I'M SORRY ABOUT YOUR FACE:
A STUDY OF FACE, POLITENESS, AND INVESTMENT
IN THE CONTEXT OF APOLOGY

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication

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Thank you to
Steven Mortenson, Charlie Pavitt, and Lindsay Hoffman
for without them this thesis would have never been possible.

To my girls-
are you coming to the office?

And to my parents
for their endless support, love, and guidance.
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The focus of this study is to investigate how, after a relationship offense, the offender’s investment in the relationship with the offended person influences the offender’s concern for self- and other- positive and negative face when apologizing to the offended person. The study hypothesized that the closeness of the relationship between the offender and the offended has a positive association with other-positive, other-negative, and self-positive face concerns but a negative association with self-negative face concern. The study also hypothesized that relationship closeness has a positive association with apology politeness. Lastly, the study posed research questions about the correlation between apology politeness and face. Results supported the main effects of relationship closeness on other-positive and self-positive face concerns. A non-significant association was found between relational investment and self-negative face. The other-negative face scale was removed from analysis. Significant associations were found between politeness and relational investment. Lastly, politeness and self-positive and other-positive face are positively correlated. Implications of the findings, limitations of the study, and future directions for research are discussed.
Understanding the centrality of face concerns and face-negotiation processes is fundamental to interpersonal competence. According to Goffman (1967), whatever the context in which communication occurs, and whatever the relationship shared by the interactants, it is assumed that each person’s face is supported and maintained during interactions. Brown and Levinson’s (1987) politeness theory attempted to delineate speakers’ motives to diminish face threats inherent to certain face threatening acts. Face management theory is useful for illuminating how relational partners with high investment in the relationship cope with problematic interaction episodes (Cupach & Metts, 1994).

The study of face concerns have just begun to address how face concerns are managed in specific contexts of interpersonal interactions, such as apologizing to an offended party. Previous research has shown that specific interpersonal interactions such as asking for favors and other compliance gaining situations can have multiple and diverse intrinsic face threats and face goals (Cai & Wilson, 2000; Wilson, Aleman, & Leatham, 1998; Wilson, Kim, & Meischke, 1991/1992; Wilson & Kunkel, 2000). Seeking forgiveness through an apology is a specific interaction that is hypothesized to have varied face threats and different face goals from the goals pursued in other types of interpersonal interactions. Apologizing is a universal speech act for making amends
after a violation of normal social order has occurred (Scher & Darley, 1997). The current study examines face goals related to apology between the offender and the victim.

The current study investigates the effects of the prior relationship (acquaintance, friend, and best friend) between the offender and victim on the offender’s intentions to protect his or her own face and the victim’s face when making an apology. As background material, the literature on apology, face, politeness theory, and investment theory is reviewed. The method used in this study is then described followed by the results discovered after the study concluded. Finally, a discussion of the results is provided followed by the implications of this study, limitations of the study, and directions for future research in the studied academic area.

Apology

“After an offense has occurred, the job of the offender is to show that it was not a fair expression of his attitude, or, when it evidently was, to show that he has changed his attitude to the rule that was violated.” (Goffman, 1971). An apology is an admittance of blame and an expression of regret for whatever transgression has occurred (Darby & Schlenker, 1982). An apology achieves a variety of important goals including acknowledging that a social rule has been broken, reaffirming the value of the rule, and reestablishing harmony in the relationship by minimizing the negative repercussions of the incident and repairing the damaged identity of the offender and the victim (Darby & Schlenker, 1982). Although all apologies include an admission of guilt, this regret for the transgression signals an intention to avoid similar relational violations, which should set the victim at ease about continued transgressions with the offender in the future (Kim, Ferrin, Cooper, & Dirks, 2004).
An admittance of blame and regret for a situation can be expressed in a variety of different ways, include a variety of different components, and must be crafted specifically to fit the nature of the situation in order to be effective in restoring relational harmony (Darby & Schlenker, 1982). Yet, apologies do not always lead to forgiveness and relational repair. Apologies must come across as honest and sincere, or else they can backfire, putting the offended party on the defense (Skarlicki, Folger, & Gee, 2004). Apologies are most effective when they include a multitude of the five main apology tactics: an apology is expressed, an explanation of the violation is expressed, the offender takes responsibility for the violation, an offer is extended to repair the situation, and an agreement is made that there will not be a repeat of the violation (Cohen, Olshtain, & Rosenstein, 1986; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Scher & Darley, 1997). Perfunctory apologies, such as saying “excuse me” after accidently bumping into someone is appropriate for incidents that are minor and have limited consequences (Darby & Schlenker, 1982). These apology rituals allow minor violations (most of the time accidental), in which the relational costs are insignificant, to be acknowledged and then forgotten quickly (Darby & Schlenker, 1982). However, as predicaments become more severe, the responsibility increases, and the potential relational cost raises, more elaborate apologies are required to effectively repair the damage done to the social rule and the identity of both parties involved (Darby & Schlenker, 1982).

To further clarify the reasons why an offender apologizes, it is important to investigate the resulting relational costs that the event has had on the relationship between the offender and the victim. When people mistreat others, they create states of injustice (Exline, Deshea, & Holeman, 2007). Justice-related theories, such as social
exchange theory, help to illuminate this injustice. Social exchange theory evaluates relationships on the basis of reward and costs. When a transgression has been committed an imbalance is created causing one party to have lower, less beneficial outcomes relative to the other party creating debts that must be repaid by the more benefitted party (Exline, Deshea, & Holeman, 2007). More recently, Worthington (2003) proposed that when people harm others, the result is an injustice gap. This gap distinguishes between the way things are and the way things would be if the situation were fair (Worthington, 2003). In order to correct the relational imbalance, the offender must lower themselves while simultaneously lifting the victim up (Exline, Deshea, & Holeman, 2007).

Clearly, apologizing for a transgression is not the same as undoing whatever damage has been caused, but it may help to pay the debt back psychologically and begin to mend the relationship (Exline, Deshea, & Holeman, 2007). “When people sincerely apologize or request forgiveness, they take on the role of a supplicant” (Exline, Deshea, & Holeman, 2007). They take a stance of submission in front of the offended party (Exline, Deshea, & Holeman, 2007). The injustice gap lessens because the apology represents a social offering, one that helps to restore justice in the relationship (Exline, Deshea, & Holeman, 2007). By admitting wrongdoing and regret for the offense, the offender responds to the face needs of the offended, helping to restore his or her sense of power over and autonomy from the situation and the offender (Exline, Deshea, & Holeman, 2007). Once the offended party feels content that relational harmony has been restored and the power has been balanced, he or she will become more likely to accept the apology and forgive the offender (Fagenson & Cooper, 1987). Additionally, the offender may find relief in a balanced relationship. Exline, Deshea, and Holeman (2007)
found that when compared to non-apology cases, apology cases are associated with higher levels of interpersonal forgiveness, self-forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Although it can be assumed from previous research on compliance gaining that different apology tactics will involve different face goals, research is yet to investigate the face goals and face threats specific to the context of apology. An apology is considered to be a simple tool used to lower the threat to a person’s character in a situation (Scott & Lyman, 1968). Nevertheless, the act of apologizing in itself can be face threatening for both the offender and the victim of the offense. For the person who has caused the offense, apologizing has the potential to damage their face because they are admitting to and taking responsibility for the violation. In addition, it is also possible that the apology offered may not be accepted by the victim (McLaughlin, Cody, & O’Hair, 1983). The victim in turn has the social pressure of accepting the apology placed onto them which is face threatening for that party (Goffman, 1955). Thus, an apology affects face concerns of all parties involved.

**Face, face goals, and facework**

The conception of self that a person claims for himself/herself during a particular interaction is called face. When a person interacts with another, both parties present a constructed self in that encounter and seeks confirmation for that self (Cupach & Metts, 1994). Clearly stated, the individual offers an identity that he or she wants to assume and wants others to approve of. In social scientific terms, face refers to “socially situated identities people claim to attribute to others” (Tracy, 1990). According to Goffman (1967), regardless of the context in which the interaction occurs, and regardless of the relational investment between the interactants, it is assumed that each person’s face is
supported and maintained during the interaction. Face is not something that a person owns internally. Face resides in the communication between people.

Brown and Levinson’s (1987) draw on their analysis of 13 societies in various areas of the world to present a theory based on two types of universal face needs: positive face needs and negative face needs. Positive face refers to the desire to be appreciated, respected, and approved of by the significant people in our lives (Cupach & Metts, 1994). Positive face is supported when messages between communicators express mutual value in treasured things, appreciation for competence, and solidarity in the relationship (Lim & Bowers, 1991). Positive face is threatened when one party no longer feels needed and valued or when one party’s abilities and capabilities are questioned (Cupach & Metts, 1994). Negative face includes the desire to be autonomous and lack imposition (Cupach & Metts, 1994). Messages respecting one’s autonomy are supportive of negative face. Conversely, messages interfering with desired actions or placing constraints on an individual are threatening to negative face (Cupach & Metts, 1994).

Face needs operate in all cultures and affect both speaker’s and hearer’s action (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Behaviors that contradict the face needs of either party involved are referred to as face threatening acts (Erbert & Floyd, 2004). Examples of face threatening acts include insults, criticisms, or requests for favors. Criticisms can threaten positive face by conveying a lack of respect and approval and disrupting the balance in the relationship, while compliance gaining can threaten negative face by forcing someone to do something and limiting the number of potential behaviors (Erbert & Floyd, 2004).
Goffman (1967) mentions the notion of “losing face” which encompasses being self-conscious, shamed, embarrassed, or humiliated. “Thus face is something that can be lost, maintained, or enhanced and must be constantly attended to in an interaction” (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Wilson, Aleman, and Leatham (1998) posit that, for a given speech act, there are face threats both inherently and potentially present due to characteristics of the context. For example, Wilson, Aleman, and Leatham (1998) found that requests inherently threaten a target’s negative face needs, while Johnson, Roloff, and Riffée (2004) concluded that refusals inherently threaten a requester’s negative face needs. Potential threats are derived from the interaction context (Wilson, Aleman, & Leatham, 1998). Wilson, Aleman, and Leatham (1998) argued that context-specific goals determine which potential face threats are most salient in interactions. For example, the goal of requesting favors results in perceived threats to a target’s negative and requester’s positive face while the goal of providing advice results in perceived threats to both the target’s and requester’s positive face. These findings are supported by work from Cai and Wilson (2000) that found similar face threats across Japanese and U.S. cultural samples for requesting favors and enforcing unfulfilled obligations.

For several reasons, how someone manages their face in interactions with a relational partner is relevant to the beginning and end of interpersonal relationships (Cupach & Metts, 1994). First, the ability to manage one’s own face and others’ face is fundamental to interpersonal competence (Cupach & Imahori, 1993). In order for people to achieve their own goals, they must be able to establish and maintain desired identities for each other when they interact (Cupach & Metts, 1994). Succinctly stated, getting ahead ordinarily entails getting along, which in turn necessitates sensitivity to the face
needs of others. As Goffman (1967) suggests, in our society, the ability to engage in appropriate facework is tantamount to “tact, savior-faire, diplomacy, or social skill”.

Second, face supports one’s identity. Situational identities constitute important sources of rewards and costs for social actors (Weinstein, 1969). The importance of confirmation is magnified as the intimacy of the relationships between partners escalates (Cupach & Metts, 1994). Indeed, Weinstein (1969) contends that “it is only in the most impersonal context that the situational identities of the parties are not a principal nexus of rewards and costs. Often, they are precisely and completely that”.

Third, effective facework fosters mutual respect and concern for one another. This supports the ritual of ordered social interactions, allowing encounters between people to be relatively smooth and enjoyable, rather than disruptive and distressing (Cupach & Metts, 1994). Moreover, facework is integral to managing the challenges and dilemmas of relationships. At its best, effective face support permits us to achieve relationship nirvana. At its worst, persistent face loss can create bitter animosity and personal distress (Cupach & Metts, 1994).

Apologizing implies the speaker is to blame for some transgression that has occurred (Darby & Schlenker, 1982). An apology involves face threats to both the offended and the offender. The occurrence of an offense damages the image in of both parties involved and implies that the offender is obliged to repair the relationship (Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Kim, Ferrin, Cooper & Dirks, 2004). The offended person may feel pressured to accept an apology while the offender also may resent the offended person, especially if the offender is not solely responsible for the offense (Kim, Ferrin, Cooper & Dirks, 2004).
Politeness theory

Brown and Levinson presented politeness as a theoretical construct based on the work of Erving Goffman’s groundbreaking study of face. Politeness theory is theory of interpersonal language production asserting why people do not always speak in the most direct and efficient way possible (Holtgraves, 2002). Brown and Levinson’s (1987) classic work on politeness suggested that the motivation stems from two main desires: (1) the need to be approved by or connected to other individuals (positive face), and (2) the need to remain autonomous (negative face). Brown and Levinson (1987) maintain that individuals recognize that the maintenance of their own positive and negative face is dependent on the maintenance of others face needs. Despite the interdependent nature of social relations, however, individuals often perform actions that threaten face (Wilson, Aleman & Leatham, 1998).

According to Brown and Levinson (1987), “certain kinds of acts intrinsically threaten face.” These are known as face threatening acts; and apologies are one of the face threatening acts that are likely to threaten the face of both the speaker and the hearer. Brown and Levinson (1987) noted that the weightiness of the face threatening act can be calculated using three parameters: the social distance between the speaker and the hearer, the hearer’s power over the speaker, and the degree of imposition of the act. The relationship power factor operated as Brown and Levinson (1987) would predict in empirical research. When persons were in the higher power situation, they were more likely to use face threatening actions and less likely to employ negative and positive face redressive tactics (Baxter, 1984). The magnitude of the imposition in terms of face threat was posited as a determining factor of politeness in Brown and Levinson’s (1987) classic
theory. The variable has predictive force empirically. When persons were in a more severe situation, they were more likely to employ negative and positive face redressive tactics and less likely to use face threatening actions (Lustig & King, 1980).

Although the social distance between the speaker and the hearer was posited as a determining factor of politeness, the variable has had conflicting results in previous research. According to Baxter (1984), the direction of the effect was the opposite of that posited by Brown and Levinson (1987). The results suggested that greater politeness is used in more close, not less close, relationships (Baxter, 1984). Conversely, Fitzpatrick and Winke (1979) found that individuals in a more committed relationship generally have less concern about the strength of the relational bonds. Consequently, they employ more spontaneous, clear, and emotionally toned strategies in their relational conflicts. As commitment increases, these strategies are perceived as less risky since the cohesiveness of the relationship precludes easy termination (Fitzpatrick & Winke, 1979).

Since both the speaker and the hearer have their own face wants, the speaker attempts to reduce the potential threat in the apology by adopting certain politeness strategies. The choice of strategies varied according to the weightiness of the face threatening act. Brown and Levinson’s (1987) classified politeness strategies as follows from least polite to most polite: (1) without redressive action, baldly on record, (2) positive politeness, (3) negative politeness, and (4) off-record.

When one tries to perform the face threatening act, first he or she has to decide whether or not to perform the face threatening act (Wilson, Aleman, & Leatham, 1998). If the weightiness of the face threatening act is excessive, the speaker may choose not to perform the act. If the weightiness of the face threatening act is not too much, and the
speaker chooses to perform the face threatening act, the next decision he or she is faced with is whether to go on record (address directly) or to go off record. Off-record strategies include the use of metaphors, rhetorical questions, tautology, etc., all of which are termed as hinting (Brown & Levinson, 1987). Since off-record strategies are indirect, the speaker can soften the face threatening act by using them; however, by doing so, the speaker also runs the risk of the hearer misunderstanding the speaker’s intention.

If the speaker chooses to go on record, he/she must decide whether to perform the face threatening act using redressive action (actions that “give face” to the hearer), or without using such action (the speaker goes baldly on record) (Brown & Levinson, 1987). If the speaker judges the weightiness of the face threatening act to be sufficiently small, he or she can choose to go baldly on record and address the utterance to the hearer in the most direct manner. This strategy entails a high risk of posing a threat to the hearer’s face. Instead he or she may attempt to counteract the potential threat to the hearer’s face by using redressive action.

Redressive action can assume two forms- one is oriented toward the positive face (the need to be accepted by others) and the other is oriented toward the negative face (the need for freedom of action; Brown & Levinson, 1987). The strategy that uses the former is positive politeness and the one that uses the latter is negative politeness. Positive politeness strategies lead to expressions of sympathy and friendship, while negative politeness strategies attempt to mitigate feelings of interference and imposition. According to Fukushima (2000), these strategies of face management are universal and necessary for successful communication.

Investment model
Rusbult’s (1980) investment model is an elaboration of Thibaut and Kelley’s (1959) exchange theory. Fundamental to both theories is the assumption that individuals are generally attracted to and form relationships with those who promise the best outcomes of interaction (high rewards at low costs). Furthermore both theories postulate that satisfaction with, and attraction to, a relationship depends on the relation of the outcomes experienced in a given relationship to a comparison level. The comparison level reflects the valence of outcomes the individual has experienced in previous relationships and/or the perceptions of the valence of outcomes experienced by others similar to his or herself. Satisfying experiences fall above the comparison levels, those below are seen as unsatisfying. Greater satisfaction leads to greater commitment (Campbell & Foster, 2002).

It seems plausible to suggest that individuals stay in relationships which provide them with satisfying outcomes and leave those which do not. But as Thibaut and Kelley (1959) had already pointed out, relationship satisfaction is not the only determinant of commitment. People may walk out of relationships with which they are satisfied, if there are even better alternatives available, or they may stay in relationships which are unsatisfactory, if there are no more satisfying alternatives open to them. Thus, the degree to which partners are committed to a relationship is strongly determined by the quality of the outcomes available to them from alternative relationship (their comparison level of alternatives).

The novel contribution of the investment model is the focus on determinants of ‘relationship commitment’ – the desire or intention to maintain a given relationship (Campbell & Foster, 2002). The investment model emphasized in addition that
commitment is also affected by investment size. Investments refer to the amount that the individual has staked in the relationship (Campbell & Foster, 2002). Examples of investments would be shared friendship networks, shared resources (dwellings, bank accounts), children, and memories or time. Greater investments lead to greater commitment (Campbell & Foster, 2002). Commitment includes conative, cognitive, and affective components. The conative component of commitment is intent to persist—feelings intrinsically motivated to continue the relationship (Agnew, Van Lange, Rusbult & Langston, 1998). The cognitive component is long-term orientation—envisioning the relationship for the foreseeable future and considering the implications of current actions for future outcomes (Agnew, Van Lange, Rusbult & Langston, 1998). The affective component is psychological attachment—emotional well-being is influenced by relationship (Agnew, Van Lange, Rusbult & Langston, 1998). The more people have to lose by leaving the relationship, the more they should be committed to it. Highly invested individuals are likely to behave in ways that help to maintain the relationship (Campbell & Foster, 2002). One of the most important strategies for maintaining relationships against the threat of prolonged conflict is apologizing.

Rationale for the present study

This study is distinguished from previous work on face and politeness strategies as related to apology by examining the influence of relational investment. Brown and Levinson (1987) noted that the weightiness of the face threatening act can be calculated using the social distance between the speaker and the hearer, the hearer’s power over the speaker, and the degree of imposition of the act. The relationship factor and the magnitude of the imposition operated as Brown and Levinson (1987) would predict in
empirical research. Unfortunately, the social distance between the speaker and the hearer has been shown to have conflicting results in past research. Thus, the current study incorporates relational investment as defined by Rusbult’s (1980) investment model to measure the commitment to the relationship. This emphasis on relational investment fills a theoretical gap in the existing literature on apology, face, and politeness strategies. The investment model provides a theoretical mechanism to explain why people pursue specific face goals during an apology and choose particular politeness strategies.

As previously stated, greater investments lead to greater commitment which includes conative, cognitive, and affective components (Campbell & Foster, 2002). These components suggest that one is intrinsically motivated to continue the relationship, envisions the relationship for the foreseeable future, considers the implications of current actions on future outcomes, and is emotionally affected by the well-being of the relationship (Agnew, Van Lange, Rusbult & Langston, 1998). By performing an apology for a wrong-doing previously committed, the individual is recognizing that social rules have been broken, reaffirms the value of the rules, and controls and regulates social conduct by acknowledging the existence of interpersonal obligations. Because highly invested individuals are likely to behave in ways that help to maintain the relationship, it seems intuitive to assume that one would select an apology strategy that is considered most polite: the use of redressive action (actions that “give face” to the hearer). For example, if the offender is in a highly invested relationship that is important to maintain with the victim, the offender might choose to use a positive politeness strategy which entails expressing sympathy while showing affection, respect, and the importance of the
friendship they share. The offender should attach importance to this relationship and therefore make the decision to be as polite as possible with the victim.

**Hypotheses and research questions**

Based on the reviewed literature, an apology is a speech act that evokes face threats and face goals specific to the interpersonal interaction. An apology involves concern for the offended person’s positive face to secure a positive image. Highly invested individuals are likely to behave in ways that help to maintain the relationship. The offender should attach more importance to protecting the face of a best friend than an friend and a friend than an acquaintance because maintaining friendship usually is perceived as more important than preserving a relationship with less already invested.

Thus, the following hypotheses are posited:

- **H1**: The importance of protecting other-positive face will be greater when apologizing to a best friend than a friend.
- **H2**: The importance of protecting other-positive face will be greater when apologizing to a friend than an acquaintance.

For other-negative face concerns, the rationale is the same as for H1-H3. The goal of protecting other-negative face in apologizing is to protect the offended person’s autonomy and prevent the offended person from feeling any imposition from the offender. Thus the following hypotheses are implied:

- **H3**: The importance of protecting other-negative face will be greater when apologizing to a best friend than a friend.
- **H4**: The importance of protecting other-negative face will be greater when apologizing to a friend than an acquaintance.

The goal of protecting self-positive face when apologizing prompts the offender to seek forgiveness from the offended person and to maintain his or her image. Thus the following hypotheses are proposed:
**H5:** The importance of protecting self-positive face will be greater when apologizing to a best friend than a friend.

**H6:** The importance of protecting self-positive face will be greater when apologizing to a friend than an acquaintance.

The goal of protecting self-negative face in apologizing is to protect the offender’s autonomy and prevent the offender from feeling an imposition to apologize for the transgression and indebted to the offended person. Because highly invested individuals are likely to behave in ways that help to maintain the relationship, the concern for self-negative face is expected to be greatest when apologizing to an acquaintance than to a friend, and greater when apologizing to a friend than to a best friend.

**H7:** The importance of protecting self-negative face will be greater when apologizing to an acquaintance than to a friend.

**H8:** The importance of protecting self-negative face will be greater when apologizing to a friend than to a best friend.

Based on the reviewed literature specific strategies selected are expected to differ based on the characteristics of the relationship between the offender and the victim. Highly invested individuals are likely to behave in ways that help to maintain the relationship. Therefore it is inferred that because maintaining friendship is usually seen as more important than preserving a relationship with someone you are less invested, the offender should attach more importance to being polite with a best friend than a friend and with a friend than an acquaintance. Thus, the following hypotheses are posited:

**H9:** The importance of being polite will be greater when apologizing to a best friend than to a friend.

**H10:** The importance of being polite will be greater when apologizing to a friend than to an acquaintance.

Research would assume that politeness and face would be related, but it has not been empirically tested. Therefore, the research questions are posited to ascertain the relationship between politeness strategies and face goals:
RQ1: Does positive politeness correlate with concern for positive face?
RQ2: Does positive politeness correlate with concern for negative face?
RQ3: Does negative politeness correlate with concern for positive face?
RQ4: Does negative politeness correlate with concern for negative face?
Chapter 2

METHODS

Pre-Test

A pre-test of four apology scenarios adopted from Han and Cai (2005) was conducted to test which two scenarios students felt were the most realistic and believable (see Appendix A). The scenarios in the pre-test were descriptions in which relationship between the offender and the victim was not disclosed. The pre-test was distributed to an introductory communication class of 37 students. Participants responded to three five-point Likert-type items asking whether the particular scenario was believable and realistic. Based on the means of the Likert items (see Table 1), the two scenarios that were most believable and realistic were the scenarios that dealt with turning in a paper late and the scenario that discusses forgetting to return exam notes. To represent the independent variable, three versions of each scenario were written, with the relationship between offender and the offended person manipulated to be same sex best friend, same sex friend, or same sex acquaintance.
Table 1: Scenario Pre-test: Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Descriptive Statistics</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late Paper</td>
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<td>Believable</td>
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<td>Happen to me</td>
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<td>1.10</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>Unrealistic</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happen to me</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>37</td>
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Dependent Variables

Manipulation checks. Two items asked whether the particular scenario in that version of the questionnaire was believable and realistic. Next, three five-point Likert-type scale items measured the relationship with the offended person (e.g., “I value my friendship with Terry”; see Appendix C).

Face concerns. Sixteen five-point Likert-scale items were adapted from Cai and Wilson (2000) measured the offender’s face concerns when apologizing to the offended person (see Appendix D): four items measured other-positive face (e.g., “How importance would it be for you to help Terry’s positive image?”), four items measured other-negative face (e.g., “How important would it be for you to leave Terry a choice about whether of not to accept your apology?”), four items measured self-positive face (e.g., “How important would it be for you to be forgiven by Terry?”), and four items measured self-negative face (e.g., “How important would it be for you to avoid feeling like you owed Terry?”).
Politeness strategies. Forty five-point Likert-scale items prepared by the author measured the offender’s likelihood to select certain apology strategies when apologizing to the offended person: ten items were without redressive action – baldly on record (e.g., “I’m sorry.”), ten items were positive politeness apologies (e.g., “You are such a great person and I would hate to lose you as a person I truly value in my life.”), ten items were negative politeness apologies (e.g., “I am so sorry I created such a problem and added to all the demands you have. I don’t want to bother you anymore, but please think about accepting my apology.”), and ten items were off-record apologies (e.g., “This stinks.”). The apology utterances were checked graduate communication students to make sure that the utterances reflected the categories.

Procedures

The participants were 385 undergraduates from introductory communication classes at a large eastern university in the United States. Participants were assigned one of the six scenarios. After reading the scenario they completed the questionnaire. The questionnaire took approximately 15 minutes to complete. The participants received a small amount of extra credit for participating in the study, and they completed the questionnaires outside of class at their own leisure.

Reliability of the scales for dependent variables

Manipulation checks. All participants perceived the scenarios as moderately believable and realistic (believable: $M = 2.2623$, unrealistic: $M = 3.4804$). Participants found no significant differences in the perceptions of believability and realism across the scenarios. All participants also responded to three statements which served as checks of the relationship manipulation. The first statement was “I value my relationship with
Terry.” Best friends responded most favorably ($M = 1.7750$), then friends ($M = 1.9714$), followed by acquaintances ($M = 2.7500$). The second statement was “I regard my relationship with Terry as long term.” Best friends responded most favorably ($M = 1.7311$), then friends ($M = 2.3643$), followed by acquaintances ($M = 3.6960$). The third statement was “I am strongly committed to my relationship with Terry.” Best friends responded most favorably ($M = 2.0588$), then friends ($M = 2.5683$), followed by acquaintances ($M = 2.7572$).

Face scales. A confirmatory factor analysis was used to examine whether the Han and Cai (2005) scales divided into four subscales as expected. Other-positive face items with loadings of .804, .769, .857, and .883 respectively loaded clearly on one dimension. Self-positive face items with loadings of .708, .889, .955, and .849 respectively loaded clearly on one dimension. Self-negative face scale items with loadings of .637, .745, .822, and .592 respectively loaded clearly on one dimension. In addition, principal component analysis revealed that all of these items loaded on separate dimensions; table 2 indicates the reliability coefficients (Cronbach’s $\alpha$) for all three face subscales. In contrast, the other-negative face items did not load into a clear clean factor; subsequently they were removed from analysis.
Politeness items. A confirmatory factor analysis was used to examine whether the 40 apology strategies divided into meaningful dimensions. Of the ten direct apology items, four items (“I’m sorry,” “I made a mistake and I’m sorry,” “I’m very sorry,” and “I really screwed this up and I’m sorry”) appeared on the same dimension with factor loadings of .727, .721, .669, and .570 respectively. A preliminary factor analysis suggested that positive politeness and negative politeness apology items were understood to be similar among respondents; consequently the two types were combined into one construct. Seven of twenty politeness items (“You are such a great person and I would hate to lose you as a person I truly value in my life,” “You have been so great to me and I hate that I have disappointed you; I am so sorry,” “You didn’t deserve to be treated so poorly considering how great of a person you are; I am sorry,” “You are so wonderful and have been so great to me, please let me make this up to you,” “I really enjoy the time I spend with you and I hope our relationship doesn’t change as a result of what I’ve done,” “I know I haven’t done things that let you know how important you are to me, but if you forgive me I promise I will make this up to you,” and “I hope that someday in the future you can give me an opportunity to make this up to you.”) appeared in the same dimension with factor loadings of .853, .821, .775, .741, .706, .681, and .621 respectively. Five of ten off-record apology items (“Not good,” “This is not good, huh?”, “Things are bad, huh?”, “This is a sticky situation,” and “This stinks.”) showed up in the same dimension with factor loadings of .866, .785, .770, .742, and .771 respectively. The five items

Table 2: Reliability (Cronbach’s α) of Face Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Face Scale (number of items)</th>
<th>Cronbach’s α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other-positive (4)</td>
<td>.885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-negative (4)</td>
<td>.908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-positive (4)</td>
<td>.780</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
loadings over .550 were retained. Thus, five items were dropped from the final scale for indirect apology. A principal component analysis demonstrated that the remaining strategies loaded on separate dimensions as expected. The results supported the internal reliability. Table 3 indicates the reliability coefficients (Cronbach’s α).

**Table 3: Reliability (Cronbach’s α) of Apology Scales**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Apology Scale (number of items)</th>
<th>Cronbach’s α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct apology (4)</td>
<td>.710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politeness apology (7)</td>
<td>.881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indirect apology (5)</td>
<td>.886</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Statistical analysis. Hypothesis 1 through 8 were tested with data generated by scales assessing the face concerns (e.g., self positive face, self negative face, other positive face) as related to level of investment in the relationship. These data were examined with a 3 x 3 x 2 mixed model analysis of variance (ANOVA). The between groups factor were level of investment in the relationship (best friend, friend, acquaintance) and scenario (late paper, forgetting exam notes). The within groups factor was the face concern (self positive face, self negative face, other positive face). Table 4 indicates the cell means for this analysis. Hypothesis 9 and 10 were tested with data generated by scales assessing the apology utterances for level of politeness (e.g., without redressive action baldly on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record) as related to level of investment in the relationship. These data were examined with a 3 x 3 x 2 mixed model analysis of variance (ANOVA). The between groups factor were level of investment in the relationship (best friend, friend, acquaintance) and scenario (late paper, forgetting exam notes). The within groups factor was the apology utterances for
level of politeness (e.g., without redressive action, baldly on record, positive politeness, negative politeness, off-record). Table 5 indicates the cell means for this analysis.

Given the sample size of 385 and a significance level of .05, post-hoc power analyses using the program G*power (Faul, F., Erdfelder, E., Lang, A.-G., & Buchner, A., 2007) were executed for ANOVA for the hypothesis proposed. A small real world effect size (.20) produced the power of .87. When the effect size was increased to a medium level (.50) power was 1.00 and at a large level (.80) resulting power was 1.00.

Given that positive and negative politeness showed no differentiation within the factor analysis they were treated as a single variable. This necessitates reframing my research questions to reflect the new variable structure. Reframe to write positive politeness and negative politeness as politeness. For the research questions, post-hoc test (N=385) a small effect size (.10) produced the power of .63. When the effect size was increased to a medium level (.30) power was 1.00, and at a large effect size (.50) power was 1.00.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Descriptive Statistics</th>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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### Table 5: Cell Means of Apology Scales

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Chapter 3

RESULTS

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1 predicted that the importance of protecting other-positive face will be greater when apologizing to a best friend than a friend. Hypothesis 2 predicted that the importance of protecting other-positive face will be greater when apologizing to a friend than an acquaintance. The ANOVA detected a statistically significant main effect for the factor of level of investment in the relationship, $F(1, 385) = 8.58, p < 0.001$ and no scenario effect. Best friends reported a greater concern for protecting other-positive face ($M = 1.63/1.88$) than did friends ($M = 1.94/2.13$), which was greater in turn than acquaintances ($M = 2.54/2.33$).

Hypothesis 3 predicted that the importance of protecting other-negative face will be greater when apologizing to a best friend than a friend. Hypothesis 4 predicted that the importance of protecting other-negative face will be greater when apologizing to a friend than an acquaintance. As noted previously, the other-negative face scale did not load into a clear clean factor; subsequently it was removed from analysis. As a consequence, hypotheses 3 and 4 could not be tested.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that the importance of protecting self-positive face will be greater when apologizing to a best friend than to a friend. Hypothesis 6 predicted that the importance of protecting self-positive face will be greater when apologizing to a friend
than an acquaintance. The ANOVA detected a statistically significant main effect for the factor of level of investment in the relationship, $F (1, 385) = 8.58, p < 0.001$ and no scenario effect. Best friends reported a greater concern for protecting self-positive face ($M = 1.59/1.62$) than did friends ($M = 1.87/1.90$), which is greater in turn than for acquaintances ($M = 2.45/2.55$).

Hypothesis 7 predicted that the importance of protecting self-negative face will be greater when apologizing to an acquaintance than to a friend. Hypothesis 8 predicted that the importance of protecting self-negative face will be greater when apologizing to a friend than a best friend. The ANOVA failed to detect a statistically significant $F$ score. Acquaintances ($M = 2.74/2.76$), friends ($M = 2.80/2.70$), and best friends ($M = 2.81/2.66$) reported the same concern for protecting self-negative face.

Hypothesis 9 predicted that the importance of being polite will be greater when apologizing to a best friend than to a friend. Hypothesis 10 predicted that the importance of being polite will be greater when apologizing to a friend than to an acquaintance. The ANOVA detected a statistically significant main effect for the factor of level of investment in the relationship, $F (1, 385) = 11.00, p < 0.001$ and no scenario effect. A post hoc comparison revealed that the estimated marginal mean score for acquaintance was significantly more than either group, driving the significant main effect. Best friends ($M = 1.88/1.69$), friends ($M = 1.74/1.68$), and acquaintances ($M = 1.80/1.84$) reported a similar likelihood of selecting a bald on record apology. Best friends ($M = 4.51/4.33$), friends ($M = 4.33/4.22$), and acquaintances ($M = 4.27/4.18$) reported a similar likelihood of selecting an off-record apology. Best friends ($M = 2.30/2.62$) and friends ($M = 2.64/2.67$) reported a similar likelihood of selecting a face concern apology, but both
were significantly higher than acquaintance (M = 3.53/3.40). Thus it is this last type of apology that was driving the results of this analysis.

Research Questions

Research Question 1: Research question 1 asks if politeness correlates with concern for self-positive face. The two items were positively correlated, $r(385) = .483, p < .01$.

Research Question 2: Research question 2 asks if politeness correlates with concern for other-positive face. The two items were positively correlated, $r(385) = .506, p < .001$.

Research Question 3: Research question 3 asks if politeness correlates with concern for self-negative face. The two items were not correlated, $r(385) = -.002, p = .967$. 
Chapter 4

DISCUSSION

This study plays a key role in determining whether actual conceptualizations of face and politeness in the context of apology correspond with existing theory and approaches to the variable. The current findings show that in some ways, participants conceptualize face just as Brown and Levinson suggested. Brown and Levinson (1987) identified two types of face needs to which individuals are assumed to attend. Positive face refers to one’s desire for acceptance and approval from others while negative face, by contrast, refers to one’s desire for autonomy and freedom from imposition. Face needs are assumed to operate in all contexts.

Consistent with this view, this study found that participants did attend to positive face needs. The results of this study show how the investment in the relationship between the offender and the offended person influences the offender’s concern for self- and other- positive face when apologizing to the offended person for a relational offense. There was support for H1 and H2 that predicted that the importance of protecting other-positive face will be greater when apologizing to a best friend than a friend and to a friend than an acquaintance. In support of H5 and H6, it was found that the importance of protecting self-positive face will be greater when apologizing to a best friend than a friend and to a friend than an acquaintance.
An apology involves concern for the offended person’s positive face (other-positive face) to maintain his or her image. The goal of protecting self-positive face when apologizing prompts the offender to seek forgiveness from the offended person and secure a positive image in the eyes of the victim. Highly invested individuals are likely to behave in ways that help to maintain the relationship. The offender attaches a high level of importance on protecting the face of a best friend than a friend and a friend than an acquaintance. The offender also looks to ensure a positive image in the eyes of the offended. This adds to the reviewed literature on apologies stating that specific face goals differ based on the level of investment in the relationship. As well as clearly showing that participants’ ratings of importance of maintaining positive face in the context of apology correspond with existing theoretical underpinnings.

Although, as evidenced above, there is overlap between theory and research findings, there are also substantial differences. In line with Brown and Levinson’s previous research, it was hypothesized that the relationship between the offender and the offended has a positive relationship with other-negative face but a negative relationship with self-negative face concern. As noted previously, the other-negative face scale was unreliable and removed from analysis (H3 and H4). Non-significant relationships were found between relational investment and self-negative face concern revealing no difference between best friends, friends and acquaintances concern for protecting self-negative face (H7 and H8).

Brown and Levinson (1987) present a theory based on two types of universal face needs: positive face needs and negative face needs. The goal of protecting self-negative face in apologizing is to protect the offender’s autonomy and prevent the offender from
feeling obligated and in debt to the offended person. In this study however, results suggest that there is little concern across all levels of relational investment for respecting the offender’s autonomy or desire to be free from constraints and imposition when apologizing. Within this particular realm these results suggest that the offender is only concerned with positive face needs.

One explanation for this finding is that when the offender is apologizing the offender is concerned with negative face but forgoes the concerns to be at the disposal of the offended. A second explanation is that Brown and Levinson’s two types of face needs are not universal. Research shows that positive face needs and negative face needs do exist, however this study suggests that in certain contexts one might chose to concern themselves with only one face need. Another explanation for this finding is the construction of the negative face scale items. This lack of distinction as seen among respondents could be the result of poor measures, but could also be the result that Brown and Levinson’s distinction isn’t recognized by lay people.

The study hypothesized that the importance of being polite will be greater when apologizing to a best friend than to a friend and to a friend than to an acquaintance (H9 and H10). Non-significant relationships were found between politeness and relational investment except best friends and friends reported a much higher likelihood of selecting a face concern apology than acquaintances.

Although the social distance between the speaker and the hearer was posited as a determining factor of politeness, the variable has had conflicting results in previous research. As stated previously Brown and Levinson (1987) proposed that individuals in a more committed relationship are less concerned about being polite to one another.
According to Baxter (1984) however, the direction of the effect was the opposite of that posited by Brown and Levinson. Conversely, Fitzpatrick and Winke (1979) found exactly what was proposed by Brown and Levinson. One possible explanation for why Fitzpatrick and Winke (1979) found results supporting Brown and Levinson theory is that their study dealt with conflict. Again, because of these conflicting results further research was needed to determine the relationship between social distance and politeness.

The results of the current study indicate the direction of the effect was the opposite of that posited by Brown and Levinson (1987). The results suggest that greater politeness is used in more close, not less close, relationships. Individuals in a more committed relationship have a high level of concern about the strength of the relational bonds. Consequently, they employ an apology with redressive action to reduce the potential threat in the apology. As commitment increases, strategies with redressive action are perceived as more appropriate to maintain the cohesiveness of the relationship.

Another substantial difference between theory and research findings is that participants failed to see a distinction between the level of politeness in positive and negative politeness statements. Research suggests that the inclusion of redressive action is what determines the level of politeness. One possible explanation for this finding might be the use of a heuristic. Heuristics are simple, “rules of thumb” which allow people to make quick decisions and judgments, and solve problems. One commonly used heuristic is the duration heuristic which evaluates services based on the length of time rather than on the content (Yeung & Soman, 2007). This would suggest to a participant that the more words an apology contains, the more polite the apology is regardless of its
content. Apologies including redressive action are lengthier messages and might explain why those are seen as being more polite.

Research would assume that politeness and face would be related, but it has not been empirically tested. Politeness is correlated with concern for self-positive and other-positive face (RQ1 and RQ2). Politeness was not correlated with concern for self-negative face (RQ 3). One would assume that people employing politeness strategies do so as a way of trying to accomplish face related goals. This was seen in the results that politeness is correlated with concern for self-positive and other-positive face. In future research it would be important to further test the relationship between politeness and attaining certain face goals.

Understanding lay conception of apologizing and matching theory with research findings has important implications for the measurement of politeness and face needs. In addition to meeting research needs, understanding apology can guide individuals toward being more skillful when they are apologizing. An important step in apology research is to describe what people actually say when they apologize and to compare these utterances to expert categories of apologies such as direct apologies, negative and positive politeness apologies, and indirect apologies. A second important step is to understand how people evaluate the politeness of actual utterances. Lastly, understanding how people apologize and how others view the appropriateness of the apology may help develop improved skills and techniques when apologizing after a transgression.

Limitations and Future Directions

One limitation of this research was that there was no collection of gender, because of this it is unknown if there was an equal number of males and females in each
condition. Coates (1998) addresses that two separate lines of linguistic inquiry have yield results which suggest that women are “more polite” than men. Holmes (1989) found that women are, in general, more likely to apologize for a transgression than men, and they are apologized to more frequently than men are. Women apologized more for interfering with someone’s personal space, interrupting, taking up too much of the available talking time, or not hearing what the other person said (Holmes, 1989). Holmes (1989) also found some support for the suggestion that women and men weight offences differently – that women apologize more readily than men. Future research should examine gender as a variable affecting politeness and face in the context of apology.

A second limitation of this research was that there was no collection of age. Although the participants were all undergraduates from introductory communication classes, the exact age of the participants is unknown. Previous research regarding age and politeness suggest that the capacity to maintain good interactions by increasing politeness occurs at a later age (Axia & Baroni, 1985). Future research should explicitly study age as a variable affecting politeness and face in the context of apology.

A third limitation is that the current study relied on scenarios to elicit responses. Although the pre-test results suggested that the scenarios were believable and realist, participants were assigned a situation created for the study. Participants were then asked to imagine themselves causing the transgression and needing to apologize for the wrongdoing. This could have proved difficult for some participants to assume the role of the offender and the face threats that follow from that role. Future research should allow participants to recount a situation in which they apologized and measure face threats, face concerns, face goals, and politeness both through the use of scales and by coding.
conversations.

A fourth limitation is that data collection did not include a truly random assignment to scenarios in this study. Forms were distributed in class and the students were asked to return them within the week. A truly random assignment, involving pre-identified ID numbers and a random number generator was not feasible in this study. However, the order of distribution of the scenarios for each condition was randomized, so that each stack of questionnaires distributed in the class contained a randomly ordered selection of the questionnaires for each scenario. There was no opportunity for participants to self-select into any of the scenarios, and each participant’s assignment was based on whichever randomly ordered questionnaire he or she took as they were distributed. This strategy provided some degree of randomization, although it did not allow for conditions with equal cell sizes.

Another limitation to this study was the use of inferential statistics without the use of a random sample. Using the sample collected violates the assumptions of inferential statistics because there is no inferential context. The use of inferential statistics and non-random samples is a noteworthy limitation of this study.

Additional research should explore the theoretical as well as methodological implications of investment. Communicators participate in a range of communication situations, and they also draw conclusions from observations of best friends, friends, and acquaintances. The current research suggests that investment influences the perceptions of communication. However, future research is needed to substantiate the patterns revealed by this research.

Although the present study and previous studies are helpful for illuminating the
investment level that shapes specific instances of interpersonal forgiving, there is a lack of research examining the personality variables and cognitive processes that predict the likelihood of to apologize or the likelihood to forgiveness. Future research might focus on developing or refining instruments for operationalizing willingness to apologize and willingness to forgive at both the relationship and personality levels, later allowing the examination of the associations between personality traits and cognitive processes (McCullough et. al, 1998).
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Pre-Test Scenarios and Free Response

Believable/Realistic
1. The scenario was believable.
   Not believable  1  2  3  4  5 Believable
2. The scenario was unrealistic.
   Unrealistic 1  2  3  4  5 Realistic
3. I could envision a situation like this happening to me.
   Strongly agree 1  2  3  4  5 Strongly disagree

Pretest Scenarios
Scenario 1: Turn in Paper Late Situation

   Terry had to go back home on Sunday night for one week due to a family emergency. Just before departure, Terry finished a final paper for a course he/she took and begged you to turn it in. Terry told you that the deadline was Thursday morning at ten. You were so occupied with your own final exam schedule that you missed the Thursday morning deadline. It turned out that the professor for Terry’s class made it extremely clear that late work would indicate failure on that assignment. As a result, Terry received a very low grade in the course. Terry was devastated. You decide to apologize to Terry.

Scenario 2: Forgot to Return Exam Notes Situation

   The professor made it clear that the final exam would account for sixty percent of the overall grade and careful notes in class would be crucial to success on the final exam. You approach the professor because you had missed a few days of the course. The professor tells you that Terry had done an excellent job taking notes. The professor told you to contact Terry to borrow Terry’s notes. You follow your professor’s instructions, meet up with Terry, and exchange notes. You were so busy during the final exam period that you forgot to return Terry’s notes and instead thought you had returned them to Terry. Late at night before the final exam, you found Terry’s notes. Because you studied that evening at a friend’s apartment, Terry couldn’t have reached you. Terry didn’t have the notes to prepare and did poorly on the exam as a result. Terry was devastated about getting a very low grade for the overall course. You decided to apologize to Terry.
Scenario 3: Forgot Computer Situation

You are taking a class with Terry and have been assigned as partners for a project. You and Terry have to present a topic of your choice to the class and need visual aides to accompany your presentation. You both decided that a powerpoint would be most effective. You volunteered to make the powerpoint since you have the most experience with that computer program and you decided you will bring your laptop to class the day of the presentation. During finals week, you were bogged down with other schoolwork, lost track of time, and forget to not only make the powerpoint, but you also forgot to bring your computer to class the day of your presentation with Terry. You and Terry did poorly on the final presentation as a result. Since the final presentation was worth sixty percent of your final grade, you both ended up receiving a very low grade for the class. You decide to apologize to Terry.

Scenario 4: Memory Stick

One day, you met Terry in the library when you were desperate to find a computer and revise your paper due in a couple of hours. You were working at a computer that was not attached to the printing system. You borrowed Terry's memory stick and promised to return it as soon as you printed your paper. After revising your paper, you felt relaxed and began to surf the internet. Attempted by curiosity, you surfed in a web page you should not open in the first place. The page turned out to contain a C.I.H. virus. The virus attacked Terry’s memory stick and wiped out all the documents in the hard disk. These documents included important papers that Terry wrote but didn’t have a backup copy of. This was an irreparable loss for Terry. You decide to apologize to Terry.

Utterances

1. How likely are you to use the following in an actual apology message?

“I’m sorry.”
“I know that I messed up and I’m sorry.”
“I really screwed this up and I’m sorry.”
“I apologize for what happened.”
“I’m sorry for what I have done.”
“I’m very sorry.”
“I sincerely apologize.”
“I did something really stupid and I’m sorry.”
“I truly apologize.”
“I made a mistake and I’m sorry.”
“I really value our relationship and would hate for this to damage your opinion of me.”
“You are such a great person and I would hate to lose you as a person I truly value in my life.”
“I really enjoy the time I spend with you and I hope our relationship doesn’t change as a result of what I’ve done.”
“You didn’t deserve this and I am so sorry.”
“I know I haven’t done things that let you know how important you are to me, but if you forgive me I promise I will make this up to you.”
“You are really important to me and I want to apologize and move past this.”
“You are so wonderful and have been so great to me, please let me make this up to you.”
“You would never do this to me and I am so sorry I have let you down.”
“You have been so great to me and I hate that I have disappointed you; I am so sorry.”
“You didn’t deserve to be treated so poorly considering how great of a person you are; I am sorry.”
“I know you are upset with me right now and I don’t want to bother you anymore, but I hope you can forgive me.”
“I hope that someday in the future you can give me an opportunity to make this up to you.”
“I don’t want to inconvenience you any further, but please think about accepting my apology.”
“It is totally your choice about whether to forgive me or not, but I hope you consider it.”
“I know that you need time to think and I want to afford you the time and space you need, but please forgive me.”
“I know you have other things going on and this is the last thing you needed. I am so sorry for adding to that.”
“I know this was a burden to you and I am sorry I got in the way.”
“I am sorry about this hassle and wasting your time.”
“I am so sorry I created such a problem and added to all the demands you have. I don’t want to bother you anymore, but please think about accepting my apology.”
“I am sorry and I hope some day you can get over it.”
“This is an awful situation.”
“I wouldn’t wish this on my worst enemy.”
“This is not good, huh?”
“I know you are upset.”
“This stinks.”
“Things are bad, huh?”
“Not good.”
“This is terrible.”
“I know that this is a bad situation.”
“This is a sticky situation.”
APPENDIX B

Six Scenarios (Adapted from Cai & Wilson, 2000)

Best Friend
Scenario 1:

You and Terry have been classmates and best friends for three years. You spend most of your day with Terry and confide in Terry with everything. Terry has been there for you through tough times and when you needed someone. Terry has also celebrated your successes with you. You cherish your friendship with Terry and regard Terry as a long-term friend. Terry had to go back home on Sunday night for one week due to a family emergency. Just before departure, Terry finished a final paper for a course he/she took and begged you to turn it in. Terry told you that the deadline was Thursday morning at ten. You were so occupied with your own final exam schedule that you missed the Thursday morning deadline. It turned out that the professor for Terry’s class made it extremely clear that late work would indicate failure on that assignment. As a result, Terry received a very low grade in the course. Terry was devastated. You decide to apologize to Terry.

Friend
Scenario 2:

You and Terry have been classmates and friends for a year. You frequently interact in and out of class, but normally in a group setting. You enjoy hanging out with Terry and have a lot of fun with Terry. You enjoy having Terry as a friend and hope to have Terry in your life in the future. Terry had to go back home on Sunday night for one week due to a family emergency. Just before departure, Terry finished a final paper for a course he/she took and begged you to turn it in. Terry told you that the deadline was Thursday morning at ten. You were so occupied with your own final exam schedule that you missed the Thursday morning deadline. It turned out that the professor for Terry’s class made it extremely clear that late work would indicate failure on that assignment. As a result, Terry received a very low grade in the course. Terry was devastated. You decide to apologize to Terry.

Acquaintance
Scenario 3:

You don’t know Terry very well apart from seeing Terry in a course you are taking. You don’t think that you will ever take another course with Terry again. You
regard your relationship with Terry as short-term. Terry had to go back home on Sunday night for one week due to a family emergency. Just before departure, Terry finished a final paper for a course he/she took and begged you to turn it in. Terry told you that the deadline was Thursday morning at ten. You were so occupied with your own final exam schedule that you missed the Thursday morning deadline. It turned out that the professor for Terry’s class made it extremely clear that late work would indicate failure on that assignment. As a result, Terry received a very low grade in the course. Terry was devastated. You decide to apologize to Terry.

Best Friend
Scenario 4:

You and Terry have been classmates and best friends for three years. You spend most of your day with Terry and confide in Terry with everything. Terry has been there for you through tough times and when you needed someone. Terry has also celebrated your successes with you. You cherish your friendship with Terry and regard Terry as a long-term friend. The professor made it clear that the final exam would account for sixty percent of the overall grade and careful notes in class would be crucial to success on the final exam. You knew Terry had done an excellent job taking notes whereas your notes were not as well prepared. You borrowed Terry’s notes to make a copy. You were so busy during final exam period that you forgot to return Terry’s notes and instead thought you had returned them to Terry. Late at night before the final exam, you found Terry’s notes. Because you studied that evening at a friend’s apartment, Terry couldn’t have reached you. Terry didn’t have the notes to prepare and did poorly on the exam as a result. Terry was devastated about getting a very low grade for the overall course. You decided to apologize to Terry.

Friend
Scenario 5:

You and Terry have been classmates and friends for a year. You frequently interact in and out of class, but normally in a group setting. You enjoy hanging out with Terry and have a lot of fun with Terry. You enjoy having Terry as a friend and hope to have Terry in your life in the future. The professor made it clear that the final exam would account for sixty percent of the overall grade and careful notes in class would be crucial to success on the final exam. You knew Terry had done an excellent job taking notes whereas your notes were not as well prepared. You borrowed Terry’s notes to make a copy. You were so busy during final exam period that you forgot to return Terry’s notes and instead thought you had returned them to Terry. Late at night before the final exam, you found Terry’s notes. Because you studied that evening at a friend’s apartment, Terry couldn’t have reached you. Terry didn’t have the notes to prepare and did poorly on the exam as a result. Terry was devastated about getting a very low grade for the overall course. You decided to apologize to Terry.
Acquaintance
Scenario 6:

You don’t know Terry very well apart from seeing Terry in a course you are taking. You don’t think that you will ever take another course with Terry again. You regard your relationship with Terry as short-term. The professor made it clear that the final exam would account for sixty percent of the overall grade and careful notes in class would be crucial to success on the final exam. You knew Terry had done an excellent job taking notes whereas your notes were not as well prepared. You borrowed Terry’s notes to make a copy. You were so busy during final exam period that you forgot to return Terry’s notes and instead thought you had returned them to Terry. Late at night before the final exam, you found Terry’s notes. Because you studied that evening at a friend’s apartment, Terry couldn’t have reached you. Terry didn’t have the notes to prepare and did poorly on the exam as a result. Terry was devastated about getting a very low grade for the overall course. You decided to apologize to Terry.
APPENDIX C

Manipulation Checks

Believable/Realistic
1. The scenario was believable.
2. The scenario was unrealistic.

Relationship
3. I value my relationship with Terry.
4. I regard my relationship with Terry as long term.
5. I am strongly committed to my relationship with Terry.
APPENDIX D

Items Retained for Face Scales (Adapted from Cai & Wilson, 2000)

Other-Positive Face

1. How important would it be for you to help maintain Terry’s positive image?
2. How important would it be for you to let Terry know that you thought highly of him/her?
3. How important would it be for you to make sure that Terry was not perceived negatively?
4. How important would it be for you to make sure that Terry doesn’t look bad?

Other-Negative Face

1. How important would it be for you to leave Terry a choice about whether or not to accept your apology?
2. How important would it be for you to keep from imposing too much on Terry?
3. How important would it be for you to appear humble to preserve your relationship?
4. How important would it be for you to maintain Terry’s pride?

Self-Positive Face

1. How important would it be for you to be forgiven by Terry?
2. How important would it be for you to keep a positive image in Terry’s eyes?
3. How important would it be for you to make sure that Terry still thought highly of you?
4. How important would it be for you to avoid damaging Terry’s impression of you?

Self-Negative Face

1. How important would it be for you to keep yourself from feeling like you were in debt to Terry?
2. How important would it be for you to protect your personal pride?
3. How important would it be for you to avoid feeling like you owed Terry?
4. How important would it be for you not to appear weak in front of Terry?