Cultural and Social[Contextual] Determination of Language Formulas[Speech Acts]: The Case of Apologies

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The general aim of this study is the cross-cultural analysis of apologetic speech acts, the notion of context from an interdisciplinary perspective and how these fit into the Bakhtinian/Vygotskian theory of verbal communication. In addition, special emphasis is placed on the analysis of cultural and contextual determination of language formulas - speech acts in particular. The study itself will involve a semantic and pragmatic analysis of apologetic speech acts from three distinct cultures/languages - Serbian, Australian English and Austrian German. The focus of the analysis will be placed, in particular, on the cross-cultural and conceptual differences of the apologetic speech-act expressions used in these languages. DCT² method will be employed to elicit the desired speech act and specific strategies, which will in turn provide the basis for decoding cultural values within the elicited language, as well as the substance for forming relevant cultural scripts in NSM³. In addition, the DCT will be used to investigate the importance and impact of explicit and implicit situational context on production of pertinent speech acts. The cultural scripts and NSM are regarded as the primary tools for encoding the cultural, attitudinal and cognitive specificities behind explicit IFIDs⁴.

On the one hand, such knowledge, coupled with the awareness of metalinguistic aspects of verbal communication, can prove essential for carving the cross-cultural miscommunication at its joints. On the other hand, it can also prove crucial for language learners in defeating the negative pragmatic transfer that occurs all too often in the process of second language acquisition.

References


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² Discourse Completion Test
³ Natural Semantic Metalanguage
⁴ Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices