

MASTER'S THESIS

"Sorry. I'm so busy that I carelessly spilt some oyster sauce on you.": the uses of apologies among a group of bilingual speakers in Hong Kong

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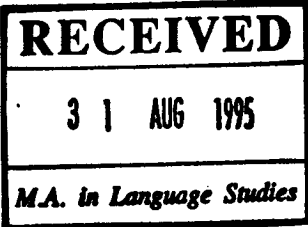
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**“SORRY. I’M SO BUSY THAT I CARELESSLY
SPILT SOME OYSTER SAUCE ON YOU.”:
THE USES OF APOLOGIES AMONG
A GROUP OF BILINGUAL SPEAKERS IN HONG KONG**

BY

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Abstract

Apologies can be defined as compensatory action to an offense, and has been part of an extensive research project called The Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) first set up to investigate cross-cultural and intralingual variation in two speech acts - requests and apologies.

This study has adapted the Bergman and Kasper (1993) study in trying to investigate the apology strategies used by Hong Kong Cantonese Interlanguage users of English (IL HK-Eng), and attempt to compare them with the American Native Speakers of English (NS AmE) in the Bergman and Kasper study.

Two questionnaires, a Discourse Construction questionnaire and an Assessment questionnaire were administered to two separate groups of post secondary students in Hong Kong. The results showed that the Social Distance reflected the social role relationships between the offender and the offended party. Situations with high severity did not necessarily provide obligation to apologize, but were dependent on the context of the situation. There was less use of Verbal Redress unlike the "waffling" and gushing theory ascribed to IL users. The reasons offered are that this may be due to the lack of language proficiency of the respondents. However, there was no set pattern in the use of apology strategies that have been discovered in similar studies.