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Apology Strategies used by Korean Learners of English*

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This study investigates the impact of sociopragmatic variables such as social status and social distance on the apology strategies used by native speakers of American English and Korean learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) in terms of cultural dimensions of individualism/collectivism and low-context/high-context. Thirty native English (NE) speakers, thirty Korean learners of EFL, and thirty native Korean (NK) speakers participated in this study to provide the target language baseline data, the interlanguage (IL) data, and the first language baseline data, respectively. This study evaluated the impact of sociopragmatic variables on apology strategies from Discourse Completion Tests. Results showed that Korean EFL learners apologized less in using an explicit apology than American NE speakers did. In using intensifiers, EFL learners were less discriminating than NE speakers as to which form of intensification would be appropriate in a given situation. EFL speakers have a tendency for not using the explanation strategy compared to American NE speakers. These differences in the speech act of apology between Korean EFL learners and American NE speakers were interpreted in terms of Korean emphasis on hierarchy, collectivism, and high-context communication and American emphasis on egalitarianism, individualism, and low-context communication.

[apology strategies/ apologies and culture/sociopragmatic variables]

I. INTRODUCTION

In all societies, the speech act of apology is called for when there is "some offensive behavior which has violated social norms" (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983, p. 20). The phenomenon of apologizing in this sense can be regarded as a universal phenomenon. However, there is not only universality, but also cultural specificity in the speech act of

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apologizing. Since the concept of offensive behavior is not the inherent nature of the behavior itself but social construction or cultural definition, the speech act of apologies can be realized differently from culture to culture. In this sense, apologizing speech acts cannot be truly understood without reference to cultural values and attitudes (Kang, 2011; Kim, 2008; Suszczynska, 1999, p. 1055). Since the concept of an offensive act is a sociocultural construct, cultural communities differ in what counts as an offense and which conditions call for apology (Maeshiba, Yoshinaga, Kasper, & Ross, 1995, p. 158; Wolfson, Marmor, & Jones, 1989, p. 180).

People in one culture often offer apologies in situations where apologizing would be totally inappropriate in another culture (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989, p. 5). People in different cultures may apologize differently for the same offense (Sugimoto, 1998, p. 72). Cultural differences in the speech act of apologizing could lead an individual in one culture to appear an incompetent communicator in another culture. The speech act of apologizing may be thus different from culture to culture. Specifically, the impact of sociopragmatic factors such as social distance (D) and social power (P) on the selection of apology strategies often vary with the culture. Cultural communities thus differ in their assessment of speakers' and hearers' social distance and social power involved in the speech act of apologizing.

Many studies on the speech act of apologizing have been conducted in the field of cross-cultural pragmatics. One of the pioneering works on apology speech acts was conducted by Olshtain and Cohen (1983). Their work formed the real base of the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) project. The purpose of this project was to determine the realization patterns of speech acts in a range of different languages, namely British English, Australian English, American English, Canadian French, Danish, German, Hebrew, and Russian. At first, the goal of the project was to investigate similarities and differences in the realization patterns of speech acts across different languages, in a study comparing four languages such as Australian English, Canadian French, German, and Hebrew, Olshtain (1989) concluded that there were no significant differences in selecting apology strategy, and that there were surprising similarities in choosing an illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) and expressing responsibility across the seven situations.

Regarding this result of the project a critical argument can be raised. The subjects of the study in this project were all from Western cultures or a culture that is influenced a lot by Western cultures. Thus there could be similarities in choosing apology strategy. But there is no study which showed evidences that the same results appeared in Eastern cultures. Moreover, there are not so much research on pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic differences between Korean culture and Western cultures. Thus, Korean EFL learners' apology speech acts should be studied more systematically, because the speech act strategy

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in offering apology may be different from culture to culture. The CCSARP remains too biased in its exclusive focus on Western cultures and fails to understand differences of speech act realizations in terms of cultural differences between Western and Eastern cultures. In this sense, Sohn (1986) argues that it is appropriate to understand the differences between American's and Korean's patterns of speech act realizations in terms of respective cultural values.

Since ordinary speech acts tend to reflect the speaker's cultural value, Korean EFL learners may transfer Korean linguistic conventions which are different from the cultural norms of English native speakers' into their apologies in English. The transfer of the cultural norms of one community to another may well lead to pragmatic failure, and lead to the judgement that the speaker is being impolite and uncooperative (Gass & Neu, 1995; Kasper, 1992; Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983). Many of the cross-cultural studies are therefore interested in the communicative competence of nonnative speakers of English and in the degree of pragmatic transfer between a native and a target language (Suszczynska, 1999). Nonnative speakers should learn what a specific condition of apology is in the target language community, what the conventional strategies of expressing apology are, and what an appropriate selection of apology strategies is. On the basis of above discussion, the following research questions were formulated to further examine the apology strategies of Korean and American speakers.

1) How is the apology strategy related to sociopragmatic factors such as social status and social distance?
2) To what extent do Korean EFL learners demonstrate pragmatic transfer in their speech act of apologizing in English?

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Apology Strategies

The function of apology is to restore and maintain harmony between a speaker and a hearer. An apology is a speech act "addressed to the face-needs" of the hearer and "intended to remedy an offense" for which the speaker takes responsibility (Holmes, 1989, p. 196). Therefore, apology can be defined as a "remedial interchange" serving to reestablish social relations that have been breached by the infraction of social norms (Goffman, 1971, p. 90). Such a remedial interchange is accomplished, according to Fraser (1980), by two main devices: an admission of fault as well as an expression of regret. For Fraser, "to apologize is to do two things: take responsibility for an offense and express regret for the offense committed" (p. 262). Holmes (1989) provides the classification of

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apology strategies into four major strategies: (1) an explicit apology (I am sorry), (2) an acknowledgement of responsibility with offering repair(It was my fault, Can I help you?), (3) an explanation or account (I have been busy), and (4) a promise of forbearance (It won't happen again).

Recent research on the speech act of apologizing tends to define apology as a "speech-act set" of semantically different formulas of expressions (Suszczynska, 1999, p. 1053). The speech act of apology usually consists of an expression of regret, an expression of responsibility, an expression of providing explanation, and/or an explanation of offering repair. Such a model was first proposed by Olshtain and Cohen (1983). Their work formed the foundation of the CCSARP, which was widely adopted by researchers to study cross-cultural comparisons in various speech acts (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989; Holmes, 1990; Suszczynska, 1999; Trosborg, 1987). The following five major strategies for apologizing have been described by Olshtain and Cohen (1983) and Blum-Kulka, House and Kasper (1989, pp. 289-294).

(1) Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID), which refers to an explicit expression of apology.
-An expression of regret: I am sorry that I am so late.
-An offer of apology: I apologize for coming late.
-A request for forgiveness: Excuse me/Forgive me for interrupting.
- *Intensification: an expression of an apology can be intensified whenever the apologizer feels the need to do so. Particularly, the more face-loss involved in an offense, the more intensifying would be provided.*
Intensification is usually accomplished by using intensifying adverbials (I'm very/terribly/so/really/awfully sorry), or by using emotional expressions (Eh/Oh/Oh, no/Oh Lord/Oh my God!).

(2) Acknowledgment of Responsibility:
-It is my fault/my mistake.
-I was confused/I didn't see/You are right.
-I didn't mean it. You're right to be angry.
- *Minimization: It refers to statements used to minimize the severity of offense, or statements used to downgrade the speaker's responsibility for the offense. Since the downgraded apology may not be accepted as an apology, this study does not deal with minimization or downgrading.*

(3) An Explanation or Account:
The speaker describes the situation which caused him/her to commit the offense: The traffic was terrible. In cultures where public transportation is unreliable, coming late to a meeting and giving an explanation like, "The bus was late," might

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be perfectly acceptable.

(4) An offer of Repair:
The apologizer makes a bid to carry out an action or provide payment for some kind of damage resulting from his/her offense: I'll pay for the damage.

(5) A Promise of Forbearance or Non-recurrence:
The apologizer commits his/herself to not having the offense happen again: It won't happen again.

The five main strategies of apology consist of two general strategies and three situation-specific strategies. Two general strategies, offering an explicit apology (IFID) including Intensification and acknowledging Responsibility, are used in remedy of most offenses, irrespective of the specific situations. The situation-specific strategies include Explanation or account, offering Repair, and a promise of Forbearance or non-recurrence. The speech act of apologizing can be realized by any one of the five main strategies, or any combination of those strategies.

2. Apologies and Culture

People from different cultures tend to communicate in substantially different ways. It is because the culture in which individuals are socialized has a great impact on their communication styles. Therefore, it is generally acknowledged that the speech act of apology cannot be truly understood without reference to cultural differences (Sugimoto, 1997; Suh, 1999; Suszczynska, 1999; Trosborg, 1995). According to Hofstede (1980), the United States is one of the most individualistic cultures, while Korea is one of the most collectivistic cultures. Although both individualism and collectivism exist in all cultures, one pattern certainly tends to predominate. And although any individual has a unique set of values, there are also sets of cultural values that are representative of a particular community. In other words, it is appropriate to understand the differences between American and Korean patterns of apologizing in terms of individualism and collectivism.

Individualism emphasizes independence, autonomy, and self-esteem, whereas collectivism tends to emphasize interdependence, harmony, adherence to group norms, and respect for hierarchical authority (Hofstede, 1980; Triandis, 1995). Such a difference between individualism and collectivism may explain why Korean people use apologies more frequently than Americans. For individualistic Americans, offering an apology can be a considerable violation of the offender's autonomy and self-esteem and thus individualistic Americans are less likely to offer an apology than collectivistic Koreans. In contrast, Korean people are more likely to apologize than American in deference to social

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harmony and hierarchy. Therefore, Americans are less likely to offer an apology than Koreans (Lee, 2006; Sugimoto, 1997).

Although there can be exceptions, it is generally acknowledged that collectivist cultures tend to employ high-context communication, whereas individualist cultures tend to use low-context communication. The terms of high-context and low-context introduced by Hall (1976) are one of the widely used terms in the literature of cross-cultural communication. A key factor in Hall's theory is context. The context refers to all kinds of additional information which include physical environments and social relationships. The context may also include nonverbal cues (body language such as posture, gesture, facial expression) and paraverbal cues such as the tone, pitch, volume of our voices (Hall, 1976).

A high-context communication is one in which a lot of covert and unspoken information is implicitly transferred, while very little is in the coded and explicit part of the message. A low-context communication is just the opposite, so that a lot of overt and explicit information is exchanged through message itself (Hall, 1976, p. 91). The former is preferred by people from a high-context culture such as Korea and China, while the latter is preferred by people from a low-context culture such as the U.S. and Canada. In a high-context culture, nonverbal messages such as posture, gestures, and facial expression sometimes can be regarded as the apologizer's sincerity of deep regret. When apologizing, Koreans are less likely to use direct and explicit messages than Americans. Members of high-context and low-context cultures communicate in different ways, especially with the use of silence. High-context Korean people think that when an apology is expected, silence often communicates mutual understanding. It is because they do not rely on verbal communication as their main source of information. In contrast, low-context American people tend to focus more on the direct and explicit transaction, and they become uncomfortable with silence.

3. Pragmatic Transfer

Based on the inseparable relationship between language and culture, Kasper (1992) identifies two types of pragmatic transfer: pragmalinguistic transfer and sociopragmatic transfer. Pragmalinguistic transfer has to do with the inappropriate use of L1 linguistic forms when communicating in L2 and is considered relatively easy to overcome. Sociopragmatic transfer is the inappropriate application of L1 pragmatic conventions when communicating in L2. It is very difficult to change (Shim, 2009) and is a far more "thorny issue to deal with in the classroom" (Kasper & Rose, 2001, p. 3).

Each type of pragmatic transfer is further divided into two: positive transfer and negative transfer. Positive transfer refers to the use of L1 pragmatic principles in L2 context when the resulting L2 form is correct. Negative transfer refers to the use of L1 pragmatic

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principles in L2 context when the resulting L2 form is inappropriate. We focus on negative transfer, because the pragmatic transfer which causes communication failures is negative transfer.

In order to determine whether or where pragmatic transfer occurs, Kasper (1992) designed a theoretical model derived from Selinker's (1969) operational definition of language transfer. In this model, the following three data sources are usually compared (Kasper, 1992; Maeshiba, Yoshinaga, Kasper, & Ross, 1995; Selinker, 1969): L2 data, interlanguage data, and L1 data. Based on Kasper's model, this study collected the following three kinds of language data. (1) the target language baseline data from native English speakers (NE), (2) the interlanguage data from Korean learners of EFL, and (3) the first language (NL) baseline data from native Korean speakers (NK). According to Kasper's theoretical model, similar response frequencies in NE, EFL, and NK can be defined as positive transfer. Similar response frequencies in NK and EFL with different response frequencies between NE and NK and between NE and EFL can be defined as negative transfer. Because of its potential for miscommunication, focus in teaching EFL should be given to negative transfer rather than positive transfer (Maeshiba, Yoshinaga, Kasper, & Ross, 1995; Suh, 2007).

III. METHOD

1. Participants

The three sets of apology data were necessary to examine the appropriateness of English apology by Korean learners of English (Rintell & Mitchell, 1989, p. 249):

(1) the target language baseline data from native English (NE) speakers,

(2) the first language baseline data from native Korean (NK) speakers, and

(3) the interlanguage data from Korean EFL learners.

A total of 90 college students participated in this study as respondents on a voluntary basis. The native English (NE) speakers were selected from an introductory sociology course for the spring 2011 semester at a Mid-western university in the United States of America. The sociology course was composed of 44 students who had diverse ethnical backgrounds. Of the 44 respondents, 14 students were not native English speakers (5 were speakers of Chinese, 2 Serbian, 2 Ukrainian, 1 Korean, 1 Tamil, 1 Bosnian, 1 Hindi, and 1 Persian) and were thus excluded. The remaining native English speakers consist of 18 female and 12 male students. Their average age was 23.5.

The native Korean (NK) speakers were selected from an introductory sociology course for the spring 2011 semester at a university in Seoul, Korea. All 50 Korean native (NK)

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speakers enrolled in this course participated in the survey but responses of only 18 female students and 12 male students were randomly chosen in order to match the sex ratio of the NE participants. Their average age was 22.4.

The Korean EFL learners were selected from an English reading comprehension course for the fall 2010 semester at a university in Seoul, Korea. In order to match the sex ratio of the NE and NK participants and to avoid possible gender effects, the Korean EFL speakers consisted of 18 female and 12 male students were randomly selected from the all 49 EFL speakers enrolled in this course. They had a score of 800 to 990 (Mean=909.89) on the Test of English for International communication (TOEIC). Their average age was 23.7.

2. Instruments

The discourse completion test (DCT) was designed according to the seven situations used by the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989, pp. 13-15; Olshtain, 1989, pp. 160-161). The seven situations, given the title Paper(S1), Book(S2), Manager(S3), Waiter(S4), Meeting(S5), Driver(S6), and Insult(S7) are as follows:

S1: (S>H, -SD)

A university professor promised to return the student's term paper that day but didn't finish reading it yet.

S2: (S<H, -SD)

A student borrowed her professor's book, which she promised to return that day, but forgot to bring it.

S3: (S>H, +SD)

A staff manager has kept a student waiting for half an hour for a job interview because he was called away to an unexpected meeting.

S4: (S<H, +SD)

The waiter in an expensive restaurant brings fried chicken instead of beefsteak to a surprised customer.

S5: (S=H, -SD)

A notoriously unpunctual student is late again for a meeting with a friend with whom she is working on a paper.

S6: (S=H, +SD)

A driver in the parking lot backs into someone else's car.

S7: (S=H, -SD)

The speaker offended a fellow student by criticizing him during a discussion. After the meeting, the fellow student mentions this fact as an insult.

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3. Procedures

The analysis model used in this study has been based on the CCSARP coding manual. In order to make valid comparisons with native English data, this study categorized the apologizing discourse of respondents by referring to the coding manual provided by the CCSARP group. According to Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989), apology responses can be realized by any one of the five major strategies, or any combination of those strategies. In the following discourse, for example, all five major strategies are used (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989, pp. 289-294):

- Discourse:

  I'm sorry. I missed the bus, and there was a terrible traffic jam.

  Let's make another appointment. I'll make sure that I'm here on time.

- Categorization:

  I'm sorry (*IFID*). I missed the bus (*RESPONSIBILITY*), and there was a terrible traffic jam (*EXPLANATION*). Let's make another appointment (*REPAIR*). I'll make sure that I'm here on time (*FORBEARANCE*).

The discourse completion test (DCT) for this study was administered through two versions. One version of the DCT was written in English, another version in Korean. The English version of the DCT was distributed among native English speakers and Korean EFL learners, who were required to respond in English. The Korean version of the DCT was distributed to native Korean speakers, who were required to respond in Korean. The researcher asked the respondents to write their responses as realistically as possible according to how they would actually respond in the given situations.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was guided by the two research questions stated in the introduction. First, how is the apology strategy related to sociopragmatic factors such as social distance and social status? Second, to what extent do Korean EFL learners demonstrate pragmatic transfer in their speech act of apologizing in English?

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1. Strategy Selection and Sociopragmatic Factors

The first research question was to investigate the relationship between the choice of apology strategies and sociopragmatic factors such as social distance and social status. The relative power or social status refers to the power of the speaker with respect to the hearer, which reflects the degree to which the speaker can impose his/her will onto the hearer. In S1 and S3, the speaker's status is higher than the hearer, whereas in S2 and S4 the speaker's status is lower than the hearer. In S5, S6, and S7, the social status of the speaker and the hearer can be considered equal. The notion of social distance is used to refer to familiarity between interlocutors. In S1, S2, S5, and S7, the interlocutors are familiar, whereas in S3, S4, and S6, they are unfamiliar. Based on the categorization and method introduced by the CCSARP (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989, pp. 289-294), this study collected data concerning the choice of apology strategies in seven situations by native English speakers (NE), Korean speakers of English as a foreign language (EFL), and native Korean speakers (NK). Table 1 shows the frequency of apology strategies used by three groups in Situation 1.

TABLE 1
Frequency (Percentage) of Apology Strategies in S1 [S>H, -SD]

	NE	EFL	NK
IFID	18(60)	12(40)	10(33)
(Intensification)	16(53)	8(27)	6(20)
Responsibility	8(27)	14(47)	18(60)
Explanation	17(57)	6(20)	6(20)
Repair	4(13)	8(27)	15(50)
Forbearance	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)

* χ^2=23.71, df=8, p<0.05 (n=30 each group)

As shown in Table 1, the general strategies of IFID including Intensification, and Responsibility are used in all of the seven situations, whereas the other three strategies of Explanation, Repair, and Forbearance are situation-specific. In the case of S1, differences between distributions of apology strategies selected by three groups were significant (χ^2=23.71, df=8) at the level of p<0.05.

In the situation of S1 (where the professor apologizes to the student), native Korean speakers (33%) and Korean EFL speakers (40%) apologized less in using IFID than American NE speakers (60%) did. This cross-cultural difference may be due to the fact that Koreans are far more sensitive to status difference or social hierarchy than Americans.

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In other words, Koreans' interpersonal relations are much more hierarchical and authoritative, whereas Americans' interpersonal relations are more horizontal and egalitarian (Sohn, 1986).

TABLE 2
Frequency (Percentage) of Apology Strategies in S2 [S<H, -SD]

	NE	EFL	NK
IFID	17(57)	25(83)	29(97)
(Intensification)	18(60)	17(57)	17(57)
Responsibility	20(67)	25(83)	28(93)
Explanation	5(17)	1(3)	2(7)
Repair	23(77)	25(83)	25(83)
Forbearance	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)

* χ^2=7.53, df=8, p<0.05 (n=30 each group)

In the case of S2 (where the student apologizes to the professor), the selection of strategies such as Intensification, Responsibility, Explanation, Repair, and Forbearance showed nearly similar frequencies, whereas the selection of IFID strategy showed considerable differences. Table 2 indicates that American NE speakers (57%) apologized much less in using IFID than Korean EFL speakers (83%) and native Korean speakers (97%) did. American NE speakers' disinclination to use IFID can be explained in terms of highly egalitarian American values, whereas Korean emphasis on hierarchical relations was expressed by the relatively frequent use of explicit apologies. However, the differences between distributions of apology strategies selected by three groups were statistically insignificant.

TABLE 3
Frequency (Percentage) of Apology Strategies in S3 [S>H, +SD]

	NE	EFL	NK
IFID	22(73)	18(60)	17(57)
(Intensification)	18(60)	17(57)	17(57)
Responsibility	10(33)	12(40)	11(37)
Explanation	15(50)	7(23)	6(20)
Repair	4(13)	3(10)	2(7)
Forbearance	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)

* χ^2=16.39, df=8, p<0.05 (n=30 each group)

In the case of S3 (where the manager apologizes to the student interviewee), the speaker's status is higher than the hearer's and the relationship between the speaker and the

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hearer is unfamiliar. As shown in Table 3, native Korean speakers (57%) and Korean EFL speakers (60%) apologized less in using IFID than American NE speakers (73%) did. These differences between distributions of apology strategies selected by three groups were statistically significant (χ^2=16.39, df=8) at the level of p<0.05.

These cross-cultural differences may be due to the fact that Korean staff managers are far more sensitive to social hierarchy than American managers. In other words, Koreans' managers are much more authoritative, whereas American managers are more egalitarian.

TABLE 4
Frequency (Percentage) of Apology Strategies in S4 [S<H, +SD]

	NE	EFL	NK
IFID	20(67)	24(80)	28(93)
(Intensification)	25(83)	22(73)	20(67)
Responsibility	6(20)	8(27)	9(30)
Explanation	8(27)	2(7)	2(7)
Repair	29(97)	28(93)	29(97)
Forbearance	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)

* χ^2=5.93, df=8, p<0.05 (n=30 each group)

In the case of S4 (where the waiter apologizes to the customer), the speaker's status is lower than the hearer's and the relationship between the speaker and the hearer is unfamiliar. As shown in Table 4, native Korean speakers (93%) and Korean EFL speakers (80%) apologized more in using IFID than American NE speakers (67%) did. These differences between distributions of apology strategies selected by three groups were insignificant (χ^2=5.93, df=8).

One of the most distinctive features of Table 4 is the contrastive distribution of the infrequent choice of the Responsibility strategy and the frequent choice of the Repair strategy. The waiter's admission to having made "such a mistake might present him as incompetent" (Olshtain, 1989, pp. 168-9). Therefore, it can be assumed that the relatively frequent choice (97%, 93%, 97%) of the Repair strategy can be regarded as compensation for the relatively infrequent choice (20%, 27%, 30%) of the Responsibility strategy. In other words, the responsibility strategy can be regarded as an expression in which the apologizer admits obligation to repair the damage caused by the offense. In this sense, an expression of responsibility can be regarded as "an offer of repair" (Holmes, 1989, p. 200).

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TABLE 5
Frequency (Percentage) of Apology Strategies in S5 [S=H, -SD]

	NE	EFL	NK
IFID	15(50)	22(73)	23(77)
(Intensification)	16(53)	14(47)	13(43)
Responsibility	8(27)	7(23)	5(17)
Explanation	7(23)	3(10)	4(13)
Repair	13(43)	11(37)	13(43)
Forbearance	11(37)	18(60)	19(63)

* χ^2=8.30, df=8, p<0.05 (n=30 each group)

TABLE 6
Frequency (Percentage) of Apology Strategies in S7 [S=H, -SD]

	NE	EFL	NK
IFID	15(50)	16(53)	17(57)
(Intensification)	12(40)	7(23)	8(27)
Responsibility	16(53)	15(50)	17(57)
Explanation	4(13)	2(7)	2(7)
Repair	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)
Forbearance	0(0)	1(0)	0(0)

* χ^2=2.12, df=8, p<0.05 (n=30 each group)

In the case of S5 (where the unpunctual student apologizes for being late again to his friend) and S7 (where a student apologizes to a fellow student for criticizing him during a discussion), the status of interlocutors is equal and the relationship between the speaker and the hearer is familiar. In other words, both S5 and S7 have the same sociopragmatic factors: [S=H, -SD]. In both S5 and S7, there were no significant differences between three groups in their frequencies of apology strategies such as IFID, Intensification, Responsibility, Explanation, and Repair.

The strategy of promising Forbearance was not used in most of the situations. As we can see in Table 5, the strategy of promising Forbearance occurred only in S5, where the speaker had to apologize for being late for a meeting with a friend. The data indicates that native Korean speakers (63%) and Korean EFL learners (60%) apologized more in using the Forbearance strategy than American NE speakers (37%) did. Despite insignificant differences, these differences can be interpreted in terms of the dimension of collectivistic and individualistic cultures. Collectivistic Korean people are more likely to apologize in using the forbearance strategy than NE speakers for the sake of social harmony and cohesiveness, whereas for individualistic American people, offering apologies in using the

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Forbearance strategy can be a considerable violation of the speaker's self-esteem and autonomy. Therefore, Americans are less likely to offer an apology than Koreans (Lee, 2005; Sugimoto, 1997).

TABLE 7
Frequency (Percentage) of Apology Strategies in S6 [S=H, +SD]

	NE	EFL	NK
IFID	18(60)	25(83)	26(87)
(Intensification)	18(60)	14(47)	13(43)
Responsibility	10(33)	12(40)	14(47)
Explanation	7(23)	3(10)	1(3)
Repair	25(83)	26(87)	27(90)
Forbearnance	0(0)	0(0)	0(0)

* χ^2=8.08, df=8 (n=30 each group)

In the case of S6 (where a driver apologizes to someone else for backing into his car), no significant differences were found between three groups in their frequencies of apology strategies. The remarkable features of Table 7 is the complementary distribution between the relatively infrequent selections (NE=33%, EFL=40%, NK=47%) of the Responsibility strategy and the relatively frequent selections (NE=83%, EFL=87%, NK=90%) of the Repair strategy. The speaker might assume that offering Repairs in this situation might be more advantageous than acknowledging Responsibility. Therefore, the frequent choice of the Repair strategy can be regarded as compensation for the infrequent choice of the Responsibility strategy. In the two situations (S4 and S6), Korean and American participants realized their apology strategies in a very similar pattern.

2. Transfer of Apology Strategies

The second research question was to investigate the pragmatic transfer patterns of Korean EFL learners' apologies in English. To determine the extent of pragmatic transfer, this study compares EFL learners' apology strategies to two baseline data provided by native English speakers (NE) and native Korean speakers (NK). The transfer is divided into two categories: positive transfer or facilitation and negative transfer or interference (Gas & Selinker, 2001). Positive transfer occurs when there are similar response frequencies among NE, EFL, and NK. Negative transfer refers to similar response frequencies in EFL and NK with different response frequencies between NE and NK and between NE and EFL.

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TABLE 8
Average Frequency (Percentage) of Apology Strategies Across Seven Situations

	NE	EFL	NK
IFID	18(58)	20(67)	21(72)
Intensifying	18(58)	14(47)	13(45)
Responsibility	11(37)	12(44)	13(49)
Explanation	9(30)	3(11)	3(11)
Repair	14(47)	14(48)	16(53)

※ Similarity between EFL and NK (χ^2=0.27 insignificant)
Difference between NE and EFL (χ^2=11.07 df=4, p<0.05)
Difference between NE and NK (χ^2=12.45 df=4, p<0.05)
n=30 (each group)

In this study, the analysis focuses on negative transfer, which often interferes cross-cultural communications. To provide a clear picture of the similarities and differences among the three groups, this study compares the overall average frequency of apology strategies across the seven situations as shown in Table 8. To examine the similarities and differences among three groups, Chi-Square tests were conducted. The overall result shows that pragmatic transfer from Korean to English occurred, because similarity in the frequency of using apology strategies was found between EFL and NK with significantly different frequencies between NE and NK and between NE and EFL.

In the case of using IFIDs or explicit apologies, native Korean speakers and Korean EFL learners tended to use IFIDs with more frequency than native American English speakers as shown in Table 8 (NK: 72%, EFL: 67%, NE: 58%). The differences in the frequency of using IFIDs between NE and EFL and between NE and NK, while showing much similarity between EFL and NK display evidence of pragmatic transfer of Korean EFL learners. In other words, American people use the strategy of IFID less frequently than Korean people. This finding that the apology strategies using IFID occur more frequently in Korea than in America reflects basic differences in cultural values between American and Korean societies. For Individualistic Americans, expressing an explicit apology can be a considerable infringement of personal autonomy and therefore Americans are less likely to offer an apology than Koreans. In contrast, collectivistic Korean people are more likely to express explicit apologies than Americans in deference to social harmony and hierarchy. Therefore, EFL learners' frequent use of IFIDs or explicit apologies, while considered acceptable among Koreans, may be regarded as inappropriate by native American people.

In the case of using the strategy of Explanation, American participants tended to provide more explanations than Korean participants (NE: 30%, EFL: 11%, NK: 11%) as shown in Table 8. Since there are differences in the frequency of providing explanation between NE and EFL and between NE and NK, and there are similarities between EFL and NK, it can

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be argued that pragmatic transfer occurred in the English apologies used by Korean EFL learners. Korean people have a tendency for not frequently using the Explanation strategy compared to Americans, suggesting that in Korea using this strategy of explaining shows too much concern for one's own face. In contrast, Americans tend to provide more explanations than Koreans. This difference reflects cultural differences between two societies. American people emphasizing low-context communication tend to rely on the meaning of the words they use, whereas Korean people emphasizing high-context communication styles combine verbal and contextual messages to convey the entire meaning.

V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Having analyzed and discussed major findings on the two research questions stated in the introduction, it is worth reiterating some of the most crucial points in the light of relevant cultural backgrounds and providing some implications for EFL classroom activities.

1. Conclusion

The first question was to investigate the impact of sociopragmatic factors such as social status and social distance on the realizations of apology strategies used by three groups. In the impact of social status on the realizations of apology strategy, significant cross-cultural differences were found between American and Korean people. In general, Korean people (NK:72%, EFL:67%) apologized more in using the IFID strategy than American people (NE:58%), as shown in Table 8. However, in the case of someone in a higher status (such as S1 and S3) apologizing to someone in a lower status, Koreans apologized less frequently in using an explicit apology (IFID) than Americans, as shown in Table 1 and Table 3. This difference probably reflects the fact that Korean culture is far more authoritative than American culture which is relatively more egalitarian. Such results of this research correspond with previous studies like Olshtain (1989) in some respect, who concluded that "all four languages tended to choose IFIDs in all situations to similar degrees" (p. 165), but are contrary in other respect. It corresponds in that IFIDs are a strategy generally chosen in all situations, however is contrary in its result that the frequencies of choosing the same strategy are substantially different according to cultures. One of the reasons that the result of this study was different with that of Olshtain (1989) might be that Olshtain's research was based on English and Western languages similar to English such as French, German, Hebrew. Whereas this research is a comparison between

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Eastern and Westesrn languages.

In the impact of social distance on the realizations of apology strategy, no significant differences were found between American and Korean people. However, Korean people including both NK and EFL speakers seemed to be more sensitive to social distance than were American people. Collectivistic Korean culture seems to be more conscious of distinction of ingroup and outgroup members than is individualistic American culture. Collectivists tend to apply different value standards to members of their ingroups and outgroups, whereas individualists tend to apply the same value standards to all. Collectivistic Korean people tend to be emotionally attached to their ingroups, whereas individualistic American people tend to be emotionally detached even to their ingroups. These cultural differences often have a strong impact on the realizations of apology strategies.

The second research question was to investigate the pragmatic transfer patterns of Korean EFL learners' apologies in English. In the case of IFID, Korean EFL learners showed pragmatic transfer by showing much similarity to native Korean speakers and showing differences between NE and EFL and between NE and NK. In the case of using the Explanation strategy, pragmatic transfer occurred in the English apology used by Korean EFL learners. Americans tend to regard frequent use of the strategy of Explanation as an active self-respect or self-defense, whereas Koreans (NK and EFL speakers) tend to regard it as excessive concern of one's face, and thus this tendency results in disinclination to use the Explanation strategy. Linguistically, American culture prefers explanation in detail without need to infer the meaning of the message by relying on the context, whereas Korean culture considers contextual cues such as nonverbal or paraverbal cues more important than verbal information. In other words, American culture is a typical low-context culture, whereas Korean culture is high-context culture. If pragmatic transfer occurs in Korean EFL learners' English apologies, their apologies may be acceptable in Korea, but may be considered inappropriate in American cultures.

Despite these findings, this research has at least three limitations. Firstly, while this is a speech-act research, this study did not rely on naturally occurring spoken responses. Secondly, the interpretations provided in this study may go beyond the data collected. Finally, the sample size used in this research is relatively small, which limits its generalizability.

2. Pedagogical Implications

Based on the major findings, three important pedagogical implications for EFL in Korea can be addressed. First, the teaching of target cultures should be an integral part of the EFL curriculum, because even fairly advanced non-native learners' communicative acts

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regularly contain pragmatic errors (Blum-Kulka, House & Kasper, 1989, p. 10). Second, in order to raise the pragmalinguistic awareness of EFL learners, they should be taught the frequently used English apologizing forms and their respective functions. For instance, Korean EFL learners used mostly '*very* sorry' even in situations where native English speakers tended to use '*really* sorry' when using intensifiers. Finally, in order to raise the sociopragmatic awareness of EFL learners, they should develop the ability to use apology strategies appropriately according to social distance, social status, and severity of the offense. Korean EFL learners should also be aware of the fact that non-verbal cues such as gestures and facial expressions are actually cultural phenomena, which have substantial impact on the speech act of apology.

In short, English teachers in classroom settings should try to enhance Korean EFL learners' pragmalinguistic awareness on how American NE speakers distinguish unique functional differences of similar linguistic forms such as 'sorry' and 'excuse me' or 'very sorry' and 'really sorry'. Furthermore, English teachers should try to enhance Korean EFL students' sociopragmatic awareness on how American NE speakers perform apology realizations appropriately according to specific contextual situations.

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APPENDIX

Discourse Completion Test

Dear Respondent,

The researchers are conducting a study entitled Apology Strategies of Native and Nonnative Speakers of English. You are kindly requested to answer the items of 'Discourse Completion Test' carefully and accurately. The information obtained in the course of this study will be kept confidential and used only for the purposes of academic research.

Thank you.

General Information:

1. Gender: Male ( ) or Female ( )
2. Age : Below 20yr ( ), 20~25 ( ), 26~30 ( ), over 30 ( )
3. Your TOEFL score ( ) and/or TOEIC score ( )

Instruction: Please read seven brief situations calling for an apology. In each case, the person who you owe the apology to will speak first. Please respond as realistically as possible.

Situation 1: Suppose you are a university professor. You promised to return the student's paper that day but didn't finish reading it yet.
Student: "Did you read my paper?"
You: _____

Situation 2: Suppose you borrowed your professor's book. You promised to return that day, but forgot to bring it.
Professor: "Did you bring the book?"
You: _____

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Situation 3: You are a staff manager and you have kept a student waiting for half an hour for a job interview because you were called to an unexpected meeting.
Student: "What happened?"
You: _____

Situation 4: Suppose you are a waiter of an expensive restaurant. You brought fried chicken instead of beefsteak to a surprised customer.
Customer: "I ordered beefsteak."
You: _____

Situation 5: Suppose you are a notoriously unpunctual student. Today you are late again for a meeting with a friend with whom you are working on a joint paper.
Friend: "Oh. You are late again!"
You: _____

Situation 6: Suppose you are in a parking lot trying to find a place to park. You happen to back up into another person's car. The driver of the car is so angry and says unpleasant words to you.
Driver: "Can't you look where you're going? See what you've done!"
You: _____

Situation 7: Suppose you are in a study-meeting with your fellow students. During a discussion you offended a fellow student by criticizing him/her. After the meeting, the fellow student mentions this fact.
Student: "I think that your last remark was directed at me and I felt insulted."
You: _____

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

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Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: College

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