

Apologies and Apologetic Attitude in Early Modern English

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1. Introduction

One of the speech acts in human language which has attracted the attention of scholars dealing with social and cultural patterns in language is apologies. In this paper I will discuss apologizing in the Early Modern English period. The present study is based on a preliminary version of the Corpus of English Dialogues 1560-1760 (CED). The corpus (see Culpeper and Kytö 1997) is divided into five subperiods: 1560-1599, 1600-1639, 1640-1679, 1680-1719, 1720-1760. The corpus is also divided into five different subcategories of text-types: trials, witness depositions (written records of spoken interaction), drama, fiction, and didactic works (constructed spoken interaction), the latter including language-learning texts. In May 2001 the corpus totalled 1,305,703 words.

Although I will investigate different forms of apologies, boosting, text-type distribution, and politeness, the focus will be on the strategies and functions of the apology expressions *sorry* and *pardon*. Comparisons with studies of apologizing in Present-day English are made (especially Aijmer 1996), partly in order to obtain a diachronic view, and partly because the topic has not yet been given much attention in historical studies.

Classical speech act theory defines and classifies apologizing according to felicity conditions for its seemingly most prototypical realizations, ie an apologetic performative verb and/or an expression of regret. Furthermore, apologies are commonly seen as a ritual, allowing an offender to act as if a ritual equilibrium is being restored (see eg Goffman 1976: 68). However, the main contributions in the 1980's and 1990's to the pragmatics of apologizing are not based on introspection, but on natural data. Olshtain and Cohen (1983) define apologizing as a culture-sensitive speech act set of semantic formulae or strategies. This sociolinguistic model was also

successfully applied by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) in the Cross-Cultural Study of Speech-Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) project. A very recent study on apologies in the British National Corpus shows that there is social variation in apologizing in Present-day English; for instance, those of the middle class apologize more often than the working class do, and younger people apologize more often than older people (Deutschmann 2003: 205).

When discussing apologies, the concept of politeness, which in recent decades has become central in the discussion of human interaction, must be considered. Brown and Levinson's (1987) theory of avoidance-based negative politeness and solidarity-based positive politeness is very important, but it is problematic in some ways. An apology expression is an IFID (Illocutionary Force Indicating Device) used as a strategy to express regret, to offer an apology or to request forgiveness. It may seem obvious that it is polite to use these strategies but in fact, there seems to be very little agreement among researchers about what exactly politeness is (Fraser 1990), nor does the concept of face seem to be universally applicable (Matsumoto 1988). Brown and Levinson (1987: 187) treat apologies as an intrinsically negative politeness strategy and consequently, from the speaker's perspective, the apology is an FTA (face threatening act) which damages his positive face (Brown and Levinson 1987: 68, 76). In other words, an apology is face-saving for the hearer and face-threatening for the speaker in Brown and Levinson's terms. Still, it is not evident what face-threatening and face-saving mean for different language groups, as Suszczyńska (1999: 1055) points out. Likewise we may assume that the modern concept of face is not directly applicable in different historical periods.

2. *Forms of apologies*

Apologies are sets of relatively fixed expressions, consisting of verbs (eg *apologize*, *excuse*, *pardon*), adjectives, (eg *sorry*, *afraid*) and nouns (eg *pardon*). All of these, with modifications and expansions, are found both in the CED and by Aijmer in Present day English (Aijmer 1996: 84). Nevertheless, there are differences in the frequencies of the apology-expressions between Modern and Early Modern English. In Aijmer's (1996) study of the London-Lund Corpus (LLC) a vast majority of the apology-expressions, 83.7 % were made up of *sorry* or *I'm sorry*. It should be noted that any comparison between data from the LLC and the CED must take the differences of content, and methods of compiling the corpora into consideration. The spoken interaction in the CED has all

been filtered by writers and printers, whereas the LLC contains non-filtered (authentic) speech. In the CED, the apology-expressions occur as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. CED apology-expressions.

Expression	raw frequency	percentage
<i>I apologize</i>	1	
<i>excuse me</i>	56	16.5%
<i>forgive me</i>	44	12.9%
<i>(I beg (your)) pardon (me)</i>	156	45.9%
<i>(I am) sorry</i>	42	12.3%
<i>(I am) afraid</i>	39	11.9%
Total	338	

Interestingly, the most frequent expression in the CED is *pardon*, making up 45.9% of the apology-expressions. The expressions *excuse me* (16.5%), *forgive me* (12.9%) and *sorry* (12.3%) have similar frequencies. Notably, *sorry* is slightly less frequent than *forgive me* and *excuse me*.

In Present-day English represented by the London-Lund Corpus, the expression *pardon* only occurs in situations where a person has not heard what was said (Aijmer 1996: 84), but it seems that the Early Modern *pardon* was the general purpose apology-expression of that period. The high frequency of *pardon* will be discussed further below. Other patterns found in the CED are the hedging devices *I'm afraid* and *(I) regret(s)*. These occur sparingly in the Present-day English data (Aijmer 1996: 849) but are possibly more frequent in the CED (Aijmer gives no frequencies for these expressions). *I'm afraid* occurs as an apology, or at least with an apologetic attitude, 39 times (11.9 %) which may be presumed to be more than in Aijmer's LLC material. However, *I'm afraid* is not a direct apology since the expression only serves to announce the speaker's apologetic attitude towards a proposition or the state of affairs; for instance it is used to announce, or to apologize for unwelcome information (Owen 1983: 90). In (1) Tukely gives unwelcome information to Sophia:

- (1) (^Sophia.^) Pooh, pooh! that's the old Story - You are so prejudic'd. - (^Tukely.^) *I am afraid*'tis you who are prejudic'd, Madam; for if you will believe your own Eyes and Ears - (*The Male Coquette*, 1757)

The expression with *regret* is also used in the CED in order to express an apologetic attitude towards the speaker's own actions, as in (2), where a gentleman challenges his best friend to a duel over a woman. Expressions with *regret* as a noun were found only twice.

(2) You must therefore force your happiness through me; as I will attempt mine from you. Tho' Heaven knows *with what regret!* To morrow, Sir, [\$ (^ (continu'd he) ^) \$] I shall expect you on the backside of (^Southampton^) House. (*The Female Gallant*, 1692)

2.1. Boosting

The Present-day English intensifiers, or boosters, found in the LLC with *sorry* were: *so*, *very*, *terribly*, *awfully* (Aijmer 1996: 92). These boosted apologies constituted 8.9% of the LLC examples. Moreover, Present-day English *sorry* was often reinforced by emotional exclamations *ah*, *oh* (*dear*) and/or by address forms and terms of endearment.

In the CED apology expressions are boosted in 9.7% of the examples. *Sorry* occurred with *very* seven times, example (3), and *heartily* three times, example (4). The boosters found in the CED are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Apology expressions and boosters in the CED.

Expression	boost
I apologize	--
excuse me	Oh, O
forgive me	Dear, sweet, good, Oh
(I beg (your)) pardon (me)	Dear, thousand, I humbly, Oh, sweet, <i>address forms</i> : sir, Lord etc
(I am) sorry	very, extremely, heartily

(3) And now, my Dear, [\$ (^says I to him, ^) \$] I am very sorry to tell you that there is all, and that I have given you my whole Fortune (*Moll Flanders*, 1722)

(4) (^Nur.^) Kinde young Master, now I am heartily sorry that I mov'd you. (*A Mad Couple Well Match'd*, 1653)

Notably, the adverbials *awfully*, *terribly* etc are absent in the CED but address forms and terms of endearment are found with the expression *pardon*, see (5), (6) and (7).

(5) (^Que.^) It doth, it doth: O *pardon* me my lord, that I mistake thy royall meaning so. (*A Humorous Dayes Mirth*, 1599)

(6) (^Camp.^) *Pardon my Lord*, I loue (^Apelles^). (*Alexander and Campaspe*, 1584)

(7) *Pardon* me, my dear charming (^Bracilla^) [\$ ((^replied^ Montano) \$] and forgive the first transgression I have done, (*The Adventures of Covent Garden*, 1699)

In (5), the apology concerns a misunderstanding. There is no social distance between speaker and (absent) hearer (the queen addressing her husband, the king), but there may still be a social difference, or at least a difference in official status between the sexes. It is also tempting to interpret the boosted apology as ironic. In (6) the social distance is great, a slave woman speaking to Alexander the Great, and it seems as if the apology only concerns that very social distance, ie the speaker apologizes for speaking. Both the social distance and the context as a whole probably call for the use of a boosted apology. Montano in (7) has shown too much emotion, thus transgressing one or more social conventions for which he is apologizing, and the boosting can be seen as triggered by the speaker's feelings for the hearer.

3. Text-type and period distribution

Tables 3 and 4 demonstrate how the various apology-expressions are distributed over different text-types and periods in the CED. (Next page)

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Table 3. Apology expressions in different text-types and subperiods in the CED.

Period Trials	1	2	3	4	5	total
<i>afraid</i>			1	2		3
<i>apologize</i>			2			0
<i>excuse</i>					3	5
<i>forgive</i>					3	3
<i>pardon</i>	4	1	4	4	1	13
<i>sorry</i>	2		3	3	1	8

Witness depositions	1	2	3	4	5	total
<i>afraid</i>						
<i>apologize</i>						
<i>excuse</i>			1	1		2
<i>forgive</i>	3	9	1		2	15
<i>pardon</i>	1	5	1	1		8
<i>sorry</i>			1		1	2

Comedies	1	2	3	4	5	total
<i>afraid</i>	1		1	5	8	15
<i>apologize</i>			1			1
<i>excuse</i>	1		1	7	7	16
<i>forgive</i>	1	1	1	3	5	11
<i>pardon</i>	15	7	15	16	11	64
<i>sorry</i>	2		2	3	1	8

Didactic works	1	2	3	4	5	total
<i>afraid</i>		1	3	5	1	10
<i>apologize</i>						0
<i>excuse</i>				3		3
<i>forgive</i>		2		2		4
<i>pardon</i>			1	5		6
<i>sorry</i>	1	1	3	2		7

Language teaching texts	1	2	3	4	5	total
afraid	1					1
apologize						0
excuse		5	15			20
forgive		1				1
pardon	2	4	3		3	12
sorry	2					2

Fiction	1	2	3	4	5	total
afraid			1	5	4	10
apologize						0
excuse		1	5	2	2	10
forgive	1	1		7	1	10
pardon	6	6	9	23	9	53
sorry	2		5	1	6	14

Table 4. Apology expressions in subperiods. Figures are normalized to 100,000 words. Raw figures are given within brackets.

Period	1	2	3	4	5
Expression					
<i>Afraid</i>	0.8 (2)	0.4 (1)	2.1 (6)	5.4 (17)	5.3 (13)
<i>Apologize</i>			0.3 (1)		
<i>Excuse</i>	0.4 (1)	2.7 (6)	8.3 (24)	4.1 (13)	4.9 (12)
<i>Forgive</i>	2.1 (5)	6.3 (14)	0.7 (2)	3.8 (12)	4.5 (11)
<i>Pardon</i>	11.9 (28)	10.4 (23)	11.0 (32)	15.5 (49)	9.8 (24)
<i>Sorry</i>	3.8 (9)	0.4 (1)	4.5 (13)	2.8 (9)	4.1 (10)

The preferred general purpose apology expression in the CED dialogues is, as already mentioned, *pardon*, with the highest frequencies in period 4. It is possible to argue that this indicates an increase in negative politeness in that period. Negative politeness is associated with a higher degree of social distance in society in general, which of course is reflected in language. The expression *pardon*, which is intrinsically a request, may be associated with

negative politeness (see below). The text-type with the highest number of apologies is comedy, which suggests that this is the most “conversational” text-type of those represented, based on the fact that comedies contain more politeness-related and/or ritual speech acts such as apologies and thanking than other text-types (Jacobsson 2002: 72).

4. *Sorry or pardon and politeness*

It is fairly clear from the evidence presented above that *sorry* had not developed into the standard apology IFID in Early Modern English that it is in the present day according to the LLC. Instead, the expression *pardon*, used in nearly half of the apologies in the CED, is a better candidate for the Early Modern English standard apology IFID. But why *pardon* instead of *sorry* in Early Modern English? In terms of strategy, *sorry* is an expression of regret (Suszczyńska 1999: 1056) whereas *pardon* is a request for forgiveness along with *excuse me* and *forgive me*. The latter two IFIDs, especially *forgive me/forgiveness*, are more common in the CED than in Present-day English. The relevance of the distinction between expressions of regret and requests for forgiveness has been supported by the findings of Vollmer and Olshain (1989). The explanation at hand is not entirely conclusive, but as I have suggested previously (Jacobsson 2002: 71, 72), there may have been a tendency towards a more positive politeness culture, in Brown and Levinson’s terms, in the first century or so of the Early Modern period. From the mid-1600s onwards, the trend was towards negative politeness (for discussions of positive and negative politeness in Early Modern English see Kopytko 1993 and 1995, and Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 1995). *Pardon* peaks during period 4 in the CED, which possibly also marks the peak of social distance in English society. This should increase the use of negative politeness strategies according to Brown and Levinson and, if this is the case, it is possible to argue that a request is more in line with social distance, and thus negative politeness, than is an expression of regret. There are sociohistorical explanations which support this: England in the late 1600s was a country with an increasing population; London especially, but also smaller towns, were crowding with migrants from the countryside. In turn this may have created anxieties about social roles (Wood 1999: 15). The growth of a modern urbanized, and later industrialized, society might well create unstable relations between people (Lévi-Strauss 1958) which may cause the development of a negative politeness culture.

5. Strategies

The model of apology strategies most frequently used in pragmatic research is based on Olshtain and Cohen (1983). This model suggests six superstrategies with some division into substrategies:

- (1) Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs):
 - a) Expression of regret, eg *I'm sorry*.
 - b) Offer of apology, eg *I apologize*.
 - c) Request for forgiveness, eg *excuse me/pardon me/forgive me*.
- (2) Explanation or account. Any external mitigating circumstances, "objective reasons" for the violation, eg *The traffic was terrible*.
- (3) Taking on responsibility:
 - a) Explicit self-blame, eg *It's my fault*.
 - b) Lack of intent, eg *I didn't mean it*.
 - c) Expression of self-deficiency, eg *I was confused/ I didn't see you*.
 - d) Expression of embarrassment, eg *I feel awful about it*.
 - e) Self-dispraise, eg *I'm such a dimwit*.
 - f) Justifying the hearer, eg *You've right to be angry*.
 - g) Refusal to acknowledge guilt or denial, eg *It wasn't my fault*. Blame the hearer, eg *it's your own fault*.
- (4) Concern for the hearer, eg *I hope I didn't upset you*.
- (5) Offer of repair, eg *I'll pay for the damage*.
- (6) Promise of forbearance, eg *It won't happen again*.

Other models, largely based on the above have been constructed by Fraser (1981: 263) with nine strategies, and Aijmer (1996: 83) with thirteen strategies. Olshtain and Cohen's model, however, has been successfully tested (Olshtain 1989, Suszczyńska 1999), and according to the results obtained, speakers of various languages resort to a limited number of strategies when apologizing, all of which can be categorized into the above six superstrategies.

Moreover, apologies can be made up of combinations of strategies by means of adding an extra conversational move. In Present-day English (LLC), Aijmer (1996: 94-5) found five strategies where *sorry* was used (Aijmer's strategies do not correspond exactly to Olshtain and Cohen's and her fifth strategy is what she calls 'reinforcing' or 'gushing,' eg *Oh God*).

The recurrent combinations of strategies in the LLC were, in Olshtain and Cohen's terminology, strategies 1+2, 1+3b, and 1+3a. The expression *sorry* in the CED is used in the combinations presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Strategies with *sorry* in the CED according to Olshtain and Cohen's model.

Strategy	
1	27
1+3a	2
1+2	4
1+5	3
1+3e	5
1+6+5	1

As for compound strategies, Table 5 shows how often the necessary core or component, eg *sorry* (strategy 1) is modified (strategies 2-6). *Sorry* in the CED is used in compound strategies 15 times or in 36% of the instances. Aijmer (1996: 96) has 13% in the LLC and Holmes (1990: 170) had about 50% for Present-day New Zealand English.

Table 6. Strategies with *pardon* in the CED according to Olshtain and Cohen's model. E is Aijmer's 'gushing,' eg oh!

Strategy	
1	126
1+2	15
1+6	6
1+3e	5
1+E	1
1+3b	3

For *pardon* (Table 6), 19% of the CED examples are used in compound strategies, the most common being IFID + explanation or account, as in (8).

(8) (^Ala.^) I ask *Ten Thousand Pardons*. I was thinking, and did not see you. (*Chit-Chat*, 1719)

Aijmer (1996) also found the combination of strategies in (8) together with acts of self-reproach modifying the apology. This is explained by a

politeness maxim, according to which the speaker should be modest by conveying a bad impression of himself (Leech 1983: 132). This is also found the CED:

(9) [\$to which (^Schiarra^) seeing she would not rise, kneeling likewise down; replied,\$] Goddess, for your celestial beauty, and Angelical voice confirm, yea, *pardon* my inconsiderate rudeness (*The English Lovers: or, a Girle Worth Gold*, 1662)

6. Function

In the following I will look at three issues at the core of the function of apologizing; firstly, I will deal with the ritual aspects of apologies and, secondly the time factor, ie anticipatory and retrospective apologies, will be discussed. Thirdly, the functions of apologies also concern the offences themselves – what is apologized for?

6.1 Apologizing as a ritual

There are of course situations where an apology is emotionally serious, and meant as a remedy for one or several offences made by the speaker. In most cases, however, a Present-day English apology is a mere ritual, occurring in stereotypical situations, and the offence is rather trivial (Aijmer 1996: 97). The ritual apology also serves as a softener and disarmer, and may, as Norrick (1978: 280) points out, simply be a way of showing good manners. Indeed, Deutschmann (2003: 204) says that 50% of his examples from the British National Corpus (BNC) were formulaic or ‘discourse managing devices’.

In the CED there are some indications that *sorry* and *pardon* were used more to satisfy social expectations than to express genuine emotion, see (10) and (11). However, these examples are very difficult to find and a thorough understanding of the context is necessary.

(10) Ah! how far you exceed all that ever I saw in the Art of Powdering. (^Belira^), don't you think Sir (^Amorous^) Dresses extremely well? [\$ (^Bel.^) \$] Undoubtedly, Sir (^Amorous^), I beg your *Pardon* I did not see you sooner - (*The lost Lover; or, the Jealous Husband*, 1696)

(11) masters, you bee all welcome: *I am sorie* that I make you tarie so longe. (*The French Schoole-Maister*, 1573)

Belira's *pardon* in (10) is clearly used only to apologize for a minor offence, and to show good manners, and the *sorry* in (11), spoken by an innkeeper to his guests has a similar function.

Aside from the difficulties concerning the seriousness of apologies, another aspect of function has to do with time. That is, the apology may either refer to an act in the past, or to upcoming discourse or actions.

6.2 Retrospective and anticipatory apologies

The classification into retrospective and anticipatory apologies (Aijmer 1996: 98 ff) may be helpful in defining the discourse-function of apologies. The retrospective apology is a response to an offence, whereas the anticipatory apology, of course, anticipates an offence. In effect, retrospective apologies are remedial, supportive (face-saving) and self-demeaning. Anticipatory apologies are disarming or softening. That speakers apologize not only for a fact but also for an intention was suggested by Edmondson (1981: 282). Aijmer (1996: 99) estimates that her sample has roughly 50% anticipatory apologies, and we may assume that the two time-distinguishing factors are of equal importance in Early Modern English.

In the CED both types are found:

(12) Then (^Dick Low^) reply'd, but still holding him, (^I beg your *Pardon* Sir, for my Mistake, for you are as like my Friend Doctor^) Cross, (^as ever I saw two Men in my Life like one another.^) (*History of ... most noted Highwaymen*, 1714)

In (12) the speaker apologizes retrospectively for mistaking the identity of the hearer.

(13) [\$ (^Mrs. T.^) \$] Sir, I beg you'd *pardon* me the Impertinence of # some Questions. (*Modern Dialogues between a Vintner and his Wife*, 1703)

In (13) Mrs T is about to ask questions and makes an anticipatory apology.

Indeed, a little more than half of the CED apologies are anticipatory and there does not seem to be any difference here from Present day use. Nevertheless, there is a slight difference when comparing the expressions

pardon and *sorry*. For *pardon* there is a slight inclination to anticipatory apologies and for *sorry* the preference is for retrospective apologies (exactly two thirds of the examples). It is likely that this is because the intrinsic meaning of *sorry* is that of regret, which naturally is a retrospective sentiment.

6.3 The offences

The types of offences associated with an apology are important because they help determine the variation between different forms. In the LLC *sorry* is used mainly for communicative problems. *Pardon* is used for similar ‘talk offences’, but much less frequently. The offences apologized for with *sorry* in the LLC have been classified by Aijmer (1996: 115), who in turn has followed Holmes (1990: 178). I have followed the same categorization for the CED and the results are shown in table 7.

Table 7. *Offences with sorry in the LLC and the CED.*

Offence	LLC	CED
talk – interrupt	98 (45.6%)	0
time – being late	21 (9.7%)	3 (7.1%)
space, bothering	5 (2.3%)	2 (4.8%)
social gaffe	2 (0.9%)	0
inconvenience, mistaking identity	90 (41.6%)	32 (76.2%)
possession, physical damage	0	5 (11.9%)

Since it is evident that the expression *pardon* was used more frequently than *sorry* in the CED, the same data for *pardon* is given in table 8.

Table 8. *Offences with pardon in the CED.*

Offence	CED
talk – interrupt	26 (16.7%)
time – being late	2 (1.3%)
space, bothering	1 (0.07%)
social gaffe	1 (0.07%)
inconvenience, mistaking identity	124 (79.5%)
possession, physical damage	2 (1.3%)

Both *pardon* and *sorry* are mainly used to apologize for inconveniences of some sort in the CED. In the LLC the majority of *sorry* examples are used for the 'talk – interrupt offence', and it is possible that Aijmer here has used telephone conversation, where this type of offence is likely to be more frequent. The (obvious) absence of telephone conversation in the CED would explain the apparent lack of such 'talk apologies'. Nevertheless, we must also consider the possibility that the written language of the Early Modern period may be lacking in accuracy in this respect – naturally there are huge differences between the recording of the LLC telephone conversations and the MSS and imprints of the CED.

The group where the CED shows more apologies than the LLC is, as already noted, the somewhat diffuse 'inconvenience offences.' Aijmer (1996: 116) defines this as apologies caused by offences that the speaker thinks will annoy or inconvenience the hearer, for example, errors committed, mistaken assumptions, when the speaker cannot answer a question or comply with a request, or has forgotten to do something which he or she has promised to do. In (14) the speaker apologizes for not being able to (or wanting to) go outdoors; in (15) the speaker does not want to give the name of the person discussed.

(14) You must *pardon* me sir [\$ (quod she,) \$] I am sickely disposed, and would be loth to take the ayre, (*A Hundreth Sundrie Flowers*. 1573)

(15) [\$ (^Di.^) \$] I am *sorry* I cannot oblige you with his name, without asking him leave, I am afraid he meets with many discouragements already but if he were named, (*Dialogue between a Member of Parliament ...* 1702)

Concerning offences, two other apology expressions, *excuse* and *forgive(ness)* show some features not evident with *sorry* and *pardon*. The expression *excuse (me)* (56 examples) is mostly used to apologize for a variety of offences which fall under the inconvenience category (47 examples are used in this way). Three examples are of 'talk offences', but not of the type where the speaker has not heard what was said and is asking for repetition, which is mostly the case with *pardon*, but rather the 'talk offences' where the speaker interrupts and/or contradicts something, as in (16), which is spoken in the context of an important trial.

(16) [\$ (^Lord President^) \$] And this that you have said is a further declining of the (^the Iurisdiction of this Court^) , which

was the thing wherein you were limited before [\$(^King^)\$] Pray *excuse me* Sir, for my interruption because you mistake me, It is not a declining of it, you do judge me before you hear me speak (*King Charls his Tryal*, 1649)

Excuse me is also used twice for social gaffes, such as bursting into laughter at the wrong time, as in (17).

(17) [\$(^Gib.^)\$] My Company's but thin, ha, ha, ha, we are but three, ha, ha, ha. [\$(^Aim.^)\$] You're merry, Sir. [\$(^Gib.^)\$] Ay, Sir, you must *excuse me*, Sir, I understand the World, especially the Art of Travelling; (*The Beaux Stratagem*, 1707)

The apology expression *forgive (me)/forgiveness* (44 examples) is used either for an inconvenience offence or to apologize for crimes committed, which would fall under the possession/damage category. There are 15 examples of *forgive(ness)* where the speaker apologizes for his or her crimes, all of which are from trials or witness depositions, as in (18).

(18) And therevpon she the said (^Alizon^) fell downe on her knees, & asked the said (^Bullocke^) *forgiuenes*, and confessed to him, that she had bewitched the said child, (*Discoverie ... of Witches in Lancaster*, 1612)

In conclusion, it is obvious that some types of offences in Present-day English are directly tied to this period, eg 'talk offences' in telephone conversations. Other factors influencing apology-worthy offences in the CED may be social structure and perhaps, literary conventions.

7. Conclusions

According to the data from the CED and LLC the apologies of the Early Modern English period were the same in form as today, ie the same lexical items are used in apologies in both corpora (*sorry*, *pardon*, *excuse me* etc). The only notable difference is found in the frequency of the expression *pardon*, which seems to have been the general apology expression of the period 1560-1760, whereas the Present-day English general purpose expression is *sorry*. The reason for this change of expression may be due to the intrinsic request-meaning of *pardon*, making it more fitting in a negative politeness culture. The Early Modern boosters (or intensifiers), have been replaced to some extent, but the degree to which apology expressions are boosted has not.

An apparently growing negative politeness culture of the late 17th century is suggested by the apology expressions. The use of the request *pardon* is probably a marker which together with other linguistic and sociohistorical evidence reveals a changing society influencing politeness.

When discussing strategies of using apologies, or any other speech act, statistics may not give all the answers. Present-day English material shows great variation in frequencies while at the same time the strategies themselves appear universal, both in space and time.

There is clear evidence of the ritual function of apologies in Early Modern English, as well as the division into retrospective and anticipatory apologies. The difference in function from Present-day English lies in the offences apologized for. In Present-day English we tend to apologize for 'talk-offences,' ie we do not hear what is said or we interrupt the speaker. However, it must be remembered that much of the material in the LLC is telephone conversation, which may account for the 'talk-offences'. Instead of 'talk offences', the CED is filled with inconvenience-offences which may reflect social distance and a highly negative politeness culture.

Much more can be done, not only with regard to apologies but concerning all types of speech-acts in Early Modern English such as thanking, requests and greetings. Future study of these will hopefully bring us closer to an understanding of Early Modern English spoken interaction as a whole. The problems are, as always with speech-related historical data, the reliability of the written material and thus the validity of the results. However, there are many opportunities for further research offered by such corpora as the CED.

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