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HẢI PHÒNG - 2010

HAIPHONG PRIVATE UNIVESITY

FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

GRADUATION PAPER

**A STUDY ON HOW TO GIVE AN EFFECTIVE
APOLOGY IN ENGLISH COMMUNICATION**

By:

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Class:

NA1001

Supervisor:

Nguyễn Thị Thúy Thu, M.A.

HAI PHONG - 2010

Nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp

Sinh viên: ....Mã số:............................

Lớp: ....Ngành:..

Tên đề tài: ....

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Nhiệm vụ đề tài

1. Nội dung và các yêu cầu cần giải quyết trong nhiệm vụ đề tài tốt nghiệp (về lý luận, thực tiễn, các số liệu cần tính toán và các bản vẽ).

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3. Địa điểm thực tập tốt nghiệp.

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CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN ĐỀ TÀI

<u>Người hướng dẫn thứ nhất:</u>

Họ và tên:...

Học hàm, học vị:..

Cơ quan công tác:..

Nội dung hướng dẫn:..

<u>Người hướng dẫn thứ hai:</u>

Họ và tên:...

Học hàm, học vị:..

Cơ quan công tác:..

Nội dung hướng dẫn:..

Đề tài tốt nghiệp được giao ngày 12 tháng 04 năm 2010

Yêu cầu phải hoàn thành xong trước ngày 10 tháng 07 năm 2010

Đã nhận nhiệm vụ ĐTTN   Đã giao nhiệm vụ ĐTTN

    Sinh viên   *Người hướng dẫn*

       Hải Phòng, ngày   tháng   năm 2010

        HIỆU TRƯỞNG

        GS.TS.NGƯT *Trần Hữu Nghị*

PHẦN NHẬN XÉT TÓM TẮT CỦA CÁN BỘ HƯỚNG DẪN

1. **Tinh thần thái độ của sinh viên trong quá trình làm đề tài tốt nghiệp:**

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2. **Đánh giá chất lượng của khóa luận (so với nội dung yêu cầu đã đề ra trong nhiệm vụ Đ.T. T.N trên các mặt lý luận, thực tiễn, tính toán số liệu…):**

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3. **Cho điểm của cán bộ hướng dẫn (ghi bằng cả số và chữ):**

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Hải Phòng, ngày ….. tháng ….. năm 2010

Cán bộ hướng dẫn

(họ tên và chữ ký)

NHẬN XÉT ĐÁNH GIÁ

CỦA NGƯỜI CHẤM PHẢN BIỆN ĐỀ TÀI TỐT NGHIỆP

1. Đánh giá chất lượng đề tài tốt nghiệp về các mặt thu thập và phân tích tài liệu, số liệu ban đầu, giá trị lí luận và thực tiễn của đề tài.

2. Cho điểm của người chấm phản biện :

(Điểm ghi bằng số và chữ)

Ngày.......... tháng......... năm 2010

Người chấm phản biện

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Nguyen Thi Thao

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PART I. INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale

It is said that "Sorry seem to be the hardest word". Some people do not know how to say and what they have to do to give an apology effectively. Especially it is the way of giving apology in English communication. People often do not apologize because of fear. The fear completely irrationalizes our minds blurring our thoughts as to what we actually fear. By consciously challenging your fears and knowing exactly what you are afraid of, you will be far more self-aware and prepare for interpersonal communication success.

"Apology" is not a neutral word: it has strong personal and emotional connotations. An apology is a speech act between two individuals, during which there is a direct and even intimate contact between the partners, within a distinct hierarchical relationship. The speaker who apologizes asks to be forgiven; the other person has the authority to forgive or not. The purpose of the act is to restore a former relational equilibrium that may vary from strong bonds, as when apologies are exchanged between lovers, to mere indifference, as when they are uttered when bumping into a passerby on the street. The hierarchical relationship may be complex. A strong person may apologize to a weaker one to restore his or her "integrity" and preserve a higher position. The weaker person confirms the other's supremacy by accepting apology.

2. Aims of the study

This study aims at:

- giving speech act, communication and apology theory in general.
- outlining factors influence on the way of giving apology.
- suggesting some ways of giving the effective apologies.

3. Scope of study

Due to the time limitation and the knowledge of an un-experienced student, this research only concentrates on outlining factors influence on the way of giving an effective apology and some ways of giving effective apology.

4. Method of the study

To study successfully and effectively, methods used in this study are:

- Material collection from good books and reliable sources
- Consulting with supervisor.
- Contrastive analysis: analyzing factors which influence the ways of giving an apology and apology strategies.

5. Design of the study

This study is divided into three parts:

Part I: "**Introduction**" includes rationale, aim, scope, and design of the study.

Part II: "**Development**", includes three chapters:

Chapter 1: "**Theoretical background**" provides general knowledge about speech act, communication and apology.

Chapter 2: "**Factors influence the way of giving an effective apology**"

Chapter 3: "**Ways of giving effective apology**" presents some apology strategies, some tips for apology strategy.

Part III: "**Conclusion**" summaries the main points mentioned in the previous parts.

PART II. DEVELOPMENT
Chapter 1. Theoretical background
1. Communication

Communication is the process of transferring information from one source to another. Communication is commonly defined as "***the imparting or interchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs***" *(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communication)*. Communication can be perceived as a two-way process in which there is an exchange and progression of thoughts, feelings, or ideas towards a mutually accepted goal or direction.

Communication is a process whereby information is incoded and imparted by a sender to a receiver viva a channel/medium. The receiver then decodes the message and gives the sender a feedback. Communication requires that all parties have an area of communicative commonality. They are auditory means, such as speaking, singing and sometimes tone of voice, and nonverbal, physical means, such as body language, sign language, paralanguage, touch, eye contact, by using writing.

Communication is thus a process by which we assign and convey meaning in an attempt to create shared understanding. This process requires a vest repertoire of skills in intrapersonal and interpersonal processing, listening, observing, speaking, questioning, analyzing, and evaluating. If you use these processes it is developmental and transfers to all areas of life: home, school, community, work, and beyond. It is through communication that collaboration and cooperation occur.

In general, any act by which one person gives to or receives from another person information about that person's needs, desires, perceptions, knowledge, or affective states. Communication may be intentional or unintentional, may involve conventional or unconventional signals, may take linguistic or nonlinguistic forms, and may occur through spoken or other modes.

2. Speech acts

2.1. Definition

Speech acts are a staple of every day communicative life, but only became a topic of sustained investigation, at least in the English speaking world, in the middle of the twentieth Century. Since that time, "*speech act theory*" has been influential not only within philosophy, but also in linguistics, psychology, legal theory, artificial intelligence literary theory and many other scholarly disciplines. Recognition of the importance of speech acts has illuminated the ability of language to do other things than describe reality. In the process the boundaries among the philosophy of language, the philosophy of action, the philosophy of mind and even ethics have become less sharp.

Making a statement may be the paradigmatic use of language, but there are all sorts of other things we can do with words. We can make *request, ask questions, give orders, makes promises, give thanks, offer apologies, and so on*. Moreover, almost any speech act is really the performance of several acts at once, distinguished by different aspects of the speaker's intention: there is the act of saying something, what one does in saying it, such as requesting or promising, and how one is trying to affect one's audience.

In many ways of expressing themselves, *"people do not only produce utterances containing grammartical structures and words, they perform actions via those utterances"* (Yule, 1996: 47). If you work in a situation where a boss has a great deal of power, then his utterance of expression, *"You are fired",* is more than just a statement. This utterance can be used to perform the act of ending your employment. However, the actions performed by utterances do not have to be as unpleasant as in the one above. Actions can be quite pleasant, as in the acknowledgement of thanks:*"You're welcome",* or the expression of surprise*:"Who'd have thought it?",* or in Vietnamese*" Ai mà ngờ được".*

Actions performed by utterances are generally called *speech acts* and, in English, are commonly given more specific labels, such as apology, complaint, compliment, invitation, promise, or request. *"The number of speech acts performed by the average individual in the course of any ordinary day when our work and leisure bring us into contact with others probably runs into the thousands"* (Austin, 1962).

These descriptive terms for different kinds of speech acts apply to the speaker's communicative intention in producing an utterance. The speaker normally expects that his or her communicative intention will be recognized by the hearer. Both the speaker and the hearer are helped in this process by the circumstances surrounding the utterance. These circumstances are called the speech event. In many ways, it is nature of the speech event that determines the interpretation of an utterance as performing a particular speech act. For example, in the wintry day the speaker take a cup of coffee but it is too iced, and produce the utterance which is likely to be interpreted as a complaint: *"This coffee is really cold !"*. Changing the circumstance to a really hot summer day and the speaker, being given a glass of iced coffee and producing the utterance, it is likely to be interpreted as a praise. *"It means that there is more to the interpretation of speech act than can be found in the utterance alone"* (Yule, 1996:48)

Here are some examples of speech acts we use everyday.

Greeting: *"Hi, Eric. How are things going?"*

Request: *"Could you pass me the mashed potatoes, please?"*

Complaint: *"I've already been waiting three weeks for the computer, and I was told it would be delivered within a week."*

Invitation: *"We're having some people over Saturday evening and wanted to know if you'd like to join us."*

Compliment: *"Hey, I ready your tie."*

Refusal: *"Oh, I'd love to see that movie with you but this Friday just isn't going to work."*

On any occasions, the action performed by producing an utterance will consist of three related acts. There is a locutionary act, which is the basic act of utterance, or producing a meaningful linguistic expression. If you have difficulty with actually forming the sounds and words to create a meaningful utterance in a language (for example, because it's foreign or you're tongue-tired), then you might fail to produce a locutionary act.

[1] *I've just made some coffee.*

Mostly we don't just produce well-performed utterances with no purpose. We form an utterance with some kind of function in mind. This is the second dimension, or the illocutionary act. The illocutionary act is performed via the communicative force of an utterance. We might utter [1] to make a statement, an offer, an explanation, or for some other communicative purpose. This is also generally known as the illocutionary force of the utterance.

We do not, of course. Simply create an utterance with a function without intending it to have an effect. This is the third dimension, the perlocutionary act. Depending on the circumstances you with other [1] on the assumption the nearer will recognize the effect you intended (for example, to account for a wonderful smell, or to get the hearer to drink some coffee). This is also generally known as the perlocutionary effect.

Of the three dimensions, the most discussed is illocutionary force. According to George Yule(1996), the term 'speech act' is generally interpreted quite. The illocutionary force of an utterance is what it' counts as'. The same locutionary act, as shown in [2a], can count as a prediction [2b], a promise [2c], or a warning [2d]. These different analyses [2b-d] of the utterance in [2a] represent different illocutionary forces.

[5] a. *I'll see you later*. (=A)

b. [*I predict that*] A.

c. [*I promise you that*] A

d. [*I warn you that*] A

2.2. Levels of speech acts

There are three levels of speech acts.

2.2.1. Locutionary act

A locutionary act tells you something that you can understand or interpret within a context to which the speaker has alerted you. The speaker would have needed to identify the context.

This is the act of saying something with a certain meaning, where words are uttered with a more or less definite sense and reference.

2.2.2. Illocutionary act

Illocutionary are acts defined by social conventions, acts such as accosting, accusing, admitting, apologizing, challenging, complaining, condoling, congratulating, declining, giving permission, giving way, greeting, leave-taking, mocking, naming, offering, praising, promising, proposing marriage, protesting, recommending, thanking.

In saying: "*I'm grateful to you for all you have done for me*" performs the illocutionary act of thanking.

Illocutionary acts form a kind of social coinage, a complicate currency with specific values, by means of which speakers manipulated, negotiate and interact with other speakers. To continue the metaphor, social encounters invole the exchange of illocutions.

Example:

Speaker A: "*Hello*" (greeting)

Speaker B: "*Hello*" (greeting)

"The illocutionary act (or simply the illocution) carried out by a speaker making an utterance is the act viewed in terms of the utterance is the act viewed in terms of the utterance's significance within a conventional system of social interaction. (Hurford, R, 2007).

2.2.3. Perlocutionary act

If I say "There a hornet in your left ear", it may well cause you to panic, scream and scratch wildly at your ear. Causing of these emotions and actions is the perlocutions of my utterance, or the perlocutionary act I perform by making that utterance.

The perlocution of an utterance is the causing of a change to be brought about, perhaps unintentionally, through, or by means of, the utterance (Latin per "through, by means of"). The point of carefully distinguishing the perlocutionary aspect of the speech act from others is that perlocutions can often be accidental, and thus bear a relatively unsystematic relationship to any classification of sentence types.

It's important to remember that the perlocutionary acts involed in examples above is not the effect of the original utterance. Rather, the perlocutionary act involed in making an utterance is that part of the total act which causes such effects.

2.3. Direct, indirect and nonliteral speech acts

Speech acts are also classified as direct and indirect speech acts. The former is defined as an illocutionary act which is mostly performed through concentrating on the literal form of grammar and vocabulary of the sentence uttered (Hunford and Heasly, 1996).

We can perform a speech act directly or indirectly, by way of performing another speech act, literally or nonliterally, depending on how we are using our words, and explicitly or inexplicitly, depending on whether we fully spell out what we mean.

These three contrasts are distinct and should not be confused. The first two concerns the relation between the utterance and the speech act thereby performed. In indirection a single utterance is the performance of one illocutionary act by way of making a statement, say by uttering "*I am getting thirsty*" or "*It doesn't matter to me*", we can make a statement or give an order by way of asking a question, such as "*Will the sun rise*

tomorrow?" or "*Can you clean up your room?*" When an illocutionary act is performed indirectly, it is performed by way of performing some other one directly. In the case of nonliteral utterances, we do not mean what our words mean but something else instead. With nonliterality the illocutionary act we are performing is not the one that would be predicted just from the meanings of the words being used, as with likely utterances of "*My mind got derailed*" or "*you can stick that in your ear*". Occasionally, utterances are both nonliteral and indirect. For example, one might utter "*I love the sound of your voice*" to tell someone nonlitarally that she can't stand the sound of his voice and thereby indirectly to ask him to stop singing.

   A different approach to distinguishing types of speech acts can be made on the basis of structure. A fairly simple structural distinction between three general types or speech acts is provided, in English by the three basic sentence types. As shown in [A], there is an easily recognized relationship between the three structural forms (declarative, interrogative, imperative) and the three general communicative functions (statement, question, command/request)

[A] a. *You wear a seat belt*.   (declarative)

   b. *Do you wear a seat belt?*   (interrogative)

   c. *Wear a seat belt!*   (imperative)

Speech act type	Direction of fit	S = Speaker X = Situation
Declarations	words change the world	S causes X
Representatives	make words fit the world	S believes X
Expressives	make words fit the world	S feels X
Directives	make the world fit words	S wants X
Commissives	make the world fit words	S intends X

Table1. **The five general functions of speech acts**

(following Searle 1979)

According to George Yule, whenever there is a direct relationship between a structure and a function, we have a direct speech act; whenever there is an indirect relationship between a structure and a function, we have an indirect speech act. Thus, a declarative used to make a request is a direct speech act, but a declarative used to make a request is an indirect speech act. As illustrated in [B], the utterance in [Ba] is a declarative. When it is used to make a statement, as paraphrased in [Bb] it is functioning as a direct speech act. When it is used to make a command/request, as paraphrased in [Bc] it is functioning as an indirect speech act.

[B] a. *It's cold outside.*

b. *I hereby tell you about the weather.*

c. *I hereby request of you that you close the door*

Different structures can be used to accomplish the same basic function, as in [C], where the speaker wants the addressee not to stand in front of the TV. The basic function of all the utterances in [C], is a command/request, but only the imperative structure in [Cb] is not being used only as a question, hence it is an indirect speech act. The declarative structures in [Cc] and [Cd] are also indirect requests.

 [C] a. *Move out of the way!*

b. *Do you have to stand in front of the TV?*

c. *You're standing in front of the TV.*

d. *You'd make a better door than a window.*

One of the most command types of indirect speech act in English, as shown in [D] has the form of an interrogative, but is not typical used to ask a question (i.e. we don't expect only an answer, we expect action). The examples in [D] are normally understood as requests.

[D] a. *Could you pass the salt?*

b. *Would you open this?*

Indeed, there is a typical pattern in English whereby asking a question about the hearer's assumed ability ('*can you?*', '*Could you?*') or

future likelihood with regard to doing something ('*Will you?*', *Would you?*') normally counts as a request to actually do that something.

Indirect speech acts are generally associated with greater politeness in English than direct speech acts. In order to understand why, we have to look at a bigger picture than just a single utterance performing a single speech act.

2.4. Apology as a speech act

Speech acts are of communication. To communicate is to express a certain attitude, and the type of speech act being performed corresponds to the type of attitude being expressed. For example, a statement expresses a belief, an apology expresses regret. As an act of communication, a speech act succeeds if the audience identifies, in accordance with the speaker's intention, the attitude being expressed. (Kent Bach, 1979)

We perform speech acts when we offer an ***apology, greeting, request, complaint, invitation, compliment, or refusal***. A speech act is an utterance that serves a function in communication. A speech act might contain just one word, as in "Sorry!" to perform an apology, or several words or sentences: "I am sorry I forgot your birthday. I just let it slip my mind." Speech acts include real-life interactions and require not only knowledge of the language but also appropriate use of that language within a given culture.

While particular speakers are involved and have explicit or implicit intentions, the speech act is also uttered in specific circumstances. These circumstances may provoke apologies or facilitate them, or they can prevent or exclude them. The reason people should apologize has to be established, either by themselves or by a third partner. Circumstances may oblige someone to apologize to someone else, while he originally did not feel the need to do so.

These characteristics of apologies as a speech act between two persons-speakers, intentions, and circumstances-are equal important when considering apologies between states.

Apologies are expressive illocutionary acts which can be differentiated from complaints, which are also expressive acts, by being convivial in nature. In the terminology of Leech (1983: 104-05), the act of apologizing is a convivial speech act, the goal of which coincides with the social goal of maintaining harmony between speaker and hearer.

Apologies have the effect of paying off a debt, thus compensating the victim for the harm done by the offence (Searle 1969; Katz 1977). An apology is called for when social norm have been violate, whether the offence is real or potential (Olshtain-Cohen 1983:20). It is assumed that there are two participants: an apologizer and a recipient of the apology. When a person has performed an act (action or utterance), or failed to do so, which has offended another person, and for which he/she can be held responsible, *the offender needs to apologize*. The acts of apologizing requires an action or utterance which is intended to "*set things right*".

3. What is an apology

In its most basic form, an apology is an expression of regret; it's a statement that the speaker says sorry. And so, the most basic of all apologies is simply: *I'm sorry.* But, there are lots of variations and lots of differences of opinion. Perception of apologies varies from one individual to the next, based mainly on childhood experiences.

Many people believe that to give an apology is to accept blame and to make an admission of having made a mistake or error of judgment. Most of such individuals give apologies rarely, and when they do, it is early in a conflict where objective facts make it difficult for them to deny culpability. (*http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Apology*)

Others believe that an apology is an expression of emotional acceptance and understanding of the (possibly minor or unavoidable) role

they played in the misfortunes of another. These people will give an apology when their actions have hurt another ones or a community even though they believe their actions were appropriate. The harm may have been inadvertent or may have been unavoidable. The apology is the expression of regret at having caused trouble for someone. (*http://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Apology*)

Still others will offer an apology or expression of sorrow to show that they share, at an emotional level, care, sympathy and concern for the hurt person or community. Such an expression of sympathy has nothing to do with culpability whatsoever.

4. Reasons for the apology

Apologies are useful for two main reasons:

(1)   Help repair relationships.

(2)   Repair the reputation of the wrongdoer.

(*http://tcbdevito.blogspot.com/2008/03/apology-apology-apology.html*)

So, if you do something wrong to your friends, family, etc…, an apology will help you repair the relationship with your partner and perhaps reduce the level of conflict. At the same time, realize that other people know your behavior and an apology will help improve the image of yours that they have in their minds.

Chapter 2
FACTORS INFLUENCE THE WAY OF GIVING AN EFECTIVE APOLOGY

1. Repetition

In some languages it is usual to repeat the actual apology word, the equivalent of running up to your friend while saying like:

"Sorry.Sorry.Sorry.Sorry."

[*http://edition.tefl.net/ideas/functional/apologizing/*]

This sounds almost comical in English, and the usual rules of repeating yourself as little as possible in English apply to apologizing too. For example in this situation:

- *"Sorry. I do apologize. You must have been waiting for ages. I'll try and make it up for you..."*

[*http://edition.tefl.net/ideas/functional/apologizing/*]

And at the end of the meeting:

- *"Sorry again for keeping you waiting."*

[*http://edition.tefl.net/ideas/functional/apologizing/*]

The exception to the rule is saying:

"I am so so so so sooooo sorry."

[*http://edition.tefl.net/ideas/functional/apologizing/*]

2. Adverbs

Many speakers use *"so"* and *"very"* interchangeably, and giving apologies is a good chance to show that there are subtle differences. In this case, *"so"* is almost always stressed and so has the same impact as (the much less common): *"I am VERY sorry"* and much more than *"I'm very sorry"*.

The speaker also can use some following adverbs: "*really, dreadfully, awfully, terribly, so much*".

For example:

I'm really sorry that I left your document at home.

I'm sorry that I've trouble so much.

[*http://edition.tefl.net/ideas/functional/apologizing/*]

3. Word stress

As is clear in the examples above, which words you stress can have a big impact on the meaning and strength of apologies and doing apologies is a good chance to tackle which words you should emphasize.

For example:

"I'm sorry" and *"I AM sorry"*.

[*http://edition.tefl.net/ideas/functional/apologizing/*]

Where the very strong second version is the only time we do not use the contraction *"I'm"*. The difference in meaning of using and not using contractions being another important point that speakers often miss out on. Stressing every single word, especially if the intonation is flat, can also make the speakers sound sarcastic.

4. Intonation

This is another neglected area of language that can be usefully tied to apologies because it has more impact here than in many other situations.

For example: going down at the end of the *"so"* in *"I'm SO sorry"* can make speakers sound like they don't really mean it.

So intonation plays an important role when we give apology.

5. Eye contact

In some cultures, people apologizing tend to keep their eyes down to show contribution, but a stereotyical dad disclining his teenage their kid might assume that means the excuse is just a lie and tell them to *"Look at me when I am talking to you"*. Let's study the story *"Juries in American often assume that witnesses from Japanese companies are lying or feeling guilty. Why do you think that misunderstanding happens?"*- Answer: *"They*

tend to look avoid eye contact with the judge and jury to show respect or to sit up very straight for the same reasons. To Americans this makes them look stressed and/ or shifty."

6. Past apologies

One difference is the one between *"I'm sorry to hear that"* (used when receiving bad news) and *"I'm sorry I heard that"* (I wish he hadn't told me that- rarely used). A similar but more common confusion is when trying to produce *"I am sorry to have + past participle"*.

For example: *"I am sorry to have given away your secret".*

[*http://edition.tefl.net/ideas/functional/apologizing/*]

This can be explained that the present tense of *"to be"* shows that the feeling is still true and therefore doesn't minimize the apology, whereas *"I was sorry to break his vase"* means the feeling is finished and could even mean *"...but now I know that it was a fake, I don't feel so bad."*

7. The voice

The voice is the most important part. Speak as honestly as possible. Avoid such 'general' apologies as:

"I'm sorry for what happened to you"

or:

"I feel ashamed for my act."

[*http://edition.tefl.net/ideas/functional/apologizing/*]

But, remember this, saying *"It's completely my fault"* is very dangerous. Avoid it.

Chapter 3
WAYS OF GIVING EFFECTIVE APOLOGY

1.   How to give an effective apology

The model of apology strategies most frequently used in pragmatic research. This model suggests super strategies with some division into substrategies:

1.1. Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)

1.1.1. Expression of regret

e.g.: *I'm sorry.*

   I'm sorry for my mistake.

[10:231]

Sentence Patterns
1.   Sorry, …
2.   I'm sorry about…
3.   I'm sorry for…
4.   I'm sorry to…

[10:231]

1.1.2. Offer of apology

 e.g.: *I apologize.*

   I apologize for what I've done for you.

[10:235]

Sentence Patterns
1.   I apologize for…
2.   I want to apologize for…
3.   I'd like to apologize for…
4.   I've got to apologize for…

[10:235]

1.1.3. Request for forgiveness

   e.g.: *Forgive me for my impoliteness.*

   Forgive me for breaking your mobile.   [10:233]

Sentence Patterns
1. Forgive me.
2. Pardon me.
3. I must be excused.
4. Excuse me for…
5. Excuse my…
6. Excuse me, but…
7. Forgive me.
8. Forgive me for…(something/doing something)
9. Forgive me if…

[10:233]

1.2. **Explanation or account**.

Any external mitigating circumstances, "objective reasons" for the violation.

e.g.: *The traffic was terrible*.

I missed the bus.

My larm didn't go off.

Someone had spiked my drink.

Sorry I'm late, but my car broke down.

Such things are bound to happen, you know.

The traffic was so heavy in the rush hour.

Sorry, I've got a bad cold.

[10:136]

1.3. Taking on responsibility

1.3.1. Explicit self-blame.

e.g.: *It's my fault*.

My fault, I'm sorry.

I'm sorry, it's my fault entirely.

You are right to blame me.

[9:151]

1.3.2. Lack of intent.

   e.g.: *I didn't mean it.*

      I didn't mean to offend you.

      I meant no offend.

      I don't mean to complicate things.

[10:236]

1.3.3. Expression of self-deficiency.

      e.g.: *I was confused/ I didn't see you.*

         You know I am bad at…

[9:157]

1.3.4. Expression of embarrassment.

      e.g.: *I feel awful about it.*

         I feel bad about it.

         I feel terrible about it.

[9:155]

1.3.5. Self-dispraise, e.g.: *I'm such a dimwit.*

1.3.6. Justifying the hearer, e.g.: *You've right to be angry.*

1.3.7. Refual to acknowledge guilt or denial, e.g.: *It wasn't my fault.* Blame the hearer, e.g.: *It's your own fault.*

1.4. Concern for the hearer.

      e.g.: *I hope I didn't upset you*.

         I hope I'm not disturbing you.

         I hope I haven't taken too much of your time.

         I hope I'm not causing you a lot of trouble.

[9:159]

1.5. Offer of repair.

      e.g.: *I'll pay for the damage.*

         I'll see what I can do about it.

[10:232]

1.6. Promise of for bearance.

> e.g.: *It won't happen again.*
>
> *I'm sorry and I promise that…*
>
> *I assure you this won't happen again.*

<div align="right">[9:159]</div>

1.7.   Admit the impingement.

Speaker can supply admit that he is impinging on Hearer's face, with expressions like:

> e.g.: *I hope this isn't going to bother you too much.*
>
> *I hope it won't cause you any inconvenience.*
>
> *I know you're tied up, but…*

<div align="right">[2:188]</div>

1.8.   Indicate reluctance

Speaker can attempt to show that he is reluctant to impinge on hearer with the use of hedges (discussed above) or by means of expressions such as the following:

> e.g.: *Look, I've probably come to the wrong person, but…*
>
> *I'm terribly embarrassed to have to admit…*
>
> *I hesitate to trouble you, but…*
>
> *You're never bothered me, I know, but…*
>
> *I hope you don't mind me saying this, but…*

<div align="right">[2:188]</div>

1.9.   Beg forgiveness.

Speaker may beg hearer's forgiveness, or at least ask for 'acquittal'.

e.g.: *Excuse me, but…*

> *I'm sorry to bother you…*

$$\left.\begin{array}{l} \textit{I hope you'll} \\ \textit{Please} \\ \textit{Would you} \end{array}\right\} \textit{forgive me if…}$$

I beg your indulgence…

I beg your pardon for…

<div align="right">[2:189]</div>

2. Some tips for an effective apology

An effective apology, like any effective messages, must be crafted for the specific situation. An effective apology to a long-time lover, to a parent, or to new supervisors are likely to be very different because the individuals are different and the relationships are different. And so, the first rule of an effective apology is to take into consideration the uniqueness of the situation-the people, the context, the cultural rules, the relationship, the specific wrong doing-for which want to apologize. Each situation will call for a somewhat different message of apology. Nevertheless we can offer some general recommendations. Combining the insights of a wide variety of researches, seven dos and don't can be offered for an effective apology:

2.1. Seven dos

2.1.1. Do admit wrongdoing if indeed wrongdoing occurred. Accept responsibility. Own your own actions; don't try to pass them off as the work of someone else.

(http://tcbdevito.blogspot.com/2008/03/apology-apology-apology.html)

Instead of: *"Smith drives so slow, it's a wonder I'm only 30 minutes late"*

➔   *"I should have taken traffic into consideration."*

Or, to take a recent example: In a response to the government's inept handling of Hurricane Katrina, Hillary Clinton said she apologized but then turned it into a criticism of others—*"I apologize, and I am embarrassed that our government so mistreated our fellow citizens…."*

(http://tcbdevito.blogspot.com/2008/03/apology-apology-apology.html)

Here there is no acknowledgement of personal responsibility but rather a shifting of responsibility to others.

2.1.2. Do be apologetic

Say (and mean) the words *"I'm sorry"* or *"What I did was wrong"*.

2.1.3. Do state in specific rather than general terms what you've done.

Instead of: " I'm sorry for what I did"

➜   *" I'm sorry for getting drunk at the party and flirting with everyone"*.

Recently, Eliot Spitzer, former Governor of New York, apologized for a series of wrongdoing but never really mentioned what they were. Of course, he was protecting himself and so kept his "apology" overly general. It was, as a result, both unsatisfactory and unacceptable to most people. Similarly, the apology of former Attorney General Albert Gonzales *(http://tcbdevito.blogspot.com/2008/03/apology-apology-apology.html)* - *"mistakes were made here"*-wasn't really an apology; it was attempt to deflect any personal responsibility.

2.1.4. Do express understanding of how the other person feels and acknowledge the legitimacy of these feelings.

For example: *"You have every right to be angry; I should have called"*.

2.1.5. Do express your regret that this has created a problem for the other person.

For example: *"I'm sorry I made you miss your appointment"*.

2.1.6. Do offer to correct the problem (whenever this is possible).

For example: *"I'm sorry I didn't clean up the mess I made; I'll do it now"*.

2.1.7. Do give assurance that this will not happen again.

For example: *" It won't happen again"*.

or better and more specific: *"It won't be late again"*.

2.2. Seven don't

2.2.1. Do not apologize when it isn't necessary.

(*http://tcbdevito.blogspot.com/2008/03/apology-apology-apology.html*)

2.2.2. Do not justify your behavior by mentioning that everyone does it.

For example: *"Everyone leaves work early on Friday"*.

2.2.3. Do not justify your behavior by saying that the other person has done something equally wrong.

For example: *"So I play poker; you play lottery"*.

2.2.4. Do not accuse the other person of contributing to the problem.

For example: *"I should have known you're overly anxious about receiving the figures exactly at 9 a.m"*.

2.2.5. Do not minimize the hurt or the problems that may have caused.

For example: *"So the figures arrived a little late; no harm is done"*.

2.2.6. Do not make excuses.

For example*: "I'm sorry the figures are late but I had so much other work to do"*.

An excuse takes back the apology and says, in effect, as:

"I'm really not sorry because there was good reason for what I've done but I'm saying I'm sorry to cover all my bases and to make this uncomfortable situation go away".

2.2.7. Do not take the easy way out and apologize through e-mail (unless the wrongdoing was committed in e-mail is your only or main form of communication). General, it's more effective to use a more personal mode of communication-face-to-face or phone, for example. It's harder but it's more effective.

3. Seven words you can never say in an Apology

There's a right and wrong way to apologize. So be careful: a badly-handled apology is often worse than no apology at all. While there is no way to guarantee that an apology will be accepted, there are seven words that will always destroy an apology's effectiveness and make a bad situation even worse. Here are seven words that will cut off any apology at the knees before it has a chance to walk. Avoid these seven apology busters and your apology has a much better chance of being accepted and restoring the relationship, which is the goal of every apology.

3.1. If

For example*: "I certainly apologize if I offended anyone"*

"I'm sorry if you considered my remarks offensive."

(http://www.jkador.com/SevenDirtyWords.htm)

The word *"if"* is the nastiest qualifier in any apology. By making the apology contingent, the apologizer says the offense may or may not have happened at all. Even if the offense did happen, it has more to do with the sensibilities of the victim than the responsibility of the apologizer. This is infuriating for the victim, for whom the offense is very real.

3.2. But

For example*: "I am very sorry, but you started it."*

"I apologize, but I thought you wouldn't mind."

(http://www.jkador.com/SevenDirtyWords.htm)

The word "*but*" is almost always guaranteed to botch an apology. The goal is to deflect some of the responsibility of the offense from speaker. Guess who is the lucky beneficiary of the responsibility we are so generously willing to share?

3.3. May

As in: *"I am sorry my remarks may have been misinterpreted"*

 or   :   *"It's possible I may have said something offensive."*

(http://www.jkador.com/SevenDirtyWords.htm)

Using the word *"may"* as a condition in an apology is another way to distance yourself from accountability. The use of *"may"* serves to turn very a real offense into a mere hypothetical.

3.4. Were or Was

As in the passive: *"I'm sorry you were punched"*

or :

"It's too bad that your reputation was damaged"

when what you mean is *"I'm sorry I punched you"*

or:

> *"I apologize for damaging your reputation".*

<div align="right">

(http://www.jkador.com/SevenDirtyWords.htm)

</div>

The passive voice is another way of avoiding responsibility when you have done something you don't want to accept responsibility. So instead of using the active, *"I made a mistake,"* the apology comes out "*mistakes were made."*

3.5. Know

As in: *"I know just how you feel"*

Or   :   *"You know I'd never want to offend you."*

<div align="right">

(http://www.jkador.com/SevenDirtyWords.htm)

</div>

Pretending you know how the victim feels is a power trip borne out of arrogance and a superior attitude. If you go in with the attitude that you know how the victim feels, all you're going to do is enrage him or her. You may guess right—no matter—the recipient of the apology will not be grateful.

3.6. Intention

As in: *"It was never my intention to let it go so far"*

or   :   *"I never intended to hurt you."*

<div align="right">

(http://www.jkador.com/SevenDirtyWords.htm)

</div>

One of the hardest lessons for apologizers to learn is that the first thing victims care about is consequences, not intentions. Any conversation about intentions, if it comes at all, comes much later.

3.7. Want

For example: *"I want to apologize to you."*

"I want to apologize" may sound like an apology, but is no more about actually apologizing than "I want to lose weight" is about actually losing weight.   It's good to want to apologize; it is better to actually do it.

Part III.CONCLUSION.

1. Summary

After a long time of working with the help of supervisor, teachers and friends, my graduation paper has been completed.

This graduation paper which is divided into three parts is presented from overview about how to give an effective apology in English communication. Firstly, this study has given out the rationale, aim, method, scope as well as design of the study. Secondly, some notions have been given in the theoretical background as an introduction to the study relating to the communication, speech acts and apology. Thirdly, the main matter of the study – ways of giving an effective apology, they are factors influence the way of giving an effective apology, ways of giving effective apology, a comparison between English and Vietnamese in way of giving apology, some tips to have an effective apology and seven words you can never say in an apology. Finally, the final part is conclusion which states overview of the whole study.

Hopefully the study will be of some help to those who care about English communication in general and ways of giving apology in particular.

However, because of my limited knowledge and ability, mistakes and short-coming are unavoidable. Therefore, the writer greatly does hope to receive any remarks, criticisms and suggestions from teachers and friends to make it better.

2. Recommendations for giving effective apology strategy

2.1. *Good stages for an effective strategy*

(1)Take the responsibility:

The first and most vital step is to admit the guilt. Maybe you realize the mistake right after doing that, or someone let you know your fault.

(2) Explain:

Another important is to let he/she know that you made the mistake unintentionally and you feel really terrible for have been hurting him or her.

(3) <u>Prove your remorse</u>:

If you apologize with an indifferent face and phlegmatic manner, then the problem will probably be worse. Express sincerely your remorse for your mistake. *"I feel so penitent for have spoken out your secret. I'm very ashamed of myself"* may be a good way to convey that.

(4) <u>Correct your mistake</u>:

After great effort in apologizing, there will be no good results if you don't take action. If you damage someone's instruments, for example, you should ask for permission to fix it or buy a new one for her. You should ask your friend whether you can give some help. Also, giving a small but significant gift be another good way to improve the situation.

(5) <u>Choose the right moment</u>:

If you make a trifling mistake, like knocking against somebody, correct it right then. Don't do it the following day. Your relationships may be worsened much if his/her anger is accumulated for a long period of time.

If your problem is more serious, like wouding your friend in his honour, then you should think of your apology carefully. In these cases, don't say an immediate apology, because it can turn out to be affected, unhonest in the victim's eyes. Remember, it doesn't matter who wins or who loses. It is vital that you can conserve a good relationship.

2.2. *Giving excuses or reasons*

In some cultures it is impolite to give a reason why something happened, as this can be seen to be taking away from your apology by giving excuses. This is true in the very strong apology as:

> *"There is no excuse for what I did"*

But generally in English not giving a reason why something happened shows that you can't be bothered to explain, leading to conversations like:

> *"Sorry I'm late"*
> *"Well, where were you?"*

For reasons of culture or lack of language, speakers might find themselves involved in conversations like this or (worse) offending people and never finding out that they have. Fun practice for the language of giving excuses includes matching funny excuses (available on many work-related humour sites on the internet) to what they were excusing themselves for.

For example:

- *The dog ate it.*
- *I'm sorry I didn't hand in my homework.*

2.3. *Giving reason and promise*

The topic above can be extended to give people a general pattern for a standard apology in English, which is an apology:

> "*I'm sorry*"
> "*I apologise*"
> "*Please excuse my lateness*"

Then a reason:

- *I missed the bus.*
- *My larm didn't go off.*
- *Someone had spiked my drink.*

And finally a promise of future action:

- *I'll buy a new clock this afternoon.*
- *I'll be more careful next time.*

This means that you can bring apologies into lessons on conjunctions (like "*because*") and will for promises.

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Apology strategies in English	
Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs) *> Express of regret*	- **Sorry,…** Xin lỗi,… - **I'm sorry**. Tôi xin lỗi. - **I'm sorry about…** Tôi xin lỗi về… - **I'm sorry for…** Tôi xin lỗi vì… - **I'm sorry to…** Tôi xin lỗi phải - **I'm sorry that…** Tôi xin lỗi là… - **I'm sorry, but…** Tôi xin lỗi, nhưng… - **I'd be sorry to…** Tôi xin được xin lỗi phải… - **I'm sorry, I don't mean to offend you, but…** Xin lỗi, tôi không có ý định làm anh/chị phật ý, nhưng… - **I'm sorry, I don't mean to upset you, but…** Xin lỗi, tôi không cố ý định làm anh/chị buồn, nhưng… - **I'm sorry, I don't mean to hurt you, but…** Xin lỗi, tôi không có ý định làm

	anh/chị đau lòng, nhưng…
	- I'm sorry, I don't mean any harm, but…
	Xin lỗi, tôi không có ý định làm hại anh chị, nhưng…
	- I'm sorry I don't mean to put you to any sort of trouble, but…
	Xin lỗi, tôi không có ý định làm phiền anh/chị một chút nào cả.
	- I'm sorry I don't mean to make things difficult, but…
	Xin lỗi, tôi không có ý định làm khó cho anh/chị, nhưng…
	- I'm sorry I don't mean to make things complicated for you, but…
	Xin lỗi, tôi không có ý định làm khó cho anh/chị, nhưng…
	- I'm sorry I don't mean to complicate things, but…
	Xin lỗi, tôi không có ý định làm phức tạp vấn đề, nhưng…
	- I'm sorry I don't mean to give you a hard time, but…
	Xin lỗi, tôi không có ý định làm anh/chị phải vất vả, nhưng…
	- I'm sorry I don't mean to give you "the runaround", but …
	Xin lỗi, tôi không có làm anh/chị

	phải đi lại vất vả, nhưng…
	- **I'm sorry I've rather a nuisance.**
	Xin lỗi, tôi đúng là quấy quả anh/chị quá.
	- **I'm sorry to trouble you.**
	Xin lỗi phải làm phiền anh/chị.
	- **I'm sorry to bother you.**
	Xin lỗi phải làm anh/chị phiền long.
	- **I'm sorry to cause you all this trouble.**
	Xin lỗi vì đã gây ra toàn bộ sự phiền toái này cho anh /chị.
	- **I'm sorry to be such a lot of trouble**.
	Xin lỗi vì đã làm phiền quá nhiều.
	- **I'm sorry if I put you to any inconvenience.**
	Xin lỗi nếu tôi có làm anh/chị cảm thấy bất tiện.
	- **I'm sorry to let you go to a lot of trouble.**
	Xin lỗi vì đã làm anh/chị phải chịu quá nhiều phiền phức.
	- **I'm sorry to trouble you (so much).**
	Tôi xin lỗi làm phiền anh/chị (quá nhiều).

	- **I'm sorry to trouble you (just now).** Tôi xin lỗi phải làm phiền anh/chị (vào lúc này). - **I'm sorry that I've troubled you (so much).** Tôi xin lỗi vì đã làm phiền anh/chị (quá nhiều). - **I'm sorry to trouble you with…** Tôi xin lỗi đã làm phiền anh/chị… - **I'm sorry to bother you (just now).** Tôi xin lỗi phải quấy quả anh/chị (vào lúc này). - **I'm sorry to bother you with…** Tôi xin lỗi phải quấy quả anh/chị… - **I'm sorry to have bothered you with…** Tôi xin lỗi đã quấy quả anh/chị… - **I'm sorry to keep you waiting**. Tôi xin lỗi vì bắt anh chị phải đợi. - **I'm sorry to have kept you waiting.** Tôi xin lỗi vì đã bắt anh/chị phải đợi. - **I'm sorry to cause you all this**

	trouble.
	Tôi xin lỗi vì đã gây ra tất cả những chuyện phiền toái này.
	- **I'm sorry to let you go to a lot of trouble.**
	Tôi xin lỗi vì đã gây ra cho anh/chị nhiều điều phiền phức.
	- **I'm (very, really, dreadfully, awfully, terrible) sorry, but…**
	Tôi (rất, thực sự, vô cùng) xin lỗi, nhưng…
	- **I'm (very, really, dreadfully, awfully, terribly) sorry (that)…**
	Tôi (rất, thực sự, vô cùng) xin lỗi là…
	- **Please accept my apology**.
	Xin chấp nhận lời xin lỗi của tôi.
	- **Please accept my apology for…**
	Xin lỗi chấp nhận lời xin lỗi của tôi về…
>Offer of apology	- **I apologise for…**
	Tôi xin lỗi vì…
	- **I want to apologise for…**
	Tôi muốn xin lỗi về…
	- **I'd like to apologise for…**
	Tôi muốn được xin lỗi về…
	- **I'd got to apologise for…**
	Tôi phải xin lỗi về…

	- I must apologise to you for… Tôi phải xin lỗi anh/chị về… **- Regretfully…** Đáng tiếc là… **- I regret that…** Tôi lấy làm tiếc là… **- It's my regret that…** Điều tôi lấy làm tiếc là… **- I regret that I find myself unable to…** Tôi lấy làm tiếc là mình không thể… **- I regret to say that I find myself unable to…** Tôi lấy làm tiếc phải thông báo với anh/chị rằng… **- I'm sorry to have to inform you that…** Tôi xin lỗi phải thông báo với anh/chị rằng… **- I'm sorry to have to tell you that…** Tôi xin lỗi phải nói với anh/chị rằng… **- I can't find any words to express my regret about…** Tôi không theertim được bất cứ lời nào để diễn tả việc tôi lấy làm tiếc về…

>Request for forgiveness	- **Excuse me**. Xin thứ lỗi. - **Excuse me for a moment (please).** Xin anh/chị đợi cho một chút/phút. - **Excuse me for…** Xin thứ lỗi về… - **Excuse me, but…** Xin thứ lỗi, nhưng… - **Excuse…** Xin thứ lỗi cho…. - **Excuse my…** Xin thứ lỗi cho…của tôi. - **Forgive me.** Xin tha lỗi cho tôi. - **Forgive me for…(something)** Tha lỗi cho tôi vì…(cái gì đó) - **Forgive me for…(doing something)** Tha lỗi cho tôi vì…(việc làm gì đó) - **Forgive me for having caused you so much trouble.** Xin tha lỗi cho tôi vì đã làm phiền anh/chị quá nhiều - **Forgive me if…** Tha lỗi cho tôi nếu… - **You're going to have to**

	forgive me.
	Có lẽ anh/chị phải tha lỗi cho tôi.
	- **You're going to have to forgive me for…**
	Có lẽ anh chị phải tha lỗi cho tôi về…
Beg forgiveness	- **I beg your pardon for…**
	Xin anh/chị thứ lỗi cho tôi về…
	- **I beg your indulgence…**
	Tôi xin cho anh/chị tha thứ…
Admit the impingement	→ **I feel bad about it.**
	Tôi cảm thấy áy náy về chuyện đó.
	- **I feel bad about troubling you, but…**
	Tôi cảm thấy áy náy về việc làm phiền anh/chị, nhưng…
	- **I feel terrible about it.**
	Tôi cảm thấy rất áy náy về chuyện đó.
Indicate reluctance	→ **I hesitate to trouble you, but…**
	Tôi do dự khi làm phiền anh/chị, nhưng…
	- **Look, I've probadly come to the wrong person, but…**
	Xem này, tôi hoàn toàn là người sai nhưng…
	- **You've never bothered me, I**

	know, but… Tôi biết bạn không bao giờ làm phiền tôi nhưng… - **I'm terrible embarrassed to have to admit…** Tôi rất lúng túng phải thú nhận… - **I hope you don't mind me saying this, but…** Tôi hi vọng là bạn hok ngại nói điều này nhưng… - **I don't want to bother you, but…** Tôi không muốn làm phiền anh/chị, nhưng…
Promise of for-bearance.	- **I don't want to trouble you, but…** Tôi không muốn làm phiền anh/chị, nhưng… →**It's won't happen again, I promise.** Tôi hứa chuyện này sẽ không xảy ra nữa. - **I'm sorry and I promise that…** Tôi xin lỗi và hứa rằng… - **I assure you this won't happen again.** Tôi cam đoan là chuyện đó sẽ không xảy ra them lần nữa.

Explanation and account	→ **The traffic was so terrible**. Giao thông thật là kinh khủng. - **I missed the bus**. Tội bị nhỡ xe buýt. - **My larm didn't go off**. Đồng hồ của tôi bị hỏng. - **My car was broke down**. Xe của tôi bị hỏng. - **Sorry, I had a bad cold**. Xin lỗi, tôi bị cảm lạnh. - **I must be excused it.** Tôi thực sự ân hận về chuyện đó. - **I'm so forgetful.** Tôi đoảng quá. - **It's was a mistake**. Đó là một sai lầm.
Concern to the hearer	→ **I hope you'll forgive me.** Tôi hi vọng anh/chị sẽ tha thứ cho tôi. - **I hope you'll forgive me for…** Tôi hi vọng anh/chị sẽ tha thứ cho tôi về… - **I hope I'm not disturbing you**. Tôi hi vọng là tôi không quấy quả anh/chị. - **I hope I'm not causing you a lot of trouble**. Tôi hi vọng là tôi không quá làm phiền anh/chị.
Explanation and account	

	- **I hope I didn't up set you**.
	Tôi hi vọng là tôi không làm anh/chị buồn long.
	- **I hope it won't cause you any inconvenience**.
	Tôi hi vọng điều đó sẽ không gây bất tiện cho anh/chị.
	- **I hope it haven't take too much of your time.**
	Tôi hi vọng không làm anh quá mất thời gian.
Taking on responsibility	→**It's my fault.**
	Đó là lỗi của tôi.
	- **My fault, I'm sorry.**
	Xin lỗi, đó là lỗi của tôi.
	- **I'm sorry, it's my fault entirely**.
	Xin lỗi, đó hoàn toàn là lỗi của tôi.
	- **You are right to blame me**.
	Bạn đổ lỗi cho tôi là đúng.
Offer of repair	- **I'll pay for the damage.**
	Tôi sẽ chi trả cho tất cả thiệt hại.