of their framework has faced many hurdles. Researchers are not unanimous in what exactly constitutes politeness (Fraser, 1990). Blum–Kulka (1992) observes, “Systems of politeness manifest a culturally filtered interpretation of interaction (1992, p. 270), the social understanding of politeness being significantly affected by certain cultural notions.” 3. Theoretical background Apology is a speech act on which a considerable literature exists. Goffman views apology as, a remedial interchange (work) with the function of changing the meaning that otherwise might be given into an act, transforming what could be seen as offensive into what can be seen as acceptable (Goffman, 1971). Marion Owen (1983) interprets remedial interchanges including apologies and accounts as those concerned specifically with repairing damage to face, where face preservation itself becomes the object of the conversation for a time, however short. A distinction between the use of “excuse me” and “I am sorry” in apologetic behaviour was discussed by Borkin and Reinhart (1978) in their analysis. The study suggests that acquiring appropriate formulas for ritualistic apology is problematic for non-
native speakers; however, substantive apologies are a more complex learning task. Coulmas (1981) in his analysis of gratitude and indebtedness notes that the function of much apologetic behaviour is ritualistic and that it varies cross-culturally as shown in a number of western languages as opposed to Japanese. Olshtain and Cohen (1983) notes that events that require apology have been shown to vary cross-culturally. Severity of the offence and the weight of contextual variables are also subject to cross-cultural variation (House, 1988, Vollmer and Olshtain, 1989). Olshtain (1989) in a study shows that preference for strategy choice varies contextually and cross-culturally. Kasper (1992) examined how contextual factors in a variety of offence contexts are perceived by Thai and American informants. She also investigated the question of how the selection of apology strategies is determined by contextual factors. The patterns of intra-cultural and inter-cultural variability which are observable in the selection of apology strategies by Thai NNS of English as compared to NS of Thai and American English were also explored in her study.

4. Apology background in inter-language pragmatics Inter-language pragmatics has been defined as “the study of non-native speakers” use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns in a second language (L2) Kasper; Blum-Kulka (1993). A huge part of literature on inter-language pragmatics has focussed on the production processes rather than comprehension or developmental issues. Cohen and Olshtain (1985) studied the types of deviations in the production of the speech act of apology by Hebrew learners of English. They pointed out that deviation from the target language could be due to the situation or grammatical and lexical factors. The same authors in a study focusing on the act of apologizing, refer to it as a “speech act set” (Olshtain and Cohen, 1983). Their discussion related to a group of students on the production of apologies by non-native speakers who vary in both the mother tongue and the target language. For example speakers of Russian and English learning Hebrew, speakers of Spanish learning English, a speaker of Korean learning English and speakers of Chinese learning English. The possibility to identify culturally and stylistically in appropriate L2 utterances in apology situations was the finding of a study conducted by Cohen and Olshtain (1981) on a group of native Hebrew speakers who served as informants for apologies in English L2. Trosborg, (1987) investigated the communicative act of apologizing as realized in the speech of Danish learners of English compared to native speaker performance. In his paper he provided an outline of apology strategies and an analysis of native/non-native communicative behaviour in terms of these strategies.

5. Speech act of apology in second/foreign language context The above review of the studies done on the inter-language pragmatics aspects of the speech act of apology shows that a study on this particular speech act as produced by Arab learners of English may vaguely exist in the map of this area of study. The purpose of my paper is to explore the features of Arab apologies in English and how the cultural differences are reflected in their performance. The study is also supposed to provide us with a view of the performance of the act of apologizing in Arabic.

6. Subjects Three groups have served as subjects in this study. The Arab group (70 students), the American group (16) and the British group (16). The Arab group serve as both, English inter-language respondents (70 responses) and Arabic as a native language respondents (63 responses). This group is a mixture of subjects who belong to five Arab states; Yemen (38), Palestine (8), Jordan (7), Sudan (9) and Oman (8). All the subjects are students enrolled at different Indian Universities and study different programmes (graduation, and post...
graduation) and subjects (commerce, English, Computer Science, etc.). Most of them come to India with a very weak proficiency in English and, through some kind of formal learning as well as social interaction they acquire English and use it for academic and social purposes. They have different levels of proficiency in English. Since their first exposure to English, both American and British varieties of English have been side by side introduced to them formally or informally. Now, along with these two verities of English they are also exposed to Indian English. In this study two control groups have served as representatives of both British and American English. The rationale behind this is to find whether Arabs are more affected by or share aspects with British or American variety of English in their production of the speech act of apology. Anyone can simply ask why subjects from among the Indian English speakers do not serve in such a study. My answer would to refer the reader to a paper by Mehrotra (1995). “How to be polite in Indian English”, where he says “The Indian English politeness forms admit of greater individual variation and stylistic range and a lower percentage of standard, conventional and fixed forms in comparison with British or American English.”

7. Method

The Arab subjects were asked to respond, in written, to a discourse completion questionnaire consisting of three situations calling for apology speech act. These situations were specifically designed to reveal the subjects use of semantic formulae when apologising and how these formulas vary in degree of severity of offence. The advantage to using DCQ is that respondents feel free to express themselves without any kind of intervention by the researcher. It was noticed that, the subjects feel embarrassed when using role-playing technique. Collecting data based on naturally occurring situations is a very time consuming task. The subjects do not use English much in their social interaction. The three situations are common in life and could happen to the subjects and do not require them to assume different roles or personalities. They are as follows: You accidentally bump into a well-dressed elderly lady at an elegant department store, causing her to spill her packages all over the floor. You hurt her leg too. It’s clearly your fault and you want to apologise. You say: At a restaurant you change your mind after the food has already been served. You want to apologise and change the order. What would you say? You forget a book which you borrowed from your female classmate and you are supposed to return it, how would you apologise? A new technique was used to collect the native English data. Due to the difficulty in getting native speakers in the areas where I conduct my research, I resorted to chatting through the internet. The idea of my research is given to the respondents. If s/he agrees to respond, the situations are sent one by one and an instant responses are received. 8. The model

In the present study the model adopted is that of Cohen and Olshtain (1981, pp. 113–134) and Olshtain and Cohen (1983, pp. 22–23). It is also based on the CCSARP coding manual (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). This model has been chosen because it has been developed out of empirical observations. This model has also shown its universality because it has been successfully tested on several languages (Olshtain, 1989). It shows that apologisers generally use a limited number of verbal strategies. However, the variation in the choice and linguistic realisations across the Arabic and English languages as representing entirely different cultures. The model followed in this study is presented below: 1. Illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs) – An expression of regret, e.g. I’m sorry. – A request for forgiveness and accepting the apology, e.g., Please forgive me/please accept my apology. 2. Explanation or account: any external mitigating circumstances,
“objective” reasons for the violation, e.g., i. Explicit: the Traffic was terrible. ii. Implicit: traffic is always so heavy in the morning. 3. Taking on responsibility a. Explicit self-blame, e.g., It is my fault/my mistake. b. Lack of intent, e.g., I didn’t mean it. c. Expression of self-deficiency. d. I was confused/I didn’t see you/forgot. e. Expression of embarrassment, e.g., I feel awful about it. f. Self-dispraise, e.g., I’m such a dimwit! g. Justify hearer, e.g., You’re right to be angry. h. Refusal to acknowledge guilt. – Denial of responsibility, e.g., It wasn’t my fault. – Blame the hearer, e.g., it’s your own fault. – Pretend to be offended, e.g. I’m the one to be offended. 4. Concern for the hearer, e.g., I hope I didn’t upset you/Are you all right? 5. Offer of repair, e.g. I’ll pay for the damage. 6. Promise of Forbearance, e.g., It won’t happen again. These strategies have been presented in the study according to their high frequency of occurrence in the data. 9. The data analysis and results 9.1. IFIDs IFIDs (Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices) is the most central strategy for an apology in various languages. Olshtain and Cohen (1983, pp. 22–23) refer to this strategy as “an expression of apology”. This is the first formula in apology as a speech act set. It consists of a number of sub–formulas: An expression of regret, e.g., “I’m sorry”. An offer of apology, e.g., “I apologise”. 3.1.1. A request for forgiveness, e.g., “Excuse me” The Table below shows that IFID formulae are used by all the subjects in situation (I) with variation in the number and type of strategy. In my data collected from the sixteen American English speakers, the sub–formula “an expression of regret” is the only strategy used (chosen) from among the other sub–formulas. This shows that American English speakers resort to offer quite a routine–like strategy and that they prefer this sub–formula in such apology–calling situations (see Table 1). Table 1. Distribution of IFIDs across the four types of data. Sorry (%) Excuse (%) Apologise (%) Forgive (Pardon) (%) English inter-language n = 70 100 1.4 5.7 15.7 Arabic n = 63 74.6 17.4 1.5 28.5 American English n = 16 100 – – – British English n = 16 87.5 6.25 12.5 – The British English speaking subjects prefer the same sub-formula, though in one of the responses “excuse me” figures once but followed by an expression of regret with intensification “I am very sorry”. The sub formula “An offer of apology” figures in two responses. One of them is an offer of apology proper “I apologise”. In the other responses a request to accept the offer of apology is expressed this way: “please accept my apology”. The slight difference in the realisation of IFID strategies between the American English speakers and the British English speaker can help in investigating this strategy as used by Arab subjects in English. Arabs are mostly exposed to both the varieties of English. Therefore, we can draw conclusions about the variety of English by which they are most influenced when they produce an apology speech act. In both the English data collected from the Arab learners of English and the elicited responses in Arabic as L1, the remedial action starts with an IFID. However, there is variation in the distribution of each IFID across both the Arabic and English responses. So far as the most common strategy “an expression of regret” is concerned, all the Arab subjects have used it in their English performance, i.e., “100% of the subjects have used “I am sorry” with some preceded by intensified adverbials. Only in one response, the strategy “excuse me” appears, yet, preceded by an expression of regret “I am so sorry”. According to Arabs perception they consider “excuse me” as so weak for the purpose of apology, even in cases of slight offences. However, interestingly, its equivalence in Arabic: i?thurni or ma?thiratan are perceived as strong expression in apologising. A “request for forgiveness” sub–formulæ occurs in 15% of the data. It is used by 11
subjects, “forgive me” figures in 9 of them and “Pardon me” in the remaining two and most of these responses are preceded by “please”. It is very interesting to notice here that “please” is used only in the English data preceding the expression of “forgive me” and “Pardon me”. However, when the equivalent expressions are used in the Arabic data nothing like “please& or “Could you” precede or follow such expressions. Here, it can be pointed out that there is a transfer case from English. The third formula of IFID, “an offer apology” is used by four subjects, three of them use the expression “please accept my apology” and the fourth subject refers to this sub-formula indirectly by saying “I don’t know how to apologize to you”. This strategy presupposes that the apologist is so embarrassed and therefore, no appropriate expression of apology is available that can express his deep concern about the offended. American and British English speakers do not seem to use such a strategy in their apologies. So, it is a transfer from Arabic. The three subjects who used “please accept my apology” strategy seem to have been influenced by the British variety of English because it figures in one of the responses of the British native speakers of English. It can also be considered a case of positive transfer from the mother tongue: Arabic. Similar expressions are found in the Arabic data. It is highly important to note that, though the non-native speakers of English (the Arabs here) used strategies other than the expression of regret in their remedial responses, these strategies did not occur alone. They were supported by an expression of regret following them in each response they occur, unlike the British English responses in which the expression of apology sub-formula “I apologise” and “please accept my apology” were never supported by any other IFID. They occur as the only IFIDs in each response. The distribution of IFIDs in the data from the Arabic L1 shows that the four sub-formulas are used with a preference for: ana aasif (I am sorry) 74%). In 28% of the data the Arabs use: (afwan or samihni or al–afw). all carry the meaning of (forgive me) and in 17% they use. mathiratan or i?thurni (excuse me). The performatve verb (apologize) does not figure. It is considered as formal way of apologizing and commonly used in the high variety of Arabic both spoken and written. It is important to note that although the expression of regret ana aasif (I am sorry) is used by 47 of the 63 subjects, 30 of them use this sub-formula alone as an IFID. The remaining 17 don’t consider ana aasif as a sufficient expression of apology in such situation. In addition to the expression of regret, ana aasif…samihini and alma?thirah or al afw. are used to make the apology strong for the purpose. Let us now consider the intensity of apology, specifically intensity of regret. In the British English data 9 subjects out of 16 use intensified adverbials preceding the expression of regret which suggests that they consider the situation highly offensive and hence entails strong expressions of apology for face-saving purpose. In the American English corpus, only six out of 16 subjects use intensifiers. However, in one response the expression of regret is repeated. This repetition makes the apology stronger in force. It can also be pointed out that the choice of intensified adverbials by the British subjects [ever so, so, terribly (3 times)] supports my claim about the difference in weighing the severity of offence by both the groups. The Arabs in their English corpus also use intensified adverbials in 68% of the data. Therefore, Arabs in their production of an apology in English use more intensifies than any of the other two groups; American (37%) and British (56%) (see Table 2). Table 2. The use of intensified adverbials in situation 1. Intensified adverbials (%) English inter-language n = 70 68 Arabic n = 63 41 American English n = 16 37 British English n = 16 56 Let us now discuss some deviations in the
non-native Arab learners of English in respect of using intensified adverbials. In some responses, we
find the repetitive use of “very” and “so” (I am very very sorry, / I am really really sorry, / I am so so
sorry, which “is” a result of transfer from Arabic, in which repetition is a common intensification
technique. In the Arabic data the repetitive use of jiddan (very) or (so) as an intensifier is clearly noticed.
Although Arab subjects come from five Arab countries, the Sudanese subjects show some uniqueness in
their use of intensified adverbials. The first observation is that the expressions of regret used by them
are always intensified. The second observation is that, six out of the eight subjects have used adverbials
like (“really so”, “really very”, “really extremely”, “deeply” and “extremely”. On the basis of this data we
observe that expressions of regret used by Sudanese subjects are highly intensified than those
expressions used by other Arab Nationals. The variation in using intensified adverbials in Sudanese data
is attributed to their better command of English and not a result of transfer from Sudanese Arabic. In a
number of cases 37% of the IFIDs are repeated twice by Arab non-native speakers of English. In a half
of these cases, it is the “expression of regret” which is repeated. In the second half the other two sub-
formulas of IFIDs are sporadically used. This repetition of different or same IFIDs in one response is a
case of transfer from Arabic. In almost the same number of cases IFIDs are found to be repeated twice
in the Arabic data. However, there is a difference. In the Arabic data the repetition of an IFID in the same
response is represented by a different sub-formula of IFID. For example, “afwan, aasif jiddan jiddan”
(forgive me, very sorry) or aasif samihoona (sorry forgive me). Only in three cases out of 21 responses
the repetitions are represented by the same IFID (expression of regret: ana jiddan aasif, aasif). The last
important point to note here is the use of address terms after an expression of regret. In the British data,
no such expression is used. In the American data “mam” is used in five responses, that is around 31%
of the whole corpus. In exactly the same percentage (22–out–of 70) the Arab learners of English use
address terms but differently. Ten of them have used (madam to show respect, 7 have used (mam) like
the American subjects, in three cases the address term (aunt) is used which is a mere transfer from
Arabic. In one case the word (mother) is used and in the last (Ms) figures. This variation is a reflection of
what the subjects say in their L1. However the use of madam is a result of transfer from English. Let us
now move to the second situation which appears in the DC Questionnaire as follows: “At a restaurant
you change your mind after the food has already been served. You want to apologize and ask for
changing the order. You say: “__________”. This situation yields unexpected results. Although, in the
description of this situation to the subjects the need for apologizing is referred to clearly, only 38.8% of
the Arab learners of English responded with apologetic expressions. More than half the subjects
perceive the offence in this situation as a slight one and doesn’t require any IFIO. On the basis of the
data collected on this situation it is observed that a highly polite request for changing the order is
sufficient for the purpose. The observation is supported by the use of intensified adverbials in only five
responses of the 27 responses in which IFIDs are used. The American native speakers of English, on
the other hand, have used expressions of regret in 87% of the data occur with also few number of
intensifiers. In the British English data 69% of the subjects use apologetic expressions (mainly
expressions of regret) with a few number of intensifiers. In the Arabic data (L1), the same percentage of
the subjects (38%) start their responses with remedial expressions. Fewer use of intensifiers and no
repetition of IFIDs is observed (Table 3). Table 3. The use of IFIDs in situation 2. IFIDs (%) English inter-language n = 70 38 Arabic n = 63 38 American English n = 16 87 British English n = 16 69 The presentation above requires some explanations. It is found that the three groups (American, British and Arabs) assign lower degree of severity of offence to this situation than to the situation of “bumping into the lady” situation with variation. The responses by Arabs in both Arabic and English shows that, to them, the offence in this situation is slight and it is not offensive to ask for changing the order. Therefore, they are highly influenced by their L1 in producing responses to this situation. Some difference is observed between how both Americans and British deal with this situation. In the data of British English, two subjects opt out: – I could never imagine doing that unless there was something wrong with the food. – If I ordered I should have it anyway. – Speakers of English opt out in four out of the seventy responses. – I’ll feel shy to change the order. So, normally I’ll eat what I have ordered. – I’ll order extra food and pay for all. In the English used by the Arab learners they deviate from their Arabic responses in using the IFID strategy. In the Arabic data, variation in the use of IFIDs is found, (ana aasif 10 responses) (afwan 7 responses). Interestingly, when apologizing in English, the same subjects who use this variation in IFIDs use one sub–formula (the expression of regret), (sorry). They prefer to use “I am sorry” because it is the most easily accessible to learners being the most common among apology formulas in English. They don’t transfer the use of the other formulas to their apologies in English. Because the other formulas like “forgive me” or “please accept my apology” used by them in the first situation are used in offences of high degree of severity along with “the expression of apology” (I am sorry) to intensify the force of apologetic behaviour. This intensity is not needed in such a situation. The subject matter of the last situation calling for apology is “forgetting a book of a female classmate which is supposed to be returned”. The figure below shows that the three groups agree on the use of remedial action in this situation. The percentages of the subjects who apologise are: British English Natives (93%), American English Natives 93%, Arab learners of English 91% and Arab L1 responses 84% as shown in Table 4). Table 4. The frequency of occurrence of remedial actions in situation 3. English inter-language n = 70 91% Arabic n = 63 84% American English n = 16 93% British English n = 16 93% Let us now consider the distribution of the IFIDs across the data collected from the three groups with respect to this situation. British English native speakers use the “expression of regret” in 15 out of 16 responses with intensifiers in only two responses. The same thing can be said about the American English data, and only five responses are intensified. Therefore, both the groups equally perceive the degree of offence severity. One of the subjects in the American English data use the sub–formula “request for forgiveness” by saying “please forgive me”. This is the only case reported to have used another sub–formula in addition to the expression of apology. In the case of Arab learners of English, “expression of regret”, the most common in English, is used by only 78%. Again deviation occurs with respect to the distribution of IFIDs sub–formulas. In this data, “excuse me” is used in 5% of the data, “forgive me” in 11% and “offer of apology” in 7%. Intensity of regret appears in 31% of the data. The sporadic use of the four formulae is, again, a result of transfer from L1 where “I’m sorry” is used by 60%, Ma?thiratan (excuse me) by 11% (more than in their English data because its force in Arabic is more than English as perceived by Arabs), “afwan” “samihinii” 15% and only 4% use the performative verb “a?tathir”
“apologise” see Table 5 below. Table 5. The distribution of IFIDs use in both inter–language English and Arabic data in situation 3. Expression of regret (%) Excuse (%) Apologies (%) Forgive (pardon) (%)

English inter–language n = 70 78 5 11 7 Arabic n = 63 60 11 15 4 9.2. Concern for the hearer The next most likely strategy to occur after IFIDs in the sequence of apology, particularly in the situation of “bumping into a lady”, is “expression of concern for the hearer”. This strategy needs not to be mentioned with respect of the other two situations. The kind of offence in both does not require this strategy. It is a situation–specific strategy which is mostly used when the victim is physically damaged. In situation (1), this verbal strategy shows stylistic similarity but statistic differences between Arabs and British/American subjects. The Arab learners of English use the formula “Are you ok”, “Are you all right” or using concrete questions like inquiring about the degree of damage and pain in 11% of the data (Are you hurt? I hope it is not serious). Statistically, the number of responses with concern for the hearer expressions is near to the number of expressions used by the same subjects in their Arabic L1 (15%). However, stylistically there seems to be no deviations from the performance by the native English speakers. As shown in the table below, The British English speakers use this strategy in 37% and the Americans in 56%. In the other two situations this strategy does not figure in the data of the three groups as no physical damage is involved (Table 6). Table 6. The frequency of occurrence of “Expression of concern for the hearer” in situation 1. English inter–language n = 70 11% Arabic n = 63 15% American English n = 16 56% British English n = 16 37% 9.3. Taking on responsibility The offender resorts to this strategy only when he/she recognises responsibility for the offence. There are four sub–formulae in this case and they can be described as follows: Accepting the blame/self–blame. Expressing self–deficiency. Expressing lack of intent. Expression of embarrassment. Taking on responsibility strategy and one or more of its various linguistic realisations appear in the responses to the three situations by the three groups. The sub–formula “accepting the blame” in situation 1 appears in 8% of the responses of E2 respondents. The six subjects clearly admit their direct responsibility for the offence by saying “It is my fault”. This strategy appears in only one response in the Arabic L1 data. American English speakers don’t use this strategy in my data and the British English speakers refer to it indirectly in only one–response “I should have looked where I was going”. The use of “self–blame” strategy by Six Arab subjects in six of their responses in English can only be attributed to the influence of the questionnaire phrasing. This strategy “accepting the blame” is not found to be used in the situation of “changing the order” and “forgetting the book”. The only explanation for this is that “self blame” formula is used to intensify the force of apology and this intensification is not required for the last two situations. The “expression of embarrassment” strategy is used by two subjects only In the Arabs learner’s data, “really, I am very embarrassed”, “I feel shy”. This is a direct transfer from Arabic responses “wallahi ana mohrad ka eer”, “ana mohrad minnish^”. As far as American and British responses are concerned this strategy appears in only one response “I feel so bad” by an American subject. Again this strategy is situation–specific, and thus it appears in none of the responses to the other two situations, except one response of an Arab learner of English “I am embarrassed”, in situation 3. Let us now consider the strategy of “expressing self deficiency”. Statistically speaking, the Arab non–native speakers of English use this strategy in (24% of the responses), like the British English speakers (25% of the responses), and exactly twice the use of it
by the Americans (12%). In the Arabic responses, this strategy is used by 26% of the subjects. Although there is a statistic gap between the use of “expressing self deficiency” by Arab non-native speakers of English and the Americans, they are similar with respect to the content of the strategy. Both the American responses are “I didn’t see you”. In twelve out of seventeen responses, the Arab non-native speakers of English use the same word “I didn’t see you”. As for the remaining five responses, there is a range of strategy choice. Three of the four British subjects express self deficiency this way “I wasn’t watching/Looking where I was going”. The fourth response is “That was clumsy of me” (See Table 7).

Various realisations in situation 1 Table 7. Distribution of the use of “Taking on responsibility”. Accepting the blame (%) Expressing self-deficiency (%) Expression of embarrassment (%) Expressing lack of intent (%) English inter-language 8 2.8 24 24 Arabic n = 63 1.5 3 26 35 American English n = 16 – 6.25 12 – British English n = 16 6 – 25 – We face this strategy again in the situation of “forgetting a book” and all the responses refer to the deficiency of forgetting to bring in the book “I forgot your book”. The Arab non-native speakers of English resort to this strategy in 82% of the responses, British 43%, Americans 81% and Arabs in their Arabic responses in 60%. The following generic formula can be posited with respect to how Arab non-native learners use this strategy: (I forgot to bring your book). In most of the responses by British and American English speakers the following generic response appears. (I forgot your book). The use of the infinitive “to bring” never appears in the responses of both the groups. The meaning of “to bring” is already implied in the proposition “I forgot your book”. As to the non-native speakers, they tend to use more words than the native speakers in order to accomplish a similar pragmatic act (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1980). The intermediate level of proficiency in English does not provide the Arabs with variation in performing the strategy which could enable them to express the same thing in different linguistic realizations. The American subjects instead of saying “I forgot”, they also said “it slipped my mind” (12% of the responses). In Arabic responses, such range of variation does not exist.

Almost all the subjects who respond with this strategy say “naseet kitabik”, “forgot your book”. The last strategy that comes under “taking on responsibility” is “expressing lack of intent”. This strategy is typical of Arabic subjects in the present data, in their responses both Arabic and English. To rule out any kind of doubt about doing the offence intentionally, 24% of Arab learners of English use “lack of intent expressions” like “I didn’t mean it”, “I didn’t do it on purpose”, etc. In about 35% of the responses in Arabic L1 by the same subjects, expressions that show “Lack of intent” are used. For example “ma kan Qasdi”, ma kansh Qasdi”, etc. However, in both sets of responses by American and British subjects, this strategy never occurs. Therefore, that it exists in the responses of the Arabs learners of English is a result of transfer from Arabic. Arabs in their apologetic/remedial actions tend to assure the offended/victim of their goodwill, hence they use this strategy. The above analysis of the strategy “Taking on responsibility” and its various manifestations shows that the three groups are not so keen on taking on responsibility particularly with regard to the situation of “bumping into a lady”. However, this claim is more justified with respect to American and English responses than to the Arabs subjects. This claim is supported by looking into the data. Two self strategies (Suszczynska, 1999), namely “self-blamed” and “self deficiency” don’t appear in the responses of both the groups of the native speakers of English. According to Susczynska (1999), “the (dis) preferences for the self-strategies should be seen.
as motivated by deeper cultural attitudes related to public self-exposure of an individual (cf. Wierzbicka, 1985 B:168 on disapproval of public display of emotions in Anglo-Saxon culture). Admitting one’s deficiency can be quiet embarrassing, discrediting, and ultimately unnecessary in a society that values personal preserves and egalitarianism. For the same reasons, there is high expectation of consideration for others and their “personal preserves”, although within the limits of non-imposition on its privacy).

Offer of repair This semantic formula “offer of repair” is a situation-specific strategy. Repair is an attempt by the offender to compensate the incurred damage. An offer of repair is often required in cases in which a verbal apology is felt to be insufficient to restore social harmony. In my study this strategy appears frequently in the situations of “bumping into a lady” and “forgetting a book”. In the first situation both American and British English data, responses indicating offers of repair are used with high frequency (87% and 93% respectively). Both the groups offer help. These offers of help exhibit a formulaic character. (Please let me help you with your things). (Can I help you?) An offer of help in the English responses refers to picking up the packages. The E2 respondents use formulas which appear in 93% and 87% of the responses of E1 respondents in only 10%. In the remaining offers of help (11%) concrete responses are used which reflect some aspects of the Arab culture. Out of the fifteen responses, nine respondents offer taking the victim to the hospital. The responses indicate that in such situation Arabs resort to expressions which offer concrete help rather than formulaic expressions which suggest the degree of incursion into the victims territory. (I will take you to the hospital if the hurting is deep), (I will take you to the nearest hospital), (Let me help you if you need to go to the hospital). In two responses, the offer of help is more concrete: (Let me take you to the hospital to get your leg X-rayed). Such “offers” of help show that the immunity of one’s private self is much less part of the Arab culture and that the private territory of the offended person is easily invaded. Another feature that should be mentioned here is the weak frequency of offers of help in the Arabs responses 21% when compared to the E1 responses (75% and 93%). When some respondents were asked why they don’t offer to help the victim in collecting her things, they said that, at such particular situation only action is needed and not verbal apologies. The subject-matter of the offer of help, here, should be whether she minds taking her to the hospital. In the Arabic data 25% of the respondents offer help. As far as the content of the offers of help is concerned, it is very much like their responses in English. Therefore, offers of help in non-native Arab speakers of English are a direct transfer from Arabic L1 see Table 8 below. Table 8. Frequency of occurring of “Offer of repair” strategy in situations 1 and 3. English inter-language (%) Arabic (%)

American English (%) British English (%) Bumping into a lady n = 70 21 25 87 93 Forgetting a book n = 63 62 52 81 81 The “offer of repair” strategy, again, occurs in the situation of “forgetting a book” with high frequency across the three groups. Our E2 respondents use it in 62% of the data, in their Arabic responses (52%). Both Americans E1 speakers and British native speakers of English use” offers of repair” in 81% of the responses. The following interpretation of the content of “offers of repair” explain the difference in their realisations across the three groups. Mainly, three formulas are used by the respondents of the three groups, namely “declaring to bring the book”, “interrogating the offended about the possibility of returning the book at a later time”, “vague redress expression”. As far as the first formula is concerned, the three groups use it with two types of time indicators, specified and non-
specified. The following examples from the data of the English inter-language of Arabs illustrates this point. “I will bring it tomorrow”, “I will bring it next time”. “By next day I will return it”. Arab learners of English tend to be specific in terms of the time when they intend to return the book. The use of “tomorrow” in 49% of the data supports this claim. The non-specific time indicators are used in only 4% of the responses. In the data of Arabic (L1), the approximate frequency of occurrence of bukrah “tomorrow” (42%) is observed. Arabic seems to share this feature of giving specific times in promising with the British English native speakers (50%). Only in 6% of the responses by the British the indefinite time indicators are used. With respect to American data, time indicators (25%) are offered with about the same frequency as non-specific time indicators (25%). Americans prefer using “as soon as possible” rather than giving a specific time. Thus, we can notice that both Arabs and British people tend to use specific responses, whereas the American people tend to give flexible responses in such situations which could help in case of failing to abide by the commitment. The table below statistically presents this observation (Table 9).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Tomorrow (%)</th>
<th>Indefinite time indicator (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arabic n=63</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English n=70</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American n=16</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British n=16</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A few instances in the data illustrate the use of “interrogating the offended” strategy. In the E2 responses, the following two examples occur. May I get it Later? Can I return the book tomorrow? The Arab users of English share this strategy with the American subjects. Consider the following responses, May I bring it tomorrow? Do you mind if I bring it over your place? The “vague redress expressions” strategies do not occur in the responses by Arabs in both E2 and Arabic L1. It is a characteristic of the native English corpus. I will make it up to you (American). I would make it up to you (British). Is there anything I can do to make it up to you? Another feature that should be mentioned here is the variation of performative verb of “repair”. A range of verbs are used by the three groups (bring): (49% is by Arabs in their English IL), (31% by the British) and (31% by the Americans), (get) by (2% Arabs), (19% British) (31% Americans), return (4% Arabs), (12% British and 6% Americans). The verb give appears in the English IL data in 4% of the responses and does not seem to be used by native speakers of English. The distribution of the use of those performative verbs shows that the Arab subjects are not fully aware of the use of the verb get and it semantic functions. The American respondents use the verb get in 31% of the data. The British subjects use it in 19% of their responses. Due to the high influence of Arabic on the English IL, Arab respondents, resort to the verb “bring” in 49% of the total 62% of “offers of repair.” The remaining responses use the verbs “get”, “give” and “return” sporadically. 10. An explanation or account of the situation This semantic formula is resorted to by the apologise to mitigate his / her guilt. A distinction is made between an implicit and explicit explanation or account (in an explanation/account offender admits that what he has done was undesirable, he tries to lessen the blame which can be attached to him by referring to mitigating circumstances that may excuse his behaviour. Thus an explanation or an account serves as an “excuse” for committed offence (Trosborg, 1987). This strategy occurs in the data with very low frequency (31%) in the situation of “bumping into a lady” in the E2 responses and does not at all appear in their responses of the native speakers of English. Since it is clear that the offender is faulty, giving an explanation or accounts of the situation will not lessen the blame. This perception seems to be
shared by the three groups. In the second situation, “forgetting a book” is sufficient to explain. No further accounts are likely to be stronger apologetic expressions than saying (I forgot). In this situation “giving accounts” is used by only tow E2 respondents and one British subject. Both express accounts of the situation by referring to “rush” or “hurry”, [Today I left my house in a hurry (E2)], I was in a rush (British English). Giving explanations is low in frequency of occurrence in the first two situations because it is a situation-specific strategy. Some detailed explanation is needed with respect to the use of this strategy in the situation of (changing the order). Here, the apologiser needs to lessen the blame and provides justification for his behaviour. Unless the speaker gives explanations the hearer (waiter and the whole staff running the restaurant) would feel offended. So, to maintain social equilibrium with the people in the restaurant, some accounts of why the order is to be changed could be given. The Arabs E2 respondents use this strategy in 23% of the data and 23% of their Arabic responses. The American E1 respondents use it in 68% of the data and similarly in the British data it appears in 62%. The wide gap in frequency of occurrence between English native speakers and non-native speakers has to be interpreted. The differences in evaluating the degree of the severity of offence by E1 and E2 respondents seem to be the main reason behind this variation. In the Arabic culture context, changing this order even after the food is already served is not an offence of high degree of severity, hence giving accounts is not always required. In the American and Western context, it seems to be difficult to change the order after the food is served, simply because you change your mind. If you ask for changing the food, you will probably pay for both. This argument is supported by the following instances from the British/English data, (You would not do that in England and get away with it. They would make you pay for two meals.), (I could never imagine doing that unless there was something wrong with the food.) In the contrary to this, you can find responses in the Arabs E2 data which have no expression of apology at all, (Can you change this please?), (May I place another order, please?) According to the Arabs, a polite request is sufficient for the purpose (Table 10). Table 10. The frequency of occurrence of “giving explanations or accounts of the situation” in situation 2. Accounts/explanations (%) English inter-language n = 70 31 Arabic n = 63 23 American English n = 16 68 British English n = 16 62 It is very interesting to go into the details of the content of “explanation” given by the respondents. Arabs E2 respondents give three types of explanations, real, neutral and unreal. Real responses are higher in frequency; 9 out of 21 explanations are real (I changed my mind, I want to change my order). The remaining 11 responses are unreal accounts of the situation. These unreal explanations have various realisations: Claims against the food quality: (I do not like spicy food), (It is oily or spicy), I do not like this food. Claims against the waiter: (Denying the served order: I ordered- - - - -not-- - - - - -). Claims against oneself: (I ordered that by mistake), (I forgot the doctors advice.) Here we notice that there is a violation of one of Grice’s maxims, namely “Maxim of quality” and the aim seems to save the speaker’s face. The same thing is said about the Arabic data. Both real and unreal explanations are given by the two native English speakers groups. British English data – I change my mind (real), – I just had change of taste (real), – I am a vegetarian and I do not take that contains sea-food sauce (unreal), – I ordered something else. You gave me the wrong meal (unreal). American English data – I have changed my mind (real), – There has been a slight change of plan. (real), – I never ordered this - - - - - I ordered - - - - - (unreal), – I did not realise - -
and I am allergic. (unreal) It is observed that the three groups use similar strategies when dealing with this semantic formula (explanation or accounts of the situation). The three groups abide by the quality maxim in most of the responses and breach it in some of them. 11. Conclusion This paper is a contribution to a more detailed analysis of inter-language and cross-cultural pragmatics. It may also help in producing a more clear picture of differences in a apologetic responses and help understand the nature of stylistic variation across cultures. From inter-language pragmatics perspective the phenomenon of transfer has been investigated and features of it are found due to the influence of the native language as well as the little exposure to the second language. For instance, the use of more than one IFID, different address terms which are not part of the native speakers responses, the use of certain semantic formulae and avoid others, all these illustrate that transfer from Arabic as L1 does occur. The use of formulaic expressions in E2 is a result of transfer from English. From a cross-cultural point of view, some differences have been highlighted. The linguistic realisations of apologising in different situations show that, due to cultural differences the native English speakers and Arabic speakers assign different degrees of severity to the same situation. It has also been observed from the data that, in the Arab culture, admitting one’s deficiency in order to set thing right is not as embarrassing and discrediting as in the Anglo-Saxon culture. The immunity of one’s private self is much less part of the Arab culture. People are more publicly available to each other. This claim is supported by the very concrete offers of help in the situation of “bumping into a lady and hurting her”. The findings are limited to the three situations mentioned earlier in this paper. Wider variation in situations that require remedial actions need to be investigated across the Arab states. The study has some pedagogical implications. Syllabus designers and material prepares have to take these findings into account during the preparation of foreign language materials to the learners of both English and Arabic.