The present study aimed to compare the similarity and difference in the linguistic behaviors of ‘apology’ in two respective imposing levels (light and heavy) and examined the process of interpersonal considerate behaviors in apologetic interaction, using 128 conversations between college friends of Japanese male and female native speakers and Korean male and female native speakers, respectively: 16 conversations of Japanese male and female native speakers at lightly and heavily imposing contexts of apology, respectively and 16 conversations of Korean male and female native speakers at lightly and heavily imposing contexts of apology, respectively.

According to ‘comprehensive conversation analysis (Usami: 2006b, 2008)’, this study analyzed the interaction of ‘apologetic behaviors’ comprehensively from global and local viewpoint to examine the discourse level and utterance level of the behaviors. In addition, Brown and Levinson (1987)’s ‘Politeness Theory’ and Usami (1998, 2001, 2002, 2003b, 2008)’s ‘Discourse Politeness Theory’ were reviewed for the theoretical background of this study. This study consists of 9 chapters.

Chapter 1 explains the research background, objective and construction of the research.

In Chapter 2, careful overview was made on the precedent studies of apology, politeness, approaches to discourse and conversation, and related literation system and then the relevance of those studies to this study was examined.

After overviewing the previous studies on ‘apology’, this study pointed out the problems of those existing studies that are biased toward apology, limited to utterance level or a certain research methodology. And this study gives an account of apology study it focused on. Besides, the present study obtained a general view of the previous researches regarding studies on such linguistic behaviors as expression of discontentment, rejection and negotiation in order to investigate into the reaction of the party accepting apology.

After taking a general view of studies on ‘politeness’, this study supported why it is effective to take the viewpoints from Brown and Levinson’s ‘Politeness Theory’ and Usami’s ‘Discourse Politeness Theory’ in examining the process of interpersonal considerate behaviors that appear in ‘apologetic behaviors’.

In this chapter, the precedent studies on discourse and text were also over viewed and then the concept of discourse used for this study was explained. Moreover, this study over viewed the methodologies for conversation study and mentioned the research methods to use in this study: both quantitative and qualititative analysis, analysis from both global and local point of view, and Usami’s ‘comprehensive conversation analysis’ that has literation system by which the comparative study of Japan and Korea is possible.
Chapter 3 explained the collection of conversation data of this study according to ‘comprehensive conversation analysis’, setting of role play, method of literation, and reliability of those data collected in the study. Data were collected from the conversations between male and female college students (power) who use Japanese and Korean as native language, respectively; between friends of the same sex, and apologetic sciences of two ranks of imposition (low and high), all of which conditions were controlled. In addition, BTSJ (Usami, 2011) and BTSK (Usami, 2007), which are the literation systems that this study used, were explained. Cohen’s Kappa was used to test the reliability of those data.

In Chapter 4, the basic information of conversation data was explained and both reliability and validity test were conducted on ‘naturalness of dialogue flow’, ‘naturalness (quality) of conversation’, and ‘awareness of recording’ which resulted from the follow-up survey. In addition, the reliability of utterance sentences and the coding of analysis items in the transcribed data were confirmed.

In Chapter 5, the apologetic conversations between Japanese and Korean male and female speakers, respectively, were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively from global viewpoint, according to ‘comprehensive conversation analysis’ in order to find out the characteristics of ‘apologetic discourses’ in low and high imposing scene of apology.

In a lightly imposing scene of apology, it turned out that both Japanese and Korean male and female native speakers tend to use interaction of ‘core discourse’ with formulaic expressions of apology. In particular, Japanese native speakers showed higher tendency to use it than of Korean native speakers. Since it is not highly imposition situation of apology, they often used ‘discourses related to follow-up’ and ‘parenthetical discourse’. In detail, Japanese female native speakers had tendency to repeat ‘core discourse’ and more ‘parenthetical discourses’ while Japanese male native speakers showed obvious tendency to terminate conversation only with ‘core discourse’. In the meantime, Korean male native speakers were characterized with ‘negotiating discourse’ which came before ‘core discourse’ began while Korean female native speakers had a strong tendency to end conversation only with ‘core discourse’.

In a heavily imposing scene of apology, it turned out that both Japanese and Korean male and female native speakers tend to more use ‘prepositional discourse’ and ‘negotiating discourse. Especially, the apologetic process under this condition turned out to be quite complex; apology could or could not be accepted according to the interaction of ‘core discourse’ and ‘negotiating discourse’. 11 apologetic conversations of Japanese male native speakers (total 16) and 8 apologetic conversations of Japanese female native speakers (total 16) were accepted to the party who was in position of receiving apology while 10 apologetic conversations of Korean male native speakers (total 16) and 14 apologetic conversations of Korean female native speakers (total 16) were accepted to the party who was in position of receiving apology.

In addition, ‘core discourse’ didn’t come up in 1 apologetic conversations of Japanese male native speakers, 4 apologetic conversations of Japanese female native speakers, 1 apologetic conversations of Korean male native speakers, and 3 apologetic conversations of Korean female native speakers. In short, it turned out in a heavily imposing situation that ‘core discourse’ decreases while ‘negotiating discourse’ increases, focusing on the reaction
to solve a problem. However, both Japanese and Korean male native speakers tended to repeat ‘core discourse’ and ‘negotiating discourse’ to have their apology accepted. On the other hand, Japanese female native speakers had a strong tendency to change their intention when the party that receives apology directly expresses rejection to apology. Korean female native speakers showed active tendency to propose a solution such as lying down an alternative.

According to ‘comprehensive conversation analysis’, the characteristics of apologetic interaction between Japanese and Korean male and female speakers, respectively, in low and high imposing scene of apology, were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively from local viewpoint in Chapter 6.

In a lightly imposing scene of apology, both Japanese and Korean male and female native speakers that have to apologize turned out to mainly use ‘utterances of situational explanation, apology and/or accountability’ while those worthy apology mainly used ‘utterances of mistake, situation confirmation, blame and/or concession’. In detail, Korean native speakers who have to apologize mainly used ‘utterances of interpersonal consideration and/or mistake adjustment’ while those who receive apology mainly used ‘utterances of compensation’. In addition, Japanese and Korean male native speakers who have to apologize more used ‘denial of accountability and expression of dissatisfaction’ than Japanese and Korean female native speakers who have to apologize while Japanese and Korean male native speakers who receive apology more used ‘utterances of blame’ than Japanese and Korean female native speakers who have to apologize. Particularly, Korean male native speakers showed this tendency more obviously. On the other hand, Japanese and Korean female native speakers who apologize more used ‘utterances of apology’ than Japanese and Korean male native speakers who apologize. Especially, Japanese female native speakers who are entitled to apology showed repeated acceptance of apology.

In a heavily imposing scene of apology, both Japanese and Korean male and female native speakers that are obliged to apologize mainly used ‘utterances of situational explanation, apology, accountability and/or interpersonal consideration’ while those worthy apology mainly used ‘utterances of situation confirmation, blame, concession and/or problem solving’. In detail, Korean native speakers who have to apologize mainly used ‘utterances of mistake adjustment’. In apologetic interaction, in addition, Japanese male native speakers more used ‘utterances of situational explanation’ and ‘utterances of blame’ than Japanese female native speakers while Japanese female native speakers more used ‘utterances of apology and interpersonal consideration’ than Japanese male native speakers. In the meantime, Korean male native speakers showed apologetic interaction of using more ‘utterances of accountability’ and ‘utterances of blame’ than Korean female native speakers while Korean female native speakers more used ‘utterances of situation explanation and/or interpersonal consideration’ and ‘utterances of concession’ than Korean male native speakers. Particularly, Korean female native speakers used ‘utterances of mistake adjustment’ very often by proposing an alternative, so they had more conversations that accept apology.

That is, it was found that females had tendency to more use considerate utterances for the other party’s face while males tended to use utterances of hurting the other party’s face more.

In Chapter 7, the apologetic conversations between Japanese and Korean male and female speakers, respectively, were analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively from local viewpoint according to ‘comprehensive conversation
analysis’ in order to find out the characteristics of the interaction of ‘utterances of apology and response’ in low and high imposing scene of apology.

In a lightly imposing scene of apology, both Japanese and Korean male and female native speakers that are obliged to apologize mainly used only ‘utterances of apology’ and/or ‘utterances of both recognizing mistake and apologizing’. However, Japanese and Korean male and female native speakers that accept apology had different utterances of acceptance, respectively. The positive responses of Japanese native speakers that accept apology such as ‘concession’ and/or ‘approval’ took 60% of their total responses while those of Korean native speakers that accept apology took only 30% of their total responses and they also used much of neutral (e.g., request of information) and negative responses (e.g., blame).

In a heavily imposing scene of apology, both Japanese and Korean male and female native speakers that are obliged to apologize mainly used not only ‘utterances of recognizing mistake and apologizing’ but also ‘complicate utterances of apology’ including ‘mentioning of situation’ to explain unpleasant event they caused and/or ‘soothing’ to calm down the anger of the party to accept apology. In detail, 40%, 60% and 50% positive responses consisted of the entire apologetic discourses of Japanese male native speakers, Japanese female native speakers and Korean native speakers, respectively. It demonstrates that they also use considerable portion of neutral and/or negative responses in apologetic interaction.

The findings in Chapter 5, 6, and 7 were examined from the perspective of ‘Discourse Politeness Theory’ in Chapter 8. As a result, politeness effect (plus-politeness, minus-politeness and neutral-politeness) was comparatively found that causes marked behavior of identifying the defaults of individual elements that comprise ‘apologetic discourse’, ‘apologetic behavior’, and ‘utterances of apology and response’. It demonstrated that it is possible to explain the phenomena in an apologetic scene in which formulaic expressions of apology are not used and, in other words, it is impossible to clearly understand such phenomena without examining it from discourse level. Next, the present study acknowledged that the analysis of linguistic behaviors at a single utterance level has limitation even if the viewpoint of interaction is applied to it. Therefore, it admitted that it is effective to analyze each of the elements of longer discourses and sentences.

In Chapter 9, the present study was summarized and implications were made on politeness study and foreign language education.

To better understand the universal theory of politeness study, this research implied that it is necessary to deal with politeness study from both local and global perspective and discussed the necessity of interactive viewpoint to understand the whole picture of linguistic behaviors. In this study, it was also pointed out that teaching linguistic behaviors with a single utterance sentence at a simple interaction level can be problematic and instead it is necessary to teach the characteristics of the levels of discourse and utterance sentence overall. In addition, this study suggested that it is important to teach how to improve interpersonal communication beyond the education.

Last, ‘apology’ is a complicated and delicate linguistic behavior, so it can cause misunderstanding and conflict in the context of different cultures. Therefore, the present study asserted that it is necessary to teach linguistic behavior ‘apology’ correctly and precisely in the fields of education.