TRANSFER AND PROFICIENCY IN INTERLANGUAGE APOLOGIZING

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1. Pragmatic Transfer

The influence of nonnative language users' linguistic and cultural background on their performance of linguistic action in a second language has been a focal concern in interlanguage pragmatics. Transfer effects have been noted at the sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic level (cf. Leech, 1983; Thomas, 1983, for the distinction between sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics). Sociopragmatic transfer has been found to operate in learners' perceptions of contextual factors, such as interlocutors' relative social status (e.g., Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz, 1990; Takahashi & Beebe, 1993); assessment whether carrying out a particular linguistic action is socially appropriate (e.g., Robinson, 1992), and the overall politeness style adopted in an encounter (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1982; Garcia, 1989; Olshtain & Cohen, 1989). Pragmalinguistic transfer has been noted in learners' use of conventions of means and forms, affecting the illocutionary force and politeness value of interlanguage utterances (e.g., House & Kasper, 1987; Bodman & Eisenstein, 1988; House, 1988; Beebe, Takahashi, & Uliss-Weltz, 1990). Because of its potential for miscommunication, focus has been given to negative transfer, the projection of L1-based sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge onto L2 contexts where such projections result in perceptions and behaviors different from those of L2 users. Yet positive transfer, the projection of L1-based sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge where such projections result in perceptions and behaviors consistent with those of L2 users, have also been attested. For instance, conventionally indirect forms for requesting (e.g., Blum-Kulka, 1982; House & Kasper, 1987; Færch & Kasper,

1989; Takahashi & DuFon, 1989; Zhang, forthcoming) were successfully transferred to English from Hebrew, German, Danish, Japanese, and Chinese. Meaning conventions were transferred in the apology strategies used in German-English (House, 1988) and Thai-English (Bergman & Kasper, 1993) interlanguage. In all of the above cases, we are justified to assume that positive transfer from L1 to L2 pragmatic knowledge was operative because the matching patterns apply to specific pairs of native and target languages and cultures and not to others. In most instances, however, it is difficult to disentangle positive transfer from learners having recourse to universal pragmatic knowledge and inferencing strategies (Blum-Kulka, 1991).

In addition to ascertaining where pragmatic transfer occurs and whether it leads to perceptions and behaviors divergent from or consistent with L2 users', interlanguage pragmaticists have attempted to identify the conditions for transfer to occur, and the factors which mediate its operation. Transferability constraints posited in the literature include learners' psychotypology in the sense of Jordens (1977) and Kellerman (1977), and their perceptions of sociopragmatic and pragmalinguistic knowledge as specific for a given culture and language or as culturally and linguistically 'neutral'. An example of differential psychotypologies is seen in the request patterns of Danish learners, who made freer use of their L1 when requesting in German than in English (House & Kasper, 1987). Universal versus culture-specific perceptions distinguished the need to apologize as expressed by Russian and English-speaking learners of Hebrew, the Russians perceiving the need to apologize as determined by the nature of the committed act, whereas the English-speaking learners made apologizing contingent on cultural context (Olshtain, 1983). Japanese female informants stated that refusing offers, requests, or invitations was much more acceptable in American than in Japanese society; hence they felt that transfer from their Japanese norms of interaction would not be successful in an American context (Robinson, 1992). At the pragmalinguistic level, German learners of English avoided the use of the mitigator 'I mean' because they considered the German equivalent 'ich meine' as language-specific (Kasper, 1982). The transferability of conventionally indirect request strategies from Japanese to English was shown to be highly context-dependent, and varied with learner factors such as proficiency and familiarity with the

situation (Takahashi, 1992).

Non-structural factors interacting with pragmatic transfer include learner-external factors such as learning context and length of residence in the target community, and learner-internal factors such as attitude towards the native and target community, and L2 proficiency. Takahashi and Beebe (1987) found that transfer of Japanese refusal strategies, while occurring in the refusal patterns of ESL and EFL learners, was more prevalent in the EFL than in the ESL learners' production. According to informants' self-reports, their culture- and language-specific perceptions of refusal strategies and pragmalinguistic function, noted by Robinson (1992) and Kasper (1982) (see above), could partly be attributed to explicit teaching. We are not aware of any studies which specifically examine the effect of length of residence on pragmatic transfer. However, since some studies suggest that length of stay influences L2 pragmatic behavior in a non-linear fashion (Olshtain & Blum-Kulka, 1985; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984), it can be assumed that this factor has an impact on pragmatic transfer also. What exactly this influence is remains to be studied. A quantitative measure like amount of exposure alone - nor, for that matter, proficiency - cannot account for the fact that highly proficient long-term residents often preserve some of their L1 communicative style, and even pass it on to the next generations of immigrants (e.g., Clyne, 1979; Blum-Kulka & Sheffer, 1993). Such an 'intercultural style', seen, for instance, in American immigrants to Israel, hardly reflects 'deficient' L2 communicative competence (Blum-Kulka, 1991). Rather, it appears to express language users' need for disidentification, or maintaining their cultural identity as separate from the community at large. Pragmatic divergence of this kind can best be accounted for in an accommodation-theoretical framework (e.g., Giles & Johnson, 1987). Of the learner-internal factors, then, social-psychological orientation is a potential determinant of pragmatic transfer. The other, 'cognitive' factor, L2 proficiency, has been found to constrain pragmatic transfer in requesting (Blum-Kulka, 1982) and apologizing (Olshtain & Cohen, 1989). In both studies, it was found that learners' limited L2 knowledge prevented them from transferring complex conventions of means and forms from L1. These findings are thus consistent with Takahashi and Beebe's (1987) hypothesis that L2 proficiency is positively correlated with pragmatic transfer. While their own

study on refusals performed by Japanese learners of English at two different proficiency levels did not demonstrate the predicted proficiency effect, Blum-Kulka's (1991) and Olshtain and Cohen's (1989) studies support Takahashi and Beebe's view. However, since these studies do not look at the performance of learners at different proficiency levels, they do not provide conclusive evidence for or against the effect of proficiency on transfer. In this paper, therefore, we shall put Takahashi and Beebe's transfer hypothesis to another test.

2. Native and Nonnative Apology

Second only to requests, apologies are the next-best studied speech act in descriptive, cross-cultural, and interlanguage pragmatics. This is so for good reasons. In any speech community, participants need to be able to engage in remedial verbal action upon committing an offense, that is, to apologize. While the speech act of apologizing can thus be regarded as a pragmatic universal, the conditions which call for apology are clearly not. Speech communities differ in what counts as an offense, the severity of the same offensive event, and appropriate compensation. These perceptions will in turn be mediated by social factors such as the interlocutors' relative status and familiarity. Nonnative speakers have to learn what the specific conditions for apology are in the target community, what the strategies and linguistic means are by which apology can be implemented, and how to make contextually appropriate choices from the apology speech act set.

The supposition of an apology speech act set is supported by a large body of studies examining native and nonnative speakers' apologizing patterns. This notion, first proposed by Olshtain and Cohen (1983) and empirically sustained in a series of studies by these authors (Olshtain, 1983, 1989, Olshtain & Cohen, 1989) entails that apologies can be carried out by a finite set of 'conventions of means', or strategies, all of which are related to the offensive act and serve as the speaker's attempt to 'make it go away': either by conveying regret and proposing remedy, or by diminishing the offense or the speaker's responsibility for it. Two strategies, offering an explicit apology and assuming

responsibility for the offense, were found to be used in remedy of most offenses, irrespective of the specific contextual circumstances. The remaining strategies - upgrading apologetic force, downgrading the severity of the offense or speaker's responsibility, offering repair, and placating the offended party by different kinds of verbal redress - are clearly cross-culturally available, yet their use is highly sensitive to contextual conditions, and subject to cross-cultural variation (Olshtain, 1989; Bergman & Kasper, 1993).

Selections from the apology speech act set are determined by a variety of context-internal and context-external factors. One of the context-internal factors is the nature of the offense. Borkin and Reinhart (1978) suggested that "excuse me" is used to remedy 'a breach of etiquette or other light infraction of a social rule', whereas "I'm sorry" is used as an expression of dismay or regret about 'a violation of another person's right or damage to another person's feelings' (1978, p. 61). Their observation compares well to Goffman's (1971) distinction between ritual and substantive apology.

Within the category of substantive apology, the offender's obligation to apologize affects the choice of apologetic formula (House,1988) and intensification of apologetic force (Cohen & Olshtain, 1981; House, 1988; Vollmer & Olshtain, 1989; Bergman & Kasper, 1993). The factor that has been shown to have the strongest effect on apology realization is the severity of the infraction. Comparison of apology in Hebrew, Australian English, Canadian French, and German with assessments of contextual factors in different offense contexts suggests that 'severity of offense is the representative contextual factor in the socio-pragmatic set of the apology' (Olshtain, 1989, p. 160). In the case of significant injury or inconcenience, Fraser (1980) observed a shift from the pattern apology account to apology offer of compensation. Holmes (1989) noted that severity of offense has a differential impact on female and male offenders' use of apology strategies. Female New Zealand offenders apologized most to light offenses whereas men apologized most to infractions of medium severity. Whereas native speakers of English intensified apologetic force dependent on severity of offense, nonnative speakers were found to take less account of severity in their choice of apology intensification (Bergman & Kasper, 1993).

According to most studies, apology performance is affected by the context-external factors social power and social distance. The lower the offender's status vis-a-vis the offended person, the more the perpetrator is prone to apologize by means of an explicit apologetic formula (Vollmer & Olshtain, 1989), intensify apologetic force (Fraser, 1980; Olshtain, 1989; Vollmer & Olshtain, 1989), and choose a more formal apology strategy (Cohen & Olshtain, 1981; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983). However, Holmes (1989) found a non-linear relationship between social power and apology in her New Zealand data: most apology was offered in equal status relationships, lower status offenders apologizing second most, and higher status offenders least frequently. In American and Thai apologizing, social power did not influence offender's selection of apology strategy (Bergman & Kasper, 1993). Barnlund and Yoshioka (1990) found that Japanese offenders varied forms of apologizing more according to participants' status than American perpetrators did in comparable contexts.

The impact of social distance on apology behavior varies across studies. Except for a limited tendency towards a negative correlation between social distance and use of an explicit apology formula, Olshtain (1989) did not establish any relationship between social distance and use of apology strategy. Bergman and Kasper (1993) found that the closer the interlocutors, the more likely the offender was to expressly assume responsibility for the offensive act Wolfson. This finding is contrary to that of Wolfson, Marmor, and Jones (1989), in whose study most responsibility was expressed between acquaintances and equally little at the two opposite ends of the social distance continuum. This finding was interpreted as further evidence in support of Wolfson's bulge hypothesis (1989). However, neither Wolfson et al. (1989) nor Bergman and Kasper's (1993) investigation include intimate interlocutor relationships. Hence neither of the two studies has demonstrated evidence for or against the bulge hypothesis.

Studies of IL apologies include the language pairs Hebrew L1–English L2 (Cohen & Olshtain, 1981), English and Russian L1–Hebrew L2 (Olshtain, 1983), Danish L1–English L2 (Trosborg, 1987), German L1–English L2 (House, 1988), Spanish L1–English L2 (Garcia, 1989), and Thai L1–English L2 (Bergman

& Kasper, 1993). Of these, only Trosborg's (1987) study examined proficiency effects on learners' performance of apology, and therefore had potential implications for a theory of pragmatic development in adult L2 learners. However, the only developmental effect she found was that the use of modality markers increased with higher proficiency. It is difficult to say whether this pattern truly reflects a development of pragmalinguistic competence or merely an extension of the learners' lexical repertoire. The learners' strategy use differed in some respects from that of the native speakers of Danish (L1) and British English (L2), but there were no proficiency effects on the learners' use of apology strategy.

Previous research has offered descriptive accounts of transfer and proficiency in interlanguage users' speech act performance. Considering the effects of contextual factors on strategy selection as reported in the literature, it seems plausible to assume a relationship between contextual factors and transfer of apology strategies. This study will therefore examine whether pragmatic transfer is constrained by contextual factors, and whether it is affected by learners' proficiency level.

3. Method

Subjects

Four groups of subjects participated in this study:

1) 30 Japanese learners of English (Intermediate) (JEI)
2) 30 Japanese learners of English (Advanced) (JEA)
3) 30 Native speakers of English (E)
4) 30 Native speakers of Japanese (J)

JEI were students enrolled in the English Foundation Program at the Hawaii Pacific University (HPU) at the time of the study. Their average age was 22.8. Their TOEFL scores ranged between approximately 400 and 500. JEA were undergraduate or graduate students enrolled at the University of Hawaii at Manoa (UHM) at the time of the study. Their average age was 27.5. Their

TOEFL scores ranged from 510 to 627 (average 579.2). E and J were undergraduate and graduate students at UHM (average age NSE: 30.4, NSJ: 25.9). J participated as nonnative speakers in JEI or JEA.

Materials

A 20-item dialog construction questionnaire (DCQ) was prepared in English and Japanese. The items represented different social domains and interlocutor role relationships in terms of gender, social distance and relative social status, and differing degrees of severity of the committed offense. The content of the items is listed below.

1. A and B are friends. A damaged B's car while backing up. (Damaged Car)
2. A and B are friends. A borrowed a magazine from B and spilled coffee over it. (Ruined Magazine)
3. At a staff meeting, teacher A contradicts teacher B. (Contradiction)
4. At a staff meeting, teacher A accuses teacher B of being a poor teacher. (Poor Teacher)
5. At an office, a junior colleague forgets to pass on a personal message to a senior colleague. (Personal Message Low-High)
6. At an office, a senior colleague forgets to pass on a personal message to a junior colleague. (Personal Message High-Low)
7. At an office, a junior colleague forgets to pass on an important business message to a senior colleague. (Business Message Low-High)
8. At an office, a senior colleague forgets to pass on an important business message to a junior colleague. (Business Message High-Low)
9. At a restaurant, a customer changes her mind after the order has already been taken. (Order Change)
10. At a restaurant, a waiter spills food on a customer's clothes. (Food on Customer)
11. At a restaurant, a waiter brings the wrong order. (Wrong Order)
12. At a restaurant, a customer spills food on a waiter. (Food on Waiter)

13. At the airport, a customs official messes up a traveller's suitcase. (Messed-up Bag)

14. At the airport, a traveller is caught trying to smuggle a Bonsai tree into Japan. (Bonsai Tree)

15. At the airport, a customs official breaks a legally purchased statue when searching a traveller's suitcase. (Broken Statue)

16. At the airport, a traveller is unable to produce a customs form. (Customs Form)

17. A professor has not yet graded a term paper which a student was supposed to pick up. (Ungraded Paper)

18. A student forgets a book she was supposed to return to her professor. (Borrowed Book)

19. A professor misplaced a student's term paper and fails the student. (Failed Student)

20. A student plagiarized from a published book and is found out by a professor. (Cheating Student)

Subjects were asked to supply both the offender's and the offended party's turn (see Appendix 1 for a sample item). For this study, only the first pair parts were analyzed.

In order to examine the relationship between contextual factors and strategy use, an assessment questionnaire was prepared, including the same offense contexts as the DCQ. Each context was rated on a five-point scale for five context-internal factors (Severity of offense, Offender's Obligation to apologize, Likelihood for the apology to be accepted, Offender's Face Loss, Offended Party's Face Loss) and two context-external factors (social Distance and Dominance) (see Appendix 2 for sample item).

Since both questionnaires were adapted from a previous study (Bergman & Kasper, 1993), the Japanese version of the questionnaires was prepared by first translating the English questionnaires into Japanese and then back into English. Adjustments to the Japanese version were made based on a comparison of the original and translated English versions. The translations were provided by a graduate student who is a native speaker of Japanese, bilingual in Japanese and English, and not an author of this paper.

Procedure

Items in all questionnaires were randomized. For the DCQ, subjects were instructed to fill in what they would say in each of the twenty contexts. The intermediate and advanced learners (JEI and JEA) filled in the English and Japanese version of the DCQ in counterbalanced order. At least one week elapsed before the second DCQ was administered. The Japanese and English version of the Assessment questionnaire was completed by the native speakers of Japanese (J) and English (E), respectively. No time limits were imposed on completing the DC and Assessment questionnaires.

Analysis

The DC data were coded into the following major categories (from Bergman & Kasper, 1993):

IFID – Illocutionary Force Indicating Device, specifying the force of apology (I'm sorry, I'm afraid)

Upgrader – Element increasing apologetic force (I'm terribly sorry, I really didn't mean to hurt you)

Taking on Responsibility – speaker admitting the offense, including self-blame (How stupid of me), lack of intent (I didn't mean to do this), and admission of fact (I haven't graded it yet)

Downgrading Responsibility or Severity of Offense – (a) utterance reducing speaker's accountability for the offense, including excuse (My watch had stopped), justification (I was suddenly called to a meeting), claiming ignorance (I didn't know you were expecting me), problematizing a precondition (we weren't supposed to meet before 12), or denial (I didn't do it); (b) utterance reducing severity of offense (I'm only 10 minutes late)

Offer of Repair – speaker offering to remedy damage inflicted on offended party by an action to make restitution H's entitlements (I'll pay for the damage, I'll have it marked tomorrow)

Verbal Redress – speaker showing concern for offended party (I hope you weren't offended), efforts to appease (let me buy you a drink) or promise of forbearance (it won't happen again)

Interrater-reliability was established through consensus coding by three raters (E, JEI, JEA data) and two raters (J data). For the following analyses of positive transfer, differences between the four groups are reported in percentages of positive transfer per group. Since this phase of the study was essentially exploratory, no inferential statistics were applied. Statistical tests of the negative transfer analyses were based on total frequencies of the negative transfer tokens tallied for the intermediate and advanced ESL speakers, and the American baseline groups. All Chi-Square tests were calculated with a correction for continuity.

4. Results

4.1. Contextual effects on pragmatic transfer

Comparison of the contextual assessments provided by the native speakers of English and Japanese showed that there was strong agreement in the two groups' perception of status, obligation to apologize, and likelihood of apology acceptance. On each of these factors, only two contexts received different assessments. The assessment of likelihood of apology acceptance parallels the one found by Bergman and Kasper (1993). Ratings of the same contexts obtained from native speakers of American English and Thai revealed likelihood of apology acceptance to be the factor on which both groups agreed most, only three contexts receiving diverging ratings. In contrast, the findings for status and obligation to apologize in this study deviate considerably from previous research. Beebe and Takahashi's studies of face-threatening acts in

Japanese and English (e.g., Beebe & Takahashi, 1989; Takahashi & Beebe, 1993) consistently demonstrated a much stronger differentiation of status-relationships in Japanese than in American speakers' performance of such acts. We had therefore suspected that a similar difference would show up in Japanese and American raters' perceptions of status in offense contexts. Obligation to apologize was the factor on which Thais and Americans differed most - eleven out of the twenty offense contexts received different scores from these groups (Bergman & Kasper, 1993). In the present study, the most different ratings were given on offenders' face loss (7 contexts), offended party's face loss (9 contexts), and social distance (11 contexts).

Because previous research had demonstrated that context assessment affects the selection of apology strategies, we reasoned that pragmatic transfer can preliminarily be predicted from similarities and differences of native speakers' contextual assessments. Thus, it was assumed that similar native speaker ratings predict positive transfer of apology patterns, whilst different ratings predict negative transfer. A context was categorized as 'similar' when ratings did not differ on five or more factors, and as 'different' when more than four factors were rated differently. The categorizations were based on separate multivariate analyses of variance for each of the twenty contexts. The dependent variables in these analyses were the seven contextual factors, and the independent variable was membership in the native Japanese or American groups. Table 1 shows for each context whether it was rated the same or different on each of the seven factors, and the transfer predictions based on these ratings.

Table 1

Transfer Predictions Based on Contextual Assessment

CONTEXT	SOCIAL.-DIST	SOCIAL POWER	SEVERITY	OBLI-GATION	LIKELI-HOOD	OFF-FACE-LOSS	OTHER-FACE-LOSS	TRANSFER
Damaged Car			−			−	−	∅
Ruined Mag.	−		−				−	∅
Contradiction						−		positive
Poor Teacher			−					positive
Pers.Mess.L-H	−						−	positive
Pers.Mess.H-L								positive
Bus.Mess L-H						−	−	positive
Bus.Mess H-L	−					−	−	∅
Order Change	−	−			−			∅
Food on Cust.	−							positive
Wrong Order	−				−			positive
Food on Wait.								positive
Messed Up Bag				−			−	∅
Bonsai Tree	−							positive
Broken Statue						−		positive
Customs Form	−							positive
Ungraded Pap.	−							positive
Borrowed Book			−	−		−	−	negative
Failed Student	−	−					−	∅

Since the American and Japanese raters in this study generally showed more agreement than disagreement in their context assessment, predictions of positive transfer by far outnumbered those of negative transfer. Only

Borrowed Book received different ratings on four factors, and was therefore expected to elicit negative transfer. For six contexts, same and different ratings counterbalanced each other; hence no transfer predictions could be made. Thirteen contexts were rated similar and thus predicted to elicit positive transfer of apology strategies.

4.2. Transfer of apology strategies

In order to determine whether pragmatic transfer was operative, a modified version of Selinker's (1969) operational definition of language transfer was adopted from Kasper (1992). According to this definition, lack of statistically significant differences in the frequencies of a pragmatic feature in L1, L2, and IL can be operationally defined as positive transfer. Statistically significant differences in the frequencies of a pragmatic feature between IL–L2 and L1–L2 and lack of statistically significant difference between IL and L1 can be operationally defined as negative transfer. Applied to the identification of transfer of apology strategies, positive transfer obtains when there is no statistically significant difference in the use of an apology strategy between E and J, E and JEI/JEA, and J and JEI/JEA. Negative transfer requires statistically significant differences in strategy use between E–J and E–JEI/JEA and no statistically significant differences between J–JEI/JEA. Because in this study, J was a subset of JEI and JEA (i.e., the same subjects served as learners and L1 native speakers), comparisons between J and JEI/JEA were not carried out.

The transfer predictions established through comparison of contextual factors in the previous section was matched against the actual occurrence of transfer on each apology strategy in each offense context. There was high correspondence between the predictions of positive transfer and its occurrence. Table 2 displays the percentage of strategies which were transferred positively according to the context-based transfer predictions.

Table 2

Predicted Positive Transfer of Apology Strategies

Context	JEI%	JEA%
Contradiction	67	67
Poor Teacher	83	67
Personal Message L-H	83	83
Personal Message H-L	50	67
Business Message L-H	83	100
Food on Customer	50	67
Wrong Order	83	83
Food on Waiter	17	33
Bonsai Tree	83	100
Broken Statue	100	83
Customs Form	100	100
Ungraded Paper	17	67
Cheating Student	83	83

In the majority of contexts where positive transfer had been predicted, the converging social perceptions of Japanese and American subjects was reflected in the same use of apology strategies by both learner groups. This match was even greater in the case of the advanced learners, who outperformed the intermediate learners in six contexts. The intermediate learners, however, did better than the advanced learners in Poor Teacher and Broken Statue. There were only two contexts where the prediction of positive transfer was not borne out. In Food on Waiter, both learner groups apologized differently from the American native speakers on all but one measure (JEI: Taking on responsibility) and two measures, respectively (JEA: IFID and Taking on Responsibility). In Ungraded Paper, the only strategy which the intermediate

learners used in the same way as the Americans was Upgrading apologetic force. Table 3 summarizes how the prediction of positive transfer was matched by the actual use of apology strategies.

Table 3

Positively transferred apology strategies

	IFID%	UG%	TR%	DG%	REG%	VR%
JEI	77	77	85	54	62	62
JEA	77	85	92	54	77	85

Again, the advanced learners' performance compared better to the transfer predictions than the intermediate learners' in their choice of four apology strategies. The strategy where both learner groups displayed least positive transfer was Downgrading apologetic force.

Overall, native speakers' social perceptions proved to be an excellent predictor of positive pragmatic transfer: where Japanese and Americans' contextual assessments converged, Japanese learners of English were prone to use the same strategies in their interlanguage apologizing as both native speaker groups. This was even more true of the advanced learners than of the intermediate learners, which makes sense in light of the assumption that advanced learners are likely to be more acculturated than intermediate learners, and have the linguistic facility to transfer pragmatic strategies from their native language where this is consistent with target use.

A requirement for positive transfer is obviously that the native speaker groups display the same kind of behaviour. In the instances of positive transfer noted above, the similarity of native speakers' strategy use could be seen as the behavioral correlate to their converging social perceptions of contextual factors. Interestingly, native speakers also preferred the same apology

strategies where they did not agree in their context assessment, and in these contexts, the learners displayed the same strategy choices as the native speakers did. In other words, positive pragmatic transfer of apology strategies occurred even in contexts where this was not predicted by the contextual assessment. Table 4 summarizes the contexts in which apology strategies were positively transferred contrary to the transfer prediction.

Table 4

Positive Transfer Contrary to Prediction

Context	JEI%	JEA%
Damaged Car	83	67
Ruined Magazine	67	33
Business Message H-L	83	83
Order Change	67	83
Messed-up Bag	67	50
Borrowed Book	83	100
Failed Student	83	83

Curiously, Borrowed Book, the only context for which negative transfer had been predicted, achieved the highest scores on actual positive transfer. In Ruined Magazine and Messed-Up Bag, the advanced learners' strategy choices differed most from the native speakers' apology patterns and were thus more in accordance with the prediction of zero transfer.

Table 5

Unpredicted positive transfer of apology strategies

	IFID%	UG%	TR%	DG%	Rep%	VR%
JEI	86	71	86	100	29	71
JEA	29	86	86	86	71	71

The advanced learners followed the prediction of zero transfer in their selection of IFIDs, the intermediate learners on Repair. On all other strategies, the learners converged in their strategy selection with the native speakers and did not differ in terms of proficiency. Since only the native speakers' sociopragmatic perceptions were elicited, we have no way of knowing whether the learners viewed the seven contexts similarly to the American native speakers and selected their apology strategies in accordance with their contextual assessment, or whether they assessed these contexts differently from the American judgements but nonetheless followed the same pattern of strategy selection.

The same mismatch between transfer predictions and transfer occurrence was observable in the few instances of negative transfer. Just as the only prediction of negative transfer (in the Borrowed Book context, see above) contrasted with actual positive transfer of strategy choice, negative transfer occurred in contexts were positive transfer had been predicted. Table 6 lists the strategies which were transferred negatively from Japanese, and the frequencies by which these strategies were used by the learners and native speakers.

Table 6

Negative transfer of strategy choice in %

IFID in Ungraded Paper

J%	JEI%	A%	
53	57	83	JEI < A

Upgrading in Food on Customer

J%	JEI%	A%	
50	48	77	JEI < A

Upgrading in Food on Waiter

J%	JEI%	A%	
20	23	73	JEI < A
J%	JEA%	A%	
20	43	73	JEA < A

Taking on Responsibility in Contradiction

J%	JEI%	A%	
63	66	37	JEI > A

Downgrading Responsibility or Severity in Cheating Student

J%	JEI%	A%	
83	71	48	JEI > A
J%	JEA%	A%	
83	79	48	JEA > A

Offer of Repair in Food on Customer

J%	JEI%	A%	
3.3	55	83	JEI < A

Verbal Redress in Contradiction

J%	JEI%	A%	
30	31	70	JEI < A

Each strategy was thus transferred negatively at least once. In the Ungraded Paper context, a professor promised to have a student's paper graded but has not done it yet when the student comes to pick it up. In response to the student's request 'Can I have my paper back now?', the intermediate learners apologized less by means of an explicit apology (IFID) than the American native speakers and advanced learners. Typical responses given by the four language groups were

(1) J: Chotto matte, sugu tsukeru kara
    "Wait just a minute. I will mark your paper right away"

JEI: Not yet. Have a seat and wait a minute.

A & JEA: Sorry, I haven't quite finished it. Could you come back tomorrow?

In Food on Customer, a waiter spills food on a customer's dress. While the Americans and advanced learners intensified the waiter's apology to the customer, the intermediate learners followed the Japanese native speakers by upgrading apologetic force less in this context, as in illustrated in (2).

(2) J: Mooshiwakearimasen, okyakusama. "It is inexcusable, sir/ma'am".

JEI: Oh, I'm sorry.

A & JEA: Oh no! I'm so incredibly sorry!

The same offense in reverse role relationships is represented in Food on Waiter, where a guest in a restaurant knocks off a waiter's tray when getting up and the food spills all over the waiter. While the American subjects had the guest apologize to the waiter just as profusely as the waiter to the guest in the previous situation, most respondents in both learner groups and the Japanese

native speakers apologized less strongly by not intensifying their expression of regret.

(3) J: Gomenasai "I am sorry"

JEI & JEA: I'm sorry. Are you okay?

A: Oh, my God! I'm terribly sorry. I'm such a klutz.

However, almost double as many of the advanced learners as of the intermediate learners did upgrade apologetic force, suggesting that they are on their way to abandon the native Japanese pattern of differentiating apology intensification according to interlocutor status in favor of the more egalitarian target usage.

In Contradiction, a teacher contradicts something that another teacher said at a staff meeting, and hurt his colleague's feelings. Most of the intermediate learners and Japanese native speakers redressed this offense by explicitly assuming responsibility for it. The American respondents preferred to offer sympathy in this situation, as will be seen below. The contrasting patterns are illustrated by the responses in (4).

(4) J: Konoaida wa gomen. Warugi wa nakattan da.
     "I am sorry for the other day. I didn't mean it".

JEI: I'm sorry. I hurt your feelings, I think. Can I listen to your feelings?

A & JEA: I hope you didn't take what I said personally. I didn't mean, to hurt your feelings, but I had to say what I thought.

In the role of a student who plagiarized for a term paper and is found out by his professor (Cheating Student), the learners and Japanese native speakers downplayed the offense by finding excuses or claiming ignorance. The

Americans used this strategy less, probably on the assumption that attempts to downplay the offense would make their case worse rather than better, cf. (5).

(5)   J: Sumimasen. Tesuto toka iroiro to ishogashikute, shimekiri ni maniawazu tame ni shikata ga nakata n desu. Hi wo aratamete teishutsu shitemo ii desu ka.
      "I sorry. I was busy preparing tests, so in order to prepare them in time it was the only thing I could do. May I submit it later?"

      JEI: I'm sorry for copying, but I was busy.

      JEA: I'm sorry. I tried to write the essay myself, but the statement in the text was so nicely written, and I didn't know you would consider if we copy from the text.

      A: Well, actually, I did get some of my ideas from a book.

In the Food on Customer context, the American and advanced respondents had the waiter offer repair to the customer, such as promising to have her dress cleaned. Half of the intermediate learners did not offer repair, and thus assumed a medium position between American and Japanese usage. Only a single Japanese respondent offered repair to this offense. Typical responses are given in (6).

(6)   J: Taihen moshiwake gozaimasen. "I am very sorry"

      JEI: Oh, I'm sorry. Are you all right?

      A & JEA: Oh, I'm terribly sorry. We'll have the suit cleaned for you.

Finally, the intermediate learners followed the Japanese pattern of not expressing much concern for the insulted teacher in Contradiction. Most of the American respondents offered tokens of concern for the offended colleague's feelings, cf. (7). Half of the advanced learner group expressed concern; the

advanced learners   thus   placed themselves between the Japanese/intermediate and American respondents in this context.

(7) J: Warukatta keredo are wa boku no sochokku na iken de atte, kimi wo kizutsukeru tsumori wa nakatta.
     "Sorry, but that was my honest opinion and I didn't mean to hurt you."

     JEI: I know that I hurt you, but that which I said was my opinion. I think I was right.

     A: Jennifer, I didn't mean to come across that strongly in there. I sure hope I didn't hurt your feelings.

Most of the negative transfer occurred in contexts with a high power differential between the interlocutors, regardless whether the offender was the higher status participant (Food on Waiter, Ungraded Paper) or in the lower status position (Food on Customer, Cheating Student). In Food on Customer and in both of the student-professor contexts, social distance was perceived differently by Japanese and American raters. It is possible, therefore, that despite the overall agreement in context perception, the diverging assessment of social distance is contributive to the differences in strategy use. This interpretation is consistent with previous studies, which demonstrated a complex interaction of contextual factors and choice of apology strategies. As noted above, each context factor has a different weight as trigger of strategy choice, and the same factor affects the selection of some strategies but not others. In previous studies, social distance was shown to affect offender's assumption of responsibility for the offense (Bergman & Kasper, 1993) and, more tentatively, their choice of IFID (Olshtain, 1989). This study suggests that diverging perceptions of social distance can account for different choices of IFID, Upgrading of apologetic force, and offer of Repair. It does not explain, however, why different assessments of social distance affect some but not all contexts. A closer look at two pairs of contexts which differ only in the interlocutors' power relationship indicates that the direction of the status

differential is the crucial factor. Japanese and American raters did not differ in their assessment of social power in Food on Customer / Food on Waiter and Borrowed Book / Ungraded Paper. However, in both of these paired contexts, Japanese and Americans differed in their actual use of the IFIDs in the student –professor situations and of Upgrading in the waiter–customer contexts. Americans used IFIDs equally often in the student–professor situation no matter whether the offender was the professor or the student (83%), and they upgraded their apologies in the customer–waiter contexts to the same extent regardless of offender's status (75%). The Japanese respondents, by contrast, made their selection of both strategies contingent on the direction of the status relationship. In the high to low contexts, they apologized less by means of an explicit formula (professor –> student (53%)) and intensified apologetic force less (customer –> waiter (20%) than in the corresponding low to high contexts (student –> professor: 87% IFID; waiter –> customer: 50% Upgrading). This contrast in power differentiation is consistent with Barnlund and Yoshioka's (1990) observation that Japanese offenders are more status-sensitive in their choice of apology strategy than Americans. The learners who followed the native model thus transferred the status-differential apology pattern from Japanese to English in these contexts. As an instance of sociopragmatic transfer, this finding fits in well with Takahashi and Beebe's (e.g., 1993) work on face–threatening acts in Japanese-English interlanguage. Their studies showed that compared to Americans, native speakers of Japanese employ a more distinctly status-differentiating approach to corrections and refusals. Mitigators such as softeners and expressions as of regret were used more frequently by the status lower to the status higher interlocutor than vice versa by both Americans and Japanese, however the Japanese respondents accentuated the status difference more than the Americans did. Just as the Japanese learners of English transferred the status-differential patterns of mitigation to their performance of face-threatening acts in English, the intermediate learners in this study aggravated apologetic force according to the status-differential L1 model.

5. Extensions to recent studies of Japanese–American Apology

The foregoing discussion of negative transfer was based on DC codings devised by Bergman and Kasper (1993). In order to examine the generality of the negative transfer phenomenon, however, it is important to compare the results of the present study with other cross cultural studies of apology in Japanese and American contexts. Barnlund and Yoshioka (1990) found, for example, that Japanese were more likely to offer several types of apologies for a transgression than Americans rating the same situation. They were also more likely to offer significantly more repair by suggesting some form of compensation for their transgressions than the Americans. In contrast, Americans were found to be more likely to provide a rationale–more excuses, justifications and downgrading of the severity of the transgression. Japanese appear to be equally direct as Americans in apologizing for perceived wrongdoings. As Barnlund and Yoshioka used different units of measurement (ratings) and a different classificatory system, we will equate the DCQ results with the most obvious of the B&Y findings in order to establish comparability between the cross cultural contrasts identified by B & Y and instances of negative transfer in our study.

In the B & Y study, the variance in preferred strategies is taken to represent major pragmatic differences between the two cultural norms. Such differences can potentially result in negative pragmatic transfer, as defined above.

Four apology strategies involving pragmatic contrasts in the B & Y research were matched with the most comparable five strategy types in the present study. These were 'explaining the situation'/downgrading, 'saying directly "I am very sorry"'/IFID and upgrading, 'offering to do something for the other person'/ repair, 'apologizing directly; several ways several times'/ (multiple apologies for a single transgression).

Instances of apology strategies for the same three groups–Japanese at the low intermediate level of proficiency in English as a second language, Japanese with advanced ESL proficiency, and an American baseline group, were reanalyzed for the twenty independent DCQ contexts. As the preceding

section of this study has suggested, there should be a greater likelihood that low intermediate ESL speakers would use Japanese strategies than do advanced proficiency ESL speakers. The results of the comparisons are presented and discuss individually below.

'Explaining the situation'/downgrading

In B & Y 'explaining the situation' is used less frequently by Japanese than by American offenders. B & Y's findings, the present study revealed that in only one context out of twenty is there a significant difference between Americans and Japanese in the downgrading/rationalizing category. Specifically, the intermediate learners used the preferred American strategy of rationalizing the transgression more than the American group. There was no such difference between the advanced learners of ESL and the native speakers of English. The sole difference was for 'Poor Teacher'.

In this situation teacher A accuses teacher B of being a poor teacher at a staff meeting (Chi-square= 6.38; p =.0118). Such a difference could indicate a transitional period during which the Japanese learners over-accommodate toward what they perceive the American norm to be, and in a sense 'out-American' the Americans. In no context do the advanced learners differ from the Americans in terms of the frequency of downgrades/rationalization, which is a finding that in not in agreement with the pragmatic contrasts established by B & Y. This may stem from the fact that all of the Japanese respondents are residents of Honolulu, and have perhaps had sufficient exposure to the Hawaiian-American norms of downgrading and reference to circumstantial causes of the transgression instead of taking responsibility, whether such taking of responsibility is warranted or not.

'Offering to do something for the other person'/ repair

According to B & Y, Japanese offenders are more prone to offer compensation for an infraction than Americans. We therefore predicted that the learners would offer more repair than the American native speakers. However, with one exception, the learners differed from Americans in their repair offers by providing less rather than more repair. The intermediate learners were much more prone to undersupply repair than the advanced

learners were. The contexts in which the Japanese learners differed from the Americans are listed below.

1. Damaged Car: A has had an accident with a car borrowed from B.
   Chi-square = 4.31 p = .037

2. Ruined Magazine: A borrowed a magazine from B and spilled coffee over it.
   Chi-square =4.31 p = .037

7. Business Message-Low to High: At an office, a junior colleague forgets to pass on an important business message to a senior colleague.
   Chi-square = 7.18 p = .007

8. Business Message- High to Low: At an office, a senior colleague forgets to pass on an important business message to a junior colleague.
   Chi-square = 7.06 p = .007

10. Food on Customer: At a restaurant, a waiter spills food on a customer's clothes.
    Chi-square = 3.88 p = .048

12. Food on Waiter: At a restaurant, a customer spills food on a waiter.
    Chi-square = 7.12 p = .007

19. Failed Student: A professor misplaced a student's term paper and fails the student.
    Chi-square = 5.42 p = .019

Since the contexts in which the intermediate learners offer less repair involve different status relationships and degrees of social distance, their divergent apology behavior cannot be explained in terms of context external factors. However, with the exception of Ruined Magazine, the offenses are all

high severity infractions. For the American subjects, repair offers are appropriate ways of redress to these kinds of transgressions. The learners' failure to offer compensation on a regular basis in these contexts suggests that they underdifferentiate their selection of repair offer according to high versus low severity offenses.

In contrast to the intermediate learners the frequency of repair offers by the advanced proficiency ESL speakers is very similar to the native speakers of English. Only in contexts#1 (Chi Square =4.13; p= .037), #12 (Chi-Square = 7.12 ; p = .007), and #17 (Chi-Square = 4.31; p = .037) do the advanced learners differ from native speakers.

In contexts #1 and #12, like their intermediate proficiency counterparts, the advanced learners provide significantly less apology than the native speakers for the transgressions. This may indicate that while advanced learners are in general familiar with American apology strategies, in highly marked and unfamiliar contexts such as Damaged Car, they know they cannot revert to Japanese strategies but do not have the experiential basis to extrapolate from their repertoire of L2 pragmatic strategies. Familiarity with social contexts has been shown to influence interlanguage pragmatic performance generally (Eisenstein & Bodman, 1986), and pragmatic transfer specifically (Takahashi, 1992).

Context #12 Food on Waiter represents the influence of role differentiation awareness between Americans and Japanese. A infraction such as that in context #12 does not warrant an offer of compensation from the Japanese because of the role/status differential implicit in customer/service employee relations. Context #17 is the only instance of negative transfer (Chi-square 4.31; p = .037).

We note that the intermediate proficiency Japanese did not differ from the native speakers of English in this context (a professor failing to grade a student paper on time). Here, the advanced Japanese are more inclined to see repair offer from the professor as appropriate, whereas their low-proficiency counterparts do not. What may appear to be negative transfer by the advanced Japanese in this context may actually be indicative of more subtle and complex pragmatic influences. They may, for instance, realize that the L2 status differential does not require high to low repair. The advanced Japanese

would therefore be less inclined to consider no repair as appropriate. They might not however realize that the American norm is not built on a single egalitarian principle, and that it might be subject to real world constraints such as the fact that professors are notoriously tardy and expect that students understand this.

'Direct apology'/IFID and Upgrading

This category of apology strategy involves the speaker providing a clear and direct apology for an infraction. The directness is most overtly expressed as some variant of "I am sorry", and is here considered distinct from an indirect form of apology such as " it is a shame it had to turn out that way". Barnlund and Yoshioka find that for both Americans and Japanese, direct apology is the most highly preferred for of redress. Japanese are even more inclined to employ direct apology. Learners can therefore be expected to use equal or surpass Americans in their use of direct apology.

However, only the intermediate level ESL learners differ from native speakers of English in that learners at this level do not apologize directly for the perceived transgression as much as the Americans in one context in which Americans consider apology appropriate. In Context 12 the intermediate Japanese learners appear to see the status differential as the governing factor in their option to offer a direct apology.

12. At a restaurant, a customer spills food on a waiter. (Food on Waiter)
    Chi-square = 7.32 p = .006

Multiple Apologies

The B and Y study found that the Japanese are more inclined to provide multiple apologies or apologetic paraphrases than were Americans. The function of the multiple apology in the Japanese milieu is to demarcate the speaker's responsibility for the transgression, and to provide a signals of sincerity for the apology. Multiple apology should therefore be a prime candidate for negative transfer in the discourse completion tasks used in this study. Indeed, the intermediate proficiency ESL learners should transfer

multiple apologies more than the advanced learners. However, the results suggest that differences in the frequency of multiple apology is not as common as expected. For the intermediate level speakers multiple apology was significantly different from native English speakers in only two contexts. In context # 13 Messed Up Bag (Chi-square = 4.27 p = .038), the lower-intermediate ESL Japanese provided more multiple apologies than Americans, but in context # 17 Ungraded Paper they chose this strategy significantly less than the Americans (Chi-square = 4.56 p =.017).

For the advanced proficiency ESL speakers the likelihood of negative transfer of the multiple apology strategy can be considered less than that for the intermediate ESL speakers. This fact is borne out in the present study. Only in one context did the advanced ESL speakers differ from native speakers. Here, the Japanese provided significantly more multiple apologies (Chi-square = 5.82 p = .015). The transgression in context #2 is one that can be considered avoidable. Presumably, since the perpetrator was remiss in preventing the mishap, the severity of the transgression becomes more acute in the minds of the advanced proficiency ESL speakers.

6. Discussion

Compared to the pervasive effect of positive transfer, negative transfer was infrequently at work in the learners' apology performance. Yet, two important findings emerge from the analysis of negative transfer. For one thing, in only two instances did the advanced learners transfer their apology behavior from Japanese to English when Japanese and American apology patterns differed, whereas the intermediate group did the same in six instances. From this, it follows that the advanced learners have a better ability to emulate American apology behavior than the intermediate learners. Secondly, except for taking on responsibility in Contradiction, the intermediate learners differed from the Americans in that they provided fewer instances of the apology strategy in question. Their negative transfer of apology strategies thus consisted in adopting a less elaborated, L1-based approach to redress offenses than the American native speakers and the advanced learners. This

study, then, does not lend support to Takahashi and Beebe's (1987, 1993) contention that advanced learners display more negative pragmatic transfer because 'they have the rope to hang themselves'. Rather, when advanced Japanese learners provide responses to exceptional situations for which they have little experience to rely on, they are inclined not to transfer L1 strategies they know are insufficient for the context. Rather the advanced learners may still not have developed the pragmatic wherewithal to provide the same responses to the subtleties of such situations as do the native speakers of American English.

There are noteworthy similarities and differences in the transfer behavior of the intermediate learners in this study and the intermediate Thai learners of English in Bergman and Kasper (1993). The Thai learners' performance suggested negative transfer of Upgrading and Repair in only one context and of IFID and Taking on Responsibility in two contexts. Their patterns of negative pragmatic transfer on these strategies was thus quite similar to that of the Japanese intermediate learners. However, the Thai learners transferred negatively on their use of Downgrading in three contexts–where the Japanese intermediate learners did not transfer negatively at all–and on Verbal Redress in as many as six contexts. Furthermore, these negative transfers were the result of over-supplying the strategy in question, rather than under-using it, which is what the Japanese learners were inclined to do.

Previous research has demonstrated that negative pragmatic transfer is more prevalent in foreign language contexts than in second language contexts (Takahashi & Beebe, 1987). This difference in learning contexts can partly account for the variance in negative transfer between the Thai and Japanese learners: the Thai learners were in an EFL contexts, whereas the Japanese learners were in an ESL context. This generalization is also borne out in the comparison of the Barnlund and Yoshioka predictions with the second language acquisition patterns observed here. The different opportunities for input and productive use of English in the ESL context surely put the Japanese learners at an advantage. Furthermore, the variety of English which served as target norm in both the Thai and Japanese studies was Hawai'i Standard English, which was consistent with the input variety received by the Japanese in Honolulu, but not by the Thais in Bangkok. Another reason for the

differences between the B & Y conclusions and those of the present study relates to differences in the sociolinguistic norms of the three speech communities. Since the Americans in the B & Y study were presumably from two distinct homogenous populations in Japan and on the U.S. mainland, and the Americans and Japanese in the present study were from a single heterogeneous speech community in Honolulu, we might surmise that there was a greater likelihood for exposure, accommodation and convergence in the Hawaiian milieu.

Given that the focus of this study is apology, it perhaps most appropriate to apologize for the obvious limitations of the study itself. With the act of apology as the center of much cross-cultural miscommunication, and its status in perceptions of duty, responsibility and liability in American and Japanese societies it is of particular importance to continue the investigation of apology across a wide variety of communicative domains.

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