

**APOLOGY STRATEGIES USED BY CHINESE
SPEAKERS IN A CHINESE TV SERIES**

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KUALA LUMPUR**

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ABSTRACT

This study is an investigation of apology strategies used by Chinese speakers, it also looks at the relationship between social status and the speakers' choice of apology strategies. Data used in this study include 57 sets of apology exchanges collected from a Chinese TV series produced in mainland China. The analytical framework used in the current study was modified based on Olshtain and Cohen (1983) and CCSARP (Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project, Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). The findings revealed that out of the strategies listed in the framework, three new types of sub-strategies were identified in the corpus of this study, comprising *expression of embarrassment*, *asking for another chance*, and *mentioning the offence committed*. The most frequently used apology strategies were the *IFIDs (Illocutionary Force indicating Devices)*, *taking responsibility*, and *explanation*. Further investigation showed that female and male speakers choose different strategies to express their apologies to female and male hearers of different social statuses. For example, female speakers preferred to apologize to higher status female hearers rather than to equal status female hearers. The findings of this study could be beneficial to Chinese learners in enhancing their communication skills in making apologies. The finding can also be used to make comparisons of apology strategies made in Chinese and other languages.

Keywords: Speech Acts; Apologies; Chinese Speakers; Chinese TV series; Social status

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini mengkaji hubungan kait strata sosial dan pemilihan penutur dengan strategi memohon maaf dikalangan penutur Bahasa Cina. Data kajian ini terdiri daripada 57 set tuturan maaf yang dikumpul dari siri television Cina dari negara China. Rangka kerja analisis untuk kajian ini telah diubahsuaikan berdasarkan kajian Olshtain and Cohen (1983) dan CCSARP (Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project, Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa tiga sub-strategi baru telah dikemukakan yang tidak terdapat dalam rangka kerja analisis yang dipilih iaitu: ekspresi malu, memohon peluang lain, dan menyebut kesalahan yang telah terjadi. Di antara strategi yang paling kerap didapati adalah strategi *IFIDs* (*Illocutionary Force indicating Devices*), strategi bertanggungjawab dan strategi member penjelasan. Selanjutnya, kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa penutur lelaki dan wanita memilih strategi yang berlainan untuk memohon maaf berdasarkan strata sosial. Contohnya, penutur wanita lebih kerap meminta maaf daripada penutur wanita lain yang mempunyai strata sosial yang lebih tinggi. Hasil kajian ini memberi faedah kepada mereka yang ingin mempelajari Bahasa Cina untuk memperbaiki kemahiran berkomunikasi dalam strategi memohon maaf. Kajian ini juga boleh digunakan untuk kajian yang membandingkan permohonan maaf dalam Bahasa Cina dengan bahasa-bahasa lain.

Keywords: Tingkah Pertuturan; Pemohonan Maaf; Penutur Bahasa Cina; Siri TV
Bahasa Cina; Strata Sosial

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ORIGINAL LITERARY WORK DECLARATION.....	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ABSTRAK.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES.....	xiv
LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	xvi
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	xvi
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.1.1 Background.....	2
1.1.2 Description of the TV series <i>Wo De Qing Chun Gao Ba Du</i>	4
1.2 Problem Statement.....	5
1.3 Research Aims.....	7
1.4 Research Questions	8
1.5 Significance of the Study	9
1.6 Scope and Limitations	10
1.7 Definitions of Terms	11
1.8 Summary	11
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	13
2.1 Introduction	13

2.2 Speech Acts	13
2.2.1 Types of Speech Acts	16
2.2.2 Direct Speech Acts and Indirect Speech Acts	18
2.2.3 Speech Act and Culture.....	19
2.3 The Speech Act of Apology	20
2.3.1 Definitions of Apology	20
2.3.2 Apology Strategies	21
2.4 Social Status and Speech	27
2.5 Electronic Media and Pragmatics.....	28
2.6 Politeness	30
2.6.1 Politeness in Western Culture.....	31
2.6.2 Brown and Levinson’s Theory of Politeness	31
2.6.3 Leech’s Politeness Principle	32
2.6.4 Politeness in Chinese	33
2.7 Previous Studies on Apologies.....	35
2.7.1 Research on apologies in other languages.....	35
2.7.2 Apologies in Chinese	38
2.7.3 Apologies on Gender	41
2.7.4 Studies on “bu hao yi si”	41
2.8 Summary	42
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	44
3.1 Introduction.....	44

3.2 Research Design.....	45
3.3 Theoretical Framework.....	46
3.3.1 Speech Act Theory.....	46
3.3.2 Politeness Theory.....	47
3.4 Data Collection.....	48
3.4.1 Data Source	48
3.4.2 Criteria of Selecting Apologies	50
3.4.3 Procedure of Data Collection	51
3.5 Data Analysis	53
3.5.1 Rationale for Formulae	53
3.5.2 Distinguishing Social Status.....	54
3.5.3 Analytical Framework.....	54
3.5.4 Analysis.....	57
3.6 The Pilot Study.....	59
3.7 Summary.....	60
CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS	61
4.1 Introduction.....	61
4.2 The Overall Choice of Apology Strategies.....	61
4.3 Strategy 1: IFIDs (Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices)	63
4.3.1 Sub-strategy 1: Expression of Regret.....	65
1. Add Modal Particle after the Expression of Regret	65
2. Combining the Expression of regret with Explanation	68

3. Combining the Expression of Regret with Mentioning the Offence Committed	71
4.3.2 Sub-strategy 2: Expression of Embarrassment	73
Function 1: “Break Out of the Current Situation”	74
Function 2: “Expressing Apology”	75
Function 3: “Formulaic Pattern”	76
Function 4: “Showing Shyness”	76
Function 5: “Expressing Inconvenience”	77
4.3.3 Sub-strategy 3: Offer of Apology	78
4.3.4 Sub-strategies 4: Asking for Forgiveness and Sub-strategy 5: Asking for another Chance	82
1. Asking for Forgiveness	82
2. Asking for another Chance	83
4.4 Strategy 2: Taking Responsibility	84
4.4.1 Sub-strategy 1: Mentioning the Offence Committed	85
4.4.2 Sub-strategy 2: Expressing Self-deficiency	88
4.4.3 Sub-strategy 3: Accepting the Blame	90
4.4.4 Sub-strategy 4: Expressing Lack of Intent	93
4.5 Strategy 3: Offer of Repair	96
4.6 Strategy 4: Concern for the Hearer	100
4.7 Strategy 5: Promise for Forbearance	101
4.8 The Relationship between Social Status and Apologies	105

4.8.1 The Relationship between Social Status and Apologies Made By Female Speakers to Female Hearers	106
4.8.2 Relationship between Social Status and Apologies Made By Female Speakers to Male Hearers	109
4.8.3 The Relationship between Social Status and Apologies Made By Male Speakers to Female Hearers	115
4.8.4 The Relationship between Social Status and Apologies Made By Male Speakers to Male Hearers	117
4.9 Summary	118
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION	120
5.1 Introduction	120
5.2 Research Question 1: “What Are the Apology Strategies Used By Chinese Speaker in a Chinese TV Series?”	120
5.3 Research Question 2: “How does social status influence Chinese speakers’ choice of apology strategies?”	123
5.3.1 The Relationship between Social Status and Female Speakers’ Choice of Apologies	124
1. Apologies Made By Female Speakers to Female Hearers.....	124
2. Apologies Made by Female Speakers to Male Hearers.....	125
5.3.2 The Relationship between Social Status and Male Speakers	126
5.4 Limitation of the Study	127
5.5 Contributions of this Study	127
5.6 Implications.....	128

5.7 Future Recommendation of the Study 129

5.8 Summary 130

REFERENCES 132

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LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

FIGURES

Figure 3.1 Description of research methodology	45
Figure 3.2 Theoretical Framework of This Study	48
Figure 3.3 Analytical framework of the current study.....	55

TABLES

Table 2.1 Leech's (1983) Politeness Principles.....	33
Table 3.1 Distribution of Apology in the TV series	54
Table 3.2 Combination of Olshtain and Cohen (1983) and CCSARP (1984) apology strategies.....	56
Table 3.3 Framework of the current study.....	57
Table 4.1 Overall distribution of apology strategies	62
Table 4.2 Distribution of sub-strategies of IFIDs	64
Table 4.3 Distribution of Sub-strategies of Taking Responsibility	85
Table 4.4 Distribution of Apology Strategies within Different Status	105
Table 4.5 Distribution of Apology Strategies Used by Female Speakers to Female Hearer	107
Table 4.6 Distribution of Sub-strategies of IFIDs Used by Female Speakers to Female Hearer.....	108
Table 4.7 Distribution of Apology Strategies Used by Female Speakers to Male Hearer	110

Table 4.8 Distribution of Sub-strategies of IFIDs Used by Female Speakers to Male Hearer.....	111
Table 4.9 Distribution of Sub-strategies of Taking Responsibility Used by Female Speakers to Male Hearer	113
Table 4.10 Distribution of Apology Strategies Used by Male Speakers to Female Hearer	115
Table 4.11 Distribution of sub-strategies of IFIDs used by male speakers to female hearers	116
Table 4.12 Distribution of Sub-Strategies of Taking Responsibility Used by Male Speakers to Female Hearers	116
Table 4.13 Distribution of Apology Strategies Used by Male Speakers to Male Hearers	117

LIST OF SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS

-	To
F	Female
M	Male
E	Equal Status
L	Lower Status
H	Higher Status
S	Speaker
H	Hearer

APPENDIX:

APPENDIX 1: Transcription of Apologies of the TV series	137
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter is a general introduction of the whole study. It covers the background of the current study whereby learning Chinese (Mandarin) is now becoming increasingly popular to foreign learners. A brief description of the TV series is provided. This is then followed by a discussion of the problem statement which talks about the lack of data regarding Chinese apologies (Fu, 2010) and social status may have more impact on the interactions of Chinese speakers (Sun & Liu, 2015). Two main research aims were provided, one is to add to the current literature on Chinese apologies, and the other one is to find out if social status have different impact on male and female Chinese speakers' choice of apology strategies. Two research questions were formulated based on the research aims. This is then followed by the significance of the study. Limitations of the study and definition of terms (such as speech act, apology, and apology strategies) used in this study in sequence. A brief summary of this chapter and the structure of the whole study is provided.

1.1.1 Background

With China's entry into the WTO (World Trade Organization) and the success of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, China has become one of the main focuses of the world, and this has aroused the interest of foreigners in knowing more about China and learning Chinese (Kou, Tan & Li, 2009). Meanwhile the Chinese government has also been promoting Mandarin Chinese by founding the Confucius Institute all over the world. By the year 2015, there were 133 countries or regions that had cooperated with the Hanban-Confucius Institute Headquarters of China to establish the Confucius Institute overseas. Undoubtedly, Chinese is becoming increasingly popular amongst foreigners, and thus more and more foreigners want to learn the Chinese language and know more about the Chinese culture (Sun, 2013).

The Chinese culture is one which has deep roots in history and its own characteristics. It is strongly influenced by the Confucian philosophy, which believes in harmony in society through respect to age and social hierarchy (Jandt 2003). According to Yum (1988), Confucianism has many different effects on Chinese interpersonal communication. For example, the Chinese have particular rules that govern interaction with their elders or with those whose status is known. With regards to apologies in Chinese, Yang (1985) pointed out that the Chinese are a group of people that do not like to apologize or take responsibility. On the contrary, there are many historical stories (such as the story of "Fu Jin Qing Zui") that show that admitting one's mistake is a good quality to have in a person, and people are encouraged to apologize and take responsibility when they do make any mistakes or offend others. On the other hand, Ying (2014) has pointed out that the Chinese apologize less than westerners. For example, in the past, the Chinese rarely apologized for sneezing, hiccupping or coughing, as these were thought to be physiological reactions that were hard to control. As such, it is inferred that the

identification of apologies or offences in the Chinese culture may differ from Western culture, and this may result in the differences in choosing apology strategies.

“Language is a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used for human communication” (Dai & He, 2002). According to the definition of language, the aim of using language is for communication. Therefore, learning a language should not only focus on grammar and vocabulary, but also the need to pay more attention in improving one’s competence of language use in communication. In order to improve one’s competence in communication, for both speakers and learners of a certain language, understanding the use of the language in a socially and culturally appropriate way is important.

Regarding any aspects of a language, speech acts is more culture specific (Birner, 2012). There are various definitions of speech acts that have been proposed, however, the general one is given by Austin (1975) that is to perform action by utterances. The object of the current study is the speech act of the apology. An apology is the speech act that is required either when the social norms of politeness demand the mending of a behavior, or when a linguistic expression has offended another person (Trosborg, 1995), or when somebody is offended due to the fact that personal expectations are not fulfilled (Fraser, 1981). Over the years, apologies have been studied in different languages, and research findings (such as by Bataineh & Bataineh, 2006; Nureddeen, 2008; and Jebahi, 2011) have shown that cross-cultural differences exist in performing the speech act of apology. However, according to Fu (2010), most studies on speech acts in Chinese are conducted to investigate the speech act of a compliment (like Chen, 1993; Yuan, 2001), and studies on apologies have not been fully developed, suggesting that there is still a lack of studies on apologies in Chinese.

A number of studies have investigated the impact of social status on the use of apologies amongst the Chinese (e.g., Pan, 2004; Li & Li, 2004; and Sun & Liu, 2015). Most of these studies confirmed the influence of social status on the use of apologies; that is, Chinese speakers prefer to employ more complex strategies to demonstrate their apologies to higher status hearers. On the other hand, gender is another important factor that has been investigated by many studies in Chinese (e.g., Li, 2006; Sun & Wang, 2009; and Hou, 2012). Most of the studies on gender differences concluded that females apologize more than males as they find it easier to make apologies. According to Bataineh & Bataineh (2006), the hearer's gender may also have influence the speaker's choice of apology, however, it was rarely considered in previous studies on apologies. Thus, this current study shall explore the relationship between social status and choice of apology by considering the gender of both the speaker and hearer.

1.1.2 Description of the TV Series *Wo De Qing Chun Gao Ba Du*

Wo De Qing Chun Gao Ba Du is a TV series that was produced by Zhejiang Satellite TV, Mainland China in the year of 2014. The TV series consists of 30 episodes in total, and each episode lasts around 30 minutes on average. This TV series tells the story about a group of university students in Chen Xi University who do not major in music but love music and consider doing music their dream. The story mainly revolves around the students' extra-curricular activities in the chorus and the cheering squad of Chen Xi University. As young adults, the university students in this TV series are full of passion but are often confused on how to pursue their dreams. They come across various difficulties such as being unrecognized by others, or struggling with internal members of the chorus/cheering squad. Luckily, with the guidance and support of their advisor of the

chorus, Mr. Xiao, these students finally overcome the hardships of growing up and make their dreams come true.

Most of the actors and actresses in the TV series come from Mainland China and only a few of them come from Hong Kong and Taiwan, China. The medium of interactions in this TV series is Mandarin Chinese, which means that all the actors and actresses in this TV series speak Mandarin Chinese.

1.2 Problem Statement

The speech act of apology has received much attention from researchers such as Cohen & Olshtain (1981, 1983), Fraser (1981), and Holmes (1989) in the field of linguistics since the 1980s. They have investigated apologies in its social functions and influential factors. However, most of these studies focused on western languages, primarily, English. Recently, eastern languages have come to the attention of linguists such as Sugimoto (1997), who compared the use of apology strategies in Japanese and English; Shariati & Chamani (2010) investigated the apology strategies used in Persian; and several others studied apology strategies of Arabic in different contexts—for example, Nureddeen (2008) in Sundanese Arabic, and Jebahi (2011) in Tunisian Arabic. Most of their studies have shown that the way people apologized could differ from culture to culture or depending on context.

In China, researchers have also started to shift their focus from the western language to their own language – Mandarin Chinese, according to a study by Fu (2010). In early 2007, Zhang (2007) claimed that studies looking at Chinese apologies were mostly conducted from the cross-cultural aspect, by comparing the use of apologies in two different languages or cultures; paying less attention to the specific use of apologies

in Chinese itself. According to the literature published in recent years, Wang (2015) for example, compared apologies in Chinese (Mandarin) with those used in American sitcoms (English), whilst Shan (2016) investigated the cross-cultural differences of apologies between Chinese and Japanese speakers. It can be noted thus far, that the problem (the lack of studies on apologies in Chinese as mentioned earlier) as claimed by Zhang (2007) has not been solved well and there still remains a lack of studies carried out regarding Chinese apologies (Bai, 2012). Therefore, this study aims to investigate apologies in Chinese, contributing to the available literature on Chinese apologies.

As mentioned earlier, the Chinese culture is highly influenced by Confucian philosophy, which emphasizes harmony in society through respect to age and social hierarchy (Jandt, 2003). The Chinese have developed particular rules that govern the interaction with their elders or those whom have a higher status than them (Yum, 1988). In this regard, Chinese people are considered “sensitive” to status in their interpersonal communication (Sun & Liu, 2015), indicating that social status may have a strong influence on how Chinese speakers conduct their interpersonal communication. Yi and Wen (2013) mentioned that status does indeed play an important role in apologies, however, they did not focus much on the relationship between social status and apologies. Therefore, the current study will be an exploration on how social status affects the choice of apology strategies of Chinese speakers.

Moreover, as mentioned above, a number of studies have investigated the impact of social status and gender on the use of apologies (Sun & Liu, 2015; and Hou, 2012). However, most of these studies discussed the influence of social status and gender independently, and rarely took the hearers’ gender into consideration.

In that regard, the first gap this study intends to fill is to examine the overall choice of apology strategies of Chinese speakers in a TV series in order to better understand the

use of apology strategies amongst Chinese speakers. Additionally, status is seen as an important factor that affects the way that people apologize in Chinese (Yi & Wen, 2013). Thus, the second problem that the current study intends to deal with is to further explore the relationship between social status and the choice of apology strategies of Chinese speakers in the TV series; in particular, how social status affects the choice of apologies made by both male and female speakers when they apologize to male and female hearers of different social statuses.

1.3 Research Aims

There are two main aims of this study. As Wouk (2006) who conducted a research on apology in the Indonesian context claims, there is still a lack of data on apologies in the Asian context. As such, the general aim of this study is to follow Wouk's (2006) path and add another set of Asian data for the studies on apologies in the Asian context, by investigating the apology strategies used by Chinese speakers in a Chinese speaking context (a Chinese TV series). More specifically, this study aims to identify and analyze the apology strategies used by Chinese speakers in the TV series. The frequency of each apology strategy is calculated in order to determine the strategies most frequently used by Chinese speakers in a Chinese speaking context (Chinese TV series), so as to enrich the knowledge available on Chinese apologies. Furthermore, in order to get a deeper insight on the apology strategies used by Chinese speakers, this study will also explore whether social status has any impact on the speakers' choice of apology strategies. If so, how social status affects male speakers' and female speakers' choice of apology strategies in a Chinese speaking context (Chinese TV series) will be discussed respectively.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the aims of this study as mentioned above, this study will be guided by the following research questions:

- (1) What are the apology strategies used by Chinese speakers of a Chinese TV series?
- (2) How does social status influence the male and female Chinese speakers' choice of apology strategies respectively?

In relation to the types of apology strategies, the first research question mainly focuses on the identification of the various types of apology strategies used amongst Chinese speakers in the TV series. The frequency and percentage of each type of apology strategy will be tabulated to clearly demonstrate which apology strategies are most frequently used. Besides that, the results will be compared to previously published works on apologies to find out if new findings will be realized in this study.

The second research question relates to how social status affects the speaker's choice of apology strategies. To answer this research question, data was coded based on the interlocutors' (both speakers and hearers) social status and gender. Numbers (frequency) and percentages of the use of each apology strategy were tabulated to determine whether social status had any impact on the speakers' choice of apology strategies. This is especially to find out whether social status has varying influences on male (and female) speakers when they apologize to female and male hearers.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is important as it contributes by adding to the pool of knowledge in linguistic research, and also enriches literature in the field of pragmatics in general. Additionally, this study helps to identify the specific usage of apology strategies in Chinese, for example, the *explanation* is commonly used in combination with the *IFIDs* (*Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices*).

In particular, this study shall have benefits comprising three aspects. Firstly, according to the investigation of apology strategies by Chinese speakers in the TV series (*Wo De Qing Chun Gao Ba Du*), this study will provide information on apology strategies used by Chinese speakers in a Chinese speaking context (Chinese TV series). The findings could also benefit Chinese practitioners in their Chinese learning by offering them the use of apology strategies. For investigating the most common strategies as well as culture-based strategies used by Chinese speakers, the findings will help Chinese speakers/learners to employ the appropriate strategies in their apologies, so as to help them to perform the speech act of apology properly by avoiding any potential misunderstandings or causing offence resulting from inappropriate expressions of apologies in social communication.

Secondly, the investigation of the relationship between social status and the choice of apology strategies will help to expand the scope of research on Chinese apologies. It depicts the important role of social status on the choice of apologies.

The findings of the present study could further be used to make comparisons with other studies on apology strategies of other foreign languages to observe if there were any cross cultural similarities and differences. This will help to enrich available knowledge

regarding cross-cultural pragmatics, showing both the universality and cultural specific features of apologies.

1.6 Scope and Limitations

The focus of the present study is to identify apology strategies used by Chinese speakers in a selected Chinese TV series with further investigation on the impact of social status regarding the use of apologies. The genre of the TV series was limited to the daily lives of a group of Chinese university students in order to ensure that the speakers have a similar cultural and educational background. 57 sets of apology examples were collected in total (see Chapter 3.4.2 p52). In order to clearly identify each strategy in data analysis, these 57 sets of apology examples were broken down into 137 segments based on the strategies they contained (see Chapter 3).

Inevitably, there are several limitations of this current study. First of all, this study is limited to Chinese speakers of one Chinese TV series produced by Mainland China, so the results cannot be generalized for all Chinese speakers in real life. In that regard, further studies are encouraged to collect more naturally occurring data in real life.

Secondly, since the study mainly focuses on the relationship between social status and the choice of apology strategies, other factors such as socioeconomic conditions and social relationships which may impact the method of apologizing, are not examined. In this aspect, more studies are called for to widen the scope of the research by investigating apologies in Chinese with consideration of the above factors (socioeconomic conditions and social relationships).

1.7 Definitions of the Terms

This section introduces the terms that used in this study:

Speech act: is the way which human performed an action by uttering something (Austin, 1962).

Apology: is an illocutionary act which is performed by expressing the feeling of apology or admitting one's fault in the offences so as to remedy the offences between the speaker and hearer (see chapter 2.3.1).

Apology strategies: are techniques used by the speaker for making apologies, such as *compensation and acknowledgment of responsibility* (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2008).

Speaker (S): in the context of apology, is the one who offends others and makes apologies.

Hearer (H): in the context of apology, is the one who is offended and apologized to.

Social status: as ranks ascribed to individuals either on the basis of birth (such age in this study) or achieved through individual effort (Diamond, 1996).

Gender: refers to the state of being male (M) or female (F) (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/gender>).

1.8 Summary

This chapter is a general introduction to the current study. In this chapter, the current situation and limitations of the studies on Chinese apologies are introduced. It can be said that in the early years, Chinese was not paid much attention and although recently

there have been a few studies conducted on Chinese apologies, most of these studies were conducted from a cross-cultural perspective and there is a lack of studies on Chinese itself still exists (Zhang, 2007; Bai, 2012). In order to deal with this problem, this study looks at apologies made by Chinese speakers in a Chinese TV series, adding another pool of data on Chinese apologies and attempts to look at the relationship between social status and the choice of apology strategies. Based on the above two objectives, two research questions have been formulated. Besides that, the significance and limitations of the current study are also discussed briefly. The definitions of terms such as speech act, apology, and apology strategies used in this study are also provided in this chapter. Moreover, the structures and main contents of the whole study are also summarized (as shown below) to provide an overall layout of the study for readers.

This thesis consists of five main chapters. Chapter one is an introduction that covers the reasons for conducting this research, the research aims, research questions, significance, and the limitations of this study are also briefly introduced. Chapter Two is a review of related literature, and this chapter mainly introduces the definition of apologies, classifications of apology strategies, and a review of previous studies on apologies of Chinese and other foreign languages. Chapter Three is a discussion of methods for data collection and data analysis, and justifications on the methods are also provided in this chapter. Chapter Four is data analysis, which reveals the findings and discussion of this study in details. Chapter Five covers the conclusion chapter which provides a summary of the results and suggestions for further studies on apologies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the literature related to the current study which looks at apology strategies used by Chinese speakers in a Chinese speaking context (based on a Chinese TV series) and the influences of social status on Chinese speakers' choice of apologies. This chapter includes seven sections starting with the definitions and classifications of speech acts and apologies in the first two sections. The third section discusses the relationship between social status and human speech whilst the fourth section is a discussion of the relationship between electronic media and pragmatics, illustrating that the TV series could be a valid source of collecting data in carrying out research on pragmatics. The fifth section is a brief review of the politeness theory in both the Western and Chinese cultures. The sixth section reviews previous studies on apologies in both Chinese and other foreign languages such as Persian (Shariati & Chamani, 2010) and Tunisian Arabic (Jebahi, 2011). A summary of this chapter is then provided at the end of this chapter.

2.2 Speech Acts

Austin (1962) defines speech acts as the actions that are performed by uttering something. According to Hatch (1992), speech acts are the utterances which serves a certain functions in communication, such as order, request, or compliment could be a word, phrase, sentence, and a group of sentences and body movement.

According to Austin (1962) speech acts could be categorized into three different types act as follows:

Locutionary act, it is the basic act of speaking, and it is the action of saying something. In other words, it is the words themselves.

Illocutionary act, which means the speakers make an utterance to achieve the potential purpose in his mind like apologizing, ordering, refusing, complimenting and swearing.

Perlocutionary act, which means the effect of the utterance on the addressee. It emphasizes the addressee's reaction.

For example, the utterance "it's hot in here!" the locution is "it" "is" "hot" "in" "here"; the illocutionary meaning could be "I want to open the door"; the perlocutionary effect might be carried out by someone opening the door. And Austin (1962) believed that at least the locutionary act and illocutionary act could be performed simultaneously. Regards to the speech act of apology, it is an illocutionary act as is performed to achieve the potential purpose of remedying offence.

With going a step further, Austin (1962) noted that to achieve the functions in communication, such as apologizing, ordering, utterances need to meet certain conditions which is called **felicity conditions**; and stated his felicity conditions as follows:

A:

- (i) There must be a conversational procedure having a conventional effect.

- (ii) The circumstances and persons must be appropriate, as specified in the procedure.

B: The procedure must be executed correctly and completely.

C: Often

- (i) The persons must have the requisite thoughts, feeling and intentions, as specified in the procedure, and
- (ii) If consequent conduct is specified, then the relevant parties must so do.

Similarly, based on the Austin's theories, Searle (1969) distinguished four *contextual conditions* for a successful performative as well:

- (i) **Preparatory:** the necessary contextual features needed for performing the speech acts, such as the assumption that some offence has been committed (for apology).
- (ii) **Propositional content:** concerns the semantic content of the utterance, such as apology refers to an act in the past (for apology).
- (iii) **Sincerity:** feelings, beliefs, intentions speakers must have, such as the speaker believed that there is an offence has been committed and recognized as such by the hearer (for apology).
- (iv) **Essential:** utterance used counts as performance of the speech act, such as an undertaking to remedy a social imbalance (for apology).

2.2.1 Types of Speech Acts

Researchers classify speech acts into several types, such as Austin (1962) classifies speech acts into five types as below:

Verdictives: the speaker states facts by using some verbs like *assess* and *rank*

Exercitives: the speaker shows her/his attitude against and for an action, thing or person by using the verbs like: *veto*, *nominate*, *warn* and *order*.

Commissives: the speaker refers to the future action by using the verbs like: *pledge*, *vow* and *promise*.

Expositives: the speaker expresses his/her views by using the verb like: *answer*, *deny* and *report*.

Behabitives: the speaker shows his/her reactions by using the verbs like: *deplore*, **apologize** and *thank*.

Since then, the classification of speech acts received more and more attention from researchers, they have different attempts to develop the original Austinian taxonomy (e.g., Bach and Harnish, 1979; Allan, 2001; Bach, 2004). However, the most influential one should be Searle's (1975a) neo-Austinian typology of speech acts, and he grouped speech acts into five types and provided further explanation via the relationship between world and words.

- (i) ***Representative:*** the action that commits to the truth of the expressed proposition like describing and affirming.
- (ii) ***Directives:*** the action that tries to get the addressee to do something, like advice, commands, order and questions.
- (iii) ***Commissives:*** the action that expresses the speaker's intention to do

something such as pledges, promises, and refusals.

- (iv) ***Expressives***: the action that expresses a psychological attitude or state of the speaker, like **apology**, blame, congratulation and thanking.
- (v) ***Declarations***: the action that changes the current state of affairs by the words and expressions. Such as “I bet”, “I declare”.

Finnegan’s (1992) categories of speech acts seems like a combination of the categories which were presented by Austin (1962) and Searle (1975a). He classified the speech acts into seven categories:

- (i) ***Representatives***: speech acts that are representing a state of affairs, like assertions, claims, descriptions and suggestions.
- (ii) ***Commissives***: speech acts that commit a speaker to a course of actions, like promise, pledges, threats and vows.
- (iii) ***Directive***: speech acts that intended to get the addressee to carry out an action, such as commands, requests, challenges, invitations and entreaties.
- (iv) ***Declaration***: speech acts that bring out the state of affairs, like blessing, firings, baptisms, arrests, marrying, dismiss a case.
- (v) ***Expressive***: speech acts that indicate the speaker’s psychological state or attitude, like greeting, **apologies**, congratulations, condolences, and thanking.
- (vi) ***Verdictive***: speech acts that make assessments of judgements, like ranking, assessing, and appraising.

Referring to the above classifications of speech acts proposed by different researchers, the speech act of apology can be grouped into two different types of speech acts. In Austin’s (1962) categories of speech acts, the apology belongs to ***behabitives*** which refers to someone using certain verbs such as “apologize” and “be sorry” to show

his/her apology. Comparatively in the rest of the two categories presented by Searle (1975a) and Finnegan (1992), the act of apology can be classified into *expressives*, which in this case refers to someone expressing an apology with or without the verb “apologize” to show his/her psychological state or attitude. Obviously, Finnegan’s (1992) classification is more comprehensive as it is a combination of classification of speech acts from both Austin (1962) and Searle (1975a). Hence, this study accepts that apologies are *expressives* as Finnegan classified.

In performing speech acts, people often have to consider the way in which they express their apologies; whereby some people prefer to perform the act of apology in a direct way, whilst others prefer to perform it in an indirect way. The following section will introduce and explain what direct speech acts and indirect speech acts are.

2.2.2 Direct Speech Acts and Indirect Speech Acts

Much of the time in communication, people do not express their meanings directly, but tend to imply their meanings using words for different goals such as by showing their politeness and mitigate embarrassment, especially in the Chinese culture. Thus, how shall the direct or indirect ways be defined? Searle (1969) discussed the direct speech act and indirect speech from the relationship of the form, and the function of an utterance. He said a speaker expresses the literal meaning that the words conventionally convey, and there is a direct relationship between the form and function for the direct speech act. When a speaker wants to express a meaning that is different from the surface meaning of his/her words, there is an indirect relationship between the word form and the word function, and this is called an indirect speech act.

Cutting (2008) accepted Searle’s (1969) definition of direct and indirect speech

acts, indicating that indirect speech means to perform one type of speech act through another type of speech act. For example, the declarative form, “I was going to get another one”, it may function as a request or an order, meaning “Get me one”.

Similarly, Huang (2007) discusses direct and indirect speech acts based on the relationship between sentence type and illocutionary force. He stated that if the sentence type matches the illocutionary force directly, the verb describes the illocutionary force, and there is no possibility of misunderstanding, then it is called a direct speech act. For example, “I apologize” and “open the door” are considered direct speech acts because the speaker expresses his/her speech directly. On the other hand, if the sentence type does not match the illocutionary force directly, the verb does not describe the illocutionary force, and the addressee must infer an illocutionary meaning, this is called an indirect speech act. To cite an example, “Can you open the door?” is an indirect speech act because the speaker does not simply mean to ask whether the hearer has the ability to open the door or not, but is actually asking the hearer to open the door.

2.2.3 Speech Act and Culture

Austin (1962) and Searle (1969, 1975) claim that speech acts operate by universal pragmatic principles, whereas Cutting (2008) claims that the ways in which people express themselves is much more culturally bound as it varies from country to country and from culture to culture. Many studies have been conducted on speech acts across different cultures and these have confirmed that differences exist in performing speech acts in certain languages. Sometimes these differences can cause communication difficulties interculturally. The following example is given by Cutting (2008) of an event which happened to Spencer-Oatey (2000):

“She was accosted at a Hong Kong bus-stop by her students, who asked “where are you going?” as a British person, she thought this question intrusive and disrespectful. She later learned that, in Chinese, it is a friendly greeting with no expectation of an explicit answer. She also found that British English greeting like to mention the weather, like “Hi, bit colder today”, while Chinese greeting mentions meals, like “hello, have you had your lunch?” it is not an invitation, but a question about welfare”.

Therefore, the current study on apology strategies in Chinese will provide an insight of the way Chinese speakers apologize in a Chinese speaking context. Hopefully, this can help to avoid misunderstandings in using the apology strategies.

2.3 The Speech Act of Apology

The speech act of apology is often used to restore the relationship between the speakers and the hearers. The speaker is the one who performs the act of apology, and the hearer is a particular person to whom the speaker apologizes. An apology is an illocutionary act, whereby it can be explained as the speaker reacting to his/her past conduct with an expression of regret for this past conduct (Austin, 1975). The speech act of the apology is also seen as a social act—sociologists and socio-linguists have explained it from a social relation’s perspective.

2.3.1 Definitions of Apology

Goffman (1971) defined the term apology as “remedial work” as follows: “an apology is a gesture through which an individual splits himself into two parts, the part that is guilty of an offence and the part that dissociates itself from the delict and affirm a belief in the offended rules”. According to Goffman (1971), performing the act of apology

does not mean to express regret or guilty for the past offense only, but also take her/himself as one part of the offence, and affirms a belief in the offended social rules.

The later definitions of apology in the field of sociology and socio-linguistics are much based on the definition given by Goffman (1971). Holmes (1990) discussed the definition of apology from its essential and aim, apology is essentially a social act that aim to remedy the offense and help to build a harmony relationship among conversationalists. For Cohen and Olshtain (1983) the speech act of apology is a social event that performed when social norms are violated. Fraser (1981) argued that apology is an act expressing regret and taking responsibility for offence.

However, apologies is defined differently in Chinese. Apologies means expressing the feeling of apology, specifically, it means to acknowledge one's fault or offer of apology (the Morden Chinese Dictionary, 1996). It is noted that the definition of apologies in Chinese did not mention any functions or aims of the act of apology, while in western languages it mainly focuses on its functions or aims (see previous sections).

In the current study, apologies are defined based on the comprehension of its definition in both western languages and Chinese: apology is an illocutionary act which is performed by expressing the feeling of apology or admitting one's fault in the offences so as to remedy the relationship between the speaker and hearer.

2.3.2 Apology Strategies

Apology strategies are essentially the ways people perform the act of apology or the ways people express themselves; they are often described by their semantic formula. In order to achieve the apology successfully, the speaker often uses one or more strategies to express their feeling of apology. Over the years, researchers on apologies classified

different types of apologies strategies based on the diversity definitions of apologies.

Fraser (1981) designed a categorization of apologies based on the intent of the speaker. He distinguished nine categories:

- (1) *Announcing the apology*
- (2) *Stating one's obligation to apologize*
- (3) *Offering to apologize*
- (4) *Requesting the acceptance of apology*
- (5) *Expressing regret*
- (6) *Requesting forgiveness*
- (7) *Acknowledging responsibility for the offending act*
- (8) *Promising forbearance from a similar offending act*
- (9) *Offering redress*

Olshtain and Cohen's (1983) classification of apology strategies would be the one that is revised by many researchers. They categorized apology strategies into seven types but in two parts. The first part includes five main types of apology strategies where the offender thinks he/she need to make an apology, namely:

- (1) *An expression of apology*
 - a. *an expression of regret, such as "I am sorry"*
 - b. *an offer of apology, such as "I apologize"*
 - c. *a request of forgiveness, such as "excuse me", "pardon me" or "please forgive me"*
- (2) *An explanation or account of the situation, such as "the bus was delayed"*
- (3) *An acknowledgement of responsibility*

- a. *accepting the blame, like “it is my fault”*
 - b. *expressing of self-deficiency, like “I was confused”*
 - c. *recognizing the other person as deserving apology, like “you are right”*
 - d. *expressing lack of intent, like “I did not mean to”*
- (4) *An offer of repair, such as “I will pay for the broken vase”*
- (5) *Promise of forbearance, such as “it won’t happen again”*

The second part consists of two strategies for the case the speaker does not think there is a need of apologies, namely:

- (6) *Denial of the need to apologize*
- (7) *Denial of responsibility.*

This taxonomy is unlike Fraser’s (1981) as it takes the situation that the hearer believes that the speaker should apologize, but the latter does not into consideration. However, as the data limitation, such situations were not discussed in current study.

Speaking of the classification of apology strategies, there is one classification that cannot be ignored, that is the taxonomy proposed by Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984) in the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP), and it contains seven apology strategies:

- (1) *Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs);*
- a. *(be) Sorry, like “I am sorry (that)I am so late”*
 - b. *Excuse, like “excuse me for being late again”*
 - c. *Apologize, like “I apologize for coming late to the meeting”*
 - d. *Forgive, like “forgive me for coming late”*
 - e. *Regret, like “I regret that I cannot help you”*
 - f. *Pardon, like “pardon me for interrupting”*

- (2) *Taking on responsibility;*
 - a. *Expresses trait of self-deficiency, like “I am so forgetful”*
 - b. *Explicit self-blame, like “it is my fault”*
 - c. *Denial of fault, like “it is not my fault that it fell down”*
- (3) *Explanation or account of cause, like “the bus was late”*
- (4) *Offer of repair, like “i will pay for the damage”*
- (5) *Promise of forbearance, like “this won’t happen again”*
- (6) *Apology intensification, like “i am very sorry”*
- (7) *Concern for the hearer, like “have you been waiting for long?”*

(Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984)

According to the authors, these strategies could be used by themselves or combined with each other in any sequence and there are different factors could affect the speakers’ choice of apologies such as personal, contextual, and cultural factors.

Bergman and Kasper (1993) classified apology strategies into seven different types:

- (1) *The Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (ifids), such as “I am sorry”;*
- (2) *Intensifier, such as “I am terribly sorry”;*
- (3) *Taking responsibility such as “I haven’t graded it yet”;*
- (4) *Giving account of the reason that caused the offence, such as “I was suddenly called to a meeting”;*
- (5) *Minimizing the effect of the offence, like “I was only ten minutes late”;*
- (6) *Offer of repair or compensation, such as “I will pay for the damage”;*
- (7) *Verbal redress, like “it won’t happen again”.*

Additionally, other researchers on apologies have also provided their own classification of apologies, like Holmes (1990) modified Olshtain and Cohen's (1983) classification to make it clearer; Owen (1983) classified apologies by the type of utterance they incorporate; Trosborg (1987, 1995); Sugimoto (1997); Brown and Attardo (2000) and so on.

As a conclusion, there are many apologies taxonomies that have been proposed by researchers. However, it is noted that most of these classifications were proposed based on non-Chinese studies and these strategies in different classifications overlap with each other. Besides, as mentioned in previous sections that apologies is a cultural-based speech act, so not all the above classifications would work for apologies in Chinese. Thus, when conducting a research on apologies one should take cultural background into consideration in choosing or creating taxonomy of apology strategies. Therefore, the current study modified a framework based on Olshtain and Cohen's (1983) and CCSARP's (1984) classifications of apology strategies (Details see Chapter 3). Below is the modified framework for the current study:

(1) IFIDs (Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices)

The first formula is the most direct realization of an apology among the strategies, as in this category, an apology is expressed via an explicit Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs) (Searle, 1969, p.69). IFIDs are defined as formulaic, routinized expressions in which the speaker's apology is made explicit by using a performative verb, in this case the apology verbs such as sorry, apologize, forgive, etc. (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984). According to Olshtain and Cohen's classification, the IFIDs are consist of several sub-strategies:

A: expression of regret, like "I am sorry"

B: offer of apology, like "I apologize"

C: asking for forgiveness, like “forgive me”

D: expression of embarrassment, like “it is embarrassing”

E: asking for another chance, like “please give me another chance”

(Expression of embarrassment and Asking for another chance are the new strategies found in the current study).

(2) The explanation, like “the bus was late”

The second formula refers to the explanation that given by the speaker as to explain the reasons why certain offences occurred. For example the students may say “the bus is late” for his/her late for class.

(3) Taking responsibility

Taking responsibility is occurred “when the speaker recognizes his/her responsibility for the offence” (Afghari, 2007). According to the framework of that employed by Shariati and Chamani (2010), this strategy is further categorized into a number of sub-strategies:

A: accepting the blame, like “it was my fault”

B: expressing self-deficiency, like “I was so forgetful”

C: expressing the lack of intent, like “I didn’t mean to ...”

D: mentioning the offence committed, like “I am late” (the new strategy used by the Chinese speakers in the current study)

(4) Offer of repair, “I will pay for the damage”

The offer of repair is a “situation-specific” strategy, which attempts to offer compensation to the hearer for the incurred damage (Al-Zumor, 2011). The damage could be physically hurt or mentally hurt, relatively, the compensation could also be offered materially or spiritually (Li, 2007). For example, the speaker broke his/her friend’s pen, he/she may say “I will buy you a new one, or I will treat you as compensation”.

(5) Promise for forbearance, “it won’t happen again”

Promise for forbearance refers to the speaker’s promise for non-occurrence of the offences. For example, the speaker spilt coffee on his/her jacket, and he/she may promise for the mom by saying “it won’t happen again”.

(6) Concern for the hearer, like “have you been waiting for long”

The concern for the hearer refers to the concern to both the hearers’ physically hurt and psychologically feeling of being offended. For example, it would happen when the speaker make the hearer fall down to the ground, he/she may asked the hearer “are you OK?” for concern whether the hearer hurt physically. It also would happen when the speaker make the hearer cry, he/she may say “are you OK?” for concern about the psychologically feeling of the hearer.

2.4 Social Status and Speech

Diamond (1996) defined “status as rank ascribed to individuals either on the basis of birth (such as sex, age, nationality, race), i.e. without reference to abilities, or achieved through individual effort”. According to Diamond (1996), an individual’s status would be fixed by his/her sex, age, family relationships, occupation; but it would also change as the culture changes. In this study, status is assigned based on their identities (such as headmaster, lecturer and students) in university and family relationships in the family settings. Higher status refers to people of higher positions and lower status refers to people of lower occupations, equal status refers to people of the same level (Diamond, 1996).

According to Raymond (2007), “Language is both a system of communication between individuals and a social phenomenon” and it is governed by social factors such as “class, gender, race, etc.”. Similarly, Byram (2006) states that different a social identity would show some differences in terms of language use. For example, when facing with certain conditions, students would give more excuses in an attempt to cover up their faults

compared with people who have already worked (Drager, 2005).

According to Holmes (2001), a social class consists of a group of people who share similar social and economic backgrounds or statuses. Based on this statement, status can represent class to a certain extent in this current study. Wells (1982) and Labov (1994) have confirmed that social status would influence one's speech in terms of word usage and the respective pronunciation.

Therefore, with regards to the relationship between status and language use, it is believed that the speaker's status would affect his/her speech. Thus, in order to obtain a deeper insight of apologies made by Chinese speakers, the current study explores how apologies are affected by status.

2.5 Electronic Media and Pragmatics

Electronic Media like films and TV series have become valuable resources in obtaining information for learning purposes—their importance in language learning have been confirmed by researchers in the field of pragmatics (Judd 1999; Kasper 2001; and Bardovi-Harlig 2001). According to researchers such as Arthur (1999), Canning-Wilson (2000), and Sherman (2003), Electronic Media can provide learners with realistic models to imitate for role-play, simultaneously enabling them to strengthen their audio/ visual linguistic perceptions.

As such, the use of video is considered a valuable resource that is commonly used in language teaching for enhancing the language learning process in the classroom. As stated by Martínez-Flor (2008), the use of video could “raise learners’ motivation towards a particular instructional target feature and to lower their anxiety when practising the skill of listening”. This is supported by Canning-Wilson (2000), stating that “video provides a

contextualised view of language that can help learners visualise words and meanings and get them to understand how the setting reveals the norms for appropriate language use” (Martínez-Flor, 2008). Therefore, researchers recommend that the use of video would be an ideal medium for introducing pragmatics in the classroom (Rose, 1993, 1994, 1997), and will be able to increase the learner’s cross-cultural awareness (Arthur 1999; Williams 2001; Charlebois 2004).

On the other hand, the value of TV in introducing pragmatics has also been addressed by researchers such as Soler (2005), and Tatsuki and Nishizawa (2005). Grant and Starks (2001) made a conclusion based on their TV-based study that TV conversations imitate natural conversations and follow the cultural and linguistic behaviour of both the language and the interlocutors. With regards to a particular speech act, Soler (2005) conducted a research to explore the speech act of request in the TV show, *Stargate* and found that using the audio-visual materials (TV series) in language teaching would increase the learners’ pragmatics awareness. Similarly, Tatsuki and Nishizawa’s (2005) study on the speech act of compliment revealed that Electronic Media, specifically TV interviews, could be used as a reliable source of data collection for conducting research on pragmatics.

In a study about the relationship between Electronic Media language and naturally occurring language, Rose (1997) conducted research to compare the occurrences of compliments on film and in a corpus of naturally occurring data. This author compared 46 American films with a corpus of naturally occurring compliments (collected by Manes & Wolfson, 1981), and found that the data collected from films was very close in form to the naturally occurring data. Later on in a follow-up study, Rose (2001) found several similarities between compliments in film and naturally occurring compliments in syntactic formulae, compliment topics and compliment response strategies, which

supported the previous finding that film data closely matched natural data. Following up from the research studies done by Rose (1997, 2001), Kite and Tatsuki (2005) studied the speech act of apologies in film and naturally occurring conversations. They too found a similar result to Rose (2001) in that the apology strategies used in data based on film and naturally occurring data did not differ much from each other.

From the above review of previous studies which addressed the benefits of using Electronic Media as a data source for the research on pragmatics and language teaching, it can be claimed that language used in Electronic Media such as in films, TV series, and TV interviews, are similar to naturally occurring data in terms of syntactic formulae and expression of certain speech acts. Thus, they can be regarded as reliable sources of collecting data when conducting research on pragmatics.

2.6 Politeness

Over the years, researchers in the field of pragmatics have shown their great interests to “politeness”, to such extent, there is a saying that “politeness could be seen as a sub-discipline of pragmatics” (Thomas, 1995). Then what is politeness? According to dictionary.com, *Politeness* is defined as showing good manners towards others, as in behaviour and speech. Leech (1983), Brown and Levinson (1987) studied politeness as a pragmatics phenomenon. They considered *Politeness* as a strategy or a series of strategies employed by speakers to achieve a variety of goals, such as promoting or maintaining a harmonious relationships. In general, in the field of pragmatics, politeness is a way of promoting or maintaining a harmonious relationships by considering other people’s feelings during the talk. However, Huang (2008) claims that culture is an important

variable in politeness and the differences between Chinese politeness and Western politeness do exist.

2.6.1 Politeness in Western Culture

Discussing politeness in western culture, the face theory of Brown and Levinson (1978) and the politeness principle (PP) of Leech (1983) are necessary to mention, as they are the earliest scholars to study politeness in the western culture and they had made a great contribution to the development of politeness theory.

2.6.2 Brown and Levinson's Theory of Politeness

Based on Goffman's (1967) idea of "face" and Lakoff's (1975) rules of politeness, Brown and Levinson (1978) developed a theory of the universal linguistic politeness. According to Thomas (1995), the term "face" is first translated from the Chinese term "diu lian", which is best understood as self-worth or self-image and face is something that can be damaged, maintained and enhanced during the interaction.

According to Brown and Levinson (1978), there are two types of face: one is defined as positive face which reflected in the desire of being liked, approved of, respected and appreciated by others. Another type of face is named as negative face which reflected in the desire of being freedom of action. According to Brown and Levinson (1978), the face wants is universal, everyone in the society wants to keep their face. In order to achieve their goal in communication, it is better for speakers to consider the face wants of their addressees. However, sometimes, it is inevitable to perform certain acts that damage or threaten other person's face, such acts are defined as "face threatening

acts” (FTAs) and it has potential to threaten the hearer’s positive face and negative face. As mentioned above, positive face refers to the needs of being respected, and liked by others. So a person’s positive face would be damaged by, for example, expressing disapproval of his/her ideas; while negative face emphasizes more on others’ freedom of doing something and it would be damaged by, for example, an order which may impede the hearer’s freedom of action.

2.6.3 Leech’s Politeness Principle

Leech (1983) explained politeness in terms of principles and maxims and listed six maxims of politeness according to English culture. Among these are (Leech, 1983 in Thomas, 1995):

Table 2.1 Leech's (1983) Politeness Principles

Tact maxim:	‘Minimize the expression of beliefs which imply cost to other; maximize the expression of beliefs which imply benefit to others’
Generosity maxim:	‘Minimize the expression of benefit to self; maximize the expression of cost to self’.
Approbation maxim:	‘Minimize the expression of beliefs which expresses dispraise of other; maximize the expression of beliefs which expresses approval of other’
Modesty maxim:	‘Minimize the expression of praise of self; maximize the expression of dispraise of self’
Agreement maxim:	‘Minimize the expression of disagreement between self and other; maximize the expression of agreement between self and other’
Sympathy maxim:	‘Minimize the expression of antipathy between self and other; maximize the expression of sympathy between self and other’.

(Source: Leech, 1983)

According to Thomas (1995), the tact maxim and modesty maxim are two maxims which may vary in their application according to different cultures. Leech (1983) has claimed that “there appears to be no motivated way of restricting the number of maxims” and some new maxims might appear during language use, which would make the theory “at worst virtually unfalsifiable” (Thomas, 1995).

2.6.4 Politeness in Chinese

“To understand Chinese politeness, it is necessary to study face (mian zi and lian)” (Mao, 1992). According to Aiziz (2005) there are two types of face in Chinese culture. One is known as “lian” and another is called “mian zi” in Chinese. Both of “lian” and “mian zi” refer to reputation or good name of a person. However, the degrees of these two types of face are different. Losing “lian” is more serious than losing “mian zi”. As lose “lian” happens when a person perform inappropriate or disagreeable action such as premarital pregnancy in rural place; while lose “mian zi” more refers to lose reputation or prestige. So it is said once “lian” is lost, it is hard to maintain “mian zi”. Being polite in interaction is actually an action of protecting both speaker’s and hearer’s face from being damaged.

According to Tao (2010) that “li mao” is the closest Chinese equivalent to the English word politeness, which is derived from the old Chinese “li” in Confucian philosophy. Chinese researcher Gu (1990) investigated “li mao” in Chinese and pointed out that politeness is a cultural based phenomenon, and he proposed four notions underlying the Chinese concept of politeness which he thinks is more suitable to the Chinese culture:

- (1) Respectfulness is self's positive appreciation or admiration of other concerning the latter's face, social status, and so on.
- (2) Modesty can be seemed as another way of saying 'self-denigration'.
- (3) Attitudinal warmth is self's demonstrations of kindness consideration, and hospitality to others.
- (4) Refinement refers to self's behaviour to others which meets certain standards.

On the basis of the four notions and Leech's (1983) maxims of politeness, Gu (1990) developed a series of maxims to explain politeness in Chinese, these are, self-denigration maxim the addressee maxim (see below definitions), the generosity maxim, and the tact maxim (see table 2.1).

- (1) Self-denigration maxim: this maxim absorbs from the notions of respectfulness and modesty in constructing its two sub-maxim which are known as: a. elevate other, and b. denigration of self.
- (2) The addressee maxim: this maxim is developed based on the notions of respectfulness and attitudinal warmth. According to Gu (1990), to addressee someone is actually a recognition of the hearer's status or role, but not only for drawing the hearer's attention.

As mentioned above, Gu's (1990) model of politeness is founded based on Chinese cultural background. In order to have a better understand of Chinese politeness in making apologies, this study mainly applies Gu's (1990) maxims of politeness in data analysis that is related to politeness.

2.7 Previous Studies on Apologies

In the previous sections, the types of speech acts, definitions of apologies, classifications of apologies strategies, the relationship between status and language use and the reliability of data from Electronic Medias have been discussed. The following section will introduce the previous studies relating to apologies both in Chinese and other foreign languages.

2.7.1 Research on apologies in other languages

Apologies have long attracted the attention of researchers in the field of pragmatics since the early 1980s, and have been mostly studied from the cross-cultural perspective (Deutschmann, 2003). For example, Cohen and Olshtain (1981) compared the use of apologies between native English speakers and native Hebrew speakers; Kasper (1988) conducted a research study to compare the use of apologies in English and Danish; and House (1988) compared apologies in English and German. Besides that, a CCSARP (Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns) project was established “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 in each of the languages studied in the project” (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984). Within the CCSARP project, the speech acts of request and apologies were examined in eight languages/contexts and these comprised of American English, British English, Australian English, Canadian French, German, Danish, Hebrew, and Russian. Data was obtained by means of DCT (Discourse Completion Tasks). The findings of the project revealed “surprising similarities in IFIDs

(Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices) and expression of responsibility preferences” (Olshtain, 1989).

Since then, numerous studies have been conducted to examine cross-cultural apology realization and speaker perception in different ways. Holmes (1990) investigated the apologies in New Zealand English by using an ethnographical approach during the data collection procedure. House (1988) used DCT to collect data to investigate the use of apologies made by native speakers of British English, native German speaker, and German learners of English. The approach of using DCT to collect data was also used by Kasper (1988) to study apology realization patterns by Danish learners of English and Danish learners of German. However, most of those studies focused on Western languages and few were focused on the Eastern languages at the time.

Recently, the focus of researchers in the field of pragmatics has had the tendency to shift into the scope of Eastern languages, and the CCSARP model is still widely used in the studies on Eastern languages (Suszczyńska, 1999; Wouk, 2006; Afghari, 2007). It is noted that most studies look at the apologies in Persian and Arabic from different contexts.

Shariati and Chamani (2010) looked at the frequency, combination, and sequential position of apologies in Persian based on a corpus of 500 naturally occurring apologies exchanges collected via observation. Olshtain and Cohen’s (1983) framework was used during the data analysis procedure as “it is claimed that this model has been developed empirically and its universal applicability has been successfully tested on various languages” (Olshtain, 1989 cited from Shariati & Chamani, 2010). The result revealed that *IFIDs* and *Acknowledge responsibility* were the most commonly used strategies in Persian. According to the authors, the result kept in line with the findings of Tajvidi (2000), Rasekh (2004), and Pejman Fard (2004), who had also studied apologies in

Persian. Shariati and Chamani (2010) claimed that the language used in DCT (discourse completion tasks) is elicited language, while the data obtained by ethnographic observation is more time-consuming and difficult, although it seems to be closer to the language used in natural settings. In addition, they claimed that their study on apologies in Persian was a descriptive study and they suggested that further studies should investigate more on the pragmatics of apologies. An example in this context is such as “who says what to whom, when, and why” and determining the influence of social variables that include age, gender, and social status.

Jebahi (2011) conducted a research study to investigate the use of apologies amongst Tunisian university students. Data was collected amongst 100 university students whose mother tongue was Tunisian Arabic, using the Discourse Completion Tasks (DCT). A pilot study was conducted before the main research to check how long the participants would use to complete the DCT and to check whether the situations were ambiguous or not. The results of this study revealed that speech acts and apology strategies are universal; however, in the use of certain strategies are culture specificities. For example, children were not explicitly apologized to in the Arabic and Islamic world (Jebahi, 2011).

Wouk (2006) investigated the use of apologies in Lombok, Indonesia and claimed that although a few of research studies on apologies have been done in the Asian context (Ang-Abbey, 1991 focuses on Hokkien Chinese, Kumagai, 1993 on Japanese, and Bergman and Kasper, 1993 on Thai), a lack of data still exists. Therefore, the current study attempts to add one more set of data on apologies within the Asian context by investigating apology strategies used by Chinese speakers.

Bataineh and Bataineh's (2006) study is an investigation of apologies amongst Jordanian EFL university students. Sugimoto's classification of apologies was taken as

the analytical framework. The findings highlighted that gender differences exist in choosing apology strategies amongst Jordanian EFL university students, suggesting that not only would the speakers' gender affect the choice of apology, it is important that the hearers' gender also be taken into consideration by future studies. It is enlightening that the current study shall consider the hearers' genders when discussing the relationship between social status and female and male speakers.

Musadad (2013) conducted a research to investigate the speech act of offer by using the data collected from American movies. It was claimed that electronic mediums such as movies and TV series were rich in speech acts, and could even be the better source in collecting data for research studies on speech acts. The findings of this study further confirmed that electronic mediums, specifically movies, are a feasible source of data collection in investigating speech acts. Similar theories that introduce the usage of electronic mediums for teaching pragmatics have also been proposed by Rose (1997).

In favour of understanding the current situation of studies on apologies in Chinese, several related literatures on apologies in Chinese are reviewed in the following sections.

2.7.2 Apologies in Chinese

Over the last two decades, the studies on apologies in China were mainly conducted from the cross-cultural perspective, for example, comparing the use of apologies in Chinese with other foreign languages. Qian (2003), Jiang (2004), and Li and Qin (2005) compared the use of apologies in Chinese and English; whilst Wang (2004) studied apology strategies in Russian and Chinese.

Zhang (2007) conducted a research on apologies that focused on Chinese only and she claimed that there have already been numerous comparison studies of Chinese apologies with other languages such as English and Russian, and researchers should pay more attention to Chinese itself. She used a DCT which contains eight situations to obtain the apologies in Chinese. 90 university students (45 female students and 45 male students) who were not majoring in languages and linguistics were selected as the participants. In order to gain a deep insight of apologies produced by Chinese speakers, the effect of social status, offence types, and social relationships were also examined. The results revealed that the social status and offence types have more influence on the speaker's choice of apologies; whilst compared to social status and offence types, social relationship seems to have less of an effect on the Chinese speaker's choice of apology.

Luo's (2004) study investigated the use of apologies by Chinese speakers, and in this study the author took the social status and social relationships into consideration. Data used in this study were collected amongst 160 students from different regions of China, consisting of different education levels and ages. Data was analyzed according to a modified framework based on the framework proposed by Olshtain and Cohen (1983) and Aijmer (1996). The result showed that the most frequently used strategies were the explicit apologies, such as "sorry" in English. These explicit apologies were commonly used in a combination with other apology strategies. Regarding the effect of social status and social relationships on the use of apologies amongst Chinese speakers, the findings revealed that social status did have some effect on the speaker's choice of apology; whereby, when the speaker apologized to a higher status hearer, they employed the explicit apologies, verbalizing the offences types and explanations more. In contrast, when it came to apologizing to a lower status hearer, they prefer to employ the offer of repair and avoided apologies more; the explanation was least frequently used when the speaker and hearer shared an equal status.

Later on, Fu (2010) carried out a comparative study on apologies amongst Chinese, Hebrew, and German speakers. 22 Mainland Chinese students who studied in a university in Britain were selected as participants. Chinese data was collected by means of role-play, and these were compared to the apologies made in Hebrew and German as provided by the CCSARP project. Data was analysed based on Olshtain and Cohen's (1983) framework. The findings indicated that Chinese speakers used the term "bu hao yi si" (it is embarrassing) more than the term "dui bu qi" (sorry), and they used more intensifiers than speakers of Hebrew and German languages.

In another study, Yi and Wen (2013) compared the apology strategies used by Native Chinese speakers and Native American English speakers. Discourse Completion Tasks (DCT) was taken as the instrument for data collection. The results based on Suszczynska's (1999) framework showed that IFIDs (Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices) was the most frequently used strategy and this was followed by the offer of repair, concern for the hearer, and taking responsibility. They concluded that apologies in Chinese were different from apologies in American English. Chinese speakers prefer to combine two or more strategies in their apologies.

To date, Chinese researchers (Cui and Shang, 2014; Liu, 2014; and Wu, 2015 etc.) still look at apologies from the cross-cultural perspective, and this indicates that the lack of studies on apologies in Chinese as claimed by Zhang (2007) still exists; and this highlights the fact that although there have been numerous cross-cultural studies on Chinese apologies, the studies on apologies in the Chinese language itself remain limited.

Besides, Li (2007) explained the use of certain types of apology strategies by using examples from different Chinese novels. In his study, he discussed the use of apology strategies from its syntactic form, functions, and degree of apologies and claimed

that Chinese is rich in apology strategies and has its own unique features in using apologies.

2.7.3 Apologies on Gender

Zhao (2008) conducted a research to compare gender differences in using apology strategies amongst a group of Chinese university students. Data was collected by using DCT (Discourse Completion Tasks), and the medium used in filling the DCT questionnaire was Mandarin Chinese. The findings revealed that male speakers are concerned more on face and apologize easily for serious offences, to hearers of higher status, or to unfamiliar hearers. However, female speakers were concerned more on others' perspective and were less impacted by social variables such as social status, social relationships, and the types of offences. He also claimed that such gender differences in using apology strategies were caused by the Chinese traditional culture which stresses that males hold more power and are of a higher status in society, while the females owned less power and were of a lower status.

Similarly, Hou (2012) conducted a research to investigate the gender difference on the use of apologies in Chinese, and the results of this study further confirmed Zhao's (2008) finding on gender differences.

2.7.4 Studies on “bu hao yi si”

Song and Liang (2011) proposed six functions of “bu hao yi si” in their study on the term “bu hao yi si” which were used by the current study to compare the use of “bu hao yi si” in later chapters. Li and Du (2012) compared the use of “dui bu qi” (sorry) and

“bu hao yi si” (it is embarrassing) amongst Chinese speakers. They found that “dui bu qi” and “bu hao yi si” were commonly used by Chinese speakers and similarly used in expressing apologies. Both “dui bu qi” and “bu hao yi si” could be used to indicate the apology directly, combined with other strategies such as the explanation, and mentioning the offence committed. However, the degree of directness and apology that “dui bu qi” and “bu hao yi si” expressed were different. They pointed out that “dui bu qi” is more direct and stronger than than “bu hao yi si” in making apologies.

2.8 Summary

In this chapter, the literature on the types of speech acts, the definition of apologies, and the classification of apology strategies are presented. Besides that, the relationships between language use and social status, and the languages used in electronic mediums are discussed. On top of that, the related studies on apologies both overseas and domestically are reviewed in this chapter.

In addition, the current study intends to consolidate the findings of previous studies (Luo, 2004; Zhang, 2007; Fu, 2010; and Yi & Wen, 2013) by investigating the overall use of apology strategies amongst Chinese speakers. From being influenced by Zhang (2007) and Sun and Liu (2015), this study intends to extend the scope of research by examining the relationship between the choice of apology strategies and the social status.

Moreover, according to previous studies, it is noted that the framework provided by Olshtain and Cohen (1983) and the CCSARP project (1984) has been widely accepted by Chinese researchers. Therefore, the current study will modify the framework of data

analysis based on Olshtain and Cohen (1983) and CCSARP (1984), as the universality of the two frameworks have been tested on apologies in Chinese.

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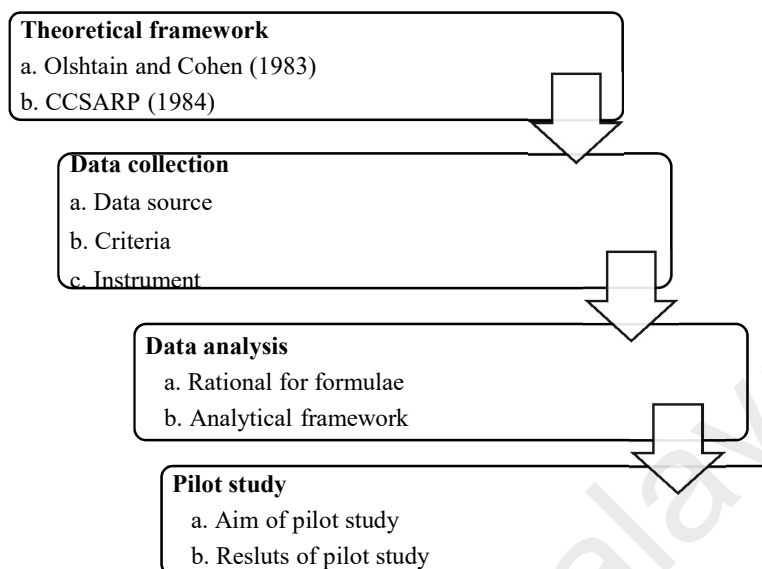
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the details of the research methods for the present study. As stated in Chapter One, the major issues that will be addressed in the present study are (1) the apology strategies used by Chinese speakers in the selected TV series, particularly, the most frequent ones; and (2) the influence of social status on the speakers' choice of apology strategies. This chapter involves four main parts, where the first section discusses the theoretical framework of the current study. The second section introduces the source of data collection, criteria of choosing apologies, and instruments for data collection. The third section involves brief descriptions of data analysis, covering how data will be analysed in this study. The fourth section is a brief summary of the pilot study used to check the validity of the framework of the current study. At the end of this chapter is a summary of the whole chapter. The whole picture of research methodology is shown in Figure 3.1. The details are expanded in the following sections.

Figure 3.1 Description of research methodology



3.2 Research Design

In general, this study is a qualitative research study as it analyses spoken data that is transcribed from TV series and aims to find out what apology strategies are used by Chinese speakers, and how the social status affects their choice of apologies. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research requires textual data and not numerical data. Similarly, Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls, & Ormston (2013) pointed out that the qualitative research concerns more of the “what” “why” and “how” questions rather than “how many”. In addition, it was stated that “Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of particular populations” (Mack, Woodson, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005). In that regard, this study is conducted based on a qualitative methodology to investigate apologies used by Chinese speakers in a Chinese speaking context (Chinese TV series).

3.3 Theoretical Framework

This section mainly discusses the theories used in the current study: speech act theory and politeness theory.

3.3.1 Speech Act Theory

Austin (1962) defined speech acts as the actions that are performed by utterances. The utterances could serve as a series of functions in interactions, such as apologizing and thanking (Hatch, 1992).

The speech act theory is initiated from Austin (1962) and developed by Searle (1969). Austin (1962) introduces performative utterances in *How to Do Things with Words*, that is, utterances which require the performance of an action and whose utterances take some effect on the hearer. Austin (1962) then developed a series of felicity conditions for achieving success in performing speech acts, and the four types of speech acts like *verdictives, commissives, expositives, and behabitives* (see Chapter Two). Later on, according to Schiffrin (1994), Austin also suggested that not all performatives involved performative verbs, meaning that performatives can be realized without verbs.

Based on Austin's (1962) work, Searle (1969) develops the speech act theory, stating that the speech act is the fundamental unit of communication. According to Schiffrin (1994), "Speech act theory analyses the way meanings and acts are linguistically communicated". Searle suggested five types of speech acts: *representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations*; and four contextual conditions for a successful performative, such as *preparatory, propositional content, sincerity and essential* (see Chapter Two).

Finnegan (1992) combines both Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) categories of speech acts and proposed six types of speech acts: *representatives, commissives, directives, declarations, expressives, and verdictives* (see Chapter Two). As mentioned in Chapter Two, Finnegan's (1992) classification of speech acts is more comprehensive as it is a combination of both the works of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). Therefore, in this study, accepting the classification of speech acts proposed by Finnegan (1992) is preferred.

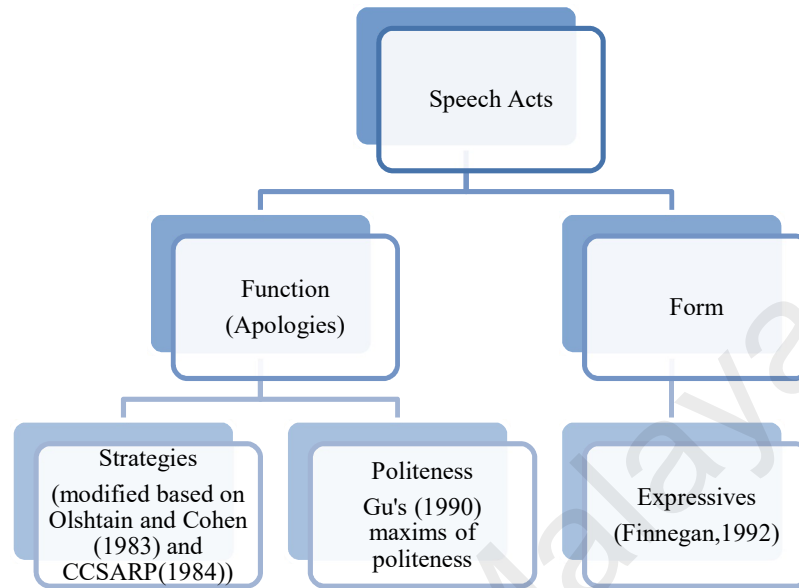
Referring to Finnegan's (1992) classification of speech acts, the speech act of apology, and the objective of the current, fell under the expressives, indicating that the speakers' psychological state or attitude of apology could be expressed with or without performative verbs such as "apologize". This also contributed to the criteria of selecting apologies during the data collection of the current study. In this study, apologies are selected based on two main criteria: lexemes on apologies, and detection according to the contexts, previous plots, their expression, countenance or gestures (see Chapter 3.4.2 p51.).

3.3.2 Politeness Theory

With regards to the concept of politeness, it appears that politeness is culture and situational specific. Based on Leech's (1983) maxims, Gu (1990) develops a series of maxims to explain politeness in Chinese: self-denigration maxims, addressee maxim, generosity maxim, and tact maxim (see Chapter 2).

As mentioned earlier, politeness is a culture based phenomenon and Gu's (1990) maxims of politeness is developed based on Chinese culture. Thus, Gu's (1990) maxims of politeness is accepted to analyze the politeness phenomenon in this study.

Figure 3.2 Theoretical Framework of This Study



3.4 Data Collection

This section introduces the source of data collection, criteria of selecting apologies, and the procedure of data collection.

3.4.1 Data Source

Data used in the current study involves 57 sets (see Chapter 3.3) of one to one (see Chapter 3.3) apologies made by Chinese speakers in a Chinese TV series, in order to determine the way a Chinese speaker apologizes.

As studies concerning the nature of apology in a variety of languages and cultures have been blooming over the years (Olshtain, 1983; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Holmes, 1990), there is a growing source of empirical data for apologizing. It is noted that most studies on the apology and its influential factors have relied on data gathered

using Discourse Completion Tasks (DCT), a type of questionnaire in which situations are provided and respondents are asked what they would say in such situations. Due to its effectiveness for controlling the contextual variables as well as making the statistical analysis more feasible (Wouk, 2006). Discourse Completion Tasks (DCT) have been widely accepted by researchers in the field of pragmatics (Zhang, 2012; Shariati & Chamani, 2010; Nureddeen, 2008; Afghari, 2007). However, it is claimed that the greatest weakness of DCT is that the language used in DCT is not naturally produced. As Wouk (2006) says, “it is not natural speech, in fact it is not speech at all”. This implies that the responses provided by participants in the DCT are based on what the participants think, or what they think the researchers want them to say.

In recent years, there have been a growing number of articles recommending the use of electronic mediums such as films and TV series for the study of pragmatics (Kumagai, 1993; Rose, 1994; Fujioka, 2003). This is because compared to DCT, film/TV series is a better source of collecting spoken data which is less rigid than the DCT, and it is believed that the language used in film/TV series are much closer to real life. This is because TV series as a type of electronic medium, could reflect real life directly or indirectly (Musadad, 2013). It can be seen to mirror real life, as the provided imaginary scenes also can be found in real life, with the exception of those full of violence, bloodiness, and horror.

Although it has to be acknowledged that the preferable data for doing research in apology is for the naturally occurring apologies, it is also the data which is difficult to collect, as apologies are more situation-dependent (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983). In order to obtain a group data which is closer to naturally-occurring data in a short period of time, this study then decided to collect apologies from a Chinese TV series to observe the way Chinese speakers apologize in their daily life.

It has been reported that factors that include age, educational background, and social distance would affect the use of apology strategies (Wouk, 2006; Bataineh & Bataineh, 2006). In order to control variables such as age, familiarity, social distance and status, the author tested out several movies and TV series based on the genre of Mainland Chinese university students' daily lives, which means that elements involving violence, gunfire, and horror were excluded. Because this type of TV series does not have too many complex interpersonal relationships, it is easy to control the variables of educational background, age, familiarity, and social distance.

However, in order to remain consistent with one story, the researcher finally decided to collect data from a Chinese TV series named *Wo De Qing Chun Gao Ba Du* (2014) produced by Zhejiang Satellite TV, Mainland China that comprised of 30 episodes. It was chosen because it was the show containing more sets of apologies compared to others, and had plots that could relate well to real life. This TV series tells the story of a group of Mainland Chinese university students and their daily lives whilst in university. Although there were two actors from Tai Wan and Hong Kong, their backgrounds were not addressed in the TV series. As the screenwriters are Mainland Chinese, it is believed that the background of these two actors would not affect their way of expressing apologies.

3.4.2 Criteria of Selecting Apologies

In this study, apologies are collected based on two criteria: the first one is based on the apology lexemes like “sorry” or “apologize”; although not all apologies include apology lexemes. The second one is based on according to the contexts, for example, the previous plots, their facial expressions, countenance, or gesture. As a consequence, 57

sets of one-to-one apology were collected. One-to-one apology means that the apology occurs between the speakers and the hearers privately in informal situations, or sometimes there may be some very familiar friends around them, but the apology only occurs between the speakers and the hearers. One set of apology refers to one piece of conversation on apology, it may contain different apology strategies in one set of apology. For example:

S: I am sorry, (expression of regret) it is my fault. (Accepting the blame)

H: It is OK, no worries about that.

In this example, an apology was made to H privately, but not in public. In this study, such an apology is identified as one set of one-one apology. It is noted in the utterances of S, S employs two strategies by saying “sorry” and “it is my fault” respectively in one apology. Based on the strategies it contains, this set of apology can be divided into two segments with “sorry” as one segment, and “it is my fault” as another segment.

3.4.3 Procedure of Data Collection

The data collection started in December 2015 and lasted for three weeks. Since the data is collected from TV series, the data used in this study places emphasis on the subtitle and not the script. As a consequence, the whole TV series must be watched fully and carefully to recognize the context and detect an apology without the use of apology lexemes. When watching the TV series, the utterances which contain an apology were first noted down in Excel form with 6 items in Chinese. Subsequently, these were initially

translated into English by the author of this study and a friend majoring in a Master of Translation in a university based in China, before being checked by a bilingual (Chinese and English) postgraduate student of linguistics to ensure the accuracy of the translation.

The following are the 6 items of the Excel form used for data collection:

(1) Episode: refers to the episode of the data

(2) Time: refers to the time when the apology occurs (for ease of double checking data)

(3) Speaker (S) and hearer (H):

a. speaker refers to the one who offends others;

b. and hearer refers to the one who is offended.

(4) Gender: refers to both the speaker's gender and the hearer's gender;

a. F refers to female and M refers to male;

b. F-F means female speaker apologizes to female hearer; F-M means a female speaker apologizes to a male hearer; M-F means a male speaker apologizes to a female hearer; and M-M means a male speaker apologizes to a male hearer.

(5) Status: refers to both the speaker's status and the hearer's status;

a. E, refers to equal status, L refers to lower status and H refers to higher status;

b. E-E refers to the apologies that occurred within equal status;

c. L-H refers to the apologies made by lower status speakers to higher status hearers;

d. H-L refers to the apologies made by higher status speakers to lower status hearers.

(6) Contents of apology: refers to the utterances to remedy the offence between the speaker and hearer.

3.5 Data Analysis

3.5.1 Rationale for Formulae

In order to analyze the speech act of apology obtained from the selected TV series, a modified framework of apology strategies (see Table 3.2) is used in the present study. The rationale of data analysis in this study is to identify the apology strategies according to the modified framework, and explaining the common usage of those strategies. For example, Chinese speakers commonly used *the expression of regret* combined with an *explanation* (see Chapter 4).

As mentioned above, the data used in this study involve 57 sets of apologies from a Chinese TV series of which at times, one set of apology may include two or more apology strategies. In such cases, the present study breaks them into segments according to the apology strategies they contain, and each segment was coded only once, whereby repetitions of the same strategies in one set of apology were not counted; for example, the utterance of “I am sorry, it is my fault”, can be broken into two segments “I am sorry” and “it is my fault” as they contain two different apology strategies, *expression of regret* and *accepting the blame* respectively. If there is an utterance like “sorry, it is my fault, sorry”, it is also counted as two segments, as the repetition of “sorry” actually contains the same apology strategy called the *expression of regret*. In such a way, based on the strategies contained, the 57 sets of apologies were broken into 137 segments in total. In Table 3.1 below, the distribution of apologies (sets and segments) in the TV series is shown.

Table 3.1 Distribution of Apology in the TV series

Episodes	1	2	4	5	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	Total
Numbers of apologies (Sets)	1	2	4	2	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	6	3	2	2	2	4	2	4	2	4	1	3	2	57
Numbers of apologies (segments)	1	5	10	6	4	1	3	5	3	2	2	3	1	10	9	2	6	8	11	8	9	5	9	3	5	6	137

3.5.2 Distinguishing Social Status

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the social status would affect the speaker's choice of apology strategy. In order to having a deeper insight over the use of apologies, the current study defines the interlocutors' social status based on their positions or family relationships. Hence, in the university setting, lecturers are defined as being the ones holding a higher status when compared with the students, and the headmaster is considered as the one with a higher status than lecturers; whilst in a family setting, parents are seen as the ones holding a higher status. Higher status refers to people of higher positions and lower status refers to people of lower occupations, equal status refers to people of the same level (Diamond, 1996).

3.5.3 Analytical Framework

In general, the study was qualitative in nature. The aim was to determine the apology strategies used by Chinese speakers and the impact of social status on the choice of apology strategies, specifically, the impact on different genders. The data analysis procedure involves presenting the distribution of each strategy and the common usage of each strategy.

Data was analysed in order to identify the apology strategies used by Chinese speakers. The analytical framework was modified based on the model provided by

Olshtain and Cohen (1983), and the CCSARP project (1984). As mentioned in Chapter Two, the frameworks of Olshtain and Cohen (1983) and the CCSARP project (1984) are widely accepted by Chinese researchers when doing their research (Luo, 2004; and Fu, 2010) on apologies. Olshtain and Cohen's (1983) framework was chosen because it was developed out of empirical observations, and its universality has been successfully tested on several languages (Olshtain, 1989), as was the framework provided by the CCSARP project (1984). Although these two frameworks have been proposed over three decades, it is still widely used in recent studies (Fu, 2010; and Yi & Wen, 2013) on apologies in Chinese. In addition, it is noted that strategies in different classifications (Fraser, 1981; Trosborg, 1987; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; and CCSARP, 1984) tend to overlap with each other. The combination of Olshtain and Cohen (1983) and CCSARP (1984) can cover most strategies listed by researchers, and as mentioned above, these two classifications are widely used by Chinese researchers. Therefore, in order to have a framework that matches the data of the current study, the framework provided by Olshtain and Cohen (1983) and CCSARP (1984) (as shown Figure 3.2 and Table 3.1) were combined together to be used as the analytical framework of the current study.

Figure 3.3 Analytical framework of the current study

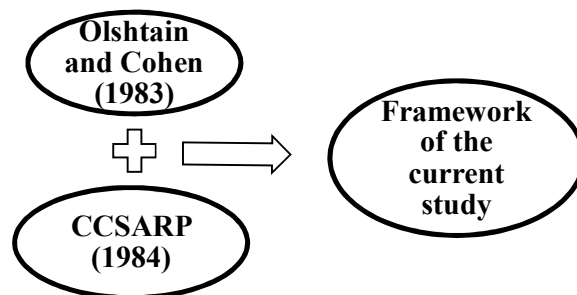


Table 3.2 Combination of Olshtain and Cohen (1983) and CCSARP (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984) apology strategies:

Olshtain and Cohen's (1983) framework	CCSARP (1984)	Framework for the current study
<p>(1) An expression of apology</p> <p>a. an expression of regret</p> <p>b. an offer of apology</p> <p>c. a request of forgiveness</p> <p>(2) An explanation or account of the situation</p> <p>(3) An acknowledgement of responsibility</p> <p>a. accepting the blame</p> <p>b. expressing of self-deficiency</p> <p>c. recognizing the other person as deserving apology</p> <p>d. expressing lack of intent</p> <p>(4) An offer of repair</p> <p>(5) Promise of forbearance</p> <p>(6) denial of the need to apologize</p> <p>(7) denial of responsibility</p>	<p>Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDS); (be) Sorry, like "I am sorry (that)I am so late"</p> <p>Excuse, like "excuse me for being late again"</p> <p>Apologize, like "I apologize for coming late to the meeting"</p> <p>Forgive, like "forgive me for coming late"</p> <p>Regret, like "I regret that I cannot help you"</p> <p>Pardon, like "pardon me for interrupting"</p> <p>Taking on responsibility; Expresses trait of self-deficiency, like "I am so forgetful"</p> <p>Explicit self-blame, like "it is my fault"</p> <p>Denial of fault, like "it is not my fault that it fell down"</p> <p>Explanation or account of cause, like "the bus was late"</p> <p>Offer of repair, like "i will pay for the damage"</p> <p>Promise of forbearance, like "this won't happen again"</p> <p>Apology intensification, like "i am very sorry"</p> <p>Concern for the hearer, like "have you been waiting for long?"</p>	<p>(1) Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDS)</p> <p>a. an expression of regret</p> <p>b. an offer of apology</p> <p>c. a request of forgiveness</p> <p>(2) Explanation</p> <p>(3) Taking Responsibility</p> <p>a. accepting the blame</p> <p>b. expressing of self-deficiency</p> <p>c. recognizing the other person as deserving apology</p> <p>d. expressing lack of intent</p> <p>(4) Offer of repair</p> <p>(5) Promise of forbearance</p> <p>(6) Denial of the need to apologize</p> <p>(7) Denial of responsibility</p> <p>(8) Apology Intensification</p> <p>(9) Concern For The Hearer</p>

As the above Table 3.2 shows, there are 9 types of apology strategies that have been modified into the current framework. However, according to the data analysis in

Chapter 4, not all strategies match the data of the current study. Hence, the following strategies that match the data of this study were applied, and some new strategies (boldface) are added based on data analysis (see Chapter 4).

Table 3.3 Framework of the current study

<p>(1) IFIDs (Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices)</p> <p>A: expression of regret, like “I am sorry”</p> <p>B: offer of apology, like “I apologize”</p> <p>C: asking for forgiveness, like “forgive me”</p> <p>D: expression of embarrassment, like “it is embarrassing”</p> <p>E: asking for another chance, like “please give me another chance”</p>
<p>(2) The explanation, like “the bus was late”</p>
<p>(3) Taking responsibility</p> <p>A: accepting the blame, like “it was my fault”</p> <p>B: expressing self-deficiency, like “I am so forgetful”</p> <p>C: expressing the lack of intent, like “I didn’t mean to ...”</p> <p>D: mentioning the offence committed, like “I am late”</p>
<p>(4) Offer of repair, “I will pay for the damage”</p>
<p>(5) Promise for forbearance, “it won’t happen again”</p>
<p>(6) Concern for the hearer, like “have you been waiting for long?”</p>

3.5.4 Analysis

Data analysis of this study consists of two stages based on the two research questions. At the first stage, this study mainly focuses on the first research question which concerns the overall choice of apology strategies of Chinese speakers in the TV series.

In order to answer the first research question, “What are the apology strategies used by Chinese speakers in a Chinese TV series?”, data was initially coded based on the

modified framework by this author, before being checked and discussed with a postgraduate student doing a Master of Linguistics in the University of Malaya, who also happens to be a native Chinese speaker. It was also checked by the author’s supervisor, an academic staff at the Faculty of Languages and Linguistics of the University of Malaya. A simple quantitative analysis was done to determine the most frequently used apology strategies by Chinese speakers in the TV series. A detailed analysis with examples was then provided for each apology strategy. The aim is to show the method in which the Chinese speakers in the TV series chose to apologize. Examples were given in Chinese with the translation in brackets. In addition, the background of each apology was also provided in English. Since each set of apologies may contain more than one strategy in the specific analysis of each strategy, the strategy was underlined or boldfaced. Below is an example of the analysis:

Example 1 (Episode 2):

Turns	Speaker/ hearer	Gender	Background: The music club of the university was recruiting new members, and the teacher asked Xiang Yu’an to join their club, and when Xiang Yu’an (a male student that looks handsome) came into the classroom, Guo Qianmi (female) a member of the club said something about Yu’an is a person with good appearance but not good at singing. Then after hearing Yu’an’s singing, Guo Qianmi changed her mind and apologize to Xiang Yu’an.
1	S	F	刚刚是我以貌取人了, <u>对不起</u> . (Just now, I judged you by your looks, <u>sorry</u>)
2	H	M	(微笑) (Smile)

From the above example, it is easy to decide that these utterances is one set of apology, as it contains the lexeme “dui bu qi” (Sorry) as seen in Turn 1, and then according to the modified framework, the strategies used in the utterances can be identified as the *expression of regret* under the *IFIDs* and “gang gang shi wo yi mao qu ren” (Just now, I judged you by your looks, sorry) in Turn 1 is an utterance which employs the strategy of

mentioning the offences committed, as it states the action that may offend the hearer.

The influence of social status on the choice of apology strategies is the main issue discussed in the second stage of data analysis. At this stage, data was coded based on the hearer's social status. At this stage, the frequency of each apology strategy was also tabulated in order to find out whether there is any difference in choosing strategies when apologizing to hearers of different social status. Apart from that, both the speaker's and hearer's genders were considered at this stage to determine a more detailed impact of social status. For example, how social status affects a female speaker's choice of apology strategies when apologizing to both a female hearer and a male hearer whom were of different statuses respectively.

3.6 The Pilot Study

A pilot study is a small-scale research conducted before the main research is done to examine whether the proposed analytical framework is workable or not, and to find out what results can be realized. This would enable the researcher to check the viability of the main research study. In the pilot study, a sample of 20 sets (37 segments) of apology was selected from a Chinese TV series of a similar genre to the one used for the main research study. Data used for the pilot study were not reused in the main research study. As stated above, this pilot study was conducted to check whether the proposed classification of apology strategies was deemed workable or not for Chinese speakers in the selected TV series. The result of the pilot study showed that most of the strategies of the modified framework were used by Chinese speakers in the TV series and this provided positive evidence that the variable social status would affect the use of apology strategies to a great extent.

3.7 Summary

This chapter discusses the methodology of this study. This is a qualitative research as it analyses spoken data to determine the nature of apologies. Data collected from a Chinese TV series is analysed in order to learn how Chinese speakers apologize. During the data analysis, a modified framework based on both the frameworks provided by Olshtain and Cohen (1983), and CCSRP (1984) was used to identify the apology strategies used by Chinese speakers. The validity of the modified framework has been checked by a simple pilot study.

University of Malaya

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

As mentioned in Chapter one, this study examines the apology strategies used by Chinese speakers by analyzing the data collected from the TV series named *Wo De Qing Chun Gao Ba Du* (2014). This chapter is divided into two sub-sections: the first section is related to the first research question which concerns the overall choice of apology strategies used by Chinese speakers. In this section, the distribution and usage of each strategy and the sub-strategies are discussed. The second section of this chapter is an in-depth analysis of the apology strategies used by Chinese speakers based on the variables of social status and gender. In this section, data was coded based on both the speaker's and hearer's social status and gender. Analysis then focuses on how social status affects the choice of Chinese speakers for apologies; particularly how the social status affects both female speakers' and male speakers' choice of apologies when they had to apologize to female hearers and male hearers respectively.

4.2 The Overall Choice of Apology Strategies

As mentioned in Chapter 3, data obtained in this study is comprised of 57 sets of one to one apology examples (see Chapter 3), all of which were collected from the TV series *Wo De Qing Chun Gao Ba Du*. It was observed that in some of the apologies, there was more than one apology strategy used. In such cases, each apology was broken into segments (see Chapter 3) based on the apology strategy it contains, where each segment

of the apology was considered as one occurrence, and repetitions of the same strategy in one set of apology were not counted. Finally, 137 segments of apologies were identified in total from the 57 sets of apology (see Chapter 3). Data analysis of this study is processed based on the number of segments in order to show the distribution of each apology strategy clearly. This section will firstly illustrate the frequency of each apology strategy used in the corpus, and then the use of each apology strategy will be discussed one by one with the examples extracted from the corpus. Table 4.1 below shows the overall distribution of the apology strategies on a macro level that occurred in the corpus of this study.

Table 4.1 Overall distribution of apology strategies

Strategies	NO.	%
IFIDs	60	43.80%
Taking responsibility	36	26.28%
Explanation	23	16.79%
Offer of repair	7	5.11%
Concern for the hearers	7	5.11%
Promise for forbearance	4	2.92%
Total	137	100.00%

(IFIDs refers to Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices)

Referring to Table 4.1, it is obvious that the *Illocutionary Force Indicative Devices* (such as “sorry”, “apologize”; henceforth *IFIDs*) are the most common strategy noted in the corpus with a percentage of 43.8%. This seems most common but it still makes up less than half of the data.

Taking responsibility (such as “it is my fault”) is the strategy noted to be at the second position among the six main strategies with a percentage of 26.28%, suggesting that more than a quarter of the data employed this strategy. *Taking responsibility* is then followed by *explanation* (16.79%), *concern for the hearer* and *offer of repair* (5.11% each). The least frequently used strategy was the *promise for forbearance* which

accounted for only 2.92%, meaning that only 4 out of 137 segments of apologies employed *the promise for forbearance*.

The findings noted here appear to be in line with the findings of Liu (2005) who has studied apologies in Chinese. She also identified the *IFIDs* and *taking responsibility* as the most common apology strategies used amongst Chinese Speakers. Shariati and Chamani (2010) studied apology strategies in Persian and reported that the *IFIDs* and the *acknowledging responsibility* were the most frequently used strategies in Persian.

On the other hand, Li and Li (2004) observed that the *IFIDs* and the *offer of repair* were the most frequent apology strategies used by Chinese speakers and the *concern for the hearer* was found to be least frequently opted. Meanwhile, Holmes (1990) reported that *IFIDs* and *explanation* were the most frequent choices in New Zealand English whilst Vollmer and Olshtain (1989) reported that the *acknowledgment of responsibility* to be the most common strategy in German.

Consequently, the choices for apology strategies may vary across social cultures and social factors. In order to know more about the use of apology strategies amongst Chinese speakers, the specific strategies used by Chinese speakers in the selected TV series will be discussed in detail in the following sections.

4.3 Strategy 1: IFIDs (Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices)

The *IFIDs* category encompasses the explicit use of apology expression that means sorry, forgive me etc (Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984). Normally, there will be a certain lexeme to indicate the speakers' intention for apologizing in this strategy. In this study, examples noted included the Chinese lexemes “*dui bu qi*” (sorry), “*qian yi*” (apology) and “*dao qian*” (apologize), “*yuan liang*” (forgive), and “*bu hao yi si*” (it is

embarrassing). A more detailed tabulation of the *IFIDs* used by Chinese speakers in the TV series and its distribution in the corpus are provided as follows. As the framework shows in Chapter 3, there are three sub-strategies under the *IFIDs* which are: *expression of regret*, *offer of apology*, and *asking for forgiveness*. However, during the procedure of data analysis, several new types of apology strategies were identified, and these are such as *asking for another chance* and *expression of embarrassment*. To illustrate the use of the *IFIDs* clearly, Table 4.2 shows the distribution of the sub-strategies of *IFIDs*:

Table 4.2 Distribution of sub-strategies of *IFIDs*

IFIDs	NO.	%
Expression of regret	43	71.67%
Expression of embarrassment	6	10.00%
Offer of apology	5	8.33%
Asking for forgiveness	3	5.00%
Asking for another chance	3	5.00%
Total	60	100.00%

(*Asking for another chance* and *expression of embarrassment* are the new strategies identified in the study which do not appear in the modified framework)

Referring to Table 4.2, five sub-strategies of the *IFIDs* were identified in total: *the expression of regret*, *expression of embarrassment*, *offer of apology*, *asking for forgiveness*, and *asking for another chance*. As mentioned above, *the expression of regret*, *offer of apology*, and *asking for forgiveness* have been identified in various languages—in English (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983), Persian (Shariati & Chamani, 2010) as well as in Chinese (Yi & Wen, 2013), whilst *the expression of embarrassment* and *asking for another chance* appears to be a more culture-based strategy that is direct transferred from the Chinese expression “bu hao yi si” and “zai gei wo yi ci ji hui” respectively. As a consequence, the above analysis shows that apologies may vary according to culture. The following discussions are carried out in order to gain a better understanding of the specific use and functions of apology strategies in Chinese.

4.3.1 Sub-strategy 1: Expression of Regret

Expression of regret is a common form of apology in Chinese that is used to express the intention of apology in almost all senses (Li, 2007). As Table 4.2 shows, there were altogether 60 segments of *IFIDs* in the corpus and around three quarters (71.67%) comprised of the *expression of regret*. The result shows that the *expression of regret* is most frequently used as a sub-strategy of the *IFIDs* by the Chinese speakers in the corpus. This result further confirms Liu's (2005) finding that *the expression of regret* was the most frequently used strategy amongst Chinese speakers.

According to the analysis, it was found that although the *expression of regret* tended to be the most frequently used strategy amongst the sub-strategies of *IFIDs*, it was rarely used independently in the corpus. It is mainly used by adding modal particle, or by combining with other strategies (only the most common combinations are mentioned). The use of the *expression of regret* is also applicable to some other sub-strategies of *IFIDs* (Luo, 2004) where there is limitation to data, and examples are only extracted from the use of *expression of regret*.

1. Add Modal Particle after the Expression of Regret

The modal particle is an important feature of the Chinese language (Ni, 2013). According to Huang and Liao (2002), the modal particle in Chinese is often used at the end of the sentence to display the speaker's mood, and can also be used in the sentence as a pause. Hu (1995) defined the modal particle as the word attached at the end of the sentence to show the mood. Based on the definitions above, the main function of the modal particle can be summarized to show the speaker's mood whilst speaking. In other words, the modal particle in Chinese could mitigate or strengthen the mood for making

apologies (Ni, 2013; Shi & Li, 2015). Below are examples of adding a modal particle after the *expression of regret*.

Example 2 (Episode 11):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xu Qian (S) was absent-minded the whole day when she practiced in the drama club, which made her adviser (H) angry with her.
1	H	徐倩! (Xu Qian!)
2	S	啊? (Ah?)
3	H	啊什么啊，都一整天了，你心思跑火星上去了，搞什么搞啊 (Ah, what ah? The whole day, your mind has gone to the Mars, what are you doing?)
4	S	对不起啊 (Sorry <u>“ah”</u>) (Tone down and bowed her head)

In example 2, S had been absent-minded the whole day whilst she practiced in the drama club and this made her adviser, H, feel angry, resulting in him stressing her name to remind her (Turn 1). However, S had not realized H's intention of reminding her by saying "ah" in Turn 2 and this caused H's complaints in Turn 3 to make S finally realize that she had annoyed H. S then apologized to H, her adviser (who is of higher status than her) by saying "dui bu qi" (sorry, Turn 4), which has been identified in this study to be the strategy of *expression of regret*. It was noted that in this apology following the *expression of regret*, a modal particle "ah" (underlined in Turn 4) was employed in a low tone. According to Deng (2010), using the modal particle with a low tone can soften the tone in the expression, and so it is inferred in this example that S added the modal particle after the *expression of regret* with the aim of softening her apology. It is also interesting to note that in the context of the scenes of Example 2, S did not pay much attention to H when H had tried to remind her by calling her name. Even when H complained to her, she had simply said "dui bu qi 'ah'" (sorry "ah") mechanically. In this scene, the modal

particle “ah” could also perhaps be understood as the uncertainty of S, as she was not sure whether H would complain to her continually or accept her apology.

Example 3 (Episode 4):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Miss Yan (H), the adviser of the cheering squad felt angry with Xu Qian (S) a member of the chorus, because Xu Qian used the copier without the permission of the cheering squad.
1	S	对不起了，严老师，因为昨天真的太晚了，图书馆都关门了，我们合唱团又没有那么高级的东西，所以才借用拉拉队的。 (Sorry “ <u>le</u> ”, (low tone with the head bowed) teacher Yan. It was so late yesterday that the library was closed. Our chorus doesn’t have such advanced machines, so I borrowed it from the cheering squad.) (look to H without rising her head)
2	H	你说清楚，盗用就是盗用，你还狡辩，我不管，不告而取，就是偷。 (Make clear that you used it without my permission. Don’t quibble. Anyway, taking it without my permission is stealing.)

In Example 3, the modal particle used after the *expression of regret* was the Chinese character “le” (underlined in Turn 1). In this TV series, H was designated as the very strict adviser of whom almost all the students felt afraid of. The offence in this example was S, a student of the chorus, used H’s copier and witnessed by H. Evidently, S had offended H and so S then apologized to H by employing the *expression of regret* (boldface in Turn 1) along with a combination of other strategies such as *explanation* and *mentioning the offence committed* (as will be illustrated in later sections). Since H was so strict, S was afraid that she would not be forgiven and she then added the modal particle “le” with a low tone after the *expression of regret* (Turn 1) in a bid to soften her apologies and obtain H’s forgiveness. This was inferred from S’s pose and eyesight, as S apologized with her head bowed and after expressing her apologies, she observed H without rising her head. In terms of politeness, S observed Gu’s (1990) addressee maxim by calling H “teacher Yan” (Turn 1) as a recognition of her status as a teacher.

Example 4 (Episode 8):

Turns	Speaker/ hearer	Background: Xiao Wen (H) felt angry with his students and decided to leave the chorus. Xu Qian (S) on behalf of all students of the chorus apologize to Xiao Wen. (Xiao Wen was in a daze facing the lake)
1	S	老师, 对不起哦 , 你快回来吧, 我们大家都需要你。 (Teacher Xiao, sorry “ <u>oh</u> ” (low tone). Come back, we all need you.)
2	H	点头 (Nodding)

The modal particle “oh” (underlined in Turn 1) could also be added after *the expression of regret* to soften the expression of apologies. As shown in Example 4, H was angry with his students in the chorus and decided to quit. On behalf of all the students of the chorus, S then went to apologize to H and begged H to stay with them. S found that H was in a daze facing the lake seeming a little bit sad. S then went to H and was told that H would not leave the chorus even before S expressed her apology. However, after knowing that H would not leave them, S still expressed her apology by saying “**dui bu qi**” (boldface in Turn 1) with the addition of the modal particle “oh” (underlined in Turn 1) after *the expression of regret*. In this case, it seemed that S softened her expression of apology not for obtaining H’s forgiveness but for pleasing H. In terms of politeness, S observed the addressee maxim by addressing H as “teacher” in the apology so as to show her respect to H.

2. Combining the Expression of regret with Explanation

Similar to English, apology strategies in Chinese can not only be used independently but also as a combination with each other (Li & Li, 2004). Combining the *expression of regret* with other apology strategies is also a popular way of apologizing in

the corpus. In this study, only the most common combinations are mentioned (see Appendix 2), such as combining the *explanation* and *speaking the offence committed*.

The *explanation* in this study is an expression that gives accounts or reasons of certain offences. According to Jebahi (2011), the *explanation* can be regarded as a type of apology strategy when it is combined with an apologetic expression. In this study, the strategy of *explanation* was mainly identified based on the combination of other apologetic expressions such as “*dui bu qi*” (sorry), “*bu hao yi si*” (it is embarrassing), and “*dao qian*” (apology) in Chinese.

The strategy of *explanation* accounted for 16.79% among six main strategies (see Table 4.1). According to analysis, there are two ways of employing the strategy of *explanation*. One is the *explicit explanation* which refers to giving a specific and clear reason or account for the offence. The other method is the *implicit explanation* which refers to giving an unspecific and unclear reason or account of the offence (Li & Li, 2004). The *expression of regret* could be combined with both the *explicit explanation* and *implicit explanation*. In Example 5, S expressed his apology to H (his wife) by saying “*dui bu qi ah*” (boldface in Turn 1) combined with an *implicit explanation* “I have something to deal with right now” (underlined in Turn 1); in this instance, he did not explain the specifics of what he was dealing with and went to find the student who was singing. Gu’s (1990) addressee maxim is also manifested in this example when S addressed H as “honey” in Turn 1.

Example 5 (Episode 2):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: When Xiao wen (S) was on the phone with his wife (H) he heard someone was singing, he had to hang up the phone and find out the student who was singing.
1	S	老婆, 对不起啊, 我有事 晚点打给你 (Honey, sorry “ah”, I have something to deal with. Call you later.)

On the contrary, in Example 6, S could not keep in line with the other students during the cheering squad practice and this made her adviser H angry, resulting in him complaining to her (Turn 1). S then apologized to H by proving a specific reason that “my legs were hurt in the morning exercise” (underlined in Turn 2) with the combination of the *expression of regret* (boldface in Turn 2).

Example 6 (Episode 12):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Miss Yan (H) found Xue Qi (s) was absent-minded today, and complained to her. Xue Qi apologized to Miss Yan.
1	H	钱雪琪，你干什么呢，你到底是力不从心还是心不在焉，你这个动作，表情，态度没有一项能达标的。你看你那腿，抬的多散漫，收小腹，你这样怎么当拉拉队队长 (Qian Xue Qi, what are you doing? Is that because your ability does not equal to your ambition or you are totally absent-minded? None of your motion, facial expression, and attitude could reach the standard. Look at your sloppy legs, suppressed stomach, how would you be a good team leader of cheering squad.)
2	S	对不起，严老师，我今天早上下叉的时候，把腿给拉伤了。 (Sorry, teacher Yan, <u>my legs were hurt in the morning exercise.</u>)

In Example 7 below, it is known from the TV series that S did not love H, even though she was H’s fiancée, and H knew about this. For this reason, their relationship seemed slightly estranged because they were not really close. When S was inquired about taking off her engagement ring, S then apologized to H to prevent any misunderstanding. To do this, S employed different apology strategies in her apology such as the *explanation* (“I am just not used to wear it on my finger” in Turn 2), *speaking the offence committed* (“then took it off” in Turn 2), *expression of regret* (“sorry ah” in Turn 2), *lack of intent* (“I did not mean it” in Turn 2), and *concern for the hearers* (“do not think too much” in Turn 2); applying them in turns with *the explanation* used first of all. Facing H’s inquiry on the reason for taking off the ring, S provided the explanation for the

offence directly and immediately to show her intention of not causing any misunderstanding.

Example 7 (Episode 21):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Shi Shi (S) took off her engagement ring on the desk, and this made her fiancé Zhong xiao (H) unhappy.
1	H	我送你的结婚戒指你就这么放着。(You just put the ring that I sent you on the desk.)
2	S	<u>我只是不习惯手上戴戒指</u> , 顺手拿下来了, 对不起啊, 我不是故意的, 你别多想。(I am just not used to wear it on my finger, and then took it off. Sorry ah, I did not mean it. Do not think too much.)
3	H	没事, 没事的啊, 好了, 那你忙吧。(It's OK, OK ah, well, then keep being busy.)

3. Combining the Expression of Regret with Mentioning the Offence Committed

Mentioning the offence committed is one sub-strategy of *taking responsibility*, and this usually happens when the speaker mentions the offence that he/she has committed. In the corpus of this study, it is found that combining the *expression of regret* with *speaking the offence committed* is commonly used among Chinese speakers in the selected TV series for making apologies. To illustrate this, Examples 8, 9, and 10 are provided.

Example 8 (Episode 2):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Guo qian mi (S) has judged Xiang Yu'an (H) by his looks and said that he couldn't sing well.
1	S	<u>刚刚是我以貌取人了</u> , 对不起 (just now, I judged you by your looks, sorry)
2	H	(微笑) (smile)

In Example 8, S had judged H by his looks and did not believe that such a pretty boy could sing well, before actually hearing H sing. H sang so well that S changed her mind and apologized to H by employing the *speaking the offence committed* first by saying “I had judged by the looks” (Turn 1), and then used the *expression of regret* (“sorry” in Turn 1) to express her regret. According to Li (2007), *speaking the offence committed* can only be omitted when both the speaker and the hearer clearly know what the offence is. According to the background in Example 8, the offence in Example 8 had happened before H began singing, and the apology occurred after H had finished singing. Therefore, it seems necessary to mention the offence that had happened beforehand in order to make the apology complete (Li, 2007).

Example 9 (Episode 4):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xu Qian argued with their adviser because of Xiang Yu An, and Yu An felt sorry for Xu Qian.
1	S	对不起啊， <u>为了我，让你惹麻烦了</u> (Sorry "ah", because of me, you got into trouble.)
2	H	不麻烦，我知道，你对于要唱草蜢的歌，这件事很紧张 (Not at all. I know you are very nervous about singing the Grasshoppers' song)

The combination of the expression of regret and mentioning the offence committed used in Example 9 was also used to apologize for the offence which had been occurring for a while. The function of the combination similar to it is seen in Example 8. However, compared to the other combination sequences, it is noticed that the combination of *expression of regret* and *speaking the offence committed* can be grouped into two sequences. Whether the *expression of regret* (Example 9) or *speaking the offence committed* went first (Example 8 and 10), no outstanding differences were found in the function of either combination type.

Example 10 (Episode 5):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xu Qian (S) changed the song they plan to perform on recruiting meeting without her adviser Mr. Xiao's (H) permission.
1	S	老师，对不起 (Mr. Xiao, sorry.)
2	H	你有什么必要跟我道歉吗？ (Is there any necessity to apologize to me?)
3	S	我没有经过你的同意就把招新会上要唱的歌给改了，对不起啊 (I changed the song sang on the recruiting meeting without your permission, sorry "ah")

In Example 10, the offence was mentioned to provide a reason for apologizing. S changed the song that they had planned to perform during the recruiting meeting without H's permission. She knew that her adviser, H would be annoyed and she went to apologize by saying “dui bu qi” in Turn 1 with H asking her if there was any necessity to make an apology in Turn 2. S then employed the *mentioning the offence committed* (Turn 3) method to explain the reason why she was there apologizing.

4.3.2 Sub-strategy 2: Expression of Embarrassment

The *expression of embarrassment* which takes up 10% of all the *IFIDs* in this study is directly transferred from “bu hao yi si” in Chinese. In the Modern Chinese Dictionary (2005), the term “bu hao yi si” is defined as (1) be shy to do something; or (2) expressing the inconvenience to do something. According to Song and Liang (2011), the *expression of embarrassment* is more concerned with the speaker's feeling of embarrassment or shyness, rather than the hearer's feeling.

According to Li and Du (2012), there are 6 types of functions for the term “bu hao yi si” (it is embarrassing), which includes (1) expressing one's feeling of shame or

embarrassment; (2) to show one's inconvenience, or unwillingness to perform something; (3) expressing the feeling of apology; (4) a formulae to show politeness; (5) mitigate the contradiction before or after the preparation of an offence; and (6) breaking out of the current situation such as by disrupting someone's talking. Data in the corpus of this study also showed the use of "bu hao yi si" as noted by Li and Du (2012).

Function 1: "Break Out of the Current Situation"

"Breaking out of the current situation" in this study refers more to disrupting other people's speech. The following example uses the *expression of embarrassment* for breaking out of the current situation.

According to the context given, H forgot to introduce his female colleague to S and started talking (see Turn 1), as shown in Example 11. This made S mistake the female who stood beside H to be H's wife, where S disrupted H talking to confirm that by using the term "bu hao yi si" (Turn 2). Here, S was breaking out of H's speech and interrupted H by saying "bu hao yi si" and followed with the question S "Is she your wife?" However, this occurrence only happened once.

Example 11 (Episode 10):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xiao Wen (H) and Shi Shi (female colleague) went to visit Xin Fei (S) but Xiao Wen forgot to introduce Shi Shi to Xin Fei, Xin Fei had to disrupt Xiao Wen's talk to ask him about Shi Shi.
1	H	辛霏，好久不见，你最近好吗？那个，这次找你呢…(被打断) (Xin Fei, long time no see, how are you now? Well, this time I am coming to you for...) (interruption)
2	S	<u>不好意思</u> ，她是你太太？ (It is embarrassing, is she your wife?)
3	H	不不不，这个对不起，忘了介绍，这是我同事，叶诗诗老师。 (no, no, no, sorry for that, forgot to introduce, this is my colleague Teacher Ye Shi Shi)

Function 2: “Expressing Apology”

Li and Du (2012) also noted that “bu hao yi si” (it is embarrassing) can be applied to express one's feeling of apology. In Example 12, S was late for an appointment with H, potentially offending H, and so he then used the term “bu hao yi si” combined with mentioning the offence committed by saying “I am late” in Turn 1. In this example, S being late could be seen as a potential offence, as it indeed had the possibility to annoy H. Therefore, the function of “bu hao yi si” in this example is inferred as providing an apology.

Example 12 (Episode 16):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xiao Wen (S) and Shi Shi (H) made an appointment to practice dancing, but Xiao Wen was late for the appointment.
1	S	诗诗， <u>不好意思</u> ，我来晚了 (Shi Shi, It is embarrassing , I am late.)

Function 3: “Formulaic Pattern”

As mentioned above, the term “bu hao yi si” (it is embarrassing) can also be used as a “formulaic pattern” when people have approval of each other. It does not mean that an offence has been committed (Li & Du, 2012). As is shown in Example 13 below.

Example 13 (Episode 26):

Turns	Speaker/Hearer	Background: Xiang Yu An asked the shop assistant (S) that if they have one certain type of key ring.
1	H	我想请问一下你们这有卖跟这个同款的钥匙圈嘛? (I want to ask that if there is a key ring that is the same as this one.)
2	S	没有哎，我们这里没有这一款， <u>不好意思</u> (No, we do not have this type. It is embarrassing.)

S was a shop assistant and H was a customer who wanted to buy a keyring. H asked S if they (the shop) carried a certain type of keyring. S provided H with a negative answer and this is followed by the term “bu hao yi si” (it is embarrassing) in Turn 2. It was noted that during this interaction, S did not say/do anything that would offend H and H did not show any feeling of being offended. According to Li and Du’s (2012) classification of “bu hao yi si” (it is embarrassing) function, this is inferred as an example of “bu hao yi si” being used as a polite formula.

Function 4: “Showing Shyness”

Example 14 illustrates the use of the term “bu hao yi si” to show one’s feeling of shyness. In this example, S1 and S2 were students in the chorus and had joined the cheering squad without permission from H, their adviser of the chorus. Therefore, when H saw the two students practicing in the cheering squad, he asked them “What’s wrong

with you?" as displayed in Turn 1. This caused the students to feel shame, and S1 then expressed his apology to H by saying “bu hao yi si” in Turn 2. Although “bu hao yi si” was used in his apology, it did not mean that S1 had realized that he had offended H. As after saying “bu hao yi si” in Turn 2, S1 said “but we have the chance to be the main actors here” and “you will not disapprove, right?” in Turn 2. This seems to suggest that they have a reasonable reason to join the cheering squad and H should be able to sympathize and understand them. Therefore, the term “bu hao yi si” used in Turn 2 was used to express a feeling of shyness.

Example 14 (Episode 27):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Zhuang Kai Wen (S1) and Guo Qian Mi (S2) are members of the Music Club, and they joined the Cheering Squad simultaneously without permission from their adviser Mr. Xiao (H) in the Music Club. Unfortunately, Mr. Xiao found them when they were practicing in the Cheering Squad, and he asked them what was happening to them.
1	H	你们两个什么情况? (What's wrong with you two?)
2	S	庄凯文：萧老师，不好意思，我们应该事先跟您报备的，但是我们在这里有能当主场的机会，你应该不会反对吧 (Mr. Xiao, it is so embarrassing, we should have asked you before, but since we have a chance to be the main actors here, you will not disagree, right?)

Function 5: “Expressing Inconvenience”

Here the use of “bu hao yi si” (it is embarrassing) could also function as a way to express the speaker’s “inconvenience” (Li & Du, 2012) to perform something. In this study, the “inconvenience” refers more to the inconvenience applying to time, which means “bu hao yi si” is used to express that S has no time to perform something. Below,

Example 15 is used to illustrate the function of “bu hao yi si” (it is embarrassing) as “expressing inconvenience”.

Example 15 (Episode 28):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xu Qian (H) asked her boyfriend Cao Jun (H) to go to the hospital, but Cao Jun had an appointment with another friend.
1	H	你下课陪我看医生好不好? (Go to see the doctor with me after class Ok?)
2	S	<u>不好意思啊</u> , 我已经约了朋友了 (It is so embarrassing “ah” , I have already made an appointment with friends.)

In Example 15, S had an appointment with other friends when H asked him to go to see the doctor with H in Turn 1. S used the term “bu hao yi si” (it is embarrassing) to express that he had no time to accompany H to see the doctor. Here, S provided the reason why he cannot go with her by saying that “I have already made an appointment with friends” in Turn 2. This means that he was not available at this time, and thus it was an inconvenience for him to accompany H to see the doctor.

Based on the above analyses, the use of “bu hao yi si” matches with most of the functions proposed by Li and Du (2012). However, the occurrence of each function only happened once or twice.

4.3.3 Sub-strategy 3: Offer of Apology

The *offer of apology* is a way to express one’s feeling of apology for some serious offences, and it indicates a more serious attitude of the speaker than using the *expression of regret* (Ruan & Du, 2009). In this study, the *offer of apology* is mainly noted by the term “dao qian” (apologize) and “qian yi” (apology) in Chinese. As shown in Table 4.2,

8% of *IFIDs* was made up of the strategy using an *offer of apology*. Below are examples that have been used to illustrate the use of the *offer of apology*.

Example 16 (Episode 4):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: The doctor (S) in the hospital found that he had misdiagnosed that Ms. Xiao (H) was pregnant at her first antenatal examination. He felt sorry about Ms. Xiao and told her the truth.
1	H	怎么样, 指标还正常吗 (Are those indexes normal?)
2	S	萧太太, 很抱歉, 其实呢, 你没有怀孕 (Mrs Xiao, I'm sorry, actually, you are not pregnant.)
3	H	你说在、什么? (What are you talking about?)
4	S	这次是护士不小心把你的病历和另一位准妈妈的产检报告放错了, 您并没有怀孕, 对于这样的疏忽, 我代表院方, 向您道歉 (The nurse mistook your medical report to another expectant mother's pregnancy check-up report. You are not pregnant. I apologize to you for the ignorance on

In Example 16, the offence was that S as a doctor had misdiagnosed H being pregnant a few days prior. Obviously, this was a serious offence if compared to examples such as being late for a date, or disturbing others. S then employed the *offer of apology* (Turn 4) to express his apology on behalf of the hospital. It was noticed that in Turn 4, S used the term “nin” (you) to indicate H. “Nin” (you) is an honorific of you in Chinese (Liu & Zhou, 2013), normally used for addressing someone of a higher status, someone more powerful, or for elderly persons (Chen, 1986). In this sense, although it was uncertain what their exact ages were, it seemed that S was older than H and they shared equal status, based on their appearances. Based on Chen's (1986) theory on the use of “nin” in this example, S should not have to employ the term “nin” to indicate H. It is inferred that S attempted to show more respect in his expression of apology in order to get H's understanding or forgiveness.

Example 17 (Episode 7):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xu Qian (S) said something that hurt her adviser Mr. Xiao (H).
1	S	肖老师，对不起啊 (Sorry "ah", Mr. Xiao)
2	H	你又来道歉啊 (You're here to apologize again)
3	S	上次是我说的太过分了让你伤心了吧 (Last time what I have said was excessive and I said and hurt you.)
4	H	我也没想到，一个中年男人的心竟然这么脆弱 (I never thought about that a middle-aged man's heart is so fragile.)
5	S	所以 我来跟您道歉 啊，你这个月很少来监督合唱团的联系，大家不是迟到就是早退感觉越来越没有动力了 (So I come here to apologize to you . You seldom went to the chorus for supervising us this month, so everyone either came late or left early. We have no motivation gradually.)

According to the background in Example 17, S as a student had hurt H's (her adviser) feelings by saying that H was not a good teacher and that they could find a better one. This hurt H so badly that H decided to resign from the position of adviser. S then realized the seriousness of the offence and apologized by employing the strategy *offer of apology* by saying "wo lai gen nin dao qian 'ah'" in Turn 5. In this apology, S also employed "nin" to address H as a mark of respect. As mentioned above, the term "nin" is usually used to indicate the person who holds a higher status to show politeness (Chen, 1986).

Example 18 (Episode 26)

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Yan Su (S) revealed their university's song list for competition to their competitors, this made their headmaster (H) angry and decided to dismiss her from the university.
1	S	校长 (Headmaster)
2	H	恩，等一下，现在不是在学校，而且我们是用朋友的身份让你请客的，所以千万不要叫校长 (En, wait a bit, now we are not at university, and I am treated by you as a friend, so do not call me headmaster.)
3	S	哦，好好好好，浩大 (Oh, ok, ok, ok, ok, Hao Da.)
4	H	这就对了 (That is right.)
5	S	既然你把我当朋友，那我就开门见山的说，上次泄露歌单的事，我回去好好的反省了一下，我真的是对不起你啊，所以我 <u>一定要敬你这杯酒，来表达我的歉意</u> ，希望得到原谅 (Since you take me as your friend, then I just come straight to the point. For the revealing of songs list, I criticized myself deeply, I really sorry for you ah, so I have to propose a toast to you, to express my apology , and wishes to get forgiveness.)

In Example 18, S was an adviser at Chen Xi University who revealed their song list for the competition to their competitor, and this made H, the headmaster of Chen Xi University angry causing him to fire S (see background). In order to keep her job in this university, S expressed her apology to H for revealing the song list during a dinner which she treated him for. The *offer of apology* was employed by saying “yi ding yao jing ni zhe bei jiu, lai biao da wo de qian yi” (I have to propose a toast to you, to express my apology, to offer my apology) in Turn 5. It seems that S employed the toast as an instrument to offer her apology. In this instance, if H drinks the wine toasted by S, it would mean that S's apology had been accepted.

It is noted that the offence referred to in the above examples are quite serious compared to previous offences which were such as being “late for a date with girlfriend” or being “late for class” (see Chapter 4.2), possibly hurting the hearers' feelings badly.

This further confirms Ruan and Du's (2009) theory that *the offer of apology* is usually used to make apologies for serious offences.

4.3.4 Sub-strategies 4: Asking for Forgiveness and Sub-strategy 5: Asking for another Chance

According to the data analysis, there was a new type of apology identified: *asking for another chance* (5%); which directly translated from the Chinese term “zai gei yi ci ji hui”. It is noted that *asking for forgiveness* and *asking for another chance* have some similarities in their usage. Hence, this section shall discuss them together.

1. Asking for Forgiveness

Asking for forgiveness (5%) is a way to apologize by performing an action of request, and it is often used together with the word “please” (Li, 2007), by *asking for another chance*. In this study, *asking for forgiveness* was noted based on the performative verb “yuan liang” (forgive) in Chinese.

Example 19 (Episode 23):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xiang Yu An (S) kissed Xu Qian without Xu Qian's (H) permission, and apologized to Xu Qian.
1	S	对不起，我那天没经过你的同意就…我那时候就是一时冲动，我也不晓得为什么这样 (Sorry, I did... without your permission. I was too impulsive that day, and I don't know why I did like that.)
2	H	一时冲动啊 (Impulsive ah.)
3	S	<u>请你原谅我</u> (Please forgive me.)
4	H	没关系啦，不过，下不为例啊 (Never mind la, but do not repeat it next time.)
5	S	当然，我保证 (Sure, I promise.)

As Li and Li (2004) have stated, *asking for forgiveness* is usually used at the end of an apology to show the speaker's sincerity. As shown in Example 19, S apologized by first expressing his regret, saying "dui bu qi" (sorry) followed by explaining the reason causing the offence by saying "I was too impulsive" in Turn 1. S then said "qing ni yuan liang wo" (please forgive me) in Turn 3. Li and Li (2004) mentioned that *asking for forgiveness* is often used at the end of an apology with no further elaboration. However, in this example, *the promise for forbearance* (boldface in Turn 5) was used only after H had said "do not repeat it next time". From this, it is inferred that S asking for forgiveness would have been the end of apology; but when H said "do not repeat it next time", S then provided a positive answer by saying "Sure, I promise". This was not highlighted by Li and Li (2004).

2. Asking for Another Chance

Examples 20 and 21 are used to introduce the use of *asking for another chance* as seen in the corpus. *Asking for another chance* (5%) was not very frequently seen in the corpus of this study to the best of the author's knowledge, and it is rarely mentioned in other studies on apologies (Zhang, 2007; Yi and Wen, 2013).

Example 20 (Episode 7):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xu Qian (S) said something that had hurt her adviser Mr. Xiao (H) which made H decided to resign from the chorus, and then apologized to her adviser.
1	H	依你们的能力，随随便便可以找一个比我能力强的导师，不在话下吧 (According to your ability, It's easy for you to find a better adviser than me.)
2	S	老师，对不起， <u>你再给我们一次机会好不好？</u> (Teacher, sorry, please give us another chance can or not?)

Similar to *asking for forgiveness*, *asking for another chance* is also carried out by performing an action of request. According to the background of Example 20, S employed asking for another chance to express her apologies to H, who was of a higher status. In order to use *asking for another chance* to apologize to someone of a higher status in a soft tone, S performed the request in an interrogative sentence by adding the modal particle “can or cannot” (Turn 2) at the end of *asking for another chance*. Modal particles used in apologies have the function of mitigating or strengthening an apology by showing more politeness (Ni, 2013; Shi & Li, 2015). Another example is provided below.

Example 21 (Episode 10):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Li Jie (S1) and Ji Jie (S2) were caught by Mr. Xiao (H) when they were cheating for the examination.
1	H	用音乐作弊? (Use the music cheat for the examination?)
2	S	老师我们错了。再给我们一次重新做人的机会吧 (low tone) (Teacher, we are wrong. Give us another chance to have a new life “ba”)

The situation in Example 21 was quite similar to the one shown in Example 20, where the apology was also made to H who was of a higher status. In this example, S added modal particle “ba” (underlined in Turn 2) with a low tone to soften his expression of the request for another chance.

4.4 Strategy 2: Taking Responsibility

Taking responsibility refers explicitly to the “expression in which the apologizer admits to having responsibility for the offense” (Nureddeen, 2008). In this study, *taking responsibility* is the second most frequently (26.28%) used apology strategy and it

includes four sub-strategies: *accepting the blame*, *expressing self-deficiency*, *expressing the lack of intent*, and *mentioning the offence committed*. The following table shows the distribution of the four sub-strategies for *taking responsibility*.

Table 4.3 Distribution of Sub-strategies of Taking Responsibility

Taking Responsibility	NO.	%
Mentioning the offence committed	23	63.89%
Expressing self-deficiency	5	13.89%
Accepting the blame	4	11.11%
Expressing lack of intent	4	11.11%
Total	36	100.00%

(*Mentioning the offence committed* is the one identified according to the data)

As is shown in Table 4.3, there were a total of four types of sub-strategies under the *taking responsibility* method. The result revealed that more than half of the total sub-strategies under *taking responsibility* comprised of *mentioning the offence committed* (63.89%); which was then followed by *expressing self-deficiency* with a percentage of 13.89%. The *accepting the blame* and *expressing lack of intent* sub-strategies shared the same percentage with 11.11% each out of all the *taking responsibility* sub-strategies. The following is a detailed discussion of the use of the sub-strategies under the *taking responsibility* method.

4.4.1 Sub-strategy 1: Mentioning the Offence Committed

Mentioning the offence committed occurs when the speaker mentions the offence he/she has committed. It was the most frequently used sub-strategy whereby more than half (64.89%) of all sub-strategies comprised of *taking responsibility*. It could be used for mentioning both of the offences which had either already happened, or for an offence that had yet to occur. The examples below are used to illustrate this.

Example 22 (Episode 5):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xue Qi, a member of the cheering squad, annoyed Miss Yan for joining the chorus with her friends.
1	H	你们三个怎么回事? (What's wrong with you three?)
2	S	对不起, 严老师, <u>没有事先跟您商量就跑去报名</u> , 但其实, 我们是想…… (耳语) (Sorry, teacher Yan, <u>without consulting with you before joined the chorus</u> . But actually, we want to…… (whisper)

In Example 22, *mentioning the offence committed* was used following an apologetic expression “*dui bu qi*” which was identified as the *expression of regret* (Turn 2). In this example, S and her friends who were members of the cheering squad had registered in the chorus without any prior discussion with H, their adviser in the cheering squad. This caused H to feel unhappy and queried them by asking what was wrong with them in Turn 1. S then apologized to H by mentioning the offence they had committed, “without consulting with you before joined the chorus” in Turn 2. On the contrary, in Example 23, *mentioning the offence committed* came first, and then followed by other strategies.

Example 23 (Episode 11):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xiang Yu'an (H) quarreled with Xue Qi because of Xu Qian (S), Xu Qian felt sorry about that and then apologized to Xiang Yu'an.
1	S	<u>那天害你跟雪琪吵架了</u> , 你们现在没事了吧! (<u>You quarreled with Xue Qi because of me that day</u> , are you OK right now?)

In Example 23, S employed the *mentioning the offence committed* by saying “You quarreled with Xue Qi because of me that day” in Turn 1 first (as shown underlined), before showing her concern for H by saying “are you OK now?” in Turn 1. This is

because the offence had occurred a few days prior, and so mentioning the offence which they had committed seemed to complete the apology. This strategy could not only be used to state the offence that had happened but it can also be used to mention an offence that would occur in future (see Example 24 below).

Example 24 (Episode 19):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Li Yi Yuan (S) had an appointment with Xu Qian first, but he forgot that and had dinner with Xue Qi (H) when Xu Qian called. So he had to apologize to Xue Qi for his leaving.
1	H	怎么了? (What's wrong)
2	S	我们约了去游乐园，不过我给忘了。 对不起啊，等一下我可能先走 。不过你放心，这餐算我的，我请客。 (We had an appointment to go to the park, but I forgot about that. Sorry “ah”, I might go first later. But don't worry, this bill is on me, I treat.)

As is shown in Example 24, S showed his apology by combining the *mentioning the offence committed* (boldface and underlined in Turn 2) and *expression of regret* (boldface in Turn 2). This differs from the offences mentioned in Examples 22 and 23, where the offence which S mentioned by saying “I might go first later” (Turn 2) in Example 24 had not yet occurred. According to Jiang and Hu (2005), using the *mentioning the offence committed* method to apologize before the offence occurred could avoid and/or mitigate the offence. Mentioning the offence before the offence could occur not only reflects the respect for the hearer but also to pave the way for the potential offence in order to avoid contradiction (Yi & Wen, 2013). Therefore, the use of this strategy made the function of the apology to be changed from being a “remedy” to a “precaution” (Jiang & Hu, 2005).

4.4.2 Sub-strategy 2: Expressing Self-deficiency

Expressing self-deficiency means that the speaker uses self-deprecation, self-humiliation or self-punishment to assume his/her responsibility to be able to strengthen the degree of the apology (Li, 2007). In terms of politeness, this sub-strategy is closer to Gu's (1990) self-denigration maxim that elevates other and denigrates oneself. In the corpus of this study, 14.89% of all sub-strategies of *taking responsibility* fell under *expressing self-deficiency* which means that 5 out of 36 segments of sub-strategies of *taking responsibility* were by *expressing self-deficiency*.

Example 25 (Episode 16):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Shi Shi (S) and Xiao Wen (H) fall down when they were dancing, and Shi Shi found she pressed on Xiao Wen's body.
1	S	对不起, 我不是故意的, <u>我笨手笨脚的</u> (Sorry, I didn't mean it, <u>I was clumsy.</u>)

According to Li (2007), *expressing self-deficiency* is often employed by the speaker of a lower status, or is the party who has done something wrong, or has a favour to ask from the hearer. For example, in Example 25, S asked H to help her to practice dancing for her wedding, and during their practice, S felt so nervous that they both fall down to the ground. After a while, she suddenly realized that she had pressed on H's body for seconds and this made her feel awkward. S then expressed her apology immediately by saying "dui bu qi" (sorry), "wo bus hi gu yi de" (I did not mean it), and "wo ben shou ben jiao de" (I was clumsy). As S and H in this example, they both owned an equal status, so it is inferred that expressing self-deficiency was used here to mitigate the awkward atmosphere.

Expressing self-deficiency is a way to describe one's deficiency by showing more respect to the hearer (Gu, 1990). Example 26 illustrates this.

Example 26 (Episode 22):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xiao Wen (S) suspected that someone revealed their song list to their competitor from another university, and went to ask the competitor's adviser Miss Yin (H) about this thing. This made Miss Yin felt angry, Xiao Wen realized that he did offended Miss Yin and apologized to her.
1	H	我们比赛靠的是实力 (We compete by our strength)
2	S	殷老师，对不起啊， <u>是我以小人之心度君子之腹了</u> ，要不这样，为了表达我的歉意，请科农大的合唱团，到我们学校的礼堂来进行练习，如果你同意的话，在这次复赛之前，我们可以进行一次交流和观摩。 (Miss Yin, sorry ah, <u>it was me measured the stature of great men by the yardstick of the small man.</u> Well, in order to express my apology, I invite your chorus to come to our university hall to practice. If you agree with this, before the quarter-final, we can organize a viewing, emulating and communication activity.)

In Example 26, there was a competition between S's chorus and H's chorus. S heard that someone had revealed their song list to H and so S went to ask H about it, causing H to feel annoyed and insulted. Facing S's suspicion, H replied by saying that they compete by their own strength seriously (Turn 1). S then realized that he may have misunderstood H and regretted his own action before. In his apology, S employed *expressing self-deficiency* by using an old Chinese saying (underlined part in Turn 2) to express his deficiency and praise the hearer to be a "great man" at the same time so as to show more respect to H.

According to the background of Example 27 below, S had misunderstood her father on the matter of divorcing with her mother for several years. In this sense, S had occasionally heard her parents talking and knew that she had misunderstood her father

those years. She was so sorry that she apologized to her father whilst crying. In her apology, S described her deficiency by saying “I was so stupid, so naive” in Turn 2 to apologize to H, her father, who is defined as one of higher status in this study (see Chapter 3). This result keeps in line with Li (2007) regarding the situations using *expressing self-deficiency*.

Example 27 (Episode 29):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xu Qian’s (S) parents divorced since she was a little girl, and she thought it was his father’s (H) fault before she heard her parents’ talking. Finally, she realized she had misunderstood her father all those years.
1	H	小倩，你回来了。 (Xiao Qian, you are back.)
		...
2	S	<u>我还那么傻，那么幼稚。</u> 你说的话不听，还一次次伤你的心，你从来都没有怪过我。 (<u>I was so stupid, so naive.</u> Did not listen to what you said, and hurt you again and again. But you never blame me.)

4.4.3 Sub-strategy 3: Accepting the Blame

Accepting the blame happens when the speaker acknowledges his/her mistake and blames himself/herself. As is shown in Table 4.3, *accepting the blame* was a sub-strategy of the *taking responsibility* which made up 11.11% amongst the four sub-strategies. According to the analysis, the use of *accepting the blame* in the corpus could be classified into two types: one is *positive accepting the blame* which refers to the speaker’s admission of offending the hearer actively (see Examples 28 and 29). The other one is *negative accepting the blame* which refers to the speaker’s admission of having offended the hearer after being asked by the hearer whether or not he/she had realized the mistake. Below are examples that illustrate the use of the *accepting the blame*.

In Example 28, the strategy of *accepting the blame* occurred twice (Turn 2 and Turn 5). As can be seen in Turn 1, H did not ask or force S1 and S2 to accept the blame, but S1 still showed that they were willing to accept the blame actively by saying “wo men cuo le” (Turn 2). In such cases, the use of accepting the blame is identified as *positive accepting the blame*. The second time (Turn 5) was considered to be *negative accepting the blame*, as S1 and S2 were both asked by H of whether they had realized their fault, where H is their adviser who holds a higher status in this study, and this resulted in S1 and S2 providing a positive answer by nodding (Turn 5) to show their willingness to accept the blame. In such cases, when faced with a hearer of a higher status, it seems that S(s) had no choice but to accept the blame. According to the analysis of this example, the use of *negative accepting the blame* could be seen as respect or obeying to H’s power or status, as it seems to imply the meaning of being forced, and not active in the *positive accepting the blame* method. Thus, it is inferred that the sincerity of using *negative accepting the blame* was considered less than that of using *positive accepting the blame*.

Example 28 (Episode 10):

Turns	Speake/ Hearer	Background: Li Jie (S1) and Ji Jie (S2) were caught by Mr. Xiao (H) when they were cheating for the examination.
1	H	用音乐作弊? (Using the music cheat for the examination?)
2	S1	<u>老师我们错了</u> 。再给我们一次重新做人的机会吧 (Teacher, we are wrong . Give us another chance to have a new life.)
3	S2	请老师宽大处理吧! (Please dealt with us mercifully.)
4	H	<u>知道错了吗?</u> (Have you realized your fault?)
5	S1&S2	<u>(点头)</u> (nodding)

Below, Examples 29 and 30 also demonstrate the use of *positive accepting the blame*, which means that the hearer did not say anything to force the speaker to accept the blame.

Example 29 (Episode 4)

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xiao wen’s wife (H) bought a set of plate with 5,000 yuan, Xiao Wen (S) complained to his wife, but his wife said she’s pregnant, Xiao Wen should not complain to her. Then Xiao Wen apologizes to his wife.
1	H	我现在是孕妇，你怎么能怪我。 (Now, I am pregnant, how can you blame me)
2	S	老婆，我错了。 (Honey, it was my fault.)

In Example 29 for example, H did not ask S if he realized his mistake; she merely expressed that S should not complain to her as she was pregnant (Turn 1), and S then employed the *accepting the blame* (Turn 2) in response. In actual fact, the wrongdoer in this example was H and not S according to the background; however, H was pregnant and thought she should not be blamed (Turn 1). For this reason, S as the husband then took the responsibility and apologized to H by saying “wo cuo le” (Turn 2). In such case, the use of accepting the blame seems not an actual apology, and it mainly occurs between those of higher status and lower status, close friends, **or couples** to avoid offence and to maintain a harmonious relationship (Fan, 2005). Thus, based on the relationship between S and H in Example 29, S showed his willingness to accept the blame in order to please his wife. One more example is provided below.

Example 30 (Episode 24)

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xiao Wen's (S) students in the chorus did a commercial performance before their competition with the chorus from other universities. But they did not know the one who performed for commercial would lose the qualification to take part in the competition. So their qualification for participating in the competition is canceled. Xiao Wen as their adviser tried his best to apologize to their headmaster (H) to get a chance.
1	H	萧文, 你报名的时候, 就应该理解人家的游戏规则嘛. (Xiao Wen, you should know the rule of the game when you register.)
2	S	校长, <u>这是我的失误</u> , 校长, 那我把转的钱退回去, 这总可以了吧? (Headmaster, <u>it was my fault</u> . Headmaster, well, I will send the money back, Is that OK?)

Similarly in Example 30 shown above, S accepted the blame without being asked or forced to. This apology occurred between the lecturer, S and the headmaster, H. The wrongdoer in this example were S's students in the chorus with their adviser, S taking responsibility and apologizing to the headmaster when they were told they had been disqualified from participating in the competition due to their commercial performance. In this apology, S showed his willingness to accept the blame actively by saying that it was his fault (Turn 2), as an attempt to keep his students' qualification of attending the competition.

4.4.4 Sub-strategy 4: Expressing Lack of Intent

The last sub-strategy under *taking responsibility* is *expressing lack of intent* in order to minimize responsibility by expressing that the speaker does not intend to offend the hearer. As can be seen from Table 4.3, it was observed that in the corpus, *expressing the lack of intent* was least commonly used as a sub-strategy amongst all four sub-strategies of *taking responsibility*, only accounting for 11.11%.

According to analysis, *expressing lack of intent* was commonly used after an expression of apology like the *expression of regret* (see Example 31 and 33) or *expression of embarrassment* (see Example 32). This strategy was mainly used to express the lack of intent of S as a way to remedy the offence (Luo, 2004). The examples below are used to illustrate this.

Example 31 (Episode 16)

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Shi Shi (S) and Xiao Wen (H) fell down when they were dancing, and Shi Shi found she pressed on Xiao Wen's body.
1	S	对不起, <u>我不是故意的</u> , 我笨手笨脚的。 (Sorry, I didn't mean it , I was clumsy.)

According to the background provided in Example 31, both S and H fell to the ground because of S whilst they were dancing, causing S to press on H's body. S then demonstrated her apology by employing the *expression of regret* first and then following up with *expressing lack of intent* by saying “wo bu shi gu yi de”. Such a situation made S felt awkward and she used *expressing self-deficiency* (I was clumsy in Turn 1) to mitigate the awkward atmosphere (see Chapter 4.4.2 p88).

As mentioned above, *expressing lack of intent* could also be used following the *expression of embarrassment* as shown in Example 32 below.

Example 32 (Episode 17):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Yan Su (S) was invited by a man (H) who works in the TV station to be his dancing partner. She felt happy but worried about the man's wife, and asked the man about his wife, the man's response made her misunderstand that his wife has passed away. So she apologizes to the man.
1	S	你觉得我适合作你的舞伴，那太荣幸了，哦，可是你太太她。 (It is my pleasure that you thought I could be your dancing partner, but what about your wife?)
2	H	那是以前的事了，现在她离开了我，去了最遥远的地方。(It has all passed, now she left me and has gone to a place far away from here.)
3	S	不好意思， <u>我不是故意的</u> ，太抱歉了，不好意思。 (It is embarrassing, <u>I did not mean it</u> , so sorry, and embarrassed)

In Example 33, *expressing lack of intent* was combined with the *expression of embarrassment*. It is noted that in this apology, S employed three types of strategies (*the expression of embarrassment, the expressing lack of intent, and the expression of regret*); repeating the *expression of embarrassment* (Turn 3). According to the background of Example 32, this was the first time they were meeting and were unfamiliar with each other. S misunderstood H's utterance in Turn 2, and thought that she must have offended H by bringing up his wife who had passed away. This made her feel awkward and she expressed her apology by first saying "bu hao yi si" (it is embarrassing), and then used *expressing lack of intent* by expressing that she did not mean to mention his wife (underlined part in Turn 3). In this apology, it seems to be that S felt more awkward than sorry, as S repeated the *expression of embarrassment* at the end of her apology (Turn 3).

Example 33 (Episode 21):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Shi Shi (S) took off her engagement ring on the desk, and this made her fiancé Zhong xiao (H) unhappy.
1	H	我送你的结婚戒指你就这么放着。(You just put the ring that I sent to you on the desk.)
2	S	我只是不习惯手上戴戒指 , <u>顺手拿下来了</u> , <i>对不起啊</i> , <u>我不是故意的</u> , 你别多想. (I am just not used to wear it on my finger, and then took it off, sorry ah, <u>I did not mean it</u> . Do not think too much.)

In Example 33, H saw that S had taken off their engagement ring and placed it on the desk. This made H unhappy with S and he queried S by saying “you just put it on the desk?” in Turn 1. S then realized that H may have misunderstood and she apologized to H immediately by using complex strategies (see Turn 2) such as an *explanation (boldface in Turn 2)*, *mentioning the offence committed (underlined in turn 2)*, *expression of regret (italic in turn 2)*, and *expressing lack of intent (boldface and underlined in turn 2)*. It seemed as if S was really afraid and worried that it may have caused a misunderstanding with H and so she tried her best to clarify the facts by using different strategies, especially using *expressing lack of intent* to show H that she did not have any intended meaning behind the action of taking off the engagement ring.

4.5 Strategy 3: Offer of Repair

The offer of repair is a “situation-specific” strategy, and it is an attempt to offer compensation to the hearer for the incurred damage (Al-Zumor, 2011). The damage could be by physically or mentally hurting the hearer, and in relation to this, compensation could be offered materially or spiritually (Li, 2007). With regards to politeness, this strategy tries to display an apology by benefiting others, keeping in line with the generosity maxim (Gu, 1990). In other words, *the offer of repair* is directed at the offence and offers the

relevant compensation. Within the corpus of this study, 5.11% of all strategies could be identified as the *offer of repair*. Examples that used *the offer of repair* are provided below.

Example 34 (Episode 23):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xiao Wen (S) invited Miss Yin's chorus to practice in their university hall, but did not invite Mr. Gao's (H) chorus, this made Mr. Gao felt angry and came to blame Xiao Wen.
1	H	为什么我们学校就没有在受邀之列? (Why don't you invite our university?)
2	S	那是一次临时的想法. (It was a whim.)
3	H	临时的想法, 您压根就没把我们放在眼里, 您这简直就是歧视。 (it was a whim, you just ignored our university, it was discrimination.)
4	S	不不不, 情况是这样的, 科农大啊条件非常简陋, 他们校方也不支持合唱团, 所以他们连个彩排的地点都没有。 (No, no, no, the truth is the University of Agricultural and Science is in a very primitive condition, and their university do not support the chorus, so they even do not have any place for rehearsal.)
5	H	我们也有相同的问题啊, 这样的弱势合唱团, 有人重视, 有人鼓励嘛? (We have same problem ah, is there any one pay more attention to and encourage a weak chorus?)
6	S	哎呀, 真的对不起, 要不这样, <u>我代表我和我的合唱团, 现在诚心得邀请您和你们的合唱团来我们学校表演。</u> (“Ai ya”, really sorry. Well, I am on behalf of our chorus to invite you and your chorus to come to perform in our university.)

In Example 34, the offence was that S did not invite H's chorus to their university for a performance and this made H feel as if their chorus was looked down upon by S (see Turn 3). In this example, S offered *the explanation* that “it was an occasional idea” in Turn 2 and “the University of Agricultural and Science is in a very primitive condition, and their university does not support the chorus, so they even do not have any place for rehearsal” in Turn 4 when H came to query S the reason their chorus was not on the invitation list. However, *the explanation* did not have the desired effect and H complained

that they faced a similar problem with the University of Agriculture and Science in Turn 5. Faced with this situation, S then made an offer to repair to H by inviting H's chorus to their university (underlined part in Turn 6).

Example 35 (Episode 24):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xiao Wen's (S) students in the chorus did a commercial performance before their competition with the chorus from other university. But they did not know the one who performed for commercial would lose the qualification to take part in the competition. So their qualification for participating in the competition is canceled. Xiao Wen as their adviser tried his best to apologize to their headmaster (H) to get a chance.
1	H	萧文。你报名的时候，就应该了解人家的游戏规则嘛。 (Xiao Wen, you should know the rule of the game when you register.)
2	S	校长，这是我的失误，校长， <u>那我把转的钱退回去</u> ，这总可以了吧？ (Headmaster, it was my fault. Headmaster, well, <u>I will send the money back</u> , Is that OK?)

In Example 35, S's students in the chorus had done a commercial performance before their competition with other choruses, violating the rules of the competition. This made H, their headmaster angry and he decided to disqualify them from participating in the upcoming competition. H complained that S should have known the rules when he registered for the competition (Turn 1). In order to prevent his students from being disqualified from the competition, S then apologized to H by acknowledging that it was his fault (Turn 2), and proposed to return the money which they had earned from the commercial performance (underlined part in Turn 2) as a form of compensation.

According to Luo (2004), in Chinese, an "offer" has the potential to refer to a top-down power, which means that it usually used for those of a lower status. When the *offer of repair* is employed to apologize to someone of a higher status, it is normally followed by an interrogative utterance of asking for a suggestion from the person with higher status. In this example, S was the one with a lower status, so he proposed to return the money

earned from the commercial performance (Turn 2), and this was followed up with an interrogative sentence “zhe yang zong ke yi le ba?” (Is that OK?), to end his apology. This was to show that it was H who had the power to decide whether the suggestion could take effect.

Example 36 (Episode 22):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xiao Wen (S) suspected that someone revealed their song list to their competitor from another university, and went to ask the competitor’s adviser Miss Yin (H) about this thing. This made Miss Yin felt angry, Xiao Wen realized that he did something offended Miss Yin and apologized to her.
1	H	我们比赛靠的是实力 (We compete by our strength)
2	S	殷老师，对不起啊，是我以小人之心度君子之腹了，要不这样，为了表达我的歉意， <u>请科农大的合唱团，到我们学校的礼堂来进行练习，如果你同意的话，在这次复赛之前，我们可以进行一次交流和观摩。</u> (Miss Yin, sorry “ah”, it was me who measured the stature of great men by the yardstick of small man. <u>Well, in order to express my apology, I invite your chorus to come to our university hall to practice. If you agree with this, before the quarter-final, we can organize a viewing, emulating and communication activity.</u>)

According to Li (2007), the offer to benefit or help could also be seen as the *offer of repair*. In reference to Example 36, S suspected that there was someone who had revealed their song list for the competition to H, their competitor. H uttered that they would compete using their own strengths (Turn 1) seriously, making S realized that he should have not suspected H. S then made an offer that benefits H by inviting H’s chorus to practice in their university (Turn 2) to demonstrate his apology.

4.6 Strategy 4: Concern for the Hearer

Concern for the hearer refers to the concern for both the hearers whom were physically hurt and psychologically offended, and it has been seen as the recognition of collective consciousness and the Chinese traditional culture that is accepted and praised by the Chinese society (Wang, Liu, and Wang, 2009). Logically speaking, *concern for the hearer* would be commonly used by Chinese speakers. However, figures on the occurrence of *concern for the hearer* in Table 4.1 showed that it has rarely occurred in this study, with only 5.11% of all apology strategies consisting of *concern for the hearer*. Below are examples for using *concern for the hearer*.

Example 37 (Episode 1):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Kai Wen (H) was teased by basketball players, and Xiang Yu An (S) felt sorry about that.
1	S	<u>你没事吧?</u> (<u>Are you OK?</u>)

According to the background provided in Example 37, S was not the one who offended H—it was his friends on the basketball team who had teased H by throwing him into the dustbin, possibly hurting H both physically and psychologically. S witnessed this and showed his concern to H by saying “Are you OK?” in Turn 1. S had not expressed what he was specifically concerned about—whether it was concern about H being, physically or psychologically hurt; so the use of *concern for the hearer* could be understood as the concern for both aspects.

Example 38 (Episode 16):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xiao Wen (H) fall down because of Shi Shi (S) when they practicing dance.
1	S	叶诗诗: 对不起, <u>你没事吧?</u> (Sorry, <u>are you OK?</u>)

In Example 38, S employed *concern for the hearer* by asking “are you OK?”. In this example, H fell down to the ground because of S, potentially hurting H physically. Thus, it is inferred that the term “ni mei shi ba” (Are you OK?) in Turn 1, referred to concern about whether H was hurt physically or not.

Example 39 (Episode 22):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xiang Yu An (S) broke up with Xue Qi and went to Xu Qian’s (H) house at midnight.
1	S	<u>我有吵到你吗?</u> <u>(Am I disturbing you?)</u>
2	H	没有啦，反正你吵我也不是一次两次了 (No la, anyhow, it was not the first time to disturb me.)
3	S	真的对不起 (really sorry)

According to Zhao (2009), Chinese speakers prefer to address the degree of the offence by using *concern for the hearer*. In Example 39, it was not hard to discern that S’ concern about H’s feeling of being disturbed by asking “am I disturbing you”, to affirm whether he had offended H first. When H offered a positive answer indirectly in Turn 2, S then expressed his apology by employing the *expression of regret* by saying “zhen de dui bu qi”(really sorry; Turn 3).

4.7 Strategy 5: Promise for Forbearance

The promise for forbearance refers to the speaker’s words that he/she will not repeat the same mistake anymore. It was least frequently used as an apology strategy by the Chinese speakers in the selected TV series, only accounting for 2.92% of all apology strategies. This result tallied with findings by Xie (2006) who had noted that the *promise for forbearance* was the least frequently used strategy amongst Chinese speakers.

According to analysis, it was noted that the use of the *promise for forbearance* in this corpus could be classified into two aspects: *positive promise for forbearance* which refers to the promise to not repeat the mistake in future being made by the speaker actively (Examples 40 and 41); and the other being the *negative promise for forbearance* which refers to the promise made by the speaker passively, where the speaker is asked not to repeat the mistake anymore (Examples 42 and 43). This form of apology is illustrated in the examples below.

Example 40 (Episode 18):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Zhong Xiao (H) was jealous of Xiao Wen, as Shi Shi the girl who he likes seems to like Xiao Wen. So he felt unhappy with Xiao Wen and did not allow his students to join Xiao Wen's chorus. Xiao Wen really needs those students and apologize to Zhong Xiao so that to let Zhong Xiao's students join his chorus.
1	H	你说过你会跟诗诗保持距离 (You said you will keep a distance from Shi Shi.)
2	S	忠孝，这个，我向你保证啊，这个我跟诗诗之间，从来没有超过这个朋友的界限。你说的那个避嫌啊这个是应该的，你放心， 我保证你以后不因为这事别扭 ，好吧。咱俩之间的不愉快，不要影响孩子。你让他们星期四去彩排，好不好？ (Zhong Xiao, well, I promise you that Shi Shi and I, we never beyond the boundary of friendship. Like what you have said that we should avoid misunderstanding, do not worry, I promise that I won't let you feel unhappy because of me OK? Do not affect students' practicing because of us. You will allow them to practice on Thursday, all right?)

In Example 40, S apologized to H by employing the *promise for forbearance* by saying that “I won't let you feel unhappy because of me” in Turn 2 positively, as according to H's utterance in Turn 1, H had not asked S or implied that a promise for forbearance was required. Therefore, the use of the *promise for forbearance* in this example was identified as the *positive promise for forbearance*.

Example 41 (Episode 29)

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xu Qian's (S) parents divorced since she was a little girl, and she thought it was his father's (H) fault before she heard her parents' talking. Finally, she realized she had misunderstood her father all those years.
1	S	对不起，爸。 (Sorry, dad.)
2	H	好好好，好女儿。 (OK, OK, OK, good daughter.)
3	S	对不起，对不起， <u>我以后会听你的话，我再也不找妈</u> 妈。(Sorry, Sorry, I will listen to you in the future, <u>and I will not look for my mom anymore.</u>)

Similarly in Example 41, S used the *promise for forbearance* herself actively by saying “I won’t look for my mum anymore” (Turn 3) without any implication that he/she had to make this promise for non-recurrence (see Turn 2).

It is noted that in Examples 40 and 41, S addressed the offence and that he/she would not commit this in future by saying “I promise that I won’t let you feel unhappy because of me OK?” and “I will not look for my mom anymore)” respectively as shown underlined in Turn 2 of Example 40 and in Turn 3 of Example 41. However, when the promise for forbearance was used negatively, the offence was rarely stated clearly. Examples 42 and 43 are used to illustrate this.

Example 42 (Episode 28):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xue Qi (S) uploaded Miss Yan's video to the internet, this made a bad effect on Miss Yan. Mr. Xiao (H) helped Xue Qi to explain this incident to their headmaster and Miss Yan. Xue Qi feels sorry to trouble Mr. Xiao.
1	H	知道自己错了是最重要的，那老师也没有惩罚你的必要了，你就记住，同样的错误就不要再犯了。 (What is important is you know your fault, so there is no need to punish you, you just remember do not make similar mistakes anymore.)
2	S	<u>我保证。</u> <u>(I promise.)</u>

On the other hand, in Example 42, S employed the *promise for forbearance* by saying “I promise” (underlined in Turn 2) to demonstrate her apology to H who was S’ adviser in the chorus. In Example 43, S simply expressed “Sure, I promise.” (underlined in Turn 5) as well.

Example 43 (Episode 23):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Background: Xiang Yu An (S) kissed Xu Qian without Xu Qian’s (H) permission, and apologized to Xu Qian.
1	S	对不起，我那天没经过你的同意就… 我那时候就是一时冲动，我也不晓得为什么这样。 (Sorry, I did... without your permission. I was too impulsive that day, and I don't know why I did like that.)
2	H	一时冲动啊 (Impulsive ah.)
3	S	请你原谅我。 (Please forgive me.)
4	H	没关系啦，不过，下不为例啊。 (Never mind la, but do not to repeat it next time.)
5	S	当然， <u>我保证</u> 。 (Sure, <u>I promise.</u>)

It is noted that both of the speakers in Examples 42 and 43 did not express the content of their promise completely. The S(s) made the promise because the H(s) had asked them not to commit the offence again as shown in the previous turns. In Example 42, S had asked H “do not make similar mistakes anymore” (Turn 1) before S made the promise for forbearance; and in Turn 4 of Example 43, H expressed her forgiveness by saying “never mind la” in response to S asking for forgiveness (Turn 3), stressing “do not repeat it next time” in Turn 3. As a result, S provided a positive response by saying “sure, I promise” (Turn 5). Such cases where the hearer asked the speaker not to commit similar mistakes in future anymore were noted as *the negative promise for forbearance*.

Having all apology strategies and sub-strategies discussed in the above sections, the following section then will further discuss the relationship between the social status and the use of apology strategies.

4.8 The Relationship between Social Status and Apologies

In relation to the question of “how does social status affect Chinese speakers’ choice of apology strategies” data were coded based on each speaker’s status to investigate the relationship between social status and the choice of apology strategies used. In contrast to previous studies that investigated the relationship between social status and apologies, the current study takes the hearers’ gender into consideration when discussing the impact of social status. Below in Table 4.4, the distribution of apologies within different statuses is shown where the result will be used to test out the most frequently used strategies within each status, and then the most frequently used strategies will be discussed in correlation with the hearer’s gender.

Table 4.4 Distribution of Apology Strategies within Different Status

Strategies	E		L-H		H-L	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
IFIDs	40	41%	17	49%	3	60%
Taking responsibility	24	25%	10	29%	2	40%
Explanation	19	20%	4	11%	0	0%
Offer of repair	6	6%	1	3%	0	0%
Concern for the hearers	6	6%	1	3%	0	0%
Promise for forbearance	2	2%	2	6%	0	0%
Total	97	100%	35	100%	5	100%

(E refers to apologies occurred between equal status; L-H refers to apologies from lower status to higher status; H-L refers to apologies from higher status to lower status)

According to Table 4.4, the most frequently used strategies amongst those of equal status were *IFIDs*, *taking responsibility*, and *explanation*, accounting for 41%, 25%, and

20% of the pool respectively. With regards to apologies made by parties of a lower status to those of a higher status (L-H), the most frequently used strategies were also *IFIDs*, *taking responsibility*, and *explanation*, accounting for 49%, 29%, and 11% respectively. It is noted that a lesser amount of data fell under apologies to those of lower status; only 3 segments of *IFIDs* and 2 segments of *taking responsibility* were identified. So far, no impact of social status was found in the use of apology strategies. In order to gain a deeper insight into the relationship between social status and the speakers' choice of apology, this study focuses on the most frequently used strategies within different statuses and takes both the speakers' and hearers' genders into consideration in the following discussion regarding the relationship between social status and the use of apology strategies.

4.8.1 The Relationship between Social Status and Apologies Made By Female Speakers to Female Hearers

This section focuses on discussing the relationship between social status and apologies made by female speakers to female hearers. Data was then coded based on both the speakers' and hearers' genders before being tabulated. Below in Table 4.5, the apology strategies used by female speakers to apologize to female hearers of different statuses is depicted.

Table 4.5 Distribution of Apology Strategies Used by Female Speakers to Female Hearer

Strategies	F-F					
	E		L-H		H-L	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
IFIDs	0	0	3	37.50%	1	50.00%
Taking responsibility	0	0	2	25.00%	1	50.00%
Explanation	0	0	3	37.50%	0	0.00%
Offer of repair	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Concern for the hearers	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Promise for forbearance	0	0	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Total	0	0	8	100.00%	2	100.00%

(E refers to apologies occurred between equal status; L-H refers to apologies from lower status to higher status; H-L refers to apologies from higher status to lower status)

According to Table 4.5, no apologies were identified for apologies made by female speakers to female hearers of an equal status. However, based on the TV series, it was noted that several offences could be identified, but no apologies were made between female speakers and female hearers of equal status. However, it is noted that female speakers of lower status preferred to apologize to female hearers of higher status, and they usually employed *IFIDs* and *explanation* methods.

As mentioned in previous sections, *IFIDs* contain five sub-strategies in this study (see Chapter 3) and comprised of the *expression of regret*, *expression of embarrassment*, *offer of apology*, *asking for forgiveness* and *asking for another chance*. The following section discusses the use of the sub-strategies of *IFIDs* by lower status female speakers to demonstrate their apologies to higher status female hearers.

Table 4.6 Distribution of Sub-strategies of *IFIDs* used by Female Speakers to Female Hearers

IFIDs	F-F					
	E		L-H		H-L	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
	.	%	.	%	.	%
Expression of regret	0	0.00%	3	100.00%	1	100.00%
Expression of embarrassment	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer of apology	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Asking for forgiveness	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Asking for another chance	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Total	0	0.00%	3	100.00%	1	100.00%

(E refers to apologies occurred between equal status; L-H refers to apologies from lower status to higher status; H-L refers to apologies from higher status to lower status)

According to Table 4.6, all the sub-strategies used by female speakers of lower status to apologize to higher status female hearers came under the *expression of regret*. The use of the *expression of regret* has been introduced in Chapter 4.3.1 (p65), such as adding modal particles after the apology is commonly used, or by combining it with other strategies. Based on the analysis of the apologies made by lower status female speakers to higher status female hearers, it was found that the lower status female speakers rarely add modal particles after *the expression of regret*. They prefer to combine it with the *explanation* and *mentioning the offence committed*. Below are examples of the apology strategies used by lower status female speakers to apologize to higher status female hearers.

Example 44 (Episode 4):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Gender	Background: Miss Yan (H), the adviser of the cheering squad felt angry with Xu Qian (S) a member of the chorus, because Xu Qian embezzled the copier of the cheering squad.
1	S	F	<p>对不起了，严老师，<u>因为昨天真的太晚了，图书馆都关门了，我们合唱团又没有那么高级的东西，所以才借用拉拉队的。</u> (Sorry “le”, (low tone with the head bowed) teacher Yan. <i>It was so late yesterday that the library was closed. Our chorus doesn't have such advanced machines, so I borrowed it from the cheering squad.</i>) (look to H without rising her head)</p>
2	H	F	<p>你说清楚，盗用就是盗用，你还狡辩，我不管，不告而取，就是偷。 (Make clear that you embezzled them. Don't quibble. Anyway, taking it without my permission is stealing.)</p>

In this example, S (F) employed the *expression of regret* to demonstrate her apology directly, then addressed the hearer (S's advisor) by her position “Yan lao shi” (boldface and underlined in Turn 1) to confirm the hearers' status (Yi & Wen, 2013). The *explanation* was used to provide an account for causing the offence in Turn 1 (underlined). *Mentioning the offence committed* was used at the end of this apology to show S's willingness in take responsibility for the offences in Turn 1 (boldface and italic). In other examples such as Example 6 (p70) and Example 22 (p85) in Chapter 4.3.1, it was noted that when lower status female speakers apologized to higher status female hearers, there was always an address and *explanation* followed by *the expression of regret*.

4.8.2 Relationship between Social Status and Apologies Made By Female Speakers to Male Hearers

This section focuses on the apology strategies used by female speakers apologizing to male hearers of different statuses in order to find out what the relationship

is between social status and the female speakers' choice of apology strategies in their apologies to male hearers. Table 4.7 below provides a description of the distribution of apology strategies amongst female speakers and male hearers.

Table 4.7 Distribution of Apology Strategies Used by Female Speakers to Male Hearer

Strategies	F-M					
	E		L-H		H-L	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
IFIDs	15	45.45%	10	55.56%	0	0.00%
Taking responsibility	10	30.30%	5	27.78%	0	0.00%
Explanation	4	12.12%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer of repair	1	3.03%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Concern for the hearers	3	9.09%	1	5.56%	0	0.00%
Promise for forbearance	0	0.00%	2	11.11%	0	0.00%
Total	33	100.00%	18	100.00%	0	0.00%

(E refers to apologies occurred between equal status; L-H refers to apologies from lower status to higher status; H-L refers to apologies from higher status to lower status)

Table 4.7 shows that data on apologies made by female speakers to male hearers fell within two groups: apologies to equal status male hearers and apologies to higher status male hearers, but no apologies were identified for females of higher status to males of lower status. It is noted that female speakers used the *IFIDs* (45.45%), *taking responsibility* (30.30%) and *explanation* (12.12%) more frequently when they apologized to male hearers within equal status; whereas when female speakers apologized to higher status male hearers, *IFIDs* (55.56%) and *taking responsibility* (27.78%) were also used frequently, but *explanation* was not found to be employed.

As mentioned in previous chapters, both *IFIDs* and *taking responsibility* contained several sub-strategies. Thus, in order to find out whether social status has any impact on the use of sub-strategies of *IFIDs* and *taking responsibility*, the following section discusses the use of IFID sub-strategies and *taking responsibility* respectively.

1. IFIDs

Table 4.8 Distribution of Sub-strategies of *IFIDs* Used by Female Speakers to Male Hearer

IFIDs	F-M					
	E		L-H		H-L	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
Expression of regret	11	73.33%	6	60.00%	0	0.00%
Expression of embarrassment	3	20.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Offer of apology	0	0.00%	2	20.00%	0	0.00%
Asking for forgiveness	1	6.67%	1	10.00%	0	0.00%
Asking for another chance	0	0.00%	1	10.00%	0	0.00%
Total	15	100.00%	10	100.00%	0	0.00%

(E refers to apologies occurred between equal status; L-H refers to apologies from lower status to higher status; H-L refers to apologies from higher status to lower status)

As shown in Table 4.8 with regards to apologies between female speakers and male hearers, it is noted that the *expression of regret* and *expression of embarrassment* were most frequently used in apologizing to male hearers of equal status, accounting for 73.33% and 20% respectively; whilst in respect to apologies to higher status male hearers, the most frequently used sub-strategies of *IFIDs* was the *expression of regret*, and no *expression of embarrassment* was identified.

According to analysis, it is noted that within parties of equal status, the female speaker rarely added modal particles after the *expression of regret*, but usually combined the *expression of regret* with an *explanation* in their apologies to male hearers of equal status. This is shown in Example 45 below.

Example 45 (Episode 26):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Gender	Background: Xiang Yu An (H) showed his love to Xu Qian (S), and asked her if they can be together.
1	H	M	徐倩，我们在一起好吗？ (Xu Qian, be together with me OK?)
2	S	F	<u>对不起</u> ，我已经答应跟曹俊交往了。 (<u>Sorry</u> , I have promised to be together with Cao Jun.)

In Example 45, S(F) apologized to the male hearer of equal status by employing the *expression of regret*, saying “*dui bu qi*” without adding any modal particles and then providing the reason for such offence by saying “I have promised to be together with Cao Jun” following the *expression of regret* in Turn 1. According to background and analysis, it is inferred that the function of apology in this example was actually to refuse. (Another example which can be referred to is Example 7 in Chapter 4.3.1, p71).

According to Table 4.8, the *expression of embarrassment* used by female speakers mainly occurred to equal status male hearers. Based on analysis, the *expression of embarrassment* was commonly used to apologize to an unfamiliar hearer in the apologies made by female speakers to equal status male hearers. Such examples include Example 11 (p75), and Example 13 (p76), in Chapter 4.3.2.

With respect to female speakers’ apologies to higher status male hearers, the *expression of regret* was the most frequently used strategy, and modal particles such as “ah” and “oh” were often used apart from combining with *mentioning the offence committed*—no *explanation* was identified. Song and Liang (2011) pointed out that the *expression of regret* and *expression of embarrassment* in Chinese had similar uses in making apologies, whilst the *expression of embarrassment* is less direct than the *expression of regret* and cannot be used in formal occasions or during an apology to someone of a higher status (Li & Du, 2012). Therefore, it can be inferred that lower status female speakers prefer to apologize to higher status male hearers in a direct manner.

2. Taking responsibility

As mentioned above, *taking responsibility* was frequently used by female speakers to demonstrate their apologies to both equal status and higher status male

hearers. In order to know the relationship between social status and the female speakers' use of apologies, this section then discusses this based on the sub-strategies of the *taking responsibility* perspective. Table 4.9 shows the distribution of sub-strategies of *taking responsibility* used in female speakers' apologies to male hearers of different statuses.

Table 4.9 Distribution of Sub-strategies of Taking Responsibility Used by Female Speakers to Male Hearers

Taking Responsibility	F-M					
	E		L-H		H-L	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
Mentioning the offence committed	4	40.00%	4	80.00%	0	0.00%
Expressing lack of intent	4	40.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Expressing self-deficiency	1	10.00%	1	20.00%	0	0.00%
Accepting the blame	1	10.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Total	10	100.00%	5	100.00%	0	0.00%

(E refers to apologies occurred between equal status; L-H refers to apologies from lower status to higher status; H-L refers to apologies from higher status to lower status)

According to Table 4.9, female speakers of equal status preferred to take responsibility by *mentioning the offence committed* (40%) and *expressing lack of intent* (40%); whilst in the apologies to higher status male hearers, the lower status female speakers showed their willingness for *taking responsibility* by *mentioning the offence committed* (80%) mainly.

Based on analysis, it is noted that *mentioning the offence committed* is mainly used by combining with *the expression of regret*. However, the sequence of combinations were different in the apologies to equal status male hearers and to higher status male hearers. Within an equal status, female speakers commonly mentioned the offence committed first, followed by the *expression of regret* or some other strategy (refer to Examples 7, 8, and 23); whilst in apologies by female speakers to higher status male hearers, the lower status female speakers used the expression of regret first to make an apology directly and

followed this up with *mentioning the offence committed for taking responsibility* as shown in Example 46 below.

Example 46 (Episode 7):

Turns	Speaker/ Hearer	Gender	Background: Xu Qian (S) said something that hurt her adviser Mr. Xiao (H).
1	S	F	肖老师，对不起啊 (Sorry "ah", Mr. Xiao)
2	H	M	你又来道歉啊 (You're here to apologize again)
3	S	F	上次是我说的太过分了让你伤心了 (Last time what I have said was excessive and I said and hurt you.)
4	H	M	我也没想到，一个中年男人的心竟然这么脆弱 (I never thought about that a middle-aged man's heart is so fragile.)
5	S	F	所以我来跟您道歉啊，你这个月很少来监督合唱团的联系，大家不是迟到就是早退感觉越来越没有动力了 (So I come here to apologize to you. You seldom went to the chorus for supervising us this month, so everyone either came late or left early. We have no motivation gradually.)
...			
6	S	F	老师，对不起，你再给我们一次机会好不好？ (Teacher, sorry, please give us another chance Ok or not?)

In this example, S (F) offended her adviser (H) who had higher status in this study and she apologized to H (M). S started by addressing H with his position and apologized directly by saying “*dui bu qi*” in Turn 1 and *mentioning the offence committed* in Turn 3 after being asked “you are here to apologize again” in Turn 2. S also employed the offer of apology in Turn 5 to demonstrate that she was serious in her apology (see Chapter 4.2.1). At the end of the apology, S then used *asking for another chance* by adding the modal particle “OK or not” in Turn 6 to confirm whether or not H was willing to accept her apology. One more example of apologies made by lower status female speakers to higher status male hearers can be seen in Example 18 of Chapter 4.3.

4.8.3 The Relationship between Social Status and Apologies Made By Male Speakers to Female Hearers

Having discussed the apologies made by female speakers in the above sections, this section mainly discusses the male speakers' use of apologies to female hearers of different statuses so as to find out how social status affects the male speakers' choice of apology when they apologized to female hearers.

Table 4.10 Distribution of Apology Strategies Used by Male Speakers to Female Hearer

Strategies	M-F					
	E		L-H		H-L	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
IFIDs	23	40%	1	100%	1	50%
Taking responsibility	14	25%	0	0%	1	50%
Explanation	13	23%	0	0%	0	0%
Offer of repair	4	7%	0	0%	0	0%
Concern for the hearers	2	4%	0	0%	0	0%
Promise for forbearance	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	57	100%	1	100%	2	100%

(E refers to apologies occurred between equal status; L-H refers to apologies from lower status to higher status; H-L refers to apologies from higher status to lower status)

According to Table 4.10, apologies made by male speakers to female hearers mainly occurred within the equal status, and few occurred to higher or lower status female hearers. It was noted that in the apologies made by male speakers to equal status female hearers, male speakers employed the *IFIDs* (40%), *taking responsibility* (25%), and *explanation* (23%) most frequently. The least frequently used strategies were *concern for the hearer* (4%) and *promise for forbearance* (2%).

With regards to the sub-strategies of *IFIDs* and *taking responsibility*, Table 4.11 and Table 4.12 below present the distribution of the *IFID* sub-strategies and *taking responsibility* respectively.

Table 4.11 the distribution of sub-strategies of *IFIDs* used by male speakers to female hearers

IFIDs	M-F					
	E		L-H		H-L	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
Expression of regret	18	78%	1	100%	1	100%
Expression of embarrassment	2	9%	0	0%	0	0%
Offer of apology	2	9%	0	0%	0	0%
Asking for forgiveness	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
Asking for another chance	0	0	0	0%	0	0%
Total	23	100%	1	100%	1	100%

(E refers to apologies occurred between equal status; L-H refers to apologies from lower status to higher status; H-L refers to apologies from higher status to lower status)

It was noted from Table 4.11 that male speakers employed the *expression of regret* most frequently when they apologized to female hearers of equal status, with a few of them employing the *offer of apology* or *asking for forgiveness* in their apologies to these female hearers of equal status.

Table 4.12 Distribution of Sub-Strategies of *Taking Responsibility* Used by Male Speakers to Female Hearers

Taking Responsibility	M-F					
	E		L-H		H-L	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
Mentioning the offence committed	10	71%	0	0%	1	100%
Expressing self-deficiency	3	21%	0	0%	0	0%
Accepting the blame	1	7%	0	0%	0	0%
Expressing lack of intent	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	14	100%	0	0%	1	100%

(E refers to apologies occurred between equal status; L-H refers to apologies from lower status to higher status; H-L refers to apologies from higher status to lower status)

Table 4.12 shows the use of sub-strategies of *taking responsibility* by the male speakers when they apologized to female hearers. As mentioned above, apologies made by male speakers to female hearers mainly occurred between those of equal status, so this section discusses the use of the sub-strategies in *taking responsibility* within equal status. It was noted that male speakers used *mentioning the offence committed* (71%) and

expressing self-deficiency (21%) most frequently when they apologized to the equal status female hearers. Based on analysis, male speakers commonly used *mentioning the offence committed* after a direct apology expression, such as the *expression of regret* and *expression of embarrassment* (refer to Example 9, chapter 4.3.1, p72; Example 16, chapter 4.3.3, p79; and Example 24, chapter 4.4.1, p87).

4.8.4 The Relationship between Social Status and Apologies Made By Male Speakers to Male Hearers

In regards to apologies made by male speakers to male hearers, Table 4.7 shows the distribution of apology strategies employed by the male speakers to the male hearers.

Table 4.13 Distribution of Apology Strategies Used by Male Speakers to Male Hearers

Strategies	M-M					
	E		L-H		H-L	
	NO.	%	NO.	%	NO.	%
IFIDs	3	38%	2	29%	1	100%
Taking responsibility	0	0%	3	43%	0	0%
Explanation	2	25%	1	14%	0	0%
Offer of repair	1	13%	1	14%	0	0%
Concern for the hearers	1	13%	0	0%	0	0%
Promise for forbearance	1	13%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	8	100%	7	100%	1	100%

(E refers to apologies occurred between equal status; L-H refers to apologies from lower status to higher status; H-L refers to apologies from higher status to lower status)

As is shown in Table 4.13, male speakers apologized to male hearers of equal and higher status. In the apologies to the equal status male hearers, male speakers used the *IFIDs* (38%) most frequently; whilst in their apologies to higher status male hearers, *taking responsibility* (43%) was the most frequently used strategy. However, due to data limitations, no significant data was found amongst the sub-strategies of *IFIDs* and *taking responsibility* used by male speakers to male hearers.

4.9 Summary

This chapter covers the data analysis, an important component of this entire study. In this chapter, data was coded based on the needs of the research questions. For instance, the second research question strives to explore the impact of social status on Chinese speakers' choice of apologies, and hence data was coded based on the interlocutors' (both the speakers and hearers) social status and genders. Data was analyzed based on the modified framework (refer to Chapter 3), and the distribution and common usage of each strategy were discussed in the first section for the overall use of apologies. Further exploration of the impact of social status was conducted in the second section of this chapter, and findings were presented based on the distribution of strategies in each group.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This study embarks on an investigation of the apology strategies used by Chinese speakers in a Chinese speaking context (Chinese TV series). In Chapter 4, the overall use of apology strategies and the relationship between social status and Chinese speakers' choice of apologies were discussed. In this chapter (Chapter 5), conclusive findings of the whole study are made and divided into six sections. This chapter starts with summarizing the outstanding features in using apology strategies amongst Chinese speakers and the impact of social status on the choice of apology for both female and male speakers, and this is followed by a summary of limitations in the current study. The fourth and fifth sections briefly discuss the implications and contributions of the current study. The sixth section provides recommendations for future studies. Finally, a brief summary is provided at the end of this chapter.

5.2 Research Question 1: “What are the Apology Strategies Used by Chinese Speakers in a Chinese TV Series?”

This study analyzed 57 sets of apologies that were extracted from a Chinese TV series, in order to learn what apology strategies are used by Chinese speakers in a Chinese speaking context (Chinese TV series). In addition to that, the impact of social status on the choice of apologies is also explored. This section mainly discusses the findings related

to the Research Question 1, that is, “What are the apology strategies used by Chinese speakers in a Chinese TV series?”

The findings revealed that *IFIDs*, *taking responsibility*, and *explanation* were the most frequently used strategies amongst Chinese speakers in the TV series. Amongst the sub-strategies of the *IFIDs* and *taking responsibility*, the most frequently used ones were the *expression of regret* under the *IFIDs*, and *mentioning the offence committed* under the *taking responsibility*. Three new types of strategies were identified in this study which are: *expression of embarrassment*, *asking for another chance* and *mentioning the offence committed*. Shown below is a summary of the common usages for each strategy in the current study.

IFIDs (Illocutionary Forces Indicative Devices) was the most frequently used strategy by Chinese speakers in the selected TV series. There were four sub-strategies under the *IFIDs*: the *expression of regret*, *asking for forgiveness/another chance*, *expression of embarrassment*, and the *offer of apology*. Amongst the four sub-strategies of the *IFIDs*, the *expression of regret* was used most commonly and accounted for more than half (72%) of the total *IFIDs*, and it could be used by adding the modal particle after it, and even combining with other strategies (*explanation* and *speaking the offence committed* are discussed).

The *expression of embarrassment* was directly transferred from the Chinese term “*bu hao yi si*”, and it is one of the new strategies that this current study has revealed. It can be used in five different ways, which are (1) breaking out the current situation; (2) expressing the apology; (3) formulae; (4) expressing one’s feeling of feeling ashamed or awkward; and (5) expressing one’s inconvenience. It is claimed that the *expression of embarrassment* had a similar use with the *expression of regret* in apologies, but it less direct than the *expression of regret*.

As Song and Liang (2011) stated, the use of the *expression of regret*, “dui bu qi” (sorry) and the *expression of embarrassment* “bu hao yi si” (it is embarrassing) are quite similar, as both of them can be used to express the feeling of apology. However, there are also several differences between them in their usage as summarized here. The *expression of regret* and the *expression of embarrassment* are different in the degree of showing apology. The *expression of embarrassment* is weaker than the *expression of regret* in an apology. The function of the *expression of regret* is acknowledging the offence and showing one’s apology more directly, whilst the function of the *expression of embarrassment* is more concern regarding one’s feeling of embarrassment when there is an affection. Therefore, the *expression of embarrassment*, “bu hao yi si” is considered less direct than the *expression of regret*, “dui bu qi” in Chinese.

Li and Du (2012) also discussed the differences of the use for the *expression of regret* and the *expression of embarrassment*. They noted that the *expression of regret*, “dui bu qi” could be used for the formal apology, while the *expression of embarrassment*, “bu hao yi si” could not. The term “dui bu qi” is often used in a formal occasion such as in a meeting or during a speech, and is used for apologizing to the person who is older, more powerful, or whom the speaker was unfamiliar with. However, in the informal occasion, the term “bu hao yi si” is more popular than “dui bu qi”. With regards to the tendency for choosing “dui bu qi” and “bu hao yi si” in apology, Yi (2005) noted that nowadays “bu hao yi si” has replaced “dui bu qi” to a great extent amongst Chinese speakers, especially in the spoken Chinese amongst young people.

The result revealed that the *offer of apology* was commonly used for serious offences and shows the speakers’ serious attitudes in making apologies. Besides that, *asking for forgiveness* was commonly used at the end of an apology, and it was noted that *asking for forgiveness* was usually used along with the addition of a modal particle

after it when it was employed to apologize to higher status. Moreover, *asking for another chance* was identified as a new type of sub-strategy under the *IFIDs* in this study; and it has a similar use with *asking for forgiveness* (refer to chapter 4.3.4, p82).

Following on from the *IFIDs*, was *taking responsibility* which also contains four sub-strategies. Comparing the four sub-strategies, *mentioning the offence committed* was the most frequently used sub-strategy amongst Chinese speakers in the corpus of this study. Based on the analysis in Chapter 4.2, *mentioning the offence committed* could be used to mention both the offence which has occurred in the past and what may happen in the future. *Expressing self-deficiency* was identified as a way of showing more respect to the hearer by demeaning oneself, and it was often employed either by the speaker of a lower status, or if they had done something to hurt the hearer, or wanted to ask a favor from the hearer; keeping in line with Li's (2007) claim on the situations for using *the expressing self-deficiency*. *Accepting the blame* could be used positively by acknowledging fault actively, and negatively when asked to accept the blame. *Expressing lack of intent* had the function of minimizing the responsibility by expressing the lack of intent (refer to chapter 4.4.4, p93).

The *explanation* was the third frequently used strategy, commonly used by combining with the *expression of regret* to explain the reason or account that caused the offence. It was noted that the *explanation* was used in two ways in the corpus of this study: one is *explicit explanation* which happens by providing a specific and clear reason or account, and the other one is *implicit explanation* which refers to giving a general reason or account (refer to chapter 4.3.1, p68).

The *offer of repair* has been noted as a strategy with the potential meaning of top-down power by Luo (2004). In this study, the *offer of repair* was used by adding a postfix which turned the apologies into interrogative sentences to avoid the potential meaning of

top-down power by asking for the hearer's suggestion to the compensate for the offence caused, when apologizing to a hearer of a higher status (refer to Chapter 4.5, p96).

Concern for the hearer can be used to show concern for the physical and psychological hurt felt from being offended. The *concern for the hearer* had been inferred to be the commonly used strategies by Chinese speakers based on the traditional Chinese culture (Wang, Liu, and Wang, 2009). However, both in the as mentioned study and the present study, *concern for the hearer* was not used so commonly as what was expected. The reason provided by Wang, Liu, and Wang (2009) was that their participants all majored in English, and their choice of apology may have been affected by their educational background. As for data limitation, this study was not able to provide a concrete reason as to why the *concern for the hearer* was used less than expected (refer to Chapter 4.6, p100).

The last strategy was the *promise for forbearance*. It was noted that similar to the use of *accepting the blame*, the *promise for forbearance* could also happen positively and refers to the speaker actively making a promise for forbearance, and in a negative sense whereby the speaker is asked/implied to make a promise for forbearance (refer to Chapter 4.7, p101).

5.3 Research Question 2: “How does social status influence Chinese speakers’ choice of apology strategies?”

As mentioned beforehand, this study also explores the relationship between social status and Chinese speakers’ choice of apologies. This section then discusses the findings related to Research Question 2 which concerns the impact of social status on the use of apology strategies.

The impact of social status on the choice of apology strategy have been confirmed by previous studies (Pan, 2004; Zhang, 2007; Sun and Wang, 2009). Different from previous studies, the current study explores the relationship between social status and the speakers' choice of apologies by considering the gender of both speakers and hearers in order to find out how the social status affects the choice of strategy made by female and male speakers when apologizing to female and male hearers respectively. This is further enlightened by Bataineh & Bataineh's (2006) suggestion for future studies that the hearers' gender may have an impact on the choice of apologies and it should be taken into consideration in future studies. In order to determine the impact of social status regarding the use of apologies, data was coded based on the interlocutors' (both speaker and hearer) social status and gender.

5.3.1 The Relationship between Social Status and Female Speakers' Choice of Apologies

1. Apologies Made By Female Speakers to Female Hearers

According to the analysis of Chapter 4.3.1, social status has more of an effect on female speakers' choice of apologies when they apologized to female hearers. The results revealed that **female speakers** prefer to apologize to **higher status female hearers** and the most frequently used strategies were *IFIDs* and *explanation*; whilst no apologies were identified between **female speakers** and **female hearers** when they shared an **equal status**. This result is quite different from that of previous studies (Yi & Wen, 2013) where the female speaker is considered to have a lesser social status when she performed the speech act of apology. This is most likely due to the needs of the plots in the TV series where the story has a happy ending with everyone getting along well with each other.

Therefore, the contradictions between female speakers who owned equal status (mainly female university students) seems necessary for the development of plots. In addition, as mentioned in Chapter 1, social status plays an important role in the Chinese culture, and according to the results that show that female speakers preferred to apologize more to higher status female hearers rather than to equal status female hearers, it is inferred that the script writer may have a very traditional cultural background and is deeply affected by the traditional Chinese culture.

2. Apologies Made by Female Speakers to Male Hearers

Based on the analysis in Chapter 4.3.2, **female speakers** used *IFIDs* and *taking responsibility* most frequently when they apologized **to both equal status male hearers and higher status male hearers**. However, the *explanation* and the *concern for the hearer* were also used by female speakers to demonstrate their apology to equal status male hearers, but were not used to higher status male hearers.

Amongst the sub-strategies of *IFIDs*, the *expression of embarrassment* was used by female speakers to apologize to equal status male hearers however, it was not employed in the apologies to higher status male hearers. Amongst the sub-strategies of *taking responsibility*, female speakers preferred to employ *mentioning the offence committed* and *expressing lack of intent* in their apologies to equal status male hearers whilst in their apologies to higher status male hearers, only *mentioning the offence committed* was used.

The results shows that social status did affect the way that female speakers apologized. It is clear that social status had more of effect on **female speakers** when they decided to apologize (or not) to **female hearers**. Regarding the apologies made by **female**

speakers to male hearers, the results showed that social status had some form of impact on female speakers' choice of apology strategies, but not on the decisions as to whether to apologize to **male hearers** or not. According to the results, female speakers preferred to apologize more to male hearers, even if they were of equal status. It also seems that male hearers received more respect than female hearers when they were of equal status. This may be caused by the influence of traditional Chinese culture which highlight that males have a higher status than females (Li, 2006). According to Li (2006), in traditional Chinese culture, males have a dominant status in the ancient society which led them to possess the higher status when compared to females, who are gentle and obedient, reflecting the good quality of females. This may have spilled over to today's modern society. Thus, females prefer to pay more attention to maintaining the harmonious social relations rather than being concerned with face.

5.3.2 The Relationship between Social Status and Male Speakers

In respect to the apologies made by **male speakers** to **female hearers**, it was noted that most apologies occurred to **equal status female hearers**. Regarding the relationship between social status and **male speakers'** choice of apologies when they apologized to **male hearers**, based on the analysis in Chapter 4.3.4, the results revealed that *IFIDs* were most frequently used by male speakers when they apologized to equal status **male hearers**. However, when male speakers apologized to **higher status male hearers** they preferred to use *taking responsibility*, and not the *IFIDs*.

According to the above results, male speakers apologized to both female hearers and male hearers even if they were of an equal status. It is inferred that male speakers are concerned more about 'face' and preferred to portray themselves as gentleman, so they

were willing to apologize to both females and males hearers within equal status. Besides, it is noted that male speakers could also be affected by the hearer's social status. Male speakers used *taking responsibility* most when they apologized to higher status male hearers, and maybe this is because they want to build a good image before the one of a higher status, as the courage of *taking responsibility* is always seen as a good quality in a person (Li, 2007).

5.4 Limitation of the Study

This study is based on a small group of data collected from a Chinese TV series. Therefore, the findings obtained according to the analysis of a small group of data in this TV series cannot be generalized to make any conclusive claims on the use of apology strategies of the entire population of Chinese speakers in real life.

Besides that, another data limitation was on whether social status has a different impact on male speakers when they apologized to female hearers and male hearers, as it was not state clearly.

- ◆ Furthermore, only social status and gender were considered in this study and other variables such as educational background, socioeconomics conditions, and social relationships that may also affect the speakers' choice of apology strategies were not examined.

5.5 Contributions of this Study

Basically, there are four major contributions of this study. Firstly, this study investigated apology strategies used by Chinese speakers in a Chinese speaking context

(Chinese TV series), covering the details that introduced the common usage of each strategy. This will contribute knowledge to linguistic research and enrich literature in the field of pragmatics in general. Additionally, it will help Chinese speakers/learners to understand the way that Chinese speakers apologize.

Secondly, this study also examined apology strategies used by Chinese speakers in a TV series, with further exploration of the relationship between social status and the speakers' choice of apology strategies. There are few studies that have been done on apologies and social status in Chinese, especially considering the speakers' and hearers' gender when discussing the impact of social status. Therefore, theoretically, this study shall contribute to literature review focusing on apologies especially for those speaking in Chinese particularly working adults of different social status.

Besides, the findings of this study have highlighted that cross-cultural differences exist in using apology strategies by identifying the *expression of embarrassment* and *asking for another chance* which were directly transferred from Chinese. In this aspect, this study further confirms that cross-cultural differences do exist in apologies.

Moreover, Wouk (2006) stated that there is still a lack of data on apologies in the Asian context, so the investigation of apologies amongst Chinese speakers would contribute to add one more group of data on apologies in the Asian context.

5.6 Implications

This study is an investigation of apologies used by Chinese speakers. Data was collected from a Chinese TV series. Methodologically, the electronic medium such as a TV series is an efficient method for researchers to collect data on apologies or other types of speech acts. As pointed out by Musadad (2013), electronic mediums could reflect real

life directly or indirectly, as it acts as a mirror to real life. In this aspect, this study proves that the speech act of apology could be investigated through the data from an electronic medium. Thus, for future studies, electronic mediums such as movies and TV series can be regarded as a valid source for data collection.

The investigation of the influence of hearers' gender on the speakers' choice of apologies expanded the scope of research on Chinese apologies, as many previous studies (see Chapter 2) on Chinese apologies were not take hearers' gender into consideration.

The result of this study shows that Chinese male and female speakers' choice of apologies were affected by the hearers' status differently, and this result may be caused by the recognition of Chinese traditional culture (Li, 2006). So performing the speech act of apology could reflect cultural differences to a certain extent. Thus, for the language learners, it is important to understand the cultural background of certain languages in order to use the languages in a culturally appropriate way. What's more, this result could be used to make comparisons with studies on apologies in other foreign languages to observe cultural differences in using apology strategies.

5.7 Future Recommendations of Study

There are several recommendations to improve the current study. First of all, future studies are recommended to further contribute to the pool of available data and it is encouraged to conduct research based on naturally-occurring data in real life. Besides that, cross-cultural studies are welcomed to enable comparisons and looking at any contrasts in results with the current study.

Secondly, due to data limitation, the current study only covers a preliminary investigation on the relationship between social status and the choice of apologies of both female and male speakers when they apologized to female hearers and male hearers. Future studies are called for to use a large quantity of data to explore the effect of social status on the apologies of female and male speakers when they apologized to female and male hearers of different statuses respectively.

Thirdly, future studies are called for to enlarge the scope of this study by taking more factors into account such as social relationship, socioeconomic conditions, and educational background; all of which may have an impact on the way that speakers apologize.

Finally, future studies are recommended so that the findings of this study can be applied in modifying the framework for conducting apology strategies used by Chinese speakers. The *expression of embarrassment*, *asking for another chance*, and *mentioning the offence committed* should be added in, in order to have a more suitable classification of apology strategies when conducting research on apologies in Chinese.

5.8 Summary

This study investigated apologies used by Chinese speakers, and the impact of social status on the choice of apologies was further explored. Data was collected through a Chinese TV series made in mainland China. The data suggests that several strategies (such as the *expression of embarrassment* and *asking for another chance*) used by Chinese speakers were culturally specific. With a further exploration on the impact of social status, the results revealed that social status could have different impacts on both female and male speakers when they apologized to female and male hearers respectively. For

example, female speakers preferred to apologize to female hearers with higher status rather than to female hearers within the equal status.

This study is a small contribution to the knowledge on apologies used by Chinese speakers in a Chinese speaking context (a TV series) and aims to expand the scope of current studies on apologies. More studies are called for to examine apologies in Chinese and the impact of social status on the choice of apologies, by taking the hearers' gender into consideration so as to have a better understanding regarding this issue.

University of Malaya

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