DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this information is my own work. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or any examination in any other university. Where use has been made of the results of other authors, they have been duly acknowledged.

........................................................................................................................................................................................................................................

Thobekile P. Luthuli

February 2016
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# Table of Contents

DECLARATION .................................................................................................................. i

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .................................................................................................... ii

Table of Contents ............................................................................................................. iii

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................ viii

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .................................................................................... 1

1.1 RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY .................................................. 1

1.2 The isiZulu-speaking community in KwaZulu-Natal ................................................. 2

   1.2.1 The ‘Shakan past’ ................................................................................................. 3

   1.2.2 Colonisation ........................................................................................................ 4

   1.2.3 Apartheid era and beyond .................................................................................. 5

1.3 PROBLEMS INVESTIGATED AND KEY QUESTIONS ............................................. 6

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW ...................................................................... 9

2.1 Introduction .................................................................................................................. 9

2.2 The definition of politeness ....................................................................................... 10

2.3 MODELS OF POLITENESS ..................................................................................... 12

   2.3.1 The social norm model ...................................................................................... 12

   2.3.2 The conversational-maxim model ...................................................................... 13

   2.3.3 The conversational-contract model .................................................................. 16

   2.3.4 The Brown and Levinson face-saving model of politeness ............................... 17

   2.3.5 Deficit, dominance and difference models ....................................................... 21

2.4 POLITENESS IN NON-WESTERN CULTURES ..................................................... 22

   2.4.1 The Zulu notion of politeness ............................................................................ 22

   2.4.2 The politeness notion of ukuhlonipha ................................................................ 23
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.4.3</td>
<td>The Chinese notion of politeness</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.4</td>
<td>The Japanese notion of politeness</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.5</td>
<td>The Igbo notion of politeness</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.6</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>SPEECH ACTS</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.1</td>
<td>Apologies</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.2</td>
<td>Functions of apologies</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.3</td>
<td>Gendered Apologies</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.4</td>
<td>Requests</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>DEBATES AROUND LANGUAGE AND GENDER</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.1</td>
<td>African Critique of Gender Theory</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.2</td>
<td>Biological and psychological factors</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.3</td>
<td>Socialisation</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.4</td>
<td>Societal norms</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.5</td>
<td>Power and Dominance</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6.6</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>SOCIAL DIMENSIONS AND LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7.1</td>
<td>Solidarity-social distance</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7.2</td>
<td>Power/Status</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS .......................................................... 54

3.1     | Introduction                                                          | 54   |

3.2     | ENVIRONMENT AND PARTICIPANTS                                          | 55   |
| 3.2.1.1| The Umlazi Township                                                    | 55   |
| 3.2.1.1| Demographic and sociolinguistic data                                  | 56   |
| 3.2.1.2| Participants                                                          | 58   |
3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN .............................................................................................................. 59

3.4 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION ................................................................................... 60

3.4.1 Participant observation ...................................................................................................... 60

3.4.2 Interviewing: Religious and Cultural Leaders ................................................................. 63

3.4.3 Questionnaires: Discourse Completion Tasks .................................................................. 65

3.4.3.1 DCTs: Set One ............................................................................................................... 66

3.4.3.2 DCTs: Set Two ............................................................................................................... 67

3.4.4 Interviews with families .................................................................................................... 67

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS ................................................................................................................ 69

3.6.1 Requests .......................................................................................................................... 69

3.6.2 Apologies .......................................................................................................................... 71

4.1 Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 74

4.2 RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL VALUE SYSTEMS OF THE ISIZULU SPEAKING COMMUNITY ......................................................................................................................... 74

4.2.1 Findings from Interviews with religious leaders .............................................................. 74

4.2.2 Findings from interviews with cultural leaders .............................................................. 75

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS FROM DISCOURSE COMPLETION TASKS QUESTIONNAIRES (DCTs) ........................................................................................................................................ 82

5.1 DCTs: REQUESTS ................................................................................................................. 82

5.1.1 Status ............................................................................................................................... 82

5.1.1.1 The utilisation of alerters ............................................................................................. 82

5.1.1.2 The utilisation of request perspective ......................................................................... 87

5.1.1.3 The utilisation of request strategies .......................................................................... 89

5.1.1.3.1 Conventional indirectness .................................................................................... 89

5.1.1.4 Utilisation of supportive moves .................................................................................. 90

5.1.2 Social distance ................................................................................................................ 94

5.1.2.1 Utilisation of supportive moves ................................................................................ 98

5.1.2.1.1 Mitigating supportive moves .............................................................................. 98
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.2 DCTs: APOLOGIES</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1 Status</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1.1 An expression of apology (IFID)</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1.2 Intensity of apology</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1.3 Other semantic formulas</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1.3.1 An explanation or account</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1.3.2 Acknowledgement of responsibility</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1.3.3 Offer of repair</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1.3.4 Promise of forbearance</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.1.3 USE OF TOTAL NUMBER OF SEMANTIC FORMULAS</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2 Social distance</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2.1 An expression of apology (IFID)</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2.2 Other semantic formulas (social distance only)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2.2.3 IFID and age</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS FROM OBSERVATION</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.1 Introduction</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 DISCUSSION</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1 Observation</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1.1 Observation of households (domestic contexts)</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2.1.2 Observation of educational contexts</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH THE FAMILIES</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1 THE UNDERSTANDING OF POLITENESS</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2 POLITENESS ASSOCIATED WITH REQUESTS AND APOLOGIES</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 THE EFFECT OF AGE, SOCIAL DISTANCE, GENDER AND STATUS</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3.1 Age</td>
<td>137</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3.2 Status</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3.3 Social distance</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3.4 Gender: The role of women</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.4 USE OF APOLOGY /REQUEST STRATEGIES ........................................................................................................ 141

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS ....................................................................................................................................... 145

8.1 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY .......................................................................................................................... 147

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY ................................................................................................. 148

BIBLIOGRAPHY ........................................................................................................................................................ 150

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: CULTURAL LEADERS .............................................................................. 168

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE: DISCOURSE COMPLETION TASKS .................................................................... 169

SECTION A .............................................................................................................................................................. 169

SECTION B .............................................................................................................................................................. 173

SECTION C (PART 1): TO BE FILLED IN BY CHILDREN ONLY ............................................................................. 177

SECTION C (PART 2): TO BE FILLED IN BY ADULTS ONLY ................................................................................ 179

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: FAMILIES ............................................................................................. 181
ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to investigate politeness within the isiZulu speaking community. The study focused on the understanding of politeness within the target community (Umlazi Township) and whether this understanding has changed over the past generation. It also examined if males and females exhibit and value politeness differently. Finally, the study investigated which of the existing Western/non-Western models of politeness are relevant for describing the politeness phenomena in the target community.

This study was conducted through the realisation of the speech acts of requests and apologies focusing on the variables of age, status and social distance. In order to achieve triangulation, qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were used. These comprised of observation of domestic and educational contexts, interviews with cultural/religious leaders, discourse completion tasks (DCTs) and interviews with families.

My findings reveal that the understanding of politeness phenomena within the target community is more in keeping with that of other non-Western cultures than in Western cultures. Females are found to exhibit more polite behaviours than males. Furthermore, the general understanding of politeness over the past generation has remained more or less constant.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I contextualise the topic under study and provide the motivation for choosing it. Thereafter, the problems and issues investigated and the key questions asked in this study are outlined. Finally, an overview of the remaining chapters is presented.

1.1 RATIONALE AND MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

This study presents an inter-generation cross sex study of politeness in the isiZulu-speaking community using speech acts of apologies and requests. It is well known that during the recent past, South Africa has experienced significant social and political changes, which immediately raise a number of fascinating questions for this study. One such question is whether the politeness phenomena among the isiZulu-speaking community have remained the same or have changed over the past generation. Another is whether the politeness strategies of men and women in the target community are similar or different.

On a more theoretical level, the study also investigates whether, among the developed politeness models, there is one that is specifically relevant in providing a complete description of the politeness phenomena in the community studied. It should be noted that results of studies of politeness in Japan and China yielded results that are not similar to the Western-based model of Brown and Levinson (1987). This evidence therefore suggests that the notion of Brown and Levinson’s framework as a universal model of politeness is not appropriate. Also, of interest will be the potential effect of the Western value system on the social relationships within the isiZulu-speaking community in South Africa.

Politeness, in the community under study was done through the investigation of two speech acts, apologies and requests. The way in which people apologise or make a request makes it possible to evaluate their level of politeness (Holmes, 1995:26). This is also corroborated by the work of Janney and Arndt (1993:14) who view ‘politeness as a rational, rule-governed, pragmatic aspect of speech that is developed and highly
influenced by the human need not to disrupt relationships and prevent conflicts.’ It is important to mention that one’s speech (thoughts and actions) is of crucial importance in keeping or disorganising social harmony. Hence, politeness behavior in human encounters is manifested through speech acts. The rationale behind the selection of speech acts of apologies and requests was based on their frequent occurrence in everyday human encounter.

The selection of the cross sex focus emanates from the fact that, although much research has been done on the difference in speech styles of men and women in Western societies, very little is reported in the literature on comparable studies in non-Western cultures. Observations for a particular society cannot be generalised to other societies since the way in which perceived politeness has been seen to relate to gender varies enormously from culture to culture. Investigating the ways in which men and women realise politeness will also enable me to explore gender relations in the community. To elucidate, if a particular gender is expected to be more polite, it would be interesting to study the expected behavioural patterns from persons of this gender in their interactions with others. One should also mention that in studying politeness, it is necessary to distinguish between community perceptions of politeness, i.e. what is considered polite by those in the community, and observations from an outsider perspective through theorised research investigations.

One other significant aspect which was investigated was whether the Western value system has had any influence on the evaluation of politeness phenomena within the generations of isiZulu-speaking community. In particular, it would be of interest to evaluate the level of change, if any, which has occurred.

1.2 The isiZulu-speaking community in KwaZulu-Natal

South African researchers have increasingly put forward a sufficiently argued case for the recognition of the integral role of history in the discussion of ethnicity (see, for instance, Mare’ 1995, Wright 1991; Wright and Hamilton 1996). Post-structuralist writers, similarly, have argued for the acknowledgement of socio-economic and historical processes when studying identity negotiations. Hence, any investigation of how language and ethnic
identity relate in a particular community today should take into consideration the history of the language community on focus.

The first concern in this section is to refer back to the origins of ethnic consciousness among the isiZulu-speaking people, and to explore the role language played in the construction of this consciousness. The history and politics of the isiZulu-speaking population of KwaZulu-Natal at present is, however, far too complex and multifaceted to include it as a detailed and comprehensive part of this thesis. To achieve the aim of this study, a brief outline of the general history and significant events with regard to language related issues will be highlighted.

1.2.1 The ‘Shakan past’

In general, sources of information are scant when investigating Zulu history before the 19th century, and for the purpose of this I am merely relying on secondary sources. According to Guy (1987:18) who provides prodigious research on Zulu history, the isiZulu-speaking people of present-day KwaZulu Natal lived in small villages, which included extended family groupings, the umuzi [homestead]. The society was regulated through an elaborate kinship system, as are other indigenous agricultural societies in the world.

Shaka ka Senzangakhona, who is widely regarded as the founder of the Zulu nation, is portrayed in a variety of ways in literature. Megalomania, ethnocentricity, sensationalism and diverse mythological interpretations are often part of his story. Statements such as: ‘I think it was unfortunate that King Shaka was killed, because I believe he was a great man, a genius. If he had lived, perhaps we Zulus would have not suffered as much as we suffered over the years up to now,’ (Buthelezi, 1972: 1) exemplify this view.

According to Zungu (1998), it was a necessity to speak the ‘pure’ Zulu of the kingdom in order to be a ‘proper’ member of it. The people who spoke this apparent ‘pure’ isiZulu, the amaNtungwa people, were deeply separated from those who spoke with their tongue lala (asleep or lying flat), which evidently was a different dialect of isiZulu. Hence, language was a unifying factor among the people of the kingdom on the one hand, as everyone spoke a variety of isiZulu, and a dividing force on the other, as the varieties
were different and groups such as the *amalala* (menials) were excluded from the kingdom.

### 1.2.2 Colonisation

When the colonisers constructed the first settlement (Port Natal) in the area now referred to as KwaZulu-Natal, they initiated communication with Shaka and recognised overlordship of the Zulu king with the aim of getting permission to settle on their land as well as to trade (Ballard, 1989: 118). Due to the fact that both Shaka and his successor, Dingane, did not allow people from their land to enter into direct trade with Whites, the influence of the colonisers was still fairly limited among the isiZulu speaking community at this time. The linguistic and geographical divisions within the isiZulu-speaking population that existed in the early years of the kingdom became further entrenched towards the end of the century.

In the middle of the nineteenth century the British forces founded the Colony of Natal, whereas in Zululand, the area north of the Thukela and east of the Mzinyathi, Mpande was recognised as an independent ruler (Guy, 1979: 13). During Mpande’s 30 year long reign – the longest of all the Zulu kings - he established a firm rule over the original kingdom, which due to the help of the Voortrekkers, had increased dramatically, in terms of territorial size. Unlike most other African societies in southern Africa at the time, the colonialists had no major influence on the people residing in Zululand and the autonomy and self-sufficiency of the kingdom remained established. In Natal, however, the British and hence the English language, started to leave its mark on the indigenous African population.

In Zululand, King Cetshwayo came to the Zulu throne in 1872 and ruled over approximately 300 000 people, most of them residing between the Thukela and the Mzinyathi Rivers and the valley of the Phongolo (Guy, 1979: 21). It is argued that in these crucial years of colonisation, the isiZulu speaking population was increasingly exposed to western influence. This also affected the way people drew from various categories to identify themselves in terms of ethnolinguistic identity negotiations. Hence: the presence of colonisers offered an alternative source of identification, alliance and protection for Africans who had long lived within the orbit of Zulu power. It was possible, for example,
to become a migrant labourer or trader, using new market opportunities to establish independent means of accumulation: These choices invariably involved adopting aspects of colonial life and could lead to the formation of new identities shaped by the language of modernism which was inscribed within the colonial policy and expressed in the world which settlers were creating (Morrell, Wright and Meintjes, 1996: 37).

Accordingly, there were various categories on the basis of which Africans, i.e. isiZulu-speakers, could identify themselves. With regard to language it must be assumed that English started to gain significance in the lives of isiZulu-speakers around this time. The contact between English and isiZulu further created interesting communication patterns between Whites and Africans. The linguistic make-up of the African population in the area of present day KwaZulu Natal was reasonably homogenous. The vast majority of manual workers employed on farms spoke isiZulu, although dialectical variation undoubtedly existed. Unsurprisingly, among Africans, isiZulu was the predominant medium of communication in the agricultural workplace, in homes and in social settings, while English was the official language in the colony (Lambert and Morrell, 1996:64).

1.2.3 Apartheid era and beyond

In 1950 a Zulu chief, Cyprian Bhekuzulu, was officially recognised as the paramount Chief of the ‘Zulu nation’, however, his power was merely representational. The state wished to create a territory that could become an ‘independent’ homeland for an “ethnically defined Zulu people” (Freund, 1996: 132). The White minority hoped to control political aspirations of isiZulu speakers in the region by restoring the name of the Zulu monarchy. Nevertheless, this ethnic ideology remained contradictory and paradoxical, if one considers that, on the one hand, the ‘new Zulu’ was proclaiming the virtues of past and tradition, and on the other hand, he was clearly a product of a mission school as in some cases, individuals were more articulate in English than isiZulu. It was thus impossible to “give approval without doubt to an unconditional return to ‘tribal’ life” (Marks, 1989:221).

One should mention that the huge majority of people involved in the Zulu ethnic movement were already proficient in English. It can further be assumed that the issue of mother tongue education became a controversial topic around this time. Marks notes that
there were differences, too, over the Society’s readiness to accept the education of African children in the vernacular’ (1989: 223). While distinguishing the traditional Zulu educational system from that of the European settlers, Vilakazi argued that ‘a child learned about its culture in the home by the methods of observation, imitation and play. Language played a very important role in this respect as it taught much of the value systems and symbols of the culture’ (Vilakazi, 1958: 299).

In a recent study, the links that underscore Zulu ethnic identity in KwaZulu Natal have been examined within the social and political context of a changing South Africa (Dlamini, 2001). Ethnicity, and thus Zuluness, is regarded as ‘a boundary phenomenon constructed within specific and competing discursive sites and with competing and conflicting practices.’ Four criteria are identified as essential categories: history, language, culture and birthplace. What becomes evident throughout Dlamini’s study is the fact that identities – as they are constructed in everyday life, in relation to various factors, be it language, culture or other variables – are not only flexible and changeable, but often characterised through discontinuities and contradictions. Hence, ‘it is clear, for instance, that while isiZulu-speaking people were considered by the state and political organisations as a well-defined homogenous group, the cultures of those who made up this group pointed otherwise’ (Dlamini, 2001:219). Accordingly, individuals within one group i.e. the isiZulu speaking community of Umlazi, hold different views with regard to sociolinguistic issues, for instance. What is important is to identify these perceptions and to analyse them in a holistic approach.

1.3 PROBLEMS INVESTIGATED AND KEY QUESTIONS

The thesis investigates politeness phenomena within the isiZulu-speaking community within frameworks previously used for studies in Western and non-Western cultures. It also focuses on inter-generational and cross-sex usage patterns.

Different arguments have been put forward in the literature about politeness phenomena (including the concept of face) concerning the opposing views about Western and non-Western cultures. Some of the scholars are of the opinion that the Western culture
functions more or less as the accepted norm. Brown and Levinson (1987) developed a model which was based on Goffman’s (1967) concept of face describing politeness as when one shows concern for one’s face. Furthermore, it contends that politeness involves expressing concern the negative face and positive face. Positive face on the one hand is the desire to be liked and approved of, while negative face is the desire not to be imposed upon. It has been noted that some scholars who have done research on politeness among non-Western cultures do not concur with Brown and Levinson’s claim concerning the universality of the concept of negative and positive face. They further dispute the notion that the higher the level of indirectness the greater the degree of politeness. In particular, the disagreement with the Brown and Levinson model stems from the fact that it inadequately addresses the discourse behaviour in non-Western cultures. It is of crucial importance to mention that among the non-Western cultures, the primary interactional focus is not on normative values or upon group identity (Matsumoto, 1988; 1989; Ide 1989). Politeness phenomena in Japanese, as studied by both Matsumoto (1988, 1989) and Ide (1989) revealed that the social context plays a much larger role in politeness expressions as compared to the face of an individual. They further noted that, in the aforementioned culture, discerning what is appropriate and also acting accordingly is more important than to utilise interactional strategies to achieve specific objectives such as pleasing or displeasing others (Nwoye, 1992: 312). Aside from ‘discernment’ Ide (1989) further contends that Brown and Levinson’s (1987) framework does not succeed in giving a proper account of formal linguistic forms, such as honorifics.

It should be noted that the analysis of individual utterances will not yield positive results to the clarification of politeness, but seeing it within the context of complete encounter between participants will achieve positive results. Furthermore, factors such as the gender, age, status and social distance of participants within the particular culture have to be considered. Moreover, the role played by the cultural value systems operating within different societies should be noted since it has an influence on the non-verbal aspects of politeness behaviour, e.g. proxemics, kinesics, etc. While the focus of this thesis is on verbal politeness, these latter aspects (non-verbal) will also be briefly discussed.
Bearing these considerations in mind, the focus of this study will be located on the observation of the politeness phenomena of isiZulu-speaking community within the politeness models that have been advocated for both Western and non-Western cultures. Furthermore, it will seek to establish which model can best accommodate these phenomena. The politeness phenomena over two consecutive generations will be examined with the hope that the results will shed light on whether they have changed or have remained the same. Furthermore, the study looks at similarities or differences in the politeness strategies of men and women. To be successful in doing this, the initial step will be to establish the community’s perceptions of politeness, followed by an empirical investigation of the actual realisations of politeness. In order to address these objectives, some of the key questions asked are:

1. What is the background understanding of politeness within the isiZulu-speaking community? How is this understanding evinced through the realisation of politeness strategies as manifested in the speech acts of apologies and requests?

2. Is this understanding of politeness, as perceived by the community members, a constant; or has it changed over the past generation? Do the realisation patterns of apologies and requests confirm this perception?

3. What is the influence of age, social distance and status on the use of apology and request strategies, both as viewed by the community, and as manifested in the discourse completion tasks (DCTs)?

4. Is politeness gendered? Is it women or men who value politeness more highly in this community? Are the politeness strategies used by women towards women different from those towards men, and vice versa?

5. Which of the available theoretical framework(s), if any, is/are most appropriate for analysing politeness phenomena in the isiZulu-speaking community? Do the data from this community support the various universalist claims made for the different theoretical frameworks or sections of these frameworks?
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

An extensive literature review is necessary to develop the research project undertaken in this study. It contextualises the topic under investigation within the broader field of research undertaken and reported on politeness phenomena. Focus is placed on politeness through the realisations of the speech acts of requests and apologies, as well as on gender. It will be noted that these are fields where considerable research is available for review. This review will assist in further developing the key questions to be asked, as well as the theoretical frameworks which will be used to analyse the collected data.

This study begins with an examination of the definition of politeness as well as the models of politeness. Next, the speech acts of apologies and requests as they form the principal devices for the study undertaken in this thesis, are discussed. Particular attention is given to aspects of language, gender and social distance. Accordingly, the literature review is developed along the following themes:

2.2 Definition of politeness

2.3 Models of politeness

2.4 Politeness in non-Western cultures

2.5 The speech acts of:

2.5.1 Apologies

2.5.2 Requests

2.6 Language and gender

2.7 Social dimensions and linguistic analysis

2.8 Conclusions
2.2 The definition of politeness

Although one of the key terms in pragmatics, politeness is probably among the most difficult ones to define. As Watts (2003) notes, “the major problem for anyone entering the field of politeness research is the bewildering ambiguity in the use of the terms ‘polite’ and ‘politeness’ themselves” (Watts 2003, 12).

In most early conceptualisations of politeness (Fraser 1990; Fraser and Nolen 1981; Gu 1990; Ide 1989) “communication is seen as a fundamentally dangerous and antagonistic endeavor” (Kasper 1990, 194), while politeness is viewed as a set of strategies necessary in order to prevent conflict in society, to facilitate “smooth communication” (Ide 1989, 225 in Eelen, 2001, 89) or to reduce friction in personal interaction” (Lakoff 1975 in Watts 2003, 50). Politeness is therefore seen as a means to reduce social friction: as “strategic conflict avoidance” (Leech 1980, 19), as a “rational behaviour aimed at the strategic softening (or mitigation) of face threatening acts” (Brown and Levinson 1978, 1987 in Watts, 2005, 15), or as the “oil that keeps the social machine running smoothly” (Wildner-Basset 1994 in Stadler 2007, 30).

As opposed to a static conceptualisation of politeness, the postmodernist dynamic view of politeness, which began to be shaped in the 1990s, views politeness as emerging from social interaction. For example, Watts, Ide and Ehrlich (1994/2005) argue that:

   Politeness is a dynamic concept, always open to adaptation and change in any group, any age, and, indeed, at any moment of time. It is not a socio anthropological given which can simply be applied to the analysis of social interaction, but actually arises out of that interaction (Watts, Ide and Ehrlich 1994, 11 in Watts 2005, 18).

The present study, in line with Felix-Brasdefer (2008), is primarily concerned with politeness, encompassing “expressive politeness (linguistic expressions that may be open to a polite interpretation in specific situations) and metapragmatic politeness
(perceptions of politeness), that is how people talk about politeness as a concept in everyday interaction” (Felix- Brasdefer 2008, 4).

Despite viewpoints given above, a review of the relevant literature by Fraser (1990:219) revealed that on the issue of what politeness is, there was not enough consistency among researchers, never mind how it might be accounted for. Furthermore, many writers failed to explicitly define what politeness is. As a result of the different notions of the concept of politeness, as well as cultural and idiosyncratic variations, attempts to characterise aspects of politeness have proved to be difficult (Koike, 1989:182). In this regard, Ide (1989:225) provides a working definition of linguistic politeness as the ‘language usage associated with smooth communication, realised:

i) through the speaker’s utilisation of intentional strategies to allow his or her message to be favourably received by the addressee, and

ii) through the speaker choosing expressions that conform with the expected and or prescribed norms of speech relevant to the contextual situation in individual speech communities.’

Drawing from the works of Goffman (1967) (see section 1.3) and Brown and Levinson (1987), Holmes (1995: 5) articulates the position that politeness ‘is the behaviour which actively expresses positive concern for others, as well as non-imposing distancing behaviour.’

The review by (Fraser, 1990) indicated that there is no generally accepted definition of politeness. For the purpose of this study, the working definition of politeness, as given above by Ide (1989:225), shall be adopted. It is envisaged that this will assist me in addressing my first key question:

• What is the background understanding of politeness in the isiZulu-speaking community?

Fraser also identified four major perspectives (models) of politeness in the published research on linguistic politeness. These models are discussed in the next session.
2.3 MODELS OF POLITENESS

The models of politeness discussed below emanate from the work done by researchers from both Western and non-Western societies. In some instances the approach has been ‘bottom-up’ approach whereby that which is considered to be appropriate behaviour for a particular society is used to construct a model applicable to that society. In other cases a particular model has been developed and thereafter claimed to be universal in application.

The purpose of discussing the abovementioned models is to broaden the understanding of the development of politeness theory. They also serve as a forerunner for the current debate between Western and non-Western perspectives of politeness phenomena which will be discussed later.

2.3.1 The social norm model

This approach assumes that each society has a particular set of social norms consisting of more or less explicit rules that recommend certain behaviour, state of affairs, or way of thinking in a context. Politeness arises when an action is in accordance with the norm, impoliteness arises when an action is to the contrary. (Fraser, 1990). It is important to mention that in different cultures, politeness can be manifested and understood in different ways through both verbal and non-verbal behaviours (Watts 2003).

This model also consists of more or less clear rules that prescribes a certain behaviour (Fraser, 1990: 220). Piller (2002) is of the view that there are two ways that norms can be approached. One approach is under a proscriptive stance, in which a person is discouraged from a behaviour. The other stance is prescriptive, meaning it is a behaviour that a person is expected or encouraged to emulate.

Ide (1989), initiated the investigation of the politeness phenomena among the Japanese society. On the other hand, Nwoye (1992:312), is of the view that in this model, politeness is ‘regarded as emanating from an individual's awareness of his/her social responsibility to the other members of the group.’ As mentioned above, it should be noted that actions that do not conform to the norms of that society are regarded as rudeness or impoliteness (Luthuli, 2007: 23).
The social norm model may be useful in the analysis of my data as its characteristics seem to be consistent with the behavioural patterns of the target community. This assumption is based on my personal interactions within the target community, as well as the results of the interviews with cultural and religious leaders of the community (to be discussed later). Aspects of the social norm model are further highlighted later in this chapter when politeness phenomena in non-Western societies are discussed (Luthuli, 2007: 57).

2.3.2 The conversational-maxim model

The conversational maxim perspective relies principally on the work of Grice (1975). He claimed that interactants are intelligent individuals who are, all other things being equal, primarily interested in the efficient conveying of messages. He proposed the Cooperative Principle (CP) which assumes that one should say what he/she has to say, when he/she has to say it, and the way he/she has to say it. The cooperative principle is a principle of conversation which states that participants, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange, expect that each will make a conversational contribution such as required. The use of cooperative principle, along with the conversational maxims, partly accounts for conversational implicatures. Participants assume that a speaker is being cooperative, and thus they make conversational implicatures about what is said (Schmitt, 2002). The (CP), simply put, requires one to say what is expected to be said, at the time it has to be said, and in the manner in which it has to be said.

Grice fleshed out the CP in four maxims:

- **Quantity**: Say no less than the conversation requires
  - Say no more than the conversation requires

- **Quality**: Don’t say what you believe to be false
  - Don’t say things for which you lack evidence

- **Manner**: Don’t be obscure
  - Don’t be ambiguous
Furthermore, Grice (1975) is of the opinion that speakers always observe the CP, hence any violations of the maxims signal conversational implications. He also contends that these maxims and this principle are characteristic of ideal changes. On the other hand he also notes that there may be a need for such exchanges to observe principles, such as ‘Be polite.’

According to Fraser (1990:223), Lakoff (1973), in an attempt to account for politeness, initiated the adoption of Grice’s construct of CP. As indicated earlier, Lakoff (1975) is of the view that ‘communities developed politeness with the aim of reducing friction in personal interaction.’ Moreover, the speaker may demonstrate politeness in his or her speech by adhering to the following rules:

(a) Formality: Don’t impose;
(b) Deference: Give options;
(c) Camaraderie: Make the listener feel good – be friendly.

It is important to mention that, depending on the type of politeness situation as understood by the speaker, the abovementioned rules may be applicable.

Leech (1983) concurs with the approach of the framework initiated by Grice (1975). However, Leech’s theory creates a differentiation between the social goals of the speaker (the speaker’s position on being ironic, polite, truthful, etc.), and the illocutionary goals of the speaker (the intended speech act(s) conveyed by the speaker through the utterance) (Fraser, 1990:224). In this regard, two sets of conversational principles are postulated, that is, Textual Rhetoric and Interpersonal Rhetoric, each of which is constituted by a set of maxims (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 4). The Interpersonal Rhetoric comprises of a Politeness Principle (PP) with six maxims as well as the Grice’s CP with all the maxims. Leech (in Fraser, 1990:224) is of the view that the PP together with its maxims assist in
explaining why speakers choose a particular form and content of what was said, and on the other hand, the utilisation of the CP and its maxims is aimed at explaining how one may interpret an utterance to convey an indirect message. Furthermore, Leech (1983) in Koike (1989: 189) states that one of the functions of the PP is to ensure that the social relationship is maintained on friendly terms. According to Leech, it is envisaged that this would enable the speaker to anticipate that cooperation will follow. However, it is important to mention that what may be considered polite in one culture may be considered impolite in another culture, and vice versa.

Leech (1983) also differentiates between ‘Absolute Politeness and ‘Relative Politeness.’ Absolute politeness implies the degree of politeness embedded in the particular actions of the speaker, whereas the latter has to do with politeness confined to a specific situation (Fraser, 1990:226). To illustrate this point: Compliments are regarded as naturally polite, whereas when one issues a directive, one is considered impolite. However, Fraser (1990) criticised this simplistic view, and then distinguished between negative and positive politeness. Fraser (1990) is of the opinion that both types of politeness involve maintaining or redressing threats to positive or negative face, where positive face is defined as the addressee’s ‘perennial desire that his wants should be thought of as desirable’, and negative face as the addressee’s ‘want to have his freedom of actions unhindered and his attention unimpeded’.

Fraser (1990:227) is also critical of Leech’s view, which categorises certain types of illocutions as either impolite or polite. As an example, a principal orders a pupil who has won a national speech contest to present the same speech to the school assembly. In terms of Leech’s view, this being an order will be seen as an impolite action on the part of the principal. However, in the view of the pupil and others, this would be seen as a compliment and, therefore, as a polite action.

In view of the social behavioural hierarchy assumed to exist within the target community (to be further explored in the interviews with the cultural leaders), the Conversational-maxim model is less likely to be suitable for the analysis of politeness phenomena in the community under investigation.
2.3.3 The conversational-contract model

Fraser (1975), and Fraser and Nolen (1981) accepted Grice’s conceptualisation of a CP, but introduced a distinct model, called the conversational contract (CC). The fundamental principle of this CC approach is that interlocutors enter a conversation with a preliminary set of rights and obligations (Fraser, 1990:232) that determine their expectations of each other during the first phases of the interaction. This set of rights and obligations is referred to as the Conversational Contract and it can be negotiated and renegotiated in the course of the interaction. Some terms of the contract can be determined through convention, others by social institutions, still others by previous encounters or the situation itself. In this view of politeness, being polite involves ‘operating within the then current terms and conditions of the CC (Fraser, 1990:233).

According to the CC model, politeness involves adhering to the terms and conditions of the current CC. This is expected of each one of us – it is the socially required norm of behaviour (Fraser, 1990:223). Politeness is therefore an ongoing process (Nwoye, 1992:310). If one contravenes the terms and conditions of the CC, then one is regarded as impolite or rude. Also, according to the CC model, being polite means that interlocutors should conform to socially agreed codes of good conduct, as in the ‘social norm model,’ but emphasises the existence of ‘quasi –contractual obligations’ (Nwoye, 1992:310) which, as indicated above, can be re-negotiated. In this regard, the CC model differs from the views of Lakoff (1973) and Leech (1983) which involve making the hearer ‘feel good,’ and from Brown and Levinson’s face-saving model (to be discussed later) which involves making the hearer ‘not feel bad.’

Based on my previous personal experience, I expect the conversational-contract model not to be applicable to the target community, since, to a certain extent, the rights and obligations of individuals in social relationships are non-negotiable. This will be further explored in the interviews with the religious/cultural leaders.
2.3.4 The Brown and Levinson face-saving model of politeness

According to de Kadt (1995:59) the ‘strategic model’ of politeness first introduced by Brown and Levinson (1978) has dominated the discussion of English and in other Western languages during the past two decades (de Kadt, 1995:59). Central to Brown and Levinson’s theory is the concept of ‘face’ which is premised on: a) the English folk notion of face and, on b) Goffman’s (1967) definition of face (Brown and Levinson, 1987:61), both of which have been subjected to much critique (Mao, 1994:454).

The English people’s concept of face is connected to the idea of being embarrassed or humiliated, or ‘losing face’ (Brown and Levinson, 1987:61). According to Ho (1975:867) such ideas of face seem to originate from the Chinese, since the term ‘face’ is the exact translation of the two Chinese characters lien (lián) and mien-tzu (mianzì), which, according to Mao (1994:454), were utilised by the English folks in China to coin the phrase ‘to save one’s face.’ It should be mentioned that this aspect will be dealt with later in this chapter.

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 contract. Face is an image of self, described in terms of approved social attributes.’ In view of the aforementioned statement, ‘face becomes a public image that is loaned to individuals from society, but can be withdrawn from them if they prove unworthy of it’ (1967:10). For societal interaction to function well, and to retain this public image, people are involved in what Goffman calls ‘face-work’. Goffman (1967:12) is of the view that ‘face work’ is common to all societies and is calculated to prevent personal embarrassment, and to maintain for others an impression of self – respect’ (Ho, 1975:868).

To account for Language usage, Brown and Levinson constructed a Model Person (MP). They describe this MP as a speaker who is fluent in a particular language and also possesses two special attributes, namely, rationality and face. Brown and Levinson state that the MP who possesses ‘rationality’ would be capable of utilising a specific mode of reasoning to select means that will satisfy his or her ends. Furthermore, Brown and Levinson (1987:61) contend that “the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself is defined as ‘face’.” For the MP this demonstrates that he or she is endowed
with two particular wants or desires that he or she will try to maintain when involved in a conversation with others. Brown and Levinson refer to the aforementioned wants as positive and negative face, where the latter deals with the desire for autonomy, not to be imposed on by others, and the former encompasses the desire to be accepted and have what one wants approved by others. It is important to mention that Brown and Levinson contend that the notion of face, as constituted by the two fundamental desires, is universal (and that interlocutors are interested in maintaining the face of others during the conversation so that others will reciprocate the action. Like Lakoff (1973), they further state that the content of face is culture-specific and subject to immense cultural discussion (Brown and Levinson, 1987:13, 61). In other words, the preferences of communities are different, that is, some may prefer negative politeness while others may choose positive politeness. Moreover, what one community regards as linguistically polite behaviour may not necessarily be regarded as polite in another community (Wessels, 1995: 115).

Within Brown and Levinson’s (1987) face-saving model, Grice’s CP is regarded as a socially neutral framework within which a normal interaction happens. Furthermore, Fraser (1990:228) is of the view that the operating assumption within Grice’s CP is ‘no deviation from rational efficiency without a reason.’ Brown and Levinson argue that the interlocutor may adopt face-saving strategies to maximise politeness. It is noted that such strategies allow one to contravene Grice’s CP. To illustrate this point, the statement ‘Close the window’ is acceptable within the Grice’s CP, but the hearer from the perspective of Brown and Levinson’s face-saving view may perceive it as impolite. This perspective emanates from the notion that politeness ‘consists of a special way of saying and doing things and also takes people’s feelings into consideration (Brown, 1980:114). Consequently, if an individual wishes to be polite, his/her speech would be more complex and less straight-forward compared to when he/she is not taking the other person’s feelings into consideration.

According to the Brown and Levinson model, during interaction, people generally cooperate with each other in order to maintain face. However, it has been noted that there are certain acts which are intrinsically face-threatening acts (FTA’s), namely, apologies, offers, compliments, requests, etc. When people are confronted by FTA’s they tend to
adopt different speech strategies to reduce or eliminate such threats, for example, by expressing them indirectly, or by softening a warning or request. In the aforementioned situations, the level of threat involved is analysed, and furthermore, factors such as the degree of power that interlocutors have over each other, the social distance and the imposition existing in a given speech act would be considered prior to deciding on an appropriate strategy. Five different levels of direct (strategies) are proposed by Brown and Levinson (1987:60) starting from ‘don’t do it’ to ‘do it,’ the latter ranging from going ‘on record’ to going ‘off record’. Doing an act ‘on record’ can be performed directly, i.e. ‘baldly, without redressive action’ or by ‘giving face’ to the addressee, i.e. ‘with redressive action’ or by ‘giving face’ to the addressee, i.e. ‘with redressive action.’ It is noted that ‘With redressive action’ can take either the form of positive politeness or negative politeness. The aspect of face being stressed will determine whether it takes the latter or the former (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 68-73).

Brown and Levinson (1987: 101-102) also identify several positive and negative politeness strategies that speakers may use. The positive strategies are divided into three main types:

(a) Claiming common ground by: taking notice and attending to Hearer’s (H’s) interests, approval and sympathy, needs, wants, and goods conveying interest, intensifying interest, utilisation of in-group identity markers, namely, slang or jargon address forms, in-group language or dialect, seeking agreement and avoiding disagreement; raising and asserting common ground, joking and presupposing.

(b) Conveying cooperation between Speaker (S) and H by indicating that you know H’s wants and are taking them into account; identifying with these wants and claiming reciprocity

(c) Fulfilling the wants of H by giving ‘gifts’ in the form of sympathy, understanding, goods, and cooperation.

The strategies of negative politeness are divided into five main types:

(a) Being direct
(b) Avoiding presumptions or assumptions by using questions and hedges.

(c) Avoiding compelling H’s response by giving H the choice of not doing the act or by minimising the threat.

(d) Communicating S’s want not to impinge on H by apologising for the infringement and making amends for it or by dissociating either S or H or both from the particular infringement.

(e) Offering partial compensation for the face threat in the FTA by redressing other wants of the H by giving deference or by acknowledging that one has incurred a debt by doing the FTA.

Brown and Levinson (1987) define the ‘face’ as characterised as an image that intrinsically belongs to the individual, to the ‘self’ (Mao, 1994:545), that is, as a ‘private face.’ Contrary to Brown and Levinson’s view, Goffman (1967) regards face as a ‘public property’ that is only assigned to individuals depending upon their interactional behaviour (Mao, 1994:454). According to Mao (1994:455) Brown and Levinson’s face is an individualistic, ‘self'-oriented image’, while that of Goffman is a public, interpersonal image.

The validity of Brown and Levinson’s claim concerning the universality of the positive and negative face would be tested within the group under study. Suffice to say that recent non-Western politeness research has disagreed with Brown and Levinson’s claim. More importantly, the Brown and Levinson model is quiet on the issue of discourse behaviour among non-Western cultures, where the basic interactional focus is upon group identity not upon individualism (Matsumoto, 1988, 1989); (Ide, 1989). Some of the non-Western based criticisms levied against Brown and Levinson’s model of politeness will now be elaborated upon in greater detail in the next section, in particular for the Chinese and Japanese cultures.

One of major criticisms, presented by Gu (1990) and Mao (1994) is that Brown and Levinson assume an individualistic concept of face, which is not appropriate to cultures with broad value tendencies in emphasising the importance of in-group interests over
individual wants. They have also questioned the validity of the Brown & Levinson’s notion of negative face in cultures where the individual’s freedom of thought and action are determined by the social status that the individual has in the group. In a similar vein, several researchers from other Asian cultures, as well as from Islamic and African cultures, have criticised the individualistic interpretation of face and/or the validity of the notion of negative face in Brown & Levinson’s theory (e.g. Matsumoto 1988, Ide 1993, Nwoye 1992 and Watts 2003). On the other hand, at least some Japanese researchers, like Fukushima (2002) and Takano (2005), regard both the positive and negative face as important in contemporary Japanese society, and especially Fukushima argues that the notion of Japanese face does not involve only the relations to others, but also the rights of individuals.

2.3.5 Deficit, dominance and difference models
Cameron (1996), Bing and Bergvall (1996), and Johnson (1997) all agree that over the past twenty years, three models commonly termed ‘deficit’, and ‘difference’, have dominated feminist linguistic approaches to language and gender. The first model, that of ‘deficit’, presents women as disadvantaged interlocutors 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 Fisheman (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, have shown interest in investigating how dominance is achieved through language: they consider how the use of generic pronouns and pronouns, interruptions, 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 continue 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.

2.4 POLITENESS IN NON-WESTERN CULTURES

In this section I review politeness studies in non-Western cultures, focusing on aspects which challenge Brown and Levinson’s model of politeness. As stated above, much of the research has been done in Chinese and Japanese cultures. These findings could be of significance since the isiZulu-speaking community has its cultural roots in a non-Western country. The discourse behavioural patterns for other Asian cultures, for example, China and Japan, could be similar in structure to that of the isiZulu-speaking community, and, therefore, of relevance.

2.4.1 The Zulu notion of politeness

In her attempt towards a model focusing on the study of politeness in the Zulu culture, de Kadt (1994) found that politeness has an immense impact on the maintenance of harmony within relations among members of the society. Furthermore, she noted that social distance and age have a significant influence on the utilisation of language. There is an emphasis on ‘group membership’ in contrast to the ‘wants’ of the individual. Therefore, one would ‘lose face’ if he or she did not behave in a manner that was appropriate to his or her group.

In further studies on the isiZulu language, de Kadt (1995, 1998) found out that one of the central values in the isiZulu culture was politeness. She further discovered that ‘ngiyacela’ (I request) was a standard form for a polite request used in different situations. This contradicts the principle of ‘the more indirect the more polite the request’ as initially
enunciated by Brown and Levinson (1987). Hence, these findings cast doubt on the universality of the Brown and Levinson model, in particular with regard to their relevance to politeness phenomena in the isiZulu culture. However, while de Kadt (1998) found that Brown and Levinson’s construct of negative face (i.e. the speaker’s desire not to be imposed upon) was questionable in the isiZulu culture, the term ‘face’ itself still had validity in the folk sense. De Kadt (1998:175) claims that isiZulu speakers are in agreement that it is possible to lose face in the isiZulu culture and that it is the fear of loss of face that constrains people to behave appropriately. Based on the aforementioned reason, de Kadt does not discount Brown and Levinson’s construct totally, but rather uses Goffman’s, (1967) broader construct of face in her analysis of isiZulu politeness. In this way she is able to include both volitional and social-indexing aspects of politeness, which are both necessary for a complete discussion of politeness, a view also held by Ide (1989).

De Kadt (1998:179) states that Triandis (1989:207) distinguishes three categories of the ‘self’, i.e. the public, collective and private self. Nonetheless, in his research focusing on the Far East and America, a detailed investigation was done on the collective and private self only. The results yielded by this investigation were that the public self is not common. However, de Kadt (1998:179) shows through the exploration of ‘hlonipha’ (i.e. to pay respect) and ‘ubuntu’ (i.e. humanity) that in the isiZulu culture not only are the private self and collective self-applicable, but also that the public self plays a fairly substantial role.

### 2.4.2 The politeness notion of ukuhlonipha

It has been noted that a large number of African societies prescribe great significance to respectful behaviour towards males and elders. Rudwick (2008:153) is of the view that this emanates from the fact that many social practices and cultural customs in these societies are based on strict patriarchy and seniority principles. Mills (2003, 2004) argues that respect and politeness are fundamentally based on particular approaches to class, race and gender.

Literally translated, *hlonipha* means ‘respect’ in isiZulu. Social *hlonipha* actions are fundamental to traditional Zulu life and what is considered ‘proper’ behaviour within the community. Literally translated, *hlonipha* means ‘respect in isiZulu (Rudwick 2008: 155). Rudwick (2008) further contends that among traditional Zulu people
ukuhlionipha (to respect) as social custom reinforces a complex value system which is based on the social variables - age, status and gender. It should also be noted that hlonipha actions are aligned to rules that regulate and control posture, gesture, dress code and other behavioural patterns.

Raum (1973), in his most detailed study on Zulu hlonipha, distinguishes between two poles of sociological significance, namely, the inferior status agent and the superior referent. He further contends that seniority, higher status and frequently also the male gender automatically qualify one as the referent of hlonipha actions.

Rudwick (2008) also notes that a detailed look at Raum’s (1973) voluminous study leaves no doubt that the Zulu traditionalist hlonipha framework is highly gendered and exhibits at least from a western perspective, numerous dis–empowering or even oppressive elements for females. This, however, is not surprising as “Zulu society has always been largely patriarchal” (Magwaza, 2001:25).

2.4.3 The Chinese notion of politeness

Ho (1975) claims that the concept of face originates from the Chinese. The term ‘face’ is thus a direct translation of the Chinese words mien-tzu and lien. Mien-tzu refers to the kind of prestige one acquires through one’s success and reputation. On the other hand, lien is the respect one commands in society by virtue of one’s integrity and good moral character. Ho points out that one may gain prestige (mien-tzu) through personally determined objectives without interacting with society, for example, by focusing on one’s academic activities towards becoming a successful academic. However, gaining or losing face (lien) is determined by one’s conduct in society, as well as through the actions of someone else, for example, a close family relative.

Ho (1975: 881) points out that the concept of face is a distinctively human concept. For an individual to succeed in society, he or she must claim for himself or herself as well as offer others respect, compliance and deference. Although the concept of ‘face’, including the rules governing face behaviour differ from one culture to another, Ho maintains that the concept of ‘face’ is generally universal (Ho, 1975:882). However, he points out that within the Western cultures the focus is on the needs of the individual while in the Chinese
culture the face of an individual is only meaningful when it is compared to that of others in society.

In his research, Gu (1990:241-242) claims to show that Brown and Levinson’s model of politeness is not suitable for the Chinese culture and outlines two reasons for this. Firstly, the Chinese concept of negative face appears to be different from that defined by Brown and Levinson. While Brown and Levinson see the speech acts such as inviting, offering, promising, etc. as threatening acts to the Hearer’s (H’s) negative face, i.e. impending H’s freedom, according to Gu, this is not so for the Chinese. For example, although a Chinese speaker (S) may insist on inviting H to dinner even though H does not want to accept, this is not seen as an imposition, but rather as an intrinsically polite act. In such a situation, the Chinese negative face is not threatened but rather S’s insistence and the way the act is performed is actually seen as showing S’s sincerity. However, in Western cultures, such an invitation would be seen as an imposition and threatening to H’s negative face.

Secondly, Gu (1990:242) argues that in interaction, politeness is not just instrumental (as seen by Brown and Levinson), but also has a normative function. The latter places a constraint on individual speech acts and conversational interaction. Failure to adhere to these norms will lead to social sanctions being placed on individuals. Gu (1990) accounts for Brown and Levinson’s failure to take into cognisance the normative function of politeness in interaction on the basis that in the construction of their theory, Brown and Levinson assume that the S and the H are two rational and face-caring model persons (MPs). He argues that this may not work in a non-Western society like the Chinese, where politeness is a phenomenon that is defined by the normative constraints which society places on each individual. On the other hand, it may work well in societies that are individualistic, like those in the West.

In conclusion, Gu (1990:256) says that while politeness is a common phenomenon in every culture, what actually counts for polite behaviour in the different cultures is language and culture specific. He further argues that politeness fulfills normative functions (i.e. the individuals’ actions or behaviour are constrained by the societal norms) as well as instrumental functions (by redressing FTA’s).
On the other hand, Mao (1994) bases his study in a manner similar to Ho (1975). He is in agreement with Ho (1975) that the concept of ‘face’ is a direct translation of the two Chinese words *mien-tzu* and *lien*. However, in his discussion of these words he articulates two important distinctions between Brown and Levinson’s concept of ‘face’ and the Chinese ‘face.’ Firstly, Brown and Levinson define face as ‘the positive self-image that every member wants to claim for himself.’ This, he claims, tends to privilege the individual in terms of his or her wants or desires. However, the face of an individual in the Chinese culture is determined by the perception or judgement and views of the individual's character and behaviour as assessed by the given community. Therefore, as a public image, the Chinese “face” is determined by the involvement of others.

Secondly, concerning Brown and Levinson’s concepts of positive and negative face, Mao contends that the concept of negative face is irrelevant in Chinese culture as an individual is not concerned with being externally imposed upon, but through *mianzi* seeks to obtain public acknowledgement of his or her prestige or reputation. In doing so they respond positively to external impositions.

Using the above arguments and other examples from Japanese society, Mao (1994) concludes that Brown and Levinson’s claim of the universality of their concept of face is unjustified.

In another article, Ji (2000) criticises Mao’s (1994) argument. In his view, Mao misunderstands the concept of ‘self-image’ within Brown and Levinson’s definition of face. Ji is of the view that a person cares not only about his own self-image, but also those of other people. This is achieved if he or she interacts successfully with society and does not show disregard for society's perceptions and views. Therefore, Mao’s interpretation that Brown and Levinson focus their definition of face upon the individual is a very narrow understanding and, therefore, incorrect, as the individual takes cognisance of society’s view in determining his or her public self-image. Furthermore, Ji (2000) disputes Mao’s interpretation of the word *mianzi* as being related to prestige or reputation. He suggests that Mao in fact redefines the two words *mianzi* and *lien* by associating *mianzi* with
prestige or reputation and *lien* with positive face. According to Ji, in the most authoritative Chinese dictionary presently in use, *Xiandia hanyu cidian* (1993), *mianzi* and *lien* have the common meanings of ‘face’ and ‘sensibilities,’ with *mianzi* also meaning prestige or respectability. Ji attributes the notion that the Chinese culture may be more oriented towards positive politeness to the fact that certain polite verbal behaviour in Chinese are associated with maintaining positive face. He further contends that the concept of negative face does in fact exist within the Chinese culture, in opposition to the view expressed by Mao. As an illustration, he claims that the use of the words *qingwen* (excuse me) and *laojia* (excuse me) when asking someone for information, is indicative of the speaker’s recognition of his/her verbal request acting as a potential threat to the listener’s negative face. Ji states that Mao’s arguments do not strongly challenge Brown and Levinson’s model of positive and negative face. He ends with the statement ‘the idea of face is both limited and difficult to grasp,’ thereby motivating for further research into polite verbal behaviour in different cultures (Ji, 2000:1062).

### 2.4.4 The Japanese notion of politeness

In their study of the Japanese culture and society, both Matsumoto (1988, 403-425, 1989:216-219) and Ide (1988:240 – 242) question the universality of Brown and Levinson’s understanding of the “notion of face as consisting of the desire for approval of wants and the desire for the preservation of one’s territory.” Their argument emanates from the fact that such a notion cannot be considered as primary to human relations in Japanese culture and society. Matsumoto (1988:405; 1989:218) states that what is of importance to the Japanese is not one’s own territory, but one’s position in relation to the others in the society, as well as becoming and remaining accepted by others. Loss of face is associated with the fact that one has not comprehended or acknowledged the structure and hierarchy of the group. In such a culture, it is significant to recognise what is appropriate and behave accordingly, i.e. conforming to the norms of expected behaviour. Nwoye (1992:311) further noted that in these societies it is not important to utilise interactional strategies to achieve specific objectives such as pleasing or not displeasing others (Nwoye, 1992:311).
According to Matsumoto (1988:405) the concept of negative face is foreign to Japanese culture since this concept presupposes that the individual is the primary unit of society. However, in the Japanese culture social interaction is governed by a person’s understanding of where he or she stands in relation to other members of the group or society, as well as his or her acknowledgement of his or her dependence on others in the group or society, and not by preserving one’s own territory. Matsumoto (1988, 1989) further justifies her argument linguistically by using examples from formulaic expressions, honorifics and the verbs of giving and receiving. She knows that a Japanese speaker can only base morphological or lexical choices on the given interpersonal relationship. Matsumoto (1988) argues that due to the social and grammatical necessity of using the proper honorific forms at all times in Japanese speech, there is no possibility of rationally distinguishing between face-threatening acts and non-face-threatening acts.

In fact, according to Brown and Levinson’s (1987) theory, every utterance in Japanese, even a simple proposition such as ‘Today is Sunday,’ can be considered intrinsically face-threatening (Janney and Arndt, 1993:18). As an illustration, Matsumoto (1989:209-210) points out that when saying ‘Today is Sunday’ in Japanese, the interlocutor has to choose a copula with appropriate honorifics (polite, plain superpolite). Matsumoto further explains that the selection of the copula will depend on his or her relationship with the addressee, and on the addressee’s perception of this relationship. Contrary to this, an English speaker may use the sentence in the similar form to anybody. These linguistic choices become the bulk of Japanese face-work.

The universality of Brown and Levinson’s principles are also questioned by Ide (1989:223) using the perspective of languages with honorifics, particularly Japanese. She mentions two aspects of language and usage which are relevant to linguistic politeness in Japanese which were neglected by Brown and Levinson’s universal principles. The choice of ‘formal linguistic forms’ among varieties with different degrees of formality was regarded as the first linguistic aspect that was neglected by Brown and Levinson’s universal principle. For example, Ide (1989: 226-227) shows that in Japanese, polite requests can be expressed even in the imperative form, if honorific verb forms are used. She argues that Brown and Levinson incorrectly treat some of the formal forms as expressions of negative politeness.
strategies and claims that these are some basic differences between the choice of formal forms and the use of strategies. In the Japanese culture the formal linguistic forms are obligatory, and social conventions (i.e. norms) would dictate the formal forms from which one can choose.

Ide also states that the second neglected usage is ‘discernment,’ which she defines as ‘the interactant’s utilisation of polite expressions according to social conventions rather than interactional strategy’ (Ide, 1989:223). Furthermore, she states that in Japanese, ‘the practice behaviour according to social norms is referred to as wakimae. Ide (1989:230) further argues that showing verbally and non-verbally one’s sense of place or role in a given situation according to social conventions’ is known as behaving according to wakimae. Similarly, Raum (1973:505) distinguishes two poles of sociological significance, namely, the agent and the referent, where the agent represents the inferior social position and the referent the superior position towards which deferential conduct is directed. Trudgill (1974:74) concurs with Raum and further adds that these two poles (the agent and the referent) are responsible for everyday code-switching whereby an individual speaker prefers one language variety over another in an attempt to adhere to the social conventions of the society. Therefore, the speaker (woman) regulates her selection of linguistic forms in order to show her sense of place, that is, of being the agent, particularly in the isiZulu culture. A woman who does not honour her position of being the agent is regarded as behaving in a disrespectful manner.

Ide (1989) also distinguishes between discernment and volitional politeness. While discernment is a form of social indexing, i.e. the speaker focuses on the socially prescribed norms of the particular society, with volitional politeness the speaker performs linguistic acts to achieve specific goals. According to Ide, while these appear to be distinct systems of language use, in practice they complement each other, with the discernment component recognised in the utilisation of non-honorific languages, while the volitional aspect is noticed in the use of honorific languages.

Okamoto (2010b) is of the opinion that in the cultural relativist argument, ‘discernment’ and strategic use are treated as contrastive notions: the former as applicable to politeness in (honorific-rich) languages like Japanese, and the latter as more suitable for accounting
for politeness in (honorific-poor) languages, like English. The observations made by Okamoto (2010b) and Pizzconi (2003, 2011) further provide support to the view that the two notions are neither contrastive nor mutually exclusive and that politeness in the two kinds of languages does not require fundamentally different approaches. This is because even when speakers choose expressions strategically, they are not entirely at liberty to use any expressions as they please. Women, for example, may feel constrained by what they think is their addressee’s expectation towards them, e.g., the dominant or traditional speech norms for women – in particular the expectation to speak politely. But this does not mean that they automatically follow these norms faithfully. For example, a number of women’s metapragmatic comments indicate that depending on the context, women may or may not adopt stereotypically feminine speech, as they are concerned with how their speech is perceived/evaluated in that specific context and wish to use linguistic forms that can help construct the desired context, in particular, identities and relationships. A woman, for instance, may use stereotypically polite and feminine speech in order to express deference towards an older or higher status person, but when wishing to build solidarity with friends, she may not use such speech or may use it to make fun of it.

In summary, it is ultimately the speaker who decides what forms to use as an interactional strategy in a given context – a strategy that does take into consideration what she thinks are the speech norms for a particular context. This conclusion also implies that linguistic forms, or indexical signs like honorifics, are not used simply in response to the contextual features (e.g., the speaker being a woman), but rather can be used to construct a context, including identities and relationships (Silverstein, 1979).

2.4.5 The Igbo notion of politeness
In his study of the Igbo society of Nigeria, Nwoye (1992:313) finds Fraser’s (1990) Conversational Contract model applicable to this society. He argues that it is through socialisation that members of the Igbo society acquire patterns of behaviour, ‘thus entering as it were, into a type of social contract with other members of the society to do his or her best to keep social contact friction-free’ (Nwoye, 1992:313). He sees such a society as being group-oriented which is in contrast to Western societies which are more
individual-oriented. The former is defined as the individual’s desire to focus on his or her personal needs and to place his or her public-self-image above those of others, while the latter refers to the individual’s desire to conform to culturally expected norms behaviour (Nwoye, 1992:313). In an equalitarian society such as the Igbo of Nigeria, Nwoye finds that the concept of ‘group face’ is more applicable, since the focus is on the collective other, where the wants and needs of the group are placed ahead of the individual’s wants and desires.

Nwoye (1992:316) also states that like the concept of face, the concept of imposition is culture specific. He argues that in an individualistic society, i.e. a society in which the primary focus of the individual is to fulfill his or her own personal needs and to maximise his or her personal comfort, speech acts such as offers, requests, criticisms, thanking, etc. may be viewed as an imposition or invasion of one’s privacy. However, in the Igbo culture, stemming from group orientation, there is almost total absence of imposition. These acts are not seen as imposition, but as one’s obligation and duty to society. Thus, he argues that many acts that are seen as face threatening, and therefore as impositions, in Western societies, are not seen as such in the Igbo society. Hence, Nwoye (1992) questions the universality of Brown and Levinson’s notion of face.

2.4.6 Summary
From the above discussion one may conclude that the notion of face is not universal in nature, but is culture dependent. While the notion of ‘individual face’ appears to characterise the Brown and Levinson (Western) model, the Chinese, Japanese, Igbo (Nigerian) and isiZulu cultures tend to conform to a ‘group face’ and / or ‘public face.’ Therefore, the studies in this project will be approached with an open mind, seeking to identify which of these types of ‘face’ are found to be relevant in the isiZulu speaking community. In doing so, the well - articulated Brown and Levinson model will be used as baseline for a comparative study of politeness phenomena within the target community, consistently noting the concerns raised by studies of politeness in non-Western cultures, as discussed above. This confirms the appropriacy of my first key question:

What is the background understanding of politeness within the isiZulu speaking community?
Having discussed the various notions of the concept of politeness, in the next section the focus is on the speech acts of apologies and requests which form the central aspect of the studies undertaken in this thesis.

2.5 SPEECH ACTS

Speech acts refer to acts we perform when we speak, for example, giving advice, agreeing, complaining, requesting or apologising. According to Brown & Levinson (1987:65), some speech acts may be contrary to the ‘face-wants’ of Hearer or Speaker and may consequently be regarded as ‘face-threatening acts’ affecting participants’ face wants in different ways. Speech acts may either impose on one party’s freedom of action, as in the case of requests, or may damage the positive self-image of one of the parties, as in the case of apologies. In this thesis, the realisation of the speech acts of apologies and requests by men and women in the isiZulu speaking community is studied in detail to gain an understanding of politeness phenomena in the community.

2.5.1 Apologies

When social conventions have been violated an apology is called for; as such, it is generally a post act. In any situation requiring an apology there is an apologiser and a recipient of the apology. The apologiser is the one who has been responsible for an action or utterance which has offended the other person (Trosborg, 1995:147-148). By apologising he or she attempts to rectify his or her offence so that social harmony and equilibrium can be restored (Holmes, 1990:267b). Although apologies can be seen as polite speech acts since they aim to restore social relations following an offence, the mere act of apologising involves potential loss of face for the speaker and support for the hearer. An apology performed impolitely will defeat the desired purpose. Apologies are generally examples of negative politeness strategies aimed at supporting or maintaining the addressee’s negative face (Holmes, 1990b:267).

It is important to mention that while the speech act of apologising may be viewed as universal, the conditions which call for an apology are not universal. Cultures may differ in what they regard as an offence, the degree of severity of a particular offence, and the compensation that is appropriate for the particular offence. These factors will in turn be
determined by other variables such as the status, social distance, gender and age of the interlocutors (Maeshiba et al., 1995). In other words, the speaker’s decision to apologise and the apology strategy that the speaker chooses will be determined by the above mentioned factors.

Furthermore it is noted that in some cultures the typical form of an apology is invoked not only to rectify an offence, but also, for example, to express solidarity and to express gratitude. This is illustrated by the following personal experience of one of my colleagues. During her visit to Germany in 2008, a Chinese guest, Dr Yu (raised in the USA), spilled coffee on his pants. She immediately reacted by saying 'sorry.' His response was ‘Why are you apologising? It was not your fault.’

The pragmatic force associated with the word ‘sorry’ was differently encoded by Dr Yu and my colleague. The use of ‘sorry’ by my colleague was to express dismay or regret at the unfortunate incident experienced by Dr Yu. However, to Dr Yu the use of the word ‘sorry’ was restricted to the situation where one is making an apology. Therefore, he was not able to understand why my colleague, who had nothing to do with the spilling of the coffee, should apologise to him.

Also, as pointed out by Richards and Sukwiwat (1983:116), in Japanese ‘thank you’ is not considered sincere enough when expressing gratitude, instead the speaker prefers to say ‘I’m sorry.’ These aspects are well summarised by the comments of Wolfson, Marmor and Jones (1989:180): ‘a cross linguistic study of apologies may well reveal that the concepts of offence and obligation are culture dependent and must, therefore, become an object of study in themselves.’

Although many cross-cultural and inter-language studies have been conducted focusing on the apology strategies used by native and non-native speakers, e.g. Cohen and Olshtain (1981), Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Trosborg (1987), Garcia (1989), House (1989), and Maeshiba et al. (1995), not much research has been conducted on the apology strategies used by men and women in different cultures. One such study was conducted by Holmes (1990a) who looked specifically at the apology strategies used by men and women. She studied a collection of 183 apologies produced by men and women.
in New Zealand and found that there were notable differences between the distribution of apologies of New Zealand men and women.

Following Olshtain and Cohen’s (1983) framework very closely, Holmes used four broad basic categories and a number of sub-categories to classify apology strategies used by respondents. The data were further analysed according to the following factors: type of offence needing remedy, the gender of the subjects, as well as the social relationship between the subjects. She found a number of gender based differences. For example, it was found that women utilised the apology speech act more than men, and that they were also apologised to more frequently than men. Apologies were also more frequent between women and relatively rare between men. The apologies of men often referred indirectly to the offender and the resulting status imbalance, while the apologies of women focused directly on the offended person and in trying to restore harmony. The women also apologised more for space and talk offences and their apologies were more directed to minor offences, while men paid more attention to time offences and used more apologies than women for more serious offences. In terms of status, it was found that while both men and women used more apologies towards power equals, the men used more apologies than women for people of different status and, finally, the women utilised more apologies to female friends, while the men utilised most apologies to socially distant women (Holmes, 1995:185).

From the above findings, Holmes (1990:269b) concludes that ‘New Zealand women are more concerned with the feelings and ‘wants’ of their conversational partners than New Zealand men do, and are therefore more ‘polite’. She does not explain these differences between the men and women’s speech in New Zealand negatively, i.e. as stemming from the subordinate position (lack of power and status) of women in New Zealand, but, rather, positively, i.e. in terms of women showing more concern for their conversational partners.

It is important to note that while Holmes takes into account factors such as type of offence needing remedy, the gender of the subjects as well as the social relationship between the subjects, she does not consider the age of participants. This leads one to question whether age is of no significance in Western cultures, given its importance in many non-Western cultures.
Other researchers have also shown that variables such as status, social distance, and the severity of the offence need to be considered when studying speech acts. For example, in a study conducted by Bergman and Kasper (1993:93) amongst a group of American and a group of Thai students, it was shown that with regard to social distance, both the groups were in agreement in perceiving the closest relationship between friends and the most distant relationship between strangers. However, when focusing on the relationship between students and professors (which both groups agreed fell into the intermediate category), the Thais (Thai students) perceived the relationship as being similar to that of distant family members, while the Americans saw it as a work relationship between participants who were at different levels of positional hierarchy. With regard to loss of face, a one to one relationship was observed between severity of offence and the degree of face loss in responses from the American students. On the other hand, no such simple relationship was found for the Thai students. Offences ranked as ‘medium severity’ were rated high on face loss. However, the authors make the point that this difference in rating could possibly be due to the conceptual differences between the notions of face in Thai and American cultures.

When offering an apology a Speaker may also do so in several different ways. According to Olshtain and Cohen (1983), in offering an apology the Speaker provides an expression of apology, an explanation or account of the situation, an acknowledgement of responsibility, an offer of repair and a promise of forbearance. However, the selection of the different options may differ from culture to culture. For example, Olshtain and Cohen (1983:25) found that Hebrew speakers seemed less apologetic than they may have intended when using English, since they often provided an excuse without making a direct expression of apology. The strategies listed above will be discussed further in the next chapter (Methodology).

Of the aspects discussed above, my study will focus on social distance, age and status. These aspects will give further information as to the politeness phenomena in the isiZulu speaking community. In particular, questions that will be addressed include:

- Do males or females use more apology strategies?
• Does the use of more apology strategies by an individual imply that he or she is being more polite?, and
• Do adults and children differ in the use of apology strategies?

2.5.2 Functions of apologies
According to Goffman (1967), apologies are examples of speech acts that focus on the ‘face’ needs of the addressee/victim, and Holmes refers to apologies as ‘face-supporting 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 or 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).

2.5.3 Gendered Apologies
It has been noted that the impact 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 utilisation 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. This research investigation is not limited to verbal apologies, however, 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.
2.5.4 Requests

A request may take the form of a command or plea. Unlike apologies which are post-event acts, requests are seen as pre-event acts. When making a request the speaker is expressing his or her expectation on the hearer to perform a certain action. Requests are by definition, face-threatening acts (Brown and Levinson, 1978): by making a request, the speaker encroaches on the hearer’s claim to freedom of action and freedom from imposition (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984:201).

Although requests have been investigated from a number of different perspectives (Blum-Kulka and House, 1989); (Hodge, 1990); (de Kadt, 1992a, 1992b); (Ellis, 1994); and (Cohen, 1996a, 1996b), very few studies have focused on age, gender and requesting behaviour. Part of this thesis will investigate the requesting behaviour of males and females in the isiZulu speaking community. In my analysis, I also focus on the claims of universality made by the proponents of politeness theory, i.e. that directness is associated with low politeness and indirectness is associated with high politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987) and that politeness and indirectness are linked in the case of conventional indirectness (Blum-Kulka, 1989). It would be interesting to note whether these claims hold true for the isiZulu-speaking community.

Brown and Levinson’s (1987) work gave rise to considerable research, both theoretical and empirical. One such study is the CCSARP project by Blum-Kulka et al, (1989), a cross-cultural study that investigated the speech acts of requests and apologies across seven different countries. The CCSARP project framework is based on a universalistic premise that the request strategies of the various languages studied would display three major levels of directness, i.e. the most direct, the conventionally indirect level and the non-conventionally indirect level. These three levels are further subdivided into nine categories that represent a universally valid scale of indirectness (Blum-Kulka, 1989:46-47). On analysis of their data by means of this coding scheme, the findings confirmed the cross-linguistic validity of the above coding-scheme.

It is important to note, however, that Blum-Kulka (1982) disputes the notion that the ‘more indirect’ means ‘more polite’ as postulated by Brown and Levinson and warns against drawing a parallel on degrees of directness and levels of politeness. In her study
of the Israel culture and the American culture, she found out that her Hebrew-speaking subjects used high level of direct requests as compared to her English-speaking subjects. She therefore argues that in the Israel society directness takes precedence over face wants as compared to the American society. In this regard, Blum-Kulka (1982:30) also refers to the work of Tannen (1979) who found that ‘Greek social norms require a higher level of indirectness in social interaction than American ones.’ The above findings indicate that politeness strategies are culture dependent, and that “more indirect” does not necessarily mean ‘more polite.’

A major critique of Blum-Kulka’s work is that by Wierzbicka (1991:88) who argues that there is more than one model of politeness and that most work on politeness merely adopts the terms ‘directness’ and ‘indirectness’ in linguistic descriptions as if they are self-explanatory. She suggests that the distinction made between these two concepts should be abandoned until clear definitions of these terms are provided (1991:88). Wierzbicka illustrates how the understanding of these concepts differs from culture to culture and underlines the need for a ‘language-independent universal perspective on the meanings expressed in linguistic interaction’ (1991:6).

Studies conducted by de Kadt (1994) yielded results that were contrary to Blum-Kulka’s findings. Whereas Blum-Kulka argued that conventional indirectness is a linguistic universal, de Kadt found that in isiZulu direct strategies were most frequent and had a high politeness rating, whereas conventionally indirect requests were only infrequently used. De Kadt (1994:110) shows that variables such as the age of the participants, the perceived weight of the request and the status of the participants affect the requesting strategy used by participants. She also found that the isiZulu term ‘ngicela’ which is a performative with a high directness rating in Blum-Kulka’s scale, was rated by her respondents as ‘most polite’ (1992b:103-104). This leads her to question whether the claimed universal connection between politeness and indirectness is true for the Zulu culture.
Studies conducted by Nwoye (1992:317) show that the speech acts such as requests in the Igbo society and culture are not seen as face-threatening acts as in the western cultures and are rarely regarded as impositions. Nwoye attributes this to the fact that the Igbos tend to care more for the collective image of the group than that of the individual. He also shows that in the Igbo society gregariousness is the norm and that ‘hospitality and regard for the good rather than for the self’ makes an act such as a request free from any impositions (1992:316). He, therefore, argues that, like the concept of face, the concept of impositions are culture dependent. Nwoye also demonstrates that in the Igbo society requests are often framed with the absence of politeness markers, such as ‘please.’ Therefore, it is not uncommon for one to make a request such as ‘I am feeling hot, open the window’ (1992:317). According to Nwoye (1992:320) such directness is the ‘preferred and most productive strategy’ and ‘social differentiations like superior or inferior, young or old, male or female, etc. do not affect directness as the preferred strategy.’

The opposing views discussed above led to the following questions which I intend addressing in this study:

- Blum-Kulka (1989) claims as a universal behaviour that the majority of request strategies are conventionally indirect. Does this apply to the isiZulu speaking community?
- Brown and Levinson (1987) claim that ‘more direct means ‘more polite’ is a universal. Does this hold for the isiZulu speaking community?

With regard to politeness phenomena within the specific community under investigation, I shall investigate the following:

- Do males and females differ in their utilisation of request strategies?
- What is the influence of variables such as age, social distance, and status on the request strategies used?
- Do adults and children differ in their use of request strategies?
It must be noted that throughout my study I shall be giving consideration to factors such as the social distance, status and gender of the respondents relative to that of the recipients. Research has shown that these are insignificant aspects in the determination of politeness strategies (see, for example, Maeshiba et al., 1995). It is, therefore, important to provide a background understanding of these variables. This is done in the sections where debates around language and gender, social dimensions and linguistic analysis are discussed.

2.6 DEBATES AROUND LANGUAGE AND GENDER

One of the earliest challenges in the gender debate was the sex-gender distinction, and debate as to whether gendering is the result of sex, and to what extent gender is a social construct (Stanley, 2002). Sex has been defined as a set of biological differences. Gender is a set of attitudes, behaviours and practices which are seen as related to sex, but which may have no essential connection. Two approaches have emerged from the sex-gender distinction: biological essentialism and social constructionism. People who take the biological approach hold the essentialist view that differences in the reproductive systems and strength, brain structure, body shape and size, as well as capacity for physical exertion may result in gender roles to develop logically and naturally, since they are based on biological reality; in other words, essentialists argue that the social manifestations of our maleness and femaleness are a direct product of biological factors.

The social constructionist view, which is generally more acceptable to feminists, argues that biological essentialism is based on popular prejudice or ignorance. They (social constructionists) are of the view that gender is constructed by cultural forces that dictate how individuals should – in terms of their sex or gender – play, dream, act, and move. To this view, sex here is biological, but gender is an identity shaped through interaction with others.

Weatherall (2002) argues that gender varies between cultures, and may even vary in a culture over time and space. Entry to particular professions, forbidden to women 150 years ago, is nowadays acceptable in most cultures. Gender, therefore, like politeness, can be culture specific. According to Bergvall (1996) a society creates gender, however,
appropriate male and female behaviour, characteristics and roles are formulated by a range of shared social conventions and expectations within the society. Ochs (1992) argues that for humans, the construction of gender starts at birth, on the observation of the genitals. Thus, at birth, the sex category begins to become a gender status through naming, dressing, and later on toys and other gender markers. Gender debates range from women’s rights as individuals, through to career and marital choices. There have been movements (such as women’s movement in the 60s and 70s) to expose gender oppression in terms of economic class in the broader framework of capitalism, and to expose patriarchy as a system characterised by dominance, hierarchy and competition. A gendered system almost always subordinates women in the society.

It is of crucial importance to mention that gender roles are constructed and enacted largely through discourse, and more importantly, women and men actively participate in the construction of their gendered identities.

Allard et al., (1995:24) also argues that the shaping of groups and individuals is not done passively by large forces in the society such as the media or the schools, but individuals or groups actively participate in the selection and rejection of the dimensions they choose to incorporate into their version of gender.

Depending on their beliefs and situations, people actively adopt different masculine and feminine practices. Nevertheless, our perception of gender is not constant, but evolves over time with experience, maturity, and reflection.

Butler (1990) argues that gender is performative, and that the feminine and masculine styles of conversation are the products of repetitive acts by women and men. ‘Gender is the repeat stylisation of the body, a set of acts done repeatedly within an inflexible regulatory frame which over time produce the appearance of substance, of a ‘natural’ kind of being’ (1990:33). Cameron, in support of Butler’s position, argues that ‘people are who they are because of, inter alia, the way they talk’ (1997:49).

Without doubt, language use and the choice of language used daily reinforce the constructed gender identities. Gender, therefore, is a process that creates social differences which define women and men. Butler (1990) also agrees that when individuals
interact socially, they see and learn what is expected. Consequently, individuals act and react in a conventional manner, and in the process of learning, construct and maintain the gendered order. ‘The very injunction to be given gender takes place through discursive routes: to be a heterosexually desirable object, to be a good mother, to be a fit worker’ (Butler, 1990:145).

2.6.1 African Critique of Gender Theory
Some of the recently emergent African discourse on gender issues as they relate to Africa includes the African feminist critique of the western approach to the conceptualisation of gender and the over-generalisation of Eurocentric norms. African feminists have argued that the concept of gender has frequently been judged in relation to the Euro-American norms of culture and experience. Mikell (1997) explains gender from an African perspective and argues that the African feminist approach to the concept differs completely from the western approach, which is based on western forms of feminism since the 1960s. She states that gender dynamics in Africa are different from those generated by western feminism. She points out that the gender struggle in the west is shaped by individualism and patriarchal control over women within capitalist industrialised western societies. African feminism, she argues, is shaped by resistance to western hegemony and its legacy within African culture. The notion of individualism which is so strong in the west, and the hegemony of western ideas within modern African culture are of significance for this study, because many of my respondents show strong (positive or negative) reactions to this hegemony.

Furthermore, African feminism, according to Mikeli (1997), is typically heterosexual, pro-natal, and concerned with ‘bread, butter, culture and power’ issues. Mama (2001) also expresses concern about the indiscriminate application of western gender theories in Africa. Amadiume (1997) argues that the western notion of family, which is nuclear, differs from that of African society where the extended family system is (or was) practiced. In the West, the typical nuclear family consists (or used to consist) of a dominant husband/father, a subordinate wife and their children. Family experiences within a nuclear group necessarily differ from those in an extended family.
Oyewumi (1997), in agreement with Amadiume (1997), but with a radical view on the applicability of gender theories to Africa, argues that the application of gender to African realities is problematic, because the concern that has produced gender debates and research is born out of Euro–American women’s experiences and desire for change. Oyewumi rejects the western feminists’ use of gender as a universalising model for describing women’s subordination and oppression. Her argument suggests that ‘woman and her subordination’ is not universal. Furthermore, Oyewumi’s (2003) later work points out that western feminists’ concept of gender is deeply rooted in the nuclear family system. The western nuclear family, she explains, is constructed on the basis of gender. For example, the household consists of two parents, where the male is considered the head and the breadwinner, and the female is associated with home and nurture. She argues that it is alien to Africa ‘despite its promotion by the colonial and neo-colonial state, international-development agencies, feminist organisations, [and] contemporary non-governmental organisations (NGOs)’ (2002:3). She further argues that within the African family system, which is non-nuclear, the family is non-gendered. She demonstrates this with Yoruba kinship examples where kinship roles and categories are not differentiated according to gender. Oyewumi argues that in the Yoruba family, power centres within the family are diffuse and not gender dependent, but centred, based on age. Power is vested in seniority, based on relative age and not on gender. According to Oyewumi, ‘seniority is the social ranking of persons based on their chronological ages,’ therefore, egbon is the older sibling and aburo the younger sibling of the speaker, regardless of gender. She concludes by arguing that the seniority principle, unlike gender, is not rigid or static, but dynamic and fluid’ (2002:5).

Oyewumi’s generalisations about Euro-American women and their families, as well as about African families, now seem in turn, somewhat essentialist and old fashioned in intellectual climate, which acknowledges the great diversity of African cultures. Politeness and impoliteness are both related to cultural expectations and the ways in which behaviour conforms or fails to conform to them.

The above critique nevertheless must acknowledge that the issue of language gender identities in the African multilingual situation may be different from images of men and
women constructed through choice and style of language use in bilingual or multilingual European communities.

In response to Oyewumi's critique of the conceptualisation of gender, Bakare-Yusuf (2002) does not subscribe to the attempt of assigning a particular category only to the 'West' and concluding that it cannot be applied to the African situation. She refers to this attempt as violating the order of the knowledge. She argues that, because for centuries, Africa has been in contact with Europe and Europe with Africa, from this relationship a whole series of borrowed traditions have continually spread and been adopted. She sees the denial of this cultural exchange as a denial of intercultural exchange between Africa and Europe.

2.6.2 Biological and psychological factors
According to Holmes (1995:7), some researchers argue that biological differences an individual is born with may contribute to sex-differentiated rates of language acquisition, and also for the differentiation in the psychological make-up or temperament of people. The differences in the psychological make-up are responsible for males and females interacting differently towards others. For example, Holmes (1995:7), reports that other researchers claim that "women concentrate on making connections, they seek participation and focus on the interdependencies between people." As a result of this concern for others, Holmes argues that women would tend to use linguistic devices that involve others and emphasise the interpersonal nature of talk. On the other hand, men are more concerned with independence and detachment, and concentrate on hierarchical relationships. Thus, they would tend to use linguistic strategies that assert control (Holmes, 1995:7).

2.6.3 Socialisation
According to Jureidini and Poole (2003:123) socialisation is the process of learning to become a member of society, and how each individual learns to fit into a group. There are several ways in which children and adults, for that matter, are socialised. Primary socialisation for a child occurs when a child learns the attitudes, values and actions appropriate to individuals as members of a particular culture (Levine and Hoffner, 2006: 650). They further contend that secondary socialisation refers to the process of learning
what the appropriate behaviour is, as a member of a smaller group within the larger society. Basically, it is the behavioural patterns reinforced by the socialising agents of society. It should be mentioned that secondary socialisation is usually associated with teenagers and adults, and involves smaller changes than those occurring in primary socialisation.

Maltz and Borker (1982:204-209), also argue that in several societies girls and boys use and interpret language differently as a result of the different patterns of socialisation that they experience while growing up. This may be illustrated by the fact that in most Western societies, girls and boys operate in single-sex peer groups through most of their childhood and they also acquire different styles of interaction during this period of time. In a study conducted in New Zealand, Holmes (1995:7) found that boys’ style of interaction was more control-orientated and competitive, as opposed to the girls who interacted more co-operatively and concentrated on relative closeness. According to Maltz and Borker (1982:200) men and women grow up and are socialised into different sub-cultures, which serve as the bases for different ideologies. This leads to different perceptions of the characteristics of friendly interaction, rules for engaging in it, and ways of signaling solidarity (du Plessis, 1995:23) in Luthuli (2007:56).

2.6.4 Societal norms
In cultures where face is regarded as a “regulatory principle promoting conformity with established norms”, politeness is mainly associated with one’s duty towards the group (Terkourafi, 2005:319). The use of honorifics in Japanese or Chinese, for instance, is dictated by social norms rather than individual choices. Similarly, Eelen (2001) argues that the link between social or cultural norms and individuals has largely been assumed rather than explicated by politeness researchers. He asserts that:

The ontology of the society-individual connection needs to be laid out in detail. Without it we are left with a gap between the abstract level of the collective where the norms and rules reside, and the level of concrete individual behaviour which is explained by those norms and rules (Eelen, 2001: 129).
In this sense, Eelen suggests that it is not enough to theorise about politeness at the individual and social levels: we also need to explore interconnections between those levels. As Arundale (2009) succinctly points out, the individual and social levels can be conceptualised as being intimately connected through what he terms the “individual-social dialectic”.

At the individual level, then, we can explore how expectations about appropriate behaviour in particular local contexts and Communities of Practice, or more diffuse social groupings, both afford and constrain evaluations of politeness and impoliteness. Politeness at the individual level can be theorised as pragmatic acts (Mey, 2001), involving both behaviours and evaluations enacted in interaction. However, rather than attempting to model the role of normative expectations as “socially average behaviour”, our focus instead should be on examining what Eelen (2001) terms a “working consensus”. In other words, it is through examining the orientations of participants to particular normative positionings, which are implicit in their evaluations of politeness, that we can better understand the role that norms play at the individual level.

At the social level, on the other hand, we can examine how politeness norms are debated, and in particular, how such debates are used to position certain individuals or groups as either lying within or outside “normal” society, often in an attempt to disempower certain groups through exclusion. The power of statements about politeness lies in the fact that they constitute moral judgements, where “the evaluator imposes a moral order on the evaluated by means of which he or she condemns or commends” (Eelen, 2001: 174).

Similarly, Lakoff (1975:53-57) argued that for the American middle class society socialisation reinforces sex roles and societal order, for instance, women’s role in the society expected them to completely avoid offence, consequently, women were required to use hypercorrect grammar and super-polite forms; avoid the use of swear words; use rising intonation in declarative statements, and to ensure that their message was understood correctly by both intensifying and hedging utterances. Women had to bear in mind that they had to avoid any offence by expressing their views at all. On the other hand, men were free to swear, rough talk, joke and challenge each other, thus showing their allegiance. Thus, the speech of women was seen as immature, unassertive and
hyper-polite. On the other hand, the speech of men was seen as assertive, adult and correct (du Plessis, 1995:23). This published piece of work by Lakoff (1975) (though not based on empirical research) is probably the source of the linguistic tradition that women are more polite that men (Luthuli, 2007: 57).

2.6.5 Power and Dominance

All recent writers on politeness and power seek to conceptualise power not as a static component of particular interactive situation or as an inherent attribute which certain individuals possess, but rather as a complex, multifaceted dynamic force. Power is ‘something people do to each other’ (Eelen, 2001: 224). Eelen goes on to argue that the subordinate pays deference to the superordinate because the superordinate is in a position of deference from the subordinate.

However, it is important to also note that participants in a conversation use a number of strategies to achieve their conversational goal. One of these goals may be to dominate other participants of the speech situation. Most studies find that in mixed talks men tend to be more dominating than women. One of the obvious strategies for achieving this goal is the use of interruptions. Their use is generally explained by the relative power of the participants which derives from their social status (Dunbar and Burgoon, 2005).

Dunbar and Burgoon (2005) further contend that the higher incidence of interruptions is noted in the relatively high social and economic status of men. Women, on the other hand, are powerless regarding their social position. This is reflected in fewer interruptions in cross-sex conversations. Similarly, as Lakoff (1975), Trudgill (1978) and others have pointed out, low social status is often characterised by passivity and low vitality. This, in turn, results in the wish to be accepted by the dominating group.

It has been acknowledged by Brown and Levinson (1987:15) and other researchers, that power has a significant role to play in the determination of the level of politeness the Speaker should accord to an addressee. For example, in societies where women have an inferior role and are vulnerable to men, they use predominantly negatively polite speech to men.
According to Holmes (1995:7-8), the greater societal power accorded to men allows them to define and control situations within their communities. In some societies male norms predominate in interaction. Deuchar (1988) in Holmes (1995:8) argues that in situations where women belong to a subordinate group, they will be inclined to be more linguistically polite than the men who are in control.

2.6.6 Discussion
The claim that women’s speech is considered more polite compared to that of men will be looked at in greater detail as it forms an important part of this thesis, in which I will try to establish through the examination of the speech acts of requests and apologies whether the speech of women or men, in the isiZulu speaking community, is to be considered more polite within the framework of the perception of politeness in the community under study. The comparison of my findings with similar or different observations in other cultures will be of interest.

According to Freeman and McElhinny (in McKay and Hornberger, 1996: 251) in societies where politeness is not acquired through language learning, but is seen as a skill, men are understood as being more polite than women. However, in societies where politeness is perceived as a form of respect and where indirectness is valued, the tendency is to view women as more polite than men. My study will attempt to establish if either of these two categories apply to the isiZulu speaking community.

Studies have shown that the aspects of the speech of men in one society might be associated with the speech of women in other societies. For example, in Malagasy, Keenan (1974), states that while women criticise openly and utilise confrontational strategies, men use language subtly and try to maintain good communication in their relationships and avoid confrontations at all cost. While men prefer indirectness as a way of showing respect, women tend to be more direct. In this society directness is associated with deviation from tradition and, therefore, with being less polite. Hence, indirectness is equated with politeness and, as a result, the men are considered to be more polite. This is in contrast to the pattern in Western societies. For example, Preisler (1986) discovered that British women tended to be linguistically more polite compared to British men. The behaviour for the Malagasy society can be accounted for by the differentiation in the roles
of men and women (Holmes, 1992:324). In this society men are engaged in village to village negotiations, dispute resolution and marriage requests, activities which are conducted through a traditional politeness system. On the other hand, women spend a lot of time in the market place where transactions take place through a devalued European politeness system. Therefore, from a traditional perspective, women are not as skillful in polite speech as men.

It is reported by Freeman and McElhinny (in McKay and Hornberger, 1996:252) that studies conducted by Smith-Hefner (1988) in the Javanese society showed that men are more skilled in using politeness forms than the women. This is not because women are not polite, but because they are too polite. This sometimes stems from the fact that women have to act as role models for their children and, therefore, tend to over emphasise the use of politeness forms. Also, in contexts where it is not clear which politeness forms to choose, women are inclined to choose the most polite form. In such instances, the men would remain silent.

According to Wessels (1995:122), Lakoff's (1975) publication on the American middle class society claimed that some politeness markers, such as rising intonation, tag questions, and hedges are usually found in women’s language, thereby illustrating that women have a tendency of being linguistically more polite than men. Other researchers, for example, Brown and Levinson (1987:252) also considered these forms to be politeness devices. Brown and Levinson state that in the Tenejapan society women were overall more polite than men. Moreover, Brown and Levinson (1987) found that Tenejapan women mostly utilise negative politeness strategies when interacting with men, and positive politeness strategies when interacting with women, while men are relatively brusque to anyone, irrespective of sex (Brown and Levinson, 1987: 251-252). This confirms the claim by Brown (1980:119), who argued that the level of politeness one uses would depend on the social relationship one has with the addressee. She found that in Tzeltal, the language spoken by the Tenejapan society, there is a class of particles which operate as adverbs, changing the force of a speech act by expressing something about the speaker’s attitude towards the act being performed (or towards the addressee)
In other words, these adverbs either strengthen or weaken what is said. Hedging acts are seen as being negatively polite and emphasising them is seen as being positively polite. Brown (1980:122) found that Tenejapan women used more particles in their (Tzeltal) speech than men did and that their speech is more elaborated than men’s speech for both positive politeness (emphasising) and negative politeness (hedging). The data presented by Brown is suggestive of the fact that women in Tenejapan are overall more polite compared to men. Women have a tendency to utilise negative politeness towards both men as well as other women because of their sensitivity to face –threatening material in their speech, and they use positive politeness towards men and other women because they are more sensitive to positive face wants (Brown, 1980:129).

The findings reported above led me to the following key questions which I shall address in the isiZulu speaking community.

* Are the politeness strategies of women towards women different from those towards men, and vice versa?
* Do men or women value politeness more highly in this community?

It is noted from the above discussion that rules for polite behaviour, or similarly the perception of what is polite, differ from one speech community to another. This raises the question as to what factors determine polite behaviour in a given society.

According to Holmes (1995:11) deciding what is or is not polite in any community involves investigating social relationships using three dimensions:

(a) the solidarity-social distance dimension,

(b) the power dimension, and

(c) the formality dimension.

The first two dimensions will be discussed in detail in the next section, as the influence of these variables will be investigated in the study on the isiZulu speaking community.
2.7 SOCIAL DIMENSIONS AND LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

2.7.1 Solidarity-social distance

Reduced social distance or high solidarity tends to result in the use of more positive politeness devices. Speakers are positively polite to friends and family with whom they get on well (Holmes, 1995).

The way in which solidarity or social distance is expressed linguistically will differ from culture to culture. Women and men are no exception. Leech (1983: 126) identifies social distance as an important factor in determining politeness behaviour. According to him, the determination of social distance does not involve the roles people assume in relation to one another in a given context, but also how well they know each other. Brown and Levinson (1987) also identify the importance of social distance as an appropriate social dimension in every culture. However, the variables that determine the level of importance will differ from culture to culture. Their model of politeness suggests that the larger the social distance between participants, the more politeness is expected towards the other participant (Luthuli, 2007: 27). This implies that one will apologise more often to strangers than to friends and intimates. On the other hand, according to Wolfson (1988:33), we respond in a similar manner (with regard to the use of linguistic politeness) to the people at the extreme ends of social distance, that is, strangers and intimates. With these two groups the relationship is fixed or stable. In these relationships people know what to expect and where they stand with each other. As a result, they are not bothered by using explicit linguistic politeness strategies. However, with acquaintances and casual friends the social distance is not fixed and the relationship is less certain and more open to negotiation. These relationships would fall in the middle of the continuum. Such persons would receive more attention in the form of linguistically polite interactions since there is a greater risk to face.

According to Brown (1980:115), positive politeness is expressed more often to an acquaintance, ‘a person whose desires and personality traits are known and liked.’ This minimised social distance or high solidarity often results in the utilisation of positive politeness devices. On the other hand, negative politeness is often expressed to those one would keep at a distance. Negative politeness avoids intruding, thus stressing the
social distance between people. Therefore, when social distance increases negative politeness also increases, while reduced social distance or high solidarity often results in the utilisation of positive politeness devices.

2.7.2 Power/Status

According to Fillmore (1975), cited in Levinson (1983), social deixis concerns those aspects of language structure that encode the social identities of participants, or the social relationship between them, or between one of them and person or entities referred to. Hudson (2002: 120) also refers to 'linguistic items that reflect social characteristic of the speaker, of the addressee or of the relation between them'. Social relations may be expressed in several ways in language, but Levinson (1983) limits the notion of social deixis to aspects of the social relationship between speaker and addressee and which are grammaticalised in language. The options available to address a conversational as *sir* or *mate* in British English is an example of social deixis. The choices the speaker makes indicate the social relationship that the speaker perceives to exist between him/her and the listener or listeners (Ruhlemann, 2007: 185).

On the other hand, Brown and Levinson (1987:77) define the relative power between Hearer and Speaker as the level at which the Hearer can improve his plans and self-evaluation (face) at the expense of the Speaker's. They conceptualise power as something that may be culturally constructed, for example, the power of an older person over a younger person or a husband over a wife, etc. Holmes (1995:17), views power as something that attracts deferential behaviour, including linguistic deference or negative politeness. In other words, people are generally more respectful to people with power and would try not to offend them.

In closing this section, it must be noted that the situation in which interaction occurs also plays an important role in the determination of the level of politeness one would use, i.e. politeness is context dependent. This means that the solidarity-social distance dimension and power dimension cannot be considered in isolation, but must be looked at in the context in which interaction occurs. For example, two brothers who are attorneys and on opposite sides in a court case, will address each other as “my learned colleague” and by their first names.
According to Holmes (1995:20), positive politeness strategies are utilised in more intimate and less formal settings, while negative politeness strategies are often utilised in formal settings and interactions. Furthermore, Brown and Levinson (1987:17) emphasise the ranking of the FTA, that is, the degree of seriousness of the FTA.

It should be noted that, although the dimensions mentioned above are universal, the weighting assigned to each one may differ quite dramatically from one culture and social group to another (Holmes, 1995:22).

The dimensions of social distance and status will be explored further in my study of the South African isiZulu speaking community.

2.8 Summary

I have developed this very extensive and rather detailed research overview as my research topic cuts across a number of fields in which research has been extremely prolific.

In the next chapter, I present the methodology that was used in an attempt to obtain answers for the key questions asked in the Introduction chapter.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is aimed at informing the reader about data collection procedures that were utilised in answering the central research questions.

In the first section of this chapter the environment in which the study was conducted is described. This is done in order to explain the wider circumstances and hence the specific South African ‘space’ in which this research was done. A South African township is a very particular environment and, despite the diversity it offers, it also has specific characteristics that distinguish it from life in the cities or rural areas. Townships are neither rural nor entirely urban; they constitute a lifestyle that may only be adequately understood by those who have experienced it.

After the presentation of relevant demographic data, including a brief sociolinguistic profile of the area, I will give detailed information about those who made this research possible; and the participants of my study. They reside in different areas and sections of the Umlazi Township. Some interviews were conducted in private homes and public spaces.

The rationale behind the complex methodological approach employed here is based on the belief that social aspects of language can only be adequately understood if the researcher is able to gain a holistic and genuine understanding of the sociolinguistic dynamics at work. Hence, the functions of language, i.e. isiZulu, in reference to politeness can be unraveled by studying the people themselves. To study politeness from this perspective also means studying the culture and examining the deeper meanings of the ethnolinguistic life experiences of the participants. The third section of this chapter discusses the different methods on which the triangulation approach of this study is based and explains the rationale for choosing them.
3.2 ENVIRONMENT AND PARTICIPANTS

All the data collected in this study were elicited within the proximity of the Umlazi Township, and all participants of this study were residents of the township, or had lived there until recently.

Since the study investigated politeness phenomena within the context of a township community in KwaZulu-Natal, the conclusions that are reached cannot be generalised to all South African township communities. Furthermore, any claims that are made are not necessarily representative of isiZulu speaking residents of the central city, suburb or rural areas in KwaZulu-Natal residents. One would expect the composition of township identities to be premised on an ‘urban’ identity construction with regard to the urban-rural dichotomy explained by Appalraju and de Kadt (2002) or Dlamini (2001). The association of industrialisation with the urban component of the community, and with modernisation, resulted in Zulu cultural practices being associated with the rural areas, being poor and conservative, creating a rural-urban or modern-backwards dichotomy, which added complexity to an already diverse setting (Dlamini, 2001: 198).

However, the term ‘urban’ has its own intricacies and ambiguity in the situation of township environments. Regardless of the fact that the Umlazi Township is part of the eThekwini Municipality, an obvious lifestyle differentiation can be noted between most township residents and residents in the city, which has socio-economic and cultural implications. South African townships are located merely in the periphery of cities and tend to have unique characteristics that demand adequate differentiation from those of an actual city environment.

3.2.1 The Umlazi Township

Due to South Africa’s history of segregation and forced separate development, African people were denied the right to settle in White neighbourhoods unless they stayed on their employers’ premises. The ‘pass-law-system’ controlled the movement of Black South Africans from rural to urban areas and from one urban area of jurisdiction to another (Slabbert and Finlayson, 2000: 121). Consequently, Black people all over South Africa who had found work in the cities started to settle in urban areas that were undeveloped.
These surrounding areas of the city that were occupied by the Black working class, became known as ‘townships’ or ‘locations’ and were based on apartheid-based town planning. Due to enormous influx of previously rural residents to urban areas, most townships’ populations have substantially increased over the past few decades. Umlazi is only one among many other examples of such a development.

Although a South African tourist webpage suggests that Umlazi ‘originated in 1845 when the British occupied Natal in force and established a number of native locations for the Zulus,’ the settlement proper only dates back to the mid-twentieth century. During the era of the Group Areas Act, a large number of Africans were evicted in the 1960s from Cato Manor (Umkhumbane) and forced to resettle elsewhere. The Umlazi Township developed during these times. Apparently, the original plans for the township included businesses and entertainment facilities. These, however, never materialised for at least two reasons. First, the township and many other areas in KwaZulu-Natal, were heavily affected by political violence during the 1980s and 1990s. This forced several businesses, such as the grocery chain Checkers, to withdraw from the township premises. Second, the continuous influx of settlers and the large number of informal settlements on undeveloped land within and around the township contributed to an unstable and unsafe environment (Tshabalala, 1998).

3.2.1.1 Demographic and sociolinguistic data

Umlazi is the second biggest township in South Africa and clearly the biggest township in KwaZulu-Natal. Language statistics of the 2001 census, however, state that it only has a population of about 400 000 people. It should also be mentioned that different sets of data provide conflicting information on this issue, since there are also claims that more than one and a half million people live in Umlazi (Tshabalala, 1998: 37). One can then assume that the current number of inhabitants exceeds the number given in the recent census, as there exists a gradual increase of informal settlements. The table below reveals the linguistic background with regard to the mother tongue languages spoken by Umlazi residents:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number of speakers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afrikaans</td>
<td>1030</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>isiNdebele</td>
<td>430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>isiXhosa</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>isiZulu</td>
<td>213583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sePedi</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seSotho</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seTswana</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>siSwati</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tshiVenda</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xiTsonga</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census Database 2001: http://www.statssa.gov.za

According to the table, the Umlazi Township is predominantly inhabited by isiZulu-speakers, with a few Coloured, Indian, and Whites, who married interculturally. One can also safely assume that those who live in the township, but have a different mother tongue, have acquired at least some knowledge of isiZulu. Admittedly, it is impossible to provide a complete sociolinguistic profile of Umlazi as no reliable census data is yet available on the area. It should, however, be pointed out that bilingualism (if not multilingualism) is characteristic of a large number of Umlazi residents. While a high level
of bilingualism is noted, a significant number of isiZulu monolingual speakers exist, particularly among the older generation. The implication here is not that every young person in Umlazi speaks English - isiZulu monolinguals also exist among young people.

### 3.2.1.2 Participants

Townships in KwaZulu-Natal, and hence Umlazi, present a contrast to the common multilingualism that characterises most other South African Townships. The participants of this investigation were all mother tongue speakers of isiZulu.

Participants in the study are defined as Umlazi residents who actively participated in the study and were at all times aware of my identity as a researcher.

The data collected for this study drew from a large number of participants and most of those born in the township, with the exception of short distance trips, but they had never left the place for an extended period. The only two main criteria I used to choose the sample of participants were the participant’s age and their mother tongue.

Within KwaZulu-Natal there are, of course, a number of different varieties of isiZulu spoken (see, for instance, Zungu, 1995). Umlazi participants frequently referred to the variety commonly in the country as ‘deep isiZulu’ and clearly distinguished the Umlazi language variety from the rural one. In comparison with other townships in South Africa, Umlazi is linguistically reasonably homogeneous. In general, townships in KwaZulu-Natal do not offer the common multilingualism that is characteristic of other South African townships, as demonstrated by Slabbert and Finlayson (2000: 122): ‘Communities who reside in these [South African] townships use the nine official African languages. On the contrary, Umlazi is predominantly populated by isiZulu mother-tongue speakers. Consequently, the dominance of isiZulu may contribute to a significant difference in the sociolinguistic situation in these townships from that of the multilingual townships in Gauteng. I must caution, however, that as already mentioned, there exists a dichotomy between ‘deep’ and ‘urban’ varieties, where ‘deep’ refers to the old, rural, relatively ‘pure’ African varieties, and ‘urban’, to urbanised forms, that are linguistically different (Slabbert and Finlayson, 2002: 238).
3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011) research designs – otherwise known as strategies of inquiry – are kinds of methods of inquiry within the research approaches (qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods) that set out structured directions and steps of research design.

Since this study is a broad investigation of politeness covering several aspects, different methods of data collection are used in an attempt to achieve triangulation. Marying (1996: 121) describes triangulation as an approach where one is attempting to explore various ways and channels to collect information which will enable one to find answers to the central questions defining the research. One has to emphasise that the goal is not to gain total conformity, but rather to compare the differences found in the collected data in order to show strengths and weaknesses of the respective methods.

The results may be more meaningful when using more than one method of collecting data, since the provision of different steps of analysis would allow the researcher to validate his or her findings. ‘In triangulation, a similar example or pattern of behaviour is explored from various sources. The utilisation of the process maximises the reliability of the conclusions reached’ (Seliger and Shohamy, 1990). Since each method (discourse completion tasks, interviews, observation) has its own advantages and limitations, and the limitations of one method could be balanced by the advantages of another, these complementary methods of data collection are adopted to enhance the validity of my findings, apart from providing answers to the key questions that are posed.

The methods of collecting data utilised for this research are interviews, discourse completion task questionnaires (DCTs) and participant observation. The analysis is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. I chose to combine both methods because, just as the three parts of a triangle are welded together (Marying, 1996: 122), I attempted to compound the three different approaches in order to gain a more holistic view of the investigated group. Qualitative data consist of empirical information captured through a wide range of techniques, usually involving watching, asking or examining. This
information is mostly presented and articulated in a non-numerical format. Quantitative data involve empirical information captured and presented in numerical forms, commonly associated with measurement through number systems, and mostly used for testing hypotheses (Punch, 2005). Qualitative and quantitative methods each have its unique characteristics, but a combination of these two methods, through which they complement each other, is generally advantageous. The combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches leads to a multiple method approach. The application of both in a piece of research brings together results ranging from hypothesis testing through to explanatory inductive processes. Likewise, the combination of the two approaches in a piece of research may capitalise on the strengths of both methods, and at the same time compensate for any deficiencies in each approach (Bryman, 1988); (Punch, 2005).

In the study, the two approaches were combined at three levels, namely; collection of data, analysis of data and the presentation of findings. The application of this combination (to collection, analysis and findings) is appropriate to the present research. For instance, the qualitative method assisted with the design of the survey; a quantitative method was used to establish occurrences of patterns identified in the qualitative data. In addition, the findings gained through a qualitative approach were further concretised by the findings from the quantitative data. The application of the two approaches at these three levels is a good example of a multi-method approach, as recommended, for example by Cohen (1996) and Wodak (1989) since there is no single method that can completely and satisfactorily assess every occurrence of linguistic behaviour.

3.4 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

As mentioned above, the methods of collecting data utilised in this study were non-participatory observation, interviews and discourse completion task questionnaires (DCTs). Below, I discuss an elaborate description of the research methodology in accordance with the sequence in which the data were collected.

3.4.1 Participant observation

Participant observation is an interdisciplinary method, but within sociolinguistics it is understood as a variety of informal field methods (Johnstone 2000, Milroy and Gordon
2003, Spradley 1980). Its aim is to holistically understand a community in order to present detailed descriptions of a particular element of that community, which in the case of this thesis is linguistic and non-linguistic politeness strategies (Rudwick, 2006). Although many sociolinguists claim that the ‘best’ and most ‘valuable’ data are inherently linked to recorded speech, it must be stressed that it certainly is the knowledge about the cultural world in which speech is embedded that leads sociolinguists to the analysis of this data (Johnstone 2000: 84). “Participant observation enables the research worker to secure his data within the medium, symbols, and experiential worlds which have meaning to his respondents” (Vidich, 1970: 164).

In order to be successful as a participant observer, the researcher must be accepted by the community to be studied (Bretborde 1998: 15). I grew up in Umlazi and received my High School education in one of the well-known schools. I also speak fluent isiZulu. I found that this made the respondents to easily connect with me. As a prelude to the interviews and discourse completion task questionnaires (DCTs), linguistic and non-linguistic politeness strategies of isiZulu speaking people (males, females, young and old) from Umlazi were observed. Observations were done in different contexts and under different circumstances, for example at schools and ordinary interaction in family households. Notes were made on paper and from memory as to conversations and the non-verbal aspects of conversations. During the period of observation my attention was focused on the possibly gendered nature of linguistic and non-linguistic strategies of isiZulu-speaking community (Luthuli, 2007: 35).

It is noted that data obtained from the observation of natural interaction would have a high degree of authenticity and can therefore contribute substantially to an investigation such as this one. Bloomer, Trott and Wray (1998) are of the opinion that while various types of research can only measure elicited behaviour, because specific tasks are presented in a controlled setting, observation allows one to examine non-elicited behaviour as and when it happens (for example, interactional behaviour, pathological phenomena, paralinguistic behaviour, and slips of the tongue). This, according to Bloomer et al., (1998), allows for a much more ‘holistic’ understanding of how language is being utilised in context. For this reason it is a technique much favoured by ethnographers. Wolfson (1983) also concurs,
when he argues that 'ethnographic research is the only reliable methodology about how speech acts function in a conversation.' Similarly, Silverman (2004) states that naturally occurring data is the most reliable and fruitful data gathering technique as it is 'derived from situations which exist independently of the researcher's intervention.'

Although many researchers regard naturally occurring talk as the most reliable, it is important to mention that it does have some limitations. For example, Lin (2005) conducted an investigation of the politeness phenomena in Chinese, and in this study, she criticised data collected from authentic conversation on the basis that it can be very time consuming. Furthermore, it is sometimes impossible for the researcher to control the 'contextual as well as the social variables such as gender, distance, age and power.' Similarly, Migdadi (2003) maintains that one disadvantage of naturally occurring data is that the 'researcher/fieldworker has to rely on memory or on the taping of long talks, with the hope that the speech act under analysis will occur during the course of the interaction.'

However, one may agree that there are some challenges to controlling the social and contextual variables in the naturally occurring data, but it is not impossible to do so. The values, integrity, and moral obligation of the researcher also play a crucial role. Therefore, conducting research using naturally occurring data as a method to collect data can lead to reliable results if the researcher strives to successfully manage the different variables and has allocated enough time to the collection of data. One should also state that one of the critical aims of this investigation was to transcend the linguistic phenomena in a vacuum and to demonstrate what Malinowski (1961:18) called the imponderabilia of actual life, 'series of great significance which cannot possibly be recorded by questioning of computing documents, but have to be observed in their full actuality.'

Seliger and Shohamy (1990: 162) are of the opinion that observations can greatly vary in their extent of explicitness. For the purpose of this study, my position in the field was that of an observer, but there were instances where I would do some probing in order to get in-depth information. The time that I spent in various High schools was very beneficial in the sense that I managed to do my observations under the guise of a visiting lecturer from a University of Technology. Most of the learners were comfortable in my presence. This obscured my role as a researcher, and assisted me in understanding the “local
knowledge” (Geertz, 1983) and the “unspoken common sense” (Johnstone, 2000: 82) and most importantly, the processes in everyday interactions that are based on subliminal assumptions.

The purpose of participant observation is to gain a full understanding of a community in order to present elaborate descriptions of a certain element of that community, which in this case are requests and apologies. Furthermore, it was envisaged that through engaging with the community at a close and personal level, the researcher would be able to construct a holistic picture of the community in relation to the utilisation of requests and apologies.

3.4.2 Interviewing: Religious and Cultural Leaders

Leedy and Ormrod (2013) are of the view that semi – structured interviews are based on a few central questions, from which the answers give rise to further questions. This interview technique is ideal because it incorporates the advantages of structured interviews (e.g. ability to compare responses) and evades the disadvantages of unstructured interviews (interviewees going off on a tangent), thus extracting data that is rich and useful (Neuman, 2011). Further advantages to this method of data collection are: depending on the flow of the interaction, the researcher can use his/her discretion to alter the order of questions; the researcher may decide to remove or add certain questions during the interview; the researcher may ask open – ended questions which allow the respondent to discuss and explain their answer in thorough detail; and the researcher has the liberty to probe for further information during the interview (Saunders et al., 2003).

In the literature review it was discussed that there is no generally accepted definition of politeness, and while politeness is a universal phenomenon, accepted polite behaviour varies from one culture to another. One can then conclude that politeness is culturally determined. It is for this particular reason that the starting point of this study was to first establish what politeness means within the isiZulu speaking community, thereby providing an answer to the first key question posed, ‘Within the IsiZulu speaking community, what is the background understanding of politeness?’
In proceeding, I drew up a set of questions which probed the interviewees’ in-depth understanding of the cultural perspective of politeness phenomena in the target community. Structured and semi-structured questions were utilised in this schedule. The semi-structured questions were open-ended questions designed to allow for individual responses. To maximise the degree of objectivity as well as the allowance for probing and clarification, structured and semi-structures questions were used. The questions were phrased so as to elicit responses to different aspects pertaining to the understanding of politeness. These questions were used as guidelines and were expanded on or probed further depending on the answers that the interviewee had given. The questions posed were designed for different purposes. The purpose of asking some of the questions to establish the extent to which age, status and social distance had an impact on the politeness behaviour or strategies that one used, while others were aimed at examining the same-sex and cross-sex interactions. Lastly, some questions were phrased to elicit responses to specific request and apology situations. However, it should be mentioned that these questions were guidelines which the researcher expanded on and probed further depending on the answers given by the interviewees.

The eight interviewees from the first research phase, all in the age group of 55+ (four females and four males), were selected from various areas of residences and also came from different backgrounds, namely, teachers, pensioners (who are not necessarily teachers), as well as retired teachers participating in cultural and or community activities. All interviewees were isiZulu L1 speakers from Umlazi or had lived in Umlazi for more than 20 years. The interviews were conducted in isiZulu and they took place at the residences of the interviewee. Each session lasted approximately an hour. As mentioned earlier, I lived in Umlazi for about 30 years and I have been employed by the institution (Mangosuthu University of Technology) for the past 15 years. It was not difficult for me to randomly select my sample. However, the problem began when some of the people (especially the retirees) fell ill or even forgot about the appointment. This, however, did not affect the findings of the study, since the individuals were willing to participate during another appointment.
One should also mention that despite the fact that some interviewees requested to be provided with the questions prior to the interview, there were no significant differences in their responses, irrespective of gender.

3.4.3 Questionnaires: Discourse Completion Tasks

Discourse completion task questionnaires were also utilised in this study, since they provided the best method for seeking answers to specific situations and questions. De Kadt (1992b), and Varghese and Billmyer (1996) define the DCT as a questionnaire which contains a brief description of situations aimed at eliciting a particular speech act. Respondents are required to carefully read each situation and then write down their responses. The method of collecting data by elicitation (DCT) to study speech acts was initiated by Blum-Kulka (1982). It is important to note that since its creation by Blum-Kulka (1982), the DCT has become a very popular technique of data collection to study linguistic politeness (Bataineh and Bataineh, 2006). Furthermore, Varghese and Billmyer (1996) are also of the opinion that 'without question the DCT surpasses all others in ease of use.' Beebe and Cummings also concur that this technique exposes researchers to large quantities of data collected within a short space of time.

Despite the fact that DCTs have been utilised as a method of collecting data by many researchers (Blum-Kulka, 1982); (Lin, 2005); (Nureddeen, 2008), cognisance is taken of their limitations. It is recognised, for instance, that one of the disadvantages of the DCTs is that they merely elicit written responses to short dialogues. As such, they neither allow for continuous verbal interaction nor do they cater for the non-verbal aspects of interactions. Nonetheless, DCTs are advantageous in the sense that they enable one to collect a large quantity of data quickly (Wolfson, 1988) and to control variables, thereby giving coherence to the findings.

In my literature review I made mention of the fact that one of the most important aspects of linguistic politeness is the manner in which people express and utilise different speech acts, for example, apologies and requests. It can be argued that these are common ways of showing politeness behaviour during conversations between the two interlocutors, that is, Speaker and Hearer. The reason for selecting these two speech acts is that they are commonly utilised in the community under study. More importantly, the study of these
speech acts through DCTs would assist me in answering two key questions: ‘Is politeness valued more highly by women or men in this community?’ and ‘Are the politeness strategies of women towards women different from those towards men, and vice versa?’

3.4.3.1 DCTs: Set One

The results obtained from the interviews assisted in drawing up discourse completion task questionnaires which were designed to elicit responses to both apology and request situations. Potential real-life situations which portrayed specific occurrences within the isiZulu speaking community were included in the DCTs. These emanated from talks with acquaintances from the said community.

The questionnaires had three sections where each situation differed from the other based on the social factors of social distance, status, age and gender. The aforementioned variables were chosen on the basis of the literature and my knowledge of the target community as primary factors that may influence politeness behaviour. Respondents were required to read each situation and thereafter write their responses (an apology or request) in the appropriate space.

Section A in the DCT (appendix 2) comprised of request situations. All six of these request situations focused on gender and social distance. It should be noted that in some situations age was also included as another variable. In designing the DCTs the social distance categories (intimates, colleagues and friends) as provided by (Holmes, 1995) were used.

Section B of the DCT (Appendix 2) consisted of apology situations, with all five situations focusing on social distance and gender.

Section C (Appendix 2) was divided into two parts, one to be filled in by the parents and the other by their children. In each part there were two situations, one a request situation and the other an apology situation, each focusing on status (i.e. upwards, equal and lower) as well as gender. Thus, altogether, the DCTs comprised a total of 15 situations.
3.4.3.2 DCTs: Set Two

It is important to mention that there are similarities between this DCT questionnaire and DCT set one. The only difference is that in this set (i.e. DCTs set two) there has been a change of the gender of the person to whom the apology or request was directed. The rationale behind separate sets of DCTs was to ensure that there is a clear distinction between the responses of the respondents to males and females in similar contexts. Compressing the study into a single DCT would have resulted in a long and tiresome questionnaire. This approach ensured that participants were responding to the same situations, but to people of different gender, and giving their responses at different times. For, approximately four weeks after collecting the first set of DCTs, the second set (a total of 40) was handed out to the same families and collected a few days later. The time interval between handing out the two sets of DCTs prevented an automatic repetition of answers.

3.4.4 Interviews with families

As stated earlier, one of the goals of this investigation was to find out if the politeness phenomena among the community under study has remained the same or has evolved. I decided to use interviews as I considered them to be the best and reliable method for this aspect of study. Since part of this study also focuses on two different generations in the target community, specifically examining whether the politeness phenomena has changed over generations, it was necessary to first establish what politeness means for the parents in families, as well as for the children in the same families. This enabled me to compare and contrast the responses. In addition, since gender is also a variable under study, I had to interview both males and females in each family. To enhance the validity of my findings, I interviewed the same set of families that had completed the DCTs as this would enable me to compare the results of the DCTs with the verbal answers of the same families.

Conducting the interviews post the analysis of the DCTs afforded me the opportunity to probe responses that were not clear in the DCTs as well as to address new questions that arose from my analysis of the DCTs. Consequently, a total number of four members were interviewed in each family (that is, two parents, male and female child). Initially, the
plan was to interview parents and children together at their respective residences. It was hoped that this would generate debate out of the interview questions and responses. On the contrary, after interviewing the first family, I observed that some of the children were not very comfortable in speaking openly in the presence of their parents. In the families where children were uneasy, I noted that parents would respond to questions and when the child was probed for a response, the response would be: ‘same as mom/dad.’ In the light of this, I then decided to interview them separately. This method proved to be successful. Although participants responded to a set of questions, I encouraged them to elaborate as much as possible. A total of eight families were interviewed and each interview lasted for approximately one and a half hours.

A total of 16 questions were posed to interviewees (Appendix 3). The questions were structured in such a way that they allowed me to obtain an understanding of aspects such as the meaning of politeness within the target community, the role of women and men, the use of apology and request strategies, the notion of directness or indirectness and the notion of imposition.

3.5 Summary

It should be noted that the research aim here revolves around an investigation of the deeper social meaning of linguistic and non-linguistic politeness behaviour, without any intention of providing a quantitative statistic, or making claims about isiZulu speakers in South Africa in general.

The conceptual and methodological framework underlying this thesis provides the reader with adequate information about the research design. Furthermore, the type of methodology presented here is one of the many possibilities available to find answers to the central questions guiding this research.

The data collected by DCT questionnaires and interviews yielded information that clearly focused on specific topics related to this research. Similarly, the data collected by participant observation also yielded information on a variety of issues.

The analysis of the data will now be done in the next section.
3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

3.6.1 Requests

The framework and coding scheme invented by Blum-Kulka, et al. (1989: 275-289) was utilised to analyse the data obtained from the DCTs for the request situations. Although this framework and the coding scheme is extremely sophisticated and allows for the duplication of research in any language, it has been widely criticised, as pointed out in my literature review. While I was unable to use the specific CCSARP DCT questionnaire as many of their dialogue situations were not applicable to the families that I used in my investigation, it was possible to use their coding scheme. As noted in my literature review, two concerns of my investigation are the claims concerning the correlation between politeness and indirectness, which has been proposed as a linguistic universal, and the claim that the request strategies are universal. I decided to use this coding scheme as I felt that it would facilitate the further testing of these claims, and would also help me to identify culture-specific interactional features in a community which, to the best of my knowledge, has not been widely studied.

The CCSARP coding scheme used in the data analysis is discussed below.

The Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realisation Patterns Project (CCSARP) analytical framework for requests is based on three major levels of politeness, which are further sub-divided into nine mutually exclusive categories. Based on CCSARP coding, a request sequence is identified as all the utterance(s) involved in the turn completing the dialogue in the DCT. Blum-Kulka et al., (1989:275-277) segment requests into 'Head Acts', alerters and supportive moves, forms of which vary cross culturally. The Head Act, which is the core of the request sequence, is the minimal unit, which can realise a request. Each illocutionary act has its own felicity conditions of that act. An act of requesting can only be considered successful if these conditions are met.

The framework allows for the following coding: Firstly, relating to the Head Act, the framework allows for strategies used to realise requests. Secondly, it allows for analysis of request perspectives, which looks to see whether the request is hearer oriented ('Can
you…’) or speaker oriented (‘Can I…’) or impersonal (‘Can one…’). Thirdly, the framework identifies mitigators of the speech act, downgraders, upgraders, intensifiers and expletives. Lastly, the framework allows for identification of adjuncts to the Head Act, which are ‘external’ modifications. The following primary features (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989b: 17) are coded for requests:

**Head Act** - The request proper, which can differ on strategy type and perspective.

**Alerters** – These serve as attention getters. They precede the actual request.

**Supportive moves** – external modifiers which either aggravate or mitigate the impact of the request.

**Downgraders and upgraders** – internal modifiers, i.e. factors embedded in request utterance proper which do not play any role in the understanding of the utterance as a request.

The utterance: *Sir, I won’t be able to type the assignment. Can I hand-write it please* – can be segmented in the following way:

- **Sir** – alerter

- *I won’t be able to type the assignment* – supportive move

- **Can I hand-write it** – Head Act, (conventionally indirect; speaker perspective)

- **Please** – downgrader

In terms of request strategies, there are three levels of directness, which are thought to be manifested universally, namely; conventionally direct, conventionally indirect and non-conventionally indirect. These are sub-divided again into nine strategy-types (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989b:18):

1. Mood derivable: the illocutionary force is signaled by the grammatical mood of the verb. (‘Close the window’).
2. Performatives: the illocutionary force is explicitly mentioned in these utterances. (‘I am asking you to stop the car’).
3. Hedged performatives: the illocutionary force is modified by hedging expressions in these utterances. (‘Would you like to…..’).
4. Obligation statements: the obligation of the hearer to do the act is stated in the utterance. (‘She has to…’).
5. Want statements: the desire of the speaker for what the hearer is expected to do when carrying out the act is stated in the utterance. (‘I want her to….’)
6. Suggestory formulae: utterances which contain a suggestion to do x. (‘How about…..’)
7. Query preparatory: utterances containing references to preparatory conditions as conventionalised in any language. (‘Can you/Could you/Would you…….’).
8. Strong hints: from the utterance there is partial reference to what the hearer is expected to do to carry out the act. (‘You have left the window open’)
9. Mild hints: in these utterances there is no reference to the proper request. (‘It’s very hot in here’)

In analysing the data, the responses of the participants will be examined for the characteristics of supportive moves, head acts, downgraders and upgraders. In the case of head acts, the strategy type as well as perspective will be investigated. The responses will also be sub-categorised according to three main levels of directness identified by Blum-Kula. Once these have been identified and categorised, the respondents’ choices for each situation will be totaled to provide frequency of occurrences and converted to percentages, thereby allowing for comparisons and contrasts.

3.6.2 Apologies

As stated in the literature review, while requests occur before the act and may involve loss of face for both participants, apologies, on the other hand, are post-event acts and potentially involve loss of face for the Speaker and support for the Hearer (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984:206). Thus, apologies are analysed differently from requests.

In my analysis of the realisation of apologies in the DCTs, I will be utilising the framework introduced by Olshtain and Cohen (1983). This framework is based on the supposition of an apology speech act set which has been supported by many studies examining native
and non-native speakers’ apologising patterns. This framework was modified and used by the CCSARP team. According to Olshtain and Cohen (1983), the speech act set encompasses a range of apology strategies consisting of explicit and indirect strategies. They refer to these strategies as semantic formulas. The apology speech act set includes five potential semantic formulas (Olshtain and Cohen, 1983:22) as listed below:

1. **An expression of an apology**;
2. **An explanation or account of the situation** e.g. “I accidentally knocked it over”;
3. **An acknowledgement of responsibility** e.g. “It’s my fault”;
4. **An offer of repair** e.g. “I’ll replace the tape recorder”
5. **A promise of forbearance** e.g. “I won’t do it again”

“An expression of an apology” is further divided into the following subformulas (Olshtain and Cohen, 1983:22):

- a. **An expression of regret** e.g. “I’m sorry”;
- b. **An offer of apology** e.g. “I apologise”;
- c. **A request for forgiveness** e.g. “Excuse me”, “Please forgive me”

In focusing on “an expression of apology”, I also assessed the intensity of regret (e.g. “I apologise profusely” (high intensity) vs “I apologise” (low intensity).

**Summary**

As in requests, the unit of analysis for apologies is the sequence of utterances used to complete the DCT. Each unit will be analysed by asking questions such as: a) Is there an IFID contained by the utterance in question? b) Does it reflect the Speaker’s responsibility for the offence? c) Does it offer an explanation for the cause of the offence? d) Does it convey an offer of repair from the Speaker? And e) Does it articulate a promise of forbearance on the Speaker’s part? An affirmative answer to any of the aforementioned
questions would indicate that the utterance should be assigned to the appropriate category. These sub-categories will then be totaled, thus allowing me to make contrasts and comparisons. For example, the total number of IFIDs used by male and female adults as well as male and female children, when responding to both males and females, will be analysed to see if any significant patterns emerge and to provide a possible reason for these patterns. The rest of the semantic formulas will be interpreted in a similar manner.
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS FROM THE INTERVIEWS WITH RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL LEADERS

4.1 Introduction

In Chapter 3, it was indicated that the study would begin by first establishing the understanding of politeness in the target community from a religious and cultural perspective. The data for this aspect of study was gathered by interviewing religious and cultural leaders within the target community.

4.2 RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL VALUE SYSTEMS OF THE ISIZULU SPEAKING COMMUNITY

The rationale for selecting the religious and cultural leaders is based on the fact that within the target community they are held in very high esteem. It is envisaged that since these individuals are well versed in the religious scriptures and cultural practices, they would be able to shed more light on the views of politeness of the community under study. In addition, in their day-to-day lives they reflect the religious and cultural value systems.

It should be noted that the discussion that follows emanates from the interviews with cultural and religious leaders (see Chapter 3, page 80). Questions from Appendix 1 were utilised to probe the interviewees’ in-depth understanding of the religious and cultural values influencing politeness phenomena in the target community. During the interviews it was noted that the interviewees’ responses transcended the religious perspective to the cultural aspects relating to what traditionally occurs in practice.

4.2.1 Findings from Interviews with religious leaders

From the responses of the interviewees, one may summarise that politeness within the isiZulu speaking community is seen as an all – encompassing phenomenon, comprising gratitude, kindness, courtesy, love, respect and good manners. These virtues, furthermore, determine the character of the person. According to the Biblical injunction, respect forms the basis of a relationship between two people. It is advisable to always show nobility when dealing with human beings. Politeness plays the same role to the Zulu word ‘Ubuntu’ which means humanity. One religious leader mentioned that behaving
in an Ubuntu manner or being respectful and generous towards others, places one on high moral ground within the community.

“Emphakathini esiphila kuwona, umuntu onesandla esiphayo kulabo abangenakho uhlonishwa kakhu ku kakhulu kungabanye abanye baze bathi ukholwa ngempela”. (Mfundisi Sithole)

Similarly, great emphasis is placed on sharing whatever one has with the greater community, irrespective of one’s own particular situation. According to scriptures, one receives blessings the more one shares. Consequently, hospitality also plays an important role within the Zulu culture. One is expected to welcome and entertain one’s guest with open arms without ever considering this to be an imposition. Therefore, it is not uncommon for the host to insist that the guest partake in a meal even though he/she was not expected. In days gone by a man would even slaughter a beast for unexpected guests, and this would, in turn, make him or her highly respected in the community.

Within this framework the scriptures emphasise the importance of respecting one’s elders. In order to respect God, one has to first learn to respect one’s parents, one’s teachers and elders. According to the scriptures, the elders also have an important role to play, since it is their responsibility to instill good morals and values in their children. Interviewees also mentioned that it is important for parents to lead by example and be role models for their children.

4.2.2 Findings from interviews with cultural leaders

It is significant to mention that the interviewees were not only able to discuss the cultural aspects relating to what traditionally occurs in practice, but they went further and incorporated the religious aspect. The interviewees concurred in their responses that politeness is seen as an all-encompassing phenomenon, comprising gratitude, kindness, love and good manners.

Isiko lesiNtu liqhakambisa ukuzwana, ukuthandana, kanjalo nokuhloniphana. IBhayibheli eliNgcwele nalo liyakuqhakambisa ukubaluleka kwalezi zinto. (Ms Bathoko).

(Both the Bible and culture emphasise the importance of love, respect and goodwill among people).
The view that culture has a role to play in language behaviour has been adopted by many researchers. More importantly, researchers have established that the intended meaning of the speaker, mediated by linguistic symbols, may be interpreted or misinterpreted in cross-cultural situations, due to each participant’s cultural rules of interpretation (Locastro, 2006: 100).

Many social science researchers, particularly pragmalinguists, sociolinguists and social anthropologists have shown a keen interest in finding out how politeness should be defined, how it is realised in different cultural frameworks and how valid is the universal theory of politeness (Watt, 2005: 125).

Blum-Kulka (1992:270) is of the view that there is an interference of cultural notion in the features of politeness across societies”..... Cultural notions interfere in determining the distinctive features of each of the four parameters and consequently affect the social perception of politeness across societies in the world.

In the abovementioned quotation, Blum–Kulka assumes that social motivations, expressive modes, social differentials and social meanings affect the social understanding of politeness. The four parameters that affect the understanding of politeness are defined as follows: The need to maintain face is social motivation for politeness; the wide range of linguistic expressions available in any language to realise politeness is referred to as the expressive modes; elements such as social distance, power, and degree to which speech act constitute an imposition on the addressee is called social differentials.

The significant question that arises here is: how do we define ‘culture’? Blum-Kulka, argues that culture is a self-evident entity which is also objective in the sense that it can be utilised to describe politeness or anything else for that matter (Watts, 2003: 78).

It was noted earlier in the thesis that politeness is culture - specific, that is, what may be considered polite in one culture may be considered impolite in another culture, and vice versa. Similarly, the form of politeness might differ from one culture to the next and the ways they are understood are different and, consequently, the conceptualisation of linguistic politeness is rather vague, especially when the technical term of politeness is
used in the pragmatic and sociolinguistic study of socio-communicative verbal interaction. In all human cultures we will encounter forms of social behaviour that we can categorise as culture specific (Watts, 2003:30).

From the cultural perspective, the interviewees confirmed that age, social and gender play an important role in politeness strategies (requests and apologies). A good illustration is that children in this community are not expected to backchat their parents or any adult, for that matter. Furthermore, according to Zulu culture, the wife is not permitted to backchat her husband, but the same is not said about the husband. More importantly, the authority bestowed on elders is such that children are not allowed to be involved in discussions with adults. It is considered to be rude for a child to participate in adult discussions without being invited by an adult. Furthermore, parents of that child would also be accused of not instilling proper discipline to the child. It is also of crucial importance to mention that according to cultural leaders, children are also not permitted to address elders simply by their forenames, but they have to prefix it by terms such as aunt, uncle, brother or sister. For example, one refers to one’s elder brother as *ubhuti* (brother), and elder sister as *Usisi* (sister).

Linked to the above, is the importance that Zulu people place on maintaining the dignity of the family. To illustrate this, the first name of a person belongs to him or her, but the surname is shared by all members of the family. One cultural leader said one will sometimes hear community people echoing sentiments like: “Eyakabani le ngane engahloniphi kanjena?” (This child who is so rude belongs to which family?). Similarly, if one’s child has done something wrong in the community, the parents of that child would be embarrassed, and that is why one would hear the father/mother saying: “Ngizobabhekelwa ubani abantu?”, meaning “how am I going to face the people/community?” This emphasises the significance of maintaining the good image of the family name.

Within the Zulu families, major decisions are made by husbands, since they are also the ones who play a dominant role. Wives do not address their husbands by their names, but there are indirect methods used to address them, for example, using clan names like “*Mshibe*” if the husband’s surname is Luthuli. Some of the interviewees, however,
mentioned the fact that in some of the homes in the urban areas this is no longer happening. Husbands are addressed by their names “Sipho” or intimate names like “sweety” or “baby”. It was also mentioned that the high level of respect accorded to males was due to the fact that in most families they were the sole breadwinners, while the wife was tasked with attending to household matters. Furthermore, if the husband misbehaves, he finds it very difficult to apologise to his wife or children, “uma uxorisa kunkosikazi uzokudelela azitshele ukuthi uymsaba” (if you apologise to your wife she will be rude to you and will also think that you are scared of her). This differentiation is a demonstration of the very specific gender roles and expectations. In the urban areas things are beginning to change, this will be illustrated in the findings of the non-participatory observation of this study.

The interviewees were also asked to discuss the significance of social status in the target community. They were unanimous that from a religious perspective there is no differentiation as according to the scriptures all human beings should be treated equally. On the contrary, within the cultural value system, there is a divide. Professionals such as doctors, lawyers, engineers, etc. are generally accorded a higher status than persons holding a lower occupation, for example, clerks, factory workers, etc. It is important to note that doctors and engineers are held in such high esteem that it is the wish of the majority of parents that their child should grow up to become a doctor or engineer, regardless of the child’s ability or potential. Interestingly, some 30 – 40 years ago teachers were also part of the higher status profession, but their ranking has significantly dropped in recent years, especially in the urban areas.

Interviewees also mentioned that previously, people who owned cattle were accorded high status, (he would be referred to as “mnumzane”), but very few people own cattle these days. Interviewees agreed that the impact of social status is less significant if the person is a woman who has succeeded outside her customary domain, for example, as a doctor or owning business, as compared to being an ordinary teacher. In both urban and rural areas, men still share the belief that if your wife is more educated than you are or brings home more money than you do, then she will not respect you. This is also as a result of the preconceived notion of the roles and expectations of women.
Earlier in this thesis, it was mentioned that the notion of politeness is culture-specific, that is, what may be considered polite in one culture may be considered impolite in another culture (Al-hamzy, 1999). Within the extended Zulu family system, there are prescribed norms of behaviour: for example, if a child wants to request something from the father, such as school fees, the mother should speak for them because they should grow up knowing that their father is a figure of respect. The husband will only be respected by the members of the community if he receives respect from his family.

“Indoda engahlonishwa emzini wayo ayindoda yalutho” (Baba Mngoma) (People will not respect you if your family does not respect you). You are not a man amongst men if they do not accord you any respect in your family).

Although all children are taught respect (boys and girls), more emphasis is placed on the girl child because it is believed that she will eventually get married and leave the family homestead to live with another family.

It has been noted that the demonstration of respect in interpersonal relationships indicated a strong commitment to traditional cultural values. If one does not apologise when expected to do so, nor express a request in an appropriate manner, then that is disrespect. It was also important to note that every one of the interviewees emphasised the importance of respect in interpersonal relationships. Interviewees also agreed that there was notable lack of respect in the township context, as the following quotation indicates:

“Emandulo, ingane yayifundiswa ukuthi ihloniphe wonke umuntu omdala, kodwa manje akusenzeki lokho ngoba ezinye izingane zikhuliswa ngezinye izingane kanti nomama sebeysabeneza abanaso isikhathi sokufundisa ingane, ngisho nje ukuthi kuyabingeleiwa, noma usabela kanjani uma umuntu omdala ekubiza.”(Mr Mvuseni).

(In the olden days, it was the responsibility of the mother (who used to be a stay home mom) to educate her children about the issues of respect. These days, since mothers are
employed, no one teaches them even how to greet or respond when an adult calls your name.)

One of the interviewees (Mr Dlamini) who is an ex - teacher and was a card - carrying member of a certain political organisation, went as far as saying that his party was so concerned about the decline of respect that they decided to incorporate it in one of the subjects taught in schools at that time.

There was also consensus among interviewees regarding the issue of the need to maintain one’s face within the broader community. The isiZulu speaking respondents spoke of ‘isithunzi’ (dignity). When one’s behaviour is not aligned to the norms of the society, this is referred to as ‘ukuzehlisa isithunzi’ or ‘lowering one’s dignity’ (Luthuli, 2007: 54). This discussion implies that there is a dichotomy between the isiZulu speaking communities and Western societies concerning the concept of face, since the former places more emphasis on the collective image of a person (de Kadt, 1998: 185).

One of the interviewees also mentioned the significance of adhering to the norms of the society.

‘Izinkinga eziningi esinazo zidalwa ukuthi singamaZulu asisawazi amasiko yingakho nabantwana bethu bengawazi’. (The challenge we have as isiZulu speaking community is that we have forgotten our roots and, therefore, there is nothing we can pass on to the next generation.)

From my discussion with the cultural and religious leaders it emanated that although the background understanding of politeness of the community under study has remained the same in most aspects, some changes are noticeable. For example, present day youth is granted more freedom of speech and in decision making in comparison to their parents in their youth. Furthermore, it also emerged from their responses that Christianity is very strong and wide-spread among community members, and with regard to identity constructions, many people foreground their identity as a Christian, rather than emphasising their ethnic or linguistic belonging. In general, the sense of Zuluness is
weaker among Christians than among those who have traditional belief systems. Predictably, the link between language and culture manifests itself less dominantly among Christians because parts of the Zulu culture are considered taboo for a Christian.

4.3 Summary

It can be concluded from the discussion thus far that the factors that make a profound contribution to the understanding and management of the politeness phenomena in the isiZulu speaking community are:

1) The age, social status and distance, and gender of the participants,
2) The situation in which the interaction occurs
3) The topic of the conversation

These aspects were also useful in the designing of the DCT’s for the next phase of the study.

My analysis of the phenomenon of politeness for the isiZulu speaking community will be taking the following two aspects into consideration: the perspective of members of the community, and a theorised analysis of actual manifestations of politeness.

The next step, therefore, will be to establish whether the value system articulated by the religious and cultural leaders holds in practice. The analysis of data collected from the families through DCTs, interviews with families, and participant observation will assist in this regard.
As indicated in Chapter 3 (Research Methodology), DCTs were used to study politeness through the realisation of the speech acts of apologies and requests. In this chapter the accumulated data are presented and analysed. I begin by examining the requests situations, initially focusing on status, followed by social distance. A similar approach is then adopted for apology situations.

### 5.1 DCTs: REQUESTS

#### 5.1.1 Status

As stated in Section C of the DCTs, scenarios were designed to elicit request responses in interactions between participants of the same sex, as well as to examine cross-sex interactions of adults and children in the selected families. Since a variable in this study is status, these situations were also designed to elicit responses to the following three status categories:

1. Higher (H)
2. Equal (E)
3. Lower (L)

The relevant request situation for the children was Situation 2 (You are going to write an important test. You do not have the prescribed text book. How would you request it from the following people: a male lecturer/ fellow student/ individual junior to you?) and for the adults Situation 2 (Your laptop has gone for repairs. You urgently need to use one. How would you request to use the laptop that belongs to the following persons: your boss/ another Head of Department/ a junior teacher?) (See Appendix 2).

The CCSARP coding scheme was used to analyse the data for the responses to the various request situations.

#### 5.1.1.1 The utilisation of alerters

According to the CCSARP coding manual (Blum-Kulka et. al., 1989:27) “an alerter draws the attention of the listener to the ensuing speech act”. Blum –Kulka has identified nine
possible sub-categories of alerters that may be used in utterances. In this study it was found that respondents used the following sub-categories of alerters: first name, surname, title/role, attention getter and a combination of these.

From the responses of the adults it was noted that the dominant categories were first name, surname and a combination of alerters, while the corresponding categories for the children are first name, title/role and a combination of alerters.

The sub-category of title/role was found to be utilised primarily by children when borrowing music videos from somebody much older, as well as when borrowing a book from the teacher (see Section C, situation 2, Section A situation 6 in Appendix 2), for example,

“Sisi Thembi, ngicela ungiboleke l music video ka Lira neka Zahara”. (Sister Thembi, please lend me Lira and Zahara music videos.)

“Thisha /Mam ngicela ungiboleke incwadi yakho ye siZulu”. (Sir, Mam, please lend me your isiZulu book).

It is important to mention that the use of “Sir” or “Mam” is, according to Brown and Levinson (1987:178), a show of great respect. It includes a level of formality when interacting with a person of higher status. For the target community, it is an act of showing deference for a person of higher authority in accordance with cultural norms. Such a behaviour was also observed by de Kadt (1995) in her study on the Zulu community.

A comparison of the responses of the adults and the children for the categories of surname and title/role shows that the children gave a greater preference to the title/role, while the adults used the surname much more than the title/role, in particular, for persons of equal or higher status. This behaviour on the part of the adults for the particular situation, i.e. requesting a laptop from your superior (principal) or a person of equal status is expected, as it is common practice in a work environment to address such persons by their surnames. On the other hand, the situation for the children required them to borrow a book from a teacher. In the target community teachers are treated with a high degree
of respect. Hence, addressing them as “Sir” or “Mam” instead of their surnames is seen as being more respectful.

It is important to mention that:

- None of the respondents (both adults and children) used first name when addressing persons of higher status. This is consistent with the level of deference shown to persons of higher status within the target community, as articulated by the religious and cultural leaders. However, it should also be mentioned that there seem to be a shift from this practice, especially from the younger generation, including those in high positions. One respondent (child) mentioned that one of the teachers in her school wrote his name and surname on the board and told them he does not mind if they address him by his first name. It is also crucial to mention that some of the children who attend multiracial schools are beginning to adopt social practices of other racial groups, where some adults, especially those in lower ranks (cleaners, gardeners, etc.) are addressed by their names. Some of the adults (especially from the religious/cultural leaders group) were of the view that this is not part of the culture of the target community.

Fraser (1990) states that “each society has a unique set of social norms which consist of clear rules that prescribe the behaviour, a state of affairs, or one’s manner of thinking in a particular situation.” Fraser illustrates this by mentioning the distinction between a formal address ‘vous’ and an informal ‘tu’ in French. Furthermore, Nwoye (1992) argues that within the social norm view, politeness is “viewed as emanating from one’s awareness of one’s responsibilities to the group members to which one owes primary allegiance.” Similarly, Held (1992) contends that one of the elements of the social norm view is “one’s consciousness of the appropriate behaviour to be exhibited when showing deference and respect to an individual’s social rank.”
A breakdown of the strategy of attention getters reveals a preference for a combination of alerters. In the target community, a conversation begins with a greeting and then the request may follow.

Most respondents, both adults and children used a combination of alerters such as:

“Sawubona thisha, ngiyaxolisa ukukuphazamisa, bengicela ungiboleke incwadi yesiZulu.” (Good morning/ good afternoon teacher, sorry to disturb you, may you please lend me your Zulu book).

“Sawubona Mam Gumede, ngicela ungiboleke ilaptop yakho”. (Good morning/ Good afternoon Mam Gumede, may you, please, lend me your laptop).

It is important to mention that the combination of attention getters is aimed at softening the imposition of requests in the target community. Chick (1985:308) shows in his interactional study that a Zulu respondent indicates an awareness of breaking into a conversation as potentially face-threatening and, therefore, opts to use the politeness strategy of apologising before asking permission, thereby lessening the sense of imposition. The attention getter communicates the wants of the speaker not to inflict any harm on the listener. To partially address the hearer’s negative face demands (Brown & Levinson, 1987), is for the speaker to demonstrate that he/she is aware of them and also take them into consideration in his or her decision to communicate the face threatening act (FTA). Any infringement of the hearer’s territory is recognised as such and not taken lightly. By apologising for performing a FTA, the speaker can demonstrate his or her unwillingness to impinge on the hearer’s negative face and thereby partially redress that impingement.

For both adults and the children, the females used highest number of alerters. It is worthy of note that male adults made use of names and surnames when addressing males. To soften the imposition of requests males also used “izithakazelo” (clan names. To illustrate this, one respondent (male) wrote:
“Ndosi, ngiyaxolisa ukukuhlupha, ngicela ungiboleke ilaptop yakho”. (Ndosi (clan name for Cele), sorry to trouble you, please lend me your laptop.)

In the strategy of endearment the frequency levels were not high for both males and females, as well as children. It was noted that children used endearment towards other children (classmates and their juniors) as illustrated in the following response:

“Uxolo mngani wami, ngicela ungiboleke incwadi yakho” (Sorry my friend, please lend me your book).

“Dadewethu, ngicela ungiboleke i video khamera yakho”. (My sister, please lend me your video camera).

This possibly reflects a desire for unity on the part of the members of the target community. De Kadt (1993:104) defines “Ubuntu” as “a general expectancy of considerateness in social relations.” It was noted that this category of endearment was used mostly in situations 1, 2, 3 and 6 (Section A) and situation 2 (Section C). These may be the situations in which the softening of a potentially difficult request was necessary and a positive politeness strategy required (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In these utterances, the members of the target community showed evidence of in-group identity markers. The use of in-group address forms by the speaker claims common ground with the hearer and is a positive politeness strategy (Brown & Levinson, 1987: 107).

The unique utilisation of endearment by the target community points to a culturally different way of presenting requests. The choice of positive politeness strategies, such as in-group markers, shows preference for aligning themselves with the hearers and, in this way, lessening the imposition. The interesting feature of this strategy is the mix by the members of the target community of the two interactional styles; positive and negative politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987), reflected, on the one hand, by very formal utterance, such as Sir, etc. and then very informal utterances, such as my friend.
5.1.1.2 The utilisation of request perspective

Variation in requests is also evident in choice of perspective. In the phrasing of the request, the speakers may choose to emphasise the role of the hearer and use the hearer dominant perspective, such as “you” or the speaker themselves and use the speaker dominant perspective, such as “I”. They may also use an inclusive “we” and choose the speaker or hearer dominant perspective or use the impersonal it and use the impersonal dominant strategy. Blum-Kulka (1989:59) maintains that the four alternative strategies are often available to speakers within a single situation. Social meaning is affected by choice of perspective as requests are inherently imposing (Brown & Levinson, 1987) and the choice of a particular strategy can cause the hearer to respond either negatively or positively to a request or misinterpret the speaker’s meaning.

Blum-Kulka (1984) is of the opinion that a range of request realisations are inclusive of the reference to the (“I” the speaker), the requestee (“you” the hearer), and the action to be performed. The speaker has a choice of selecting various ways of referring to any of these factors. To illustrate this, the distinction between ‘could you do it’ and ‘could we have done it’ is one of perspective. ‘Could you’……. Here, the hearer’s role is emphasised……. On the other hand, … ‘could we……’ places emphasis on the role of the speaker. Considering that when performing a request, the hearer is the one who is ‘under threat’, avoiding to name the addressee as the main performer of the act softens the impact of the imposition.

My findings are not different from the results of Blum-Kulka (1989:59) who found that in the four languages which were researched, most conventional requests are Hearer dominant in nature. It is important to mention that the distribution pattern in Table 1 is not the same for all three status groups, implying that the status of the Hearer has an impact on the request perspective one chooses to use.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Situation</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hearer Dominant</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Speaker Dominant</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker/Speaker Dominant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impersonal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the Hearer dominance, the largest number, although small, was recorded for female adults when addressing males. The most common utterances recorded were:

“Ngicela ungiboleke………” (Can you please lend me…….)

“Angazi noma uthishomkhulu angakwazi yini ukungiboleka ilaptop yakhe”. (I don’t know if the principal could lend me his or her laptop?)

The impersonal perspective reflected in the utterance, “Angazi noma……” was frequently used for people of higher status and strangers, unlike in Blum-Kulka (1989:60), where it was the Hebrew speakers’ most frequent second choice of perspective within the class.
of conventional forms. In using the impersonal perspective, the speaker avoids imposing on the hearer.

In summarising the request perspective, as reflected in Table 1, the target community showed more frequent use of it. The impersonal strategy was not used frequently, this differs from Blum-Kulka’s Hebrew subjects who used it a lot more in their responses (Blum-Kulka, 1989:60).

5.1.1.3 The utilisation of request strategies

5.1.1.3.1 Conventional indirectness
Query preparatory comprises of the conventionally indirect strategy, categorised as number 7 on the indirectness scale (Blum Kulka, et al., 1989). A speaker will choose the conventionally indirect strategy where there is a threat to the listener’s territory or autonomy, but cultures, subcultures, and groups apply these principles differently (Brown & Levinson, 1978: 283). Productive ways of constructing indirect speech acts are a marked feature of English usage and, according to Brown and Levinson (1987:132), probably universal. They argue that the social rationale of indirectness is based on universal principles and define universal in the sense that languages share universally a set of pragmatic distinctive features (Brown & Levinson, 1987:47).

The preparatory saying contains reference to a preparatory condition for the possibility of the request, usually one of capability, possibility or willingness, which is conventionalised in the given language such as, can I, could you, I was wondering if you would……. It is a strategy where the speaker chooses to be indirect in order not to impose, and is the linguistic realisation of negative politeness. Hedges on illocutionary force, polite pessimism, for example, about the success of requests, etc., and emphasis on the hearer’s relative power, are all part of negative politeness as it constitutes redressive action addressed to the addressee’s negative face. There is ambivalence between the speaker wanting to go on record and a desire for negative-face redress, which comes together in the strategy of conventional indirectness (Brown & Levinson, 1987:130). The conventionally indirect form is favoured because it is both communicatively effective and interactionally safe and doesn’t directly challenge the hearer.
In conventional indirectness, sentences and phrases that have meanings which are contextually unambiguous are used, for example: “Ungangiboleka ikhamera yakho kusasa?” (Can you lend me your camera tomorrow?) intended as a request, not as an enquiry. It was noted from the responses that the more conventionalised forms were selected, since the major motivation for being indirect is politeness and indirect speech acts play the role of hedges on illocutionary force. Knowledge of the conventions of the means and forms of the target language allows speakers to express the intended level of illocutionary transparency effectively.

The two most common conditions on request compliance are a) that the addressee can comply and b) that he or she is willing to carry out the requested act. It appears that in standard situations, the speaker possesses the social right to communicate the request, and the hearer has a social responsibility of complying with it. Standard situations, according to House (1989:107), are negotiations of meaning that are much more reduced and relatively easy linguistically because participants are familiar with the conditions and expectations of the situation. Non-standard situations, however, are those where participants are not familiar with the conditions and expectations of the situation and, therefore, find more difficult to negotiate.

Although this strategy was used mostly by adults (females) and on a small scale by children, the situations which reflected the highest use for adult females was situation 5 in section A as well as situation 2 in section C. It is important to also mention that it was noted that most children did not make use of this strategy for the person of higher status, simply because most of them attended English medium schools and they are not familiar with different ways of making requests in isiZulu.

5.1.1.4 Utilisation of supportive moves

Supportive moves serve to indirectly modify the pragmatic force of the utterance used for realising the request. This is done through the mitigating or aggravating effect, such as supportive moves have on the situation in which the Head act is embedded (Blum Kulka and Olshtain, 1984:205). Supportive moves are longer and more explicit in comparison
with modification within the Head act because they have their own propositional content and illocution. They are, therefore, more transparent politeness procedures, which conform to the conversational principle of clarity. According to Faerch and Kasper (1989:244), selecting efficient supportive moves requires conscious planning decisions on the part of the speaker, and the hearer has to attend to their semantic and pragmatic meaning in order to assess their persuasive force before deciding on his or her own response.

From the data in Table 2 below, it is noted that the grounder and the imposition minimiser were most frequently used, followed by the preparatory.

In the case of a grounder, explanations or justifications and reasons are provided by the speaker for his/her request. The data reveal that grounders were utilised more frequently by the female and male adults than by the children. It was also noted that, unlike adults, children used grounders when interacting with adults, but not with children their own age. Examples of grounders utilised by respondents are as follows:

“Ngicela ungiboleke ikhamera, eyami yatshelkwa udadewethu oseGoli manje ayikabuyi kanti kusasa usuku lokuzalwa kuka Baba wekhaya besifisa ukuthatha izithombe”. (Please lend me your camera. Mine was borrowed by my sister who is in Gauteng. She has not returned it and I need to take pictures during my husband’s birthday party tomorrow.)

“Mfowethu izolo besixakeke kakhulu emsebenzini kangangokuthi angibanga nalo nekhefu ebengithi ngizophuthuma kokhokhela ilayisensi yetelelishini. Bengicela ukukupathisa ungikhokhele”. (“My brother, yesterday was so hectic at work that I did not even go for lunch during which I had planned to go and pay for my TV licence. Please, can you pay for me today?”)

The abovementioned examples illustrate that the grounder may either precede or follow the request. It used to mitigate the imposition.

In the case of the imposition minimiser, the speaker attempts to minimise the imposition placed on the hearer by his or her request. It must be noted that the children used more
imposition minimisers than grounders. The opposite was the case for the adults. Examples of imposition minimisers in the data were as follows:

“Ngicela ungiboleke ikhamera yakho ngizoyibuyisa kusasa ntambama.” “Please lend me your camera I’ll bring it back tomorrow.”

“Mam, ngicela ungiphe ilift yokuya ekhaya, ngizokukhokhela imali kaphethilolo.” (Mam, please give me a lift home, I will pay you).

In these examples the imposition minimisers are used to reduce the impositive force of the request. The hearer is being assured of the date and time by which the borrowed item will be returned, and also the fact that he or she will pay for transport. This guarantee is intended to make it easier for the hearer to accede to the request.

In using the preparatory, the speaker prepares the hearer for the forthcoming request by enquiring whether the hearer is available to comply with the request or by seeking permission from the hearer to make the request (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989: 287). My data Table 2 reveals that the female adults and children use a larger number of preparators than their male counterparts. An illustration of a preparatory from the data is as follows:

“Ngiyaxolisa ukukuphazamisa, bengicela ungingenise kulayini, ngiphuthuma ibhasi eliya emsebenzini.” (“Sorry to disturb you, can you please allow me to cut the queue before you, I am rushing the last bus to work.”)

It is interesting to mention that, in preparing the hearer for the request by the use of “Ngiyaxolisa ukukuphazamisa” the speaker is attempting to minimise the impact of the request. Brown and Levinson (1987:142) also add that such a request may contribute to reduction of the directness of the request, thus making it more polite.
# Table 2

## Mitigating Supportive Moves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mitigating Supportive Moves</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Preparator</th>
<th>Getting a precommitment</th>
<th>Ground</th>
<th>Promise of reward</th>
<th>Imposition Minimiser</th>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Preparator</th>
<th>Getting a precommitment</th>
<th>Ground</th>
<th>Promise of reward</th>
<th>Imposition Minimiser</th>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>L 1</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>MC Male</td>
<td>U 1</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>MA Female</td>
<td>U 1</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>MC Female</td>
<td>E 1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>L 0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Moreover, the status of the recipients (as illustrated in Table 1) had an impact on the distribution of the mitigating supportive moves. For example, children were found to be utilising the mitigating supportive moves towards adults than children their own age. On the other hand, female adults used this strategy towards male adults (especially their spouses).

In the next section, I examine the impact of social distance on request strategies.

5.1.2 Social distance
As mentioned earlier, a request can be realised from the perspective of the hearer, the speaker or both participants or in an impersonal manner (not mentioning any of the participants). A distribution of request perspectives for the sample population is analysed from the data in table 2 and 3. These data correspond to Section A of the DCTs 1 and 2 (See Appendix 2) for the three social categories of intimates, colleagues and strangers.

In responding to intimates and strangers (Table 3) the majority of the requests are clearly hearer dominant in nature. This pattern is also observed for the adults and children when responding to colleagues, although the difference between hearer dominant and speaker dominant request perspective is not that large (Table 4). However, here the female adults are found to use an equal number of hearer dominant and speaker dominant request perspectives. It is striking to note that both for the adults and the children only hearer dominant requests are used towards intimates.
Table 3

**Request Perspective**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Intimate</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>Stranger</th>
<th>Intimate</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>Stranger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hearer Dominance</td>
<td>Hearer Dominance</td>
<td>Speaker Dominance</td>
<td>Hearer Dominance</td>
<td>Hearer Dominance</td>
<td>Speaker Dominance</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

While the majority of the requests in Table 3 were of a hearer dominant type, some of the requests in Table 4 are speaker dominant in nature.
Table 4

**Request Perspective and Age**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Intimate</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>Stranger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hearer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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</table>

This difference can be attributed to the nature of the situations in the DCTs. This is illustrated in the following examples:
Example 1: In Situation 4 where the speaker requests an intimate (brother) to pay an account, one is restricted in framing the request so that it has a hearer dominant perspective, as can be illustrated as follows:

“Bengicela ukukupathisa ungikhokhele iakhawunti yami ka Edgars.” Noma “Ngizwa umama ethi uya ngase dolobheni, angazi noma ungakwazi yini ukungikhokhela iakhawunti yami.” (Can you, please, go to Edgars and pay my account. Or Mom tells me you are going to town, I don’t know if you would be able to pay my Edgars account.)

It should be noted that the above request is accompanied by an imposition minimiser “angazi noma ungakwazi yini.” Similarly, in other responses in DCTs 1 and 2 other forms of downgraders and mitigating supportive moves were used. Presumably, these were used to reduce the impact of the imposition.

In my data, there was one example of a speaker and hearer dominant request perspective, as shown in the example below:

“Kunganjani sisebenzise ikhamera yakho emcimbini kababa kusasa.” (How would it be if we use your camera at my father’s party tomorrow?)

This was used by a male child to a female of a younger age.

From an examination of the data for the request perspective, the following responses were obtained from a few male and female children when responding to a stranger of a younger age when requesting to cut the queue:

Female child: “Ngingavele ngimphushe ngingene kulayini.” (Would just push him or her out of the queue).

Male child: “Uxolo mfowethu, ukulayini ongafanele, owabakhokha ngamakhadi kufhela lo.” (Sorry brother, you are in the wrong queue, this one is for customers paying by debit cards only).
Male child: “Ntwanas, nangu mama wakho ekubiza, ufuna ukukuthengela ushokoledi.” (Young man, your mom is calling you, she wants to buy you chocolate).

Female child: “Mina kufanele ngime phambi kwakho ngoba ngimdala kunawe.” (Since I am older than you, I feel that I should stand in front of you).

Male child: “Buyela eceleni udedele abantu abadala.” (Move one side, let big people pass).

None of these types of responses were obtained from the adults. The responses received from children raised the following questions:
Did they take this question seriously? or Do these responses reflect the strategies used by children or young people to “manage” queues?

5.1.2.1 Utilisation of supportive moves

5.1.2.1.1 Mitigating supportive moves

The distribution of supportive moves in the data (Table 5) makes very interesting reading. In the case of responses to intimates and colleagues the following four mitigating supportive moves were recorded, namely, grounder, getting a pre-commitment, imposition minimiser and a promise of reward. Of these, the grounder was by far the most frequently used in all cases, except for the responses of the children when responding to intimate males and females, in which situations the imposition minimiser becomes prominent. The following examples were lifted from the data:

Grounder: “Sawubona Scelo, ngicela ungikhokhele iakhawuni yami yocingo. Kufanele ngikhokhe namhlanje, manje nginomhlangano obalulekile ntambama.” (Hi Scelo, could you, please, pay my telephone account. I have to pay today but I have an important staff meeting this afternoon).

Getting a pre-commitment: “Ngicela ungisize ungidlulele eposini ungikhokhele iakhawunti yami yocingo, uma ukudlula eposini kungakukhiphi endleleni...
yakho.” (Please help me by going to the post office and pay my account if this does not take you out of your normal route)

Table 5

Mitigating Supportive Moves

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Intimate</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>Stranger</th>
<th>Intimate</th>
<th>Colleague</th>
<th>Stranger</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grounder</td>
<td>Getting</td>
<td>Imposition minimiser</td>
<td>Getting</td>
<td>Imposition minimiser</td>
<td>Getting</td>
</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA Male</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The difference in responses of adults and children (Table 5) in the case of intimates could be attributed to the fact that there is a “generational gap” in the responses. However, this is contradicted by the distribution for colleagues and strangers, where the responses of the adults and the children display similar patterns.

The unusual shift in pattern in Table 5 for intimates, from the adults to the children, may be associated with the particular situation to which the adults and children had to respond (i.e. requesting an account to be paid by either a brother or sister). In this situation the parents are relating to a brother who lives external to their own household and, therefore, see the need for an explanation or the need to give reasons for the request (i.e. the utilisation of a grounder). On the other hand, the children are relating to a brother who lives in the same household. Therefore, the need for a grounder falls away because of the close proximity and preference is given to the imposition minimiser. For example:

“Ngicela udlule eposini ungikhokhele iakhawunti yami yocingo, vele kusendleleni yakho.” (Please go via the post office and pay my telephone account, after all, the post office is on your way.)

In the case of responding to strangers, just two types of mitigating supportive moves are used by both adults and children, namely; the grounder and the preparatory, in approximately equal proportion.

The use of a significant number of preparators when responding to strangers, could be due to the particular situation, namely; requesting money that is long overdue from an acquaintance. The hearer is prepared by the speaker for the request first jogging the hearer’s memory on the subject matter, i.e. the money that is long overdue. For example:

“Angazi noma usayikhumbula yini imali engakuboleka yona, sengiyayidinga kukhona engifuna ukumkhokhela.” (I don’t know if you still remember the money you borrowed from me. I owe somebody and I need it to pay him/her back).
“Sawubona, angiqondile ukukubelese, kodwa bengicela ungibuyisele imali yami, ngiyayidinga.” (Hi there, I am not trying to pester you, but please, I need the money I lent you).

It was noted that in all three social categories (intimates, colleagues and strangers) the grounder was by far the most frequently used mitigating supportive move. However, there was a distinct increase in the use of grounders when addressing strangers, as compared to the responses towards intimates and colleagues. This increase in the number of grounders used for strangers could be attributed to the nature of the situation, that is, asking for permission to cut the queue. In such a situation an explanation would generally be necessary before the request is imposed on the hearer.

When responding to intimates, both the adults and children generally use the least number of grounders when addressing colleagues. Here, the distribution pattern is more or less proportionally the same for responses to persons of older, the same and younger ages. For the colleagues, the preparatory is the second frequent mitigating supporting move used by both adults and children, primarily by the female adults. A comparison shows that a much larger number of preparators were used when addressing colleagues than intimates.

The finding that the grounder was the most popular mitigating supportive move is consistent with the results obtained in the study of the influence of status. Moreover, the liberal use of mitigating supportive moves, especially the grounder which was most popular, appears to concur with the views of the religious and cultural leaders that, according to culture of the target community politeness is fundamental to human interactions. In the next section I present my data for the apology situations in the DCTs, starting with status and then, social distance.

5.2 DCTs: APOLOGIES

5.2.1 Status
Section C of DCTs 1 and 2 was designed to examine the effect of status on politeness strategies. It consists of two parts, one filled by the adults and the other by the children. Each part has one apology situation and one request situation. The relevant apology
situation for the children was Situation 1 (You accidentally throw a pencil at somebody else instead of your friend. How would you apologise if the person you threw the pencil at is a female lecturer/ fellow student/ a junior individual) and that for the adults as Situation 1 (You are a Head of Department in a school. How would you apologise if you spilled juice on the table of your boss (principal)/ another HOD/ a junior teacher at the school).

In these two apology situations (one for the children and one for the adults) the relative status or power of the apologiser and the person offended was taken into account. The following three categories were used to classify apologies according to the relative status of the people involved:

1. Upwards (Higher-H) i.e. apology to superior or person of greater power.
2. Equal (E) i.e. apology to a person of equal power.
3. Downwards (Lower – L) i.e. apology to a subordinate or person of lesser power.

Since this study is also a generational cross – sex study, DCTs were designed to elicit responses between participants of the same sex, as well as to study cross-sex interactions of both adults and children in the selected families.

Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984:206) share the view that the linguistic realisation of the act of apologising can happen in two ways. Firstly, an apology may be performed directly by means of an explicit illocutionary force indicating device (IFID), “which chooses a routinised, formulaic expression of regret (a performative verb) such as: (be) sorry; apologise, regret, excuse me”, etc. (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984: 206). Earlier findings by Olshtain and Blum-Kulka (1983) seem to demonstrate that a scale of conventionality of IFID realisations exists for each language. For example, they found that the word “sorry” is the most common form used in English, while the word “slixa” meaning “forgiveness” is the most common form used in Hebrew. On the other hand, in isiZulu the most common word used is “ngiyaxolisa” but “sorry” is also mostly used by isiZulu speaking community.
Secondly, an apology can be performed indirectly by taking on responsibility, reducing the degree of the offence or giving explanations. Sometimes these strategies may not be regarded as sufficient to restore social harmony and, therefore, an offer of repair is made (Trosborg, 1987:164). The apologiser may also use a strategy such as a promise of forbearance which relates to future behaviour in order to placate the Hearer.

According to Olshtain and Cohen (1983:21) an apology has a speech act set which will consist of a number of semantic formulas. They discuss five such potential formulas that may emerge when an offender is making an apology. These are:

1. An expression of an apology
2. An explanation or an account of the situation
3. An acknowledgement of responsibility
4. An offer of repair
5. A promise of forbearance

An expression of apology is further divided into a number of sub formulas:

a. An expression of regret
b. An offer of apology
c. A request for forgiveness

Using the above semantic formulas, the data shall now be analysed.

5.2.1.1 An expression of apology (IFID)

When an interlocutor utilises an IFID, he or she recognises that some norm has been violated and asks for forgiveness, for example, by saying “ngiyaxolisa” (sorry), “excuse me”, “forgive me”, “I apologise”, etc. This is done in order to placate the hearer. Thus, the IFID has a function of signaling regret. Table 6 below illustrates the distribution of IFIDs, i.e. an “expression of apology” which is subdivided into an expression of regret, an offer of apology and a request for forgiveness – used by both female and male adults and children when responding to females and males of different status. This intensity of the
“expression of regret” was also studied, for example, “I’m sorry” (ngiyaxolisa) – low intensity and “I’m very sorry” (ngiyaxolisa kakhulu) – high intensity.

The total number of participants for each of the four categories of respondents was 10. In some cases more than 10 responses were recorded because respondents used more than one “expression of apology”, as evident in one of the quotations below.

From the data presented in Table 6 below, one can observe that an expression of regret, that is, “I’m sorry” was the most commonly used form of IFID by four categories of respondents. It is interesting to note that although these are isiZulu speaking respondents, the pattern created seems to be consistent with the findings of Olshtain and Blum – Kulka (1983) who found that the word “sorry” was the most common form of IFID used in English. The analysis of data also revealed that among the other forms of IFIDs used was a request for forgiveness which was mostly used by children towards adults, as well as some women towards men. An example from the data is as follows:

An offer of apology: “Ngiyaxolisa ngokuchitha etafuleni lakho Thishomkhulu, ngizosula khona manje.” (I apologise for the spillage Principal, I will clean it now).

A request for forgiveness: “Ngicela ungixolele ngokungcolisa itafula lakho.” (Please forgive me for messing up your table.)

From the table below it is seen that for the female adult respondents, while the difference between the three status categories is small, the largest number of IFIDs is used when addressing persons of higher status.

As for the female children, when responding to females, persons of higher status receive the most number of IFIDs. In contrast, it was persons of equal status who were addressed with maximum number of IFIDs when responding to males.
## Table 6: IFIDs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>An Expression of regret</th>
<th>An offer of Apology</th>
<th>A request for Forgiveness</th>
<th>An Expression of regret</th>
<th>An offer of Apology</th>
<th>A request for Forgiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<td>MA Male</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The distribution pattern for the male adults when responding to both males and females is found to be more or less equal for the three status categories.

For the male children respondents, the distribution when responding to females is almost identical in pattern to that of the male adults. When responding to males, persons of higher status receive the most number of IFIDs. For both males and females, persons of lower status are addressed with the least number of IFIDs.

What was important to note was the fact that participants (adults and children) have shifted from utilising some forms of apologising used by isiZulu speakers. There were very few respondents who used the following expressions:

- “Lixhoshwa libhekile”
- “Ayidle izibekele”

In general, the largest number of IFIDs is used for persons of higher status and the least number for those of lower status. “I’m sorry” (ngiyaxolisa) (an expression of regret), was the most common form of IFID used by all the respondents.

### 5.2.1.2 Intensity of apology

A study of the deviations with respect to the intensity of apology, in particular, intensity of regret (i.e. low and high intensity) is now presented. An example of a low intensity regret is:

> “I’m sorry, it was an accident.” (Ngiyaxolisa kube iphutha.)

While an example of a high intensity regret is:

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<tbody>
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</table>
“I am very sorry, Principal, please forgive me - it won't happen again. (Ngiyaxolisa kakhulu Thishomkhulu, benginanakile. Ngixolele bandla angeke kuphinde kwenzeke).

The data in Table 6 above yielded the following results:

Adult females used approximately an equal number of high and low intensity regrets when addressing males and females of higher status. For persons of equal and lower status a significantly larger number of low intensity expressions of regret were used.

In measuring the responses of the female children, it was found that a much larger proportion of high intensity regrets were used when addressing females of higher status, as compared to when responding to males of higher status. An approximately equal number of high and low intensity regrets were used for both males and female of equal status. A similar behaviour was observed when addressing females of lower status. However, for males of lower status, a larger proportion of low intensity regrets were used.

The intensity distribution was found to be the same for male adults when responding to males and females of equal and lower status, dominated by a larger number of low intensity regrets. However, when responding to males of higher status, the adult males used an equal number of low and high intensity regrets, while a larger number of low intensity regrets were used when addressing females.

Male children were found to use an approximately equal number of low and high intensity regrets when addressing females of all three status categories. In responding to males, an equal number of high and low intensity regrets were used when addressing persons of higher status. A large number of low intensity regrets were used when addressing males of equal and lower status.

The above distribution of low and high intensity expressions of regret appear to indicate the following:

*Female adults do not differentiate when responding to males and females.
* Male adults treat persons of equal and lower status equally, but use a proportionally larger number of high intensity regrets for males of higher status as compared to females of higher status.

* Male children treat females of different status equally, but when responding to males use a proportionally larger number of high intensity regrets when addressing those of higher status.

* Female children treat males and females of equal status equally and use a proportionally larger number of high intensity regrets for females of higher and lower status in comparison to males of the same status.

A simple count of the total number of high intensity regrets (for the data in Table 6) when responding to persons of all three status categories is given in Table 7 below:

Table 7

**Total of High Intensity Regrets**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Recipients</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 indicates that:
While adult males and females use a proportionally larger number of high intensity regrets when addressing males, the opposite behaviour is seen for the male and female children who use a larger number of high intensity regrets when addressing females.

A possible explanation for this difference may be that the adults still perceive the males as having a more dominant role in the target community. This arises from the traditional view that the males were breadwinners and the females were the housekeepers. With the changing home scenario of many women from the target community now also becoming educated, working and re-defining their role as home executives, it is possible that their children now see them as playing major roles in the home and society at large.

5.2.1.3 Other semantic formulas

5.2.1.3.1 An explanation or account

This formula which is an indirect result of the offence can be offered in addition to or together with “an expression of apology” as illustrated in the examples below:

“Ngiyaxolisa ngejuice engiyichithe etafuleni, bengithi ngithatha i time book kwase kuthinteka ingilazi.” (I apologise about the juice I spilled on the table. I was trying to take the time book and then touched the glass by mistake.)

“Ngicela ungixolele nge juice echithekile. Kube iphutha lami. Ngithume umfundi angibekele ifile phezu kwetafula. Ubeke wanganaka kwase kuchithekka ijuice engaboni.” (I apologise for the spilled juice. I sent a learner to put my file on the table and she tells me she did not realise there was a glass with juice on the table.)

A study of the use of “an explanation or account” of the situation yielded the following:

When responding to both males and females, the adult females offered more or less an equal number of explanations to persons of the three different status categories. This pattern was also found for the female children when addressing males. However, when they responded to females, two differences were observed. Firstly, the total number of explanations offered to females was significantly larger than that offered to males [15 for
females, 10 for males]. Secondly, the largest number of explanations were offered to females of higher status and the least number to those of lower status.

Interestingly, it was observed that the male adults did not see the need to offer an explanation when responding to both males and females irrespective of their status. For, in both the cases, just one “offer of explanation” was recorded and, in each case, to a person of higher status.

In offering explanations to females, the male children responded with more or less an equal number to persons of all three status categories. However, when responding to males, two important differences were observed. Firstly, the total number of explanations to males was much larger than that offered to females [11 for males, 7 for females]. Secondly, the largest number of explanations were offered to males of higher status and the smallest number to those of lower status. This behaviour is opposite to that recorded for the female children.

From the above discussion it would appear that:

* Female adults do not distinguish between male and female when offering an explanation, and persons in the three categories are treated almost equally.

* In addition, they make a significantly larger number of “offers of explanation” in comparison to the adult males [total offered by males and females=2, total offered by female adults to males and females = 20]

A possible explanation for this is that the men see apologising as an act that they have to perform. Its impact on the recipient is irrelevant. Contrary to this, women perceive apologies as ways of restoring social relationships. Therefore, greater emphasis is placed by them on ensuring that the apology is accepted. Also, it may be that the men perceive apologies as an admission of weakness or inadequacy. The consequence of this is that when men apologise they focus on the fact that the action serves as a loss of face for them, and not the impact that the apology has on the hearer. As a result, the apology is as brief as possible.
The above results have also shown that:

*the female children offer more explanations to females, on the other hand, males receive the largest number of explanations from the male children.

A possible explanation for this pattern is that the children express greater solidarity with persons of the same gender. This behaviour could stem from their cultural upbringing in which cross-sex interaction or association is not encouraged and where freedom of association with the opposite sex is frowned upon even for teenagers.

5.2.1.3.2 Acknowledgement of responsibility

This formula is used by the Speaker when he or she recognises that he or she is responsible for the offence. Recognition of one’s fault is regarded as face-threatening to S and is aimed at appeasing H, as illustrated by the examples below:

“Ngiyaxolisa, imina enganganakanga. Ngizothola indwangu ngisule itafula.”
(I’m sorry. My carelessness. Will get a cloth and wipe the table.)

“Ngiyaxolisa, yiphutha lami.” (I’m sorry, my fault.)

It has been noted in the previous data discussion that for female adults when responding to females, persons of higher status received the largest number of “acknowledgement of responsibility”, whereas for responses to males, it is persons of equal status who received the largest number. When responding to both males and females, the least number of “acknowledgement of responsibility” was given to persons of lower status.

In comparison to the female adults, the female children used a small number of “acknowledgement of responsibility” when responding to both females and males with a total of five in each case. The results show that there is no outstanding pattern in the behaviour exhibited by female adults and children, except for the point mentioned above.

The results for the male adults make interesting reading. A total of 13 “acknowledgement of responsibility” are used when responding to females, with the largest number [i.e. 17] for persons of higher status and an equal number for persons of equal and lower status.
In contrast, only a total of 3 “acknowledgement of responsibility” are used when responding to males, divided equally between the three status categories.

The data for the male children is in some respect similar to that for the male adults. A total of seven [4 high, 2 equal, 1 low] “acknowledgement of responsibility” (with the largest number for persons for higher status) are used when responding to females, while in responding to the males, a total of three “acknowledgement of responsibility” (equally divided between the three categories) are used.

The above results indicate that:

*the males (both adult and children) place a greater emphasis on acknowledging responsibility when responding to females than to males.

A possible interpretation for this finding is that males find it easier to apologise to females, even if they are of higher status, than to other males. If one may regard “acknowledging responsibility” as an inadequacy or failure, then it may be easier for males to “lose face” by using them (i.e. acknowledgement of responsibility) to females who are perceived to constitute a socially less powerful sector of the target community. On the other hand, a male acknowledging responsibility to another male may be seen as an uncomfortable experience.

5.2.1.3.3 Offer of repair

This formula is more situation specific and would be relevant if some injury or damage has been caused. By offering to “put things right” the speaker may hope to save face.

An offer of repair is illustrated below:

“Ngiyaxolisa ngokwenzekile, ngizolisula itafula ngokushesha”. (I’m sorry about this, but I will clean the table immediately.)

A study of the use of “an offer of repair” to males has shown the following:

Adult females make slightly more “offers of repair” to males than to females (16 for males, 13 for females). In responding to females, the female adults offer the largest number to
persons of equal status. Male adults use an equal number of total “offers of repair” to both males and females (a total of 18), of these the largest number is offered to males of higher rank.

Regarding the children’s responses, a noteworthy difference is that, in the case of male children, the proportional distribution is the same for persons of the three status categories, while for the female children it is persons of higher status who receive the largest number of “offers of repair”, with an equal number given to persons of equal and lower status.

The above results indicate that:


A possible explanation of this is that in the case of an “offer of repair” adults place greater emphasis on rectifying the situation in comparison to children. It is also interesting to note that of the adults, it is the males who make the most “offers of repair.” Earlier it was found that the adult males provided the least number of “explanations or account”. The above two points appear to indicate that the adult males regard apologies as more often superfluous, face-threatening acts which are admissions of weakness, inadequacy or failure. Hence, since they perceive the situation as being rectified by an “offer of repair”, the need of an explanation or account does not arise. In contrast, the female adults make sufficient use of all the semantic formulas. Thus, they provide laboured apology responses. This could be attributed to the fact that they regard apologies as ways of restoring social harmony and expressing their concern for the offended. To them, loss of face or admission of inadequacy or failure is of lesser importance than restoring social harmony.

5.2.1.3.4 Promise of forbearance
As in an “offer of repair” this formula is also situation specific. According to Brown and Levinson, 1987:125) a promise is another way a Speaker may decide to emphasise
his/her cooperation with Hearer in order to redress the potential threat of some FTAs. Making a promise demonstrates Speaker’s good intention in addressing Hearer’s positive face wants.

The following example, illustrates this:

“Thishomkhulu, ngenze iphutha ngachitha ijuice etafuleni lakho, ngiyaxolisa, ngeke kuphinde kwenzeke futhi.” (Principal, I mistakenly spilled juice on your table, I am sorry, it won’t happen again.)

The very limited use of a promise of forbearance by all the respondents (total of 2) could be attributed to the fact that the situations were not perceived as being repetitive occurrences, thereby eliminating the need for a promise of forbearance.

5.2.1.3 USE OF TOTAL NUMBER OF SEMANTIC FORMULAS

Finally, a study is conducted of the total number of semantic formulas (data from Tables 7 and 9) employed by the four sets of respondents. The objective of this exercise is to look for some emerging pattern which may be correlated with the findings from the interviews with the religious and cultural leaders, as well as the individual families:
The distribution is given in Table 8 below:

**Table 8: Total no. of Semantic Formulas for Status Categories**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female adult</th>
<th>Male adult</th>
<th>Female child</th>
<th>Male child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The general pattern emanating from the above table is that:

*the largest number of semantic formulas are used when apologising to persons of higher status and the least number to persons of lower status.*

These findings are consistent with the outcome of the interviews with the cultural and religious leaders who pointed out that from a cultural perspective there was a status divide within the target community. People of higher status are accorded greater power.

The overall total number of semantic formulas utilised by female and male adults and children is also shown in Table 8 above. It is seen from the above data that:
*the female adults and children use more semantic formulas than adults and children, respectively.

The implications of the data presented in Table 8 above are now considered. Questions that can be immediately asked are:

*When a person uses a large number of semantic formulas, is he/she being more polite?

Therefore, are the members of the target community more polite to persons of higher status (as per the data in Table 8)?

*Are female members of the target community more polite than the male members by virtue of the fact that they use a larger number of semantic formulas than their male counterparts?

*Is there a change in the behaviour of patterns of children in comparison to adults?

Responses to these questions will be sought when the above results are correlated with the outcomes of the interviews with the religious and cultural leaders, as well as the selected families.

It is important to note that although the females (adults and children) use more semantic formulas than the males, there is no clear pattern in the distribution of the semantic formulas for females responding to males and females responding to females, and vice versa.

The data presented on apologies in this section focused on the status of the recipients relative to the respondent. In the next section, the role of social distance of the recipients relative to the respondent will be the subject of study.

**5.2.2 Social distance**

The relative social distance between the respondent and the recipient is recognised by many researchers, for example, Leech (1983), Brown and Levinson (1987), Wolfson (1988), etc., as one of the most basic factors determining the appropriate politeness behaviour in societies.
Brown and Levinson (1987) contend that more politeness is shown to persons when the social distance is greater. In other words, one would apologise more to a stranger than to an intimate or colleague. Wolfson (1988), on the other hand, suggests that with strangers and intimates the relationship is clear-cut. However, relationships with friends are more ‘dynamic and open to negotiation’ (Wolfson, 1988:33) and, therefore, need regular redefinition and reassurance.

As stated before, Section B of the DCTs was designed to elicit apology responses between participants of the same sex, as well as to examine cross-sex conversations of adults and children in the selected families. Since a variable in this study is the social distance between the participants, the situations in Section B were also designed to elicit responses to the following three categories:

1. Intimates e.g. brother, sister, etc.:

**SITUATION B1:** You borrowed a tape recorder from a close relative. The tape recorder gets damaged while it is in your possession. Your relative comes to collect the tape recorder. How would you apologise if he is: much older than you or of the same age group as yourself or much younger than you?

And

**SITUATION B4:** You agreed to pay your sister’s account which is in arrears. You forget to do so. Sister: Did you remember to pay my account? You……

2. Friends or colleagues

**SITUATION B3:** You were supposed to meet with your colleague at a coffee shop in town. You do not honour the appointment. Your colleague comes to your flat later that day. Colleague: We were supposed to meet. I waited for more than an hour! You……

and
SITUATION B5

You are having a social event at your house. You request your colleague to lend you music CDs. She lends them to you with a restriction that you return them a day after the event. Unfortunately, after the event you notice that there is one CD that is missing. How would you apologise for the CD if your colleague is the same age group as yourself/much younger than you/much older than you?

3. Strangers or distant acquaintances

SITUATION B 2: You are in a crowded supermarket. You bump your trolley onto a person. How would you apologise if he is: the same age group as you/much younger than you/much older than you.

And

An acquaintance does some work for you, but you do not pay her immediately after she finishes the work. You meet her at a mall. How would you apologise.

You………

In addition other Situations in the DCTs also investigate the participant’s response to persons of different age groups, i.e. older, same age and younger. It is recalled that the DCTs were administered to a set of ten families. In each family there were four participants: a Female Adult and a Male Adult (i.e. the parents), a Female Child and a Male Child (two children). A presentation of the data obtained for apologies through the DCTs, as well as interpretations, is given below. The analysis of the effect of social distance on the speech act of apology begins with an examination of the data for Situations B2, B3 and B4.

5.2.2.1 An expression of apology (IFID)

First I consider the IFIDs corresponding to Situations B2, B3 and B4 in DCTs 1 DCTs 2 (Appendix 2), as reflected in Tables 9a, 9b and 9c. Since each of the situations corresponds to a particular social distance, all aspects of the data in each of Tables 9a, 9b and 9c for IFIDs will be discussed fully, before moving to the next Table. Thereafter, a
summary discussion is presented of the other semantic formulas in all three tables. A similar approach is adopted when studying the effect of both social distance and age.

The data recorded for intimates in the Table 9a reveals that:

*the vast majority of IFIDs are in the form of an expression of regret. Very few instances of an offer of apology and a request for forgiveness are recorded. With regard to the intensity distribution for an expression of regret, much lower intensity regrets are used when responding to both males and females, except for the responses of the male adults. The latter use more high intensity regrets when addressing males and an equal number of high and low intensity expressions of regret when responding to females.
Table 9a: Semantic Formulas: Intimates (B4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL DISTANCE: INTIMATE</th>
<th>An expression of apology (IFID)</th>
<th>Expression of Regret</th>
<th>An offer of apology</th>
<th>A request for forgiveness</th>
<th>An explanation or account</th>
<th>Acknowledgement of responsibility</th>
<th>Offer of repair</th>
<th>Promise of forbearance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESPONDENTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RECIPIENTS</strong></td>
<td>Low Intensity</td>
<td>High Intensity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is also seen that

*the vast majority of expression of regrets are of low intensity.*
One may expect such a situation, i.e. non-payment of an overdue account, to elicit high intensity regrets. However, this was found not to be the case. A possible explanation for this behaviour is that, because of the close social distance with intimates, the respondents do not see the need for expressing high intensity regrets. This agrees somewhat, with the findings of the interviews with the religious and cultural leaders. The intensity of the responses may well be different when responding to a colleague.
### Table 9 b: Semantic Formulas: Colleagues (B3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL DISTANCE: COLLEAGUES</th>
<th>An expression of apology (IFID)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respondents</td>
<td>Recipients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FC</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The IFID distribution when responding to colleagues (Table 9b above) shows no consistent pattern. The responses of the participants are quite different. For example, while the female children use a majority of high intensity regrets when addressing both males and females, the male children utilise an equal number of high and low intensity regrets for both genders. Here also, as for the intimates, the frequency of an offer of apology and a request for forgiveness are comparatively low.

From Table 9c below it is seen that:

*the IFID distribution pattern when responding to strangers is remarkably similar to that for intimates (Table 9a), with all participants using a majority of low intensity regrets, with the exception of male adults when responding to males.
Table 9c: Semantic Formulas: Strangers (B2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOCIAL DISTANCE: STRANGERS</th>
<th>An expression of apology (IFID)</th>
<th>Expression of Regret</th>
<th>An offer of apology</th>
<th>A request for forgiveness</th>
<th>An explanation or account</th>
<th>Acknowledgement of responsibility</th>
<th>Offer of repair</th>
<th>Promise of forbearance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESPONDENTS</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>RECIPIENTS</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FA</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>FC</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>MA</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Furthermore, very few instances of an offer of apology and a request for forgiveness are recorded. The distribution of the total number of IFIDs for the data in Tables 9a to 9c is shown in Table 6 below.

*In the majority of cases colleagues receive the largest number of IFIDs with “I’m sorry” (ngiyaxolisa) being the most common form of IFID used.

*The distribution pattern for the intimates and strangers are more or less equal.

Table 10: IFIDs by social distance and gender participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relative distance</th>
<th>Recipient gender</th>
<th>Adults</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intimates</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strangers</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5.2.2.2 Other semantic formulas (social distance only)

In this sub-section I analyse data in Tables 9a, 9b, and 9c for the other semantic formulas, apart from IFIDs. A comparison of the three tables shows that the frequency of an explanation or account and an offer of repair are very high for intimates and strangers. In the case of colleagues, while the frequency of an explanation or account is very high, that for an offer of repair is significant, but not as the other two cases. In all three cases (intimates, colleagues and strangers) the recorded data for acknowledgement of responsibility and promise of forbearance are negligible.
In summary, the above results for the distribution of the IFIDs and the other semantic formulas indicate:

* Colleagues receive the largest number of IFIDs.

* The participants respond in a very similar manner towards intimates and strangers.

5.2.2.3 IFID and age

From the data collected it was noted that the IFIDs are dominated by an expression of regret, which is consistent with the data in Tables 9a to 9c. Comparatively, a smaller number of offers of apology and requests for forgiveness are recorded in all three status groups. In the case of intimates, more high intensity regrets are expressed by all four groups of respondents. The largest difference is recorded for the female children where there are twice as many high intensity regrets. One should mention that this behaviour is opposite to that reflected in 9a where the majority of low intensity regrets were recorded for intimates. A possible reason for this is that the situation B1 (damage to a tape recorder) may be perceived as more serious than the situation B4 (non-payment of overdue account). Therefore, the former warrants high intensity expressions of regret.

The implication of this is that:

* the intensity of an expression of regret is situation dependent.

Towards colleagues and strangers more low intensity regrets are used. The only exception for strangers is recorded by male adults, where in responding to both males and females, a larger number of high intensity regrets are used. Towards colleagues the exceptions are the responses of the female and male children to males, where they employ almost an equal number of high and low intensity regrets.

The general pattern is that strangers receive the highest number of IFIDs while colleagues receive the least.
This appears to be consistent with Brown and Levinson’s (1987) model of politeness, which suggests that respondents show more politeness when there is a greater social distance between participants. In other words, one would apologise more often to strangers than to friends. This raises the question: “what is the reason for this difference?” A possible explanation would be to examine situations from the DCTs where participants had to respond to colleagues. Situation B1 is easier to rectify by making an “offer of repair” (i.e. replacing the damaged recorder) in comparison to Situation B3, where the colleague’s time has already been wasted and cannot be replaced or repaired. In this case an “offer of repair” would not be as meaningful as in Situation B1. This is supported by the number of “offers of repairs” that were recorded for the two situations (for situation B3 ranging from 1 to 4, for Situation B1 ranging from 6 to 10). It is possible that a person who makes an “offer of repair” will not see the need for an explicit apology and, therefore, in such a case the number of IFIDs will be reduced.

The discussion of the findings from participant observation is discussed in the next chapter.
CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS FROM OBSERVATION

6.1 Introduction

This section presents an in-depth discussion of my own observation concerning the utilisation of requests and apologies in the Umlazi Township by isiZulu first language speakers. The discussion of the ethnographic data is, of course, selective and analysed in respect to its pertinence to the central research questions. As mentioned earlier, politeness in the community under study would be studied through the investigation of two speech acts - apologies and requests. It is envisaged that the results of the observation will either agree or disagree with Holmes’ (1995:26) contention on how people perform requests and apologies, and this will enable the researcher to evaluate how polite they are.

Janney and Arndt (1993:14) supported the aforementioned statement when they argued that politeness can be perceived as a rule governed, rational, pragmatic aspect of speech. They further contended that it is rooted in the need of humans to maintain relationships and prevent conflicts. The manner of one’s speech (thoughts and actions) is of crucial importance to the maintenance or disruption of social harmony. Therefore, speech acts are ways of showing politeness behaviour in human interactions. I decided to observe the speech act of apologies and requests since they occur in everyday human conversations. It is also hoped that this observation will reveal that some members of isiZulu speaking community in Umlazi are beginning to reject traditional femininity in favour of a more westernised, emancipated identity, as discussed by de Kadt and Ide (2002).

6.2 DISCUSSION

6.2.1 Observation

In Zulu culture, showing respect is central to the indication of politeness, and can be expressed both verbally and non-verbally. Respect is supposed to be reciprocal, being conveyed from the speaker to the addressee, and from the addressee to the speaker. Furthermore, it has been noted that the act of analysing people’s utterances only, cannot clarify politeness, but politeness has to be viewed within the context of complete interactions between participants. In light of the aforementioned statement, observations
were conducted in the following contexts: educational and domestic. Observations were done in order to determine whether the politeness phenomena have remained constant or changed over time. It was also envisaged that observations would reveal if, for typical situations and contexts, there seem to be specific verbal and non-verbal strategies. Furthermore, the similarities or differences in the politeness strategies of men, women and children were noted and analysed.

6.2.1.1 Observation of households (domestic contexts)

The aim of this study was not to explore Zulu culture, but the researcher felt it necessary to outline some of the cultural elements relevant to the aspect being discussed in this sub-section.

Vilakazi (1962:23) explains that ‘the umuzi is a group of nuclear families constructed around the kraal.’ He further explains that the constituent nuclear families were dependent on the head of the kraal, whose responsibility was to grow the economy of the homestead. Hammond – Tooke (2008:62) states that ‘for at least a thousand years, cattle have been the most expensive asset in Zulu culture, as well as the only form of capital. Janet Shope (2006:64) confirms that, ilobolo facilitated a relational bond among families, but it was also a cultural traditional ideological domain where a Zulu head of the kraal attained a status quo over a woman, symbolising authority and power.

Contrary to the above, the post-colonial versions of masculinity are committed towards the democratisation of relations between genders. Buthelezi (2008:23) contends that South Africa, after apartheid, is now being reconfigured as a coherent entity. From this point of view, Morrell (2001: 4) confirms two significant issues that shaped the context of South Africa in the early 1990s: addressing the issues of masculinity, as well as recognising masculinity as a crucial aspect of gender.

Hunter (2005:389) further contends that the impact of a culture of gender equality is now experienced by men in the expansion of women’s work, which has disrupted men’s position as the sole ‘provider’. Furthermore, the roles of men as leaders in the society and households has also been impacted upon by the availability of equal employment
opportunities for all and economic volatility. This suggests that the discrepancy in power relations between women and men is being challenged by the culture of gender equality.

Recent sociolinguistic research suggests that the domestic setting – as the stronghold of the indigenous African languages – is losing ground in urban areas (Kamwangamalu, 2003).

In light of the above background, when the households in Umlazi were observed, a rural – urban dichotomy was noted. Some individuals gave an impression that they did not belong to the old conservative South African community, but to a new and modernised one. Some of these men categorically stated that they were less concerned about their children or wives’ politeness strategies. In one family, children would be heard shouting at their fathers if they wanted something and no one would try and tell the child that he or she is not supposed to shout at an elder. The child would not even be requested to apologise. In the same family, the father was watching a soccer match on the television, and the son (15+) came in, took the remote control and switched to another channel. The son did not request permission to switch to another channel. The reason he gave was:

“This is our TV, yours is in the bedroom. You should be asking for permission from us to watch in the lounge.”(This was said by the child (12) to the father).

During observation it was also noted children would apologise by blaming someone else. In one household this is what happened:

A 10 year old boy comes back late from school. I learn that the school finishes at 14h30 and he should be home by 15h00. He comes back at 17h15. The mother asks why, and he says “It’s Olwethu’s fault.” “He said we should go and watch a soccer match after school and I went with him.”

In the above example the 10 year old boy, Qiniso, avoids an apology by renegotiating the power dimension, blaming his friend, Olwethu. It might be that he is doing this because he wants to win his mother’s sympathy and forgiveness.

In another incident, boys were playing soccer and one of them kicked the ball and broke the neighbour’s window. Instead of saying “ngiyaxolisa” (I’m sorry”. He said “Angenzanga
ngamabomu” (It was not my intention) One may refer to this as the strategy for the lack of intent. In other words, he does not want to be held responsible for what has happened. However, he does not deny what he has done.

With reference to the traditional belief systems and the issue of ukuhlonipha in particular, it is evident that there is a strong intergenerational conflict, because many young men and emancipated women regard the custom in a critical light, whereas older people view it as a precious tradition that should be maintained. Hlonipha may be defined, from a general perspective, as any kind of practice and behaviour sharing respect, but one must also understand the spiritual aspect of it. It is important to distinguish the behavioural aspect of ukuhlonipha from isihlonipho. The latter is the ‘language of hlonipha’ as an actual linguistic performance. The linguistic practice, isihlonipho is characterised by the careful avoidance of syllables that occur in the names of the husband’s siblings (Finlayson1978, 1995).

I am concerned here only with the sociolinguistic implications ukuhlonipha carries today, rather than with the lexicon of the language variety, isihlonipho. Dlamini (2001:206) notes that “in Zulu families, children are taught about the significance of ukuhlonipha abadala (respect for adults) as well as a non-confrontational way of disagreeing with adults.” Finlayson (1995) argues that although isihlonipho is undoubtedly still practiced in rural communities, women today are no longer ostracised for neglecting some aspects of it. In the Umlazi Township it was also noted that in some families some aspects of hlonipha behaviour were still upheld. Members of the older generation, however, repeatedly complain about the younger generation’s lack of respect. The linguistic aspect is still practiced to some extent among older generation in Umlazi, however, the younger generation view the utilisation of the linguistic variety as outdated and “backward”.

In one family I observed the ceremonial slaughtering of the goat. In this family the eldest son had a problem with just one subject in one of the Universities of Technology. He had failed the subject twice and he was now in his third year. They were worried that should he fail it again, he will not graduate. The father felt that he had to slaughter a goat to communicate with the ancestors (amadlozi). When communicating with amadlozi, he had to begin with apologising for any wrongdoing which may be the cause of the bad luck that
has befallen his son. He then requested them (amadlozi) to guide his son and be with him all the time, especially when he writes the problematic subject. It is important to mention that the wife does not attend this ceremonial slaughter where there is also incense (impepho) which is burned. I was also informed that amadlozi listen/consider requests and apologies done by males. As a woman (if your husband is deceased) you may request your husband’s brother to assist you. Clearly, some males in the households observed still strongly believe in the dominance of males. This is what one male was heard saying when he was having a conversation with other males:

“Kuwumsebenzi wami njengendoda ukufundisa umndeni wami (nonkosikazi) ukuthi kufanle baziphathe kanjani la emzini ka Baba. Uma omunye embuza ukuthi yena ufundiswe ngubani, angaphenduli. Uqhubeka uthi “uma ingane yami ingazi ukuthi uma icela into kumuntu omdala ikhuluma kanjani futhi yamukele kanjani, kusho ukuthi angindoda yalutho”. (Gudi, 38) (It is my responsibility to educate my family (including my wife) as to the appropriate behaviour. However, what was important to note was the fact that the emphasis was on the request and apology strategies directed towards males, and not vice versa. When asked about how males should apologise or make requests towards females, he found it extremely difficult to respond.

Despite the prevailing male dominated dynamics in Umlazi, there were men who were re-interpreting the way people request and apologise. Obviously, as (Selikov, et. al., 2002) contends, South Africans are capable to be their own agents and have mechanisms to assert themselves, at least in urban settings.

In the domestic setting it was also noted that responses between social unequals were quite long. An illustration of this is a conversation between a father and son, in which the son requests his father to pay his school fees. This fact, I think, is very closely connected with the issue of indirectness in speech act realisation. IsiZulu speakers use indirect means to realise communicative goals such as requests. Even when they do attempt to be direct sometimes, they tend to use many words to arrive at their goal. For example, in the following conversation, a child has been sent away from school because his fees have not been paid, so he asks for the money from his father:
Son: *Sawubona baba* (Good morning/afternoon dad.)

Father: *Yebo mfana wami, kunjani?* (Good morning/afternoon son, how are you?)


(I am well dad. I wanted to inform you that I have been sent away from school because I owe school fees. I was wondering if dad would be able to pay the fees for me.)

The son’s request sequence makes use of a query preparatory strategy, specifically a conventionally indirect strategy, *angazi nomu ungakwazi yini ukungikhokhela* (I was wondering if you would pay my fees). The son uses such language because clearly, he is asking for a favour, so he has to find the right words to help mitigate the force of the request, because it requires some action from his father.

### 6.2.1.2 Observation of educational contexts

It is important to mention that during observation, I noted that, although respectful behaviour is perceived as situation dependent, the divide between rural versus urban and traditional versus modern is evident in the contemporary Zulu society. The excerpts below demonstrate how the younger generation in the community under study feel torn by the conflicting demands of the modern and traditional worlds concerning politeness:

“I’ve observed that as young people (especially those of us ‘abafunda ku Model C schools) – we are confused by these conflicting demands of the modern and traditional worlds, that is, one that is influenced by a western perception of what polite behaviour is……… for instance, *uma ngithatha iscript sami* from a white lecturer, I can use one hand and then say "Thank you". I have to remember to use both hands when accepting my script from a Black lecturer and also say "Ngiyabonga", otherwise I will be regarded as a disrespectful child. On the other hand, something very interesting was noted. White lecturers expected students to utilise “please” when making requests (e.g. if you were not in class when scripts
were distributed, say, "May I, please, have my script", and not, "I want my script"). Black lecturers expect students to use "ngicela".

Another observation was done in one of the Distance learning universities. The student was requesting leniency from the lecturer, since he submitted the assignment late. This is the letter:

_Late submission of assignment_

_I here in report that I got my study guides late. Secondly, I do not know anyone who is doing the same course as this one in the area I live in. I know I should have done something but, please sir, I am begging you to consider my assignment._

_Your urgent attention to this matter is highly appreciated._

_Yours faithfully_

Rudwick (2008), is of the view that the nuclear family is responsible for laying down certain standards of respect. On the other hand, the more general principles of respectful, social and linguistic behaviour are acquired from the immediate environment, the larger society and in private and public conversations. Hence, the perception of what constitutes respectful behaviour is entrenched in an individual’s culture, but more importantly, in an individual’s upbringing and socialisation. This brings me to the last aspect in participant observation which deals with the fact that some of the children come from child headed families, hence, no adult or parent educated them about polite behaviour.

**Summary**

In conclusion, one may argue that, participant observation in different educational contexts and households proved to be extremely useful in complementing the interviews as well as presenting a complete and genuine picture of the sociolinguistic dynamics at work here. Speech situations and speech events were explored and language choices of individuals were systematically observed and contextualised. In the next chapter I focus on the Interviews with families.
CHAPTER 7: FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS WITH THE FAMILIES

As indicated in the Research Methodology, a total of eight families that completed the DCTs were interviewed at their respective homes for their views and understanding of politeness. It was also pointed out that the interview schedule (Appendix 3) was drawn up after an analysis of the data from the DCTs. In addition, the questions focused on those aspects of politeness phenomena that were relevant for my study, the role of men and women in the target community.

7.1 THE UNDERSTANDING OF POLITENESS

An analysis of the recorded data reveals that the families (both adults and children) are consistent in their understanding of the phenomenon of politeness. This understanding is best summarised by the following recorded statements:

"The way that you respect somebody else’s space --- showing respect for their principles and beliefs"; "speaking in a caring, respectful manner ---- saying please, thank you, and not making demands." In addition, interviewees also emphasised using the appropriate “tone of voice – don’t speak harshly, loudly”. Such behaviour was considered to be consistent with cultural norms.

The significance of being polite at all times was recognised as a reflection of “the kind of person you are” as well as portraying the “image of one’s family”. Moreover, in the case of the children, it reflects their upbringing.

The above factors indicate that from a cultural perspective the notion of “face work” exists among the isiZulu speaking community in order to avoid or remedy a loss of face (Goffman, 1967: 11-12). However, the conception of face is not identical to that of Brown and Levinson (1987).

The politeness behaviour displayed by an individual is associated with the “impression that he or she creates” (individual face), the image of his or her family (group face), as well as the image perceived by the community at large (public face). It is important that these three concepts of face are maintained at all times, so as not to ‘lose face’. This fear of loss of face forces one to behave in a respectful
and polite manner towards others. A similar observation was made by de Kadt (1998: 175) in her investigation of the notion of face and its applicability to the isiZulu language.

In probing the relationship between culture and politeness all interviewees expressed the view that politeness is a feature in every culture. However, on further probing it became evident that:

- While the majority of the children were aware that politeness may manifest itself in different ways in different cultures, this was not the case for some of the adults.
- Some adults hold a simplistic view that politeness is universal and, therefore, should be practiced in the same manner by all cultures.

The extract below illustrates how females in Zulu society feel torn between the modern and traditional contexts:

“I often feel confused when I find myself in these two contexts with conflicting demands. For example, one context (modern) expects me to maintain eye contact during an interaction, while the other context (traditional) expects me not to maintain eye contact during an interaction” (Maphindi, 29, Umlazi).

### 7.2 POLITENESS ASSOCIATED WITH REQUESTS AND APOLOGIES

All interviewees (children and adults) were unanimous that it was necessary to be polite when making a request or apologising. A request that is not polite may not elicit the desired response from the hearer. On the other hand, when apologising, if one is not polite then the apology will be meaningless and could, therefore, be rejected by the hearer. With regard to a request, one of the younger interviewees stated:

“Ask politely --- say why you need it and for how long, etc. Saying that you will return it makes the other person to trust you. The other person should not ask you when you are going to return it.”

It is interesting to note that this statement covers aspects of requests as per the CCSARP coding scheme. For example, “say why you need it” is a category of a downgrader,
namely a grounder (which provides an explanation or reasons for making the request). The views expressed here concur with the findings from the DCTs where mitigating supportive moves, dominated by the downgrader, were freely used.

In investigating the role of directness or indirectness when making a request, interviewees expressed the view that they would prefer to be asked indirectly when a request is made to them. Most of the interviewees viewed a direct request as impolite. Some associated such a request with the character of the individual, as in, “a person who is very pushy and is always demanding stuff.” A direct request was seen as requiring immediate action/answer, while an indirect request gives the hearer the opportunity to ponder over the request as illustrated in the following quotation:

“An indirect request gives the hearer a chance to negotiate with the speaker about the request.”

Blum Kulka (1982:30) contends that “interlocutors seem to prefer indirect ways despite the fact that languages provide them with explicit direct ways for achieving communicative ends, in day to day communication”. He further adds that the level of directness in the performance of the speech act differs from one language to another, as well as from one culture to another. The appropriate interpretation and performance of any speech act, particularly indirect speech acts, requires the understanding of the language as well as the correct utilisation of that language within a given culture.

7.3 THE EFFECT OF AGE, SOCIAL DISTANCE, GENDER AND STATUS

This study also investigated the influence of factors such as age, status, social distance and gender of the individual to whom the request or apology was directed. These are discussed below.

7.3.1 Age

While from a religious and cultural perspective the interviewees were in agreement that all should be treated equally, in reality cultural practice dictates otherwise, and greater respect is expected to be shown towards elders.

This is illustrated by one of the interviewees:
“In my culture there is a saying ‘uhlonipha omncane, uhloniphe omdala’, meaning one should respect young and old”. This does not translate into reality cause within our isiZulu speaking community children are always reminded to respect the elder.

Younger persons are expected to treat elders with more respect than their peers because the elders are credited with more knowledge, expertise and experience. This allows them to act in an advisory capacity in guiding younger persons. The high respect shown to elders is such that they are consulted when major decisions have to be made within their families, for example, when purchasing a new home. Also, for special family functions, for example, the wedding of a grandchild, they will be the first recipients of the invitation. Such an action is seen as ensuring that the blessings of the grandparents are received.

The interviewees also pointed out that the address terms used within the target community highlight the respect shown towards elders. For instance, children are not allowed to address the elders by their first names, but instead, would use respectful terms such as “mama” (mother), “gogo” (grandmother), “mkhulu” (grandfather) “malume”, (uncle), etc. On the other hand, it is acceptable for elders to call children by their names. In turn, elders, as role models, are expected to show love, compassion, and understanding to their children. The views expressed here were also confirmed by the cultural/religious leaders and also evidenced in their responses to the questionnaires. A similar relationship between children and adults has been noted by de Kadt (1998:182) in her investigation of the concept of face in the isiZulu speaking community.

Despite the prescribed norms of behaviour for the children in the target community, it is important to note that some parents admitted that their children are not raised strictly in accordance with the manner in which they themselves were raised. Today, children are allowed greater participation in adult discussion as well as in expressing their views.

### 7.3.2 Status

Interviewees were of the opinion that the status of a person should not influence the respect shown to him or her, however, this is not what happens in practice.

According to one of the interviewees, “the society makes people behave in a particular way – for example, doctors, professors, etc. are put on a pedestal. In general, a person
with higher academic qualifications is shown greater respect. However, for interviewees from older generation, persons with high qualifications in certain fields, for example, law, medicine and science are accorded much higher respect than those in other fields, for example, doctorate in Psychology. In the rural areas, teachers and nurses are still accorded a very high status. On the contrary, children perceive fields such as Engineering and Commerce as equally attractive career opportunities. Therefore, they tend to accord respect to all persons of higher educational qualifications. Another issue raised, was that people generally look up to persons who are financially well off, without regard for their character. Such people are, therefore, accorded higher status because of their material wealth. A good example given by the interviewees are people who are getting tenders from the Government departments. Some of them are illiterate, but because they have money, they are accorded high status in the community. Other interviewees mentioned some people who are stealing cars “amagintsi”, those who sell drugs as also some of highly respected people in the Umlazi Township. This also holds true for religious organisations (churches) as well. One interviewee mentioned the following example:

“In a certain area in KZN, most churches have this policy that the priest only buries members of the congregation who come to church regularly and also pay their tithes (there’s record kept by the church elders). Surprisingly, if a person of a high status from the community dies and the family requests the church to assist, they don’t say ‘no’, but if it is somebody not well known in the community, the policy applies.”

The views expressed here are consistent with those of the cultural and religious leaders.

7.3.3 Social distance

With regard to the influence of social distance, the male and female adults expressed differing views. The former saw a need for being more polite to intimates and colleagues. The primary reason was that one associates regularly with such persons. Hence, to maintain this close relationship one had to be more polite by consistently offering reasons, explanations, etc. This is not necessary in the case of a stranger as “with a stranger, we don’t know that person”. Therefore, short responses would be appropriate. The female adults, however, felt “more relaxed” in the presence of intimates and colleagues and,
therefore, did not see the need to be over-polite when apologising or requesting. They, instead, would be more polite to a stranger as this was an unknown person. According to one of the female adult interviewees:

“With strangers – you want to create an impression as they don’t know you and will go all out to be polite. With colleagues/intimates – we are familiar with them and would treat them in an ‘everyday’ manner.”

7.3.4 Gender: The role of women

The majority of interviewees were of the opinion that women are expected to be more polite than men.

This position concurs with the views of the religious and cultural leaders that the prescribed norms of behaviour placed greater demands on women, and as already indicated, has been observed in some responses to the DCTs.

The respondents recognised the following:

- The role played by women in the target community has evolved.
  In the past, men perceived women as occupying insignificant roles in spite of the numerous responsibilities, hence the domination of women by men in decision making. However, an increase in gender awareness campaigns and policies, together with the occupation of important professional positions by women contributed to a dramatic shift of position. This is confirmed by the following quote by an interviewee:
  “In the past men had more power, but now that in some families women are the sole providers, there is a noticeable shift of mindset”. With the new democracy after 1994, there are policies designed to address issues of gender equity.”

The question “Is it more important for a woman or man to be more polite?” ignited a robust discussion among children and adults as shown below:

Female Child: “I would argue that society puts more emphasis on females to be polite, for example, women are expected to speak softly and not be loud --- a man
who speaks softly is said to be too feminine. The overall behaviour of women should revolve around politeness.”
Female Adult: “In most societies women are expected to embody politeness.”
Male Adult: “That was happening a long time ago.”
Female Child: “No, it is still happening nowadays – the criticism levelled at women is shocking-----women have to be exemplary to their children ---- women have to speak, sit and talk in a polite way all the time---- when children are ill -disciplined----- the woman shoulders the blame.”
Male adult “Well ------ if a woman misbehaves people discuss the issue for long time than if it is a man------- even if a man cheats, people turn a blind eye--- - but if it’s a woman--------

It is interesting to note that the father concurred with the child on realising that the child explicitly illustrated her points.

7.4 USE OF APOLOGY /REQUEST STRATEGIES

In investigating whether men or women use more apology strategies, the majority of the interviewees concurred that women used more. This is evidenced in the results from the DCTs for both female adults and children.

Female Adult: “Men tend to think that utilising the apology strategy is a sign of weakness. Therefore, they shy away from the word ‘sorry’ while women, on the other hand, use it a lot and they also go further and do some actions to show how sorry they are.”
Male Adult: “Ladies seem to provide long explanations. A man would just say “I can’t help you, that’s all…… no further explanation. Women want to make you understand.”
Male Child: “Since women are emotional beings, they utilise the apology strategy more frequently than men.”
The majority of the respondents were of the view that when someone uses more apology strategies he or she is being more polite, since when one is apologising it
is expected that he or she “will not simply say ‘I’m sorry’ but will give something more, for example, a reason as the hearer needs to understand exactly what happened”. On the other hand, a minority view was expressed that the use of more strategies was not necessarily being more polite, but the person was “just taking advantage of the situation” and trying to suck up.”

There were differing views as to whether one can judge how polite someone is, according to the way he or she makes a request or apology. Some of the respondents articulated the position that the tone of a person’s voice and the way they presented what they were trying to say would enable one to judge his/her character. On the other hand, others felt that one “should not judge a book by its cover” as “lots of people hide behind their ‘please’ and ‘thank you’s.” Therefore, the outward manifestation did not necessarily reflect the inner nature of the person. Interviewees were also asked if they saw a request made upon them as an imposition.

Interviewees agreed that they did not see a request as an imposition. They expressed the view that one must always be willing to do things for others, as “service to society is service to God.” Also, one “must do things out of the goodness of your heart - and not in the hope of gaining anything.”

It is important to mention that cultural and religious leaders also expressed the same view.

Finally, it must be noted that while the views of the adults and children on politeness behaviour in the community more or less concurred, the adults pointed out that the children of today are slowly becoming more assertive than they were in their youth. For example, in some families, children are beginning to engage in debate and discussion with their parents. Also, when given an instruction, a few of the children expressed the need to be provided with reasons, explanations, etc. During the interviews, the children pointed out that this shift in behavioural pattern could be due to exposure to Western cultures on television and external peer pressure. Therefore, the above factors could influence politeness behaviour in the target community in future years.
7.5 Summary

Evidence from my data supported the claim made by Brown and Levinson that people vary their linguistic behaviour according to the degree of social distance, relative power and the degree of imposition of a certain speech act. It was found that the interlocutors used different politeness strategies when addressing people of varying social distance. Speakers were also found to use more redressive devices if the cost of the speech act was high. Moreover, speakers also used more redressive devices if the hearer had more power over the speaker. The social distance between the speaker and the hearer was found to be the major determining factor of the linguistic politeness strategy to be employed. It is important to mention that it was found that when social distance is high, the cost of the request is high, hence the number of mitigating devices utilised in order to soften the negative impact of the request. On the other hand, when the request is performed by members belonging to the same level, where social distance is low, it is carried out by using fewer mitigating devices.

It is noted that the analysis and interpretation of the interviews reiterates, to some extent, the findings from the questionnaires. The above analysis clearly shows that the vast majority of interviewees are consistent in their understanding of the politeness phenomenon. However, while many children were aware that politeness may manifest itself in different ways in different cultures, it was discovered that this was not the case with adults.

The issue of respecting the elders features without a doubt, as a vital element within the isiZulu speaking community, however, it was noted during participant observation that this was not the case in some families. Contrary to what is happening in practice, some interviewees were of the view that the status of a person should not influence the respect shown to him or her. We should be respectful towards one another.
This brings me to the end of the discussion of my findings. In the next chapter, conclusions are drawn. Limitations of my study are pointed out and recommendations for further research are made.
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I summarise and discuss the findings obtained in this study. This chapter also focuses on finding answers to the key questions that were posed. I attempt to correlate the perspectives on politeness offered by community members in the various interviews with the results of my investigations from an outsider perspective. The limitations of the study undertaken in this thesis are then pointed out. This is followed by some recommendations for further study.

It was noted that the results of the interviews with religious and cultural leaders, as well as the families showed that there was a shared understanding of politeness among members of the community under study. Central to this understanding was the fact that politeness forms the basis for human relationships. Furthermore, both religious and cultural leaders, as well as the families stressed the importance of utilising proper politeness strategies, like, ‘ngicela’ when requesting and ‘ngiyaxolisa’ when apologising. However, it is of crucial importance to mention that displaying complete politeness is also dependent on non-verbal norms of behaviour. The consistency between the findings from the questionnaires and the results of the interviews with the cultural and religious leaders as well as the families, was noted. They both highlighted the significance of politeness in human interactions in the target community.

From the interviews with families I concluded that male adults are more polite towards intimates and colleagues than to strangers. This contrasts with the female adults and the male and female children, who all expressed the view that they would be more polite towards strangers than to intimates and colleagues.

Another significant conclusion is that from a cultural perspective both groups of interviewees concurred that greater respect is shown to persons of higher status, not only in terms of professional positions, but also in terms of material wealth. Higher status also used to be accorded to men, however, it should be noted that in the interviews with the families, interviewees acknowledged that women are beginning to play a more important role in the society.
The utilisation of alerters yielded the following conclusion, firstly, children gave greater preference to title/role than the adults, and the most popular forms were Sir/Mam. According to Brown and Levinson (1987:178) the use of a title shows greater respect when formally interacting with a person of higher status. Secondly, none of the participants (children or adults) used the first name when addressing persons of higher status. This level of deference shown to persons of higher status within target community is consistent with the views of the cultural and religious leaders, as well as the families.

From the responses on the DCTs I also concluded that both males and females used a proportionally larger number of high intensity regrets when addressing males. This difference in pattern can possibly be attributed to the fact that adults still perceive males as having a more dominant role in the given community.

Interviews with cultural and religious leaders also showed that from a cultural view, greater emphasis was placed on women to exhibit polite behaviour. This was confirmed by the interviews conducted with families where it was pointed out that the society expects women to be more polite. Furthermore, interviewees were also of the view that men feel that apologising is a sign of weakness, while women do so using numerous apology strategies to ensure that social harmony is maintained.

The argument developed in the thesis also allows for the following conclusion: the utilisation of different request and apology strategies assisted in unveiling the underlying principles of gender and social interactions. In addition, it enabled the researcher to gain access to ways of thinking, belief systems, self - views and world views of people from different cultural backgrounds and upbringing. Such understanding may foster dialogue and reduce conflicting interpretations of perceived impoliteness. It may, at the same time, make the retention, or at least the persistence of belief systems, self and world- views which belong to earlier phases of the individual’s life appear inappropriate.

Upon further analysis of data, it was noted that “offers of repair” and “promises of forbearance” were offered by participants on two conditions: (1) noticeable damage to the addressee had happened as a result of the transgression, and (2) the parties involved in the situation were friends or acquaintances. One may then conclude that the variables
“severity of offence” and “social relationship between participants” have an influence on the utilisation of “offers of repair” and “promise of forbearance”. It may be the case that members of the target community regard these two strategies as highly face–threatening for the speaker and, thus, choose to employ them to correct an infraction with visible damage that they have committed toward someone with whom they have much invested socially.

In conclusion, it can be stated that this study has demonstrated that apologies in isiZulu speaking community are essentially social speech acts which are basically aimed at supporting the relationship between participants rather than at the expression of referential information or propositional meaning. This study has also revealed that apologies may also address aspects of victim’s positive face needs, such as the desire to be appreciated. Furthermore Brown and Levinson (1987:73) point out that the apology itself damages the speaker’s face, and it has been illustrated in this article that a remedial exchange may be oriented to attending to these face wants.

8.1 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitations of this study are initially discussed in terms of the tools used to collect the relevant data. These are the DCTs, interviews and participant observation.

It should be noted that DCTs are advantageous in that they allow the researcher to collect a large quantity of data in a very short time, and also to obtain answers to specific questions. However, as Harford and Bardovi-Harlig (1992) have pointed out, a DCT “cannot…….. show us the whole picture: it disallows certain common negotiation strategies, it eliminates certain semantic formulas, and it influences the politeness and status balancing profiles……..”. In addition, data drawn from DCTs cannot be equated with naturally occurring data. Nevertheless, with careful consideration of the advantages and disadvantages of the tools used, the combined data allowed considerable insights into the study.

Another possible limitation of my study relates to the chosen sample size. In particular, the investigation was restricted to one township, Umlazi. As such, my sample size may not be representative of a larger population, for example, of the L1 speakers of isiZulu in
Kwa-Zulu Natal as a whole. For this reason, I have been very cautious when attempting to generalise my results.

The multi-method approach to the topic and the triangulation of the findings has proven to be very useful in analysing data within the Umlazi isiZulu speaking community. Among other things, the research confirms that the information given in questionnaires and interviews is frequently incongruent with the factual behaviour and actions of individuals. In middle- and upper-class Umlazi homes, slow language shifts take place among children and adolescents without parents openly admitting to it. This and other sociolinguistic developments could only be adequately elicited by the method of participant observation.

Finally, Johnstone (2000:86) asks whether a better researcher is the one who is a member of the group being studied. She further argues that both insiders and outsiders can be effective since once they start working, participant observers occupy roles of both insiders and outsiders. My role as an insider was beneficial to the study in the sense that I was able to probe and ask questions that would lead to eliciting the required responses without making the respondent uncomfortable. On the other hand, my being an insider may have been a limitation in the sense that at times it may have prevented me from maintaining the critical and analytical distance that is necessary to generalise about the group in question.

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

In this study I have focused on the speech acts of requests and apologies. It is envisaged that the findings and conclusions of this project will shed light to the pragmatic nature of requests and apologies in isiZulu. The purpose of this research (in my opinion) should not only be academic, but should also actively seek to contribute to societal redress.

The current research (as I indicated before), was carried out with a small sample. I, therefore, urge that a similar research be carried out on a larger scale, to enable broader generalisations. On the one hand, the study could be expanded in terms of the number
of respondents, and focus groups, in order to base conclusions on a broader sample. On the other hand, types of data collected, and the context in which data are collected, could be expanded. The collection of data in contexts such as Universities of Technology and schools would enable contrastive studies to be undertaken.

Another question that comes to mind for future study is: “How has urbanisation contributed towards preventing the isiZulu speaking community from retaining its cultural practices?

It would be interesting to find out what the results of this study would be if the sample is drawn from Institutions of Higher Learning in townships, as well as from the so called ‘Model C’ schools.

Another suggestion is that research needs to be done in cross-cultural pragmatics which will determine the extent of the differences in interactional style and speech act realisation between native speakers of African languages and non-native speakers of African languages from non-African cultural backgrounds.

Another aspect that emerged during my investigation was the changing role of women in the community. Therefore, an interesting topic could be: “Zulu Women: The Past and Present”. This could investigate changes in the role of the Zulu women and the possible impact this may have on their language usage.

Finally, it was interesting to note that despite a small sample size, the characteristics of politeness phenomena within the community that was studied are found to have much in common with those of other non-Western cultures. I trust that the insights provided by my study will inform the isiZulu speaking community on the current state of politeness phenomena in the community. Also, within our multi-cultural South African society, it will allow persons outside the target community to better appreciate politeness behaviour within the target community. As such, the findings of my study will hopefully promote social interactions within the target community and enhance cross cultural communication.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: CULTURAL LEADERS

1. What is your perception of politeness?
2. When is it significant to be polite?
3. What is your understanding of polite behaviour? Give an example.
4. When would you consider an individual to be polite? Give an example.
5. Are there any factors (e.g. age, status, social distance) that will determine the politeness behaviour shown by Speaker to Hearer and vice versa?
6. Do you think people respond differently towards men and women? If yes, why?
7. In your understanding of politeness, do apologies have a role to play?
8. Mention factors that will influence the level of apology for a given misdeed committed by an individual?
9. Name infringements that you would deem it necessary to apologise for? Examples of possible situations:
   a. You took an important telephonic message for your husband/wife from a friend. You forgot to pass on the message. Would you apologise to your husband/wife? If the message was for your daughter/son, would you apologise?
   b. Your wife/husband’s cellphone has been repaired. You promise to pick it up from the repairer but you forget. Do you consider it necessary to apologise?
10. Their perception of directness/indirectness will be further probed through their responses to specific situations. For example: Your neighbour’s dog comes into your premises and pushes the dustbin down and everything inside the dustbin is spilled onto the ground. How would you deal with this situation? If an elaborate response is given, I would then enquire why they did not tell the neighbour they do not like what the dog was doing and it should not happen in future or they must clean the mess.
11. In your understanding of politeness, do requests have a role to play?
12. Their understanding of directness/indirectness relating to requests will be probed through their responses to specific situations. For example: You are having
“umsebenzi” at home and you require your neighbour’s assistance in the preparation. What would you say when requesting her assistance?

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE: DISCOURSE COMPLETION TASKS

QUESTIONNAIRE: DISCOURSE COMPLETION TASKS: 1

NAME: (Optional).................................................................................................................

GENDER: Male: Female:

AGE GROUP: 15 -25 26 – 39 40 -60 60+

INSTRUCTIONS

Please read the following request and apology situations carefully. Kindly respond as naturally as possible in the space provided, writing down exactly what you would say (to the person) in each situation.

SECTION A

REQUESTS

1. An acquaintance (female) is owing you money. It is long overdue. You meet her at the shopping mall. You decide to go to her and ask for the money.

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2. You need to videotape a special function. You do not own a video camera. You want to borrow one from a close relative (female). How would you request for the camera if she is:
3. You park on the wrong spot and rush into a grocery store to buy one item. As you approach the cashier you see a **person (male)** in front of you. How would you ask him permission to cut the queue, if he is:

(a) much **older** than you

(b) of the **same age** group as yourself

(c) much **younger** than you
(b) of the same age group as yourself.

(c) much younger than you.

4. Your store account has to be paid urgently. You are too busy and cannot pay it yourself. Your brother goes to town daily. You request him to pay the account for you.
5. You have to conduct some urgent business in town. You do not have your own transport. You request your **colleague (male)**, who lives a few houses away from you, for a lift.

YOU…………………………………………………………………………………………
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6. You are having a party at your house and want to borrow some music tapes and CDs from your **colleague (female)**. How would you ask your colleague if she is:

(a) much older than you………………………………………………………………
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(b) of the **same** age group as yourself…………………………………………
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SECTION B
APOLOGY

1. A close relative (female) borrowed you a tape recorder. While the tape recorder is in your possession, it is damaged. She comes to collect the tape recorder. How would you apologise to her if she is:

(a) Much younger than you…………………………………………………………………………………………
(b) Of the same age group…………………………………………………………………………………………

(c) much younger than you…………………………………………………………………………………………
2. You are in a grocery store. While pushing the trolley in a rush, you collide with another customer (male). How would you apologise if he is:

(a) Much older than you

(b) The same age group as yourself

(c) much younger than you
3. You were supposed to meet with your **male colleague** at a coffee shop in town. You do not honour the appointment. Your colleague comes to your flat later that day.

**Colleague**: We had an appointment today and I waited for one and a half hours for you!

**You**:

4. Your sister’s account is in arrears. You agree to pay it for her since you work in town. She gives you the money to settle the account but you fail to do so.

**Sister**: Did you pay my account?

**You**: 
Somebody you know (female) does some work for you (could be anything). You promise to pay her, but you do not. You then meet her at the shopping mall. How do you apologise for not paying her?

**You:**

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SECTION C (PART 1): TO BE FILLED IN BY CHILDREN ONLY
REQUESTS AND APOLOGIES

1. You accidentally throw a pencil at somebody else instead of your friend. How would you apologise if the person you threw the pencil at is a:
   (a) Male teacher
       ........................................................................................................................................
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   Your classmate (male)
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   (c) a person who is junior to you (male)
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2. You are going to write an important test. You do not have the prescribed textbook. How would you request it from the following people?
   (a) A female teacher
(b) Classmate (female)

(c) a person junior to you
SECTION C (PART 2): TO BE FILLED IN BY ADULTS ONLY
REQUESTS AND APOLOGIES

1. Situation: You are the Head of Department in one of the schools. How would you apologise if you spill juice on the table of:
   (a) The principal (male)
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(a) Your principal (female)

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……Another Head of Department (female)

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(b) a junior teacher (female)

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APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: FAMILIES

1. What is your perception of politeness?
2. In your opinion, is politeness important? When AND why is it important to be polite?
3. Mention ONE example of polite behaviour.
4. It is said that age, sex, status and social distance have an influence in the level of politeness that a Speaker would show towards a Hearer and vice versa. Do you agree?
5. Do you think that politeness differs from culture to culture or is it the same in all cultures?
6. In your understanding of politeness, do requests have a role to play?
7. When someone requests something from you, do you prefer a direct or indirect request?
8. Imagine an individual asking for something from you, but is not direct instead gives you a hint, would you consider this as polite? If not, why?
9. As an individual (you), do you prefer making a direct or indirect request?
10. In your opinion, do you consider asking for a favour or asking someone to do something as imposing?
11. If you answered YES to the above question (10), mention the words you would use to minimise the imposition?
12. Do apologies have a role to play in your understanding of politeness?
13. Do you think factors such as age, sex, status and social distance of a person would make a difference to you when you are apologising?
14. When apologising, do you generally accept responsibility or do you try to pass the blame?
15. Would you say there are differences in the way men and women (isiZulu speakers)
   a. Apologise
   b. Request
16. What similarities or differences do you think are there in the way in which isiZulu speakers request and apologise?
   a. Refer first-hand experience
   b. What do you think are the reasons for the similarities or differences?