

GENDERING POLITENESS:

**Speech And Act Among Zulu Second Language Speakers Of The English Language
On The Durban Campus**

BY

BUSAYO OLAMIDE IGE

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of M. A. Gender
Studies, University of Natal.

Durban. 2000

Declaration

In accordance with the regulations of the University of Natal, I certify that the contents of this thesis are my own original work unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text.

I further declare that this thesis has not been published at any other university.



B. O. IGE

Table of Contents

	PAGE
Acknowledgements	iv
Abstract	v
Chapter 1 Introduction and Literature review	
1 Introduction	1
1.2 Theories of Politeness	3
1.2.1 Non-western Approaches	5
1.3 Apologies	11
1.3.1 Functions of Apologies	13
1.3.2 Gendered Apologies	13
1.4 Debates around Gender and Language	14
1.4.1 Deficit, Dominance and Difference Models	14
1.4.2 Gender Identity	15
1.5 Gender and Politeness	18
Chapter 2 Methodology	
2.1 Problems and issues to be Investigated	23
2.2 Data Collection Methods	24
2.3 Apology Production	25
2.3.1 Observation	25
2.3.1.1 Position of the Researcher	26
2.3.2 Role-plays	27
2.4 Apology Perception	30
2.4.1 Focus groups	30
2.4.2 Role-play interviews	33
Chapter 3: Data Analysis	
3.1 Introduction	34
3.2 Scenario A	34
3.2.1 Male apologies	35
3.2.2 Female apologies	41
3.3 Scenario B	49
3.3.1 Male apologies	50
3.3.2 Female apologies	54

3.4	Coming late to lecture	56
3.5	Scenario C	58
3.5.1	Female apologies	59
3.5.2	Male apologies	60
3.6	Physical infringement	65
Chapter 4: Discussion of Results		
4.1	Gender display of culture	69
4.1.1	Male involvement	70
4.1.2	Female independence	73
4.2	Politeness strategies of men and women	75
Chapter 5: Conclusions		
5.1	Summary of findings	80
5.2	Suggestions for further research	81
Appendix 1		
1	Issues and questions discussed in focus group discussions	84
2	Situational questions posed to the focus group members.	84
3	Role-plays interview.	85
Appendix 2		
Scenarios and role-plays transcriptions		86
Bibliography		92

Acknowledgements

I am profoundly grateful to Prof. Elizabeth de Kadt for her patience, support and outstanding supervision of this work. I would also like to express my appreciation to Prof. Lydia McDermott who gave me access to some materials. I must also express my thanks to Dr. Chine Onyejekwe for her inspirational and financial support. Mandy Lamprecht should also be mentioned for her kind support.

I would like to thank Dr. and Mrs. S. A. Ajila for their invaluable assistance, love and care in the course of this research project.

I specially thank my loving husband for his invaluable support, love and encouragement. Without which it would have been impossible to complete this project.

Finally, to the King, Eternal, Immortal be all the praise for the grace, mercy and favour he granted me throughout my studies for the M .A. Soli Deo gloria!

Abstract

In this thesis, I have moved away from the general question of ‘How do women and men behave linguistically?’ (Bing and Bergvall, 1996 :19) and have turned to investigate in particular how the speech act of apologies contributes to the production of people as ‘women and men’ (Bing and Bergvall, 1996 :19). In other words, the investigation focuses on the effect of politeness strategies on the construction of gender identities.

Using poststructuralist feminist theory as developed primarily by Weedon (1987), this thesis investigates the politeness strategies employed by some Zulu students at the University of Natal, Durban, in their English-medium interactions with African international students. The speech act of apologies is the area of language investigated, with data being collected primarily by means of role-plays and focus groups. The focus of the analysis is limited to the performance of apologies towards non-Zulus by 12 Zulu male and female students. To this end, the various strategies employed by the respondents were analysed according to the framework developed by Holmes (1989,1995). In addition, information gathered in the focus groups revealed to what extent politeness strategies are still being transferred from Zulu to English.

The strategies employed by these men and women are considered as revealing some of the ways by which politeness contributes to the construction of gender identities, in the University context. On the basis of this limited sample, it is argued that traditional Zulu

male masculinity, while still dominant, is now being contested in the University context by some students favouring a less tradition-oriented identity. The strategies employed by the female respondents, on the other hand, suggest that Zulu women students may be beginning to reject traditional Zulu femininity in favour of more westernized identities.

1

Introduction and Literature Review

1.1 Introduction

This thesis seeks to explore some of the ways in which language contributes to the construction of masculine and feminine identities. It draws principally on the past decade of research in feminist linguistics, in which, in terms of poststructuralist theory, language has increasingly come to be seen as central to the feminist project of the emancipation of women. Language has been found to be one of the resources drawn upon in the construction of gender roles (Johnson 1997), which is in itself a process of constant negotiation with those around us (Craib 1998). This thesis will examine the construction of gender identities by means of politeness, as demonstrated by the use of apologies. In this way, I reject the essentialist approach¹, which for many years promoted a philosophy of the sameness of women. In this way, too, I join researchers who seek 'the difference gender makes' rather than 'gender difference' (Cameron 1992), and concur with Johnson's (1997:25) assertion that 'we must abandon the search for trivial structural reflections of whatever we believe to be typically "male" or "female" language'. Furthermore, this piece of research is conducted within a specifically African context, which has had substantial consequences for the theoretical

¹ Essentialist feminism arises out of universalist and separatist feminism. Universalist feminists pose that women are biologically and culturally equal to men, but historically denied equality. Separatist feminists advocate that women and men are equal, but different, and are historically denied equality; a separate sphere for women and women is acclaimed as the way to achieve equality. See Stone (1994:6).

framework utilised. Brown and Levinson's standard model of politeness is rejected for one which is considered more appropriate to a non-western language like Zulu. Non-verbal forms of languages are analysed alongside verbal forms, because in Zulu non-verbal forms crucially inform our understanding of the verbal forms.

The subjects studied in this thesis were Zulu English-speaking students (second language English-speakers) at the University of Natal in Durban. I focused on their management of politeness in English, which is the medium of interaction at this University, and a common lingua franca among many students. Students were studied when using apologies as it was assumed that in this speech act a range of politeness strategies would be utilised. It must be stressed, however, that the intention was not to undertake a speech act study with gender as a variable, but rather to investigate the role of politeness in constructing gender identities.

In chapter 1, I develop the theoretical framework of this investigation. Brown and Levinson's theory of politeness is reviewed to test its applicability to a non-western language like Zulu. In the course of the review, the concept of 'deference' is adopted as more appropriate for this research. I also review briefly debates around gender and language. Chapter 2 describes and justifies the methodology of data elicitation, in line with the current emphasis on a multimethod approach for collecting speech act data (Cohen, 1996). The two categories of data involved are the production of apologies and the perception of apologies. In chapter 3 I begin to present and analyse the data and to investigate the various politeness strategies used by participants. I draw

together my findings in chapter 4, analysing the ways in which women and men use apology and politeness strategies to construct very different identities. The final chapter 5 draws the thesis together with a summary of the earlier chapters, and presents my conclusions from the entire investigation and some suggestions for further research. I include 2 Appendices: Appendix 1 contains firstly the list of questions and issues raised at the focus group interviews, and secondly the questions posed at the interviews of the role-play participants. Appendix 2 contains the full transcripts of those role-plays, which have not been presented in the body of the thesis.

In the following section, I will review selected research from three areas of investigation: theories of politeness, debates around gender and language, and debates around gender and politeness. By highlighting some hitherto unexplored questions, I will ascertain which approach is most appropriate to this investigation.

1.2 Theories of Politeness

The standard framework which scholars and researchers have adopted for the analysis of politeness, both in mainstream and feminist linguistics, is the theory of politeness proposed by Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987). This framework in turn draws upon Goffman's work on the construction of 'face' (1967). The further development of this theory of 'face' by Brown and Levinson is based on everyday usage in terms of 'losing face' and 'saving face'. Politeness, according to this model, involves maintaining each other's face by observing two different kinds of face needs, namely negative face and positive face.

Negative face: the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, rights to non-distraction - i.e. to freedom of action and freedom from imposition.

Positive face: the positive consistent self-image or 'personality' (crucially including the desire that this self-image be appreciated and approved of) claimed by interactants (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 61).

In addition, negative face is described as a 'public self-image', which suggests that the individual person becomes territorial. claims rights to non-distraction, and avoids any imposition by another person. On the other hand, positive politeness speaks of the individual's desire to be liked and admired.

Brown and Levinson then present in great detail the range of ways in which positive and negative face manifest themselves as positive and negative politeness. Positive politeness aims to disarm threats to positive face (the desire to be liked and admired). The addressee is to be treated as a friend, a person whose desires and personality traits are supposedly known and liked. Positive politeness is essentially approach-based, that is, it is an expression of interest in the addressee by using strategies such as: exaggerated expressions, use of in-group identity markers, seeking agreement and avoidance of disagreement, and the giving of gifts in the form of goods, sympathy, understanding, and co-operation etc. Negative politeness on the other hand, as the desire to be unimpeded by others, aims to **disarm threats** to negative face (the desire to not be imposed upon). Negative politeness is, **avoidance-based** and its strategies are

characterised by self-effacement, formality and restraint, and usually redressed with apologies. Brown and Levinson assumed that these two types of faces operate in most languages, and claim universal status for them.

1.2.1 Non-western Approaches

In spite of the considerable explanatory power of Brown and Levinson's model, it has increasingly been critiqued by scholars and researchers working on non-western languages. In particular its claim of universality has been the target of rebuttal, from the perspective of languages from the Far East and from Africa. It has been pointed out by researchers such as Ide (1982; 1990), Nwoye (1992), de Kadt (1995, 1996) that the concept of negative face in particular connotes a notion of an individualistic self, which is considered to be a behavioural paradigm especially in western cultures. Hence the major criticism instituted against Brown and Levinson is that although they conducted their research into three unrelated languages and cultures (Tamil of South India, Tzeltal spoken in Mexico, and the English of the USA and England), they failed to accommodate adequately the diversities in and of 'self'. A typically western standard is seen as imposed on these other cultures, especially in the proposition of negative face, which has been faulted for its inability to accommodate the notion of the collective self. Identifying what is perceived as polite behaviour in a culture demands an understanding of the society's values in relation to the people's deployment of a particular language. Ide (1982, 1990), for instance, has pointed out that the Japanese people are conscious of norms, feelings and sensibility when interacting in public. Empathy and sensitivity to the needs of others are two main values and cultural

practises identified with Japanese. A great deal of attention is paid to relational roles and the position of participants in a variety of hierarchies. Consequently Japanese women are required by **their culture/society** to express themselves with the appropriate deference by means of a wide range of honorifics, and also are expected to be sensitive to complex contextual factors, which determine polite usage in the Japanese language (Smith 1992; Ide et al. 1986).

In the African context, a main focus of concern has been Brown and Levinson's perceived interpretation of 'self' as individualistic. Here again, the construct 'negative face' is considered not to accommodate the concept of 'self' in African contexts and has therefore been declared not appropriate. For instance, Nwoye (1992) finds Brown and Levinson's model unsuitable for accounting for politeness phenomena in Igbo (in eastern Nigeria).

Brown and Levinson's view of politeness, especially their notion of negative face and the need to avoid imposition, does not seem to apply to the egalitarian Igbo society, in which concern for group interests rather than atomistic individualism is the expected norm of behaviour (Nwoye, 1992: 320).

In Igbo society, for example, requests, offers, thanks and criticisms are carried out in accordance with the dictates of the group within which individuals belong, age is revered and achievement is also honoured.

For similar reasons de Kadt (1994,1995) queried the applicability of Brown and Levinson's theory to the Zulu language and instead based her analysis on the concept of face as originally developed by Goffman (1967). Zulu society, like the Japanese, strongly emphasises positional status (Raum, 1973). Zulu hierarchies consist of authority and submission, based on the categories of age, gender and social status. Age groupings are generally maintained throughout life (Krige, 1936), a great deal of authority is vested in the elderly over the young, and the younger are required to show respect to those who are older. Social relations are largely structured by the resulting group identities (de Kadt, 1998:182). Along gender lines Zulu women are required to pay attention to *hlonipha* practices (the verb *hlonipha* means 'to pay respect'), for instance wives are required to avoid calling in-laws by name. The man or father usually has considerable legal and ritual authority over the family.

In work based on Brown and Levinson's model of politeness, the concept of indirectness has come to play a central role: it is generally assumed that greater indirectness results in greater politeness. This principle, too, does not seem easily applicable to the African context. In a series of investigations into Zulu politeness norms and strategies, de Kadt (1994, 1995, 1996) has tested this theory and asserts that the concept of indirectness, as developed by Brown and Levinson, is problematic in its application to the Zulu language. The study of Zulu directives shows that politeness in Zulu may well involve strategies of directness rather than indirectness. Instead of using indirect strategies to make a polite request as often is the case in western languages, Zulu requests are frequently made in direct terms. Such a direct

approach will become evident in the data of this thesis. De Kadt's (1992; 1995) research reveals that directness was used in 80% of the responses she collected, while the remaining 20% together involve hints and indirectness. In his investigation of deference and directness in Xhosa performative requests, Gough (1995) concluded that indirectness is not a universal sign of politeness, because the use of the strategy of indirectness is based on one possible socio-cultural pattern, usually found in western (English) communities.

However, instead of rejecting the term 'face' as an explanatory device I will follow de Kadt's approach by turning to Goffman's (1967) broader interpretation of face, which seems to offer a more adequate explanation of politeness in non-western languages. According to Goffman (1967: 5), face is 'the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact'. Goffman further states that face is negotiated and renegotiated during interactions, in other words it is not static, it is 'a loan from society' and is found in the midst of events, it is a 'public property'. This means, for instance, that the 'face' of the persons involved in negotiating an apology is to be protected, given that face is a 'public property'. It becomes the duty of everybody in the society to protect each other's 'face'. Participants value what others expect of them, and in this way face, according to Goffman, is a mutual construct. In contrast to Brown and Levinson, who defined 'face' as a 'self-image', Goffman sees face as a 'public property', assigned to individual participants (Mao, 1994). Correspondingly, the definition of self in Goffman's analysis of face appears more appropriate for non-western languages, and

specifically for Zulu. 'Self' is portrayed as collective, i.e. as 'public property', which fits into the Zulu interpretation of 'self', and not as individualistic, i.e. as 'private'. This understanding of 'face', when complemented by Goffman's analysis of deference, is well able to explain the production and maintenance of interactive behaviour. Deference, Goffman explains, is not limited to something a subordinate owes the superordinate, but it also requires the dominant superordinate to respond adequately. In other words the superordinate is also required to maintain the conception of 'self' that the subordinate has built up from institutionalised and sanctioned rules of the society in question.

Goffman's theory of 'face' as complemented by his concept of deference, is applicable to the roles and understanding of 'face' in Zulu culture. This is because the concept of deference deals with 'face' as reciprocal and not as one-sided; in terms of such an understanding of deference it becomes the duty of both illocutors whether subordinate or superordinate to protect each other's 'face'.

First, there are a great many forms of symmetrical deference which social equals owe to one another, deference obligations that superordinates owe their subordinates. Secondly, the regard in which the actor holds the recipient need not be one of respectful awe. A sentiment of regard that plays an important role in deference is that of affection and belongingness. Actors (superordinates) thus promise to

maintain the conception of self that the recipient has built up from the rules he is involved in (Goffman, 1967:59-60)

This symmetrical and reciprocal deference between the subordinate and superordinate is well exemplified in de Kadt's (1996) analysis of the Zulu concept of 'face'. According to her the Zulu notion of 'face' is embedded in two core words: *hlonipha*, which means 'to pay respect' and *ubuntu*, meaning 'humanity'.

The concept in societal interaction is denoted by the verb *hlonipha*, generally translated as 'to pay respect', and with regard to each group set ways of showing the necessary respect to those above one in social hierarchy are prescribed. These shows of respect are reciprocated by the attitude of *ubuntu*, 'humanity', which is expected of the superordinates in response (de Kadt, 1996: 182).

The data analysed in chapter 3 reflect interactions between social equals, hence we will not be drawing on the concept of deference in our analysis. Nevertheless, I find the above theoretical perspective on politeness essential to a proper understanding of the strategies identified in the data.

To sum up: the limited research into politeness in African languages (Adegbija 1989, de Kadt, 1992, 1994, 1995, 1996; Gough, 1994; Nwoye, 1992 and Wood, 1992), has demonstrated that 'face' in African contexts is a different construct to 'face' in western

culture. 'Face' in African contexts is a public property that is shared and cared for by all. At the same time, it is the duty of every individual in society to defend and uphold the values and traditions of their society. Hence, politeness in the African context is not only about saving and losing 'face' with reference to the individual self, but with reference to self as given to individuals by the society or culture. The society or culture in which people are located constructs the 'self' they display.

1.3 Apologies

Apologies are speech acts: in Cohen's terms (1996: 384), functional units in communication. According to Austin (1962), speech acts have three kinds of meanings: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary forces². In practice, the application of these three functional meanings to a speech act, e.g. apology has been found to be problematic (Cohen, 1996). This is because the meaning of the perceptible apology does not necessarily correspond with the apologist's pragmatic intention. For example, when an apologist utters an apology out of pressure, sarcastically or where the non-verbal strategies do not coincide with the verbal apology, then the apology given is incompatible with the apologist's intention.

Since the 1960s there has been a shift from theoretical definitions to the empirical research of speech acts. This shift has led to considerable developments in the study of this aspect of language behaviour by researchers such as Fraser (1981); Olshtain and

² Locutionary refers to the literal meaning of the utterance, illocutionary deals with social functions that the utterance or written text has, and perlocutionary refers to the result or effect that is produced by the utterance. See Cohen (1996: 384).

Cohen (1983); Owen (1983); Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1984); and Blum-Kulka (1989). In particular, a generally accepted system for classifying different linguistic apology strategies has been developed. In this thesis, apology strategies are categorised according to the classification of Cohen, Olshtain and Rosenstein (1986), which utilises five broad categories. Subsequently, Holmes (1989, 1995) adopted these main categories of apology strategies, but modified them to suit her New Zealand perspective. Holmes reduced the five categories to four by merging the third and fourth (acknowledgement of responsibility and offer of repair). In addition, she subdivided the original broad categories where necessary. The following are the main apology strategies as re-organised by Holmes (1995):

1. Explicit expression of apology (when an apologist uses a word or sentence to convey his/her apology).
2. Explanation or accounting for situation (an indirect apology).
3. Acknowledgement of responsibility, including: accepting the blame, expressing lack of intent and an offer of repair/ redress.
4. Promise of forbearance, e.g. I promise it won't happen again.

In this piece of research, only three of these four categories (numbers 1, 2 and 3) were actually employed by my respondents; I have therefore not included category 4 in my discussion.

1.3.1 Functions of apologies

According to Goffman (1967), apologies are examples of speech acts that pay attention to the 'face' needs of the addressee/victim, and Holmes refers to apologies as 'face-supportive acts' (Holmes 1989, 1995). An act of apologising is considered necessary, when a behaviour negates or violates social norms. A classic situation is when an action or utterance results in a person perceiving himself/herself as deserving an apology. As noted by Holmes, 'an apology will typically address an offence performed by the speaker' (Holmes 1995: 155). Goffman (1971:140) therefore aptly defines an apology as a remedy. From these different definitions of apology, one can conclude that it is a remedy for an offence and a cure for the restoration of social harmony (Holmes 1989). Simply put, an apology is a speech act addressed to 'V's' face-needs and intended to correct an offence for which 'A' takes responsibility, and thus restore the equilibrium between A and V (where A is the apologist, and V is the victim).

1.3.2 Gendered apologies

The influence of gender on the distribution of speech acts has received relatively little attention in mainstream linguistics. But today there is a body of research by feminist linguistics comparing women's and men's speech forms: work such as Lakoff (1975); Brown (1980); Thorne, Kramarae and Henley (1983), and Coates (1986). Research on how women's use of apologies differs from men's is exemplified by Holmes (1989, 1995). However, these researchers are focused on 'difference', which reinforces gender polarisation; as a result we know very little about men or masculinity. The

approach of this study is different: I will focus on how identities of men and women are constructed by their use of apologies. In addition, this research investigation is not limited to verbal apologies, and non-verbal apologies are analysed alongside the verbal ones. These non-verbal speech forms, an aspect that most researchers have left out, have been found to be crucial for the detailed analysis of apologies

1.4 Debates around Gender and Language

1.4.1 Deficit, dominance and difference models

Cameron (1996), Bing and Bergvall (1996), and Johnson (1997) all agree that over the past 20 years, three models commonly termed 'deficit', 'dominance' and 'difference', have dominated feminist linguistic approaches to language and gender. The first model, that of 'deficit', presents women as disadvantaged speakers based on their early sex-role socialisation. Lakoff (1973; 1975) suggests that women interact in a 'powerless language'. The second model, the 'dominance' model, exemplified for instance by the work of Zimmerman and West (1975), West (1984), and Fishman (1983), challenges the male control of language and focuses on how language reflects, constructs and maintains male dominance. Zimmerman and West conclude that women perform poorly in cross-sex conversations, in comparison to their male counterparts. Feminists like Spender (1980), among others, are interested in exploring how dominance is achieved through language: they consider how interruptions, the use of generic pronouns and nouns, politeness etc., reflect language power relations and maintain them. The third model, that of 'difference', sees itself as an alternative approach to the first two models (Johnson, 1997). Its objective is to discourage those working on

women's speech from a perpetual comparison with male norms, which continues to place women in a position of deficit. This approach, therefore, stresses that women's language is not inferior to men's language, but simply different (Coates, 1986; 1995). In the 1980s, the 'difference' model of language and gender gained ground over the 'deficit' and 'dominance' models, and it became the popular model in language and gender studies (Cameron, 1996). During the past decade, however, these three models have all been critiqued as being inadequate in their approaches to issues of gendered power relations (Johnson, 1997; Cameron, 1996; Crawford, 1995; Bing and Bergvall, 1996). It has been argued that these models tend to strengthen the dichotomy between females and males rather than weaken it and in addition reinforce gender polarisation. At the same time it has become clear that little is known about men or masculinity because the focus has been exclusively on women.

1.4.2 Gender Identity

Moving beyond the three earlier models, Weedon (1987) has argued from a poststructuralist viewpoint that in order to understand gender power relations and bring about change, gender identity (and not just female identity) must be explored. There is the need to understand why women tolerate social relations that subordinate their interests to those of men. Similarly, it is important to understand the discursive strategies employed by men in their quest to sustain male hegemony. In comparison with the earlier approaches, this one is anti-essentialist and focuses on the deconstruction of the notion of gender relations by deconstructing the female-male dichotomy. A look beyond dichotomy requires an approach that embraces a new line

of questioning which can weaken gender polarisation and investigate male speech behaviour alongside the female. As argued by Cameron (1996), instead of questioning 'how women and men speak differently', the question should be about language which challenges rather than reinforces gender polarisation. In other words, emphasis should be shifted from 'gender difference' to 'the difference gender makes' (Cameron, 1992b). Consequently, the attempt to find 'the difference gender makes' rather than 'gender difference' leads us to consider the construction of identity, specifically of gender identity.

A starting premise is that feminine and masculine identities are not in fact opposites as constructed by the structuralist paradigm, but are mutual social or cultural constructs. Jenkins (1996), a structuralist sociologist, had defined identity by classifying the world into two social groups, 'man' and 'woman', and from the outset associating every individual with the one rather than the other. (For instance, I am a woman, not a man). It is from such structuralist understandings that the essentialist feminists had derived their binary approach. This is now strongly challenged by poststructuralists. For instance, Hall (1996) a post-structuralist sociologist, argues that identity is not a given, but is constructed through discourse and disciplines. If identity is a construct, then gender identity is also a construct. Butler (1990: 33) argues that gender is performative: 'Gender is the repeated stylisation of the body, a set of repeated acts within a rigid regulatory frame which over time produce the appearance of substance, of a 'natural' kind of being'. This means that by performing these acts, behaviours imposed by culture or society become an accepted norm, and such a behaviour after a

period of time appears natural. Becoming a woman or a man is therefore not something attained all at once; on the contrary, gender is reaffirmed and displayed by the constant repetition of acts in accordance with laid down norms. According to Butler (1990), 'feminine' and 'masculine' are the products of the ways we go about doing things, rather than a trait. Given that speech is a stylisation of the body, then masculine and feminine styles of conversation may well result from the repetition of acts by women and men. Cameron (1997: 49), arguing from a poststructuralist approach, states that 'people are whom they are because of (among other things) the way they talk'. The reason for adopting this approach is embedded in the way and manner by which women and men communicate daily. The focus here is not on classifying differences between the speech of women and men, but the concern is to investigate the on-going use of linguistic and non-verbal resources by individual women and men to produce gender distinctions. This is the route taken in this thesis: a search for gender identity, examining women's and men's use of one particular aspect of language, politeness, that contributes to forming or constructing their identities.

Although gender is perceived to be regulated and policed by rigid social norms, this approach acknowledges the variability of gender identities. For a number of reasons women and men do sometimes break away from their early socialisation and indulge in acts of infraction, subversion and resistance. A change of environment may result in a change of behavioural attitudes of women and men. Such a shift in behaviour could be brought about by a new environment with different social norms. In this research, for instance, all respondents, male and female, have been placed in a new environment

(UND) characterised by a culture with a strong western influence, and we will explore the possible impact this has on their gender identities.

The poststructuralist approach offers a potential answer to my research question into gendered speech styles, which is why I chose to work within this framework. This approach focuses on how people behave in terms of gender and why they choose these behaviours. As argued by Cameron (1996:47) 'who you are, and are taken to be depends on your repeated performance over time of the acts that constitute a particular identity'. And of course the acts are produced (possibly as acts of resistance) in the face of the normative pressures or forces of the accepted norms of societies. For some of the Zulu UND students, living in an environment different from their natural environment has a considerable impact on their speech style, while for others it seems to make little difference.

1.5 Gender and Politeness

The topic 'gender and politeness', was thematised by one of the first discussions of language and gender. Lakoff's (1975) essay examines politeness in relation to women and concludes that the 'kinds of politeness used by and of and to women', such as over-politeness (Lakoff, 1975:82), are by no means accidental: on the contrary they are confining and oppressive. In attempting to define and describe 'women's language,' Lakoff acknowledges that politeness has variations that can be classed as politeness used by women and of course kinds of politeness used by men. Women are portrayed to be 'more polite' than men and as conversing in a 'powerless language':

this too, is the result of male dominance. In this way, women are seen to have a particular polite speech style that, at the same time, conveys a lack of authority. Men on the other hand, are depicted as oppressors, domineering, less polite. Lakoff's work has been critiqued because her claims were based on personal intuition and not on empirical data. Nevertheless, she introduces what has since become an important topic in the discussion of gender and politeness: the claim that women are 'more polite' than men. (The problems with this kind of claim will be discussed below)

A few years later Brown drew on the Mayan culture from Mexico to show how and why 'women [are] more polite' (Brown 1980:111). In this society women, during their reproductive years, are all categorised as non-powerful in relation to men. The femaleness of the women is seen to override their individuality and also requires them to behave interactively as subservient to men. To establish this status of women Brown demonstrates differences in the Mayan men's and women's use and style of language. Women are perceived as assuming more strengthening particles (like 'sure') when speaking to women, than when speaking to men. On the other hand, when women speak to men they tend to use more weakening particles, which are perceived as a sign of respect or politeness. In addition, women make use of more particles when speaking to women than towards men, which also indicates respect. Consequently, the women in this community are seen to have their own speech style. Clearly, Brown is working within the difference model. As a result the focus here is on 'gender difference' rather than 'the difference that gender makes'.

Holmes's (1989; 1995) work on speech acts and gender also sought to demonstrate that women in New Zealand are 'more polite' than men. Her work examines gender differences in the distribution of apologies in order to illuminate the complexity of the language learner's task in acquiring communicative competence. This work is based on the difference model and reinforces the binary approach to gender constructed by the structuralists.

Clearly, the small body of research focusing on gender and politeness is limited in a number of ways. Firstly, it is located firmly within the model of politeness developed by Brown and Levinson; as demonstrated above. This model may not be altogether appropriate to the discussion of Zulu. Secondly, it is also located within the structuralist tradition, whereby men and women are perceived as 'different'; and women as 'more polite'.

Familiarity with politeness theory and with the enormous cultural variations in manifestations of politeness immediately reveals the highly problematic nature of such a claim. Rather than there being a culture-based idea of politeness towards which men and women approximate more or less closely, politeness is a system of behaviours. Politeness systems are located within particular societies, and offer behaviours which men and women can draw on to construct themselves in particular ways. They can construct themselves, at specific moments, as more polite or less polite, according to the norms of their society. Furthermore, this construction of identity will doubtless

vary over time: identity construction is an ongoing process which never reaches a conclusion.

A further limitation which applies generally to work on gender and language and indeed, to the bulk of work on politeness is that it has focused only on the verbal aspects of language and has neglected any non-verbal aspects of speech. Possibly this approach is appropriate to the discussion/analysis of western-style politeness. Recent work in politeness in African languages has shown that non-verbal forms of language are crucial for the understanding of polite behaviour in the African setting (de Kadt, 1994; Wood, 1992). This study will therefore take both the verbal and non-verbal forms of polite behaviour into consideration. It is fundamental to consider how important and necessary are the non-verbal speech forms are in order to correctly evaluate polite behaviour in African societies. The choice of apologies as speech act is motivated not least by the lack of research in this area of African languages. Although there has been some work done on politeness in areas like requests and the expression of gritudes, apologies have not yet been studied. It is expected that this special focus on apologies will enrich our understanding of the politeness strategies of the Zulu language, and at the same time our understanding of (politeness and) cultural ground rules for polite behaviour in Zulu.

To sum up: in the study of language and gender, the African experience is still largely unexplored. In addition, focused research into apologies is still largely lacking in mainstream linguistics in South Africa. An African perspective on the issue of language

and gender is crucial for the emancipation of women in all our societies. In focusing here on identity, I will be considering the management and the effect of politeness on the construction of identity as gendered. In order to explore this issue in the African context the study will utilise Goffman's (1967) concept of deference as expanded by de Kadt (1996), and the poststructuralist approach to language and gender. This approach overall will permit an examination of women and men's use of language and of ways in which gender identities are produced.

2

Methodology

2.1 Problems and issues to be investigated

The following research questions have emerged from the preliminary readings, the survey of literature and my own observations:

1. What is the understanding of politeness of Zulu speakers when using English? An answer to this question will help to establish the understandings that inform the attitudes of Zulu men and women when speaking English.
2. To what extent are Zulu communicative gestures transferred to English? If such transfer does take place, this will shed light on potential miscommunication between Zulus and non-Zulus.
3. What are the politeness strategies commonly used by Zulu speakers in English, and how are these strategies used in apologies by men and women respectively?
4. To what extent can the use of these politeness strategies be seen as a constructing gender identities?

2.2 Data Collection Methods

Two factors informed the methods used for data collection: firstly, the principle of multimethod, and secondly the need to collect both production and perception data. Cohen (1996) has recently called on researchers to use a multimethod approach in their assessment of speech acts, in view of the fact that no single method can assess the entirety of any linguistic behaviour and indeed, that no perfect method exists. At the same time, I wished to collect data as to the production of apologies by men and women, and as to the perception of apologies, also by men and women. Hence a number of methods were used. Under the category of production data, observations and role-plays were employed, and for the second category of perception data, focus group discussions and interviews of the role-players were utilised. The focus group discussions in turn were sub-divided into two processes: focus group discussions and, subsequently, participants' reactions to the instances of apology they had produced in the discussions.

In the following I sketch out briefly the research steps in the order in which they took place, as in the next section the methods will be separated out for discussion into the two categories production and perception data. The whole investigation started with 2 months of non-participatory observation. Next came the focus group interviews, which took place over a period of 5 weeks. The role-plays followed, spread over 7 weeks, a longer period than anticipated due to certain problems, which will be explained later on. Last but not

least came the role-play interviews, which took place immediately after sections of role-plays had been performed, with the groups involved.

2.3 Apology Production

2.3.1 Observation

The entire investigation began with non-participatory observation which informed the procedures used for the data collection. Before deciding on the sample of students who should ideally participate in the interviews, I had earlier on carried out non-participatory observation, which took place in two natural settings, the library and the university café. At these places students are constantly engaged in interaction with members of staff, café workers, friends, and colleagues. Notes were made on paper and from memory as to conversations and the non-verbal aspects of conversations. During the period of non-participatory observation my attention was **focused on the possibly gendered** nature of verbal and non-verbal expressions of apology in English among bilingual Zulu students and other, non-Zulu L2 speakers of English. My observation revealed great differences in polite behaviours utilised by first year students and by those at other levels of study, and I noted that the higher the level the more westernised the students appeared. For instance postgraduate (Zulu) students appeared to have assimilated 'white' culture which influenced their responses and reactions to polite behaviour substantially. They seemed to be able to manage and express apologies in a typically 'westernised' manner, as compared with the undergraduate Zulu students, particularly the first level students. Given my focus on the transfer of Zulu communicative gestures to an English-speaking setting, I decided to limit my sample for this study to first year undergraduates Zulu students. This would

certainly exclude the more complex mixed identities of graduate students, but I considered that given our present lack of knowledge in the field of investigation, it would be more productive to focus on students who would be most likely to possess and exhibit Zulu-based forms of politeness in their conversations. Clearly, such students would be more likely to transfer discourse patterns and hence enable me to investigate these than would others at higher levels of study. Nevertheless, it must be borne in mind that the cosmopolitan environment of the University of Natal will doubtless impact on all students, including those who come to the university from a more traditional Zulu cultural setting. Indeed, as urbanisation progresses more and more rapidly the term 'Zulu culture' is becoming increasingly open to a wide range of interpretations, and this must be borne in mind throughout this study.

My observations also suggested that substantial differences in the management of politeness existed along gender lines. The frequent use of the phrase '(I'm) sorry' became a focus of my attention: although the phrase remained constant, the intention of the phrase seemed to differ.

2.3.1.1 Position of the Researcher

In addition, it became clear that my position as researcher and international student from West Africa would impact substantially on the study. Until I speak, I am generally assumed to be a Zulu, but as soon as I speak, attitudes towards me tend to change markedly, in a positive and a more negative sense. As a result I was in a good position to study the way and manner these students interact with foreign black students, and

particular along gender lines. The ideal method for data collection during this phase of observation would have been a (hidden) taperecorder, which unfortunately could not be used due to ethical reasons. What I ended up doing was to make notes immediately afterwards, and of course not all the information was remembered during this exercise.

Clearly, data obtained from the observation of natural interaction will have a high degree of authenticity and can therefore contribute substantially to an investigation such as this one. However, for ethical reasons, data collected by this method were not made use of in the analysis. It would have been wrong to tape people's speech without their awareness, and informing them beforehand reduces the authenticity. Nevertheless, these data did allow me to clarify the questions to be asked and to identify a target group for both focus groups and role-plays.

2.3.2 Role-Plays

Videotapes of open-ended role-plays were employed for data collection for a number of reasons. They are an ideal source of data for the 'production of speech acts' approach. In addition, videotaped role-plays capture both the verbal and non-verbal interactional strategies that are essential for this research. Although data collected from role-plays cannot be equated with authentic speech collected in naturalistic settings in terms of use of language, role-plays allow the investigation of certain qualities of authentic conversations, such as of the sequential organisation of speech act performance, and types of interlocutor responses elicited by specific strategies (Cohen, 1996; Kasper and Dahl, 1991), particularly when open role-plays are used. This method has been successfully used by

quite a number of speech acts researchers, such as Fescura (1993) and de Kadt (1994, 1995), to mention but a few. And finally, repeating the scenarios with a range of respondents enables comparison to be made (Cohen, 1996; Kasper and Dahl, 1991).

Students from the same institution, the University of Natal, Durban Campus, performed the role-plays. Participants included Zulu and non-Zulu students, because the study focuses on Zulu multilinguals using English; such respondents are far less likely to use English when addressing Zulu-speakers. The speech act 'apology' which pays attention to the 'face' needs of the addressee (Goffman, 1967), was selected for this research, because the negotiation of an apology is very likely to involve manifestations of politeness. Three different apology strategies were identified and explored in this research: explicit apologies, explanatory apologies and acknowledgement apologies. I developed four scenarios for these role-plays, which were later reduced to three due to the shortness of the fourth scene. In particular, the third scenario was structured on my personal experience as a library assistant. The tapes were subsequently transcribed and annotated, to include non-verbal behaviours. During the course of transcribing both the role-plays and the focus group discussions occasional adjustments of tense, article use, punctuation etc. were made to improve their readability.

The three scenarios are:

- You borrowed a pen from your neighbour (the person sitting next to you, unknown to you) in an examination hall because yours suddenly stopped writing. But the borrowed pen broke while you were using it. The owner is waiting for it outside the hall.

- A friend of yours gives you an assignment to submit, which carries the penalty of minus 10 marks for late submission. For some reason you were unable to hand in the assignment.
- You approach a black non-South African library student assistant and later realise that the assistant does not understand or speak Zulu.

Twelve students, six males and six females participated in the role-plays. Students were carefully selected on the basis of gender and ethnicity, in other words, three male Zulus, three non-Zulu males, three female Zulus and three non-Zulu females were requested to perform the same scenario twice over, first with the same sex and then with the opposite sex. However, in not all cases was the full complement performed. In total I obtained nineteen role-plays. The intention was to pair Zulu speakers with non-Zulu speakers and males with females. The total of twelve respondents was felt to enable adequate comparison of the different categories of respondents. In order not to confuse the reader I have given each participant a name: the Zulu respondents were given Zulu names, and the non-Zulus were given English names, rather than more realistic African names, to ensure clarity.

The recordings took place in an informal environment chosen by participants, thus enhancing a relaxed mood, which was further supported by the fact the camera was handled by myself (a student like them). Participants were given full freedom to respond as briefly or as fully as they felt necessary. They were likewise given the opportunity to decide whether to sit or stand for each scenario, after the brief verbal description of the

situation. In this way participants were encouraged to utilise body position and gestures fully when interacting, and once some initial restraint had disappeared, I felt I could assume that verbal and non-verbal polite behaviours were expressed with relatively little constraint. The respondents were requested to role-play each situation as they would if confronted with such situations in real life. The length of each role-play varied from one pair of respondents to another; each recording took approximately 10 minutes. At the end of the recordings the tape was played back to the participants for their comments.

However, the whole exercise was by no means free of hitches. The process of recording was rather time-consuming, because several participants failed to turn up. For instance, with some participants I was unable to realise the male-female role-plays, as these males and females could only come separately. Likewise, some participants left half way through the session for an important assignment.

2.4 Apology Perception

2.4.1 Focus groups

Focus group discussions (captured on audio tapes) were one of the techniques adopted here to derive data on perceptions about the speech act under consideration. This technique is not new, it has been applied by researchers in both mainstream and feminist linguistics. For instance, de Kadt (1994) employed the focus group method in her investigation of politeness in Zulu, and Cameron (1997) in her analysis of gender identity

construction in young men's talk. However, as will be explained below, I introduced a slight modification of this technique.

Participants were organised in two separate groups, a male group and a female group, and they were requested to explore in group discussion their perceptions of politeness and of apologies in Zulu culture with special reference to gender. The separation of genders was intended to facilitate free expression of their perceptions without any overt or covert intimidation. As mentioned earlier, the focus group discussions were structured in two sections. Firstly, participants were asked to comment on their own polite behaviours, especially on campus, and I directed the discussion by means of situational questions. These questions were carefully structured around selected social dimensions of familiarity and distance, for example, apologies to friends and to students unknown to the apologiser. I encouraged participants to talk about issues of gender, language use, politeness, apologies, relationships and family. Secondly, and this is the modification of the technique I introduced, participants were requested to respond to certain situations put forward that required apologies, i.e. to produce apologies (and to comment on these). Respondents were requested and encouraged to address and respond to issues raised as they would if faced with such situations. I would give an example of a situation similar to those in the role-plays. For instance, they were asked how they would respond if they 'came late to a group discussion'. It should be noted that data from this section could also serve as additional data for the production of apologies. Data collected in the focus groups was documented in a 3 hour audio tape, with each section taking about 35 minutes. Participants were able to decide on the length of their responses to the questions and

issues that were raised. Subsequently, I transcribed the tapes. In order to capture aspects of non-verbal communication of the respondents during the group discussions I took notes on paper of body language, gesture and tone of voice. For example, I took note of the degree of spontaneous response, the extent of participants' involvement, and I considered the energy level and enthusiasm within the group.

In total there were 12 participants in the focus groups. Each group consisted of 6 members and all were Zulu students who spoke English as a second language (L2 English). As stated above, the intention was to have two groups, one of 6 female members and the other 6 male members, but, again there were difficulties in organising the male focus group. Even with repeated attempts, it was impossible to get all 6 members of the male group together in one interview. Discussions finally took place with three separate pairs¹. The male group was therefore eventually sub-divided into 3 sub-groups consisting of 2 members at a time. The female group, on the other hand, was successfully constituted as one group, with all members coming together at the appointed time and venue, although this was not until after two unsuccessful attempts. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 -25 years. The groups were asked the same questions and the discussions took place in the same venue under the same arrangements but at different times. Again I took care to ensure that the discussions took place in a relaxed environment: they were held in a seminar room during the lunch hour when every one was in a relaxed mood and spoke freely.

¹ In chapter 3 I will demonstrate that the opinions of these six male respondents led me to constitute two male sub-groups, with 4 and 2 members respectively. The 2 members of the minority sub-group belong to different pairs in these focus group interviews.

In real time the focus group discussions actually took place before the role-plays and none of the participants took part in both a focus group and a role-play. This was done in order to avoid bias.

2.4.2 Role-Play interviews

This session was very brief: participants in the role-plays were asked to comment on their performance immediately after the recording. Their reactions and answers to the few questions that were posed to them were noted on paper. During this phase, the time factor was the major difficulty encountered, as participants were generally in a rush to leave instantly after the recordings and some did leave. Those that stayed could only spare a few minutes, which limited greatly the number of questions and answers. The purpose of this additional method was to enrich the data which had just been collected.

The above data collection (role-plays, focus group discussions and role-play interviews) was carried out over a period of three months. The results of the investigation will be presented in the next chapter.

3

Data Analysis

3.1 Introduction

The following analysis of the politeness strategies of men and women draws on the role-plays and focus group data. I select for detailed analysis what I consider to be representative male and female role-play realisations of each of the three scenarios, at the same time indicating how these utilise some of the main apology strategies identified by Holmes. In analysing these role-plays, I draw on the discussion in the focus groups for additional substantiation. It will be shown that these men and women clearly do use significantly different politeness strategies. At the same time, however, differences in strategies emerge within the group of male respondents. My analysis will seek to show that, while all women respondents tend to use similar politeness strategies, two male sub-groups must be recognized in terms of markedly different attitudes to politeness and to the realisation of politeness.

3.2 *Scenario A: ZM/ZF borrowed a pen from NZM/NZF in an examination hall, but unfortunately the pen broke while in use. After the exam ZM/ZF meets the owner of the pen outside the hall.*

This scenario seeks to elicit an apology for a possession offence between relative strangers or distant acquaintances who are of equal status. According to Holmes, explicit

expression of apology is the simplest and most frequent apology form. These explicit apology strategies require the apologist to clearly speak out or voice an apology. This may be done by using words or phrases such as: 'sorry', 'I apologise', 'I'm sorry', 'forgive me', 'excuse me' etc. Holmes limits her investigation to verbally expressed apologies; here we will look to identify both verbal and non-verbal apology strategies.

3.2.1 *Male Apologies*

We will begin with interactions between two males.

Role-play A1:

- 1 Sifiso: (No speech approached NZM¹ rubbing his right hand on his head)
- 2 Tom: Hi, how was the paper?
- 3 Sifiso: It was OK, but I'm sorry your pen broke while I was writing (Puts hand down and looking down most of the time)
- 4 Tom: No it was a bit faulty, but were you able to write the paper?
- 5 Sifiso: Yea I was able to write, because I borrowed one from the invigilator (low tone and points in the direction of the door)
- 6 Tom: Its OK as long as it worked

The following abbreviations are use in the role-plays: Non-Zulu female (NZF) and Non-Zulu male (NZM), and I have used a slash (/) to indicate interruptions.

7 Sifiso: Thanks sharp (smiles, raises tone, claps hands and pats Tom on the shoulder).

In Zulu culture, showing respect is central to the indication of politeness, and can be expressed both verbally and non-verbally. Respect is reciprocal, being conveyed from the speaker to the addressee and from the addressee to the speaker. In this analysis the focus is on polite expressions, both verbal and non-verbal, used by the speaker, whom we will term the Apologist (A); the addressee we will term the Victim (V). For typical contexts and apology situations there seem to be specific verbal and non-verbal strategies.

In this case Sifiso expressed himself non-verbally as he approached Tom by not speaking and by rubbing his hand on his head, and we need to enquire with great care as to the communicative intent of these two strategies. De Kadt (1998) states that when a status differential is present, posture and gesture tend to follow fixed conventions. When there is no status differential present, posture and gesture play much **lesser** roles. Speechlessness before a person is regarded as a show of respect in the Zulu culture, and is commonly used towards superiors: 'You don't speak unless spoken to'. Turning to the focus group discussion, this view was shared by all members of the male focus group. But the group of 6 respondents split into two sub-groups of 4 and 2 respectively, on discussing whether this same approach is employed when apologising to equals. We focus here on the position of the larger sub-group, whom I will term the 'rigid males' or R-men. These men argued that in this case the silence and the rubbing of hands is meant to indicate a message of equality to V. According to this group (which seems to reflect

the attitude of Sifiso in role-play A1), 'we do apologise especially to older persons, but if of our age we want to show him that I am also a man; you pretend as if you made a mistake'. A second respondent added: 'so when we don't speak we are passing a message to him; it is not the same as when we are quiet before older people'. At the same time, hand-rubbing on the head is employed to indicate that V is (simply) a person of equal status: during a conversation with elders there would be little or no movement of the hands, such as was observed here in this interaction between equals. In other words, this act of speechlessness combined with rubbing of hands would seem to signal that the interaction was between people of equivalent status (as in youth and students). The rubbing of hands is done to express freedom or fearlessness, as stated by a member of the first focus sub-group, 'Yea it's like that with boys of my age, that's the place where you are mostly free you express yourself as you are.' The freedom to move and position self in some way can be interpreted as a form of masculine display ('although I'm sorry but I'm still a man'). It is a way of asserting oneself as a man.

This non-verbal expression is then followed by Sifiso's verbal response to Tom's question. He apologises by saying 'I'm sorry, your pen broke while I was writing.' It is a somewhat indirect way of admitting wrong-doing, in that the choice of sentence form shifts blame onto the pen. This may, however, in part be due to transfer from Zulu, for instance the standard Zulu phrase *ipeni liphukile* translates literally as 'the pen broke'. The structure is common among both male and female respondents and will be further discussed below. The dropping of the hands appears to be emphasising the words 'I'm sorry' and is associated with the intermittent avoidance of eye contact. This explicit

apology could be explained as an attempt to live up to what these students perceive as the rules and regulations of the institution. For instance, the focus group commented: 'sometimes there is no need for an apology, but the time has changed, we tend to humble ourselves and apologise even though you feel it should have been solved otherwise. but then we respect the rules of the school and apologise'. In Move 5 Sifiso lowers his voice as he explained what happened in the examination hall. It should be noted that the lowered tone was introduced after the actual apology, which will be shown to be different to the way females employ this same strategy.

We will now contrast **this role-play** with a second one between two further male respondents.

Role-play A4:

- 1 Bongani: Sorry I borrowed your pen, but I seemed to have broken it. I'm really sorry I'll try and get you a new one as soon as I can (hands the pen to NZM and looks up and down, avoiding eye contact intermittently)
- 2 John: No you don't really have to get a new one
- 3 Bongani: Are you sure? (smiling)
- 4 John: yea, I've got another one
- 5 Bongani: OK that's great I'm really sorry
- 6 John: its fine

Bongani is a representative of what I consider to be a minority sub-group of the male respondents, the 'flexible males', or F-men. Here, too, both verbal and non-verbal strategies are employed. Bongani goes straight to the point, beginning with an explicit apology. 'sorry I borrowed your pen but I seemed to have broken it'. Unlike Sifiso, Bongani does not shift blame onto the pen, nevertheless, his use of the verb 'seemed' can be interpreted as some attempt to reject responsibility. Bongani further acknowledges some responsibility by offering a replacement for the broken pen, an offer which is turned down by John. Again, Bongani's commitment is somewhat open to question: he uses the word 'try', meaning that he will attempt to get a new pen if possible. This would seem to be a general face-saving device. The statement is accompanied by the non-verbal strategy of intermittently avoiding eye contact, that can be interpreted in this case as emphasising the explicit apology already given. There is a minimum of non-verbal strategies utilised here. On the issue of non-verbal apology strategies, the second focus sub-group concluded that: 'as a guy you try and present your manhood as you apologise to the age-group. You apologise for your wrong but at the same time you are presenting yourself as not inferior'.

Role-play A4 corresponds with opinions expressed by the minority sub-group within the male focus group, who perceive the act of apology very differently from the first sub-group. Questions on apologising to an age-mate elicited the following response: 'I'll just go straight to that person when he or she would remember that I have done this and apologise' and the second student added, 'I don't have a problem apologising with guys of the same age; it's not a problem; you greet and talk at the same time'. Speaking out

first according to these two is an expression of politeness towards age-mates. In line 1 of role-play A4, Bongani used the word 'sorry' twice and in line 5 emphasised this and used the phrase 'I'm really sorry'. In relation to this direct and emphasised apology, the second male sub-group has this to say: 'with somebody with whom we are not familiar we have to show a deep remorse'. And further: 'you do this by repeatedly saying man I'm sorry I didn't mean to do this to you.'

My data for male-female interactions using Scenario A is limited to that between Sifiso and Grace.

Role-playA2

- | | | |
|---|--------|--|
| 1 | Grace | Hi how was the paper |
| 2 | Sifiso | good, but sorry your pen broke when I was writing
(hands by sides and study NZI's face) |
| 3 | Grace | Don't worry I'll get another one. |
| 4 | Sifiso | OK thanks (left hand on his neck). |
| 5 | Grace | You are welcome. |

Sifiso waited to be spoken to first, as he did in role-play A1, but here he limits his use of non-verbal strategies, in that he keeps his hands at his sides during most of the interaction. This, of course, can be interpreted as a indication of politeness, which is commonly employed during interactions towards elders or superiors, or where the subordinate does not feel 'free' (see de Kadt 1994). Sifiso may have employed this same strategy here, in that Grace was a stranger, and he therefore had to assess her with care.

Commenting on the role-play afterwards, Sifiso agreed that such a mark of respect towards an age-mate was unusual. Unlike in dialogue A1, Sifiso made no offer of replacement here, and Grace seemed to accept this, telling him in Move 3 not to worry. Sifiso appears very brief in his interaction with Grace, and the limited non-verbal strategies employed here are totally different from those of the male – male interaction. This is not surprising when one hears the view of the first male focus sub-group on politeness towards women: ‘when it comes the issue of ladies we become less polite especially when you don’t have a future investment in her’. Another member of the group adds: ‘culturally it is the female person that should show respect to men and so you have to show that you are in control.’

The evidence from both focus group discussions and role-plays suggests that there seem to be two rather different male approaches to apologising. However, both do seem to use a common style of masculine expression, for instance, slang words such as ‘sharp’ (A1) and the phrase ‘OK great’ (A4), which, according to the first focus sub-group, are typically used by males towards those of equal status. The verbal and non-verbal expressions described so far suggest that with both groups, displays of (masculine) power are involved in apology strategies. This issue will be taken up in Chapter 4.

3.2.2 Female Apologies

In this section we will start by examining an interaction between two women.

Role-play A5

- 1 Zanele: I'm sorry your pen when I was writing it just broke,
so if there is a problem I can give you another one (looks down
most of the time, using a low tone, and fiddles with the pen).
- 2 Grace: Not at all/
- 3 Zanele: No you need to get another one for your
exams (pressing the pen against her chest).
- 4 Grace: No no please, just bring it like that
- 5 Zanele: I'm very sorry please (repeatedly looking up into
the eyes of NZF, and then down)
- 6 Grace: fine

Here too both verbal and non-verbal strategies are employed. Zanele goes straight to the point, starting with an explicit apology: 'I'm sorry your pen when I was writing it just broke'. Again we see the strategy of shifting the blame onto the pen (as also used by Sifiso). This has been explained above as a common phenomenon which may be due to transfer from Zulu. Zanele did not stop at an explicit apology, but went further to acknowledge her responsibility by offering Grace a replacement for the pen, which is a general face-saving device. This was an open offer to Grace: 'so if there is a problem I can give you another one'. Here, too, Zanele looks down when apologising. The female focus group was in agreement that this indication of respect is unexpected in an interaction between people of the same status, and is probably due to the lack of familiarity between Zanele and Grace, resulting in some unease about the situation. The lowering of tone is explained by the female focus group as follows: 'when you apologise

you also use the tone of your voice'. Another respondent added: 'you use the tone of your voice to show that you are sorry by lowering it'. In Move 3, Zanele stresses Grace's need when her offer of replacement is turned down by Grace, and the non-verbal language display here portrays Grace as not 'free', in that she keeps her hands on the pen, pressing it against her chest. Finally, in Move 5, after Grace has refused Zanele's offer, Zanele reemphasises her remorse, reinforcing her apology with the adjective 'very'. As the female focus group comments: '...most times you emphasise that you are sorry.'

Role-play A7

- 1 Busisiwe: Hi (Smile)
- 2 Alice: Hi how was the exam
- 3 Busisiwe: too bad man (with hands in the pocket)
- 4 Alice: Where is my pen
- 5 Busisiwe: Oh this is what I was going to tell you, I was very unfortunate because your pen just broke when I was still writing, and I was forced to borrow it from somebody else (looks straight into Alice's eyes at first, and speak with low tone and intermittently looking down)
- 6 Alice: it just broke up the blues
- 7 Busisiwe: No I'm sorry I really don't know what happened, because/ (puts hands out of the pocket, and looks down)
- 8 Alice: you were panicking
- 9 Busisiwe: yea, you can say that (with a bit of smile)

- 10 Alice: I've been through that kind of situation
- 11 Busisiwe: Don't worry because I will see you because
you still need it (demonstrating with hands)
- 12 Alice: Oh yea, OK I'll be quite glad if you can give it back
- 13 Busisiwe: thank you

In this role-play, Busisiwe approached Alice with a smile and greetings, which could be interpreted as an attempt to get on cordial terms with Alice before breaking the news. Therefore, Busisiwe does not go straight to the point. This relaxed atmosphere is further reinforced in Move 3, when Alice stands with her hands in her pockets. (We will see a similar stance between friends, in Scenario B.) Alice's stance changes markedly when it comes to the actual explanation offered in Move 5: the tone is lowered, and the speaker looks down intermittently. The avoidance of eye contact is common to all respondents, but the lowering of tone (as in the previous role-play) seems to be a female strategy. Here again, in Move 5, the common strategy of shifting the blame onto the 'thing' is employed by Busisiwe, who begins by saying: 'I was very unfortunate because your pen just broke'. The explicit apology comes in Move 7, and is personalised: 'I'm sorry'. This, together with the non-verbal strategies: taking the hands out of her pockets, and looking down, seems to reflect a sober attitude. This is quite similar to the sober attitude displayed above in role-play A1 by Zanele. In Move 9, Busisiwe manages to smile again in response to Alice's conclusion: 'you were panicking', but (on video) this smile is thin and unreal. In Move 11, Busisiwe offers Alice a replacement, giving consideration to

Alice's need for the pen for the completion of the examination. Alice gladly accepts this offer, and Busisiwe responds to this with thanks: 'thank you'.

Looking at these two role-plays (A5 and A7) critically, we observe a number of similarities in the way Zulu-speaking females approach a V to apologise. However, these similar elements are not necessarily used in the same sequence. Firstly, the intermittent eye contact and use of low tone seem to be common to both. Another important similarity is the personalising of the explicit apology by the use of the phrase 'I'm' before 'sorry': 'I'm very sorry', 'I'm sorry'. This is followed by both Zanele and Busisiwe taking responsibility by making an open offer to replace the pen, with no conditions attached. And finally, these two Zulu females seem to consider what Grace and Alice need, which appears to have led to them making the offer: 'No you need to get another one for your exams'; and 'Don't worry because I will see you because you still need it.'

The following is a female-male version of this same scenario performed by Busisiwe.

Role-play A6

- 1 Busisiwe Hi how are you? (approaching NZM smiling)
- 2 Tom How was the paper?
- 3 Busisiwe It was good, but I was so unfortunate when I was writing your pen just broke, sorry, but I promise I will replace

it (suddenly looks down as she speaks with a low tone and covers her mouth with her hands as she explains)

- 4 Tom Yea, but it's the only pen I've got at the moment so when can you give me
- 5 Busisiwe when are you writing? (rubbing her hands and later folding her arms)
- 6 Tom I'm writing next week is just that/
- 7 Busisiwe Maybe we should try to have a place where we are going to meet (looking straight into NZM's eyes as she awaits his answer).
- 8 Tom Yea, what about tomorrow at lunch, what does it sound like?
- 9 Busisiwe So at which place? (spreading her hands)
- 10 Tom Café
- 11 Busisiwe Ok thank you very much.

Busisiwe uses the same strategy here as in A4. She does not go straight to the point, but begins with greetings and reinforces this with smiles. This here can be interpreted along similar lines to A4, a show of friendliness towards a stranger in order to win sympathy. In Move 3, Busisiwe gives the account of the incident, then comes an explicit apology 'sorry', ending with an offer to replace the pen. These expressions are accompanied by non-verbal strategies, such as the avoidance of eye contact as she speaks. In subsequent moves, after V has accepted the offer of a replacement, A seems more relaxed as she

suggests they agree on a time and place to meet: she stands with her arms folded, she meets his gaze, and finally spreads her hands.

We note that in scenario A both males (Sifiso and Bongani) and females (Zanele and Busisiwe) employ explanatory strategies to convey their apologies, although both males are briefer in their explanation in comparison with the female speakers. However, the differences are not limited to a simple male – female dichotomy. We will focus now on the disparity noted in the behaviour of the two males, Sifiso and Bongani. In the discussion we assigned Sifiso to the first male sub-group, and Bongani to the second. Sifiso clearly approaches an apology differently, depending on the gender of the victim. In role-play A1 Sifiso, interacting with a man, gave an explicit apology and a brief explanation of the situation and circumstances surrounding the incident. But in role-play A2, when interacting with a woman, Sifiso waited to be questioned before responding with an explanation for the occurrence of this incident. This is confirmed by the first focus sub-group, for whom it certainly appears that the gender of V does determine both verbal and non-verbal strategies to be employed. ‘To guys we will explain, but to ladies we won’t explain, because ladies talk too much.’ In addition, according to the focus group, the race of V also plays an important role: if V is Zulu, they might consider explaining, but otherwise – and especially if it is someone of a different skin colour – they would not. (Given that all my role-players were black – though from different countries - it was not possible to test this issue further in dialogue.)

On this basis we can very tentatively formulate the following apology strategies towards relative strangers.

Male sub-group 1:

Apology to male: Explicit apology + explanation + non-verbal strategies indicating equality.

Apology to female: Explicit apology only; if query from V, then a brief explanation.

Limitation of non-verbal strategies to avoid suggestion of equality.

Male sub-group 2:

Apology to male: Explicit apology + brief explanation + non-verbal (smiling)

(Apology to female, based on focus discussion only): Explicit apology + brief explanation.

Female group:

No distinctions between apologies to males and females were noted.

Apology to male and female: Explicit apology + explanation + non-verbal strategies (low tone) to indicate sincerity in apologising

3.3 Scenario B: NZF/NZM, had asked ZF/ZM, a friend to submit an assignment on his/her behalf. For some reason ZF/ZM did not do this and now it would cost NZF/NZM 10 marks.

Scenario B seeks to elicit an apology for a relatively serious time offence between friends. A time offence is one that evolves around lateness, for example, keeping people waiting and taking too long are regarded as time offences (Holmes 1995). Scenario B in this section is chosen as a time offence because of the serious nature of time involved. In this section, too, a few role-plays are selected for close analysis, and references are made to others. Again, I will be drawing on the focus groups to support my interpretation.

According to Holmes, time offences typically lead to an explanatory apology. This is a strategy that goes beyond the explicit expression of regret. It involves an explanation from A to V, to account for situations or circumstances. Time offences also lead to the admission of responsibility. Whereas Scenario A typically led to a rather reduced acknowledgment of responsibility, here we have the clear acceptance of blame, plus an offer of redress. In most cases an explicit apology is included, but it will be shown that in interactions between friends, it may be reduced or at times left out completely.

3.3.1 *Male Apologies*

Here we will begin with an interaction between Sifiso and Alice, to continue probing our tentative conclusions as to how the first male sub-group manages apologies.

Role-play 132

- 1 Alice: Hi
- 2 Sifiso: I'm OK, but I'm sorry couldn't submit your assignment (rubbing his hands until Move 8)
- 3 Alice: What were you saying?'
- 4 Sifiso: I said I couldn't submit your assignment (smiling)
- 5 Alice: No hah ha
- 6 Sifiso: seriously (nodding)
- 7 Alice: How can you I asked you fairly and /
- 8 Sifiso: Yes I was prepared but the fact that my parents came here and I suppose to leave with and I simply forgot to come back before 4 o'clock but unfortunately I came back at 6 o'clock (frowning).
- 9 Alice: So what should I do now
- 10 Sifiso: So I think if you have time lets go to the lecturer (pointing the direction of the door)
- 11 Alice: So who should approach the lecturer you or I

- 12 Sifiso: I think I you know I'm the one who is having the problem I think you can recommend me because I know its not your fault (rubbing his head).
- 13 Alice: Did you really forget or you had something occupying your mind
- 14 Sifiso: Yes of course I had the problem of meeting my parent. I thought I'll be back just before 4 but it was unfortunate I came back late. But I think you can come with me now to the lecturer (frown).
- 15 Alice: I don't know what to do right now
- 16 Sifiso: Simply accompany me to take it there (smile)
- 17 Alice: But it like its stupid /
- 18 Sifiso: lets go (frowning again).
- 19 Alice: OK lets go

In response to Alice's greeting, Sifiso goes straight to the point and tells her about the problem with her assignment. He apologises explicitly with the phrase 'I'm sorry'. The concurrent non-verbal strategy can be interpreted as him trying to appease Alice by rubbing his hands and it also indicates his readiness to apologise for the incidence. In Move 4 when Alice requested him to repeat what he said, Sifiso left out the apology : 'I said I couldn't submit your assignment': this was accompanied with a smile. This smile appears to be apologetic as he repeats himself to his friend, and it is followed by nodding to buttress his explanation. But in Move 8, Sifiso interrupts Alice as her tone changes.

- 2 John: You can't tell me you still have this paper.
- 3 Bongani:
/I'm sorry (hands the paper over)
- 4 John: It might cost me 10 marks now
- 5 Bongani: I'm sorry really have to apologise I tried. I was busy when I got there they say they were not going to take it (smiling).
- 6 John: If this was yours you would have submitted it
- 7 Bongani: I really tried, sorry I went there, but I was too late (smiling and demonstrating with his hands).
- 8 John: You think sorry is enough.
- 9 Bongani: I'll try and go talk to them again and try and see if I can get it in (sudden change to sober expression).
- 10 John: No leave it I'll take it myself

Bongani, a representative of the second male sub-group, approaches John with a very vague explanation: 'I was kind of busy I couldn't hand it in.' There is no detailed account of what happened; he does not tell John what exactly kept him busy. The explanation is immediately followed by an explicit and reinforced apology: 'I'm really sorry'. The accompanying non-verbal strategy is similar to that he uses in role-play A3 from Scenario A: he looks up and down intermittently. As explained by the respondent when interviewed about his performance after the recording, the avoidance of eye contact happened here unconsciously, he did not specifically intend using it in this case. The

- 5 Busisiwe: No is just that I have, you know that boy
friend of mine / (smiling)
- 6 Grace: yea
- 7 Busisiwe: he took me out and I was not prepared to
- 8 Grace: So now the assignment is now overdue. I'll lose 10
marks
- 9 Busisiwe: We must go to that lecturer and just explain
(demonstrate with hand)
- 10 Grace: I think/
- 11 Busiswe: Lets go lets go, its fine

We turn now to apologies expressed by women. Here, too, both verbal and non-verbal strategies are used to express an apology to a woman friend. The interaction starts with a warm greeting: Busisiwe hugs Grace, which displays affection and reveals their level of intimacy. In Move 3, she then tells Grace about the problem with the assignment. She gives a brief and incomplete explanation for the delay and immediately demands that Grace go with her 'now' to hand it in. Move 3 alone comprises all three apology strategies: the explicit apology: 'sorry I forgot to submit the assignment'; an explanatory strategy, although brief and incomplete: 'I was having a little problem yesterday'; and lastly an admission of responsibility in the form of an offer of redress: 'you must go with me now'. The non-verbal actions that accompany the above statements are very expressive: Busisiwe holds Grace's hands in hers and speak with a low tone. The holding of hands again displays intimacy and in addition could be interpreted as a plea, soliciting

V's understanding. The use of the low tone here would once again seem to be employed to express remorse, as explained above when discussing role-play A5 from scenario A. According to the female focus group, with friends too, one lowers the tone of voice to show one is genuinely sorry: 'we apologise to friends by saying it and showing it by lowering your voice'. In Move 5 Busisiwe begins to give a more detailed explanation of what happened to her, but is interrupted by Grace. Busisiwe smiles as she speaks, probably indicating that Grace is familiar with her problem. The interactions remains friendly, with Busisiwe encouraging Grace (in Move 8 and Move 10) to accompany her to speak to the lecturer. A further role-play between women friends (B6, Appendix pp. 87-88) reveals Zanele also apologising in the same friendly but apologetic manner.

We will now return to the tentative apology strategies offered at the end of our discussion of Scenario A. Do these formulae also hold for interactions between friends? In order to answer this question let us review the role-plays in this scenario. In role-play B2, Sifiso does not give an explanation for the late assignment until Alice in Move 8 questions his integrity. Whereas in Role-play B1 (see Appendix pp. 86), Sifiso approaches Tom with an explicit apology which is immediately followed by an explanation and, in due course, an offer of redress. Here, too, Sifiso uses different strategies towards a woman, and a man. In role-play B3, Bongani as, as in A4, begins with a brief and incomplete explanation, and then moves to an explicit apology. The women (Busisiwe in B4, and Zanele in B6) begin with a demonstration of affection which reflects a cordial relationship, and then employ, as in Scenario A, an explicit apology in a low tone, and an

explanation. Therefore it would seem that our tentatively presented apology strategies are applicable to apologies between friends as well.

3.4 Coming late to lecture

In order to obtain further data, the following question was put to the focus groups:

Coming late to a lecture how would you react; do you apologise; if yes, how?

This is a time offence but of a different type to the above time offence in Scenario B. The following responses were offered by the various focus groups:

The first male sub-group responded with some vigour: 'Yea you just sit down because you don't care; by the way you are all different; you don't know each other yet; you cannot spend five minutes discussing the matter; if any man challenges me I'll fix him'. Another respondent continued added: 'I think it's also justified; someone can waste your time just talking about something that can be settled by other means'. This group responded with a display of physical strength, involving a lack of respect for others. The co-students, rather than the lecturer, were seen as V; the offence was not perceived as requiring a (verbal or non-verbal) apology. The lecturer was left out completely.

The second male sub-group suggested a different strategy: 'yea I'll apologise, you are supposed to apologise for that it's a lack of punctuality'. And the second respondent added: 'you don't go straight to the lecturer, when you come in you just raise your hand and I'm sorry I'm late and then take your seat'. In contrast to the first group, who

recognised their colleagues as V, the second group interprets the offence as one against the lecturer and not against the co-students.

The female group offered a similar response to the second male sub-group in their approach. 'No I don't apologise when I'm late I don't want to disturb the lecture'; 'you wait till the end of the lecture and see the lecturer'; and finally: 'But then there are some lecturers who force they need you to do something like wave of hand'. To the female group V is the lecturer, and they gave two different reasons as to why apologies should not be expressed: to avoid disturbance, and because this is not welcomed by some lecturers. In any case it is perceived as an offence against the lecturer rather than against co-students.

3.5 Scenario C: ZM/ZF approaches a black non-South African library student assistant and later realises that the assistant does not understand or speak Zulu.

This scenario seeks to elicit an apology for a mistaken identity between two strangers. Here too, the unintended offence tends to result in an explicit apology and generally an explanation (though in this scenario an explanation of a somewhat different type).

The following three role-plays respond to Scenario C, a situation whereby a black student assistant in the library is approached for help by another student who uses the Zulu language. However, it turns out that the assistant is from another African country and therefore does not speak Zulu. The first version is performed between two women,

the second shows a man interacting with a woman library assistant, and the third is between two men. The selected role-plays are representative of the various gender groupings we have been proposing; once again I will explore my assumption that two groups of men exist.

3.5.1 *Female Apologies*

Role-play C1

- 1 Zanele: Ngicela ukwazi ukuthi lenwadi ngingayithola kuphi? (moves close and look straight into NZF's eyes as she speaks pointing at a book title on a paper.)
'Can I know where I can get this book'
- 2 Alice: sorry
- 3 Zanele: Ngicela ungibhekela kwi computer (moves even closer and points again at the title)
'Can you help me in the computer where can I get it'
- 4 Alice: I don't speak Zulu

- 5 Zanele: Oh sorry I thought you are Zulu speaker
because of your complexion (moves back a bit with a smile and
lowering her tone).
- 6 Alice: Does it mean that everybody who is dark speaks
Zulu
- 7 Zanele: No some times if a person stays here I just
assume he's a Zulu speaker (looking down and up intermittently)
- 8 Alice: Then that's wrong ok
- 9 Zanele: Ok (rubbing hands)
- 10 Alice: So what do you want
- 11 Zanele: I just want to check this reading, I have
checked on the computer I couldn't find it (leans over but not as
close as before, pointing at the title on the paper)
- 12 Alice: May be I can help you check
- 13 Zanele: Oh thanks (smiling)

According to the scenario, Zanele was to assume that the student assistant is Zulu or at least speaks Zulu, and this was expressed in the confidence with which she asked for information in Zulu. On discovering that Alice is not South African, Zanele in Move 5 explicitly apologises and gives a reason for her assumption, lowering the tone of her voice. Her reason is immediately rejected by Alice. Zanele continues justifying her assumption (Move 7), but by now she has drawn back a bit from Alice, which indicates unfamiliarity or timidity. The confidence she displayed in Moves 1 and 3 has suddenly

disappeared, now that she realises the person she was talking to is not Zulu and does not speak Zulu. After Alice has challenged her in Move 8, she admits that she was wrong to make such an assumption in Move 9.

3.5.2 *Male Apologies*

Role-play C3

- 1 Sifiso: Sawubona (with a smile)
- 2 Grace: what?
- 3 Sifiso: Sawubona
- 4 Grace: pardon
- 5 Sifiso: where are you from, you in KZN why don't you talk Zulu (eyes widen in astonishment and then screws up his face).
- 6 Grace: Sorry I don't understand Zulu (looking upset),
- 7 Sifiso: Ok I'm sorry, you look so much like Zulu (spreading his hands with a slight frown)
- 8 Grace: I'm thinking why (still upset)/
- 9 Sifiso: You know I thought you talk Zulu (still frowning)
- 10 Grace: You don't just talk to people any how, you must have a manner of approaching
- 11 Sifiso: Yea, that is right I know (screws up his face).

- 12 Grace : It doesn't mean that all blacks in KZN are Zulu
- 13 Sifiso: Yea but I think you should learn some basics
(nodding)
- 14 Grace: You should have asked your question instead of/
- 15 Sifiso: I need
to find a book with no 526.

Here Sifiso makes the same assumption as he greets the assistant confidently in Zulu. When he realizes that the assistant is not Zulu and does not speak Zulu, he immediately inquires about Grace's nationality (Move 5) and questions her inability to speak Zulu. He only apologizes in Move 7 with the phrase 'OK I'm sorry' when he realizes that the assistant is upset. An analysis of this phrase suggests that the word 'ok' before 'sorry' is used to reduce the weight of the apology, to pacify Grace rather than apologizing for a mistake. When Grace challenges his approach he agrees, but his attitude changes. he becomes unfriendly. and stresses that Grace should learn some basics of the Zulu language. Sifiso wards off a face-threatening challenge by Grace with unfriendliness.

Role-play C5

- 1 Bongani: Uxolo mfethu kukhona incwadi ebengiyifuna lapha
elibrary manje manje angiyitholi ngicela ungisize (looking straight
at NZM)
- 'Sorry brother, there is a book that I'm looking for in the library
but I can't get it, can you help me'

- 2 John: I could be black in Zululand. but I don't understand Zulu
- 3 Bongani: Really, where are you from (smiling with
bright eyes)
- 4 John: is that what you want
- 5 Bongani: No no I'm just asking for a book. but just
wondering where you are from because I don't meet many people,
black people here in South Africa who don't speak Zulu (still
smiling rubbing his hands)
- 6 John: I come from Africa
- 7 Bongani: Oh is it (looking straight at John in the eyes)
- 8 John: Yea
- 9 Bongani: Anyway, can you help me with this book, I have
tried to find it (pointing at the title on the paper)
- 10 John: Do you have the number
- 11 Bongani: Yea (face expressionless)
- 12 John: Give me the number
- 13 Bongani3: 365 (looking at John)
- 14 John: Ok go to level 4
- 15 Bongani: Thanks
- 16 John: Sure

Bongani approaches the male library assistant with a comrade-like tone and maintains eye contact as he addresses him in Zulu. In Move 3, when he finds out that John is not

South African, he becomes very interested and is full of smiles. He inquires about John's nationality which John refuses to declare. But Bongani gives no explicit apology, even though John seems upset. Instead he explains the reason for such an approach in Zulu. Although John does not respond to his friendliness, Bongani manages to keep his cool (he keeps smiling). He seems rather to be amused by the way and manner John is answering him.

Having examined these three different speakers, a certain attitude seems to be common to all despite their differences. The most common shared behaviour is the way all three begin with the same assumption and express it in the manner of their approach. Each speaks Zulu to the assistant on the basis of her/his skin colour. Also of interest was the confidence displayed when using Zulu, which was shared especially by the first two respondents. The two male speakers also shared some common ground. They seemed to either greet or identify with the library assistant by calling him *mfwethu* 'brother', and their line of questioning was similar.

However, female and male speakers do display some differences in strategies. Firstly, the female speaker begins by explaining her need, whereas both males start with greetings or the use of the word *mfwethu* 'brother'. This expresses some intimacy on the basis of a joint cultural background, as explained during the role-play interviews. The second obvious difference between female and male behaviours is the way they all react when the assistant declares his/her position as a non-South African. The first speaker apologises for the mix up and goes on to repeat her inquiries in English, but the men

handle the situation differently. Sifiso and Bongani both respond with interest and inquire about Grace's and John's nationality respectively. As a result their conversation with the assistant tended to be longer than that of the female. Finally, unlike the female speaker neither of the men thinks the situation really requires an apology, although the second speaker gives one to appease the assistant. The unintended offence is trivialized and they respond in terms of their own interests.

Here too, the male responses can be sub-divided. The first male respondent displays his identity not only by asking for the assistant's national identity, but also by questioning her inability to speak Zulu and insisting that she learn. When the assistant rejects his approach his attitude changes; he becomes unfriendly and is no longer interested in the conversation. In the role-play interview he stated that the thought of a foreigner harassing him in his own land made him angry. On the other hand, the second male speaker displays a similar interest in the assistant by asking about his nationality, yet this speaker limits his curiosity to interest. He seems to be more interested in finding out where the assistant is from and does not question his inability to speak Zulu. Unlike his counterpart, he remains calm and undisturbed throughout the conversation.

My own experience as a black international student who often works as library assistant at UND confirms the existence of the three sets of strategies outlined above. In addition, these strategies seem to be a function of the gender (identity) of the student involved, and not of the gender of the library assistant. For example the first male subgroup uses this set of strategies when interacting with black foreign males and females. Role-play C4,

between two males, further substantiates these strategies (see Appendix pp. 90). Similarly, the female apology strategy is also confirmed for interactions with males and females by one additional role-play, C2 (see Appendix pp. 89).

3.6 Physical infringement

If you accidentally throw a pencil at a classmate instead of your friend, how would you apologise?

Focus-group responses to this scenario are discussed here, because of its slight resemblance to mistaken identity. Members of the focus group were asked to react to this situation as they would in real life. Again the men responded in different ways. We will begin with the responses of the first male sub-group, followed by the second sub-group and end with the female group.

The first male sub-group explain their strategy in such a situation: 'if it is a lady it depends if it's a black lady you really apologise, but if it's another race you just sorry and leave that site. I think ownership of this land especially in Kwa-Zulu Natal, everyone must submit to Zulu although it's wrong, she might be asked in Zulu to pass the pen knowing well that she does not understand Zulu, but if she does not we'll abuse her in Zulu'. Another member adds: 'I think he is right our apology is very thin. We don't like to apologiseif you hit someone by mistake, he should know that its a mistake, if I say sorry then I go. If he doesn't understand then you feel there must be something wrong with him or her that must be sorted out. The only way to sort it out is to show him or her that you not afraid of him or her'. In this case, too, these men find a show of physical

strength an appropriate response, in order to show that they are bold or courageous men. This offence is portrayed as trivial: 'he should know that it's a mistake'.

Respondents from the first male **group limit themselves** to an explicit apology and see no reason for an explanation of the incident. The victim is expected to know or understand that the incident is simply a 'mistake'. Their sense of self is based on physical strength and political domination, in that they refer to ownership of the land. As owners of the land they become territorial and seek to exhibit power and control both physically and socially by commanding the victim to pass the thrown pen back.

The second group of men **sees things differently**, and both agree that it is an offence and that it is necessary to apologise to the victim irrespective of race or gender. 'No you have to apologise'; as exemplified by: 'I just realised I was trying to throw the pen at my friend so the pen hit you. I'm sorry you know I was trying to direct the pen to my friend.' These men recommend that an explicit apology and possibly a brief explanation are appropriate under such circumstances. By receiving such an apology, V is given the opportunity to **assess** the situation and this in return fosters understanding on V's part.

Lastly, we will look at the female responses. All members of this group were unanimous as to what was to be done. 'You apologise and explain whether its a colleague or not'. 'It depends on for example like when you bump into someone in the corridor, you cannot explain why you bump into him or her just apologise, saying sorry'. 'Sometimes you can say I'm sorry I didn't see you.' 'At times the person sees that you are not paying attention

to where you are going to I mean you just say I'm sorry.' In an attempt to explain what their approach would be, they compared the situation to other similar apology situations.

The offence is not trivialised by the women: 'you apologise and explain'; and the women here agreed that a **proper apology is necessary**, which might require explanation in order to ensure the 'face' of the victim is addressed. The situation is **approached** by the women without strong emotion, which allows them to measure out **apologies in** an equal manner to whoever deserves them.

Having analysed the different types of gender displays within the male and female focus groups and the male and female role-plays, it becomes clear that 'difference' can not be ruled out. In the next chapter I shall explore these different strategies to discover if the end result are same.

4

Discussion of Results

4.1 Gender Display Of Culture

The key issue examined in this study is the role that politeness plays in the construction of gender identities among Zulu L2 English speakers on the Durban campus of the University of Natal. In my analysis of the focus group discussions and role-play data I have argued that the politeness styles of women and men contrast markedly in certain respects, particularly in terms of their relation to Zulu culture. The dominant male perspective on politeness (including decisions as to whether politeness is necessary in a particular situation or not) conforms with expectations from Zulu culture and with established Zulu norms. Even in the multicultural University context, a Zulu male can best construct his identity as a 'man', by complying with the norms of a traditionally oriented Zulu-based politeness. Yet, as will be explained below, this perception is now beginning to be contested: in my analysis I found it necessary to distinguish between a majority of R-men and a minority of F-men. The women, on the other hand, construct their female identity (seemingly a rather unified construct) not only in terms of Zulu culture, but also in terms of attempts to create a platform for interaction with people from outside the Zulu culture. At the same time, of course, they are perfectly aware of what culture says and requires of them regarding polite attitudes. I will present and explain these different attitudes towards culture, by drawing on the terms 'involvement' and 'independence' developed by Scollon and Scollon (1995), but used here in a different sense.

4.1.1 Male Involvement

The definition of 'involvement' in the *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* has the connotation of inclusion: a subject is part of a group, or participates in an event. I will be arguing here that the politeness strategies analysed reveal two levels of male involvement: the R-men still identify completely with Zulu culture, whereas the F-men are at times able to distance themselves from Zulu culture.

The self-presentation of the R-men in the focus group reveals not only that they are very aware of their culture, but also that their primary allegiance is to that cultural system of behaviour. Their constant use of the phrase 'we Zulu' depicts the extent to which they remain involved in Zulu culture. During the focus group discussion, the men continuously make reference to their culture in an effort to explain what it means to be polite. In their eyes, the politeness behaviours of both male and female members of Zulu society are clearly prescribed by tradition. This means that the Zulu masculine and feminine identities, to which these politeness behaviours also contribute, are, as social constructs, clearly defined. These males seem happy to absorb these cultural expectations, probably because they place them in positions of authority as they mature from boys into full grown men: 'when you are a small boy you must show respect to everybody, but once you are a young man, then the younger ones and ladies must respect you' (comment by a R-man). In a culture in which face is a public property (Goffman 1967), such respect is clearly important.

In that the male world is constructed in this way around Zulu culture, these men not only adhere strictly to the regulations guiding male behaviour in their society but also seek to extend these to the larger world. In other words, the cultural identity men seek to construct does not change when they move beyond Zulu society; they continue to construct themselves as Zulu males in their interactions with people from different cultures. As they remain fully involved with Zulu cultural norms, transfer of these can constantly be observed in their interactions with non-Zulus. In terms of theories of intercultural communication, such transfer would tend to result in miscommunication. This is confirmed by my data: miscommunication is more frequent in those interactions involving men, and particularly R-men. These men draw on Zulu norms to decide, firstly, when politeness is necessary, and secondly, how to express politeness – both of which might well lead speakers from another culture to reject the R-man as impolite. On the one hand, the lack of an expected apology may upset a V from other culture; on the other, unfamiliar apology strategies may lead to miscommunication. This holds, too, for the non-Zulu participants in this research project: even though they are African international students, their cultural backgrounds still differ.

This attitude of total involvement is clearly reflected in the language used by the R-men. Phrases like ‘our culture’, ‘we Zulus’ are repeatedly used whenever they introduce the word ‘culture’ into their discussion. Such ongoing use of the first person plural pronoun indicates an inclusion of self as part of the group. The focus group discussions further clarified these attitudes, when members of this sub-group discussed apologies and reacted to apology situations: ‘you have to be in control if you are a man’; ‘we Zulus are kind of

proud we always beat ourselves': 'Zulu has been a strong nation and so somewhere or somehow all the others (white, Indian and Xhosa) that we are forced to live with here, they just must listen to us, even if they don't like it'.

Such overt statements are underpinned by non-verbal strategies, as we saw especially in the role-plays involving Sifiso, who was chosen from the role-players to represent the R-men. Sifiso's non-verbal strategies display this masculine strength, as he frowns to save face when he feels his authority is challenged by V, particularly when V is a woman. The reason for this type of self-presentation could be that R-men are expected to exhibit their strength by fighting rather than to waste words, as explained by members of the group.

Let us now turn to the minority group of males, which I have labelled the F-men. On the other hand, they are willing to compromise some aspects of their culture for a western one: they are willing to accept a certain measure of western influence. At the same time, like the R-men, they still maintain strong links with and respect for their Zulu culture. They too use the phrases 'we Zulus' and 'our culture', but occasionally interchange these with 'the Zulu culture' and 'the Zulus'. This suggests some ability to distance themselves from their culture of origin. It was noticeable in the role-plays, that Bongani, selected as representing this set, was more apologetic in his approach, repeatedly using words like 'sorry', 'I'm sorry', 'I'm really sorry'. This is in sharp contrast to the verbal style of the R-men who barely use the phrase 'sorry' or 'I'm sorry', and certainly not the reinforced form 'I'm really sorry'. It is clear that these men construct themselves differently to the R-men:

even though both the R-men and the F-men remain 'culturally involved', this is to a significantly different degree.

4.1.2 Female Independence

Let us now turn to the women. Both in the focus group and the role-plays, the female respondents show a level of detachment in respect of culture. The term 'independence', given its literal meaning, freedom, gives us a clear picture of the way these women relate to Zulu culture when outside of Zulu society. In the course of the focus group discussions, as with the men, references were made to 'culture' to establish the expected norms guiding women's politeness. But unlike the men, these women no longer identify completely with their Zulu culture. Instead they see it as their heritage: 'a woman is polite from childhood we are brought up that way, and so we inherit it'. As a result there is less transfer of Zulu interactional norms during communication with non-Zulu speakers, except for the occasional avoidance of eye contact. In other words, these women try to avoid carrying over their constructed identity as Zulu women when interacting with non-Zulus, and this especially in a learning environment such as the University of Natal, Durban. These women create a boundary around the identity they have constructed in terms of Zulu cultural norms, and seek to construct another identity that is acceptable in whatever society they are involved with, in this case a rather more Western-oriented university campus. Certainly the women do possess some individual differences, with some even revealing an occasional R-men or F-men trait. Yet they all are unanimous in their responses to the discussion around culture. In terms of this unified voice, the female focus group remained undivided and a single group.

Their use of words, too, includes some phrases that reveal their cultural independence. In the first place, there are fewer references to 'culture' than with the men, and when the term is used, it is mostly in a general sense, being referred to in relation to other cultures, like 'white culture'. Phrases like 'the Zulu', 'the Zulu culture', 'Zulu women' are occasionally employed in the course of the discussion, but unlike the men, the women constantly use the article 'the' to qualify 'culture' instead of first person plural pronouns. This strategy of using articles instead of inclusive pronouns reveals a clear sense of distance, and their precise cultural orientation remains unclear. The phrase 'Zulu women' constructs the women as on-lookers rather than as members or part of the group termed Zulu women. Nevertheless, their cultural independence does not in any way diminish their respect for their culture.

In the role-plays, the women present two different characters, or approaches. The first, presented by Zanele, displays confidence, approaches V calmly, and apologises, thus exhibiting the feminine identity presented by the focus group. The second female, Busisiwe, on the other hand, appears rather timid and nervous. When questioned about her performance after the recording, she pointed out, quite clearly, that she was not intimidated, but shy by nature. When considering this statement, we should nevertheless bear in mind that 'shyness' is considered an appropriate cultural norm for traditional Zulu women.

4.2 Politeness strategies of men and women

This section explores the relationship between gender identity and the patterns of politeness strategy choices of the three groups identified above: the R-men, the F-men, and the Zulu women.

The R-men perceive apologies purely from a cultural (Zulu culture) point of view and administer apologies accordingly, irrespective of V's own culture. The construction of masculinity their culture requires of them is one that displays control, physical strength, self-assuredness and courage. They see what they term 'the western form of masculinity' as weaker and hence as not acceptable. Consequently, their approaches differ considerably from those of the other two groups. The apologies of R-men towards males differ from those towards females, and in addition, skin colour and/or culture determines the strategy to be used. Their comments in the focus group on the apology situation of physical infringement were revealing: 'If it's a lady it depends, if she is black, you really apologise. "I'm sorry", but if she is of another race you just say "sorry" and leave that site'.

The R-men in the focus group agreed on the display of control and physical strength as a sign of their masculinity. And consequently, as one of them said: 'our apology line is very thin'. A male V who dwells on an issue longer than expected, is seen and understood as being unreasonable, and the response of the R-men is to ask for a fight to settle the issue. When a female V is involved, an apology is made reluctantly, particularly if it is a female of colour other than black. The explanation for this is that they 'own the land' and will not be intimidated by (indian and white, and even black) 'foreigners', especially by women

foreigners. The justification proffered here is one of political power, and this would appear to be the actual justification. This attitude is also reflected in the role-plays towards female Vs. In role-play B2, Sifiso, an R-man, only becomes at all serious when Alice questions his integrity: only in Move 9 does he find it necessary to give an explanation for letting her down. As serious and disturbing as the issue is for Alice, Sifiso approaches the matter in a rather whimsical manner.

The minority F-men, in contrast, have adopted a form of masculinity that embraces self-control and mental strength. Both representatives agree that although men possess physical strength, it should not be allowed free reign. While R-men construct themselves in terms of physical strength and control over others, F-men draw rather on the ability to control this same physical strength; they see self-control as manly. Exercising self-control as an F-man does not completely rule out the exhibition of typically R-style masculine behaviours, but these are displayed only when they seem reasonable. For instance in role-plays B3, Bongani remained calm despite the unfriendly attitude of his friend, but in Move 9 he changed his approach, seeing that his friend was not co-operating. Bongani commented on this change during the subsequent interview: he had tried to make John understand the situation, but John seemed unwilling to accept his apology and by now was beginning to irritate him. The focus group commented: 'if you are a guy you have to try to persevere your manhood. you apologise at the same time you try to save yourself. So it like, I apologise because I did some thing wrong to you not that I`m inferior to you'. In other words: 'I have done something wrong and I`m really sorry for that but at the same time I`m still a man`. Similarly, in role-play C5, Bongani put up with the library assistant's

unfriendliness until Move 11, when his expression changed and he terminated the interaction.

F-men are by no means divorced from Zulu culture, but compromises are possible. They display a form of masculinity that is calm, understanding and self-controlled, which is an acceptable construct in the westernised University context. To F-men an apology is a must whenever one becomes aware of wrong-doing. An apology must be proffered to any V, irrespective of their gender and race (colour). However, an apology to a female V is handled somewhat differently than to a male V. While a male V is given a full apology ('I'm really sorry'), the female V must be treated with additional respect. The F-men focus sub-group was explicit on this point. Wherever a wrong is identified, V must receive an apology, irrespective of gender, but in addition: 'to women because they are weaker than men you have to be nicer by showing them respect'. In role-play A4, F-man Bongani began with an apology in Move 1, stressing it further in the same Move, and offering a replacement. When the victim refused this in Move 4, the conversation ended with a repetition of the explicit and reinforced apology: Bongani presented himself as a man of self-control and a good sense of management of situation.

Let us now turn to the women and their unified construction of femininity, which I have characterised as 'independent'. All the women interviewed displayed a positive attitude towards that version of westernised culture which happens to be the culture of the learning environment. This suggests that female student identity may draw indirectly on western femininity. (Indeed, in their discussion the R-men accuse female Zulu students of imbibing

western culture without giving Zulu culture due consideration.) Thus the women display a form of identity which includes a progressive and independent femininity. However, they still retain their inherited culture which comes into display when interacting with a fellow Zulu and at times also slips through into their interactions with other nationalities. These female students treat men and women equally, which means that any V will receive the same level of apology (according to the severity of the offence), irrespective of gender and race. Age, however, receives special consideration. As argued by de Kadt (1998), in Zulu culture status differentials lead to less 'free' postures and gestures. The female focus group made it clear that silence and avoidance of eye contact are strategies commonly used when interacting with elders, irrespective of race. A member of the group commented specifically on this: 'for example, I was told by a white lady that when I'm talking to her that I must look at her in the eyes to show that I'm paying attention. She said she knows that in Zulu culture you don't look into an elderly person's eyes, what she didn't know was that I was paying attention to her and I was only being polite'.

I have been arguing here that these women behave in a uniform manner, and we will review the role-plays briefly to confirm this statement. In all the female role-plays Zanele and Busisiwe appear to be consistent in their use of apology strategies. Role-plays A5, A6, A7, B4, B5, B6, B7, C1 and C2 (see Appendix) are uniform in their explicit apologies and the accompanying non-verbal strategies. Busisiwe and Zanele both approach all Vs, irrespective of gender and social distance (strangers and friends), in the same style. Both women use explicit apologies like 'sorry', 'I'm sorry', 'I'm very sorry'; and in all cases these apologies are reinforced non-verbally by lowering the tone of their voice. The focus

group, too, referred to this non-verbal strategy as a means of showing sincerity in apologies. They confirmed, too, that all Vs must receive such an apology, both in verbal form ('I'm sorry') and in non-verbal form (use of lowered tone), without discrimination.

In conclusion, I have argued that three different perceptions of apologies can be identified, which are then available for three different constructions of gender identity. The R-men see apologies in cultural terms and draw strongly on Zulu culture in constructing themselves as masculine. The F-men see apologies in more personal terms and construct a masculinity that exhibits mental strength and self-control. To the women, apologies are about being considerate, and the women's approach to femininity is informed by 'right doing'.

5

Conclusion

5.1 Summary of findings

Johnson (1997: 25) has argued that 'a focus on the ways in which masculine identities are formed and in particular the role of language in the construction of those identities' is one of the ways of overcoming masculine resistance to change. She draws on Weedon's (1987) poststructuralist challenge to urge feminist linguists to begin to explore the 'discursive strategies employed by men in their attempt to resist change and hold on to power' (Johnson 1997:25). In this research project I have attempted to respond to this challenge, and, indeed, to take the process one step further. Not only have I investigated men's use of discursive strategies, and indicated some ways in which these can be understood as a quest to sustain male hegemony. In addition I have explored women's discursive strategies and discovered indications that these women are no longer willing to tolerate social relations that subordinate their interests to those of men (Weedon 1987).

My thesis has explored the ways in which apologies are realised by male and female Zulu students when speaking English in a westernized learning environment. The results of this study have then been interpreted in terms of the construction of gender identities. I have argued that whereas Zulu masculinity now seems to be contested between more and less traditional understandings, the Zulu-speaking women investigated are as a group rejecting the traditional understanding of Zulu femininity. The full range of apology

strategies used by these L2-English speakers reflects more and less strongly transfer from Zulu. Strategies selected by the men tend to reveal a far higher degree of transfer: those used by women are generally more distant from Zulu. The male group I have termed R-men have a strong sense of attachment to their culture; their apology strategies exhibit a high degree of transfer. Their masculinity is constructed in terms of physical strength and domination over others. F-men, on the other hand, are somewhat detached from Zulu and use a combination of transferred and English-oriented apology strategies. Their masculinity is constructed in terms of mental strength and self-control. The women, finally, tend to utilise apology strategies which are more distant from Zulu. While retaining a deep respect for Zulu culture, they are shifting away from traditional Zulu understandings of female roles, which entails a rejection of male domination, and their identity is constructed in terms of a positive femininity.

5.2 Suggestion for further research

The aim of this research project is to contribute to the ongoing feminist project of exploring language as a means of constructing gender identities, in the anticipation that this will shed light on some of the various structures and strategies that still suppress women. Gender research is never merely academic in purport; it seeks actively to contribute to societal redress.

The current research was carried out with a very small sample, yet the results are most suggestive. I therefore urge that similar research be carried out on a larger scale, to enable broader generalisations, and indeed conclusions to be drawn as to how women are

presently, and can best resist male hegemony. On the one hand, the study could be expanded in terms of the number of respondents, role-plays and focus groups, in order to base conclusions on a broader sample. On the other, the types of data collected, and the context in which data is collected, could be expanded. I have produced some first information about how Zulu men and women tend to apologise in English; how do they respond to apologies proffered to them? The collection of data in contexts such as technikons and schools would enable contrastive studies to be undertaken. Indeed, the collection of data from outside KwaZulu-Natal would enable apologies to be explored in relation to the psychology of Zulu space ownership. In these ways, the more pervasive constructions of gender identity among Zulu students when speaking English could be determined, as well as their societal consequences.

Moving away from the language perspective, researchers in gender issues might profitably explore what seem to be fairly substantial shifts in gender perspectives on the UND campus. On the one hand, I have shown that the majority construction of masculinity is being challenged; on the other all the women students investigated seemed to be in agreement in their move away from traditional Zulu femininity. Again, the potential societal consequences of such shifts make it imperative that we find out more about them.

Finally, given the diversity in the student body on Durban campus, language and communication researchers should continue to look into ways of improving cross-cultural and cross-gender communication on campus. This University will doubtless continue to

attract more students from a wide variety of **backgrounds**, which in turn may well further exacerbate the already existing tendency to cross-cultural miscommunication, especially in the residences. Attempts should be made to investigate the key culture and language related issues involved, to ensure that entrants gain a level of awareness as to communication across cultures, and across genders, which will help to accommodate students from other cultural groups within South Africa, as well as international students.

Appendix 1

1 Issues and questions discussed in focus group discussions.

What do you think politeness is?

What does it mean to be polite?

How do you go about being polite?

Is it expressed in the same manner by women and men?

How do you express your politeness to non-Zulus? (whites, Indians and other Africans).

How do you express politeness to your age groups of males and females?

How about politeness to older people? (Zulus and non-Zulus)?

What is an apology?

Do you apologise?

How do you apologise to people?

How is it expressed?

If you were to apologise to somebody you feel you have wronged, how would you go about it?

Do women and men apologise in the same way?

2 Situational questions posed to the focus group members.

Would you apologise for coming late to a lecture?

If you accidentally throw a pencil at a classmate instead of your friend, how would you apologise?

Would you apologise for coming late to a group discussion?

3 Role-play interviews

Questions such as the following, depending on the shape of the specific role-play.

Why were you avoiding V eyes?

Would you have behaved differently if it were a real life situation?

Why did you frown?

Were you in a way intimidated?

Why did you suddenly change your attitude?

Appendix 2

Role-play transcriptions

Role-plays which have not been transcribed in the text of the thesis are appended here.

Scenario A: ZM/ZF borrowed a pen from NZM/NZF in an examination hall, but unfortunately the pen broke while in use. After the exam ZM/ZF meets the owner of the pen outside the hall.

Role-play A1 Sifiso and Tom., see pp. 35

Role-play A2 Sifiso and Grace, see pp. 40

Role-play A3 Siphwe and Tom

1 Tom Hi, how was the paper

2 Siphwe It was alright, but I have a problem I'm sorry your pen broke when I was writing (folding his arms and looking straight into Tom's eyes).

3 Tom What happened?

4 Siphwe I don't know, it just broke when I was writing (spreading his hand).

5 Tom So how did you manage?

6 Siphwe I borrowed another pen from the lady in front of me (pointing).

7 Tom Don't worry its fine

8 Siphwe Ok thanks (shakes Tom's hand).

there was nothing I could do I'm very sorry. (rubbing the paper in her hands and speaks with a low tone)

2 Alice But you could have just brought the assignment to me. Do you know that I'm going to lose 10 marks.

3 Zanele I know that, but because I was sick I couldn't make it so I'm very sorry, I was very sick (pressing the paper against her chest).

4 Alice Ok bring it I'll go and see the lecturer.

5 Zanele I'm so sorry (hands over the paper).

6 Alice Its fine.

Role-play B7 Zanele and Tom

1 Zanele Hi, I'm very sorry I didn't submit your assignment because I was sick yesterday and I went to see the Doctor. I know it will pain you, but there was nothing I couldn't I'm very sorry (press the paper against her chest and speaks with a low tone).

2 Tom Are you better now

3 Zanele Yes thanks, I'm on medication (smiling).

4 Tom So what do you think I can do now about this assignment. Its going to cost me 10 marks.

5 Zanele I know I'm sorry it was because I was sick, lets go together to the lecturer and I'll tell him what happen (pressing the paper on her chest and lowered the tone of her voice).

6 Tom Bring it I'll take it myself.

7 Zanele Are you sure (hands over the paper slowly).

Scenario C: ZM/ZF approaches a black non-South African library student assistant and later realizes that the assistant does not understand or speak Zulu.

Role-play C1 Zanele and Alice. see pp. 58-59

Role-play C2 Busisiwe and Tom

1 Busisiwe Ngicela ungisize ngithole leencwadi (moving close and points to the title of the book)

'Please where can I find this book'

2 Tom Sorry I don't understand Zulu

3 Busisiwe Oh I'm sorry, I thought you were Zulu (lowering her tone as she back off)

4 Tom Is it because I'm black?

5 Busisiwe Yes (smiling).

6 Tom It doesn't mean that every black person is Zulu

7 Busisiwe No, it is because I don't meet a lot of black people here that are not Zulu (fiddling with the hem of her blouse).

8 Tom Anyway, what can I do for you?

9 Busisiwe Please I am looking for this book (leans over and shows Tom the title of the book).

Role-play C3 Sifiso and Grace, see pp. 59-60

Role-play C4 Sifiso and Tom

- 1 Sifiso Sewubona!
- 2 Tom Can you speak in English please.
- 3 Sifiso Why (moves back and frowns)
- 4 Tom Because I'm not Zulu, that's why.
- 5 Sifiso Oh where are you from (eyes brightened)
- 6 Tom Why do you want to know
- 7 Sifiso I want to know because I'm interested in meeting other black Africans
(looking serious).
- 8 Tom I'm from East Africa.
- 9 Sifiso Where in East Africa? (spreading his hands)
- 10 Tom Kenya
- 11 Sifiso But I think you should learn Zulu while you are here or don't you like
Zulu (nodding and pointing to the ground).
- 12 Tom What exactly can I do for you?
- 13 Sifiso I'm looking for this book, and I really think you must learn Zulu (pointing
to the title, raising head and looking straight into Tom's eyes).

Role-play C5 Bongani and John, see pp. 61-62

Bibliography

- Adegbija, E. (1989) A Comparative Study of Politeness Phenomena in Nigerian English, Yoruba and Ogori. *Multilingua* 8(1): 57 –80.
- Austin, J. L. (1962) *How to Do Things with Words*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Bing, J. M. and V. L. Bergvall (1996) The Question of Questions: Beyond Binary Thinking. In V. L. Bergvall, J. M. Bing and A. F. Freed (eds) *Rethinking Language and Gender Research: Theory and Practice*. London and New York: Longman, pp. 1-30.
- Blum-Kulka, S. (1989) Playing it Safe: The Role of Conventionality in Indirectness In S. Blum-Kulka, J. House-Edmondson and G. Kasper (eds) *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies*. Norwood NJ: Ablex, pp. 37-70.
- Brown, P. and S. Levinson (1987) *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Brown, P. (1980) How and Why are Women more Polite: Some Evidence from a Mayan Community. In S. McConnell-Ginet, R. Borker and N. Furman (eds) *Women and Language in literature and Society*. New York: Praeger Publishers, pp. 111-136.
- Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and Subversion of Identity*. New York: Routledge.

- Cameron, D. (1992) Not Gender difference but the Difference Gender Makes—Explanation in Research on Sex and Language. *International Journal of the Sociology Language* 94, 13-26.
- Cameron, D. (1996) The Language-Gender Interface: Challenging Co-option. In V. L. Bergvall, J. M. Bing and A. F. Freed (eds) *Rethinking Language and Gender Research: Theory and Practice*. London and New York: Longman, pp. 31-53.
- Cameron, D. (1997) Performing Gender Identity: Young Men's Talk and the Construction of Heterosexual Masculinity. In S. Johnson and U. H. Meinhof (eds) *Language and Masculinity*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 47-64.
- Coates, J. (1986) *Women, Men and Language*. London and New York: Longman.
- Coates, J. (1995) Language, Gender and Career. In S. Mills (ed.) *Language and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. London: Longman, pp. 13-30.
- Cohen, A. D., E. Olshtain and D. S. Rosenstein (1986) Advance EFL Apologies: What Remains to be learned. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language* 62: 51-74.
- Cohen, A. D. (1996) Speech Acts. In S. L. McKay and W. H. Hornberger (eds) *Sociolinguistics and language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 383-420.
- Craib, I. (1998) *Experiencing Identity*. London: Sage.
- Crawford, M. (1995) *Talking Difference: On gender and Language*. California: Sage.
- De Kadt, E. (1992) Requests as speech acts in Zulu *South African Journal of African Languages*, 12(3): 101-106.

- De Kadt, E. (1994) Toward a Model for Politeness in Zulu *South African Journal of African languages*. 14(3): 103-112.
- De Kadt, E (1995) The Cross-cultural Study of Directives: Zulu as a Non-typical language. *South African Journal of Linguistics*. Supplement 27: 45-72.
- De Kadt, E. (1996) I must be seated to talk to you. In L. Bouton and Y. Kachru (eds) *Pragmatics and Language Learning*, Vol. 6. Urbana, IL: Division of English as an International Language, University of Illinois.
- De Kadt, E. (1998) The Concept of Face and its Applicability to Zulu Language. *Journal of Pragmatics* 29: 173-191.
- Fescura, M. A. (1993) *A Sociolinguistic comparison of 'reactions to Complaints': Italian L1 vs. English L1, Italian L2, and Italian as a community language* Unpublished Doctorate Dissertation. Toronto: University of Toronto, Graduate Department of Education.
- Fishman, P. M. (1983) Interaction: The Work Women do. In B. Thorne, C. Kramarae and N. Henley (eds) *Language, Gender and Society*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, pp. 89-101.
- Fraser, B. (1981) On Apologizing. In F. Coulmas (ed.) *Conversational Routines*. The Hague: Mouton, pp. 259-271.
- Goffman, E. (1967) *Interaction Ritual*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Goffman, E. (1971) *Relations in Public* New York: Anchor Books.

- Gough, D. H. (1995) Some Problems for Politeness Theory: Deference and Directness in Xhosa Performative Requests. *South African Journal of African Languages*, 15(3): 123-125.
- Hall, S. (1996) Introduction: Who Needs Identity? In S. Hall and P. Du Gay (eds) *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage, pp. 1-17.
- Holmes, J. (1989) Sex Differences and Apologies: One Aspect of Communicative Competence. *Applied Linguistics* 10(2): 194-213.
- Holmes, J. (1995) *Women, Men and Politeness*. Singapore: Longman.
- Ide, S. (1982) Japanese sociolinguistics: Politeness and Women's Language. *Lingua* 57: 357-85.
- Ide, S. (1990) 'How and Why Do Women Speak More Politely in Japanese?' In S. Ide and N. McGloin (eds) *Aspects of Japanese Women's Language*. Tokyo: Kurocio, pp. 63-79.
- Ide, S. M. Hori, A. Kawasaki, S. Ikuta and H. Haga (1986) Sex Difference and Politeness in Japanese. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 58: 25-36.
- Jenkins, R. (1996) *Social Identity*. London: Routledge.
- Johnson, S. (1997) Theorizing Language and Masculinity: A Feminist Perspective. In S. Johnson and U. H. Meinhof (eds) *Language and Masculinity*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 8-26.
- Kasper, G. and M. Dahl (1991) Research Methods in Interlanguage pragmatics. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 13(2): 215-247.
- Krige, E. (1936) *The Social System of the Zulus*. London: Longman.
- Lakoff, R. (1973) Language and Woman's Place. *Language in Society* 2: 45-79.

- Lakoff, R. (1975) *Language and Woman's Place*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Macaulay, R. K. S. (1977) *Language, Social Class and Education*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Mao, M. R. (1994) Beyond Politeness Theory: 'Face' Revisited and Renewed. *Journal of Pragmatics* 21: 451-486.
- Nwoye, O. G. (1992) Linguistic Politeness and Sociocultural Variation of the Notion of 'Face'. *Journal of Pragmatics* 18: 309-328.
- Olshain F. and A. D. Cohen (1983) Apology: A Speech Act Set. In N. Wolfson and E. Judd (eds) *Sociolinguistics and Language Acquisition*. Rowley Mass.: Newbury House, pp. 18-35.
- Olshain, E. and S. Blum-Kulka (1984) Cross-linguistic Speech Act Studies: Theoretical and Empirical issues. In L. Mac Mathuna and D. Singleton (eds) *Language Across Cultures*. Dublin: Irish Association for Applied Linguistics, pp. 235-248.
- Owen, M. (1983) *Apologies and Remedial Interchanges: A Study of Language Use in Social Interaction*. Berlin: Mouton. Walter de Gruyter.
- Raum, O. F. (1973) *The Social Function of Avoidances and Taboos among the Zulu*. Berlin: De Gruyer.
- Scollon, R. and B. K. Scollon (1995) *Interactional Communication: A Discourse Approach*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Smith, J. S. (1992) Women in Charge: Politeness and Directives in the Speech of Japanese Women. *Language in Society* 21(1): 59-82.
- Spender, D. (1980) *Man Made Language*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

- Stone, L. (1994) Introducing Education Feminism. In L. Stone and G. M. Boldt (eds) *The Education Feminism Reader*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Thorne, B., C. Kramarae and N. Henley (1983) (eds) *Language Gender and Society*. Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House.
- Weedon, C. (1987) *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- West, C. (1984) When the Doctor is a Lady. *Symbolic Interaction* 7(1): 87-106.
- Wood, M. (1992) Expressing Gratitude in Zulu, a Speech Act Study Emphasizing Communicative Competence. In R. K. Herbert (ed.) *Language and Society in Africa*. Cape Town: Witwatersrand University Press, pp. 265-275.
- Zimmerman, D. and C. West (1975) Interruptions and Silences in Conversation. In B. Thorne and N. Henley (eds) *Language and Sex: Difference and Dominance*. Rowley Mass.: Newbury House, pp. 105-129.