

A Study of Apology Speech Acts by Indonesian EFL University Students

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Abstract

Speech acts have many types, but the researcher chose apology as a topic of discussion in this study. The use of apology speech acts on learning English in Indonesia, especially at the level of education has not been fully used properly. The researcher described the data which are found in a text made by Indonesian EFL learners. This study recruited a group of EFL students of 6th-semester in Universitas PGRI Madiun (UNIPMA) as participants were chosen from 6th-semester students consist of 25 students. Data collected by using Discourse Completion Test (DCT). The result revealed that, apology strategy and syntactic-semantic pattern. The aim of this study is to investigate the strategies, syntactic-semantic pattern and pragmatic transfer. This result is in line with the study of New Zealand as a comparison. And pragmatic transfer revealed that there was a significant difference between the Indonesian EFL learners and New Zealand's pragmalinguistics performance. Then, from sociopragmatic aspect, some students have been able to distinguish the expression between friends and people of older age or higher level.

Keywords: Apology Speech Act; Strategies, Syntactic-Semantic, Pragmatic

INTRODUCTION

Speech acts have many types, but the researcher chose apology as a topic of discussion in this study. The existence of research that has been done until now proves that the topic of apology speech act is still interesting to be studied, for example Alzebaree and Yavuz (2017) used by Kurdish and English speakers for their research. The objectives of their study was to investigate the apology strategies of Kurdish EFL undergraduate students (KEFLUS) and their linguistic and pragmatic competence in making apologies. Chamani and Zareipur (2010) made a research of apology speech act used by English and Persian speakers as participant of their research. The result of their research indicated that both English and Persian speakers used relatively the same set of apology strategies.

Some researcher also does the research used by differences of gender of the speakers. Shahrokhi and Jan (2012) was investigated the realization of apology speech act by Persian male native speakers to grouping and framing the apology strategies used in their interactions in various social contexts. The study reveals the availability of some of the universal apology strategies in Persian and a culture-specific apology strategy used by Persian men that is situation-dependent in relation to contextual variables. Besides Saleem, Azam and Saleem (2014) are used by Pakistani EFL learners of their research and there is no statistically significant difference in their used of the apology strategies between male and female participants.

The studies mentioned above have been carried out in L2 or foreign language learning situations. They have carried out researches on the use of apologies in a foreign language learning situation and found out differences resulting of the learners or participant. The researches above tried to provide some insights about the strategies and patterns of apology used by native speakers comparing with the strategies produced from another speaker.

For the theoretical significance, the research is expected to the English learners to know the lack of their apology understanding and to avoid the errors of using apology speech act in their speaking, just a matter of using grammatically correct words and forms, but also knowing when to use them and under what circumstances.

For the practical significance, it will be advantageous for lecturers and teachers, especially for speaking subject. Hopefully, this research can give them more information about apology speech act which can help their learners to use apology speech act well in learning environment or their daily activity. This research is also expected to be useful for other researchers as instruction and additional references who has same topic of this research.

The researchers present several research journals that serve as previous study. The researcher did not take the journal from American English because New Zealand is also an English-speaking country and might also have some interesting research results that can help me out in the data analysis. Then the researcher wants to know the extent of participant's understanding of the use of apology speech act. In addition, similar research is still rarely done in Indonesia, so the researcher tries to do this research by comparing the apology speech act made by New Zealand native speaker. The New Zealand data is done by the previous researcher, so the researcher in this study just make it as comparison and supporting to this study.

From several articles, many previous researchers analyzed by gender, age, or only apology strategies, or only syntactic-semantic patterns. The researcher in this study tries to focus on more than a form which is not only based on apology strategies, but also syntactic semantic pattern and pragmatic transfer, as a whole. The aim of this study is to investigate the strategies, syntactic-semantic pattern and pragmatic transfer that Indonesian EFL University Students in Madiun use in apologizing, and EFL University Students are considered high level students and are assumed to have finished attending grammar and pragmatics classes.

METHOD

In this research, the researcher uses the descriptive type of qualitative method. Qualitative method is research which represent on verbal and non-numerical data as the basic of analyze and creative problem solving of the research. According to Hancock (2009: 6) said that qualitative focuses on explaining and interpreting and may to expansion of new knowledge or opinion based on the invention, or to an observation of an organizational process.

The data of this research is document, that is written text made by Indonesian EFL learners of 6th students in Universitas PGRI Madiun. The text is about apology strategies which made by them.

The researcher chooses this setting because the students majority is Javanese, they are come from local area and they speak Javanese as their first language. While they also learn Indonesian as a national language. It is interesting whether their Javanese or Indonesian language influences their understanding of the delivery of apology speech acts in the form of English as a foreign language.

This study recruited a group of EFL students of 6th semester in Universitas PGRI Madiun (UNIPMA) at academic year 2017/ 2018. This sample was chosen from 6th semester students because it was considered to have finished attending grammar and pragmatic classes. Learner participants consist of 25 students in a class which selected. Instead of

selecting the sample, the researcher selects one class for sample. It is meant that if all students in one class become sample, it will be easier to see students' abilities in understanding apology speech act, pragmatic and also their grammar whether they have mastered the material well or not.

The researcher taken and used the theory by Janet Holmes's, published by Cambridge University Press on June, 1990 and adopted her result data for comparison. This journal entitled *Apologies in New Zealand English*. The researcher did not take the journal from American English because New Zealand is also an English-speaking country. Mostly they just bring up US or UK, the rest might also have some interesting research results that can help me out in the data analysis.

The data used in this study are collected from the original source. Therefore, the researcher uses primary data collection techniques. In collecting data, the researcher gives a questionnaire in the form of a discourse completion task (DCT) to the participants. Data collected on May, 31st 2018 by using Discourse Completion Test (DCT), is considered to be one of the major data collection methods in this research. The DCT is a written questionnaire that consists of a number of designed situations used to elicit specific speech acts.

The data collected in 30 minutes in class. The instrument of this research is DCT consist of six situations. First, the researcher introduce herself, explain the aim of what the researcher wants to do in that class. Before the researcher give them the questionnaires, the researcher gives them a written consent form to the participant. The participant given 5 minutes to understand the consent form and give their signature if they agree. After that, the researcher gives them the questionnaires and ask to write their answer below the situations.

There are questionnaires that consist of situations as instrument adopted from Andrew Sangpil Byon's journal published by University of Hawai'i Press on 2005. This journal entitled *Apologizing in Korean: Cross-cultural Analysis in Classroom Settings* with the goal of research is to investigating of Sociopragmatic features of American KFL learners in the Korean speech act of apology. This was taken because it was considered complete by including the utterances intended for professor and friend who had different level.

The researcher analyzes the data after the data were collected. The researcher uses analysis data to solve the problem. The researcher attempts to do research related to apology strategies conducted by Indonesian EFL learners by comparing with New Zealand English native speakers. Apology speech act has pattern/structured and also related to the pragmatic competence. So, the language they produced in EFL must be compared with native speakers and compared to the pattern. This pattern will be analysed so that the data can be calculated and made in the form of percentage. The researcher wants to

know whether there are differences or similarities strategies used by both groups of speakers. The researcher adopted the result of apology strategies which used by New Zealand participant and comparing with apology strategies used by Indonesian participant by using same theory by Janet Holmes. The researcher used some theories to analyze the element of this apology speech act, which are apology strategies, syntactic-semantic patterns and pragmatic transfer.

FINDING

1. Apology Strategies

Table 1.1 The result of Apology strategies data

Questions	An explicit expression						An explanation or account	An acknowledgement of responsibility										A promise of forbearance		
	Offer apology		Express regret		Request forgiveness			Accept blame		Express self-deficiency		Recognize H(hearer) as entitled to an apology		Express lack of intent		Offer repair/ redress				
1	3	12%	22	88%	3	12%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
2	2	8%	22	88%	3	12%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	2	8%	0	0%
3	1	4%	17	68%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	12%	1	4%
4	1	4%	17	68%	2	8%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	12%	0	0%
5	1	4%	25	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	12%	0	0%
6	1	4%	22	88%	2	8%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	7	28%	0	0%
SUM	9	36%	125	500%	11	44%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	18	72%	1	4%

Tables 1.1 display the result of the analysis of the apology strategies used by Indonesian EFL learners of 6th Students in Universitas PGRI Madiun. The analysis of data presents the subjects' responses to the apology strategies used. This data presented the information on strategies that were employed the situations, total number of strategies employed in relation to the 6 situations and the percentages.

1.1.1 An Explicit Expression

Table 1.1.1 an explicit expression

An explicit expression					
Offer apology		Express regret		Request forgiveness	
3	12%	22	88%	3	12%
2	8%	22	88%	3	12%
1	4%	17	68%	1	4%
1	4%	17	68%	2	8%
1	4%	25	100%	0	0%
1	4%	22	88%	2	8%
9	36%	125	500%	11	44%

An explicit expression has three kinds, there are offer apology, express regret, and request forgiveness. In whole strategies, there is one of the situations which none of the participants, that is fifth situation of request forgiveness.

The first kind of explicit expression strategy is offer apology. In first situation, there are 3 participants used it and becomes the most participant in this strategy. For example: *Yes, I will. I do apologize my mistakes. I late to come here*

The most common strategy used by students is the express regret strategy for what has been done. For all situations, any participants used regret expression in response and fifth situation all of the participants used it, as in the following example: *I am sorry, I am forgot bring your notes. I can't return the notes today. I will return it tomorrow.*

The third kind is request forgiveness. Situation number 2 and 3 has three response participants, and situation number 5 has none participant. The following example: *Tasya, please forgive me. I've forgot to bring your book today.*

2. Syntactic-Semantic Patterns

Table 2.1 The result of Syntactic-semantic patterns data

Questions	Variant of apologize or apology/ies						Pattern with sorry								Other patterns							
	Verb		Noun		I'm afraid		(Intensifier) sorry		I'm/am (Intensifier) sorry		(I'm) (Intensifier) sorry to/i/for VP/(that)S		(I'm) (Intensifier) sorry about that/it		Excuse me/us		Pardon (me)/I beg your pardon		Forgive me		We regret that S	
1	2	8%	0	0%	0	0%	6	24%	13	52%	3	12%	0	0%	2	8%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
2	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	4	16%	17	68%	1	4%	0	0%	1	4%	1	4%	1	4%	0	0%
3	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	12%	13	52%	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%	0	0%	1	4%	0	0%
4	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	12%	12	48%	3	12%	0	0%	0	0%	1	4%	1	4%	0	0%
5	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	6	24%	13	52%	6	24%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
6	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	3	12%	16	64%	3	12%	0	0%	0	0%	1	4%	1	4%	0	0%
SUM	3	12%	0	0%	0	0%	25	100%	84	336%	16	64%	1	4%	3	12%	4	16%	4	16%	0	0%

Tables 2.1 display the result an analysis data of the syntactic-semantic patterns used by Indonesian EFL learners of 6th Students in Universitas PGRI Madiun. The analysis of data presents the subjects' responses to the syntactic-semantic patterns that used. This data presented the information on patterns that were employed the situations, total number of patterns employed in relation to the 6 situations and the percentages.

2.1.1 Variant of Apologize or Apology/ies

Table 2.1.1 variant of apologize or apology/ies

Variant of apologize or apology/ies					
Verb		Noun		I'm afraid	
2	8%	0	0%	0	0%
1	4%	0	0%	0	0%
0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
3	12%	0	0%	0	0%

The first pattern is variant of apologize or apology/ies which has 3 kinds, such as verb, noun, and I'm afraid.

The first kind has 3 participants used. Situation number 1 has 2 participants and becomes most participant in this kind, because the second situation is 1 participant and the other situations are none participant. the following example: *Yes, I will say I apologize for my fault, sir. I forgot to take your book form.*

The second and third kinds of variant of apologize or apology/ies are noun and I'm afraid, there is none participant used it in all situations.

DISCUSSION

1. Apology Strategies

In the previous chapter, it can be seen from the table that there are several types of strategies or patterns that are most used of participants. In this case, strategy most used by participants, namely express regrets, request forgiveness and offer repair/ redress. Their use of apology strategy is very monotonous because many apology strategies they mostly used 3 of them. This result is in line with the study conducted by Janet Holmes (1990) as model, there are four main strategies most used by participants, namely express regret, an explanation or account, request forgiveness and offer repair/ redress. The analysis demonstrates that an explicit apology without any elaboration or further supporting comment is the most widely occurring strategy in this corpus of naturally occurring apology exchanges. It is also proof that New Zealand people frequently combine an explicit apology with other strategies and may even reduplicate their chosen strategy on occasion. It can be said that the Indonesian L1 system is similar to L1 New Zealand people, so from the results of apology strategies it can be seen that the high of express regret is most widely used by participants.

In this case, Indonesian has a culture that is very easy to apologize, so it is also seen that express regret is most widely used. They assume that apologizing is better than forgiving, so they are very easy to apologize, but the apologies they understand are just a little, like "sorry". Indonesians are accustomed to saying the word sorry or I'm sorry because of the reflection of their L1 who says "maaf", so that it is carried away in their L2. So it can be concluded that, their L1 system is very influential in their L2, so when they express language in L2, it still translated and transferred from the L1.

This result is in line with the study conducted by Canli and Canli (2013) research which used by EFL Teachers in Turkish and English. The result show that their L1 can be said to have an effect on their use of apologies, as they transferred native Turkish norms into English. They were transferred their native language strategies to the target language. This result also supported by Ping (2017) who used by Chinese students and the data collection method is an adaptation of the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) which used three situations. The major findings of the present study are summarized as follows: (1) As Chinese culture is collectively oriented and people regard mutual concern and mutual care as being polite, the subjects don't want others to lose their faces, they tend to take their responsibilities and produce an explicit apology frequently, meanwhile they use avoidance-based negative politeness strategy together with remedial strategies. (2) Their use of apology strategy is very monotonous because among 16 apology strategies they

only used 8 of them. While Asmali and Yavuz (2014) used by Turkish, Polish and Latvian prospective English Teacher. From the result, there is no difference was observed among the appropriateness levels of the apology strategies used by Turkish, Polish and Latvian participants. Besides, Farashaiyan and Amirkhiz (2011) done the research and show the result that Iranians and Malaysians used similar types of strategies in many of the situations (eleven). In frequency strategies, Iranian and Malaysian societies, their choice of strategy depends on hierarchy factor whether they are apologizing to a professor, a classmate, a teacher, a close friend, or a stranger. In line with the expressions of apology from Indonesian participants who also did this when apologizing to different types of people, if they apologized to the professor, they would express more polite sentences than expressions to friends.

2. Syntactic-semantic Patterns

In the result shows that 3 patterns most used by participants, there are (intensifier) sorry, I'am/am (Intensifier) sorry, and (I'm) (Intensifier) sorry to/if/for VP/(that) S. In previous research from Janet Holmes (1990), three categories account 72 percent of all the apologies collected included some form of sorry. Written examples are always involved an explicit apology at some point and, not surprisingly, they tended to use the more formal syntactic patterns. It can be concluded that there are similarities patterns with NZ.

This result is in line with the study conducted by Farashaiyan and Amirkhiz (2011) who have done the research used by Iranian and Malaysian students showed the result that when the subjects used an expression of regret, they always preceded by intensified adverbials (I'm so/terribly/really /very sorry). This may have something to do with the fact that they watch English movies and other English programs.

Summing up, in the previous chapter, it can be seen from the table that there are several patterns that are not used at all. None of the 25 participants used this patterns. In this case, it can be seen that participants did not choose this patterns because of their lack of grammatical competence. They only know that apologizing only uses the word sorry, even though some students know that there are other patterns besides the word sorry. They assume that the most commonly used is only sorry and they are afraid that their interlocutor does not understand when saying an apology besides sorry.

For example, the word target is read by "tarjet" because they have known that the letter G is read J, then plural is always added by s / es, but not all. Students' understanding of L2 language rules in English is not good, so there is over generalization. The source is the L2 system, do they know only partially, then what is understood is applied to everything. For example cactus, if plural becomes cactuses, even though it should be cacti. Why this can happen, due to the ability of students in terms of grammatical

competency like this, when learning plural grammar which is controlled by the majority. So that lecturers when teaching, aspects of mother tongue and target language are must be involved, so that there is a comparison and contrast, not just L2 theories. Besides that, when teaching irregular plural for example, then explain between regular and irregular in a balanced manner, so that students understand well that plural does not have to be added by s / es.

3. Pragmatic Transfer

From the pragmalinguistic aspect, the researcher will analyze in terms of syntax. From this aspect, the part that will be seen is how the sentences build from participants. The results indicated that there was a significant difference between the Indonesian EFL learners and the New Zealand's pragmalinguistics performance.

The analysis shows that although their use of pragmalinguistics accuracy structures was different, both of the Indonesian EFL learners and the New Zealand used direct strategies such as 'I'm sorry/I regret' to apologize. Apology speech act which expressed by Indonesian EFL learners are more likely to use sentences from Indonesian which are translated into English. For example, , *I sorry about your note, tomorrow I promise to bring*. In variety of vocabulary, Indonesian EFL learner still has many deficiencies in terms of the English vocabulary. So that their apologies speech act are less varied, most of them tend to say I'm sorry, even though there are many other expressions of apology.

Then, from sociopragmatic aspect related to rules or norms, culture and also acceptable behavior as well as politeness. In this case, some students have been able to distinguish the expression between friends and people of older age or higher level, for example here when they express an apology to their lecturers. For example, the expression of their apology has shown politeness, *Forgive me, sir/ma'am. I forgot. To bring back the book.*

CONCLUSION

1. Conclusion

From apology strategies, there are several types of strategies or patterns that are most used of participants. In this case, strategy most used by participants, namely express regrets, request forgiveness and offer repair/ redress. Their use of apology strategy is very monotonous because many apology strategies they mostly used 3 of them. This result is in line with the study conducted by Janet Holmes (1990) as a model, there are four main strategies most used by participants, namely express regret, an explanation or account, request forgiveness and offer repair/ redress. It can be said that the Indonesian L1 system is similar to L1 New Zealand people, so from the results of

apology strategies it can be seen that the high of express regret is most widely used by participants.

From syntactic-semantic patterns, the result shows that 3 patterns most used by participants, there are (intensifier) sorry, I'am/am (Intensifier) sorry, and (I'm) (Intensifier) sorry to/if/for VP/(that) S. In previous research from Janet Holmes (1990), three basic categories account for 72 percent of the total New Zealand corpus of apologies.

From the pragmalinguistic aspect, the researcher will analyze in terms of syntax. The results indicated that there was a significant difference between the Indonesian EFL learners and the New Zealand's pragmalinguistics performance. The analysis shows that although their use of pragmalinguistics accuracy structures was different, both of the Indonesian EFL learners and the New Zealand used direct strategies such as 'I'm sorry/I regret' to apologize. Apology speech act which expressed by Indonesian EFL learners are more likely to use sentences from Indonesian which are translated into English. Then, from sociopragmatic aspect related to rules or norms, culture and also acceptable behavior as well as politeness. In this case, some students have been able to distinguish the expression between friends and people of older age or higher level, for example here when they express an apology to their lecturers.

2. Suggestion

From the conclusion on the previous section, the researcher would like to propose several suggestions in connection with the pedagogical implication and for further researcher.

2.1 Pedagogical implication

- a. L2 learning needs to include L1 for comparison in order to reduce error rates and improve pragmatic competence learners
- b. The findings of this study will be useful not only for curriculum designers and material developers, but also for textbook writers and language teachers. Raising awareness of the pragmatic aspects of language can help curriculum designers to develop curriculum and more pragmatic material developers to combine authentic, communicative, and skill-based tasks into L2 teaching / learning programs.
- c. For the teacher must teach students the standard of the issues discussed, so that students understand that apology has many types, not just sorry.

2.2 For the next researcher

For the next researchers interested in taking similar topic as the current study, they can take various kinds of research articles as the samples instead of taking only one kind of

article. Besides that, they can also compare different written registers such as research articles and students' thesis or compare different section of the registers. Furthermore, the number of the samples can also be increased to provide more valid results.

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