

## Apologies in Chinese and English-A Research Report

Song Li

Liu Lida

*Harbin Institute of Technology Harbin Institute of Technology*

### Abstract

Apology-making is a universal phenomenon, but the realization of this speech act may be culture specific. This paper, by looking into an investigation on apology-making, attempts to discover some of the most distinctive features of apology behavior in Chinese in terms of strategies and the socio-pragmatic variables that influence the selection of apology strategies. Based on the findings of the investigation and the research made by the group of scholars involved in the Cross-cultural Speech Act Realization Project, the paper also compares the apology behavior of Chinese native speakers and English native speakers. Some distinctive differences as well as similarities are found. The authors try to account for the differences from the perspectives of social norms, cultural values and cultural contexts. It is hoped that the present research will not only make contributions to the study of apology behavior in the two languages but also offer practical assistance to learners of Chinese or English as a foreign language.

### 1. About the investigation

#### Aim

- To find out the general pattern of apology in Chinese.
- Identify the socio-pragmatic variables that influence the speech act of apology in Chinese.
- To discover the similarities and differences between apology behavior in Chinese and English.

#### Hypothesis

- Apology strategy is situation specific.
- Frequency of apology is lower in Chinese.
- Socio-pragmatic factors like social power, social distance, severity of offence and gender affect the speech act of apology in Chinese.

- Marked differences exist in the realization of the speech act of apology in Chinese and English.

### **Instrument**

The investigation makes use of one discourse completion test (DCT) and two questionnaires. The discourse completion test is designed according to the seven situations used by the group involved in the Cross-cultural Speech Act Realization Project (see Appendix1 and Appendix2). And the two questionnaires are used to elicit information on: 1) Chinese speakers' evaluation of the scales of social distance, social power, severity of offence and obligation for apology (Questionnaire A, see Appendix3); 2) frequency of apology by Chinese speakers in status-unequal relationships and with people of different genders (Questionnaire B, see Appendix4).

### **Subjects**

The subjects consist of two groups. Group1 are 158 students from the Foreign Language Department in Harbin Institute of Technology, and the English Department of Heilongjiang University, 60 of which are freshmen, 42 sophomores and 56 seniors. All of them are English majors in their early twenties. They are also called the Student Group in this study. Group2 are people of different occupations (nurses, clerks, accounts, shop assistants, drivers, etc.), whose age ranges from 20 to 39 without education at the university level. Group2 is also called Non-student Group in the study.

The Student Group is chosen for two purposes: one is to elicit data comparable with that of the CCSARP group since their data were mainly collected from university students; another purpose is to see whether the level of English affects Chinese speakers in their apology behavior. The Non-student group is chosen mainly as a reference group for the Student Group.

### **Language**

The DCT and two questionnaires were all written in Chinese and the responses were made in Chinese as well. We believe only the use of native language could reveal the true profile of a speech behavior in that language.

### **Measurement**

In order to make valid comparisons with the English data, we measured the responses in Chinese by referring to the coding manual provided by the CCSARP group. The framework and data of English speakers are based on their report in the book *Cross-cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies* (Bulum-Kulha 1989).

### **CCSARP**

The Cross-cultural Speech Act realization Project is a project initiated to investigate cross-cultural and intralingual variation in verbal behavior with the focus on two face-threatening speech acts: requests and apology. The same framework is used to study these two speech acts in German, Canadian French, Hebrew and Australian English. The study was designed to allow for reliable comparability both along the situational (socio-pragmatic), cultural and native/non-native axes.

## 2. Results

### 2.1 Apology in Chinese

Adopting the method and categorization used by the CCSARP group, we calculated data concerning the use of five strategies: explicit expression of apology (IFID), taking on responsibility, explanation, offer of repair, and promise of forbearance. We also gathered information of frequency and socio-pragmatic factors concerning apology behavior in Chinese. The findings of our investigation are as follows:

#### 2.1.1 Apology strategy is situation specific

The data from the investigation show that different situations call for different strategies of apology. In other words, Chinese prefer to adopt different kinds of strategies to realize the speech act of apology. Table 1a presents the percentage of strategy selection of the Student Group (G1) and the Non-student Group (G2) out of the total number of possibilities. For the 158 subjects in G1, if each of them could use each strategy 7 times, the total number of possibilities would be 1086 (7x158). For G2 the total number would be 210(30x7). The fact is that the subjects showed different preferences for each situation. While the use of IFID is 67.3% for G1 and 62.3% for G2, the use of Forbearance is only 6.01% and 4.05% respectively. We find that IFID could be used in all of the seven situations, but Forbearance is used almost exceptionally in the situation of Meeting.

#### 2.1.2. Low frequency of apology and differences between G1 and G2

In the data collection, we found considerable number of respondents did not give apology of any kind. Instead, they blame the hearer in the case of Driver, or simply state the fact that the paper is not read in the case of Paper. Besides the general low production of apology, we also found that the two groups of respondents showed different degrees of preference for the five strategies, with G2 lower in most cases ( see Table 1a), but the preference or the shape of the patterns are more or less the same. We tried to account for the differences from two perspectives: the difference in English level and the difference in educational background.

**Table 1a. Percentage of strategy selection from total number of possibilities in Chinese**

	IFI D	Resp	Expl.	Repa.	Forb	Intens	Minim	0	Opinion	Concern
G1	67.5	43.7	27.1	18.4	6.01	25.28	9.75	20.6	11.2	3.05
G2	62.3	42	16.2	18.2	4.5	17.5	9.7	31.8	4.3	—

We compared the responses given by the students of different grades, and found that their English level does not seem to be an important factor in the selection of apology strategies. Table1b shows the percentage of the use of IFID by three subgroups of students.

**Table1b. Percentage of the use of IFID in the subgroups of student respondents**

	Paper	Book	Manager	Waiter	Meeting	Driver	Insult
Freshmen	43.35	83.5	78.5	91.5	73	91.5	80
Sophomore	38.6	81	86	88	71	97.6	78.6
Senior	32.75	60	59	75	51.1	71.2	68.5

An interesting fact revealed by the above table is that the use of IFID to make direct and explicit apologies seem to go downward with the increase of age among the respondents. This also holds true if G2 is taken into consideration. It seems that the lower the students' English level is, the greater the chances of direct apology will be. Although we haven't found a satisfactory explanation for this phenomenon, we could conclude that the selection of strategy used by Chinese English learners at the university level are not so much influenced by their English level as by other factors. Mother tongue and native culture do have profound influence on foreign language learners.

The research findings of Jia (1997) and Huang (1997) also reveal that the level of English proficiency is not a significant factor in the selection of apology strategies by Chinese English learners.

Then we considered another striking difference between G1 and G2: their levels of education. We believe that in getting more education, the students also learned more about the more desired social norms governing the communicative behavior. In China, apart from knowledge-oriented courses, students are also required to take courses on ethics and social conducts from primary schools all the way through to universities.

Making appropriate apologies is manifestation of good manners and is expected to be found among better educated people. The process of education is, to a great extent, the process of enculturation. We certainly need to do further research in this respect before coming to sounder conclusions.

### 2.1.3. Socio-pragmatic factors

We used the same four scales to elicit Chinese respondents' evaluation of the following: social distance, social power, severity of offence and obligation for apology (see Appendix3).<sup>1</sup>

**Table2a. socio- pragmatic factors by situations**

	Distance		Power		Severity		Obligation	
	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2
Paper	2.15	2.08	2.55	2.08	0.98	1.27	1.56	1.14
Book	2.2	2.09	1.24	1.55	1.01	1.36	1.19	1.45
Manag.	1.06	1.14	2.54	2.5	1.46	1.29	1.46	1.29
Waiter	1.04	1.18	1.48	1.96	1.42	1.38	1.59	1.87
Meeting	2.67	2.95	1.73	1.09	1.21	1.36	1.33	1.64
Driver	0.98	1.13	1.78	1.77	1.74	1.68	1.62	1.59
Insult	2.13	2.14	1.86	1.73	1.7	1.68	1.54	1.73

- Note: 1) social distance on a scale of 1 to 3 ( 1=strangers, 2=acquaintance, 3=friends)  
 2) social power on a scale of 1 to 3 (1=S lower than H, 2= S and H are equals, 3=S higher than H)  
 3) severity of offence on a scale of 1 to 2 (1=low, 2=high)  
 4) obligation of the S to apologize on a scale of 1 to 2( 1=low, 2=high).

The data concerning these factors are shown in Table2a. Analysis of the data proves our hypothesis that the use of apology strategies is closely related to the above socio-pragmatic factors. The obligation and intensity of direct apology rise with the severity of offence. Two situations --the Waiter and the Driver stand on top in the use of IFID: 82% and 84.16% in G1 and 63% and 60% in G2, where the severity of offence and the obligation for apology are among the biggest too (see Table1c).

In most cases, the percentages for obligation of apology follow the same pattern with those of severity of offence except in one or two cases.

Our findings about the four socio-pragmatic factors confirmed the conclusion made by the CCSARP group that obligation for apology rises with severity of offence and the selection of strategies have much to do with the social power and social distance between interlocutors.

**Table1c. Percentage of the use of IFID in each situation**

%	Paper	Book	Manager	Waiter	Meeting	Driver	Insult
G1	39.58	67.67	65.33	82	59.73	84.16	71.94
G2	30	57	34	63	43.3	60	33.3

#### 2.1.4 Frequency and relationships

By using Questionnaire B (see Appendix 4) we looked into the perceived frequency of apology between several pairs of speakers in the senior-junior, superior-inferior and male-female relationships. The respondents are asked to describe the frequency on the scale of 'sometimes', 'often', 'seldom' and 'never'. The result is shown in Table2b.

We can see that apology is frequently made by speakers of people in lower status. However, in the male-female relationship more respondents believe that men make more apologies to women. This is out of our expectation. The common belief is that men are still dominating both at work and at home, esp. in important matters. When interviewed about this, some respondents replied men tend to make more apologies to women because they are expected to be polite to ladies and they want to show good manners before ladies. The majority of our respondents are female, so the data are to a great extent more representative of the observation or experience of females. To give a more complete description of the frequency of apology between male and female speakers, we still need to gather more and balanced data from both genders and take more factors like age and education into consideration. We shall leave this for our future research.

**Table 2b. Frequency of apology in terms of social relationships**

	Sometimes		Often		Seldom		Never	
	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2	G1	G2
Parent----children	37.5	36.7	3.8	6.7	50.1	50	8.7	6.7
Children ---parent	32.7	40	59.6	46.7	6.7	6.7	___	6.7
Teacher---student	37.5	40	2.9	6.7	16.3	13.3	4.8	10
Student---teacher	34.6	33.3	50	53	53	47	.96	___

Employer—employee	16.3 33.3	.96 —	62.5 67	12.5 13.3
Employee---employer-	15.4 33.3	76 48	6.7 —	— —
Elder---younger	26.9 26.7	6.7 —	51 50	16.3 20
Younger---elder	25 6.7	68.3 48	6.7 20	6.7 —
Male---female	18.3 12.4	67.3 33.3	8.7 16.7	— —
Female---male	52.9 46.7	18.3 13.3	32.7 20	— —

**2.2 Comparison**

Following the framework of CCSARP we compared apology behavior in Chinese and English. The English data are based on the investigation of Oshtain(1989) on Australian English. Since Australian English shares far more common features than diversities with other English varieties, we consider Oshtain’s data valid to represent English. Both similarities and differences are observed in apology behavior in Chinese and English.

**2.2.1 Similarities**

We observed the following features in both English and Chinese:

- The apology strategies selected vary from situation to situation.
- IFID and Responsibilities appear in all of the seven situations while other strategies are used only in some of the situations.
- Obligation and intensification rise with the severity of offence.
- IFID has the highest percentage in both languages.

**Table1d. Percentage of strategy selection from total number of possibilities in Chinese and English (G1 N=1586, G2 N=210, Eng N=1526)**

	IFID	Resp	Expl.	Repa.	Forb	Intens.	Minim	0	Opinion	Concern
G1	67.5	43.7	27.1	18.4	6.01	25.28	9.75	9.75	20.6	3.05
G2	62.3	42	16.2	18.2	4.5	17.5	9.7	31.8	4.3	—
Eng	75	71	4	12		24	8	—	—	5

Table1d shows the percentage of selection of strategies out of the total number of possibilities in both English and Chinese.

In spite of the above-mentioned similarities we found that Chinese speakers showed quite a few differences in the frequency of apology and selection of specific strategies. Notable differences are 1) Chinese speakers make fewer apologies given the same situations. 2) Sharp differences of percentage in the use of Taking Responsibility and Forbearance. 3) More strategies are used in Chinese.

- lower percentage in Chinese

A generally lower percentage is observed in the Chinese subjects. In particular, a much lower rate is found in the use Responsibility in the Chinese data. See Table3a.

**Table3a. Distribution of the strategy of Responsibility response percentage**

	<b>Paper</b>	<b>Book</b>	<b>Manager</b>	<b>Waiter</b>	<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Driver</b>	<b>Insult</b>
<b>G1</b>	35.6	81.75	10.5	42.05	24.2	35.1	82.35
<b>G2</b>	40	76.7	6.7	23.3	6.7	36.7	33.3
<b>English</b>	83	95	95	16	66	69	70

Except in the case of Return Book, the Chinese respondents seem to feel less responsible for the offensive act, esp. when the Speaker is higher in position or has more power over the Hearer, as in the cases of Paper and Manager. With close friends, Chinese usually don't feel the need to say 'sorry', not to say to take responsibility for 'trivial matters' like being late for an appointment with friends. Although punctuality is gaining more importance than before, especially in more industrialized areas in China, the offence caused by unpunctuality in meeting a friend is still not considered severe. In the case of Insult, the percentage is considerably higher in Chinese. This is possibly because the insult for a colleague will seriously damage the harmony between friends. In the case of the Waiter, the percentage in English drops to 16. The explanation offered by the CCSARP group is that taking on responsibility for bringing the wrong dish may cost the waiter his job. But in China, esp. in state-owned restaurants, waiters will not get fired simply because of making minor mistakes. In contrast, to say 'sorry' or taking on responsibility is considered as good attitude towards customers. And in the case of Paper, the student-teacher relationship has similar features in most if not all cultures. Teachers always hold more power over their students and they feel less need to make apologies; instead, they are expected to hear apologies from their inferiors, the students.

By observing the differences in preferences for the use of Responsibility and other strategies, we have good reason to believe that the same socio-pragmatic factors, such as social distance and power, may have different influence on the selection of strategies in the same situation.

- Higher percentage in the use of explanation is found in Chinese.



More Chinese prefer to use this rather indirect or implicit way of apology making to save the face of their own as well as that of others. This strategy is mostly used in the cases of Manager, Meeting, Insult and Waiter.

- The use of Forbearance

The strategy of Forbearance is almost exclusively used in the case of Meeting, but not in any of the situations in English. Although Chinese make fewer apologies, when they realize that serious offence has been made, they do make sincere apologies by using IFID, giving explanation, offer repair etc. In the case of Meeting, a promise of forbearance is thought to be the best ‘remedial repair’.

- Asking opinion of the Hearer

Many respondents in our investigation prefer to ask the opinion of the Hearer after an offer of repair. This occurs mostly in the cases of Book and Driver, as indicated in Table3b below.

**Table 3b. Distribution of the strategy of Hearer’s opinion.**

	Paper	Book	Manager	Waiter	Meeting	Driver	Insult
G1	6.7	56.7	.96	4.8	_____	15	_____
G2	6.7	6	_____	_____	_____	13.3	_____

- The use of 0 strategy.

For each situation, there are responses without showing any degree of apology. We group these into 0 strategy, the distribution of which is to be found in Table3c.

**Table3c. Distribution of 0 strategy in Chinese**

	Paper	Book	Manager	Waiter	Meeting	Driver	Insult
G1	22.1	14.4	12.5	6.7	5.7	8.7	3.8
G2	46.7	16.7	20	20	33.3	20	26

The use of 0 strategy partly accounts for the low percentage of apology in Chinese. Meanwhile it reveals the complexity of apology strategies in Chinese.

A look at the above similarities and differences bring us to the conclusion that cultures do share certain rules for the performance of the speech act of apology. But differences undoubtedly exist across languages, as in the case with Chinese and

English. In spite of all the limitations of our present investigation, it is obvious that speakers of Chinese and English use different sets of strategies even in the same situation. This is contrary to the findings of the CCSARP group, who claim that “given the same social factors, the same contextual features, and the same level of offence, different languages will realize apologies in very similar ways” (Oshtain,1989:171). This may hold true for similar cultural groups, but definitely not for diverse ones. It may not be uncommon for the same social factors and contextual features to produce different levels of offence and to call for different strategies in the speech act realization.

### 3. Analysis

We tried to trace the differences of apology behavior between speakers of Chinese and English and identified three reasons that contribute to such differences: social norms, cultural values and cultural contexts.

- **Social norms**

The data collected from our investigation and from the CCSARP suggest that the selection of apology strategies is situation specific. Each culture has its own rules as to when, to whom, and how an apology is made. Different situations call for different apology strategies and the same situation may very likely stimulate different apology strategies across languages or cultures. What calls for an apology in English may not have the same force in Chinese. One important task of cross-cultural and sociolinguistic researchers is to discover the kind of social rules or norms that govern each performance in the cultures concerned.

- **Cultural values**

As some sociolinguists (Wolfson, 1989) point out that the surface forms of speech behavior reflect the cultural values of the speakers. We believe that the social norms for the speech act of apology are, to a great extent, determined by the cultural values of the speakers. Native English speakers in the West are generally individual-oriented. Individualism is predominant in their every day life. Individual interests and well being is of paramount concern for the majority of them. Thus the time, space, possession, feelings of the individuals are highly valued. People are very sensitive to the interests and well being of each other. Any offensive act upon the individual entails the need for an apology. Besides, English speakers are brought up to be responsible for their own behavior. Therefore high frequency of apology is observed among them, with strategies of open apology (IFID) and taking on responsibility the most commonly used. Along with high value on individualism, personal success is the goal of life for many. During the competitive race for success, individuals in the English speaking countries are more likely to come into conflict with each other and create more opportunities for apology.

However, in the collective-oriented Chinese culture, people are more concerned with the interests and well being of the group. Group interests surpass that of the individual. So more often than not, people are less conscious of the potential for

offence on the individual. And even when they do realize some sort of damage has been done to a person, they don't see much need for apology or to apologize intensively (as in the case with the Non-student Group). Moreover, keeping group harmony is very important in the Chinese society. There tend to be less direct conflicts between individuals and therefore fewer chances for apology to occur.

- **Cultural contexts**

Native Chinese and English speakers are considered to be from two different cultural contexts: high context and low context cultures. Although contextual factors influence communicative behavior in all cultures, high context cultures are more dependent on them. Evidence could be found in the complexity of apology behavior in Chinese. The wider range of percentages, the more selective of strategies, and the more variant of the responses from the two groups in our study, all these are the result of contextual factors.

One striking difference between high and low context cultures is found in the nature of social structure. Heterogeneous as the Chinese society is, social status and relationships are of great significance in maintaining social order. Once a certain social status is acquired, a Chinese will inherit a set of obligations as well as expectations. If everyone is committed to the obligations and meets the social expectations on them, a harmonious social order will be maintained. The data we collected from responses to Questionnaire B showed the different attitude and reactions for people of different status and relationships (see Table 2b).

The common practice in China is that people senior in age or status are supposed to be respected more and have more power over their inferiors. For them to openly make apologies will mean to lose such power or authority and is therefore to be avoided. On the other hand, their superior position demands more respect and obedience from their inferiors. If any offence is made on them, an apology, usu. a sincere one, is expected. In our investigation, low percentage is found in the situation of Manager and Paper. The professor and manager, because of their privileged status, are not expected to make apologies to the less privileged people. And their react will not be taken as bad manners by ordinary Chinese.

However, the same situation calls for apology in English. One reason is that interpersonal relationships are generally equal in nature. The social structure in English speaking countries is homogeneous and social relationships are fairly egalitarian. The concern for the individual's well being goes well beyond the concern for a person's status. So higher percentages are observed in most situations including the cases of Professor to Student and Manager to Interviewee.

## **Conclusion**

To sum up we can say that apology-making as a speech behavior is common in both Chinese and English, but considerable differences exist in the two languages in terms of the frequency of apology and actual realization of it. The variations are the

function of the underlying social norms and rules and cultural values in each cultural context. Our hypotheses are proved in the research and we accomplished most of the prescribed tasks.

However, this study is far from completed. For one thing the DCT and Questionnaires used in our investigation have their limitations or weaknesses. The written response may not be the actual production of speech act or the true description of the subjects' reaction in daily life. Subjective responses may not always correspond with objective ones. So other methods, e.g. observation and interviews, might offer new insight into apology behavior in Chinese.

As stated earlier, we intended to seek general patterns in the realization of apology in Chinese. But we find that there is still a lot of work to be done concerning the complexity suggested by the present investigation. The present study may have much to tell about apology behavior of Chinese university students, but not so much about other social groups. Data from a larger-scale survey are needed and more factors, such as education, gender and regional and occupational differences, should be considered before a general profile of apology behavior in Chinese could be depicted.

## References

- Bulum-Kulka, S., House, J. & Kasper, G. (1989). *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Oshtain, Elite. (1989). Apologies across languages. In Bulum-Kulka et al (eds.), *Cross-Cultural Pragmatics: Requests and Apologies*. Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Wolfson, Nessa. (1989). *Perspectives---Sociolinguistics and TESOL*. Newsbury House Publishers.
- Jia, Yuxin. (1997). *Intercultural Communication*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Publishers.
- Huang, Yonghong. (1997). A cross-cultural study of apologies. *Papers of the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Cross-cultural Communication*. Harbin: Harbin Institute of Technology Press.

## Appendix 1. Seven Apology Situations use by CCSARP

- A university professor promised to return the student's paper that day but didn't finish reading it. (Seminar Paper)
- A student borrowed her professor's book, which she promised to return that day, but forgot to bring it. (Book)
- A stuff manager has kept a student waiting for half an hour for a job interview because he was called to an unexpected meeting. (Manager)
- The waiter in an expensive restaurant brings fried chicken instead of boeuf a la maison to a surprised customer. (Waiter)
- A notoriously unpunctual student is late again for a meeting with a friend with

- whom she is working on a joint paper.(Meeting)
- A driver in a parking lot backs up into the hearer's car.(Driver)
- The speaker offended a fellow worker during a discussion at work. After the meeting, the fellow worker mentions this fact. (Insult).

**Appendix 2. The discourse completion test in Chinese.( adapted after Appendix 1)**

- 你是一位大学教师。你曾答应一位学生读完他的论文之后把论文归还给他。可是你还没读完。
  - (学生) 老师, 我的论文您读完了吧? 我可以拿回去吗?
  - (教师)
- 你是一位女学生。你从老师那里借了一本书。你答应那天把书还给老师, 可你却忘带了。
  - (老师) 我借给你的书看完了吧?
  - (学生)
- 你是一位经理。你被临时叫去开会, 因此让一名前来面试求职的学生等了半个小时。
  - (学生) 经理, 我们可以开始了吗?
  - (经理)
- 你是一家高档酒店的服务员。你为一为顾客端来一份炸鸡, 而这位顾客点的却是炖牛肉。顾客感到非常惊讶。
  - (顾客) 哎呀, 我点的是炖牛肉呀!
  - (服务员)
- 你是一位一惯不守时的女学生。你与一位朋友正合作写一篇论文。你与这位朋友约会见面, 你迟到了。
  - (朋友) 你这次又来晚了。
  - (迟到者)
- 你是一名司机。你在停车场倒车时撞上了一辆轿车。
  - (被撞者) 你撞了我的车。
  - (撞车者)
- 你在讨论工作时说话冒犯了一位同事。会后这位同事向你提及此事。
  - (被冒犯者) 你刚才讲话也太不客气了。
  - (冒犯者)

**Appendix 3. Questionnaire A -- Scales of Socio-cultural factors concerning Apology in Chinese (Adapted after Olshtain's scales.)**

根据下面的提示, 写出你对以上 7 个情景的看法。你只需要在相应的空格填入适当的阿拉伯数字 (1, 2, 或 3)。

社会距离 (当事人之间的关系远近) 1、陌生 2、相识 3、朋友

社会权势 (当事人之间的权威大小) 1、道歉者较被道歉者权威小  
2、二者权威相等  
3、道歉者较被道歉者权威大

冒犯程度 (被侵害程度的高低) 1、低 2、高

道歉责任（应道歉责任的高低） 1、低 2、高

情景 \ 社会因素	社会距离 social distance	社会权势 power	冒犯程度 severity	道歉责任 obligation
论文 Paper				
还书 Book				
经理 Manager				
服务员 Waiter				
约会 Meeting				
司机 Driver				
冒犯 Insult				

**Appendix 4. Questionnaire B-- Frequency of among Chinese**

在你或你的朋友中，是否有以下情况出现，请在相应处划钩：

- 家长向孩子道歉 1、有时 2、经常 3、很少 4、从不
- 老师向学生道歉 1、有时 2、经常 3、很少 4、从不
- 经理向雇员道歉 1、有时 2、经常 3、很少 4、从不
- 长辈向晚辈道歉 1、有时 2、经常 3、很少 4、从不
- 孩子向家长道歉 1、有时 2、经常 3、很少 4、从不
- 学生向老师道歉 1、有时 2、经常 3、很少 4、从不
- 雇员向经理道歉 1、有时 2、经常 3、很少 4、从不
- 晚辈向长辈道歉 1、有时 2、经常 3、很少 4、从不
- 男士向女士道歉 1、有时 2、经常 3、很少 4、从不
- 女士向男士道歉 1、有时 2、经常 3、很少 4、从不