

Apologies and Cultural Dimensions

English for Negotiations

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Five strategies for apologies

Apology strategies can be used alone or in any combination or sequence.

1. Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID)
2. Taking on responsibility
3. Explanation or account
4. Offer of repair
5. Promise of forbearance

Example of all five strategies in one apology:

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

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

Other Strategies

- Opting out
 - No acknowledgement of offense
- Denial of fault or offense
 - I did not cause the accident. You parked your car in my way!
- Blame (putting blame on the hearer)
 - Why didn't you remind me?
- Health (asking the state of health)
 - Are you all right? I can take you to hospital.
- Request
 - Can I use it for two days?



Example: President Obama

- “I am sorry that they are finding themselves in this situation based on assurances they got from me... We’ve got to work hard to make sure that they know we hear them and we’re going to des in a tough position as a consequence of this.”



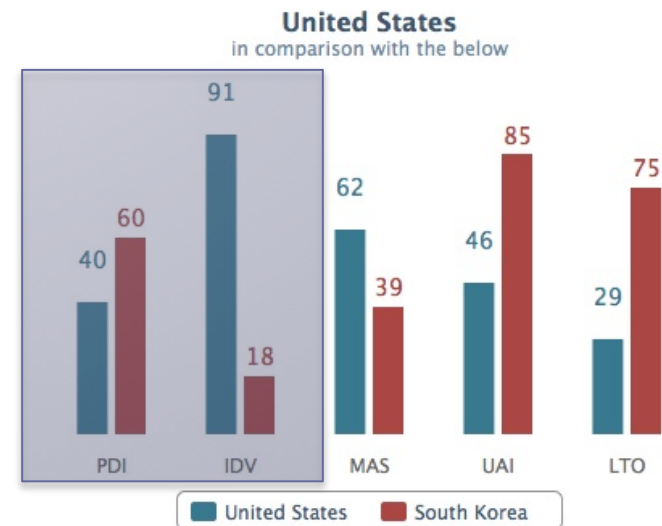
Cross-Cultural Study of Apologies Korean Speakers and American English Speakers

- Byon (2005) compared L1 Korean and L1 English apologies
- Koreans: focus on Power
- Americans: focus on social Distance
- Korean semantics involved societal and responsibility issues not necessarily present in American English

**Power
Distance**

Power and Distance

- Two significant social variables affecting speech act performance
- Power - vertical
 - nonreciprocal control and submission
- Distance (or solidarity) - horizontal
 - mutual bonding and unfamiliarity

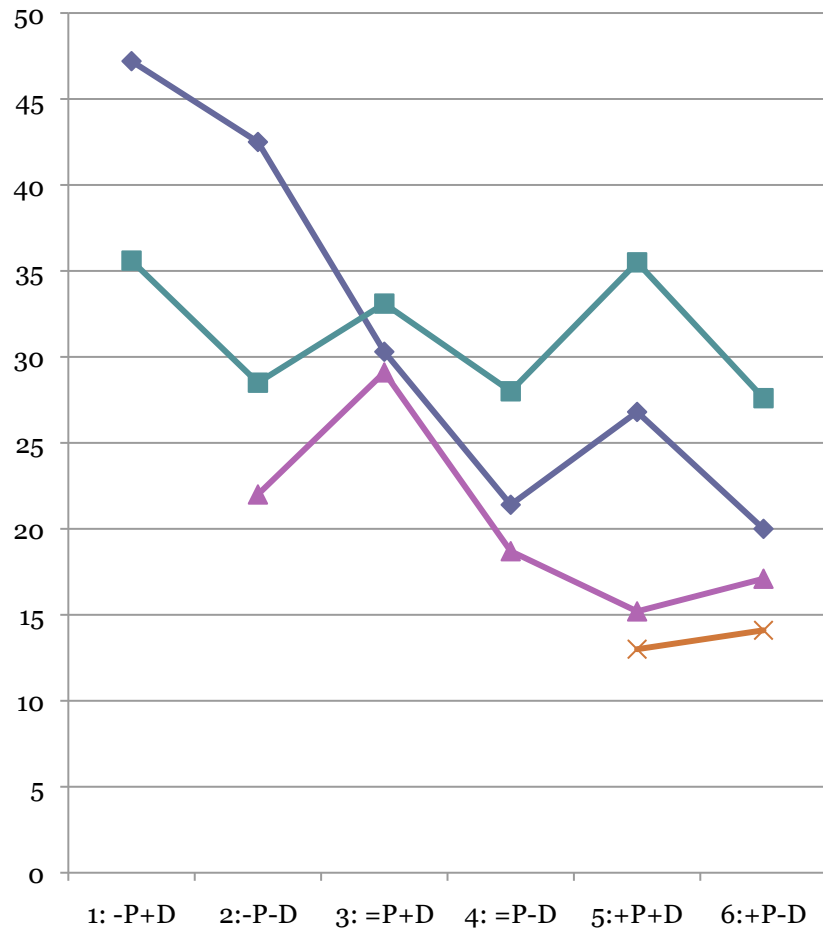


Six possible combinations

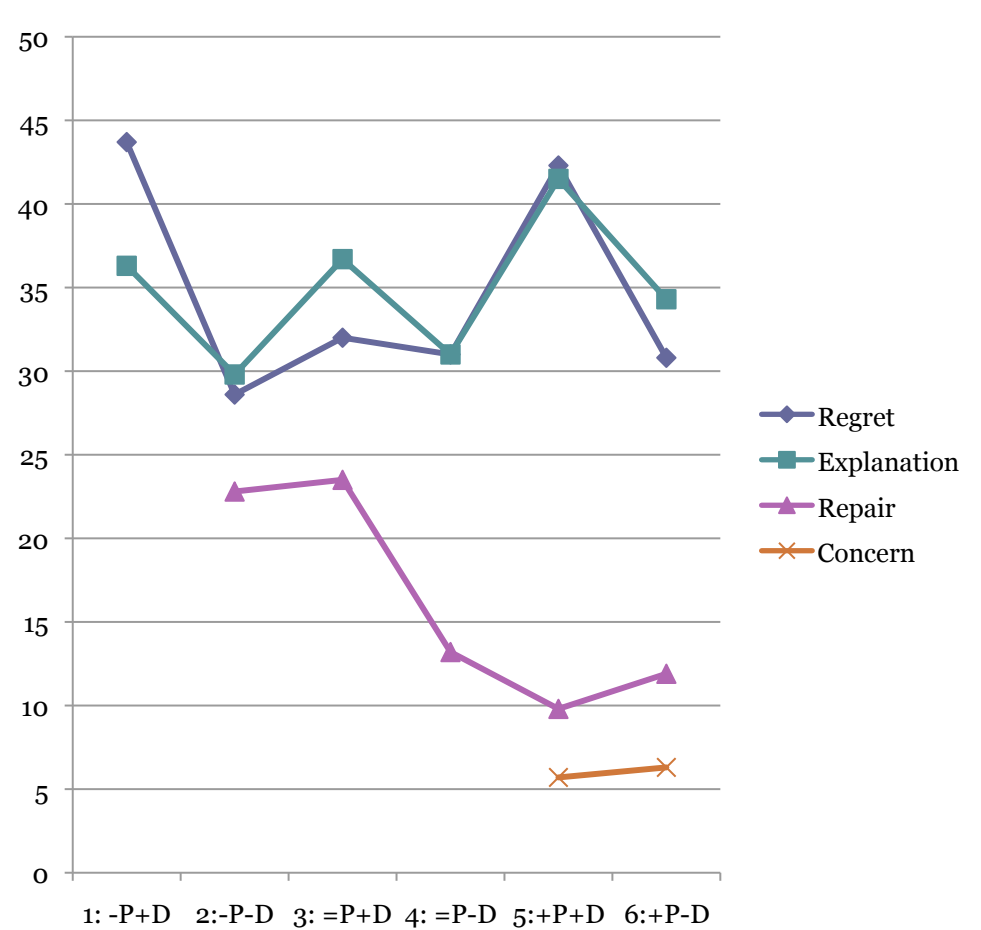
1. -power, +distance
(lower power speaker)
2. -power, -distance
(lower power speaker)
3. =power, +distance
(equal power speaker)
4. =power, -distance
(equal power speaker)
5. +power, +distance
(higher power speaker)
6. +power, -distance
(higher power speaker)



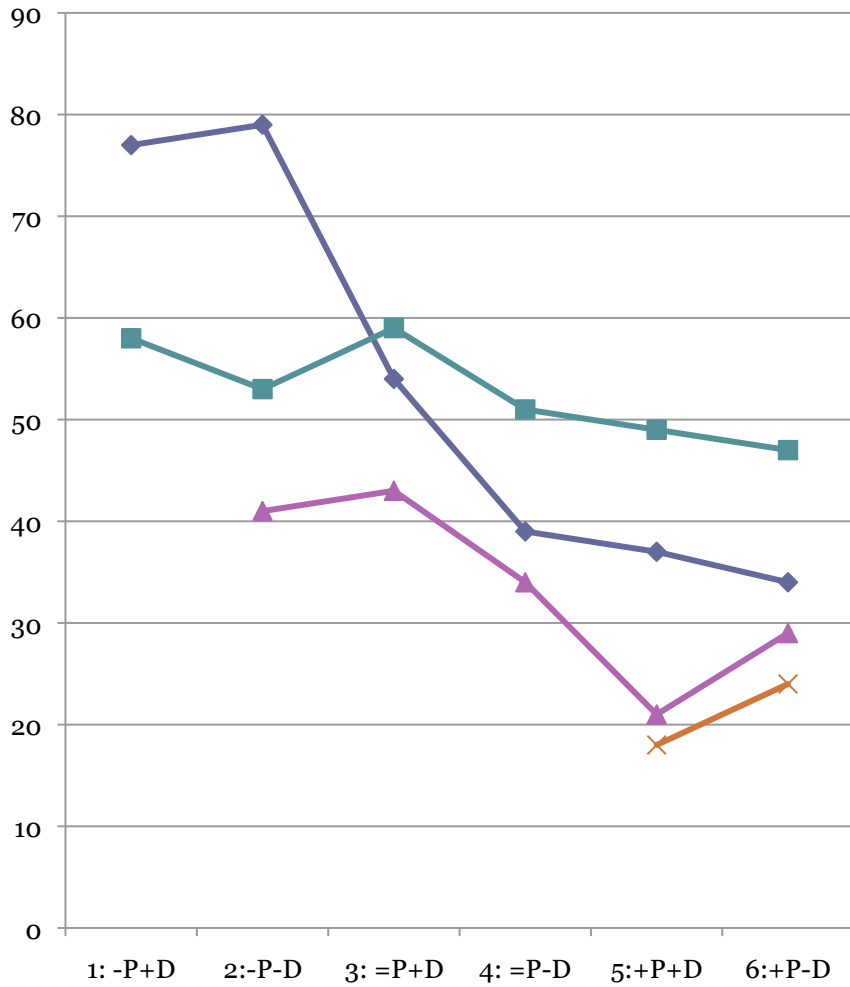
Number of Koreans who expressed:



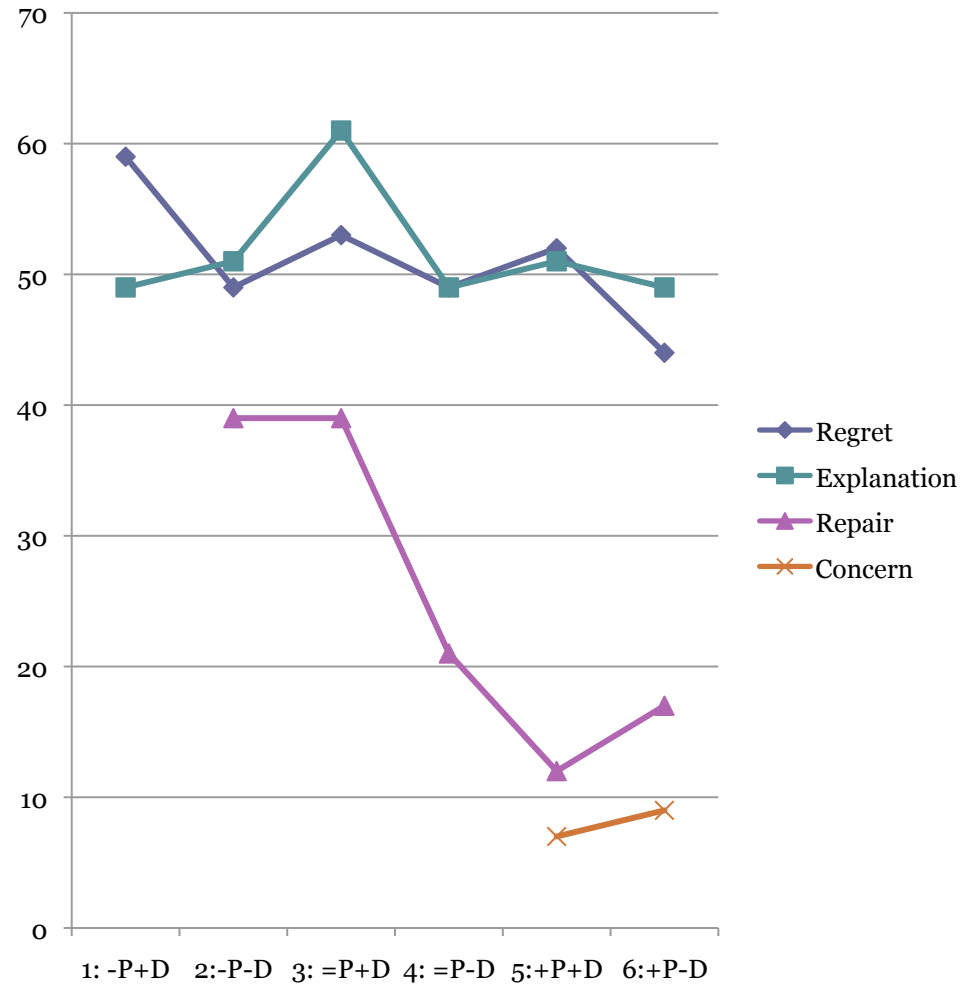
Number of Americans who expressed:



Frequency of expressions by Koreans:



Frequency of expressions by Americans:



Cross Culturally

- Use of apology formulae tend to be similar across languages
- The most frequently employed formula:

expressing regret +
explanation + offer of repair



Situation 1

You are taking an economics class, and have many questions about the mid-term. You set up an appointment with the professor at 2:00 p.m. in her office. It is your first time meeting the professor during his office hours, and you don't know the professor well. You arrive in the professor's office fifteen minutes late.



What is the power-distance relationship?

- Apologizing to someone in authority may impose heavier psychological burdens than apologizing to someone of lower status.
- Koreans employ expressing regret frequently:

Yes, Professor, I am sorry that I am late. Have you waited so long?

I am really sorry. If it is OK with you, may I ask you a question now?

Table 3. The Total Number of Formulae Used in Situation 1

| | % (<i>N</i> = raw score) | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | KN | KFL | AEN |
| Opting out | — | — | — |
| Accepting the blame | 5.5 (9) | — | 3.7 (5) |
| Expressing regret | 47.2 (77) | 50.8 (64) | 43.7 (59) |
| Offer of apology | — | 3.2 (4) | 1.5 (2) |
| Minimizing | — | — | — |
| Querying preconditions | — | — | — |
| Blaming someone else | 1.2 (2) | — | 3.7 (5) |
| Embarrassment | 2.5 (4) | — | 5.2 (7) |
| Explanation | 35.6 (58) | 40.5 (51) | 36.3 (49) |
| Expressing concern | — | — | — |
| Promise of forbearance | 7.9 (13) | 5.6 (7) | 5.9 (8) |
| Offer of repair | — | — | — |
| TOTAL | 100.0 (163) | 100.0 (126) | 100.0 (135) |

→ Verbosity = Excessive use of regret

Self-Introducing Remarks

- Korean speakers use self-introducing remarks before and/or after making their apologies

Professor, how are you? This is Kim Chel, who is supposed to meet you at 2 o'clock today.

Well, Professor, I am taking your economics class . . . I am sorry that I am late.

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- Korean speakers made more use of intensifiers
 - Increases impact of intent

Professor, I am really sorry for being late.

Individualism vs Collectivism

- The American English speakers did not make apologetic remarks more than once.
- They did not use self-introductory remarks

I'm sorry. I wasn't able to make it on time.

Sorry about being late. Is there still time to ask you some questions?

I'm sorry. I had an appointment for 2:00 p.m. and I couldn't find your office, since this is the first time I've been here.

Situation 2

You borrowed a book from a professor, whom you know well. You promised to return the book today in class, but you forgot to bring the book.



What is the power-distance situation?
Will you apologize in this situation? If yes, please write what you would say in actual conversation.



What would you say?

What is the power-distance situation?

Will you apologize in this situation? If yes, please write what you would say in actual conversation

What elements of the apology would you incorporate?

Table 4. The Total Number of Formulae Used in Situation 2

| | % (<i>N</i> = raw score) | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| | KN | KFL | AEN |
| Opting out | — | — | — |
| Accepting the blame | — | 1.3 (2) | 1.8 (3) |
| Expressing regret | 42.5 (79) | 33.3 (51) | 28.6 (49) |
| Offer of apology | — | 1.9 (3) | 0.6 (1) |
| Minimizing | — | 5.2 (8) | 7.6 (13) |
| Querying preconditions | — | — | — |
| Blaming someone else | 2.2 (4) | — | — |
| Embarrassment | 4.8 (9) | — | 0.6 (1) |
| Explanation | 28.5 (53) | 32.0 (49) | 29.8 (51) |
| Expressing concern | — | 4.6 (7) | 7.0 (12) |
| Promise of forbearance | — | — | 1.2 (2) |
| Offer of repair | 22.0 (41) | 21.6 (33) | 22.8 (39) |
| TOTAL | 100.0 (186) | 100.0 (153) | 100.0 (171) |

**Offer of repair, not used in Situation 1,
is the third-major formula in Situation 2 for all groups.**

Korean Extensive Use of Expressing Regret

Oh, Professor, I am sorry. I should have brought the book by today, but. . . .

I completely forgot about it. What should I do? I am really sorry.

You will forgive me, right?



American Speakers Use of Minimizing and Expressing Concern

It is no problem, right? Since it is morning, and I can bring it to you later.

Hey, I'm sorry but I forgot to bring your book. You don't really need it now, right?

Professor, are you all right without it today?



Positive Politeness

- Strategies that strengthen common ground
- Convey that the speaker and hearer are cooperators
- Fulfill a hearer's desire for something
 - attending to an addressee's interests
 - exaggerating approval
 - using in-group identity markers
 - seeking agreement
 - asserting common ground
 - being optimistic, etc.

Negative Politeness

- Preserve a hearer's freedom of action and freedom from imposition
 - being indirect
 - using hedges
 - being pessimistic

There **might** just be a **few insignificant** problems we need to address.


The party was **somewhat** spoiled by the return of the parents.

I'm not an expert but you **might want to** try restarting your computer.

-Distance: New Strategy?

- American speakers used positive politeness strategies because of change in the distance variable
- Korean speakers still found it difficult to use these formulae, despite the change in the distance variable.



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- It is impolite for a Korean student to use “positive politeness strategies” such as expressing concern and minimizing toward someone who is of higher status.
 - Korean speakers continue to use title in addressing their professor with high frequency


- Situation 1: -power +distance
 - Regret + explanation
- Situation 2: -power –distance
 - Regret + explanation + repair
- Situation 3: =power +distance
 - Regret + explanation + repair



Situation 4

=power - distance

- Use of positive politeness strategies most frequent among Korean speakers
- Korean speakers would not necessarily apologize
- They would start conversation with different topics (e.g., giving a complimentary remark):
 - Hey, you look great today!
 - By the way, I called you last night. Were you busy/away?
- Korean speakers show more solidarity with intimates of
=power
 - Use of first name as an address frequent Koreans and Americans
 - Koreans attached an “in-group identity marker,” to end the addressee’s first name as a positive politeness marker to strengthen solidarity



Situation 5

+power, +distance

- Professor:
 - Regret + explanation + expressing concern + offer of repair
- American speakers tended to show concern more often in the –distance situations compared to +distance situations
- Altering the distance variable




Group Activity

- Create a situation where your team has done something to offend the other side
- Use one of the 6 combinations of power-distance
- Should be relevant to US-ROK negotiation
 - US team: How to apologize to Koreans?
 - ROK team: How to apologize to Americans?



END

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- There are a series of
 - analytic connections between the notion of speech acts, what the speaker means, what the sentence uttered means, what
 - the speaker intends, what the hearer understands, and what the rules governing the linguistic elements are (Searle 1969;
 - cited in Schiffrin 1994:54).

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- "We are aware that a lack of communications...led to the perception that Apple is arrogant and doesn't care or attach enough importance to consumer feedback," Mr. Cook wrote in the letter, which was published on the firm's Chinese website. "We express our sincere apologies for any concerns or misunderstandings this gave consumers."

Reacting to the repeated attacks, Tim Cook, Apple's boss, apologized to a Chinese firm's customers. He vowed to improve Apple's customer-service policies.



Face Threat

- Threat: positive or negative face of a participant
- The participant calculates the weight of a specific FTA based on power, social distance, and ranking
- Chooses an appropriate politeness strategy for that act's weight (degree of threat)

- There are 5 Korean terms that are typically considered apology terms: mian-, coysong-, sakwa-, silyey-, and yongse-. Mian and coysong- are nouns, which become adjectival verbs when combined with the -ha 'do' suffix to form mianha- and coysongha-. The latter three are verbs. All five forms are Sino-Korean and can take honorific inflection; however, the adjectival terms cannot take certain inflections, such as the progressive, that verbs can (Sohn, 1999:[26TD\$DIF]275-277).

Mian and

- coysong are both far more commonly used as apologies than the other three and are often translated as 'sorry' or 'to apologize'. Of the 181 apologies in our corpus that used one of these lexical items, 164 contained mian or coysong. There is a sixth lexical item in use, the English loan word sori. Sori is most often used by young speakers and takes no inflection. We will focus on mian and coysong for the remainder of this essay.

Korean Speech Levels

- Four speech levels commonly used in Korean society (Sohn, 1999)
 - **Deferential**
 - addressing the public (public announcement, news broadcast, or lecture)
 - junior person to a senior person; signifies a formal conversational setting
 - **Polite**
 - addressing someone of senior status in a casual, non-formal, and everyday type of conversation

These two speech levels can be used in a single interaction

- **Intimate**
 - **No ending**
- **Plain**
 - **Ending with –ta).**

These two levels are used when addressing a child, when speaking to someone of lower status, or between very close friends