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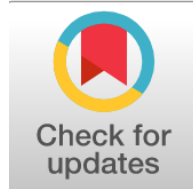
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Pragmatics Study of Speech Act of Apology Between Men and Women: Comparative Study

Kajian Pragmatik Tindak Tutur Permintaan Maaf Antara Pria dan Wanita: Studi Komparatif

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Abstract

General Background: Apology strategies are essential in communication, influencing interpersonal relationships and social interactions. Understanding how men and women employ these strategies differently can provide insights into gender-based linguistic variations. **Specific Background:** Olshtain and Cohen (1983) identified five categories of apologetic techniques: Apology, Repair Offer, Account Explanation, Acceptance of Responsibility, and Forbearance Promise. While previous studies have explored apology strategies, limited research has examined their application in real-life contexts, particularly in Padang. **Knowledge Gap:** Despite extensive research on gender and language, there remains a lack of empirical studies comparing the specific techniques men and women use when apologizing and how these choices are shaped by social and cultural factors. **Aims:** This study aims to analyze the similarities and differences in the apology strategies of men and women, identifying patterns in their linguistic choices and behavioral tendencies. **Results:** Findings reveal that both genders employ all five apology strategies, with direct apologies being the most commonly used and forbearance promises being the least. Men favor explanation-based apologies, while women prefer offering repair. These differences stem from distinct communication styles—women emphasize emotions and solidarity, whereas men focus on logic and status. **Novelty:** Unlike prior studies, this research uses a purposive sampling method to analyze real-life expressions of regret in a natural setting. It highlights the impact of gendered communication styles on apology choices, offering new perspectives on pragmatic language use in social interactions. **Implications:** Understanding gender-based apology strategies can enhance cross-gender communication and reduce misunderstandings. These findings are valuable for interpersonal communication training, language teaching, and cross-cultural studies, contributing to the broader field of sociolinguistics and pragmatics.

Highlights:

- Analyze gender differences in apology strategies.
- Women prefer repair offers; men favor explanations.
- Enhances cross-gender communication and sociolinguistic understanding.

Keywords: men and women, apology, apology strategies, utterance.

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Introduction

Apologizing is an essential part of human communication. People need to know what an apology is and how it functions. "Compensatory activity for a transgression done by S (the speaker) that has impacted H (the hearer)" is how Boston *et al.*, (2007) [1] defines apology (p. 44). Labben (2016) [2] defined it as "a speech act which is designed to give support for the H (hearer) who was really or possibly harmed by a violation X, where the S (speaker) is willing to embarrass himself or herself to some extent and to accept blame and responsibility for X" (p. 156).

According to Gooder and Jacobs (2000)[3] highlighted that "a genuine apology admits the truth of wrongdoing, takes ultimate responsibility, displays true sorrow and remorse, and pledges not to repeat the offense." so, "some of the components of the correct apology include the acknowledgment of trespass, the implicit confession of guilt, an expression of remorse, and a promise of a future in which the hurt would not reoccur."

In the right situation, certain actions are required to convey the offender's grief. A person's choice of apologetic technique is influenced by their gender, status or class, ethnicity, and degree of intimacy. According to recent publications that use the term "sexuality," such as Susanti ,2020 [4] gender is a social construct that involves a wide range of genetic, psychological, social, and cultural differences between men and women, while sex is primarily determined by genetics [5]

To put it another way, sex separates men and women biologically and physiologically, while gender differentiates them socially and culturally. Language, gender, and apologetic strategies have already been the subject of numerous studies. One of these is Holtgraves,(2007).[6] study, which demonstrates that social and cultural disparities in New Zealand cause men and women to have different opinions about apologies and to rank the need for apologies differently.

The first researcher to examine variations in apologetic techniques was Chunlin (2013). Similar to this, Al-Sallal and Ahmed (2020) [7] studied apologetic techniques, particularly as they applied to Arabic-speaking people in Jordan. Their study sought to determine whether gender affects the methods of apology used in different contexts. It is noteworthy that Indonesian researchers have also made contributions to the study of gender-based variations in apologetic techniques, in addition to those from other countries. For example, a study by Sudirman (2018) [8] examined how men and women employ different apologetic techniques. The researcher has been motivated by earlier research to investigate the connection between gender and speech acts, specifically focusing on apologetic tactics.

This study aims to investigate the many apologetic techniques used by people of different genders, taking into account the importance of apologies in everyday relationships and the language distinctions between men and women. It specifically seeks to determine whether gender affects the choice of these tactics in different situations.

In order to focus on seventh-semester students, who have already been introduced to the idea of expressive speech acts and the significance of preserving the addressee's "face," the study employs apologies as a primary example [9] . It is anticipated that the results will demonstrate how well participants comprehend and use this information in practical settings. This study focuses on apology tactics, however other research has looked at gender-based disparities in other areas, like praises and reactions. In a university context, where participants spend most of their time, it seeks to determine the kinds and differences in approaches employed by male and female presenters. Furthermore, the study looks into what makes employing apologetic techniques easier, with a particular emphasis on the linguistic traits of male and female communication. To keep the study's emphasis narrow, cultural, age-related, and social background characteristics are not included.[10]

The Problem of the Study

When the behavioral standard is broken, an apology is an attitude act that is used to try to make things well and make the aggrieved hearer feel better. Usually, the act of apology specification presents difficult questions, such as how to identify the expressions that carry out the act and how these expressions are actually generated to mend the situation. Finding a suitable method for identifying the act of atonement and precisely defining the expressions that carry out the act based on its attributes, constituents, contextual variables, etc., is therefore the goal of the variety of apologetic demands. Therefore, it is vital to determine whether men and women differ in how they use and determine the speech act and expressions of apology, they going to use.

The Aim of the Study

The study attempts to find answers to the following questions:

- 1: To what extent do speech acts and gender play a role in the similarities and differences between men and women apologies?
- 2: Do women selection of apology expressions resemble from men apologies used in typical situations?

3: To what extent does gender play a role in constructing selection of apology expressions?

1.1 The Concept of Apology

Apologies are subsumed primitively by Epprecht, (1998) [11] under "Behabtive" class; Behabtive include the reaction to other people's behavior and fortunes and to the attitude of someone else's past or imminent conduct. Apology is not only a reaction, attitude or expression to another person's behavior. It is also an expression of a psychological state which reflects the speaker rather than the hearer behavior. (Sattar *et al.*, 014)

Apology falls under the umbrella of Searle's taxonomy as member of expressive speech acts, where he defines apology as an act of expressing regret occurs in the course of performing wrongdoing prior to the time of speaking, resulting in an offence and need a repair [12]

Gooder and Jacobs (2000: 241-73) [3] define apology as an act of expressing where the speaker tries to express his own state or attitude through reflecting true feelings and sorrowful emotions. This is attributed to the fact that for an apology to have an effect, it should reflect true feelings.

An apology is a spoken act that is employed when someone violates a behavioral norm or when an action or statement has caused one or more others to feel offended. In these situations, the guilty person or people must apologize. According to Aufa, (2011). [13], an act of apology entails imbalances between the speaker and the hearer, which are caused by the speaker's offense against the hearer. In order to gain the hearer's forgiveness, the speaker must mimic him, which restores equilibrium. An apology, according to Hidayat(2016) [14] is a "compensatory action to an offense in which the speaker is casually involved and which is costly to the hearer." Losing face or perhaps a serious misunderstanding could be the price. [4].

1.2 Characteristics of Apology

The main characteristics of apology can be summarized as follows:

1- Apology is generally subjunctive act; this means that the performer of the wrongdoing must be the apologizer; otherwise, they will be another or may be understood that the speaker has bad intention. This is attributed to the fact that one cannot express the regret, sorrow, or sadness of the others, but can only report them [15]

2- Apology is generally post - event act; this means that it is based on past deed of actions. Thus, the speaker apologizes for pre- event that he has committed [16]

3- Apology is the act that actually resorts the balance between the speaker and the hearer [17]

4-Apology is the act that is designed to provide support for the hearer who is actually offended by a violation of something.

Methods

The descriptive-qualitative research paradigm, which does not take statistical computations into account, will be used to design this study [4]. Sentences representing the participants' utterances comprise the data that was gathered. Since content analysis is a research method used to discover certain material qualities in written or visual materials, this research design is a content analysis [18]. This study aims to provide a thorough explanation of the apologetic techniques that contribute to the parallels and discrepancies between the apologies of men and women. In this study, thirty men and thirty women were gathered in one location and instructed to write down whatever sentiments of regret they felt were suitable. Something noteworthy here is that the participants were directed to behave the way they used to in their daily interactions and thus to write down the first thing that came into their minds regarding both the situation and the apology involved. Besides, they were also asked to write down all of their personal information. Qualitative research, according to Hitomi, (2017) [19], are more likely to use non-random or purposeful selection based on specific criteria. Purposive sampling is a type of nonprobability sampling used by the researcher. Purposive sampling is also known as judgment sampling because it selects sample items from the population that are deemed to be typical or representative [15]. Purposive sampling is most commonly used in attitude and polling data.

Result and Discussion

Result

1. Research Finding

The results in this research is displayed in tables. The table is classified to answer the research question of this

research. The table used below shows the types of apology strategies by men and women.

| No. | Type of Apology Strategies Used by Men | Freq. | % |
|-----|---|-------|-------|
| 1 | Expression of Apology | 14 | 40.2% |
| 2 | Explanation of Account | 8 | 20.4% |
| 3 | Offer of Repair | 4 | 10.2% |
| 4 | Acknowledgement of Responsibility for Offense | 2 | 0.6% |
| 5 | Promise Forbearance | 2 | 0.6% |

Table 1. of Frequency and Percentage of Apology Strategies Utterances by Men

Based on table 1, Expression of Apology was the most preferable strategy (40.2%) used by men. The second most preferable strategy was Explanation or Account of the Situation (20.4%). Next, it was Offer of Repair (10.2%) and then Acknowledgement of Responsibility for Offense (0.6 %). The least preferable strategy used by men was Promise of Forbearance (0.6 %).

| No. | Type of Apology Strategies Used by women | Freq. | % |
|-----|---|-------|-------|
| 1 | Expression of Apology | 15 | 50% |
| 2 | Explanation of Account | 4 | 10.2% |
| 3 | Offer of Repair | 9 | 27% |
| 4 | Acknowledgement of Responsibility for Offense | 1 | 0.3% |
| 5 | Promise Forbearance | 1 | 0.3% |

Table 2. of Frequency and Percentage of Apology Strategies Utterances by women

According to table 2, Expression of Apology was the most used strategy (50%) by women s among the other four strategies. Then the second one was Offer of Repair (27.2%) and then Explanation or Account of the Situation (10.2%). The fourth most used strategy was Acknowledgement Responsibility of Offense (0.3 %), and the last most used strategy was Promise of Forbearance (0.3 %).

| No. | Type of Apology Strategies Used by Men and women | Men | Women | Difference |
|-----|--|-------|-------|------------|
| 1 | Expression of Apology | 40.2% | 50% | 9.8% |
| 2 | Explanation of Account | 20.4% | 10.2% | 10.2% |
| 3 | Offer of Repair | 10.2% | 27.2% | 17.2% |
| 4 | Acknowledgement of Responsibility for Offense | 0.6% | 0.3% | 0.3% |
| 5 | Promise Forbearance | 0.6% | 0.3% | 0.3% |

Table 3. of Percentage Comparison between Men and women Apology Strategies Utterances

Table (3) showed that men percentage in Expression of Apology strategy is higher (9.8 %) than women. Men percentage is 40.2 % and women percentage is 50%. It also showed that Expression of Apology strategy is the most preferred strategy by both men and women. The second one is Explanation of Account strategy. Based on the table, men percentage (20.4 %) is still higher than women percentage (10.2%) in using this strategy with 10,2 % in percentage difference. Whereas, in Offer of Repair strategy, women percentage (10.2%) surpassed men percentage (10.2 %). Women percentage is 17.2 % higher than men's. It showed that this strategy is the second preferred strategy by women and it is the third preferred strategy by men after Explanation of Account strategy. Next, in Acknowledgement of Responsibility for Offense strategy, women percentage still higher than men percentage. [20] Women percentage is 0.6 % and men percentage is 0.3 % with percentage difference is 0.3 %. The last is Promise of Forbearance strategy. In this strategy, men percentage (0.6 %) higher than women percentage (0.3 %) with 0.3 % in difference. men and women have differences in using the apology strategies. It can be seen from the tables that men apology strategies from the most used to the least used are sorted as follows; expression of apology, explanation of account, offer of repair, acknowledgement of responsibility for offense and promise forbearance. Whereas, women apology strategies from the most preferably to the least preferably are sorted as follows;

expression of apology, offer of repair, explanation of account, acknowledgement of responsibility for the offense and promise forbearance. However, men and women also have similarities in using apology strategies. According to the tables, both men and women had Expression of Apology as the most used strategy in their utterances. Then men and women had Promise of Forbearance as the least used strategy in their utterances.[15]

Discussion

Based on the results, the study found that men and women employ nearly identical apologetic techniques. Men employ five strategies: offering reparations, acknowledging responsibility for the offense, offering an explanation or account of the circumstances, expressing regret, and promising to be patient. Additionally, five methods are present in women's utterances. Apologies, explanations or accounts of the circumstances, offers of repair, acceptance of responsibility, and promises of patience are the most common terms they utilize. Men and women typically employ the same apologies as the most preferred tactic and the pledge of patience as the least preferred tactic. Nonetheless, men use apology expressions and account-explanation techniques more frequently than women. Otherwise, women are more likely than males to use methods such as confession of responsibility for offenses, offer of repair, and assurance of forbearance. The researcher groups apology scenarios according to the level of closeness and the gravity of the mistake.

The levels of intimacy are classified into two categories: lecturers who have more power or higher position, and friends who have equal with the people. Based on the impact on the hearer, or both of them, mistakes are classified as minor or serious transgressions. [21]. There are differences in the ways that apologetic techniques are applied in a number of domains. When expressing regret to friends for both little and severe transgressions, men are more likely to give an explanation of account. Compared to women, who are known to be more expressive than men, they are known to struggle with self-expression [22]. Instead of apologizing outright, they give an explanation for their actions. By providing an explanation, they admit that they committed the crime but that they are not solely to blame. According to Tolsi, (2006). [23] , women place a higher value on closeness and solidarity than males do on independence, power, and status. Women are more concerned about offending someone because it involves hurting their feelings, which may negatively affect their relationship. [24]

Consequently, ladies decide to apologize to their friends. By expressing sorrow and apologizing for both serious and minor transgressions, they preserve the peace in their friendships. However, the usage of apologies and explanations or account-taking techniques is equivalent when people are implicated in crimes against possession. Possess are more polite in using both techniques to apologize since they are viewed as having a better social rank than individuals. Compared to males, women were more likely to acknowledge their responsibilities to their friends. The majority acknowledge their guilt and declare their inadequacy and lack of motivation to hurt their pals. This is because women emphasize solidarity while expressing their own emotions. They seldom think about how their prestige or authority in society will change if they acknowledge that they committed the crime. They will therefore be seen as trustworthy and accountable. This is also consistent with women's concerns regarding the hearer's method of apologizing. They only pledge tolerance three times for men and ten times for women since they are sure they won't commit the same mistake twice. For this reason, neither men nor women frequently employ this tactic.[25]

Conclusion

Based on the issues and the data analysis, the researcher comes to the conclusion that men and women employ five different strategies: offering to make amends, apologizing, explaining or accounting for the circumstance, admitting responsibility for the transgression, and promising to be patient. Men and women employ different apology techniques. Men favor explanations or accounts of the situation as their second most preferred tactic, while women prefer offers of repair. Then, for men, the third most popular tactic was Offer of Repair, while for women, the third most popular tactic was Explanation or Account of the Situation. But there are also parallels between how men and women use apology techniques. The most common tactic employed by both men and women in their speech was the expression of apology. Then, the least common tactic employed by both men and women in their speech was the Promise of Forbearance. Men and women are recognized to have distinct traits in their speech. While women utilize their emotions, emphasize closeness and solidarity, and apologize for small transgressions, males use reason, concentrate on power and position, and prefer to obtain or propose solutions to sympathize. These are the factors that facilitate the selection of apology tactics by both men and women in Padang. The study displayed the methods employed by the participants without addressing the effect of those strategies on the hearer, as the primary goal of this research is to identify the differences or similarities in the usage of apology strategies. The study's usage of people's daily lives may assist reduce the number of different kinds of violations that might happen. In conclusion, hearers occasionally anticipate that offenders will apologize in the way that they prefer. Men and women, however, have different approaches of apologizing. Knowing that each gender has a preferred method of apologizing might help prevent misunderstandings, particularly when people are interacting with people of different genders.

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