

MASTER'S THESIS

A comparison of L2 learners' interlanguage performance on apologizing in terms of age

Ho, Shuk Man

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**A COMPARISON OF L2 LEARNERS'
INTERLANGUAGE PERFORMANCE ON
APOLOGIZING
IN TERMS OF AGE**

**HO SHUK MAN, CONNIE
STUDENT NO.: 06405282**

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Abstract

This research investigates age differences in interlanguage performance on the speech acts of apology. Previous studies have mostly focused on first language performance on apology, cultural differences on apology, comparison between native English speakers (NSs) and non-native English speakers (NNSs), relationship between apology and other factors such as age, gender and social differences. This research is different from the previous studies in that the comparison groups are all NNSs in Hong Kong. The 2 age groups are 9 and 11 respectively. The respondents' speech acts were collected by a discourse completion task (DCT) based on Hudson, Detmer and Brown's (1992) DCT format. The result showed that 'expression of apology' was the most frequently used strategy while 'offer of repair' and 'promise of non-recurrence' were seldom used in both age groups. To express a sense of apology, "I am/I'm sorry" was the most frequently used statement. Some 9-year-old respondents expressed higher degree of apology which included an intensifier 'very'. To take a responsibility, 'accept the blame' was the most common reaction, especially to the receiver with high status. To give an explanation, 9-year-old respondents showed inefficient pragmatic knowledge while 11-year-old respondents involved variations. To give a promise, 11-year-old respondents gave promise when they felt guilty.

摘要

這研究探討不同年齡組別，在道歉的演講行為上的內在語言表現的不同。以往的研究多集中探討研究對象的道歉語言表現、文化差異與道歉語言表現的關係、比較以英語為母語及非英語為母語的研究對象在道歉語言表現的不同、各種因素如年齡、性別、權力與道歉語言表現的關係。是次研究與以往的研究的不同之處，是這次研究的兩組研究對象，均是非英語為母語的香港學生，兩個年齡組別分別是 9 歲及 11 歲，研究對象的演講行為都是由一份對話工作紙(DCT)搜集而來的，形式以哈德森、黛特摩及布朗(1992)的對話工作紙為藍本。研究結果顯示「表示歉意」是兩組研究對象最常用的道歉策略，而「提供補償」及「答應不再發生」就是較少使用的策略。在「表示歉意」方面，「對不起」是最常用的語句，部份 9 歲的研究對象表達了程度較深的歉意，就是在「對不起」前加上了強調語氣的「很」字，即「很對不起」。在「負上責任」方面，最常見的反應是「接受過失」，尤其是當對方是享有較高地位者。在「提供解釋」方面，9 歲的研究對象顯示出他們在語意學上的知識的不足，而 11 歲的研究對象則有較多不同形式的表現。在「提供保證」方面，當 11 歲的研究對象自覺犯錯時，他們會提出保證。

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