

Abstract

The purposes of this research are (1) to compare the situations in which the apologies are used in Japanese and Thai and (2) to compare apology strategies used by Japanese and Thais and examine the results of three social factors that may have some effect on choice of apology strategies: the social distance between the participants, the relative power status of the participants, and the seriousness of offense.

In order to achieve the first purpose, the data were collected from five television dramas each in Japanese and Thai. For the second purpose, data were collected from fifty native speakers each of Japanese and Thai by using a discourse completion test.

Based on the data, the study found that the situations when apologies are normally used in Japanese can be classified into six groups – 1) making an offense 2) refusing a request 3) making a request or asking for permission 4) expressing gratitude 5) calling for attention 6) entering or leaving the room. However, in Thai society, there are only four situations identical with the Japanese, missing situations of expressing gratitude and entering or leaving the room.

Concerning apology strategies, it was found that the strategies of Japanese and Thais can be classified into four super-strategies – 1) an explicit expression of apology 2) an acceptance of blame 3) satisfying the offended person (by expressing concern, offering repair, and promising forbearance) 4) an explanation or account. The frequency of apology strategies shows that the Japanese tend to use the strategy of an acceptance of blame more often than the Thais, while the latter frequently use the strategy of satisfying the offended person and an explanation or account more than the Japanese.

The analysis of three social factors mentioned above revealed that all social factors have some effects on choosing apology strategies for both Japanese and Thais.