***Sorry* as a pragmatic marker in Ghanaian and Ugandan Englishes: A corpus-based approach**

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**Abstract**

*Sorry* is a linguistic marker that is typically used in apologising but has been noted to perform different discourse-pragmatic functions such as expressing sympathy, regret and indicating self-repair (Arizavi & Choubsaz, 2018). Previous accounts of *sorry* in its adjectival and discourse-pragmatic forms have been studied in different varieties of English including British English (e.g. Deutschmann, 2003), American English (e.g. Arizavi & Choubsaz, 2018), and Irish English (e.g. Lynch, 2013). In many cases, research on *sorry* is embedded within studies that generally deal with different ways of expressing apologies (e.g. Degenhardt & Bernaisch, 2022), which lead to restricted attention on *sorry* as a pragmatic item. It is the aim of this study to extend the research on *sorry* by examining pragmatic variation in the use of *sorry* as a pragmatic marker between Ghanaian English and Ugandan English, in terms of its frequency, form, pragmatic functions and occurrence in different text types. The data for the study, which are extracted from the Ghanaian and Ugandan components of the International Corpus of English, are examined from a variational pragmatic framework. Preliminary findings show similarities and differences in the use of *sorry* in Ghanaian and Ugandan English. Ghanaian English users combined sorry with more intensifiers than Ugandan English users while Ugandan English users preferred combinations with interjections. Moreover, there is preference for the use of *sorry* to signal self-repair in Ugandan English while there is preference for the use of *sorry* to perform apologising functions. Possible L1 influence may have led to some of the differences between the two varieties. The study, thus, contributes to the research on the pragmatics of *sorry* as well as pragmatic variation between Ghanaian English and Ugandan English.

**Key words**: *sorry*, International Corpus of English, Ghanaian English, Ugandan English, variational pragmatics

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