THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERLOCUTOR SENSITIVITY IN THE REALIZATION OF SPEECH ACTS OF APOLOGY AND REFUSAL*

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ABSTRACT

The ability to adjust one's language according to differences in status of an interlocutor and in the degree of familiarity between interlocutors plays an important role in successful communication. Most research that explores the effect of the social status and social distance of listeners on the realization of the speech act has examined western children's speech act behavior; relatively little attention has been paid to non-western children's development in this area. The present study attempts to shed light on the development of interlocutor sensitivity in the realization of speech acts of apology and refusal. This study examined the pragmatic development of Mandarin-speaking children, a relatively under-researched speaker group. A total of 400 students participated in this study, including 1st, 4th, 8th graders and college students. A discourse completion task was used to collect production data. It was found that participants of different ages differ in their ability to reveal interlocutor sensitivity.

Key words: pragmatic development, speakers of Mandarin Chinese, the speech act of refusal, the speech act of apology

1. INTRODUCTION

The ability to adjust one's language according to the differences in status and in the degree of familiarity between interlocutors plays an important role in successful communication. Several researchers have discussed the significance of contextual factors such as social status and social distance in their theories. For instance, Brown and Levinson (1987) claimed that factors such as (a) the social distance between the speaker and the interlocutor; and (b) the power differential between the speaker and the interlocutor influence a person's selection of a strategy for use in the realization of a speech act. Wolfson's (1988) bulge theory claimed that the politeness behavior used by middle class Americans with intimates, status-unequals, and strangers is qualitatively different from which they use with non-intimates, status-equal friends, colleagues, and acquaintances. According to Wolfson (1988), very few polite linguistic speech act behaviors occur when one interacts with people at the extreme opposite ends of the social distance continuum (i.e., intimates and strangers). It is when interacting with acquaintances, colleagues, and status-equal friends that people employ the most linguistically polite speech behavior. Furthermore, both bulge theory and politeness theory derive from an analysis of western adult speech behavior. The speech behavior of non-western children has yet to be explored to discover whether it is affected in the same way by social status and social distance.

While a substantial body of research has investigated the effect of the social status and the social distance of listeners on the realization of the speech act, most researchers have examined only the speech act behavior of adults. Relatively little attention has been paid to children's development in this area. Among the limited number of studies examining children's development of interlocutor sensitivity, the majority of studies explored the realization of the speech act of requests (e.g., Axia and Baroni 1985; Bernicot and Legros 1987; Bernicot 1991; Becker 1986; Pedlow, Wales and Sanson 2001). In addition, most research exploring this issue has been conducted with western children, with very little attention paid to the development of non-western children in this area. This study attempts to fill this gap by exploring Chinese children's development of interlocutor sensitivity during the realization of speech acts of apology and refusal.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Speech Acts

Austin (1962) was the first to introduce the notion of speech as an act, stating that "the uttering of the sentence is, or is part of, the doing of an action" (p. 5). In other words, speakers actually perform an act when saying something. Searle (1969) refined Austin's concept and claimed that the minimal unit of communication is the performance of illocutionary acts. He classified speech acts into five classes: 1) representatives: which commit the speaker to the belief that the expected proposition is true (e.g., assertions, concluding); 2) directives: by which speakers attempt to get hearers to do something (e.g., requesting, questioning); 3) commissives: which commit the speakers to a future course of action (e.g., promising, threatening, offering); 4) expressives: in which a speaker expresses a psychological attitude toward a prior action (e.g., thanking, apologizing and complimenting); and 5) declarations: in which the speaker has an influence on an immediate change in an institutional state of affairs (e.g., baptism).

Research concerning the development of pragmatic competence in speech acts revealed that the emergence of various types of speech acts differs. Hsu (2003), observing the language development of 28 Mandarin-speaking children aged one, two and three years old for two or three years, found that the speech act of greetings emerged at the age of nine months; requests at 1;1; refusals at 15 months; concessions at around 2;6; warnings at 2;9; and suggestions and promises at three years old. The speech act of apology was not mentioned in his study. Wells (1985), conducting a longitudinal study of children's pragmatic intents, found that the majority of the children studied at 60 months had not acquired interpersonal functions like threatening, promising, blaming, apologizing, and giving explanations. Astington (1988) found that the speech acts of requests, protests and greetings developed earlier than speech acts such as promising, deceiving and persuading. Although considerable research on the development of pragmatic competence in speech act exists, the developmental pattern of children's interlocutor sensitivity in the realization of speech acts has attracted relatively little attention from researchers.

2.2 Children's Interlocutor Sensitivity in the Realization of Speech Acts

A substantial number of empirical studies on speech acts has found social status and social distance to be significant variables, which have provided evidence in support of Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory and Wolfson's (1988) bulge theory (e.g., Beebe and Takahashi 1989; Beebe, Takahaski and Uliss-Weltz 1990; Blum-Kulka, Danet and Gherson 1985; Eisenstein and Bodman 1986; Kreutel 2007; Holmes 1990; Holtgraves and Yang 1990; Olshtain 1989; Vollmer and Olshtain 1989; Walkinshaw 2007). For example, Olshtain (1989) found that the apologizer used more intensification when the status of the offended party is higher. Parallel findings were reported in Vollmer and Olshtain (1989). Beebe, Takahaski and Uliss-Weltz (1990) showed that the use of refusal strategies by Japanese subjects was affected by the status of the interlocutors. Walkinshaw (2007) explored how the power distance affected Japanese subjects' selection of disagreement strategies. The analysis of the data revealed that the disagreement strategies that they selected for use in power-equal talks were more complex than those in power-unequal exchanges. While studies concerning the effect of social status and social distance on realization of speech acts have proliferated in recent decades, most researchers have examined only adult speech act behavior. Research on children's development in this area has lagged behind.

Several studies have shown that the ability of young children to modify the linguistic forms of requests based on the characteristics of interlocutors increases with age. Newcombe and Zazlow (1981) analyzed eleven two-year-olds' speech to adults to examine the use of request strategies by children of this age. It was found that two-year-olds used hints as a request strategy, but that they were unable to change the politeness level of the strategy based on the characteristics of their interlocutors. Bernicot and Legros (1987) examined children's comprehension of direct and indirect requests, using a story completion task to collect data. The results showed that the performance of five-to six-year-old children in differentiating the locutionary and illocutionary components of requests was better than that of three-to-four-year-olds.

Becker (1986) examined children's understanding of the relationship between request forms and the relative status of speakers and listeners. It was found that preschoolers are able to distinguish bossy requests such as those used by higher-status speakers from nice requests based on syntactic directness, semantic softeners and tone. In the same vein, James (1978) examined young children aged 4;6 to 5;2 speaking to three different-aged listeners: adult, peer and younger child in a request situation. The results showed that children were able to vary the forms of the directives based on the listener's age. It was found that children addressed the most polite directives to the adult, followed by the peer and the younger child.

Wilkinson et al. (1984) reported that school-aged (aged six to eight) children's selection of the type of indirect request was affected by the interlocutor. For instance, children sought information using requests such as "Do you know how to do this one?" when the listener was a peer. When the listener was a teacher, the children only used requests in forms such as "I don't know how to do this one". Requests such as "Do you know how to do this one?" were never used. Baroni and Axia (1989) explored the effect of familiarity on children's selection of request strategies. It was found that children tend to use polite request strategies with less-familiar speakers and impolite strategies with more familiar ones. Becker and Smenner (1986) examined young children's spontaneous use of the phrase "thank you" and found that preschoolers said thank you spontaneously more to adults than to peers. As the above review suggests, most studies of children's interlocutor sensitivity have examined children's development in the realization of the speech act of request. This study examined children's development of interlocutor sensitivity in the realization of speech acts of apology and refusal in order to have a more complete picture of children's pragmatic development.

2.3 Children's Development of the Speech Act of Apology

Apologies are face-supportive acts (Holmes, 1989), which have the power to lessen resentful feelings, mitigate the loss of face and restore harmony between speakers and recipients. Apologizing has been found to be the most common form of post-conflict behavior (Fujisawa, Kutsukake, and Hasegawa, 2005). Ely and Gleason (2006) analyzed children's use of apology in the parent-child discourse and found that a large number of apologies were prompted by parents. The use of direct prompt apology, however, decreased with age. Schleien, Ross, and Ross (2009) observed young children's (2;6-4;6) apology to siblings and found that the use of spontaneous apologies increased with age and that children preferred spontaneous apologies more than parent-mandated apologies. Investigating children's (aged 3-9) understanding of apology, Smith (2009) found that preschool-age children understood that apologies can make a victim feel better and the children preferred genuine apology to non-genuine apology. Studies examining children's reactions to apologies showed that children evaluated transgressors who provided more elaborate apologies more favorably and ascribed less blame to them (Darby and Schlenker 1982; Ohbuchi and Sato 1994; Smith, Chen and Harris 2010; Smith and Harris 2012; Vaish, Carpenter and Tomasello 2011).

Research on the development of the production of apology strategies has demonstrated that the degree of elaboration in children's apologies increases with age. Kampf and Blum-Kulka (2009) showed that the range of apology strategies increased with age. For example, strategies such as a more formal IFID--mitnacel ("apologize"), "promise of forbearance", "repair" and "minimization", and "intensifiers" occurred only in adults' apologies. The findings of Lin's (2009) study revealed that the apologies that younger children (under seven years old) used were more direct than those of older children, and that older children's apologies were more elaborate than those of younger children. In the same vein, examining the developmental pattern of Mandarin-speaking participants in 3rd, 6th, and 10th grades, and in college, Chang (2016) found that participants in grade 3 produced the least-complex apology strategy patterns, and they mainly used a single apology strategy or a two-strategy combination, whereas

older participants combined a higher number of apology strategies (3-, 4-, 5-, and 6-strategy combinations) in their apology production. The degree of elaboration in the children's apologies also increased as they grew older. Although extensive research has explored the development of the speech act of apology, few studies have examined children's development of the ability to vary apology strategies according to their understanding of the status of their interlocutors.

2.4 Children's Development of the Speech Act of Refusal

Refusals are speech acts that function as a response to another act such as a request, an offer, an invitation or a suggestion. The speech act of refusal is classified as a face-threatening act because it tends to risk the interlocutor's positive or negative face (Brown and Levinson 1987). A high level of pragmatic competence and linguistic competence is called for if a speaker wishes to convey a clear and yet polite refusal message.

The majority of refusal studies to date have focused on cross-cultural comparisons or language transfer issues, and have mainly examined the refusal behavior of adults (e.g., Chang 2009, 2011; Felix-Brasdefer 2003, 2004, 2008; Liao, and Bresnahan, 1996, Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, and El Bakary 2002; Takahashi 1996; Takahashi and Beebe 1987). The development of the speech act of L1 refusal remains under-researched. Guo (2001) observed the development of a child's refusals for 10 months (1;11-2;09) and found that the child frequently gave direct refusals without providing reasons and also expressed his unwillingness by shaking his head or crying.

Adopting a cross-sectional approach, Yang and Chang (2008) developed 12 cartoon episodes and interviewed each of their participant to collect Mandarin-speaking children's (K-grade 6) refusal responses. It was found that the number of refusal strategies used and the length of the refusal responses increased with age. In addition, indirect refusal strategies were used more frequently by older children, whereas direct refusal strategies were used more frequently by younger children. Parents' social class was found to also affect children's production of refusals. Children from middle-class families used more indirect refusals than those from low or high social class families did. Reeder (1989) compared the

refusal responses of kindergarten children, 3rd-graders and college students. The results showed that the college students produced significantly more refusal strategies than the kindergarten children and 3rd-graders.

In summary, most research that explores the effect of social status and social distance of listeners on the realization of the speech act has examined adult speech act behavior; relatively little attention has been paid to non-western children's development in this area. This study attempts to fill this gap by exploring Mandarin-speaking children's development of interlocutor sensitivity during the realization of speech acts of apology and refusal. The purpose of comparison of the development of these two speech acts is to examine whether the development pace for manifesting interlocutor sensitivity differs across types of speech acts. In this study, we hypothesized that a linear relationship would be found between social distance/social status and the number of apology or refusal strategies used in the realization of speech act in the college group but not in the younger age groups.

The research questions included:
(1) Are there developmental differences in perception as to
    (a) the severity of offense across different age groups among native Mandarin speakers?
    (b) the need to apologize or refuse more politely to a classmate than to a best friend or a teacher differ across different age groups of Mandarin native speakers?
(2) How do Mandarin native speakers of different age groups differ in their ability to reveal interlocutor sensitivity in the realization of the speech acts of apology and refusal?

3. METHODS

3.1 Participants

This study adopted a cross-sectional approach to explore the development of children's ability to reveal interlocutor sensitivity in the

realization of the speech acts of apology and refusal. A total of 400 students participated in this study, including 100 first graders, 100 fourth graders, 100 eighth graders and 100 college students. The average age for each group was 7, 10, 14 and 19 years old, respectively. Participants from first graders, fourth graders and eighth graders were selected to represent children at different stages of cognitive development as proposed by Piaget (1932): the preoperational stage, concrete operational stage and formal operational stage. College students were selected to represent young adults. Each group consisted of 50 females and 50 males. All of the participants were native speakers of Mandarin Chinese.

3.2 Data Collection

To examine the development of the children's ability to reveal interlocutor sensitivity when apologizing to or refusing interlocutors with a different social status and social distance, a discourse completion task was used to collect production data. Although a written discourse completion task (DCT) has its limitations in representing naturally occurring interactions, it allows researchers to manipulate the variables of interest (Beebe and Cummings 1996) and informs about speakers' pragmalinguistic knowledge and sociopragmatic knowledge of the strategies and linguistic forms selected (Kasper 2000). It is, therefore, considered an appropriate instrument for this study.

Four basic scenarios were selected, two eliciting apology responses and two eliciting refusal responses. The selection of these four scenarios was based on a pilot study. To choose scenarios that were appropriate and familiar to the participants in the grade levels included in the present study, a preliminary questionnaire that contained 20 scenarios (ten for apologies and ten for refusals) was administered to five students from each grade level. The students were asked to rate each scenario on a 10-point Likert scale by considering the likelihood of occurrence of the scenario in their lives. Based on the results of the preliminary questionnaire, four scenarios were selected for the present study (i.e., the top two most frequently occurring scenarios from each of the four speech acts), including being late, spilling juice on a borrowed book, refusing an invitation to a pizza party and refusing a request to lend a favorite book.

To explore the children's ability to vary strategies when encountering interlocutors of different social status and social distance, each of the scenario was repeated three times with a different interlocutor: a best friend, classmate, and teacher. Hence, there were twelve scenarios in total. In addition to the production data, the perception data were also collected. The participants were asked to provide a rating for the severity of the offense for each scenario. They were also asked to respond to a question concerning their perception of the need to be more polite when apologizing to or refusing a familiar interlocutor or an interlocutor with a higher social status.

3.3 Procedures

The discourse completion task questionnaire was distributed to the participants in a classroom environment. For each scenario, the researcher provided a detailed description of the context and the interlocutor to the respondents and then asked the participants to provide a rating for the severity of the offense in the scenario. After rating the severity of the offenses in the scenario, the participants were then asked to respond to questions such as, "In your opinion, should you apologize more politely to a classmate you are not close with than you would to your best friend?" or, "In your opinion, should you apologize more politely to your teacher than to a classmate?" The design of these questions was intended to gauge the participants' perceptions of the role of social distance and social status in the selection of an apology or refusal strategy. Finally, the participants were asked to write down what they thought the character in the scenario should say to apologize or refuse appropriately for each situation. The participants were informed that the classmate and the best friend in each scenario were of the same age as themselves, whereas the teacher was around age 40. Both the classmate and the teacher were characterized as acquaintances rather than strangers and were of the same gender as the participant.

Several measures were taken to ensure that the participants from all of the age groups could perform the DCT smoothly. First, to facilitate the participants' comprehension of the scenarios in the DCT questionnaire, each Chinese character was accompanied by Chinese phonetic symbols.

All of the first graders are familiar with Chinese phonetic symbols and have no problem decoding them. In addition, the research assistant read each scenario aloud for participants. If the participants had any questions about their understanding of scenario, the research assistant elaborated on the scenario on an as-needed basis. Moreover, to reduce the response burden on young participants who might not be able to write all of their responses in Chinese characters, the participants were allowed to use Chinese phonetic symbols in place of any Chinese characters they did not know. For instance, if they did not know how to write "*對不起*" (Chinese characters for "sorry"), they could write their response using the Chinese phonetic symbols "ㄉㄨㄟˋ ㄅㄨˋ ㄑㄧˇ"). All of the participants performed well with respect to the production of responses and had no problem completing the DCT questionnaire.

The decision to ask participants to answer the perception questions prior to eliciting their apology or refusal responses was based on the following considerations. Since the aim of the present study was to examine participants' ability to vary apology/refusal strategies according to the interlocutor's social status or social distance, it was important to ensure that all of the participants considered the severity of the offenses and the social status/social distance of the interlocutors before they provided their responses so that everyone was on an equal footing and so that their apology/ refusal responses accurately reflected their interlocutor sensitivity.

To answer research question 1-(a) (Are there developmental differences in perception as to (a) the severity of offense across different age groups of among native Mandarin speakers?), the mean rating of the severity of the offense from each group was first calculated. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to assess the statistical significance of the differences across the age groups. In addition, to examine participants' sensitivity to the characteristics of the interlocutor, a paired *t*-test was performed within each age group to investigate whether the mean rating of the severity of the offense differed significantly between situations in which the interlocutor was a best friend or a classmate. A paired *t*-test was performed to investigate whether the mean rating of the severity of the offense differed significantly between situations in which the interlocutor was a teacher or a classmate. In

addition, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed for age to assess the statistical significance of differences across age groups.

To investigate possible age differences in the perception of the need to apologize to or refuse more politely a classmate than to a best friend or a teacher (research question 1-(b), the number of participants who answered "yes" to the questions "In your opinion, should you more politely apologize/refuse to your teacher than to a classmate?" and "In your opinion, should you more politely apologize/refuse to a classmate you are not close with than you would to your best friend?" was calculated and compared.

To investigate the possible differences in their ability to vary apology and refusal strategies when apologizing or refusing to interlocutors with different social status or social distance, a coding scheme developed by Chang (2010) was used to analyze the apology responses, and a coding scheme developed by Beebe et al. (1990) was used to analyze the refusal responses (see Tables 1 and 2). The apology and refusal responses produced by the participants were analyzed as consisting of a sequence of strategy/semantic formulas. For example, if a respondent refused an invitation to the party, saying "I'm sorry. I can't go to your party because I have a piano lesson," this was coded as: [expression of regret][negative ability][excuse]. The data were coded by the researcher and a trained research assistant. Intercoder reliability was 91 percent.

The production data were analyzed in terms of 1) the degree of elaboration and 2) the use of apology or refusal strategies. To analyze the degree of elaboration, the differences in the mean number of apology strategies used between situations involving interlocutors of different social status and social distance were examined. A paired *t*-test was performed to see whether the difference was statistically significant. The analysis of the use of apology or refusal strategies involved a comparison of the frequency of each type of strategy used in situations involving interlocutors of different social status and social distance. A *chi*-square test was conducted to examine whether the difference was statistically significant.

Table 1. The coding scheme of apology strategies in the present study

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I.   Illocutionary force indicating device (IFID):
       1. expression of regret or offer of apology, e.g., "I'm sorry" or "I apologize."
       2. request for forgiveness, e.g., "Excuse me," " Please forgive me" or "Pardon me."
II.   Adjunct
       1. explanation or account of the cause which brought about the violation, e.g., because of the traffic.
       2. expression of the speaker's responsibility for the offense:
          a. explicit self-blame, e.g., "It's my fault/my mistake."
          b. expressing lack of intent, e.g., "I didn't mean to upset you."
          c. acknowledgement, e.g., "I shouldn't have done it."
          d. admission of fact, e.g., "I'm late."
       3. offer of repair, e.g., "I'll buy you a new one."
       4. promise of forbearance, e.g., "It won't happen again."
       5. minimization of the degree of offense, e.g., "It's not the end of the world."
       6. speaker showing concern for offended party, e.g., "I hope you weren't offended."
       7. intensifier, e.g., really, very
       8. alerter, e.g., "Teacher…"
       9. justification, e.g., "Your teaching is really boring."

Table 2. Classification of refusal strategies of the present study
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    I. Direct refusal
        1. No
        2. Negative willingness/ability (e.g., "I can't/I won't /I don't
           think so.")
    II. Indirect
        1. Statement of regret (e.g., "I'm sorry." or "I feel terrible.")
        2. Wish (e.g., "I wish I could help you…")
        3. Excuse, reason, explanation (e.g., "I have a headache.")
        4. Statement of alternative (e.g., "why don't you ask someone
           else?")
        5. Set condition for acceptance (e.g., "If you had asked me
           earlier, I would have…")
        6. Criticism/preach (e.g., "As a student, you should come to
           class…")
        7. Postponement (e.g., I'll think about it later.)
        8. Topic switch (Avoidance)
        9. Repetition of part of request (e.g., "this weekend?")
    III. Adjuncts to Refusals
        1. Statement of positive opinion/ feeling or agreement (e.g.,
           "I'd love to…")
        2. Pause filler
        3. Gratitude

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4. RESULTS

4.1 The Effect of Social Distance and Social Status on Ratings of the Severity of the Offense

Research questions 1 and 2 examined the effect of social distance and social status on ratings of the severity of the offense. A one-way ANOVA and a paired *t*-test were performed to assess the statistical significance of differences across age groups. Tables 3 and 4 present the means and

standard deviations for the perceived severity of an offense across age groups. As shown in Table 3, the results of the one-way ANOVA reveal a significant main effect for age regarding the perception of the severity of the offense for all of the apology situations ("spill juice on the a borrowed book"--best friend: $F= 6.20, p<.0001$; classmate: $F=9.09, p<.0001$; teacher: $F=7.27, p<.0001$; "one-hour late"-- best friend: $F=12.56, p<.0001$; classmate: $F=14.39, p<.0001$; teacher: $F=7.87, p<.0001$). The results of a Scheffe F test revealed that younger participants (*Grades 1 and 4*) perceived the severity of the offense in the "spill juice on the borrowed book" situation regardless of the characteristics of the interlocutors as significantly higher than did the eighth graders and the college group. Interestingly, the younger participants gave a lower mean rating for the severity of offense in the "one-hour late" situation than did the eighth graders and the college group.

In addition, Table 3 reveals that all of the participants, younger and older alike, perceived that the offense was more serious when the offended party was a classmate as opposed to a best friend for both "apology" situations (i.e., "spilling juice on the borrowed book" and "being one hour late"). The difference in the ratings between the situations involving a classmate and a best friend was statistically significant ("spilling juice on a borrowed book": grade 1: $t=-3.688, p=.000$; grade 4: $t=-6.348, p=.000$; grade 8: $t=-9.015, p=.000$; college: $t=-7.184, p=.000$; "one hour late": grade 1: $t=-3.267, p=.000$; grade 4: $t=-4.400, p=.000$; grade 8: $t=-3.039, p=.003$; college: $t=-6.348, p=.000$). With regard to the effect of social status, a significant difference was found in the ratings of the 4th, 8th graders and college students for the severity level of the "spilling juice on a borrowed book" situations involving a teacher and a classmate (grade 4: $t=4.856, p=.000$; grade 8: $t=10.744, p=.000$; college: $t=10.965, p=.000$). For the "one hour late" situation, only 1st- graders perceived the offense as significantly more serious when the offended party was a teacher as opposed to being a classmate ($t=-2.695, p=.008$).

Table 3. Means and standard deviations for the rating of the severity of the offense in apology situations

	Apology Situation									
	"spill juice on the borrowed book"					"one-hour late"				
	Grade 1	Grade 4	Grade 8	College	F	Grade 1	Grade 4	Grade 8	College	F
	M	M	M	M	p	M	M	M	M	p
	(SD)	(SD)	(SD)	(SD)		(SD)	(SD)	(SD)	(SD)	
Best friend	3.01	2.71	3.35	3.26	6.20	2.91	3.10	3.73	3.66	12.56
	(1.43)	(1.04)	(1.09)	(1.05)	.000	(1.42)	(1.18)	(.94)	(.98)	.000
Classmate	3.58	3.69	4.29	4.05	9.09	3.38	3.72	4.08	4.31	14.39
	(1.34)	(1.16)	(.82)	(.94)	.000	(1.34)	(1.17)	(.939)	(.77)	.000
Teacher	3.66	2.96	3.14	2.98	7.27	3.78	3.47	4.13	4.17	7.87
	(1.38)	(1.19)	(1.07)	(1.19)	.000	(1.29)	(1.32)	(.99)	(.90)	.000
Social distance: t	-3.688	-6.348	-9.015	-7.189		-3.267	-4.400	-3.093	-6.348	
Best friend vs. Classmate p	000	.000	.000	.000		.001	.000	.003	.000	
Social status: t	-.545	4.856	10.744	10.965		-2.695	1.695	.162	1.422	
Classmate vs. teacher p	.587	.000	.000	.000		.008	.094	.871	.158	

Regarding the effect of social distance in "refusal" situations, the participants from grades 4, 8 and college agreed in their perception that the offense was more serious in both situations, as reflected in Table 4 ("refuse a party invitation": grade 4: $t=-6.452$, $p=.000$; grade 8: $t=-11.076$, $p=.000$; college students: $t=-10.324$, $p=.000$; "refuse to lend a book": grade 4: $t=-5.235$, $p=.000$; grade 8: $t=-10.662$, $p=.000$; college students: $t=-11.773$, $p=.000$).

With regard to the effect of social status, cross-interlocutor variation occurred only in the ratings of 4th-graders for the situation in which they had to refuse to lend a book. Participants from grade 4 perceived that the offense was more serious in the situation involving a classmate as opposed to a teacher ($t=3.705$, $p=.000$).

The results in Table 4 also reveal a significant main effect for age regarding the perception of the severity of the offense for all refusal situations except the situation where one has to refuse the best friend's invitation ("refusing to go to the party"-- best friend: F= 4.33, p>.05; classmate: $F=18.6$, p<.0001; teacher: $F=11.71$, p<.0001; "refusing to lend the book" -- best friend: $F=3.21$, p<.05; classmate: $F=16.67$, p<.0001;

teacher: F=7.63, p<.0001). The results of a Scheffe F test revealed that the 1st -graders perceived the severity level of the "spilling juice on a borrowed book" and "refusing to lend the book" situations involving a teacher and a classmate as significantly higher than did the eighth graders and the college group.

The participants' perspectives on whether one should apologize more politely to a teacher, a classmate or a best friend for "apology" situations are illustrated in Table 5. As reflected in Table 5, the majority of the participants in all age groups believed that it was necessary to apologize more politely to a classmate with whom the student was not close than to their best friend and that they should apologize more politely to a teacher than to their classmate in both of the situations.

Table 4. Means and standard deviations for the rating of the severity of
the offense in refusal situations

Interlocutor		Refusal Situation									
		"refusing to go to the party"					"refusing to lend the book"				
		Grade 1	Grade 4	Grade 8	College	F	Grade 1	Grade 4	Grade 8	College	F
		M	M	M	M	p	M	M	M	M	p
		(SD)	(SD)	(SD)	(SD)		(SD)	(SD)	(SD)	(SD)	
Best friend		3.76	3.75	3.85	3.66	4.33	3.41	3.80	4.00	3.76	3.21
		(1.33)	(1.16)	(1.18)	(.98)	.73	(1.30)	(1.29)	(1.09)	(1.02)	.02
Classmate		3.42	2.88	2.35	2.38	18.60	3.47	3.08	2.70	2.36	16.67
		(1.42)	(1.20)	(1.01)	(.99)	.000	(1.39)	(1.22)	(1.05)	(.84)	.000
Teacher		3.30	2.82	2.56	2.33	11.71	3.13	2.51	2.55	2.31	7.63
		(1.40)	(1.23)	(1.15)	(1.07)	.000	(1.52)	(1.30)	(1.10)	(1.10)	.000
Social Distance	t	-1.962	-6.452	-11.076	-10.324		-.492	-5.235	-10.662	-11.773	
Best friend vs.	p	.053	.000	000	.000		.624	.000	.000	.000	
Classmate											
Social Status	t	.599	.221	-1.625	.408		.347	3.705	1.208	.546	
Classmate vs. teacher	p	.578	.826	.107	.684		.181	.000	.230	.586	

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Table 5. Differences in the number of participants who responded "yes" to the questions regarding whether one should apologize more politely to interlocutors of different social status or social distance N (%)

| | Apology Situation | | | | | | | |
| | "spill juice on the borrowed book" | | | | "one-hour late" | | | |
Questions	Grade 1	Grade 4	Grade 8	College	Grade 1	Grade 4	Grade 8	College
In your opinion, should you more politely apologize to a classmate you are not close with than you would to your best friend?	99 (99%)	97 (97%)	98 (98%)	93 (93%)	92 (92%)	96 (96%)	94 (94%)	90 (100%)
In your opinion, should you more politely apologize to your teacher than to a classmate?	97 (97%)	100 (100%)	98 (98%)	94 (94%)	98 (98%)	100 (100%)	99 (99%)	98 (98%)

The participants' perceptions of whether one should more politely refuse a teacher, a classmate or a best friend in "refusal" situations is presented in Table 6. As seen in Table 6, only 11% of the 1st-graders believed that one should more politely refuse a classmate than a best friend. The percentage of the older participants (8th-graders and college students) who shared the same view as the 1st-graders, however, increased to 21% for 8th-graders and 63% for college students. With regard to the effect of social status, nearly 90% of the participants from all age groups believed that it was necessary to refuse more politely to a teacher than a classmate in both refusal situations.

Table 6. Differences in the number of participants who responded "yes" to the questions regarding whether one should refuse more politely to the interlocutors of different social status or social distance N (%)

	Refusal Situation							
	"refusing to go to the party"				"refusing to lend the book"			
	Grade 1	Grade 4	Grade 8	College	Grade 1	Grade 4	Grade 8	College
Questions								
In your opinion, should you more politely refuse a classmate you are not close with than your best friend?	11 (11%)	4 (4%)	21 (21%)	63 (63%)	7 (7%)	4 (4%)	20 (20%)	64 (64%)
In your opinion, should you more politely refuse your teacher than your classmate?	87 (87%)	95 (95%)	90 (90%)	86 (86%)	93 (93%)	99 (99%)	95 (95%)	81 (81%)

4.2 Cross-Interlocutor Variations in the Use of Apology and Refusal Strategies

Table 7 presents the means and standard deviations for the number of strategies used in each apology situation. While the majority of the participants from all of the age groups believed that it was necessary to apologize more politely to a classmate with whom the student was not close than to their best friend, significant cross-interlocutor variations were only found in the mean number of the use of apology strategies produced by the college students. The college students employed a significantly higher mean number of strategies when apologizing to a classmate than to a best friend in both situations ("spilling juice on a borrowed book": t=-3.939, p=.000; "one hour late": t=-3.806, p=.000).

Table 7. Means and standard deviations for the number of strategies used in each apology situation

				Apology Situation							
		"spill juice on the borrowed book"					"one-hour late"				
		Grade 1	Grade 4	Grade 8	College	*F*	Grade 1	Grade 4	Grade 8	College	*F*
Interlocutor		*M*	*M*	*M*	*M*	*p*	*M*	*M*	*M*	*M*	*p*
		(SD)	*(SD)*	*(SD)*	*(SD)*		*(SD)*	*(SD)*	*(SD)*	*(SD)*	
Best friend		2.03	2.48	3.11	3.18	36.67	2.01	2.52	3.00	2.64	71.18
		(.76)	(.915)	(.95)	(.97)	.000	(.73)	(.81)	(.87)	(.96)	.000
Classmate		2.03	2.39	3.39	3.75	72.46	1.90	2.36	3.22	3.15	56.65
		(.62)	(.909)	(1.09)	(1.06)	.000	(.63)	(.90)	(.88)	(.94)	.000
Teacher		2.49	3.31	4.14	4.41	66.89	2.47	3.01	4.00	3.96	55.24
		(.85)	(.950)	(1.12)	(1.28)	.000	(.94)	(.93)	(1.01)	(1.13)	.000
Social Distance	*t*	-.003	.698	1.934	-3.939		1.146	1.291	-1.799	-3.806	
Best friend vs.	*p*	.998	.486	.055	.000		.253	.198	.074	.000	
Classmate											
Social Status	*t*	-4.277	-6.996	-4.799	-3.970		-5.059	-4.998	-5.773	-5.528	
Classmate vs.	*p*	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	
teacher											

On the other hand, all of the participants agreed in perceiving that they should apologize more politely to a teacher than to their classmate in both situations, and participants from all of the age groups employed significantly more strategies when apologizing to a teacher as opposed to a classmate in both apology situations ("spilling juice on a borrowed book": grade 1: $t=-4.277$, $p=.000$; grade 4: $t=-6.996$, p=.000; grade 8: $t=-4.79$, $p=.000$; college: $t=-3.970$, $p=.000$; "one hour late": grade 1: $t=-5.059$, $p=.000$; grade 4: $t=-4.998$, $p=.000$; grade 8: $t=-5.773$, $p=.000$; college: $t=-5.528$, $p=.000$).

Table 8. Means and standard deviations for the number of strategies used in each refusal situation

Interlocutor		"refusing to go to the party"					"refusing to lend the book"				
		Grade 1	Grade 4	Grade 8	College	*F*	Grade 1	Grade 4	Grade 8	College	*F*
		M	*M*	*M*	*M*	*p*	*M*	*M*	*M*	*M*	*p*
		(SD)	*(SD)*	*(SD)*	*(SD)*		*(SD)*	*(SD)*	*(SD)*	*(SD)*	
Best friend		1.64	1.99	2.43	2.28	19.99	1.65	1.98	2.44	2.21	18.46
		(.582)	(.732)	(.820)	(.883)	.000	(.561)	(.763)	(.935)	(.773)	.000
Classmate		1.76	1.94	2.31	2.21	11.79	1.66	1.83	2.35	2.24	20.47
		(.674)	(.701)	(.778)	(.746)	.000	(.673)	(.660)	(.770)	(.730)	.000
Teacher		1.69	1.99	2.63	2.62	31.35	1.74	2.04	2.43	2.51	17.94
		(.746)	(.759)	(.910)	(.947)	.000	(.658)	(.816)	(.919)	(.862)	.000
Social distance	*t*	1.328	-.503	-1.032	-.545		.032	-1.421	-.743	.284	
Best friend vs. Classmate	*p*	.186	. 616	.304	.587		.974	.157	.459	.777	
Social status	*t*	.750	-.493	-2.602	-3.371		-.878	-1.946	-.652	-2.314	
Classmate vs. teacher	*p*	.464	. 622	.010	.007		.381	.053	.515	.022	

Table 8 presents the means and standard deviations for the number of strategies used in each refusal situation. Although nearly 90% of the participants from all of the age groups believed that it was necessary to be more politely in refusing a teacher than a classmate in both refusal situations, cross-interlocutor variation was only found in the mean number of refusal strategies produced by the participants from grade 8 and college in the situation where one has to refuse a party invitation (grade 8: *t*=-2.602, *p*=.010; college: *t*=-3.371, *p*=.007) and by the participants from college in the situation where one has to refuse to lend a book (college: *t*=-2.314, *p*=.022). With regard to the effect of social distance, the results of a paired *t*-test revealed that none of the groups demonstrated cross-interlocutor variation in the mean number of refusal strategies in either refusal situation, as reflected in Table 8.

In addition to the examination of the mean number of strategies produced, the frequency of the use of each type of strategy in situations involving interlocutors of a different social status and social distance was also compared. It was found that participants from grades 1, 4, 8 and

college employed more "alerters" when apologizing to a teacher in both "one hour late" and "spilling juice on a borrowed book" situations ("spilling juice on a borrowed book": grade 1: $\chi2$=57.600, p=.000; grade 4: $\chi2$=145.680, p=.000; grade 8: $\chi2$=166.972, p=.000; college: $\chi2$=127.096, p=.000; "one hour late": grade 1: $\chi2$=51.585, p=.000; grade 4: $\chi2$=119.467, p=.000; grade 8: $\chi2$=120.339, p=.000 ;college: $\chi2$=134.966, p=.000) and participants from grade 1, 8 and college used more "promise of forbearance" (grade 1: $\chi2$=12.285, p=.000; grade 8: $\chi2$=15.341, p=.000; college: $\chi2$=8.605, p=.000). The college students also used more "blame" strategies ($\chi2$=5.05, p=.036) whereas the 8th graders employed more "lack of intention" strategies ($\chi2$=4747, p=.049) when apologizing to a teacher in "one hour late" situation.

Concerning the effect of social distance, participants from all of the age groups employed more "intensifier" strategies when apologizing to a classmate as opposed to a best friend in the "spilling juice on a borrowed book" situation (grade 1: $\chi2$=10.467, p=.002; grade 4: $\chi2$=6.105, p=.024; grade 8: $\chi2$=10.503, p=.002; college: $\chi2$=17.506, p=.000). In addition, the 8th graders and college students used more "repair" strategies when apologizing to a classmate as opposed to a best friend in the "spilling juice on a borrowed book" situation (Grade 8: $\chi2$=26.601, p=.000; college: $\chi2$=3.974, p=.033). Participants from grade 8 also used more "blame" strategies when the interlocutor was a classmate.

There exist, however, fewer cross-interlocutor variations in the participants' realization of speech acts of refusal in comparison with those of their speech act of apology. The college students used more "regret", "postponement" and "wish" strategies ("refuse to lend a book": $\chi2$=15.818, p=.000; "refuse a party invitation": $\chi2$=6.989, p=.010) when refusing a party invitation from a best friend as opposed to a classmate. Likewise, 8th-graders employed more "postponement" strategies when refusing a party invitation from a best friend as opposed to a classmate. With regard to the effect of social status, the interlocutor variation was only found in the college students' use of gratitude strategies. The college students were found to use more "gratitude" strategies ($\chi2$=6.522, p=.012) when refusing a party invitation from a teacher as opposed to a classmate. No cross-interlocutor variation was found in the use of refusal strategies produced by first graders and fourth graders to reveal their sensitivity to the

difference in social distance or social status between interlocutors.

To gain a more coherent picture, the above-mentioned interlocutor variation in the use of apology and refusal strategies was reorganized in terms of the age groups disregarding the difference in the type of speech act. As seen in Table 9, the 1st-graders revealed interlocutor sensitivity in using "alerters", "intensifier", and "promise of forbearance" strategies, whereas the 4th-graders varied in the use of "alerter" and "intensifier" strategies. The college students revealed interlocutor sensitivity in the use of eight types of strategies, including: "alerter", "intensifier", and "promise of forbearance", "repair", "postponement", "regret", "wish" and "gratitude" strategies. The 8th graders, on the other hand, manifest interlocutor sensitivity in the use of seven types of strategies participants used "regret" and "lack of intention" strategies, including: "alerter", "intensifier", and "promise of forbearance", "repair", "postponement", "lack of intention" and "blame".

Table 9. Differences in the use of apology and refusal strategies to reveal interlocutor sensitivity

	Age Group			
	Grade 1	Grade 4	Grade 8	College
Strategy	1. Alerter	1. alerter	1. alerter	1. alerter
	2. intensifier	2. intensifier	2. intensifier	2. intensifier
	3. promise of forbearance		3. promise of forbearance	3. promise of forbearance
			4. repair	4. repair
			5. postponement	5. postponement
			6. lack of intention	6. regret
			7. blame	7. wish
				8. gratitude
Total number of different strategies	3	2	7	8

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The present study investigated how the ability to manifest interlocutor sensitivity differs across various age groups of Mandarin native speakers. Unlike Baroni and Axia's (1989) study, which found that children used polite request strategies with less-familiar speakers and impolite strategies with more familiar ones, the present study showed that while the majority of the participants from all of the age groups believed that it was necessary to apologize more politely to a classmate with whom the student was not close than to their best friend, significant cross-interlocutor variations were only found in the mean number of the apology strategies used by college students, which might indicate children's ability to manifest interlocutor sensitivity in the realization of the speech act of request develops earlier than that of the speech act of apology.

The finding that significant interlocutor variation (teacher vs. classmate) in the mean number of strategies was discovered in all of the participants' apology responses, but not in their refusal responses also provides evidence supporting that the developmental pace of the manifestation of interlocutor sensitivity differs across speech acts. The development of the speech act of refusal in this area may lag behind that of the speech act of apology. One possible explanation for the developmental differences across speech acts may be that the speech act of refusal relies more on the use of "excuse/reason", "alternative", "set condition for acceptance" and "wish" strategies, which are non-formulaic expressions, to make the refusal less direct and less threatening. Compared with the speech act of refusal, the speech act of apology contains more formulaic expressions, such as "I am sorry," "please forgive me," "It is my fault," and "I didn't mean it." Children acquire these formulaic expressions at an early age; therefore, they have the linguistic resources at their disposal to express politeness when realizing the speech act of apology. In contrast, the "excuse/reason" and "alternative" strategies are more cognitively and linguistically challenging than the apologetic formulaic expressions.

In addition to the developmental differences across speech acts, the results also showed that the ability of Mandarin-speaking children to manifest sensitivity to interlocutors of a different social status might

develop earlier than their ability to manifest sensitivity to interlocutors of different social distance. In both apology situations, the participants from all of the age groups were capable of using more apology strategies when the interlocutor was a teacher in "teacher vs. classmate" situations. On the other hand, in "close friend vs. classmate" situations, even though all of the participants believed that it was necessary to apologize more politely to a classmate than to their best friend, interlocutor variation was found only in college students' apologies.

The finding that children's perception of the need to more politely apologize to or refuse a certain interlocutor was not consistent with their actual ability to manifest this politeness in their apologies or refusals, which may indicate that production and perception skills are acquired at different rates. Studies concerning the acquisition of several aspects of knowledge, such as phonetic knowledge, syntactic knowledge, and vocabulary, have shown that the rate of acquisition of perceptual skills precedes that of productive skills (e.g., phonetics: Altenberg, 2005; Flege and Munro, 1994; syntax: Collins, 2005; McDaniel and Lech, 2003; vocabulary: Webb, 2008). It seems reasonable that knowing a social convention (i.e., perception) precedes production (i.e., demonstrating such knowledge with the use of words. This also echoes Bardovi-Harlig and Hartford's (1993) observation that "Knowing that one needs to do something is logically prior to knowing how to do that same thing" (p. 298).

This study aimed to explore the development of children's ability to reveal interlocutor sensitivity in realizing the speech acts of apology and refusal. The findings show that the ability to manifest sensitivity toward interlocutors of different social statuses develops earlier than sensitivity toward interlocutors with different degrees of familiarity (social distance). In addition, the development of the ability to manifest interlocutor sensitivity in realizing the speech act of refusal seems to lag behind that of the realization of the speech act of apology. The present study found that participants of different ages differ in their ability to reveal interlocutor sensitivity. Factors such as social status and social distance were found to affect the college students' selection of strategies, which supports Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness theory. However, the variations in children's use of strategies in relation to social contexts were

not predicted by either politeness theory or bulge theory.

The present study contributes to the field of pragmatic development in several ways. First, the present study examined the pragmatic development of Mandarin-speaking children who represent a relatively under-researched speaker group; therefore, the findings of this study expand our understanding of children's politeness and pragmatic development. In addition, this study provides data to add to the dearth of research concerning children's development of pragmalinguistic competence and sociopragmatic competence in the speech acts of apology and refusal. This study adopted a cross-sectional approach. A longitudinal study of development in this area is needed to complement the findings of the present study. This study asked participants to respond to the perception questions before completing the DCT, which might have primed them and made them aware of the research question before they provided their responses on the DCT. Future study could try to have the perception questions asked after the participants have provided their DCT responses.

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拒絕與道歉對象之親疏關係、社會地位和禮貌表達的語用發展研究

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許多研究結果已顯示一般成年人執行拒絕或道歉等言談行為時，多會考量談話對象的社會地位以及與自己關係親疏等因素，再選擇適切的策略來拒絕或道歉。但學界目前對於此部分語用能力在成長過程中的發展歷程所知仍極為有限。本研究檢視不同年齡的參與者在執行拒絕語和道歉語此兩個言談行為時，對於需「考量談話對象身分」及「考量關係親疏」的感知是否有差異性。另外，亦查驗比較不同年齡的參與者依對象而所變化所選擇的拒絕、道歉策略的能力是否有差異。本研究參與者包含以下四組不同年齡層：國小一年級、四年級、國中二年級及大學一年級學生。分別以感知問卷，收集參與者對於「考量談話對象身分」及「考量關係親疏」的感知資料；及以情境問卷收集參與者拒絕語及道歉語的表達資料，檢視其發展情形。研究結果顯示參與者依對象而變化道歉策略之能力的發展較早於依對象而變化拒絕策略之能力的發展。

關鍵字：語用發展、母語為中文者、拒絕語、道歉語、社會距離、社會階級