

Online Corporate Apology Strategies Posted on Twitter in Arabic: A Socio-Pragmatic Study

Rahaf Aldossary

Department of English, College of Science and Humanities in Al-Kharj, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University,
Al-Kharj 11942, Saudi Arabia

Mohammad Mahzari*

Department of English, College of Science and Humanities in Al-Kharj, Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University,
Al-Kharj 11942, Saudi Arabia

Abstract—This study aims to identify the types of moves and politeness strategies used in online corporate apology (OCA) in Arabic, posted on customers' complaints/negative reviews on Twitter. Additionally, the study compares Arabic with English, Japanese, and Chinese to explore cross-cultural similarities and differences in OCA. Following the growth of social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, various studies have focused on identifying the strategies utilized on social media using data from new-age computer-mediated communication. OCA strategies used by companies to restore their image, manage rapport, show accountability, and responsibility have been studied in many languages, but not Arabic. This study collected 271 responses on customer complaints/negative reviews from a company's account on Twitter and analyzed them using Morrow and Yamanouchi's (2020) model of rhetorical moves and Spencer-Oatey's (2008) rapport management framework. It revealed 12 OCA moves that were used 1045 times: opening, closing, repair, promising, explanation, expressing reassurance, apology, request, showing appreciation, denying the problem, expressing feelings, and compensation. Closing was the most frequent move, followed by opening and repair. All the previous moves were used in English, Japanese, and Chinese, except promising, expressing reassurance, showing appreciation, expressing feelings, denying problems, and compensation. The findings indicate that the company used 11 moves to enhance rapport and manage customers' face needs, sociality rights, and interactional goals. Denying the problem was the only move challenging rapport, and was used only 1%. The company seeks to preserve its image to build rapport with customers in OCA.

Index Terms—online apology, corporate apology, Arabic, rapport management, rhetorical moves

I. INTRODUCTION

Speech act theory by Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) describes apology as an expression of feelings. This can be realized by different moves and strategies. Hodeib (2020) states that apology is the most examined speech act because it holds social functions that manage harmony. Apology strategies have been extensively studied in face-to-face (FTF) communication, but with the growth of social media platforms, online apology in general and online corporate apology (OCA) in particular have gained increasing attention. These studies were conducted to examine apology strategies in Eastern and Western languages and mainly focused on OCA posted on various platforms in different contexts, such as Twitter (Lutzky, 2021; Page, 2014; Skytt, 2015; van Hooijdonk & Liebrecht, 2021), websites (Hopkinson, 2017; Morrow & Yamanouchi, 2020; Xu & Yan, 2020; Yonghong, 2020). These platforms offer an opportunity to customers to post their complaints to which companies respond; however, they may use strategies other than apology to preserve their image and reputation or manage their relationship with an overhearing audience. Accordingly, scholars have used politeness theory to analyze companies' responses to customer complaints. Spencer-Oatey's (2008) rapport management framework was designed based on this theory introduced by conversational maxims by Grice (1975), which most researchers have used for corporate apology, such as Page (2014) and Yonghong (2020). However, while there has been much research on Arabic apologies, as will be discussed widely in the literature review in general, none has focused specifically on apology strategies used by OCA in Arabic, which creates a gap in discourse analysis in general, and institutional discourse for business purposes in particular. Therefore, this study aims to identify the OCA strategies adopted by Arabic companies in response to customer complaints posted on Twitter. The data for the study were collected from an Arabic company account on Twitter for a qualitative and quantitative analysis by applying the rhetorical moves presented by the coding process of Morrow and Yamanouchi (2020) and drawing upon the rapport management framework of Spencer-Oatey (2008). The main objective of this study is to identify the types of moves used by companies, compound moves, and politeness strategies. In addition, the study compares Arabic with English,

* Corresponding Author

Japanese, and Chinese to explore cross-cultural similarities and differences in OCA moves. Japanese and English were chosen from Morrow and Yamanouchi's (2020) study, in which the current study adopted their taxonomy according to their moves. Chinese was chosen because it was compared with a previous study in terms of the types of moves conducted by Yonghong (2020). Therefore, this study answers the following research questions:

1. What types of moves and compound moves are employed by a company to address customer complaints in Arabic responses?
2. What are the similarities and differences between Arabic and English and Japanese and Chinese in terms of the types of moves?
3. What are the politeness strategies employed by the company in Arabic responses?

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The section includes three subsections. The first concerns speech act theory in general, and the speech act of apology in particular. The second is a move/genre analysis and the traditional view of politeness, while the third section concerns the rapport management framework.

A. *Speech Act Theory and the Act of Apology*

This study focuses on one of the acts of speech act theory, the apology. Speech act theory was first established by Austin (1962) under the assumption that the function of uttering a language expression is to perform an action, not just say it. Searle (1969) systematized it by connecting theory with sociology, jurisprudence, and linguistics. According to Searle et al. (1980), speech act theory is considered a pragmatic theory based on the belief that the smallest unit of human communication is a performance of acts like asking, requesting, or apologizing rather than simple sentences or expressions. Austin (1962) stated that the explicit way to apologize is to use the present indicative active with a first-person subject in English. Searle (1979) defines apology as one of the speech acts that indicates the "psychological state specified in the sincerity condition about a state of affairs specified in the propositional content" (p. 15). The theory first classified apology by Austin (1975) as behavior, and later, Searle (1979) assigned it to the expressive category, along with thanking and congratulating.

Furthermore, Searle et al. (1980) elucidated that propositional content and illocutionary forces can characterize speech acts. Moreover, the illocutionary act is the speaker's intention, similar to an apology, based on speech act theory. Jebahi (2011) reported that an apology is an expressive illocutionary act that requires remedying the face of the receiver for an offence the speaker committed, which is his/her responsibility to rebalance the relation between the victim and the apologizer. Additionally, when a speaker apologizes, he/she tends to follow a certain strategy, which is one of the most famous apology strategies presented by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984).

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) defined apologizing as a post-event act that proves that the event has already occurred, and the speaker is aware of committing a violation of social norms with the realization that he/she might cause it (p. 206). Furthermore, they presented five apology strategies: taking on responsibility, explanation or account, offer of repair, promise of forbearance, and illocutionary force indicating device. First, they analyzed assuming responsibility as when the speaker admits to their fault and attempts to appease the hearer; in this case, it might be a face-threatening act (FTA) for the speaker. Explanation, offer of repair, and promise of forbearance are considered inherently situation-dependent. To illustrate, in cases where the speaker attributes an offence to external factors, offered a repair for the compensated offence, or when the speaker promises all of them an apology and considers owning responsibility for the offence. Lastly, illocutionary force indicating device is one of the most direct realizations of an apology that includes formulaic expressions, such as regret. However, Kasper and Blum-Kulka (1993) indicated that the more sensitive a strategy is to contextual factors, the more obligation, face loss, and offence will occur, which cause an upgradation of the apology, where it can be realized by different moves and strategies.

B. *Move Analysis and Politeness Theory*

This study followed the analysis of the move process presented by Morrow and Yamanouchi (2020) and formulated by Swales (1990). Swales viewed a move as a segment in either spoken or written contexts serving a specific purpose that applies to the whole goal. Zhang and Vázquez (2014) explained that move analysis is a top-down method for examining texts typical of a certain genre. Moreover, many studies have been conducted to determine the function of apology using politeness theory, which has undergone multiple developments by well-known researchers from various languages and cultures. Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory is the most popular that influence politeness theory. This theory was based on Goffman's (1967) notion of face, which suggests that face is the primary motivator for politeness. According to Goffman (1967), the definitions of face, interaction, and relationship are the main components for understanding the concept of face. Brown and Levinson (1987) developed their theory based on Goffman's notion of faces by introducing negative and positive faces. In this theory, the face is the public image that every person or member of society claims for themselves, and the function of social relations occurs within the speaker, addressee, and face-threatening content of the FTA. According to Brown and Levinson (1987), the FTA consisted of a negative and positive face: Negative face is the freedom of action and from imposition, while positive face is "the positive consistent

self-image or personality” (p. 62). They identified three sociological factors that affect the level of politeness: the speaker’s relative power over the addressee, the social distance between them, and their ranking of impositions. Accordingly, they presented universal strategies of politeness to protect the interlocutor’s face when engaging in social interaction and to consider social variables along with maintaining others’ faces with the use of speech acts. Although the theory has certain limitations regarding its application to the non-Western context, it ignores the interaction with relational aspects and stresses the individuality of face.

Meanwhile, Leech (2014) defined politeness as “a form of communicative behavior found generally in human languages and cultures.” He highlighted eight characteristics of politeness: (1) politeness is an act that is not obligatory, and speakers only behave politely when they feel the need to, (2) polite and impolite behaviors have different levels, (3) people can sense the degree of normality based on members of society to determine politeness according to the occasion, (4) the situation decides whether politeness occurs and to what extent it does, (5) Leech divided two parties in politeness that have a distinct relation of their behaviors; A represents the audience while B is a solo person; the point here is A behavior reflects politeness and contributes a high value to B, while B will be considered the opposite and of low value, (6) politeness is a repetitive act that manifests itself, (7) it consists of exchanging value between the speaker and another party, (8) politeness has the habit of creating a balance value between A and B especially in thanking and apologizing. For instance, an apology occurs when the speaker commits an offence and needs to verbally repay his/her negative actions. Leech (2007) stated that politeness theory is not only applicable to Western cultures, but also East Asian cultures because politeness reflects varied values (qualitative and quantitative). However, Leech’s theory emphasizes the maintenance of harmonious relationships.

C. *The Rapport Management Framework*

Therefore, to overcome the limitations of Brown and Levinson (1987) and Leech (1983), this study applies the rapport management framework presented by Spencer-Oatey (2005a, 2005b, 2008). Spencer-Oatey (2005a, 2005b) developed the framework based on Goffman’s (1967) notion of face. Spencer-Oatey (2005) defined rapport as “the relative harmony and smoothness of relations between people, and rapport management refers to the management or mismanagement of relations between people” (p. 96). Spencer-Oatey (2008) stated that rapport management refers to “the use of language to promote, maintain, or threaten harmonious social relations” (p. 3). This framework is based on three main bases of rapport: face sensitivities, social rights and obligations, and interactional goals. Spencer-Oatey (2008) defined face sensitivities as the “face is closely related to a person’s sense of identity or self-concept” (p. 14). Second, in terms of social rights and obligations, Lin (2020) states that these two are based on socio-pragmatic interactional principles: equality (the belief to have the right to be treated equally) and association (the right to interact socially with others) during an interaction. The third is interactional goals, which occur when people interact and tend to achieve a specific goal. Spencer-Oatey (2008) states that goals can also be relational or transactional. The rapport management framework considers the impact of various factors on speech acts, such as the overhearing audience, culture, and discourse context. This is accomplished by considering the face needs, social rights of the participants, and their interactional goals.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

There is one section in the literature review. It discusses previous studies on OCA in computer-mediated communication (CMC).

Online corporate apology

This section presents an overview of the latest studies on OCA collected from various social media platforms and websites. Customers’ complaints tend to damage a company’s image; therefore, companies are required to consider a suitable response to uphold their image and their relationship with customers. Extensive studies have been conducted on companies’ responses and apologies to customer complaints. One of the most well-known studies on company complaints was presented by Page (2014), which analyzed corporate apologies posted on Twitter, and found that companies’ apologies shared some additional components that can be added to the illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) formulaic to help repair their images, re-establish rapport between them and customers, or save their faces. One of these components was greeting, closing, using the customer’s name as a rapport-building strategy, and acknowledging the customer’s social obligations to gain appropriate attention. Companies use previous strategies to save their image and manage their relationships with customers. Despite these strategies, Page (2014) found that it was rare for companies to assume responsibility on Twitter. Additionally, most companies use customers’ names in their apologies for rapport management purposes. Skytt (2015) believes that companies add the name of the addressee in their apologies to create a friendly relationship and reduce distance. However, Page (2014) disagreed with Skytt’s (2015) statement and claimed that excluding the customer’s personal name would make the response more genuine and sincere.

Hopkinson (2017) identified three aspects found in every apology: the face concern of the person, which is the (companies), to whom the apology is directly addressed (customers), and the presence of third parties that observe the apology (overhearing audience). Hopkinson (2017) found that culture influences apology; that is, the three aspects may be perceived differently based on the culture of language and context. Therefore, the findings of this study revealed that

the IFID of English as a lingua franca (ELF) was ambiguous in comparison to L1, which made significant use of facework proficiently, and ELF responses used face neutrality more. Spencer-Oatey's (2008) rapport management framework was largely employed by CMC studies on companies' apology. Sato (2018) stated that applying rapport management in apology can be impacted by technological characteristics, as well as situational and medium factors of computer-mediated discourse (CMD) based on the scheme presented by Herring (2007). To illustrate, the findings revealed that participants on Redditt apologized for inappropriately posting a comment. Ho (2018) stated that there were two types of rapport management, either enhancing rapport by apologizing or damaging the rapport—like denying problem.

Meanwhile, Morrow and Yamanouchi (2020) compared Japanese and American apologies to investigate claims that the Japanese apologize and accept responsibility more than Americans do. They found that despite English having a higher percentage of frequency of moves than Japanese, both languages still perceive apology and politeness to be identical. Additionally, they identified 9 moves, Japanese with a total of 523 and English with 526 frequencies in the responses. The findings indicated that the most significant moves of Japanese responses were thanks: 149 times, repairs 120 times, and apology: 114 times. "Thanks" was found to be the highest in English responses (111 times), followed by apology (105 times), and opening move (63 times). Therefore, the study found that the Japanese apologized more than Americans, but with a marginal difference. Moreover, the agents in both languages used corporate voices. In English responses, the plural forms of the first person like "we" was used and in some cases they switched to "I" that identified them as individuals. Similarly, Japanese respondents used corporative voice through collective expressions applied in self-reference, along with repetition, causative expressions, and honorific language, to accomplish management rapport purposes. Morrow and Yamanouchi (2020) state that neither Japanese nor English agents explicitly take responsibility for customer complaints, leaving them unspecified. The Japanese accepted responsibility for causing discomfort or unpleasantness rather than issues, and the English responses avoided apologizing for the issues by shifting the focus to apologizing for disappointing customers. This was to protect their face, prevent damage to their reputation, and build a rapport with customers and overhearing audience.

Additionally, Cenni and Goethals (2020) investigated corporate apologies for negative hotel reviews on TripAdvisor through the cross-linguistic dimension of three languages (English, Dutch, and Italian) to detect socio-pragmatic similarities and differences in CMC settings. The study revealed that, when dealing with criticism or denying failure, Italian corporations tended to take a defensive stance, shifting accountability on the guests. The British and Dutch adopted a rapport-saving style and requested the customers to handle the issue through private communication channels. The British and Dutch responses considered social obligations, thanked customers, apologized, and referred to corrective action. Although Italian corporations used similar moves as their British and Dutch counterparts, their main goal was to protect their image as a hotel group.

To summarize, previous studies have found that some cultures and languages affect the type of moves utilized in their apologies. However, companies currently train their employees to use business language that determines how they respond to customer complaints. Along with TripAdvisor, Twitter is one of the most popular CMC sources of valuable corporate apology data. Page's (2014) study contrasts with research on hotels. Based on Morrow and Yamanouchi's (2020) study, hotels accept responsibility for both languages (Japanese and English). Although TripAdvisor has an enormous audience with a shared target (traveling), it is not similar to Twitter, which is open internationally for anyone to reach and can damage their image. Moreover, words like "sorry" and "apologies" have a distinct communicative function, but in some cases their function might be varied, especially when companies deal with customer complaint.

Xu and Yan (2020) found that Chinese companies used apology as an opening and closing, acknowledging the responsibility of showing sincerity and sympathy to customers. To illustrate, some companies apologize regardless of the possibility that customers might not accept the apology. Similarly, Yonghong (2020) and Xu and Yan (2020) found that companies tend to use the first person plural form "we," which is another way for them to reduce the social distance and indicted to company not as someone alone. Yonghong (2020) concluded that moves such as repairs, explanations, opening, and closing are used as remedies to enhance customer rapport. Rapport management investigates how people apologize for and support rapport with the hearer. Morrow and Yamanouchi (2020) and Yonghong (2020) agreed that other moves utilized apology to manage rapport.

Tereszkiewicz (2020) conducted a study on Polish brand profiles on Twitter, following Page (2014), and found a significant change between 2015 and 2017. Apology frequency has been increasing and has been identified as a tool for enhancing a company's image to build rapport with customers. Lutzky (2021) conducted a study to identify the hidden communicative function of "sorry" used by airline companies and determine the effectiveness of discursive strategy. The author argued that "sorry" is a multifunctional form word. Based on the findings, one represented the illocutionary force of the apology and the other empathy. Therefore, it was again found that companies on Twitter tended not to take advantage of their customers' problems, even saying sorry could express a function rather than an apology. The author stated that companies intend to protect their image and reputation through the frequent use of sorry. Unfortunately, customers react negatively to the company's inconvenient customer service, which causes them to lose face. Furthermore, van Hooijdonk and Liebrecht (2021) explained that another reason why customers do not appreciate companies apologizing is that they consider it as a sign of empathy, not remorse. Consequently, the more a company

apologizes, the greater it affects its image. Van Hooijdonk and Liebrecht (2021) stated that the effectiveness of an apology relies on the type of response strategy employed by companies. In addition, they found that apologies were more acceptable when they were combined with both defensive and accommodative strategies, and did not show any difference when used alone.

Companies respond to customer complaints to repair their image, save face, protect their reputation, or for other apology strategy tactics. However, they preferred to refer to them as clients. By contrast, Cenni and Goethals (2021) analyzed business responses to positive reviews. They identified three main types: thank the reviewer for showing appreciation, and five minor ones such as acknowledging criticism to take responsibility. Hotels downgraded the positive comments that rapport management explained as the best example of modest talk. In conclusion, these studies have identified the online apology strategies implemented by various corporations in different languages, but Arabic has yet to be studied. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how OCA communicates with customers on Twitter in Arabic.

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Data

The data consist of 271 Arabic responses to customers' complaints posted by a company for cleaning services in Saudi Arabia on their official account on Twitter, regarding problems such as price, service, on-call housekeepers, scheduling, contract, offers, application, and website. The company specialized in housekeeping services, providing trained and skilled labor, and had 236,200 followers on Twitter. The names of the company, customer usernames, real names, and any other personal information were deleted for privacy purposes. Furthermore, spelling and grammatical errors in the responses were not corrected. The data were collected from tweets made between December 2021 and April 2022. This company's account was chosen because of its popularity and interaction with customer complaints to explore the moves of OCA in Arabic. The data could be accessed by anyone to observe the interactions between the company and customers. Overall, 271 responses were manually collected by copying and pasting them into an Excel file to code the texts for reliable and accurate results. The data used in this study included texts along with emojis posted on the company account. The emojis were not analyzed even though they were utilized in most corporate apologies considering that they were beyond the scope of the study.

B. Procedure

The data were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively to better understand the moves of OCA in Arabic. Quantitative analysis was based on the frequency of moves, whereas qualitative analysis discussed the nature of the texts and moves. The responses were analyzed based on the taxonomy provided by Morrow and Yamanouchi (2020) to answer the first and second questions. Morrow and Yamanouchi (2020) adopted Swales' (1981) rhetorical approach to analyze the generic structure of research articles. Swales (1990) stated that a move is a segment unit in written or spoken text that serves a specific goal and contributes to its overall fulfillment. According to Morrow and Yamanouchi (2020), the rhetorical move approach is effective in recognizing the apology and accompanying moves. Therefore, this study used five of what Morrow and Yamanouchi (2020) presented, and modified the rest to fit the data analysis process. The moves in this study were opening, apologizing, explanation, repairing, closing, requesting, expressing feelings, denying problems, reassurance, appreciation, and compensation. The analysis process involved describing the frequency, percentage, and nature of each move, along with sufficient examples translated from Arabic to English and transliteration. To answer the third question, this study applied Spencer-Oatey's (2008) rapport management framework to identify and interpret politeness strategies. We followed two steps to achieve data coding reliability. Using Morrow and Yamanouchi's (2020) taxonomy, the first researcher coded the first 100 responses, while the second revised the codes. Discrepancies, especially for new codes to suit Arabic data, were discussed and resolved in several meetings. The same procedure is applied to the remaining responses to ensure reliability.

V. ANALYSIS

In this section, we present a move analysis along with examples used in OCA strategies when responding to customer complaints. Two figures summarize the findings of the analysis: the types of moves and compound types of moves that show that the moves come together in one comment offered by customer service representatives (CSR). Finally, the table shows the moves in Arabic, English, Japanese, and Chinese to compare cross-cultural similarities and differences.

Figure 1 illustrates the types of CSR moves employed in response to customer complaints. In the data, it was found 12 moves were frequently found in a total of 1045 moves: opening, repairs, promising, explanations, expressing reassurance, apologizing, requesting, showing appreciation, denying the problem, expressing feelings, compensation, and closing.

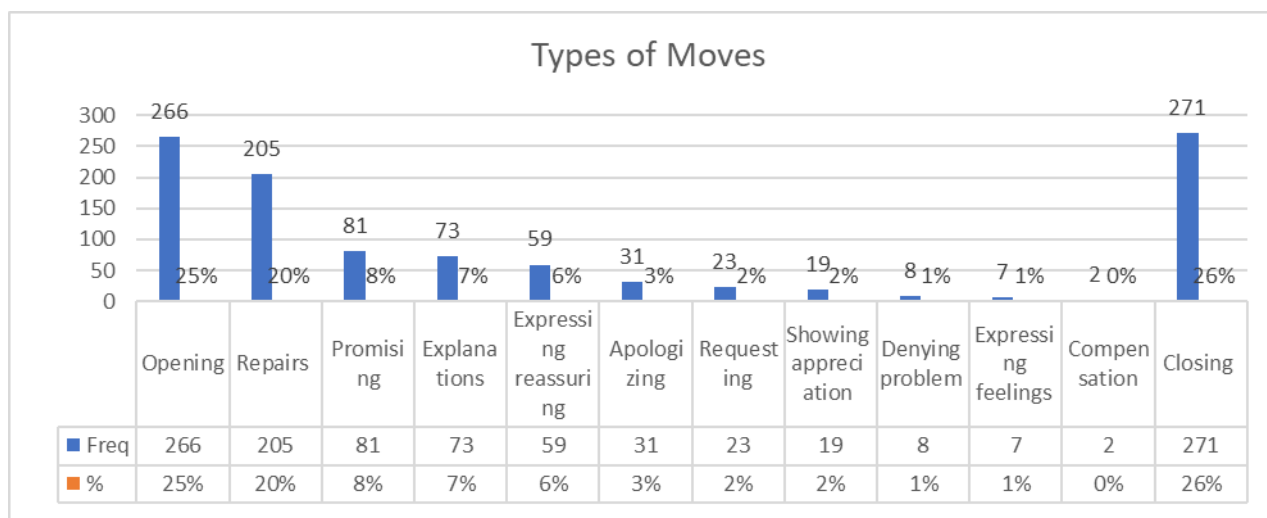


Figure 1. Types of Moves of Online Corporate Apology Strategies in Arabic

As shown in Figure 1, the most commonly used moves were opening (266 times), closing (271), and repairing (205). However, closing was the most frequent move in the data, occurring 271 times (26%), suggesting that all the responses of the company had a closing. The nature of closing expression included a positive expression that reflects feelings (e.g., *sa'idna bi tawasuluk* "we are glad to contact you"), honor (e.g., *natasharraf bi khidmatik da?iman* "we are always honored to serve you"), showing appreciation (e.g., *nuqaddir lak tawasuluk* "we appreciate your contact"), and wishing or a farewell expression (e.g. *yawmuk sa'id* "have a nice day") followed by the first name of the CSR. In every response, the company made sure to end the response with the first name of the CSR, which is a strategy to reduce the distance between the customer and CSR that represents customer service. It can also be applied to shift customer focus from the company to CSR. However, the CSR "we" in the previous expressions of closing to indicate to the company, not as someone alone to show more appreciation and respect of company to the customer. In addition, the company used various closing expressions to build a rapport with customers (see Extract 1).

Extract 1:

Customer service representative:	... طاب يومك، (اسم الموظفة)
Transliteration:	ta:ba yawmuk, (?ism al-muwaTHTHafah) ...
English translation:	Have a nice day, (the name of the employee (female: deleted)) ...

For instance, the CSR in Extract 1, used the expression *ta:ba yawmuk* "Have a nice day," followed by the first name of the CSR to end the conversation politely. The female representative used a farewell expression, followed by her first name, to reduce the distance, as mentioned above. In addition, the CSR ended the response with a positive expression to soften the apology or response to negative comments or complaints on the company's account.

The second most frequent move was opening, with a frequency of 266 (25%). Opening included formal/informal greetings like مرحبا/هلا ومسها marhaba/hala wmasshala "welcome," يسعد مساك yis'id masak "good evening" and عليكم والسلام wa 'alaykum assalam "peace be upon you," followed by the customer's first name and/or address term عزيزي 'azizi "my dear." In cases when the customer's name or his/her username is not clear, the CSR uses "my dear" and in some situations, the CSR would use it along with the customer's name, which is a business language to reduce the distance between them and the customer. The opening move was used to build a rapport by acknowledging customers' social rights (see Extract 2).

Extract 2:

Customer service representative:	... هلا والله عزيزتي ...
Transliteration:	hala wallah 'azi:zati ...
English translation:	Welcome my dear...

As demonstrated in Extract 2, the CSR responded with an informal greeting, which was one of the most used expressions in the data, followed by "my dear," employed for rapport management and politeness purposes. Using the name of the customer in the greeting move could be construed as paying more attention to him/her. Moreover, repair was the most frequent move after closing and opening. Repairs were performed 205 times (20%) in the responses. It is applied to politely request the customer to explain the problem through direct messages using the envelop icon on Twitter or to provide the CSR service with his/her personal information for further contact to solve the problem. This was done to manage their relationship with an overhearing audience by dealing with upset customers in private. In addition, it shifted the blame for being the source of the problem to the source of the solution. In addition, the company implicitly used repairs to accept responsibility for its failures. This is because repair is considered to be a face-saving strategy (see Extract 3).

Extract 3:

Customer service representative:	... زودينا ببياناتك خاص
Transliteration:	zawwidi:na bibayana:tik kha:s...
English translation:	Provide us with your personal information privately ...

In fourth place comes promising as the most frequent move, appearing 81 times (8%). The company uses its promises as a politeness strategy to regain customer trust. In the data, there were promising phrases used like in Extract 4 *?abshiri* “you got it,” which is an informal Arabic term used to reduce formality and rebuild relationship with the customer. This phrase simply means that they will seek possible solutions to satisfy customers, and it has a promising tone in Saudi culture. Moreover, promises were mostly used with repair as a rapport management strategy (See Extract 4).

Extract 4:

Customer service representative:	... ابشري
Transliteration:	?abshiri ...
English translation:	You got it ...

The fifth move employed was explanation, occurring 73 times (7%). CSR utilizes explanations when customers complain about the arrival time of the housekeeper or have a problem with the company’s application/website. Therefore, the company employs explanation to avoid apologizing, deny responsibility, or save face by shifting the focus to the customer instead of themselves. Extract 5 demonstrates how the company handled customer complaints regarding the expiration of the contract by explaining how their contract works rather than owning responsibility and apologizing.

Extract 5:

Customer service representative:	... يتم احتساب مدة العقد من تاريخ استلام العاملة...
Transliteration:	yatim ?ihtisa:b muddat al- °aqd min ta:ri:kh ?istila:m al-°a:milah ...
English translation:	The contract is counted from the time you receive the housekeeper ...

Subsequently, the sixth move was expressing reassurance, at 59 times (6%). The expression of reassurance is a new move created to suit the current data, and it is a politeness strategy used to soften the company response. It uses an informal expression, such as *wla yihimmak* “don’t worry.” This move was used when the company wanted to avoid apologizing to appear polite and protect its relationship with the customer. Moreover, a reassuring expression was used to comfort the customer and make him/her feel less anxious, while assuring that he/she will receive the best treatment (see Extract 6).

Extract 6:

Customer service representative:	... لا تشيل هم ... ولا يهملك
Transliteration:	wla yihimmak ... la: tshi:l ham ...
English translation:	Don’t worry ... don’t worry ...

Apologizing move came next with a frequency of 31 (3%). The results show that this company used the apology move less frequently than the other moves, which confirms that the OCA in Arabic did not apologize for every negative review. The company tended to apologize for specific problems mentioned by customers, such as when the housekeeper was accused of stealing something or hitting the customer’s child. Therefore, the company protected its reputation with an overhearing audience and saved its image by employing an apology strategy for examples of previous problems, followed by asking the customer to provide personal information to perform procedures in private. The company apologized directly through one phrase, that is *نعنذر* *na°tadhir* “we apologize” as shown in Extract 7 below. It used “we” to indicate the company is apologizing, not individuals.

Extract 7:

Customer service representative:	... نعتذر عن سوء اداء العاملة ...
Transliteration:	na°tadhir °an su:° a:da:° al-°a:milah ...
English translation:	We apologize for the housekeeper's poor performance...

The eighth most frequent move was requesting at a frequency of 23 (2%). The nature of requesting the data was to ask the customer to check the website, follow their accounts on social media, or check his/her private message box through the envelop icon on Twitter for further contact. Sometimes requesting was followed by an informal phrase that includes social and appreciated values in Saudi culture, which mean “if you don’t mind please” as in *la: hint* as a politeness strategy. This is because the company wanted to soften the request and appear more polite toward the customer rather than appearing rude in terms of giving orders using imperatives (see Extract 8).

Extract 8:

Customer service representative:	... شيك على الخاص لا هنت
Transliteration:	shayyik °ala al-kha:s la: hint ...
English translation:	Check the private message please ...

Showing appreciation was the ninth move, at 19 times (2%). This move represents sympathy and shows that the company understood and valued the customer’s complaint, as shown in Extract 9. Appreciation is a rapport

management strategy used to show that a company has acknowledged that there is a problem. The appreciation used “we” to indicate the company is concerned and understands the customer’s problem.

Extract 9:

Customer service representative: ... مقدرين موقفك
Transliteration: muqaddiri:n mawqifak ...
English translation: We understand what you went through ...

Denying problem was the tenth frequent move, with a frequency of eight (1%). This move was employed when the CSR tried to avoid responsibility or defend itself due to a claim given by the customer; that is, the housekeeper was not well-trained. The company used this move to protect its image, and it was considered a way to damage rapport management because of its defensive stance. Furthermore, this move was not applied much to the data because the company may have specific instructions to follow when responding to customers to build rapport rather than damage it. This move was used to deal with the customer when he/she stated that their housekeepers are not well-trained. The CSR used “all” to strongly confirm that housekeepers are well-trained as provided in Extract 10.

Extract 10:

Customer service representative: ... كل العاملات مدربات
Transliteration: kul al-[°]amila:t mudarraba:t ...
English translation: All the housekeepers are well-trained ...

Expressing feeling was the 11 move, with a frequency of 7 (1%). This positive politeness strategy is used to express positive feelings. The purpose of this move was to show the customer that the company was happy that he/she contacted them or used their services using the plural form of the first person (see Extract 11).

Extract 11:

Customer service representative: نسعد بتعاقدك معنا
Transliteration: nas[°]ad bita[°]a:qudk ma[°]ana
English translation: We are happy you have a contract with us.

Finally, the last move was compensation, used only twice, and simply involved a refund to the customer. The company compensated the customers when they were highly upset with the services. For example, when the company canceled a customer’s appointment, it stated that it was out of its control. This move was a rapport management strategy to enhance their image in front of customers, and CSR used the plural form of the first person to show the dissatisfaction of customers (see Extract 12).

Extract 12:

Customer service representative: ... وزعلك ما يرضينا ابد عشان كذا تم منحكم 100 نقطة ...
Transliteration: wa za[°]alak ma: yirdi:na abadan [°]asha:n kidh tam man^hukum 100 nuqtah...
English translation: Your dissatisfaction does not satisfy us at all, so you have been awarded 100 points...

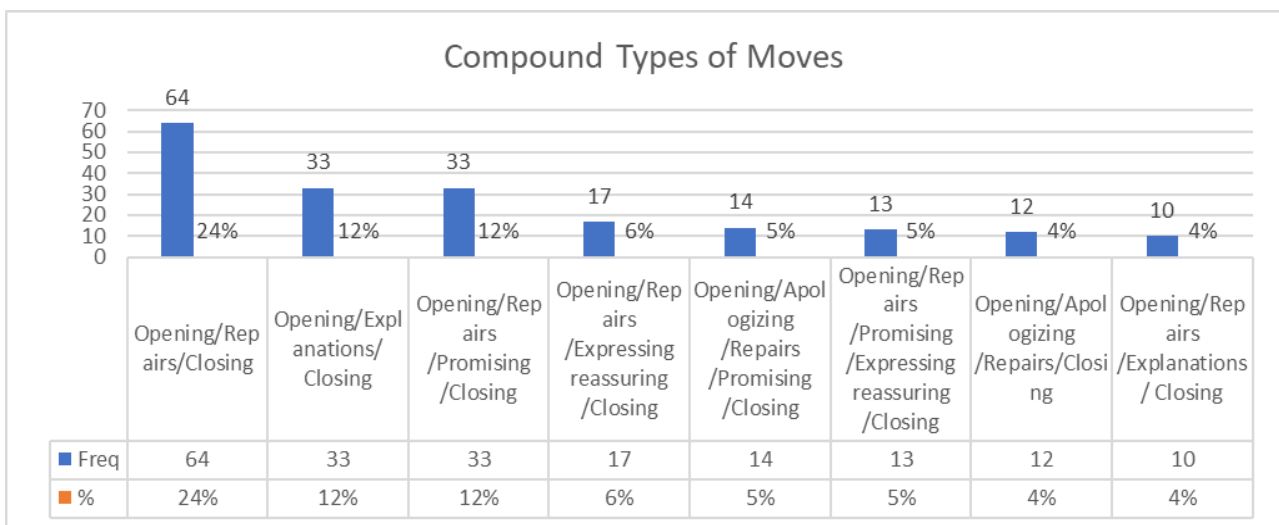


Figure 2. Compound Types of Moves of Online Corporate Apology Strategies in Arabic

As illustrated in Figure 2, 41 compound types of moves occurred 271 times in OCA strategies in response to negative reviews. However, the figure illustrates only compound moves that were used 10 or more times. First, the most frequently used compound move employed was opening/repairs/closing, with a frequency of 64 (24%). The various moves in the previous compound moves were also employed in most of the compound types mentioned in the figure, but along with other types of moves such as explanation, promising, and expressing reassurance. Then, the second

compound move was opening/explanation/closing and the third compound move was opening/repairs/promising/closing, which shared the same frequency of occurrence and percentage (33 times: 12%). Consequently, the fourth compound move was opening/repairs/expressing reassurance/closing that was used 17 times (6%). The fifth and sixth compound moves in the data had the same percentage, but their frequencies differed slightly. The fifth move was opening/apologizing/repairs/promising/closing, which occurred 14 times (5%). However, the sixth compound move opening/repairs/promising/expressing reassurance/closing occurred 13 times (5%). The seventh compound move was opening/apologizing/repairs/closing, occurring 12 times (4%). The last compound move included was opening/repairs/explanations/closing, which occurred 10 times (4%). It is clear that opening/repair/closing was employed mostly in the most common compound types of moves.

TABLE 1
TYPES OF MOVES OF ONLINE CORPORATE APOLOGY IN ARABIC, ENGLISH, JAPANESE, AND CHINESE

#	Arabic moves (current study)		English moves by Morrow and Yamanouchi (2020)		Japanese moves by Morrow and Yamanouchi (2020)		Chinese moves by Yonghong (2020)	
		Freq		Freq		Freq		Freq
1	Openings	266	Openings	63	Openings	16	Openings	58
2	Repairs	205	Thanks	111	Thanks	149	Thanks	78
3	Promising	81	Apologies	105	Apologies	114	Apologies	77
4	Explanations	73	Explanations	39	Explanations	25	Explanations	49
5	Expressing reassurance	59	Repairs	49	Repairs	120	Repairs	66
6	Apologies	31	Further contact	39	Further contact	7	Further contact	22
7	Requesting	23	Invitations	48	Invitations	56	Invitations	51
8	Showing appreciation	19	Closings	58	Closings	29	Closings	37
9	Denying problem	8	Other	14	Other	19	Other	15
10	Expressing feelings	7						
11	Compensation	2						
12	Closing	271						

Table 1 shows the results of studies adopting both the rapport management framework and rhetorical moves of online corporate apologies toward customers' complaints in English (e.g., hotels on TripAdvisor), Japanese (e.g., hotels on TripAdvisor), and Chinese (e.g., a restaurant website) and compares them with Arabic (e.g., cleaning services company on Twitter) to explore cross-cultural similarities and differences in terms of OCA. As shown above, Chinese, Japanese, and English languages exhibited the same type of moves. However, the results of the present study (Arabic) had six similar types of moves to those found in those three languages, e.g., the move of openings, apologies, explanations, repairs, further contact by requesting to provide with personal information, and closings. Thanks and invitations were not used in the Arabic data, only thanking in the closing move. In contrast, Arabic had moves that were not used in the other three languages: promising, expressing reassurance, showing appreciation, expressing feelings, denying problems, and compensation. Essentially, there are similarities and differences in the types and frequencies of moves employed in OCA cross-cultural languages. This could be attributed to the different platforms and cultures that offer OCA.

For example, the move of thanks was used mostly in all languages except Arabic, which did not use it because it utilized expressions such as showing appreciation (e.g., we appreciate your contact) and expressing feelings (e.g., happy to contact you) rather than thanking to express gratitude indirectly. This is also because the company wanted to show customers that they welcome criticism or complaints in Arabic. The apologies move was frequently employed in English and Chinese responses, followed by Japanese and Arabic. The move of repairs was utilized mostly in Japanese responses, followed by Arabic, Chinese, and English responses to build rapport and serve other functions, such as politely requesting customers for further contact. The move of opening was most frequently used in Arabic responses, followed by English, Chinese, and Japanese responses. Closing was employed mostly in Arabic responses, followed by English, Japanese, and Chinese. It is obvious that there is a high frequency of opening and closing moves in Arabic responses. The move of explanations was used most frequently in Arabic responses, followed by Japanese, Chinese, and English. Invitations were used in all languages, except Arabic, because the company services include providing housekeepers for cleaning services. Therefore, there was no need to invite customers to solve the problem. Repairs are among the most common moves in Arabic responses. The move toward further contact was used mostly in Arabic (as a request to send personal information for further contact), English, and Chinese, followed by Japanese responses. The company implemented repairs in various situations to avoid apologizing to the customer and save their image by managing customer sociality rights. Subsequently, it was proven that the main function of repairs is to save the company's face, improve services provided by the company, and prevent problems from recurring.

VI. DISCUSSION

The main goal of this study was to analyze OCA in Arabic to identify moves, politeness strategies, and cross-cultural

similarities and differences in terms of online apology. This was done to overcome the gap in the literature regarding the OCA in Arabic. The data presented 12 moves with 271 responses, with closing and opening being the most frequent. The closing move was employed in all 271 responses by the company with various expressions such as farewell, expressing positive feelings, and appreciation. These expressions are primarily used for rapport management purposes. It was also found that the CSR of the company used the first personal name as a signature closing with the customer to track CSR issues and reduce any type of distance between them. In addition, the company did not rely on a limited number of closing and opening expressions but instead used multiple expressions to indicate politeness.

Similarly, the company used the customer's real name or username and greeted him/her, such as good morning or welcome, before he/she began in the other moves, to show that using the customer's name in the opening helps reduce distance and acknowledge the customer's obligations rights. However, in some cases, the name of the customer is not clear, so the CSR used formal endearing nicknames like "my dear customer." Additionally, the current results agree with Skytt (2015) in terms of using the addressee's name to help build a friendly relationship and make customers feel like they are contacting the company directly. However, the results disagree with those of Page (2014) because the researcher believes that when a company does not use the customer's name, it can increase the percentage of genuine and sincere responses. Explanation moves are used to interpret problems related to housekeeper scheduling policies, misunderstanding offers, discounts, or booking an appointment. However, explanations are used in cases that either avoid responsibility or shift blame to prevent face damage. This is similar to the findings of Page (2014), who stated that explanations are used to implicitly deny responsibility for an offence. To illustrate, multiple customers had a problem and did not find an available date to reserve; therefore, the company explained to them to either refresh the page or choose another day. In this case, explanation protects the company's face but damages the interactional goal of customers by admitting the problem or apologizing.

Meanwhile, promising is mostly utilized with repairs to fulfill customers' face needs. Moreover, the company promised the customer that he/she would be satisfied with solving the problem and asked him/her to handle the situation in a private direct message to protect their reputation. Furthermore, an apology is likely to be used alongside other moves to enhance rapport-like repair or promising. The company apologizes using one direct expression, and the apology serves different functions in the data. The first function was acknowledging the problem and restating the offence of the customer's complaint like "we apologize for the housekeeper's poor performance." The company intends this expression to enhance rapport and manage customers' interactional goals. Not only these functions, but this also showed that the company cared about the customer's face by using a negative politeness apology expression. The Arabic company made sure to apologize explicitly when the customer complained about a sick housekeeper for coronavirus precautions purposes. Regardless, when a company explicitly assumes responsibility, it eventually damages its image. Therefore, the company apologizes for causing dissatisfaction rather than a bad service that will manage the sociality rights of the customer and save the company's face. This is similar to what Yonghong (2020) stated: apologizing for discomforting or causing disappointment shows that the company respects customers' social rights, while Ho (2020) identified apologizing based on hotel responses as a move that serves the interactional goal. Although the current study demonstrates a higher number of moves than Yonghong (2020), they both agree on the assumption that Arabic and Chinese companies are concerned about restoring rapport with customers by managing their association rights.

Another finding is that the company used a plural pronoun to provide a corporate voice in all responses. This is similar to what Morrow and Yamanouchi (2020) found in both Japanese and English responses. In contrast, the company used the singular form of the second person pronoun "you" when addressing the customer. The move to express reassurance is one of the moves added to describe certain rhetorical moves not reflected in Morrow and Yamanouchi's (2020) types of moves. This serves politeness purposes and restores customer confidence by managing their face needs. Similarly, the company used the move of expressing feelings as a closing expression as in "happy to assist you," to apply politeness and enhancing rapport through managing customer association rights. Furthermore, requesting was largely accompanied by repairs, such as asking the customer to check their website or their private message on Twitter, followed by an informal expression from the dialect, to mean please.

Conversely, showing appreciation indicates that the company understands and values customer complaints. Cenni and Goethals (2021) found that appreciation is achieved by thanking the customer for writing a review. However, the current study differs from Cenni and Goethals's (2021) in that their study is based on positive comments, whereas this study is based on negative comments, or complaints. Finally, a compensation move is employed twice for the data. It is used to refund customers when there is a cancellation from the company, not the customer, or when they are highly unsatisfied. Compensation helps a company maintain its relationship with customers by managing its association (sociality rights).

The following moves—opening, closing, repair, explanations, promising, apologizing, requesting, expressing feelings, expressing reassurance, showing appreciation, and compensation—helped the company enhance rapport by managing customer face needs, social rights, and interactional goals. In addition to the enhancing rapport moves, the company can also use denying problem, which is a challenging rapport move and a defensive stance to state that their housekeepers are well-trained. In addition, Ho (2018) discovered that denying means the company indicates that the

complaint is not fair or invalid for the company's service. The challenge of rapport represented by one move was to avoid any conflict or damage to the company's reputation due to an overhearing audience, while enhancing rapport used to support the relationship between customers and save the company's image. In addition, the company used an expression from the Saudi dialect, which is informal, in their responses to reduce formality like "you got it" that has a promising sound, to reduce social distance, and build rapport. Similarly, another expression from the dialect was used, which meant please and follow request, as a politeness strategy.

To compare the results of the OCA in Arabic with those used in FTF communication in Arabic, most of the moves or strategies are used in FTF interaction, except opening, expressing reassurance, requesting, showing appreciation, expressing feelings, and closing, due to the context. Regarding cross-cultural comparisons, there are similarities and differences in the use of moves that can be a result of culture or the type of service offered by the company, which could influence the construction of an OCA. Finally, all moves, except denying the problem, are attributed to managing rapport, protecting the company and customer face, and enhancing rapport to manage sociality rights.

The company also used various emojis beyond the goals of the study for different pragmatic functions. For instance, the use of a smiley face with three hearts 😊 to show politeness or soften the response, the folded hands 🙏 to intensify the meaning of preceded expression like thanks in the closing move, the use of envelop with arrow emoji 📧 or 📩 both indicate sending private message on Twitter, a flower was used for decoration, and the use of red heart emoji ❤️ to show appreciation.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to identify the moves of OCA and politeness strategies employed by Arabic companies toward customer complaints on Twitter. Morrow and Yamanouchi's (2020) rhetorical moves were used to answer the first and second questions. To answer the third question, this study draws on Spencer-Oatey's (2008) rapport management framework. The findings revealed 12 moves in the analysis of 271 responses from the company, and 41 compound moves 271 times, but only included those with 10 frequencies and moves in the results. Based on the results, the most frequent moves of Arabic companies are used to enhance rapport, such as closing, opening, and repairs. Compound moves were the most frequent (64 times). The company avoided the challenge rapport moves like denying problem; therefore, it was used only eight times (1%). Moreover, the study discovered that the OCA served two functions in Arabic: to apologize for the offence to manage the customer's interactional goal or avoid responsibility and apologize for dissatisfaction in managing customers' sociality rights. It was also found that Arabic responses included the CSR's personal name, endearing names, and customers' names to support rapport and build relationships with the customer. The company also used politeness strategies, such as opening, expressing reassurance, showing appreciation, and closing. In addition, the company used a plural pronoun to present a corporate voice. Another significant result is that the company used various emojis to soften the use of rapport expressions and implemented expressions from the Saudi dialect to reduce social distance and formality. Additionally, the company's politeness strategies are aimed at managing the three bases of the rapport management framework. That is, customers' face needs are managed by promising and showing appreciation, while sociality rights are managed by expressing reassurance, repairs, opening, closing, and compensation. However, the interactional goals were managed by apologies when the company acknowledged the offence. In conclusion, Arabic OCA adopted enhancing rapport moves and politeness strategies to safeguard their image, protect their relationship with customers, and overhearing audience.

The implication of the study relies on providing an insight into how Arabic OCA manages customer complaints/negative reviews, which will contribute to the field of discourse of online consumer reviews in general and negative reviews/complaints in particular. Furthermore, this study contributes to increasing companies' awareness of customers' demands and how to address their complaints/negative reviews. The findings cannot be generalized because this study reflects only the OCA of a company on Twitter. Therefore, the study recommends that future work explore OCA in different contexts and platforms, such as TripAdvisor, Booking, and Google reviews, along with an analysis of the functions of emojis to better understand OCA strategies, not only in Saudi Arabia, but also in other Arabic countries, considering the influence of dialect in OCA. In addition, future studies should investigate private messages between the customer and the company/CSR to explore the structure of moves and analyze the responses of customers to the OCA to understand the meaning and interpretation from the perspective of customers, not only researchers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was supported by funding from Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University, project number (PSAU/2023/R/1444).

REFERENCES

- [1] Alhojailan, A. I. (2019). The effects of monolingualism on the apology strategies of Saudi Arabic speakers. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 6(6), 1–15.

- [2] Austin, J. L. (1962). *How to Do Things with Words*. Harvard University Press. doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198245537.001.0001.
- [3] Blum-Kulka, S., & Olshtain, E. (1984). Requests and apologies: A cross-cultural study of speech act realization patterns (CCSARP). *Applied Linguistics*, 5(3), 196–213.
- [4] Brown, P., & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge University Press.
- [5] Cenni, I., & Goethals, P. (2020). Responding to negative hotel reviews: A cross-linguistic perspective on online rapport-management. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 37, 100430. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2020.100430>.
- [6] Cenni, I., & Goethals, P. (2021). Business responses to positive reviews online: Face-work on TripAdvisor. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 180, 38–50. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2021.04.008>.
- [7] Grice, H. P. (1975). Logic and conversation. In *Speech acts* (pp. 41–58). Brill.
- [8] Goffman, E. (1967). *Interaction ritual: Essays on face-to-face interaction*. Doubleday
- [9] Ho, V. (2018). Exploring the effectiveness of hotel management’s responses to negative online comments. *Lingua*, 216, 47–63. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lingua.2018.10.004>.
- [10] Ho, V. (2020). Do hotels enhance and challenge rapport with customers with the same degree of commitment? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 166, 70–83. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2020.06.002>.
- [11] Hodeib, C. (2020). On the discursive expression of politeness in Syrian Arabic: The case of apologies. *Alkalmazott Nyelvtudomány*, 20(2), 1–34. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.18460/ANY.2020.2.003.
- [12] Hopkinson, C. (2017). Apologies in L1 and lingua franca English: A contrastive pragmatic study of TripAdvisor responses. *Discourse and Interaction*, 10(1), 49–70. DOI: 10.5817/DI2017-1-49.
- [13] Herring, S. C. (2007). A faceted classification scheme for computer-mediated discourse. *Language@ internet*, 4(1), 1–37.
- [14] Jebahi, K. (2011). Tunisian university students’ choice of apology strategies in a discourse completion task. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(2), 648–662. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2010.09.008>.
- [15] Kasper, G., & Blum-Kulka, S. (1993). *Interlanguage Pragmatics*. Oxford University Press.
- [16] Leech, G. N. (1983). *Principles of Pragmatics*. Longman Group Ltd.
- [17] Leech, G. N. (2014). *The Pragmatics of Politeness*. Oxford University Press.
- [18] Leech, G. (2007). Politeness: Is there an East-West divide? *Journal of Politeness Research*, 3(2), 167–206 <https://doi.org/10.1515/PR.2007.009>.
- [19] Lutzky, U. (2021). “You keep saying you are sorry.” Exploring the use of sorry in customer communication on Twitter. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 39, 100463. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2020.100463>.
- [20] Lin, C. Y. (2020). Exploring judges’ compliments and criticisms on American, British, and Taiwanese talent shows. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 160, 44–59. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2020.02.008>.
- [21] Morrow, P. R., & Yamanouchi, K. (2020). Online apologies to hotel guests in English and Japanese. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 34, 100379. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2020.100379>.
- [22] Page, R. (2014). Saying ‘sorry’: Corporate apologies posted on Twitter. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 62, 30–45. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2013.12.003>.
- [23] Sato, A. (2018). Apology in/r/language learning: Applying computed-mediated discourse analysis to the investigation of rapport management online. *Otarushōkadoigaku jinbun kenkyū* [Humanities Research at Otaru University of Commerce], 136, 119–139.
- [24] Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language*. Cambridge University Press.
- [25] Searle, J. R. (1979). *Expression and meaning: Studies in the theory of speech acts*. Cambridge University Press.
- [26] Searle, J. R., Kiefer, F., & Bierwisch, M. (1980). *Speech Act Theory and Pragmatics*. D. Reidel Publishing Company.
- [27] Skytt, F. (2015). *Sorry seems to be the hardest word: A case study of corporate apologies on Twitter*. Retrieved Apr 15, 2022 from <https://www.diva.portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A820064&dswid=-228>.
- [28] Spencer-Oatey, H. (2005a). (Im) Politeness, face and perceptions of rapport: Unpackaging their bases and interrelationships. *Journal of Politeness Research*, 1(1), 95–119. <https://doi.org/10.1515/jplr.2005.1.1.95>.
- [29] Spencer-Oatey, H. (2005b). Rapport management theory and culture. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 2(3), 335–346. <https://doi.org/10.1515/iprg.2005.2.3.335>.
- [30] Spencer-Oatey, H. (2008). *Culturally Speaking Second Edition: Culture, Communication and Politeness Theory*. Continuum International Publishing Group.
- [31] Swales, J. (1990). *Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings*. Cambridge University Press.
- [32] Tereszkievicz, A. (2020). Complaint management on Twitter—evolution of interactional patterns on Polish corporate profiles. *Pragmatics*, 30(3), 405–430. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1075/prag.17040.ter>.
- [33] Van Hooijdonk, C., & Liebrecht, C. (2021). Sorry but no sorry: The use and effects of apologies in airline webcare responses to NeWOM messages of flight passengers. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 40, 100442. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2020.100442>.
- [34] Xu, Z., & Yan, A. (2020). A pragmatic study of image restoration via corporate apology in Chinese internet corporations. *English Language Teaching*, 13(6), 76–88.
- [35] Yonghong, Q. (2020). Apologies in Chinese restaurants’ responses to negative online reviews and rapport management—A Cross-cultural Perspective. *Sinología y Hispánica. China Studies Review*, 10(1), 119–142. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18002/sin.v10i1.6318>.
- [36] Zhang, Y., & Vázquez, C. (2014). Hotels’ responses to online reviews: Managing consumer dissatisfaction. *Discourse, Context & Media*, 6, 54–64. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcm.2014.08.004>.

Rahaf E. Aldossary was born in Al-Kharj in 1996, Saudi Arabia. Aldossary majored in English language and graduated with a bachelor’s degree in 2017 from Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University in Al-Kharj. After that, Aldossary studied linguistics and took her master’s degree in 2022 from the same university.

She currently works in the medical field as a medical coder, but previously she was an English teacher at the PYD (Preparatory Year Deanship) for medical and engineering female students at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University. Moreover, she taught English skills for about a year at a community college in Al-Kharj. She is currently interested in studying the influence of social media on young teenagers' languages. Also, the previous research interest was analyzing the business language with the customers, which is achieved in this current study.

Mohammad A. Mahzari was born in 1987 in Al-Kharj, Saudi Arabia. Mahzari graduated with a BA in English Language from King Saudi University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 2009. Mahzari earned his MA in English Linguistics from Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti, MI, USA, in 2013. Then Mahzari graduated with a PhD in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics from Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ, USA, in 2017.

He started his teaching experience as a teaching assistant in the English Department at Prince Sattam bin Abdulaziz University (PSAU) in 2009. In 2013, he was promoted to a lecturer position. In 2017, he was appointed as an assistant professor. Then he was promoted as an associate professor in the same department and university in Al-kharj, Saudi Arabia. He published many studies in pragmatics, discourse, and sociolinguistics. The recent published studies as follow:

- Alqreeni G., & Mahzari, M. (2023) Exploring Online Arabic Complaints in Hotel Reviews on TripAdvisor: A Discourse-Pragmatic Study. *World Journal of English Language*, 13(1), 167-184.
- Alsager, H., & Mahzari, M. (2021). On the Syntax of *ʔanna* and *ʔan* in Modern Standard Arabic: A Phase-Based Approach. *WORD*, 67(2), 172-187.
- Hassanein, H., & Mahzari, M. (2021). A Taxonomy of Antonymy in Arabic: Egyptian and Saudi Proverbs in Comparison. *Open Linguistics*, 7(1), 200-222.