2005

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Ching-Yi Shih

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A STUDY OF THE INTERLANGUAGE OF APOLOGY BY TAIWANESE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE LEARNERS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition

by
Ching-Yi Shih
September 2005
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ABSTRACT

This thesis will present a study of the interlanguage of the speech act of apology by Taiwanese learners of English. Specifically, I will compare the way Taiwanese learners apologize in English and how they apologize in mandarin Chinese, as well as how native speakers of American English apologize. If Taiwanese speakers apologize differently in English from the way native English speakers do, I may be able to explain why these differences exist in relation to the way they apologize in their native Chinese.

The data for this study are collected from participant apology response on a Discourse Completion Test (DCT), which are used in Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP). My subjects include a group of twenty native speakers of English and twenty Taiwanese ESL learners. My instrument contains four situations of apology, which represent different degree of offence, different social distances and power differentials between the speakers and the hearer. The data is analyzed for the kinds of semantic formulae and intensifying and mitigation strategies used.
At the general level, the results indicate that there were not many differences between the native speakers of American English and the Taiwanese non-native speakers with regard to their use of main strategies for apologizing. However, when analyzed at a more detailed and specific level of content and description, cultural and linguistic-specific preference, tendency and style become apparent, some of which may have influenced the Taiwanese learners' choice of strategy in the second language. The Taiwanese subjects are prone to apologizing more with regard to the frequency of using IFIDs. On the contrary, the native speakers have a greater tendency to intensify their expression of apology than the non-native speakers, especially to make more comments or express more concerns for the hearer. Also, this study provides strong evidence for transfer the norms of their native language and culture into culture into English when apologizing, particularly in the aspect of negative transfer.

This study may be significant in two ways - ESL pedagogy and cross-cultural research in speech acts. As for the former, it suggests that ESL students should not only be taught grammar of a target language but also
strategies for doing speech acts, in other words, ESL teachers should have more emphasis on learners' pragmatic competence. With regards to cross-cultural research in speech acts, this thesis has revealed both similarities and differences between native speakers of American English and Taiwanese speakers of Chinese. These similarities and differences will contribute to our understanding of the two languages and the two cultures in question.
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CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In recent years, the emphasis in second language learning and teaching theories has shifted from a linguistic approach to a communicative one, as the importance of communicative competence has been realized as a goal of language teaching and learning in second language acquisition. Hymes (1964) is the first person to introduce the notion of communicative competence. Such competence consists not only of linguistic and grammatical knowledge but also the knowledge of the rules of language use, i.e., language learners' ability to use appropriate language for social interaction in specific contexts. This is especially necessary for foreign or second language learners since most of them may be comfortable of dealing with vocabulary and grammar of the language but lack sufficient control over the pragmatics of the languages, such as those expressed by speech acts. For instance, they may have learned a host of vocabulary and phrases for apologizing but may not be sure when it is appropriate to use which form or how to use it appropriately. Olshtain and
Cohen point out that "learners of a language may lack even partial mastery of such speech act sets and that this lack of mastery may cause difficulties or even breakdown in communication" (pp45). Hence, it is necessary for ESL/EFL students to acquire these sociocultural rules in order to follow social norms and communicate in an acceptable and understandable way.

Speech act theory, which was developed by Austin and Searle, is based on the idea that language is a form of behavior, and it is governed by rules (Searle, 1969:22). "Recent second language research on speech acts represents a focus on pragmatics, based on the theories of speech acts proposed by Austin and Searle" (Koike, 1989:279). According to Searle (1965), in a speech situation, speakers perform various acts by their utterance. In other words, when we speak we perform acts such as apologizing, requesting, complaining, and making statements. Searle defines these as "speech acts" whereas in Austin's terminology, he called them "illocutionary acts." Owing to its valuable implications for research and teaching, speech acts is one of the most compelling notions in the study of language use. Perhaps for most researchers' purpose of investigating speech acts in the context of second language, the most
essential question is whether and to what extent the various aspects of speech acts discussed so far are universal. According to many, the answer to this question is positive, e.g., (Austin (1962); Searle (1969); Fraser (1985); however, there has not been so much research to confirm or dispute the assumption. Thus, the issue of universality vs. culture specificity in relation to the notion of speech acts has been and still is a debated issue in cross-cultural pragmatics.

People from different communities and countries may speak in different ways since every language not only has its own conventional patterns and rules, such as different linguistic codes, lexicons and grammars, but also their ways of using the codes. House and Kasper (1989:40), for example, write: "The cultural norms reflected in speech acts may differ from one language to another." In addition, these differences can reflect different cultural values, social norms, communicative styles, and perspectives on politeness. "In accounting for social realizations of speech acts, cross-cultural variables which affect their use become extremely important" (House & Kasper, 1989:45). That is because those cultural differences may be the reasons of misunderstandings and ill-feelings. Hence, "the
study of speech acts can provide us with a better understanding and new insights into the correlations between linguistic forms and socio-cultural context" (Olshtain and Cohen, 1983:35).

Many cross-cultural speech acts studies have been done in the last few years. For instance, empirical studies concerning the realization pattern of apologies in a variety of languages and cultures have been conducted by Cohen and Olshtain (1981); Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984); Olshtain and Rosentein (1986); Owen (1983); Kasper (1989); Trosborg (1987, 1995); Olshtain (1989); House (1989).

A good deal of previous research indicates that even fairly advanced L2 learners' performance of speech acts contain pragmatic errors even though they are quite competent with grammar and vocabulary. In other words, they are not capable of conveying and comprehending the patterns of L2, politeness value and social norms in the target community. Those learners' violation of L2 patterns is shown to be due to the language system they developed on their path to acquire the target language. This system, called interlanguage, is "the systematic knowledge of language which is independent of both the learners' L1 and the L2 system he is trying to learn", and it is "the
theoretical construct which underlay the attempts of SLA researchers to identify the stages of development through which L2 learners pass on their way to L2 (or near L2) proficiency” (Ellis, 1985:42).

Apology is one of the most frequently studied speech acts because of its importance in daily communication. When we communicate or get along with people, some offences may occur. In order to maintain the relationship, the offender may have to repair the offence. Thus, apology is a remedial activity produced by the offender. When apologizing, the speaker (S) is willing to admit her fault; S then provides some benefits to the hearer (H) or makes promises to make up. Hence, the speech act of apology is a face-saving strategy for the H, and at the same time, it is self-face threatening for S, in Chen’s (2001) and Brown and Levinson’s (1978) terms.

Apology is a universal speech act, existing in every language. Its use is determined by contextual factors, such as sex, age, social distance, hierarchical status, imposition level and so forth. That is to say, apologies in different languages have specific-cultural characteristics. These variables may differ from one culture to another. It is not easy for L2 learners to have control over the
conventions of forms and means used by native speakers in the performance of linguistic action. Such deviations from the norms of the target language may lead to the perception that the L2 learners are "not polite", "over polite", or insincere. For Mandarin Taiwanese learners of English, for instance, when they perform the speech act of apology in English, they may be considered as over polite and insincere. The reason is that for Chinese, politeness is more for the purpose of maintaining social harmony since "one's face is really the face of one's group" (Scollon and Scollon, 1995:134). Thus, when they feel they have offended people, they would like to confess and try to make up for their fault. In other words, Chinese face is a public image. Scollon and Scollon state:

We believe that on this dimension Asians tend to be more aware of the connections they have as members of their social groups, and therefore, they tend to be more conscious of the consequences of their actions on other members of their groups. In contrast to this, westerners, and especially Americans, tend to emphasize their independence. This leads them to be more concern about their own freedom of activity than with
their connections to other members of their group. (Scollon & Scollon, 1995:133)

The studies of cross-cultural speech act of apology have been amply investigated by many researchers. However, most of the research seems to focus on the Western languages. There have not been many studies explored on speech act by mandarin Taiwanese speakers of English. Hence, this study represents an attempt to explore the linguistic and cultural differences in the form of apologies between American English and Taiwanese ESL students.

The focus of this study is twofold: the study of interlanguage by Taiwanese learners of English and the cross-cultural study of speech acts. In the former, researchers have given recent attention to interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) - how ESL learners use their target language to achieve certain pragmatic functions and to perform specific speech act realization. If their use of the target language significantly deviated from the native speakers of the target language, why (Blum-Kulka, 1991; Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993; Ellis, 1994; Kasper, 1998).

In the latter, this study mainly focuses on comparing and analyzing American English speakers and Taiwanese ESL
speakers' apology speech act realization patterns based on three social relation factors: the weight of imposition, social distance and social status. The participants' responses will be analyzed in terms of the kinds of semantic formulae and intensifying and mitigation strategies used. In other words, examining the link between the participants' speech formula and how it is used in natural contexts may provide an explanation of the politeness orientation in a certain culture.

The relevance of this line of research to TESL in general and ILP in particular is obvious: if languages differ in the way they do the same speech act, then it is predictable that learners of a second language may develop a particular interlanguage for doing that act.

In the rest of this first chapter, I draw on previous research and briefly explain the theoretical framework of communicative competence, cross-cultural study of speech act and apology and ESL learners' pragmatic interlanguage. The second chapter will introduce the methodology and present the data analysis of this study. The major aim of data analysis is to determine the possibility of assessing Taiwanese speakers' pragmatic interlanguage and socio-cultural competence and to compare the differences and
similarities of apologizing strategies between native speakers of English and nonnative speakers. Fraser’s list of semantic formulas (1979, characteristically associated with the speech act of apologizing. The third chapter discusses findings of the study and the forth chapter concludes the study.

Communicative Competence

The emphasis in second language learning and language teaching has shifted from the concern of structural linguistics in the 1960s to language comprehension and use in a variety of social situations in the 1970s and 1980s. In other words, linguists have focused on ESL learners’ development of communicative competence (e.g. Savignon, 1972; Van Ek, 1975; Wilkins, 1976; Munby, 1978; Widdowson, 1978). Chomsky’s concept of linguistic competence was criticized as being too narrow since “it only provides a partial account of the knowledge required for language use” (Kasper & Blum-Kulka, 1993:9). Therefore, the notion of communicative competence is a reaction against Chomsky. It was first introduced by Hymes in the mid-1960s and later defined in his 1971 study. According to Hymes’ definition, communicative competence is “a knowledge of the rules for
understanding and producing both the referential and the social meaning of language" (Paulston, 1974:349). Effective communication requires that both speakers and hearers understand the meaning of words and agree on the rules in terms of social norms, values of the language in the community. If they do not share the same set of rules, the meaning of an interaction may be easily misinterpreted and misunderstood. A speaker can indicate how she perceives the social relation between her and the interlocutor or how she would like to build up the relation with the hearer by using appropriate vocabulary and using certain strategies in realizing speech acts such as requests, complaints, apologies.

The necessity to develop communicative competence is especially important in second language learning and teaching since many ESL learners who lack effective communicative competence may encounter many problems.

Cross-cultural Study of Speech Act of Apology

In the area of cross-cultural study of speech acts, researchers have focused on how a particular speech act is linguistically realized in different languages. According
to Kasper et al., "Second only to request, apologies are the next-best studied speech act in descriptive, cross-cultural, and interlanguage pragmatics" (Kasper et al., 1996:158). Apologies exist in every speech community since people need to perform remedial actions when committing an offense in order to recover the damaged relationship. Hence, Kasper et al. point out that the speech act of apologizing can be regarded as a pragmatic universal, whereas the conditions which call for apology are clearly not. The reason that the conditions call for apology are not universal is because speech communities differ in what counts as an offense, the weight of the same offense, and appropriate repair. These perceptions will vary cross-culturally.

The Notion of Politeness

We can view the use of politeness in apologies as one of the ways that speakers acknowledge social roles based on relative status, familiarity and other possible factors. In recent years politeness has been related to the discussion of human interaction. The notion of politeness was discussed by Goffman (1967), Lakoff (1973), Grice (1975), Leech (1983), Brown and Levinson (1978, 1987), and Chen (2001). Brown and Levinosn (1978, 1987) and Leech (1983)
consider politeness as a series of communicative strategies which are used by a speaker to maintain or build relationships between participants in conversations and to achieve smooth communication. In addition, speakers may vary in the way they talk or adjust their behavior depending on how they perceive politeness. The best known politeness theory is Brown and Levinson's 1987 work. Deriving from the Goffman's (1967: 25) notion of "face" and from the English folk terms "losing/saving face," "it acknowledges politeness as ritual, and maintaining 'face' in interaction is the central element in commonly accepted notions of politeness." Brown and Levinson define face as "the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself" (1987). Besides, there are two types of face: positive face and negative face. Positive face is "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others". On the other hand, negative face is "the want of every 'competent adult member' that his actions be unimpeded by others and on other words, it is "the basic claim to territories, personal preserves, right to non-distraction".

When people interact with others, they cannot avoid doing/saying something that will cause face loss to their
hearers. Hence, some speech acts intrinsically threaten face, and Brown and Levinson call them ‘face-threatening acts’ (FTAs). For instance, apologies are FTAs which imply damage to S’ positive face” (Brown and Levinson, 1987:68, 76). Apparently, in order to achieve a successful communication, both a speaker’s and the hearer’s efforts are needed.

Although Brown and Levinson’s theory holds an important place in cross-cultural analysis, their theory has been criticized. For example, their concept of politeness is said to be ethnocentric, and their data came mostly from western languages and cultures. Besides, scholars think Brown and Levinson’s theory has absurd cultural differences. According to Wierzbicka, “in different societies and different communities, people speak differently; these differences in ways of speaking, different communicative styles, can be explained and made sense of in terms of independently established different cultural values and cultural priorities” (Wierzbicka, 1991: 67). Wierzbicka argued that linguistic differences are due to “aspects of culture much deeper than mere norms of politeness” (1985:145) and are associated with cultural differences such as interlocutants’ intimacy, social status
and so forth. For instance, even when social situations are similar in two different cultures, the speech act patterns they use may differ, such as apology.

**Defining Apology**

According to Olshtain’s (1989:1055) definition, "apology speech act which is intended to provide support for H (hearer) who is actually or potentially malaffected by a violation X. Hence the act of apologizing is face-saving for H and face-threatening for S (speaker)" at times both speaker and hearer’s face are threatened. However, at the same time, apology speech act is a kind of strategy for mitigating or remedying the face-threatening act, hence being considered a face-saving act.

In general, apologies were made when S has failed an implicit or explicit obligation to or she recognizes that a violation of social norm was committed. Hence, the function of apologies is to “provide a remedy for an offense and restore social equilibrium or harmony. (Edmondson, 1981 & Leech, 1983)” “Apologizing”, which is an “expressive” act along with speech act such as “thanking,” “congratulating,” “offering condolences,” (Searle, 1975), in Brown and Levinson’s (1987) terms. “In brief, the speech act of apologies is primarily and essentially a social act and
aims at restoring relations or maintaining harmonic relations with the offender."

Olshtain and Cohen (1983) analyze the speech act of apology cross-culturally. They proposed the concept of ‘speech-act-set’, which is defined as the group of the semantic formulae of which one or all can be used to perform a speech act, and claimed that the realization of any of these formulae may be not only language specific, but also culture and situation specific. Olshtain and Cohen’s semantic formulae of apology is shown as follows:

1. An expression of apology.
   a. An expression of regret (e.g., “I’m sorry”)
   b. An offer of apology (e.g., “I apologize”)
   c. A request for forgiveness (e.g., “Excuse me or “Forgive me”)

2. An account or explanation of the act.
   a. An acknowledgement of responsibility.
   b. An offer of repair.
   c. A promise of forbearance.

studied requests and apologies across languages and cultures through the use of an elicitation instrument in the form of a written questionnaire, across a variety of situations, such as social and contextual factors, e.g. social distance, dominance, and severity of imposition. The goals of CCSARP were “to compare across languages the realization patterns of two speech acts—requests and apologies—and to establish the similarities and differences between native and non-native speakers’ realization patterns in these two acts” (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984). In the Blum-Kulka et al.’s (1989) CCSARP coding scheme, apologies can be performed by the following strategies:

1. an illocutionary force indicating device (IFID); such as, “I’m sorry”, “I apologize”, or “Excuse me”
2. an explanation or account of the cause which brought about the violation
3. an expression of the speaker’s responsibility for the offense
4. an offer of repair
5. a promise of forbearance
This is very similar to Olshtain and Cohen's semantic formulae of apology speech act. The only difference is that Blum-Kulka et al. propose the new term IFID to indicate the expression of apology.

Interlanguage Pragmatics

The term "interlanguage" was introduced by Selinker in 1969 and elaborated in 1972. However, during the 1970s, interlanguage studies typically addressed learners' phonological, morphological, and syntactic knowledge, in other words, their linguistic competence. As a result of Hymes's (1972) notion of communicative competence to second language teaching and learning, the scope of interlanguage research was extended to learners' pragmatic and discourse knowledge. Researchers refer to this field as "interlanguage pragmatics" and it has been consequently defined as "the study of non-native speakers' use and acquisition of linguistic action patterns in a second language" (Kasper and Blum-Kulka 1993:1). These studies focused on non-native/ ESL/EFL speakers within the framework of speech acts and politeness. According to Gass and Selinker, "all languages have a means of performing speech acts and presumably speech acts themselves are
universal, the form used in specific speech acts varies from culture to culture” (Gass & Selinker, 2001:243). That is to say, even the same linguistic forms are not always used in the same situations for the same functions since it may differ cross-culturally. Therefore, when language learners are not fully aware of specific L2 cultural norms of pragmatic appropriateness, they may experience miscommunication or breakdown in communication.

In the process of learning a second language, learners cannot avoid producing ungrammatical utterances. This is quite obvious not only to teachers of learners but also to any native speakers of the target language who come in contact with them. Blum-Kulka claims that learners seem to develop an interlanguage of speech act performance which can differ from both first (L1) and second (L2) language usage in linguistic form and/or procedure of strategy. Besides, Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper indicated that some previous researchers’ studies of interlanguage pragmatics demonstrated that “even fairly advanced language learners’ communicative acts regularly contain pragmatic errors, or deficits, in that they fail to convey or comprehend the intended illocutionary force or politeness value.” Since then many efforts have been made to account for language
learners' pragmatic failures in terms of their underlying linguistic processes. Blum-Kulka and Kasper (1993:55) pointed out some of the learners' speech act patterns "as resulting from overgeneralization, simplification, or reduction of sociopragmatic or pragmalinguistic interlanguage knowledge". L1 pragmatic transfer has been believed to play a central role in the formation of such interlanguage. Culemas (1978), for instance, postulates that "pragmatic interference was a significant source of cross-cultural miscommunication" (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989:10).

The speech act of apology is one of the few speech acts studied in cross-cultural speech acts research (Borkin & Reinhart, 1978; Zimin, 1981; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Cohen & Olshtain, 1987; Trosborg, 1986). The languages studied, however, have been mostly Indo-European languages and Hebrew. The study presented here expands such efforts into an Asian language, thus offering more support to an important area of SLA research. Transfer in Interlanguage Pragmatics

Selinker's emphasis on the role of L1; i.e., the degree to which L1 knowledge transfers to the L2, and the influence of L2 learners' linguistic and cultural
background on the performance in a second language has been a main topic in interlanguage pragmatics. Selinker points out that L2 learners constantly adjust their L1 systems to become more approximate to the L2, in a consecutive 'reconstructing' process. Similarly, Kasper writes

"The one concern which consistently links interlanguage pragmatics to mainstream SL research is that of transfer (Kasper, 1992:205)." In other words, transfer is considered as a major factor in shaping NNS' pragmatic knowledge and performance. This is because in the real conversation, pragmatic transfer seems to matter more and it is more obvious to be noticed, than other transfer of relative clause or word order (Kasper, 1992:205). The focus in research has been mainly on negative transfer; that is, the influence of L1 pragmatic competence on IL pragmatic knowledge that differs from the target language.

Pragmatic Transfer Defined

It has not been easy to define transfer. According to Odlin, "transfer is the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired" (Oldin, 1989:27). Beebe et al defined pragmatic transfer as "transfer of L1
sociocultural competence in performing L2 speech acts or any other aspects of L2 conversation, where the speaker is trying to achieve a particular function of language” (quote in Kasper, 1992:206). “discourse transfer” and “pragmatic transfer” overlap, so do Takahashi and Bebee (1992), who suggested that “cross-linguistic influence” and “transfer” are interchangeable (quoted in Kasper, 1992:206). In this study, I follow Kasper’s definition, pragmatic transfer in interlanguage pragmatics is “the influence exerted by learners’ pragmatic knowledge of language and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information.” In other words, interlanguage pragmatics will refer to “L2 learners’ developing (unstable, deficient, permeable) pragmatic knowledge” (Kasper, 1992:207).
CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

The data for this study were collected from a group of 20 native speakers of American English and a group of ESL subjects: 20 Taiwanese ESL students who have studied English in Taiwan for more than six years. All of them are currently enrolled in undergraduate or graduate programs in California State University, San Bernardino and all of them are between 22 and 45 in age. The non-native speakers (NNSs) are acquaintances and friends of the researcher; they volunteered to take part in the study. The native speakers (NSs) are all volunteers from undergraduate English classes at CSUSB.

At the time of this study, NNSs' length of stay in the United States ranged from less than one year to 4 years and they are all at an intermediate or advanced level of proficiency in English, having scored 500 or higher on the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language). In general, even though NNSs all have had the experience of learning English more than six years, most of them are still not
confident of their ability in speaking English since they had spoke English rarely with NSs in their own country.

Instrument

Although it is true that to obtain data produced spontaneously in a natural setting is ideal, it is more “time consuming and does not always yield abundant examples of the desired speech behavior” (Cohen and Olshtain, 1985:135). Hence, in this study, in order to collect data of NS and NNS utterances in apologies, questionnaires were used with a discourse completion task (DCT), which was employed by CCSARP. Rintell and Mitchell point out that this method allows the elicitation of data from a large group of subjects relatively easily, and seems to have better control of the contextual variables to the study. In addition, participants do no have time pressure, allowing them the opportunity to think about their response. Most important of all, Rintell & Mitchell write (1989:270) “this method has been especially effective for the comparison of strategies from different languages, and for the comparison of strategies used by native speakers and learners of the same language”.

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In this study, the questionnaire contains six prompts that provide the subjects with specific contexts for apology and the entire six scenarios are included in appendix B. They are designed to represent different degree of offence that would lead to an apology. In the questionnaire, subjects were asked to put themselves in each situation and to assume that in each case they would say something and then write it down. In addition, as Olshtain and Cohen describe, some social (i.e. social distance and power) and contextual (i.e. the severity of the offence) factors may have culture-specific impacts on the speaker's decision to choose an apology. In this study, in order to discuss the influence of these factors on the speakers, these situations vary in three aspects: social distance (degree of familiarity) between interactants, relative social status (ascribed power) of either speaker or hearer, and imposition level (as perceived by the respondent). In the 6 scenarios, the familiarity between speakers and hearers is divided into high (Question #1, #2, and #5) and low (Question #3, #4, and #6). The social power is divided into three parts: speaker's position is higher than the offender (Question #2), equal (Question #1, #5 and #6), and at the lower level (Question #3, and #4). The
5. Having backed into a friend unintentionally and caused her to spill her coffee over her clothes
Complainer: the friend

6. Having backed into someone’s car and made a small dent in its side
Complainer: the stranger

The role relationships between the speaker and the hearer varied along with two parameters: ‘dominance’ and ‘social distance’. With regard to dominance, the role relationship between two participants was specified either by the authority or by the lack of authority of one interactant over the other. The social distance measures the familiarity between interactants: whether they are strangers or, if not, whether they are intimate.

Take scenario 1 for example. The context says: “Your friend’s car is broken. You promised to meet him/her at a dealership to help him/her choose the right car. You forgot the meeting. The next day, you see your friend and what would you say?” In this situation, the familiarity between the speaker and the hearer was set as high since they are friends. Also, the hearer’s (friend) social power was equal with the speaker (student).

This leads to four types of role constellation:
'dominance' (power) and 'social distance.'

a. Status unequal, non-intimate (Q3) +dominance
(authority figures e.g., boss/subordinates)+social distance

b. Status unequal, intimate (Q2) +dominance
(authority figures e.g. father) -social distance

c. Status equal, non-intimate (Q4, Q6) -dominance
(e.g., strangers, elder lady) +social distance

d. Status equal, intimate (Q1, Q5) -dominance
(e.g., your friends or near acquaintances)-social distance

In order to compare the apology of NS subjects and NNS subjects, two pragmatically equivalent versions of the questionnaire — one in English and the other in Mandarin Chinese — were used. I designed the English version first and then rendered it in Chinese, making every effort to ensure pragmatic equivalence (rather than grammatical or lexical equivalence).

The English version was given to NS subjects in order to determine how they apologize in these six situations, which will then be used as a basis for comparison. The NNS subjects were given both the English and the Chinese version of the questionnaires.
In analyzing the data in this study, I used the model based on Olshtain and Cohen’s semantic formulae of apology (1983) and Blum-Kulka et al’s CCSARP coding scheme (Blum-Kulka, 1989), presented as follows.

Apology strategy:

(1) Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)
   a. An expression of regret, e.g. I’m sorry
   b. An offer of apology, e.g. I apologize
   c. A request for forgiveness, e.g. Excuse me/ forgive me/pardon me

(2) Explanation or Account
   Any external mitigation circumstances, ‘objective’ reasons for the violation, e.g. The coffee shop is too crowded.

(3) Taking on Responsibility
   a. Explicit self-blame, e.g. It is my fault/my mistake/I know I should be more careful
   b. Lack of intent, e.g. I didn’t mean to forget it.
   c. Expression of self-deficiency, e.g. It totally slipped my mind/ I didn’t see you/ I forgot
d. Expression of embarrassment, e.g. I feel awful about it/ I feel terrible

e. Self-dispraise, e.g. I’m so clumsy/I’m so stupid

f. Justify hearer, e.g. You are right to be angry.

g. Refusal to acknowledge guilt

   Denial of responsibility, e.g. It wasn’t my fault

   Blame the hearer, e.g. It’s your own fault/why didn’t you call me?

   Pretend to be offended, e.g. I’m the one to be offended

(4) Offer of Repair, e.g. I’ll pay for the damage/I will go with you next time

(5) Promise of Forbearance, e.g. I promise that won’t happen again.

Coding Schemes and Examples

In order to analyze the obtained data, the speech act set used in my study has been tabulated using Olshtain and Cohen (1983)’s and Blum Kulka-et al. (1989)’s semantic formulae consisting of five main apology strategies—an expression of apology (IFID), an explanation or account, taking on responsibility, an offer of repair, a promise of
forbearance. According to Olshtain and Cohen, there are also many sub-formulae of apology in each semantic formula for the speakers to choose, which are described below. In addition, modifications of apology strategies were also considered in this study, included- intensifier: (very, really, so), exclamations: (interjection-oh, oops), (invocation-God!) or course (damn), and comments: about self (how could I?), about others (are you O.K.?), about situation (I don’t see any damage, thank goodness). In this chapter, the examples of apologies are presented exactly the same way as the subjects answered in the questionnaires, without any grammatical corrections. The American participants’ and Taiwanese participants’ responses are identified by “NS” (native speaker) and “NNS” (non-native speaker). The detailed definitions of sub-formulae based on Olshtain and Cohen’s explanations (1983) and instances that were discussed in this study follow.

An apology may be performed directly by the use of a performative verb that directly signals apology, such as (apologize, be sorry, excuse,) or it can be expressed indirectly by taking on responsibility, providing an explanation, offering of repair, or promising of forbearance. Each indirect strategy has its function to
either increase the speaker’s sincerity to restore the
harmonic relation or to further pacify the complainer.

Findings about the Five Strategies

Expression of Apology (Illocutionary Force
Indicating Devices)

According to Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984:196) “the
most direct realization of an apology is done via an
explicit illocutionary force indicating device (IFID),
which selects a routinized, formulaic expression of regret
(a performative verb) such as: (be sorry; apologize;
regret; forgive; excuse, and so forth).” The IFIDs serve
the function of expressing speaker’s regret for the
violation/imposition. Trosborg (1987:152) indicates that
“the routine formula ‘I’m sorry’ is by far the most
commonly used form of expression and is often extended by
means of Adverbial intensifiers (e.g. ‘I’m
really/very/terribly/most dreadfully sorry’).” Table 1-3
present the results of subjects’ use of IFIDs in this
study. Table 1 shows the frequencies of IFID by NSs (N=20):
Table 1. Illocutionary Force Indicating Device Use by Native Speakers of English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>sorry</th>
<th>excuse me</th>
<th>forgive</th>
<th>apologize</th>
<th>Don't be angry/mad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>118</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows the frequencies of IFID uses by NNSs in their English version (N=20).

Table 2. Illocutionary Force Indicating Device Use by Nonnative Speakers, English Version

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>sorry</th>
<th>excuse me</th>
<th>forgive</th>
<th>apologize</th>
<th>Don't be angry/mad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>125</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 presents data on the use of IFID in the Chinese version by NNSs (N=20). The original Chinese utterances are hen Bao-Qian, Dui-Bu-Qi, Hen-Guo-Yi-Bu-Qu: 'very sorry,' Bu-Hao-Yi-Si: 'excuse me,' Qing-Yuan-Liang:
'please forgive me,' Wo Dao-Qian: 'I apologize,' and Bie-Sheng-Qi: 'Don't be mad.'

Table 3. Illocutionary Force Indicating Device Use by Nonnative Speakers, Chinese Version

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>very sorry</th>
<th>excuse me</th>
<th>please forgive me</th>
<th>apologize</th>
<th>don't be mad</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>147</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As can be seen from these tables, the data in this study confirm Trosborg's findings since 'I'm sorry' did occur most frequently in the subjects' responses as an expression of apology. As demonstrated, both groups reported frequent use of the IFID formulae. In the majority of cases, the non-native speakers used this strategy in much the same way as the native speakers did. Also, when we compared the non-native speakers' answers in both versions, we found that their answers are quite similar too. Whereas there were still some significant differences between native speakers and non-natives in the selection of the linguistic form for expressing the apology in the two
situations involving “forgetting an appointment with your friend”, and “backing into a stranger’s car”. In NNSs’ answers of both versions, we saw their using of IFID strategies by saying “don’t be mad/angry,” “I must make you mad about me” “are you still angry now” or “you must be very upset/ angry,” while NSs did not expressed in this way. Furthermore, we found the NNSs seemed more likely than the NSs to use “please forgive me.” It is especially obvious in non-natives’ answers in Chinese version. (NS: 3, NNS: E8, C10) This strategy seems to lower the speaker herself so as to elevate the position of the hearer, thus helping mend the offense. NNSs’ preference of requesting the hearer to withhold anger and plea for forgiveness is probably affected by their L1 since in Chinese conversation, request to withhold anger is also an approach to apologize. According to Suszczynska, “requests to withhold anger and pleas for forgiveness, they do embody some kind of deference and indebtedness, ... they are perceived as a natural and expected display of emotional involvement” (Suszczyska, 1999:1059). We finally calculated the overall number of their IFIDs strategy in each group, we found that natives use 118 IFIDs in their answers, non-
native speakers’ English version have 125, and 147 in Chinese version.

Explanation or Account

In most situations, when the speaker is aware of having caused offence on the hearer or admits that what he/she has done was undesirable, she would first express their regret, and then try to mitigate the offense by giving an explanation or account of the problem. Explanation can be divided into implicit and explicit.

Implicit explanation:
Example (1): I just made a one million dollars business.
Example (2): I’m preparing for my resume.
Example (3): Accidents are always happened. That’s life.

Explicit explanation:
Example (2): I’m sorry. Are you O.K.? This place is so crowded.

The frequency of this strategy used by each group of subjects is presented in Table 4, below:

35
Table 4. Explanation or Account, All Three Versions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NSs (Expl.)</th>
<th>NSs (Impl.)</th>
<th>NNSs (English) (Expl.)</th>
<th>NNSs (English) (Impl.)</th>
<th>NNSs (Chinese) (Expl.)</th>
<th>NNSs (Chinese) (Impl.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
<td><strong>61</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 suggests that there is no example for implicit explanation in native speakers' responses. However, we found some instances occurred in non-natives' answers. In "forgetting an important meeting" situation (Q6), two subjects used implicit explanation to mitigate their fault by saying "I just made a one million dollars business (Ex.1)" and "I'm preparing for my resume (Ex. 2)." Also, one subject answered "I keep calling you yesterday" in the "forgetting an appointment with a friend" situation, implying that he did try to tell the hearer that he was unable to meet the hearer, but unfortunately the hearer missed the call so that the hearer had to wait for two hours. Another example was found in bumping into a
stranger’s car situation (Q6). One non-native speaker said “accidents always happen, that’s life,” that is quite obvious an implicit explanation since it does not provide any specific reason for denting a stranger’s car (Ex. 1).

Taking on Responsibility

Once a speaker recognizes that she did something offensive to someone, except to express her sorry, to acknowledge her mistake and take on the responsibility is also a strategy to placate the hearer. “When a complainee chooses to take the responsibility for what he/she had done is wrong, he can also do it implicitly or explicitly and with various degrees of self-blame/deficiency” (Trosborg, 1987:150). According to Trosborg’s definition, the subcategories outlined below are all hearer-supportive and self-demeaning.

Implicit acknowledgement: e.g. ‘I know there is no excuse’; ‘I know you are disappointed’

Explicit acknowledgement: e.g. ‘I made a terrible mistake’; ‘This is all my fault’

• Expression of lack of intent: e.g. ‘I didn’t meant to keep you waiting’; ‘I didn’t do it on purpose’; ‘I didn’t intend this happen’
• Expression of self-deficiency: e.g. 'What a dork I am'; 'I'm a bit clumsy today'

• Expression of embarrassment: e.g. 'It's so sad to hurt your pretty cat'; 'I can't express my regrets'

The frequencies of the use of the taking on responsibility in all three versions are seen in Table 5.

Table 5. Taking on Responsibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NSs</th>
<th>NNS (English)</th>
<th>NNSs (Chinese)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(IA)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(EA)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(lack interest)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(self-defense)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(embarrass.)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>20</strong></td>
<td><strong>36</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data of this study indicate that native speakers and non-native speakers both used these strategies to take responsibility. Such admission of fault is face-
threatening to the apologizer. We found that native speakers and non-native speakers' responses in both versions are similar with regard to this strategy except in three situations. In one situation, “forgetting the promise to your child”, NNSs acknowledged their fault explicitly to their children by saying “it is my fault.” However, in native speakers' answers, we do not find any such example. In other two situations, “bumping into an elder lady and causing her to spill her package over the floor" (Q4) and “having backed into a stranger’s car and making a dent in his car” (Q6), non-native speakers used this strategy significantly more than native speakers and they tend to use diverse approaches to acknowledge their mistake or take on the responsibility rather than merely admitted their fault explicitly. Specifically, NNSs used four different approaches: expression of a lack of intention ('I didn’t intend this happen'), explicit acknowledgement of fault ('this is all my fault', 'I know it’s my fault/mistake'), self-blame ('I’m so careless', 'please forgive my stupid, I am a bad driver'), and expression of embarrassment to the hearer ('it’s so sad to hurt your pretty car); while NSs only explicitly acknowledged their responsibility by saying 'it’s all my
fault'. It seems to non-native speakers that the more they humble and blame themselves, the more they could lessen the guilt and reduce the imposition. However, American speakers seem reluctant to admit their in public, especially to strangers, possibly because admitting fault is too face-threatening.

**Offer of Repair**

When an apologizer is aware of the severity of her impingement on the complainer, and she realized that it is insufficient to merely express the regret, and to give reasonable accounts or acknowledge the responsibility, she may offer some repair to mitigate their offence, placate the complainer and restore the harmonic relationship. In other words, according to Trorsborg's (1987:152) explanation, "repair may be offered in its literal sense or as an offer to pay for damage." (pp152) He further points out that in situations in which actual repair is not wanted, the apologizer may offer some kind of 'compensatory' action or 'tribute' to the complainer (Trorsborg, 1987:152). The following are examples of offer of repair and compensation:

**Repair:**

**Example (1):** I’ll pay for cleaning. (NS)
Example (2): I will make it up to you. (NS)

Compensation:

Example (3): You can ask your mom. (NNS)

Example (4): 你現在有什麼想要的玩具嗎? (Is there any toy you want to have now?) (NNS)

Example (5): Let me do something to compensate. (NNS)

Example (6): Son, let me buy you a gift for compensation. (NNS)

The use of this strategy by subjects of his study is presented in Table 6:

Table 6. Offer of Repair

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NSs</th>
<th>NNS (English)</th>
<th>NNSs (Chinese)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 6, we see that native and non-native speakers offer repair to a similar extent. However, we can only found the compensatory action or tribute strategy in non-native speakers’ English and Chinese answers. For example,
in “forgetting to take your kid to the movie situation” (Q2), a non-native speaker answered: “You can ask your mom” (Ex. 3), indicating he was unable to take his kid to the movie, but his wife could perhaps do it. If he answered “you can ask your mom instead,” it could be a very obvious compensation to his child. In addition, in example 4, another non-native speaker answered “is there any toy you want to have now,” which could be also considered a compensation action because the speaker may be not willing to actually repair, but he still has to do something to comfort his child. Thus he compensates his child for breaking the promise by buying him a new toy. Examples 5 and 6 can also be regarded as compensation.

Therefore, in this strategy, we saw the response patterns are little different since NSs seem to volunteer repair more willingly, by contrast, sometimes NNSs’ sincerity of offer of repair was doubtful.

Promise of Forbearance

With regard to future behavior, an apologizer can promise either never to perform the same offence to the hearer again or promise to improve her behavior. When using this strategy, the apologizer often utters the performative verbs like “promise,” “assure”, and “guarantee,” i.e., “I
promise it won’t happen again” or use the auxiliary with very high certainty “must”. Table 7 presents the findings about this strategy in the current study.

Table 7. Promise for Forbearance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>NSs</th>
<th>NNS (English)</th>
<th>NNSs (Chinese)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 tells us that the strategy of promise of forbearance was not frequent in both groups and it appeared in only three of the situations in this study (Q1, Q2, and Q3). Further, its use was limited to several respondents. Compared to natives’ answers, we found that non-natives use this strategy in quite the same way as the natives did, especially when they answered in English. Nevertheless, their responses in Chinese, especially in ‘forgetting to take your kid to the movie’ (Table 5), non-natives employed this strategy with much higher frequency (16) than the natives (6) and also their response in the English version
In non-native speakers' Chinese version, they also tend to use "must."

Example (1): 這一次我一定會準時到的, 絕對不會再遲到的 (This time I must be on time and will never break the promise again.) (NNS)

Example (2): 下次我一定會記得絕不會再錯過了 (Next time I must remember it and will never miss again.) (NNS)

Example (3): I apologize and I can assure you this will not happen again. (NS)

However, it is worth noting that NNSs do not show this tendency in their responses of English version. There is not any example of uttering adverbial 'must' in the data. Instead, they seem to be conscious of the difference and realize it is not transferable while answering in English. Example 3 and 4 illustrate that they are capable of using this strategy in L2.

Example (3): I won't make the same mistake as I made today.

Example (4): It won't happen again. I promise.
Other Findings

Modification of Apology Strategies

According to Olshtain and Cohen (1990:47) "In addition to the main strategies which make up the speech act set, there are ways in which the speaker can modify the apology by either intensifying it or by downgrading it."

Modifications of apology strategies are of the following kinds:

1. Intensified adverbials - 'really', 'very', 'so', 'terribly', 'awfully', 'truly', 'please', +combinations and repetitions.

2. Emotional exclamation- interjection ('Oh', 'Oops'), invocation ('God', 'Jesus', 'my goodness') or course ('damn') +combinations.

3. Comments - about self (How could I?), about others (Are you O.K.?), about situation (I don't see any damage, thank goodness).

4. Repeat IFID - 'I'm sorry, I'm sorry'

Thus, modification strategies also play an essential role in apology speech act by making the apology stronger and sound more sincere, have creating more placation for complainer. At the same time, they also serve to denigrate the speaker, threatening her face. The subjects in this
study seem to modify their IFIDs quite readily, as is seen in Table 8, below:

Table 8. Modifications of Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excl.</th>
<th>Intens.</th>
<th>Repeat IFID</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English by NS</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English by NNSs</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese by NNSs</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the data of this study, the native speakers were found to intensify their expression of apology significantly more than the non-natives. They also have a greater tendency to make comments or express concerns for the hearer than non-native speakers did. In 'forgotten to help a friend buy a car' situation (Q1), half of native speakers expressed their concerns for the friend by asking or commenting “were you able to find the right car?”, “are you still looking for a car?”, “did you end up calling someone else?”, “did you have someone else meet you?” “I hope you found a good deal” “I hope you were able to make it without me.” NNS, on the other hand, did this only four times - one time in Chinese, three times in English.
Indeed, having comments and expressing concern for the hearer can be a useful strategy because it conveys an additional attempt to pacify the hearer and thus help restore their relationship. However, NNS learners do not seem to be able to use this strategy.

In addition, NSs used more modification strategies than NNSs, except repeat IFID. This could be due to the fact that repeating a strategy is easier than actual modification, which requires more linguistic sophistication than mere repetition. This could also be due to an influence from Chinese, as Chinese speakers seem to repeat more than English speakers in their conversation.

Aside from this, my study has revealed some difference between the Chinese NNSs and the NSs in Cohen, Olshtain, and Rosenstein's (1986). In their research of Hebrew ESL students' apology strategies, they found that the non-natives did not use "really" in the way that natives did; instead, they used very to mean really. The native speakers tended to make a distinction. Therefore, Cohen, Olshtain, and Rosenstein suggested that the non-natives' patterns of intensity were "overlearned and appear to be used indiscriminately." They also found that the non-native speakers stuck to one overgeneralized form, such as 'very',
perhaps for the purpose of “playing it safe” (Cohen & Olstain, 1986:50). However, the non-native speakers’ selection of intensification in this study has a variety of forms (so, terribly, truly, really, very). As we seen in Table 9, below, we found that non-natives used “so” most frequently in the intensification, and “really” is the second most frequently used term. “Very,” which was assumed to be overgeneralized by non-native speakers, was used by only four people. Hence, it is not necessary true, at least for Chinese ESL learners, that the non-natives were less discriminating about different forms of intensification. In the sense that in Chinese, people do make a distinction between “really” and “very,” this ability to distinguish the two words in the present study could be a case of positive influence of a learner’s native language on her target language.

Table 9. Use of Intensifiers by Nonnative Speakers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>so</th>
<th>really</th>
<th>very</th>
<th>terribly</th>
<th>truly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dominance and Social Distance

Holmes writes that “social distance was defined very early in sociolinguistic research as an important and influential factor across a range of communities” (Holmes, 1989: 205). In addition, according to Brown and Levinson’s model of politeness, “the greater social distance, the heavier the weighting of the face-threatening act (FTA)”. In other words, the greater social distance, the more effort on the apologizer will make to remedy the situation, hence help restore the offended person’s face. This is in line with Bergamn and Kasper’s (1993) finding that “the closer the interlocutors, the more likely the offender was to expressly assume responsibility for the offensive act” (Kasper, Maeshiba, Ross and Yoshinaga, 1996:160).

Apologies to a person in position of authority (a-situations):

- An employee (has forgotten an important meeting and it is the second time)
- A child (has forgotten a promise to your kid)

Apologize to a stranger (b-situations):

- (A) has bumped into an elder lady and caused her to spill her package over the floor
- (A) has backed into someone's cat and made a dent in its car

*Apologize to a friend or equal status (c-situations)*:
- (A) has missed an appointment with a friend
- (A) has backed into a friend unintentionally and caused her to spill her coffee over her clothes.

Table 10 presents findings about dominance and social distance in this study.

![Table 10. Dominance and Distance]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>+dominance</th>
<th>-dominance</th>
<th>-dominance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+social distance</td>
<td>+social distance</td>
<td>-social distance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boss</td>
<td>Elderly Lady</td>
<td>Stranger</td>
<td>Friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSs</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNSs Eng</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NNSs Chi</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Trosborg's term, there is "no straight 'top-to-bottom' scale of politeness, viz. a-situations more polite than b-situations, b-situations more polite than c-situations, was found??" (Trosborg, 1987:163). That is to say, when we interpret Table 10 based on Trosborg's model,
we found that the participants' selection of apology strategies, the impact of dominance and social distance were not significant for both groups.

The perception of power relations and the level of similarity in the six apology situations varies from a high of 32 in the situation of "bumping into an elder lady (Q4)" to a low of 13 in the "forgetting to take your kid to the movies (Q2)". Regardless of the statistical number, we found that the NSs and the NNSs' overall use of IFIDs is quite similar since both of the groups expressed their regret and apologized the most when they bumped into an elder lady and forgot a friend's appointment. The result is quite surprising because it is assumed that subjects of both groups are supposed to apologize and express regret the most to the boss, an authority figure, in the situation of forgetting to attend the meeting for a second time (Q3). However, in forgetting to take your child to the movie situation (Q2), both groups of natives and non-natives did use less politeness and apology strategies. (see Table 10) Thus, the findings in this study show that the parameters [+social distance] and [+dominance] did not result in an increase in the number of direct apologies. Their responses tend to be neutral because they not only apologize a lot to
[+social distance], like an elder lady, but also to [-social distance], such as a friend.

Severity of Imposition

Most studies have shown that the severity of infraction is the strongest factor on apology behavior. In addition, according to Kasper’s statement, “degree of imposition and severity of offence are decisive contextual factors influencing the choice of the sociopragmatic strategies involved in the communicative acts of requesting, complaining, and apologizing”. That is to say, for apologies, a greater and extensive apology and restoration are needed when the offender acknowledged committing the imposition and resulting in the harm to the complainer. However, the offender’s perception of the degree of the severity of the offence has to be taken into consideration since it is sometimes subjective. It is possible that one who has caused the infraction and offended someone, but he may not perceive himself doing something wrong; hence he may not feel the need to apologize. Austin pointed out that “what may serve as an adequate ‘excuse’ differs in different circumstances, and that what he called our ‘standards of the unacceptable’ vary contextually: ‘we set different limits in different cases’” (Austin, 1979: 194).
In terms of the apology strategies used with offenses of different seriousness, the findings of this study indicates that both groups have the agreement that the lightest offense is "forgetting to take child to a movie" situation, Q2 since they both elicited less apology strategies. As to the most heavily ranked offenses, the native speakers mostly consider Q4, "bumping into a friend unintentionally, causing her to spill her coffee over her clothes, the coffee is hot", is the most serious offenses; whereas a disagreement was found in the non-native speakers' response of English and Chinese versions. In their response of English version, they also weighed Q3 as the heaviest severe offense, but in the Chinese version, the most heavily offense they perceived was Q4, "bumping into a well-dressed elder lady accidentally at an elegant department store, causing her to spill her package over the floor" and they ranked Q3 situation as the second serious offense.
CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I will discuss the differences and similarities between Taiwanese and American participants’ apology strategies and possible reasons for these differences and similarities. I will also discuss the Taiwanese learners’ interlanguage pragmatic competence in terms of their selection in L2 of the apology strategy in a given social context as compared to the responses in their native language.

Similarities and Differences

According to the data analysis, at a general level, the results indicate that there were not many differences between the NSs and the NNSs with regard to their use of main strategies for apologizing. In other words, the responses of two groups of participants display similarities in their choice of strategies: they all regularly use IFIDs, explain for the reasons, take on responsibility, offer of repair, and promise of forbearance. This finding seems to coincide with Olshtain’s (1989) claim about the similarities in the
choice of apology strategies across languages. However, when analyzed at a more detailed and specific level of content and description, cultural and linguistic-specific preference, tendency and style become apparent, some of which may have influenced the NNS learners' choice of strategy in the second language. Also, comparing the NNSs' two versions—English and Chinese—in the questionnaire, the findings show that some of them appear to be affected by their first language in their responses in the English version.

Table 11 shows the total number of instances of each strategy in the data.
Table 11. Choice of Strategies for Apologizing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Q1</th>
<th>Q2</th>
<th>Q3</th>
<th>Q4</th>
<th>Q5</th>
<th>Q6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resp</td>
<td>4/2/2</td>
<td>0/2/3</td>
<td>4/5/6</td>
<td>3/7/7</td>
<td>3/5/5</td>
<td>4/14/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expl</td>
<td>18/17/19</td>
<td>13/11/10</td>
<td>12/10/14</td>
<td>4/6/7</td>
<td>3/5/4</td>
<td>5/6/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-pair</td>
<td>10/13/11</td>
<td>15/18/16</td>
<td>9/9/9</td>
<td>20/14/16</td>
<td>14/14/13</td>
<td>20/17/18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise</td>
<td>0/3/3</td>
<td>2/1/10</td>
<td>2/1/3</td>
<td>0/0/0</td>
<td>0/0/0</td>
<td>0/0/0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55/58/62</td>
<td>43/47/56</td>
<td>47/47/54</td>
<td>40/47/62</td>
<td>40/47/48</td>
<td>48/60/55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Modification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Intensifier</th>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Exclamation</th>
<th>Repeal IFID</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IFID</td>
<td>18/8/9</td>
<td>8/3/1</td>
<td>2/2/5</td>
<td>1/2/2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29/15/17</td>
<td>1/16/7</td>
<td>18/18/15</td>
<td>32/31/32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NSs    | NNS (Eng) | NNS (Chi)

Expression of IFIDS | 118 | 125 | 147
Explanation or account | 55 | 55 | 61
Taking on responsibility | 20 | 36 | 36
Offer of repair | 88 | 85 | 83
Promise of forbearance | 4 | 6 | 16
Total | 285 | 307 | 343

The results in the NS data are in line with the findings by many previous researchers (e.g. Holmes, 1990; Owen, 1983; Trorsborg, 1983). That is, the most commonly used form of expression of regret is ‘I’m sorry’ and is
often extended by means of adverbial intensifiers (very, really, so and so forth), with a few cases of 'excuse me' and 'I apologize', and even fewer cases of 'forgive me'. The nature of English apologetic choices can be related to Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and explained in terms of the threat to speaker's face. For native speakers of English, a direct expression of regret, like 'I'm sorry' seems to appear much less face-threatening for both the speaker and hearer than request for forgiveness and withhold anger. It is true that begging the hearer for forgiveness and holding the angry have more damage to the speaker's self-esteem since the speaker may put herself into the risk that the hearer deny to forgive her. By contrast, in both versions of the NNS data, all four IFID strategies were well employed. There is a preference for Bie-Sheng-Qi (Don't be angry), and Qing-Yuan-Liang (Please forgive me) since from Chinese speakers' perspective, when one has made a serious offense, merely saying 'I'm sorry!' will sound too 'weak' and 'insincere'. Therefore, compared with American native speakers, Taiwanese speakers are prone to apologizing more with regard to the frequency of using IFIDs. In addition, in the use of "taking on responsibility" strategy, we find that even though both
groups used it, the way that the NSs take on their responsibility is to admit that they are at fault explicitly; whereas the NNSs used four approaches. Aside from admitting their fault explicitly, they express their lack of intention, self-blame themselves, and express their embarrassment to the hearer. For Americans, to admit one’s deficiency or mistake is likely to acknowledge one’s weakness, and that is quite face-losing and damage to one’s self-esteem. However, in Chinese culture, it is believed that being humble and deferent is a good virtue. Thus, once you imposed on someone, the more you self-blame yourself, the more sincere you have, also, the more guilt you can lessen. In some aspect, the offender’s face is threatening, but in some other way, it is face-saving since the offender already denigrated and humbled herself, by doing so, the offended one will save the face for the offender. As Holmes’ states, “it seems likely that different groups in the society emphasize different aspects of participants; face needs and that different cultures weigh the face loss engendered by an apology differently” (Homes, 1990:192).

Another obvious difference is found in the use of modification strategy. The native speakers have a greater tendency to intensify their expression of apology than the
non-native speakers, especially to make more comments or express more concerns for the hearer. The NNSs, however, are not found to use this strategy as often; instead, they use other strategies, such as repeating IFIDs. One of the possible reasons for this could be the linguistic competence: NNSs may lack the ability to intensify as NSs do, as intensifying in a variety of ways are more linguistically challenging than merely repeating an utterance.

With regard to interpreting the correlations of choice of apology strategies with social factors (i.e. dominance and familiarity) and contextual factors (i.e. the seriousness of imposition), the data of this study suggests that the influence of dominance and the severity of offense was not significant for any of the groups. By and large, this study yielded the results which generally do not confirm the dominance-politeness hypothesis, that is, one tends to be increasingly polite with increasing social dominant power. Whereas distance seems to be correlated with subjects' admission of responsibility: the closer the interlocutors, the more responsibility they would hold and the more explicit apologies would be performed.
Negative Transfer and Interlanguage

The influence from learners' native language (L1) and culture on their IL pragmatic knowledge and performance has been considerably documented. In addition, transfer is considered a major factor in shaping NNS' pragmatic knowledge and performance. A clear focus in this line of research is negative transfer, as it can result in learners' pragmatic failure. According to Thomas, for instance:

The inappropriate transfer of speech act strategies from one language to another, or the transferring from the mother tongue to the target language of utterances which are semantically/syntactically equivalent, but which, because of different 'interpretive bias', tend to convey a different pragmatic force in the target language. (Thomas, 1983:101)

This study has revealed evidence for negative transfer in the subjects' speech act of apology. I will discuss three types of transfer in this section: strategy transfer, utterance transfer, and phrases transfer.
Strategy Transfer

Strategy transfer refers to speakers' transferring of a strategy for apology from L1 to L2. As is indicated earlier, NNSs used far more instances of "taking on responsibility" in the Chinese version of the survey than did NSs. When we consider their English version, we find similar frequencies: they "took on responsibility" just as much when speaking English. Consider the following examples:

(1) Boss. I'm really sorry about that. I know it's all my fault and I made it twice. The meeting is really crucial to our company. How about the result? I do know I have to be responsible to my behavior this time. I will respect all the decision boss you make to me and the punishment.

(2) I'm sorry. I didn't pay attention on the road,(I wasn't paying attention) so it's my fault. I'll pick up everything for you.

(3) Sir, I am so sorry and I made a terrible mistake. Please give me an opportunity to find the remedy.

Note that it is not likely for a native English speaker to admit fault and to take on responsibility so explicitly. In a situation like (2), where the speaker runs
into an elderly lady, for instance, English speakers do not tend to admit fault so profusely. Similarly, in Example (3), the Chinese speaker responded with "I am so sorry and I made a terrible mistake," which again is not something that happens frequently in English. If these utterances are not common in English, meaning that NNSs in this study should not have learned them from native speakers around them, it is highly possible that they have transferred the strategy of admitting fault and taking on responsibility from their native Chinese.

**Utterance Transfer**

In the present study, there are also instances where the transfer seems to be at the utterance level, as it is not easy to identify what strategy is being transferred. Examples (4-6) illustrate this:

(4) I'm so sorry! I didn't want to do that on purpose. I have completely forgotten this matter. Please forgive me. Let me do something to compensate.

(5) Are you all right? Please forgive me, I am not intended.

(6) I'm sorry. I didn't intend this happen. I should be more careful. I will take charge of this accident and will contact my car insurance company to ask for
help.

In these examples, the NNS learners utterances that I didn’t want to do that on purpose, I am not intended, and I didn’t intend this happen are translations of utterances from Chinese to English, as these utterances are very common ways to apologize in Chinese but much less so in English.

Phrase transfer

On the other hand, there seems to be evidence that NNS also translated words and phrases in their responses.

(7) I guaranteed certainly do something to compensate. (I guarantee you that I’ll certainly do something to compensate.) Please forgive me.

(8) Something blocked me.

(9) Sorry! Be calm down! I’ll compensate your loss!

The NNSs used guarantee in (7), blocked (meaning ‘delayed’) in (8), Be calm down in (9), and compensate in both (7) and (9). These are the words that do not seem to appear frequently in conversations by native speakers of English for the purpose of apologizing. However, their Chinese translations are much more active in the same speech situations: it is common for a Chinese to “guarantee” a future act, to explain that something has
“blocked” her from a course of action, to ask another person to “calm down,” and to promise to “compensate” for an offence in an act of apologizing.

Conclusion

According to research in the area, interlanguage is a product of transfer and learners’ try and error—their forming of rules of the target language based on input and other factors. This study provides strong evidence for transfer, particularly negative transfer. It demonstrates that Taiwanese learners of English relied heavily on their knowledge about apology in Chinese when they communicated with English speakers. As I indicated in Chapter 1, this could lead to the perception that these learners are “impolite” or even “rude.”

This general conclusion has implications for both the ESL pedagogy and cross-cultural research in speech acts. As for the former, it suggests that ESL students should not only be taught grammar of a target language but also strategies for doing speech acts. While it is not my concern in this thesis to propose specific ways to do so, I believe that the current study adds to the growing body of research that this is both necessary and doable. With
regards to cross-cultural research in speech acts, this thesis has revealed both similarities and differences between native speakers of American English and Taiwanese speakers of Chinese. These similarities and differences will contribute to our understanding of the two languages and the two cultures in question.
APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE (SIX QUESTIONS) CHINESE

VERSION FOR NONNATIVE SPEAKERS
Background Information

Major: ___________________________ Undergraduate/Graduate
Mother Tongue: _______________ Age: _______________ Male/Female
If nonnative English speaker, rate your speaking ability:
Excellent ________ Good: ________ Fair ________
Time spent in English-learning: approximate _______ years
Time spent in the United States: _______ month, _______ years

(請先以中文回答)

試想下面幾種情境,並假設倘若你本身有遭遇到這些情況時,您會如何回答.反應.請將您的回答填寫於每個問題之後的空白處,在您回答問題之前請先仔細的閱讀整個情境

1. 有一天你的朋友告訴你說他的車子壞掉了,他希望你能夠陪他一起去買車,因為你對車的了解較多,你們約好在車店碰面,然而你卻完全忘了這回事,直到隔天你遇到了朋友

朋友: 你怎麼啦?昨天我們不是應該在車店碰面的嗎?我在那裡等了你整整兩個小時耶,而且等不到你我又沒主意該如何選車,你也至少打通電話給我嘛!

你的回答:

2. 你從上班的地方打了一通電話回家詢問孩子家中是否一切安好,可是孩子卻向你抱怨說你又忘記了你已答應帶他去看電影,這也是你第二次對他黃牛了你的小孩

於是說

小孩: 你又忘記你答應我的事了

你的回答:

3. 原本你要和你的老闆出席一場非常重要的會議,結果你卻完全忘記並且錯過了,等到會議開完後的一個小時,你立刻打了一通電話給老闆道歉,更遺的是你已經第二次錯過這樣重要的會議了,老闆接了電話後說:

老闆: 你在幹嘛?
你的回答:

4. 在一個格調優雅的百貨公司裡,你不小心的撞上了一位穿著高雅的老太太,把她的手提包也撞掉了裡頭的東西散落一地,你很明白這是你的不對,於是你跟這位太太道歉
老太太:唉呦,我的天阿!
你的回答:

5. 你到咖啡店喝咖啡,但因為人多太擁擠了,你一個不小心竟撞到你的朋友,她當時手中正拿了一杯滿滿的熱咖啡,因你這麼一撞,她的咖啡潑到她的衣服
你朋友:哎呀!
你的回答:

6. 當你在倒車準備停車時,因為你的疏忽,你的車就衝撞到停在旁邊的一輛車子,你撞凹了你車子的旁邊的門,那輛車的司機氣衝衝的下車來,問你:
司機:你這人是怎麼開車的阿?看看你幹了什麼好事.
你的回答:
APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE (SIX QUESTIONS) ENGLISH VERSION FOR BOTH AMERICAN STUDENTS AND TAIWANESE STUDENTS
Instructions:
Please put yourself in the following situations and assume that in each instance you will, in fact, say something. Write down what you would say in the space provided. Make sure that you read the whole situation carefully before you respond. (In the following questions, please answer in English)

1. Your friend’s car is broken. You promised to meet him/her at a dealership to help him/her choose the right car. You forgot the meeting. The next day, you see your friend and say:
You say:

2. You called from work to find out how things are at home and your 13 year old son complained to you that you forgot to take him to the movies, as you had promised. This is the second time that has happened. You son asked you, “Mom/Dad, did you say you were gonna take me to a movie?”
You say:

3. You forgot for the second time to attend a crucial meeting with your boss. An hour later you call him to apologize.
You say:

4. You accidently bump into a well-dressed elder lady at an elegant department store, causing her to spill her package over the floor. It’s obviously your fault, and you want to apologize.
You say:
5. Because the coffee shop is crowded, you bump into a friend unintentionally, causing her to spill her coffee over her clothes. The coffee is hot.

She: Ouch!

You say:

6. In a parking place, you back into another car making a small dent in its side. It was clearly your fault. The driver of the other car was visibly upset.

You say:

I REALLY APPRECIATE FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND HELP
Thank you for your valuable time and patience 😊
REFERENCES


