

# **THE APOLOGY STRATEGIES IN SIMULATED CLASSROOM SITUATIONS USED BY THE FEMALE AND THE MALE STUDENTS OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF PETRA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY, SURABAYA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is the study of apology strategies and the similarities and/or the differences of the types of apology strategies used by the female and the male students. My respondents consist of 20 female and 20 male students of the English Department. This study used the theory of Ogiermann (2009). I constructed my own Discourse Completion Test (DCT) questionnaire consisting of 10 simulated classroom situations. The quantitative approach was used in this study. The finding revealed that the first three most dominant types of strategies used by the both of them were expression of regret, acceptance of responsibility and justification. The similarities and/or the differences of the three most dominant types of apology between the female and the male students were found in the percentage use of apology strategies. Expression of regret was used 52.8% by the female students and 47% by the male students. The female students used 53.3% and the male students used 46.6% in acceptance of responsibility. Justification was used 52.7% by the female and 47.3% by the male students. For that reason, the female and the male students tend to use the same types of apology strategies, although their percentages are only slightly different.

Keywords: Apology, Apology Strategies, Gender and Sentence

Apology strategies are really needed to prevent misunderstanding or offences done by the speakers, and it can train courtesy in building good relationship with others. Alfattah (2010, p.224) states that “an apology is a fundamental speech act, which is a part of human communication that occurs in every culture to maintain good relation between interlocutors.” Then, I chose to focus on the setting which is inside the English classroom. In order to see the different apology strategies responded by the female and the male students, I decided to create the situations of simulated classroom situations between students to students and students to lecturers. The simulated classroom situations are used to see the expressions appeared during the classroom interaction.

I chose to use the theory of Ogiermann (2009) to analyze the three most dominant types of apology strategies used by the female and the male students. According to Ogiermann (2009), there are three main strategies of apologizing. Ogiermann (pp.58-59) states that “the three main strategies of apologizing consist of IFIDs (Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices), positive politeness strategies (offer of repair, promise of forbearance, and concern for hearer), and accounts [upgrading (accepting responsibility, face-threatening to S)].” In this study, I decided to focus on apology strategies used by university students or adult learners, especially the female and the male students of the English Department (ED), Petra Christian University (PCU) in Indonesia because of the two reasons behind this. Firstly, the situations in the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) questionnaire were written in English. Secondly, the respondents of my study had to answer the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) questionnaire in English. Therefore, I chose the English Department (ED) students as my respondents to answer the DCT questionnaire.

This study is intended to find out the first three most dominant types of apology strategies used by the female and the male students of the English Department at Petra Christian University (PCU). In addition, this study wants to find out the similarities and/or the differences of those first three most dominant types of apology strategies used by the female and the male students

I used the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) questionnaire for collecting the data of the English Department (ED) students. The DCT questionnaire that I used was new, but it was inspired by Ogiermann (2009) who had already tried the DCT questionnaire in her research. I made new situations which were appropriate with the setting of simulated classroom situations in my study, and I had done a pilot project to test the clarity of the DCT questionnaire. The DCT questionnaire was given to the enrolled students of English Education Business (EEB), English for Business Communication (EBC), and English for Creative Industry (ECI) majors of the English Department (ED) of Petra Christian University (PCU). Then, there were 40 students when I conducted this study.

## **METHODS**

I used the quantitative approach because “the main focus of how much or how many, as well as the results are usually presented in numerical form” (Merriam, 2009, p.5). However, I did not stop of the result of quantification, and I tried to make more senses of the tendency as reflected of quantification.

First of all, I met the Head of the English Department to ask her permission to do an observation by distributing the DCT questionnaire to enrolled students of the English Department. Next, I typed 10 simulated classroom situations of the DCT questionnaire by using Microsoft Word, and I printed out the questionnaire. However, before distributing the DCT questionnaire to the participants, I did a pilot project to check the clarity of the DCT questionnaire items and to ambiguous questions. The pilot project was done to 5 students of the English Department in February 2015. I also put the original DCT questionnaire and the modified DCT questionnaire on the appendix. After conducting the pilot project, in March 2015, I began to distribute the DCT questionnaire to the enrolled students of English Education Business (EEB), English for Business Communication (EBC), and English for Creative Industry (ECI) majors of the English Department. In this semester, EEB major opened 8 classes, EBC major opened 6 classes, and ECI major opened 8 classes. I distributed the DCT questionnaire to half of the classes in each major which were opened in this semester. Half of the classes in each major opened in this semester were hoped to represent all classes of each major.

After I knew how many classes that were opened in this semester, I began to ask some students of each major about the list of the friends' name of each class and their contact phone, and how many students were in each classroom. Then, each class consisted of more or less around 15 students, and I only needed 30% of all students in each classroom as my respondents. I hoped that 30% of all students in each classroom could represent the whole data that I need. After I got all of the data, I tried to contact those students to help me answer the DCT questionnaire. However, there were some students that I did not know their contact phone; then, I asked my friends from each major of the English Department to help me contact them. After I succeeded to contact all of them and made an appointment with them, I tried to distribute the DCT questionnaire to them. I chose 2 female and 2 male students in each classroom. The total of my respondents were 40 students that consisted of 20 female and 20 male students.

Prepared Table 1 The Analysis of the Apology Strategies Used by the Female Students

S I T U A T I O N	Resp	Answers	Categories																			Notes				
			IFIDs							Accounts										Positive Politeness Apology Strategies						
			P	O	R	E	C	D	F	O	D	A	M	E	A	J	L	E	A	S	Offer of Repair			PF	CH	
			T	A	F	R	E	S	W	O	R	I	I	X	F	U	I	E	R	C	DO		IO	IN		
1	a. ....																									
	b. ....																									
	c. ....																									
	a. ....																									
	b. ....																									
	c. ....																									
	Total																									

Prepared Table 2 The Analysis of the Apology Strategies Used by the Male Students

S I T U A T I O N	Resp	Answers	Categories																			Notes				
			IFIDs							Accounts										Positive Politeness Apology Strategies						
			P	O	R	E	C	D	F	O	D	A	M	E	A	J	L	E	A	S	Offer of Repair			PF	CH	
			T	A	F	R	E	S	W	O	R	I	I	X	F	U	I	E	R	C	DO		IO	IN		
1	a.	.....																								
	b.	.....																								
	c.	.....																								
	a.	.....																								
	b.	.....																								
	c.	.....																								
	Total																									

I used table 1 and table 2 above to analyze the first three most dominant types of apology strategies used by the female and the male students. In the first column on table 1 and table 2, I put the number of the situation according to the DCT questionnaire. That column was also applied to all the situations.

The second column dealt with the total number of the respondents of English Department students. The third column dealt with the answers of each student. The students' answers consisted of one sentence or more. Therefore, I used codes like 'a', 'b', 'c', and etc. It was meant that the alphabet 'a' was used for the first sentence, alphabet 'b' was used for the second sentence, and the next alphabets were applied to the next sentences. The fourth up to the twenty sixth columns were the columns for each type of apology strategies. I put tick (√) in the columns because the students' answers were available on the types of apology strategy. The last column dealt with the notes that contain the brief explanations related to the analysis. The bottom column in each table situation dealt with the total tick (√) of each type of apology strategies. The total tick of each apology strategy appeared in the types of token and percentage. First, for getting the percentage of each type of apology strategy used by the female students, I used this formula.

$$Xf(cat) = \frac{f(cat)}{\sum tf} \times 100\%$$

$Xf(cat)$  = the percentage of each type of apology strategy used by the female students  
 $f(cat)$  = the total tick of each token type of apology strategy used by the female students  
 $\sum tf$  = the total tick of all token types of apology strategies used by the female students  
 Then, for getting the percentage of each type of apology strategy used by the male students, I used this formula.

$$Xm(cat) = \frac{m(cat)}{\sum tm} \times 100\%$$

$Xm(cat)$  = the percentage of each type of apology strategy used by the male students  
 $m(cat)$  = the total tick of each token type of apology strategy used by the male students  
 $\sum tm$  = the total tick of all token types of apology strategies used by the male students

After analyzing the data of the DCT questionnaire, I looked the similarities and/or the differences of the first three most dominant types of apology strategies used by the female and the male students.

I counted the percentage of the comparison for the similarities and/or differences of apology strategies used by the female and the male students. Firstly, for getting the total percentage of the dominant types of apology strategies used by the female students, I used this formula.

$$A = \frac{a}{\sum f} \times 100\%$$

$A$  = the total percentage of the most dominant type of each apology strategy used by the female students  
 $a$  = the total tick of the most dominant type of each apology strategy used by the female students  
 $\sum f$  = the total of the most dominant type of each apology strategy used by the female and the male students

Secondly, for getting the total percentage of the dominant types of apology strategies used by the male students, I used this formula.

$$B = \frac{b}{\sum m} \times 100\%$$

$B$  = the total percentage of the most dominant type of each apology strategy used by the male students  
 $b$  = the total tick of the most dominant type of each apology strategy used by the male students

$\Sigma m$  = the total of the most dominant type of each apology strategy used by the male and the female students

After getting the total percentage of the three most dominant types of apology strategies used by the female and the male students, I put it into the table 3.

The table below was used as a media to evaluate the similarities and/or differences of the three most dominant types of apology strategies between the female and the male students.

Table 3 Similarities and/or Differences of the Three Most Dominant Types of Apology Strategies between the Female and the Male Students

Strategies	Female		Male	
	Times	Percentage	Times	Percentage
		%		%
		%		%
		%		%

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The apology strategies used by the female students of the English Department are presented in the following table.

Table 4 The apology strategies used by the female students of the English Department

Situations	Female		
	Strategies		
1	ER (16 / 2.9%)	AR (20 / 3.7%)	IO (7 / 1.3%)
2	ER (16 / 2.9%)	EX (19 / 3.5%)	AR (13 / 2.4%)
3	ER (17 / 3.1%)	JU (8 / 1.48%)	AR (22 / 4%)
4	ER (12 / 2.2%)	LI (24 / 4.4%)	AR (25 / 4.6%)
5	PT (3 / 0.55%)	ER (15 / 2.79%)	IN (17 / 3.1%)
6	ER (18 / 3.3%)	AR (16 / 2.9%)	IN (14 / 2.6%)
7	ER (11 / 2%)	JU (19 / 3.5%)	IO (19 / 3.5%)
8	ER (19 / 3.5%)	DR (8 / 1.48%)	DO (7 / 1.3%)
9	ER (19 / 3.5%)	JU (12 / 2.2%)	AR (13 / 2.4%)
10	ER (15 / 2.79%)	AR (9 / 1.67%)	DO (14 / 2.6%)

Looking at the table above, it shows that expression of regret, acceptance of responsibility and justification are the first three most dominant types of apology strategies used by the female students. The strategies used in each simulated classroom situation are presented in the following part.

a) Expression of regret

Example: *“(I am terribly sorry, ma’am. I will turn down the volume and keep the class quiet.)”*

In that example, the respondent used expression of regret strategy to respond to that situation. In that situation, it shows that she expressed her regret to the lecturer. She confessed to the lecturer that she had done a fault. Even though *“I’m sorry”* is the standard apology, it is still accepted as an apology.

b) Acceptance of responsibility

Example: *“(I am sorry, ma’am. This is my fault, not her fault. I borrowed the book and forget to return it to her.)”*

In the example above, it can be seen that acceptance of responsibility appeared in that situation. It is shown from the *“this is my fault, not her fault”* sentence. In that sentence, the respondent said to the lecturer that she was the one who was responsible for the offence. She provided a confession that took a self-critical of her behavior. In addition, in example two, it shows that she accepted for taking the responsibility by admitting her mistake.

c) Justification

Example: *“(Can you help me? Can you change the schedule of yours with my group? Next week I cannot do the presentation because I must go to Bandung for my sister’s wedding.)”*

In that example, the respondent ended by Accounts strategy justification when she said *“It is because next week I cannot do the presentation because I must go to Bandung for my sister’s wedding”*. This example shows that the respondent admitted the damage and accepted responsibility by mentioning her own duty in which she had to attend her sister’s wedding. She tried to fix the damage by suggesting repairing the damage to her classmate. Then, the apologizer did not deny being the one responsible for controlling the situation and preventing it from becoming offensive.

Besides the first three most dominant types of apology strategies used by the female students found in this data, I also found the first three most dominant types of apology strategies used by the male students. The apology strategies used by the male students of the English Department are presented in the following table.

Table 5 The apology strategies used by the male students of the English Department

Situations	Male		
	Strategies		
1	ER (19 / 4%)	AR (14 / 2.9%)	JU (6 / 1.27%)
2	ER (15 / 3%)	AR (14 / 2.9%)	EX (17 / 3.6%)
3	ER (14 / 2.9%)	AR (17 / 3.6%)	JU (6 / 1.27%)
4	ER (10 / 2%)	AR (19 / 4%)	LI (16 / 3.4%)
5	ER (15 / 3%)	IN (15 / 3%)	AR (4 / 0.85%)
6	ER (18 / 3.8%)	AR (12 / 2.5%)	IN (9 / 1.9%)
7	ER (10 / 2%)	JU (15 / 3%)	IO (17 / 3.6%)
8	ER (14 / 2.9%)	AR (6 / 1.27%)	DO (7 / 1.48%)
9	ER (15 / 3%)	JU (8 / 1.7%)	AR (10 / 2%)
10	ER (11 / 2.3%)	AR (7 / 1.48%)	DO (14 / 2.9%)

The table 5 shows that the majority of responses from the male students showed that the first three most dominant types of apology strategies consist of expression of regret, acceptance of responsibility, and justification. Those three strategies can be seen in the following part.

a) Expression of regret

Example: “***I am sorry***, but I cannot make it on my presentation day due to sudden matter in Bandung. Can you please replace your date with mine on that day?”

Expression of regret strategy appeared in example three. It is shown in which the respondent started the expression by using “*I am sorry*”. The male student as the respondent apologized the mistake to his friend because he could not do the presentation because of the sudden matter. He felt sorry to his friend that made the damage for his group’s member and another group.

b) Acceptance of responsibility

Example: “***I am sorry that I made a noisy voice, ma’am***. I can lower the volume right now.”

In example three, there is an example of acceptance of responsibility strategy. It can be seen in the first sentence when he said “*I made a noisy voice, ma’am*”. That expression can be meant that it was my fault. From the words of “*I made a noisy voice, ma’am*”, the respondent indirectly showed that he admitted the offence that had done by all the students in the classroom. He implicitly confessed that that situation was his mistake or fault. In that situation, he was willing to accept responsibility. He was aware that he was the class captain responsible for the situation in the classroom.

c) Justification

Example: “***I am sorry man. I could not help it because I am sick***. I promise you to talk with the lecturer, so he can give us one more chance.”

In the middle sentence, the respondent expressed his feeling by using Accounts strategy justification. In that situation, he felt regret because he could not do the presentation well so that it caused his partner’s grade to be lower. He explained to his friend that he was sick in which it became his reason for not performing well.



However, he still admitted that it was his offence. He also accepted responsibility of his offence by trying to talk to the lecturer. In that situation he did not mean to do that, but there was a reason to do so.

Moreover, discussing about the apology strategies used by the female and the male students in facing some situations in the DCT questionnaire, there were some similarities and differences found in the students' responses. The similarities and differences can be seen on the table below.

Table 6 Similarities and/or differences of the three most dominant types of apology strategies between the female and the male students

Strategies	Female		Male	
	Times	Percentage	Times	Percentage
Expression of regret	158	52.8 %	141	47 %
Acceptance of responsibility	118	53.3 %	103	46.6 %
Justification	39	52.7 %	35	47.3 %

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the analysis of forty students' questionnaire, the finding revealed that there were two out three main apology strategies (IFIDs, accounts and positive politeness apology strategies) used in the DCT questionnaire. There were expression of regret, acceptance of responsibility and justification. The first most frequently used strategies were expression of regret, which was used 52.8% by the female students and 47% by the male students. The second place was acceptance of responsibility that was used 53.3% by the female and 46.6% by the male students. Then, the last place was justification, which was used by the female students about 52.7% and the male students about 47.3%.

Furthermore, the findings reviewed that the female and the male students did not show any big differences in facing situations in the DCT questionnaire. Either the female or the male students expressed their regret directly when they did mistakes because of their own mistakes. They are more likely to show their responsibilities in the offensive situations in which they were involved in making the damage. They were also willing for the offence by admitting their regret and providing a confession that criticized themselves of their behavior.

In addition, from my analysis, it could be seen that either the female or the male students tend to use the same types of apology strategies in responding the situations in the DCT questionnaire. Even though the percentage use of apology strategies was not too different between the female and the male students of the English Students. Even though I compared the female and the male students in the use of apology strategies, it does not mean that it pictures all the female and the male students' use of apology strategies due to the limited data.

By conducting this study, I wish this study can give the readers insights related to the apology strategies and can be useful for the readers who are interested in the use of apology strategies of the female and the male students when facing the situations. Furthermore, hopefully, further research on similar topics could be carried out in the future.

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