

APOLOGY STRATEGIES USED BY EFL LEARNERS OF UNIVERSITAS RIAU

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Abstract: *This study was conducted to analyzing EFL Learners' strategy in apologizing. This was a descriptive qualitative study using a qualitative approach combine with descriptive statistics. The participants of this study were 32 EFL Learners that currently study in their second academic year in English Department of Universitas Riau. They were selected using cluster random sampling technique. The data was collected online using a DCT (Discourse Completion Task) containing 8 situation which required participants to write down their responses for each situation. The result revealed that participants are capable to use a wide variety of apology strategies. Moreover, they have tendency to use more than one strategy in one situation.*

Key Words: *Apology strategy, DCT, .*

STRATEGI MEMINTA MAAF OLEH MAHASISWA BAHASA INGGRIS DI UNIVERSITAS RIAU

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini dilaksanakan dalam rangka untuk menganalisa strategi yang digunakan oleh mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris dalam meminta maaf. Penelitian ini menggunakan metodologi kualitatif deskriptif yang memakai pendekatan kualitatif serta dikombinasikan dengan data statistik deskriptif. Mahasiswa Bahasa Inggris yang berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini berjumlah 32 orang yang saat pengambilan data telah berada di tahun kedua perkuliahan di Universitas Riau. Partisipan dipilih berdasarkan Teknik pengambilan sampel acak secara berkelompok (Cluster). Data dari penelitian ini dikumpulkan secara online menggunakan instrumen Bernama DCT (*Discourse Completion Task*) yang berisi 8 situasi buatan yang mengharuskan partisipan untuk menuliskan respon yang mereka berikan jika situasi yang dimaksud terjadi kepada mereka. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa para partisipan dianggap mampu untuk memberikan dan menggunakan berbagai macam jenis strategi meminta maaf. Para partisipan juga memiliki kecenderungan untuk menggunakan lebih dari satu jenis strategi meminta maaf dalam tiap situasi.

Kata Kunci: Strategi meminta maaf, *DCT*.

INTRODUCTION

In daily communication, people do speech acts to perform their purposes and give better understanding to the hearers. Each kind of speech acts is used to bring various functions. Jeon (2017: 2) in his study says “speech acts refer to how language is used to get things done and correspond to the functions of language such as requesting, thanking, complaining, apologizing, complementing, ordering, stating, commanding, promising, offering, and treating.” Among all speech acts, apology known as one plays a major role in daily life. Apology defines as a remedial interchange used to maintain social concord after a real or virtual offense (Goffman 1971, as cited in Tehrani et al., 2012: 93). Apology is also functioning to re-establish good relationships between interlocutors; therefore, it is fundamental speech act which occurs in human daily communication in every culture (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983 in Qorina, 2012: 94).

Although the main aim of an apology is to maintain relations between two parties or more, it is also known as an expression of positive politeness strategy. To this theory, Brown and Levinson (1987, as cited in Qorina, 2012: 94) state apologies are politeness strategies. When somebody commits an offense, the natural reaction is apologizing to the victim. Humankind learns to apologize at an early age once they commit an offense (Schenker & Darby, 1981 as cited in Leunissen et al., 2013: 315). In Indonesia, apology is even taught at school since apology is regarded as part of culture. The apology practice begins from a small thing that may not be severe at all. There are a wide variety of ways one can apologize to anyone else. One of many possible ways of apologizing is offering repair while the offense involved a damaged item.

Goffman (1971, as cited in Awedyk, 2011: 50) defines apologies as gestures where somebody splits himself into two parts; one as his guilty side of an offense and another one as dissociates itself from the delict and affirms a belief in the offended rule. There are four assumptions we must make while discussing an apology. First, A believes an act has been already performed. Second, A believes his act offended B to some degree. Third, A believes that he has responsibility in the act offending B. the last, A regrets it (Qorina, 2012). Awedyk in his study at 2011 states there are four factors that determine the occurrence of different apology strategies, they are the nature of the offence, the situation of the interaction, the familiarity of the individual involved, and the sex and age of the individual involved.

Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989, as cited in Jassim & Nimehchisalem, 2016: 117) consider apology as the most complex and hardly classified speech act because doing it may execute other speech acts such as request, command, offer, and so on. The classifications of apology may also depend on its strategies. Based on the same study, Blum-Kulka’s framework revealed that apologies can be shown at various levels. The following table is a summary of these levels:

- a. No Modification Explicit Apology IFID
- b. Apology without IFID
 - 1) Expressing responsibility
 - 2) Refusing to apologize.
 - 3) Explaining out of control cause
 - 4) Offering repair with promise
- c. Apology with IFID

- 1) Internally
- 2) Externally

There are a wide range of apology studies in Western contexts. In Indonesia, various studies of apology strategies have already been conducted to be a helpful reference and give recommendations about apology strategies that are used in any contexts and research variable. In this study, the researcher wants to provide a more possible situation to see EFL Learners' apology strategies in Universitas Riau by using DCT (Discourse Completion Test).

RESEARCH METHODS

This study involved 32 fourth-semester EFL Learners in Universitas Riau that currently study at English Education Study Program selected by using cluster random sampling technique. The EFL Learners that participated in this study were required to write their responses to see their apology strategies in 8 certain situations. The data was collected using DCT (Discourse Completion Task) distributed online via Google Form to participants. The current study has adapted the DCT designed by Jassim and Nimehchisalem (2016) and the data was grouped and analyzed according to Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989, as cited in Jassim & Nimehchisalem, 2016: 119).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Generally, the findings of this study reveal various strategies students used in order to apologize in the given situation of two social context. Several examples of the data are presented.

1. Apology Strategies Produced by EFL Learners

As researcher stated before, the data were analyzed based on Blum-Kulka framework and supported by Holmes framework. There are 14 classifications in total, yet only 13 apology strategies seem to be appeared in this research.

a. Single Apology Strategies

In this category, there are 3 basic strategies of Blum-Kulka framework; Explicit apology using IFID, Apology without IFID, and apology using IFID with intensification. Explicit apology using IFID commonly stated in a short statement with no modification added. Apology without IFID strategies are usually followed by internal or external reasons of the speakers, and these strategies are divided into 8 sub-classifications; taking responsibility by relating self-deficiency, taking responsibility by self-blaming, denying the fault, explaining specific and explicit reasons, explaining general and implicit reasons, offering repair follows with specific promise, offering repair by giving unspecific promise, promising not to repeat the same offence. Apology IFID follows with intensification divided into 3 sub-classifications; intensifying apology by single adverbial internally, intensifying apology by double or more adverbial internally, expressing explicit concern for the hearer (externally to the IFID). Other 2 strategies from Holmes' framework added to analyzed the data; a request for forgiveness, and expressing lack of intent.

After collecting and analyzing the data, only 4 apology strategies that were found as a single strategy in this research.

- 1) [Explicit Apology Without IFID] *I am sorry, bro.*
- 2) [Taking Respon by Relating Self-Deficiency] *I really forget for submitting your task.*
- 3) [Explaining Explicit Specific Reason] *Hi bestie, I think I can't hang out with you today cuz I have something need to do first.*
- 4) [Intensifying Apology Using Single Adverbial] *I'm truly sorry for my carelessness, ma'am.*

The frequency and percentage of these strategies is presented in the table below:

No.	Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Expressing Apology IFID	7	2,73%
2.	Taking Responsibility by Relating Self-Deficiency	1	0,39%
3.	Explaining Specific and Explicit Reason	1	0,39%
4.	Intensifying Apology by Single Adverbial Internally Strategy	6	1,95%

b. The Combination of Apology Strategies

The students as participants of this research are having tendency to use more than one strategy in their apology. The combination is often between explicit apology using IFID and one or more sub-classification of apology without IFID strategies or apology using IFID with intensification and one or more sub-classification of apology without IFID.

The frequency and percentage of these strategies is presented in the table below:

No.	Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Explicit Apology IFID – Taking Responsibility by Relating Self-Deficiency Strategy	16	6,35%
2.	Explicit Apology IFID - Taking Responsibility by Self-Blaming Strategy	5	1,95%
3.	Explicit Apology IFID – Explaining Specific and Explicit Reason Strategy	32	12,50%
4.	Explicit Apology IFID – Explaining General and Unspecific Reason Strategy	4	1,56%
5.	Explicit Apology IFID – Offering Repair with Specific Promise Strategy	56	21,88%
6.	Explicit Apology IFID – Offering Repair with Unspecific Promise Strategy	7	2,73%

7.	Explicit Apology IFID – Promising Not to Repeat Offence Strategy	9	3,52%
8.	Apology IFID with Intensification – Taking Responsibility by Relating Self-Deficiency Strategy	7	2,73%
9.	Apology IFID with Intensification – Taking Responsibility by Self-Blaming Strategy	10	3,91%
10.	Apology IFID with Intensification – Explaining Specific and Explicit Reason Strategy	8	3,13%
11.	Apology IFID with Intensification – Offering Repair with Specific Promise Strategy	69	26,95%
12.	Apology IFID with Intensification – Promising Not to Repeat Offence Strategy	4	1,56%
13.	Apology IFID with Intensification – Expressing Lack of Intent	5	1,95%
14.	Request for Forgiveness - Offering Repair with Specific Promise Strategy	3	1,17%
15.	Taking responsibility by relating self-deficiency – explaining specific and explicit reason strategy	1	0,39%
16.	Taking responsibility by relating self-blaming – offering specific repair	3	1,17%

The frequency and percentage of these strategies is presented in the table below:

No.	Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Apology with IFID – Explaining Specific Reason – Expressing Concern to The Hearer	1	0,39%
2.	Apology IFID with intensification – Offering specific repair – Expressing Concern to The Hearer	1	0,39%

The findings of this research reveals that the students have adequate understanding in politeness area. It can be seen as they are performed well in apologizing. The total apology responses for eight situations were 256 responses. The research showed from total 14 strategies from 2 different framework, only 1 strategy did not appear in the response; it is denying the fault. A huge various strategies given then

were divided into 3 large categories; single strategies, combination of two strategies, and combination of more than 2 strategies.

The most strategy used in this research is combination of Apology IFID with Intensification – Offering Repair with Specific Promise Strategy. The frequency of this combination strategy is 69 (26,95%), follows with the combination of Explicit Apology IFID – Offering Repair with Specific Promise Strategy that has 56 frequency (21,88)%. There are also several strategies that only appear once in the whole responses; Taking Responsibility by Relating Self-Deficiency, Explaining Specific and Explicit Reason, taking responsibility by relating self-deficiency – explaining specific and explicit reason strategy, Apology with IFID – Explaining Specific Reason – Expressing Concern to The Hearer, Apology IFID with intensification – Offering specific repair – Expressing Concern to The Hearer.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

The current study is to look into the apology strategies produced by English students of Universitas Riau based on their prior knowledge helped by eight given situations. The collected data were 256 in total responses in which reveal 13 of 14 strategies according 2 different frameworks (Blum-Kulka and Holmes). The students seem to have behavior to combine more than one strategy in every utterance they gave. Moreover, these combinations arranged 22 variations of apology strategies. Even though the most word choice the students stated is “sorry”, the combination with other strategies made a huge variation in apology strategies produced by the students.

Recommendation

The topic of this research has a wide range of study. Yet this research has many limitations. First, the participants were chosen from English Department of Universitas Riau without any consideration about age, gender, and other background. Second, only 32 students input their responses for this research. The researcher aware of the limits of this research, but in available time and certain reasons, it was not possible. It is suggested other researchers are expected to conduct further studies on the same topic, with the variation of instrument that the current research.

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