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**Realization of Apology Strategies of EFL Graduate Students: A Case of Two EFL Graduate Students in Indonesia**

*Eko NOPRIANTO*<sup>1</sup>

**ABSTRACT**

Communication breakdown could probably occur among interlanguage speakers due to some factors, one of which is the limited knowledge on how to correctly perform the utterances using the target language. This case study involving two graduate students of English was conducted to find out what their apology strategies and to explore how pragmatic transfer might interfere their apology strategies. Using an oral Discourse Completion Task (DCT) and an interview, it was found that both participants opted to use explanations of account when expressing their apology in almost all situations provided. It was also discovered that participants used less varied apology strategies although they have learned English for years. Besides, they tend to intensify their apology expressions to show their sincerity of apologizing combined with the use of some vocative expressions to show the politeness. Furthermore, pragmatic transfer was found to influence their apology expressions both in term of pragmalinguistics which transfer semantic form of Indonesian to English and sociopragmatics transfer which was influenced by the inappropriateness of using general familiarizer.

**Key Words:** apology, pragmatic, pragmatic transfer, pragmalinguistics, sociopragmatics.

**1. Introduction**

Interlanguage speakers from different cultural background, language, and characteristics such as in Indonesia unavoidably often experience the communication breakdown when using English. Those differences might influence the way they communicate to others. As stated by Cedar (2017), people from different first language and culture could lead to a misunderstanding and even an offense when using English if it is not supported with the knowledge of how to use the speech act properly. They seem to use their first language background when communicating using the target language. Interestingly, it often happens not only to low proficiency of English but also to the ones who already gained knowledge of advance grammar and vocabulary (Sa'da & Mohammadi, 2005). Adressing to the misundersatnding, some startegies would be employed.

One of the strategies in social act occurred in all cultures is apology. Among other types of speech acts, apology is considered as one of the most frequently used by people in all cultures in daily life since its function is to maintain good relationship between the speaker and the hearer. Apology is a pivotal role in relational management communicating consciousness and acceptance of moral responsibility for offensive behavior and initiating the process of negotiating forgiveness (Holmes, 1990; McCullough et al., 1998); Robinson, 2004). In its realization, apology seems to be complex and difficult

<sup>1</sup> Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, noprianto.eko@student.upi.edu.

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to recognize since it involves not only linguistics and paralinguistic aspects but also social and psychological aspects (Grainger & Harris, 2007). Moreover, as stated by Holmes (1990), apology also plays to show the level of a politeness in which it involves face management and take place in both public and private situation and interaction. In addition, Goffman as cited in Alfattah (2010, p. 226) sees apology as a “remedy”, a term which certainly leads to the main function of the apology which is to give a remedy for an offense and restore the social harmony. Meanwhile, according to Olshtain & Cohen (1983) apology occurs if a social norm has been violated no matters the offense is made is real or perceived. Furthermore, Blum-kulka & Olshtain (1984) explains that there are some factors underlying a person apologizes and the reasons of choosing certain apology strategies. The most important one is the degree or the seriousness of the offence he/she made besides other factors such as culture, person, context, power, parameter of distance, and probably age.

Interestingly, besides being used by all languages around the world, apology varies in term of its linguistic structures and the culture underlying its use (Chakrani, 2007; Kalisz, 1993). The difference is also found in term of how frequent it is used in daily life (Salehi, 2014). Cedar (2017) mentions that the difference in the set of apology strategies and its uniqueness is determined by the different speech and culture among the community. In other words, member of certain community will use apology strategies differently in term of what strategies and when those strategies are used in certain situation.

In the last few decades, the act of apologizing has been claimed to have attracted many pragmatics scholars' attention (Grainger & Harris, 2007). The attention involves the various cultural background of the participants around the world. In the context of Indonesia, some studies have also been conducted by several scholars with different focuses and data collection methods such as Wouk (2005) who focussed on the genders and their apology strategies, Wouk (2006) investigating the different semantic use of apology strategies of participants in several situation, varied status and their relationship, Qorina's (2012) study investigating the apology strategies development and the pragmatic transfer interference, Cedar's (2017) study emphasizing on the relationship of apology strategies with English proficiency level, and Jones and Adrefiza (2017) who compared apologies in Australian English and Bahasa Indonesia in term of cultural and gender perspectives. In other Asian societies, some studies were also conducted as the ones done by Bagherinejad and Jadidoleslam (2015) to Iranian EFL learners to know the effect of gender and proficiency level on the use of apology strategies and by Jassim and Nimehchisalem (2016), exploring the socio-pragmatical awareness of Arab students on committing offense and their apology strategies in the formal and informal social contexts.

Different from those aforementioned studies, the present study was aimed at investigating the apology strategies of graduate students in Indonesia and how pragmatics transfer might interfere their strategy choice in qualitative case study perspectives. Using case study, this current study was expected to draw a deep and comprehensive information regarding the participants' apology strategies. Besides using a spoken discourse completion task as the main data instrument in which it is considered more 'natural' than the written one which was mostly used by those previous studies, the present study was also supported with an interview right after the task has been finished to triangulate the results.

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## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Apology

Since apology is one of speech acts which draws many attention by many scholars, the definitions of apology also vary. According to Robinson (2004, p. 292), apology is a pivotal role in relational management communicating “awareness and acceptance of moral responsibility for offensive behavior and initiating the process of negotiating absolution”. In its realization, apology seems to be complex and difficult to recognize since it involves not only linguistics and paralinguistic aspects but also social and psychological aspects (Grainger & Harris, 2007). The complexity which apology possess then attracted many studies to be conducted over time not only in relation to intercultural emphasis but also to particular language around the world. Moreover, as stated by Holmes (1990), apology also plays to show the level of a politeness in which it involves face management and take place in both public and private situation and interaction. She further elaborates that apology is an important component of social harmony maintenance since it does not only realize an awareness and acceptance of moral responsibility for the offensive activity and action someone has done but also involves the initiation of negotiation process he might offer. According (Blum-kulka & Olshtain, 1984) explains that there are some factors underlying a person apologizes and the reasons of choosing certain apology strategies. The most important one is the degree or the seriousness of the offence he/she made besides other factors such as culture, person, context, power, parameter of distance, and probably age.

In addition, Goffman as cited in Alfattah (2010, p. 226) sees apology as a “remedy”, a term which certainly leads to the main function of the apology which is to give a remedy for an offense and restore the social harmony. Meanwhile, according to Olshtain & Cohen (1983) apology occurs if a social norm has been violated no matters the offense is made is real or perceived. Using an apology, a speaker tries to acknowledge that what he/she has done is wrong and would lead to damage to the hearer. Therefore, the speaker would make an effort to restore their good relationship. However, in several occasions, an apology expression such as “sorry” sometimes act not only as an admit of doing wrong action, but also it could be as a personal regret or act of condolence relying upon the context in which the situation happens (Robinson, 2004). The situation could be seen when someone says “I am sorry to hear that” clearly indicates that he/she is trying to show his/her sympathy since it is not found any offences made.

### 2.2. Apology strategies

With respect to the apology strategies, many researchers made efforts to identify and propose semantic formula for apology strategies such as Blum-kulka & Olshtain (1984); Blum-kulka, House & Casper cited in Cedar (2017); Olshtain & Cohen (1983); and Holmes (1990). This current study adopted the framework of apology strategies proposed by (Blum-kulka & Olshtain, 1984) which consist of two major strategies. One major strategy would also be divided into several sub-categories. This framework would also be used as the framework data analysis of the present study. The apology strategies are seen as follows:

1. An explicit illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) such as: *(be) sorry; apologize, regret; excuse, etc.*

2. an utterance containing reference to one or more elements from a closed set of specified propositions which is categorized into four:
  - a. an explanation or account of what causes the offence:
    - i. explicit explanation e.g. *The bus was late*
    - ii. implicit explanation e.g. *Traffic is always so heavy in the morning*
  - b. an expression of the S's responsibility for the offence:
    - i. Expressing self-deficiency which means accepting responsibility e.g. *I'm so forgetful; You know me, I'm never on time.*
    - ii. Expressing explicit self-blame e.g. *It's my fault/mistake.*
    - iii. Denying fault which means rejecting the need to apologize e.g. *It's not my fault that it fell down.*
  - c. an offer of repair:
    - i. Specified offer e.g. *I'll pay for the damage.*
    - ii. Unspecified offer e.g. *I'll see what I can do.*
  - d. A promise of forbearance e.g. *this won't happen again.*

In addition to apology strategies, some people tend to use "apology intensification" (Blum-kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 208) to emphasize the level of apology seriousness as in two following types:

1. Intensification which can be formed with the use of adverbials as in 'I'm *very* sorry'. And repetition or double intensifier as seen in 'I'm *terribly, terribly* sorry'.
2. Concern for the Hearer as in the utterance *Have you been waiting long?*

Regarding the use of intensification, or what Leech (2014) called as intensifiers or modifiers, he divided intensification into two: internal modifiers in which they are syntactically integrated into the main components of apology e.g. *I'm terribly* sorry and external modifiers, where they stand apart from the head act such as *Oh Dear!*. Two types of modifiers are usually used to add emotive meaning on the expressions.

### 2.3. Pragmatic transfer

Since another purpose of the study is to explore how pragmatic transfer interferes apology strategies of the participants, it is essential to define what pragmatic transfer means. According to Žegarac & Pennington (2000), defining what pragmatic transfer is will be helpful practically and theoretically. Practically, the definition would help understand, deal with and anticipate the possible problems in cross-cultural communication while theoretically, it would be important in doing the data analysis with the framework. Thus, Žegarac & Pennington (2000) further defines pragmatic transfer as "the transfer of pragmatic knowledge in situations of intercultural communication" (p. 2). However, the definition seems complicated to understand since the term "transfer" and "pragmatic knowledge" need also to be defined. As stated by Odlin cited in Kasper (1992), pragmatic transfer relates to the effect which results from similarities and differences between the target language with the languages which has also been acquired either perfectly or imperfectly. Thus, Kasper (1992) explains that pragmatic transfer is defined as the "influence exerted by learners' pragmatic knowledge of languages and cultures other than L2 on their comprehension, production and learning of L2 pragmatic information" (p. 6).

Thus, since pragmatic transfer is a result of the incompetence of pragmatic knowledge, which according to Leech (2014) can be positive but often negative since it would cause communication breakdown or interference due to the contrasting properties of both languages, it is fundamental for interlanguage speakers to have competence in pragmatics. According to Leech cited in Kasper (1992) pragmatic competence comprises two subcategory: pragma-linguistics and socio-pragmatics, two categories which are later used as the types of pragmatic transfer in this study called as pragma-linguistics transfer and socio-pragmatics transfer (Thomas, 1983). Pragma-linguistics is defined as “the particular resources which a given language provides for conveying particular illocutions” while Socio-pragmatics relates to “the culturally-based principles or maxims that underlie interactants’ performance and interpretation of linguistic action” (Leech cited in Žegarac & Pennington, 2000, p. 11).

Therefore, relying on Leech’s concept of pragmalinguistics, (Thomas, 1983) then defines pragmalinguistics transfer as the “inappropriate transfer of speech act strategies from one language to another, or from the mother tongue to the target language of utterances which are semantically/syntactically equivalent, but because of different ‘interpretive bias’, tend to convey a different pragmatic force in the target language” (p. 101). The inappropriate transfer might be caused by inappropriate use of speech act strategies from L1 to L2 such as the misuse of direct speech when native speaker tend to use indirect politeness strategy. From Thomas’ definition, Kasper (1992) believes that the definition should not only be limited only semantically and syntactically aspect but also be expanded in term of politeness transfer and illocutionary force as well. Thus, Kasper further defines pragmalinguistics transfer as the process in which politeness value or illocutionary force realized to specific linguistic aspect in L1 affects how participants perceive and produce form-functional mappings in L2. While, sociopragmatics transfer refers to the ‘the sociological interface of pragmatics’ (leech cited in (Kasper, 1992, p. 209) which is related to social perceptions which underlie participants’ performance and linguistic action interpretation involving assessments of interlocutors’ social distance and social power, rights and obligations, and degree of imposition (Kasper, 1992), Thomas (1983) had mentioned that sociopragmatics transfer is the influence of participants’ ability to judge whether they could make certain utterances or the ability to know how, when, and why to make utterance based on social situations involving the assessment of social distance, size of imposition, when to leave an a face- threatening act, relative power evaluation, rights, and obligations, etc

### 3. Research Methodology

In achieving the objectives of the study, a case study approach was preferred by the researcher. He used two instruments to collect the data; a spoken discourse completion task (DCT) and an interview right after they finished performing a spoken DCT. The DCT used in this study was adapted from Wouk (2005) with some modifications which consists of six different situation. The rationale of choosing Wouk’s work is because it was considered to be the most relevant in Indonesian context in which it comprises several situations which has different level of status, social distance, intimacy, power, the degree of offense, and cultural consideration as well. The use of spoken DCT instead of written one is to get as ‘natural’ result of conversation as possible (Wouk, 2005). In analyzing the data, the apology strategies framework of Blum-kulka & Olshtain (1984) and Leech (2014) were employed.

Regarding the participants, they were selected purposefully based on three criteria: the length of studying English which probably could give deep information related to the use of apology strategies, gender, and their ability to speak multi languages which also relates to their cultural background as well.

The first participant, Andi (pseudonym), is a thirty- year- old male who comes from one province Indonesia and has learned English for nineteen years in formal education. The intensive English learning was obtained when he enrolled to English education program at two universities for undergraduate study and graduate study. Coming from an intercultural family and neighborhood and moving to some different places to stay for couple of years made him able to speak some languages such as Malay, Indonesia, English, Arabic, Minangkabau language, Sunda language, and Javanese language fluently (the last three languages are local languages in Indonesia).

Meanwhile, the second participant, Ana (pseudonym), was a thirty four- year- old female who came from one of provinces in Sumatera, Indonesia. Living in a community and family that use Malay language as their daily life, made her able to speak this language very fluently and becomes her first language in everyday conversation together with Bahasa Indonesia. English has been exposed to her for more than nineteen years in formal education since junior high school until university.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

The current study was intended to explore the apology strategies used by graduate students of English in Indonesia and to find out how the pragmatic transfer might interfere their apology strategies.

### 4.1. Apology strategies used by all participants

Table 1. Participants' apology strategies

No	Apology Strategies	Frequency		
		Total	Participant 1 (Andi)	Participant 2 (Ana)
1	IFID + Giving explanation	8	4	4
2	IFID + an offer of repair	3	2	1
3	Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)	0	0	0
4	IFID + Denying fault/Rejecting to apologize	1	0	1
5	IFID + A promise of forbearance	1	0	1
6	IFID + Explicit self-blame	0	0	0
7	opt out	0	0	0
8	IFID + Expressing self-deficiency	0	0	0
9	IFID + Concern for hearer	0	0	0
10	IFID + Internal Modifiers (adverbials)	6	4	2
11	IFID + External Modifiers	1	0	1
12	Vocatives expressions	8	6	2

Table 1 above indicates that both participants tended to use similar number of apology strategies except that participant two (Ana) use more types of strategies than participant one (Andi) did. If this

finding was related to gender, then this finding was similar to Jones & Adrefiza's (2017) study which found that Indonesian female used more strategies than male. However, with the very limited participant, this study was acknowledged to be difficult to compare with the study. The data above also showed that the most apology strategies used by the participants were the combination of Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) with the explanation with a total eight times shown in all situations, four times for each participant. It was followed by the use a specified offer to repair the offense for a total three times. The other types of strategies such as a promise of forbearance and denying fault are used not more than once only by participant two (Ana). Even, no participant made use to express self-deficiency, overt apology (IFID), explicit blame and self-deficiency. The tendency of using explanation of account strategy when expressing apology by this present study's participants was in line with what Cedar (2017) and Qorina (2012) found in their study. Using quantitative approach with 42 undergraduate students, Cedar (2017) found that Explanation of account was positioned in second place in frequency after the use of IFIDS similar to Qorina (2012) who found that explanation of account was in second place but after expression of regret. According to Wouk (2006) The use of explanation when expressing apology by Indonesian people was as an effort to reduce the degree of offense made by the speakers and to give personal responsibility.

Interestingly, the participants seem to only use the expression *sorry* to all situations. This might indicate that although the participants are graduate students of English and all of them have learned English for more than fifteen years, they tend to use limited variations of apology strategies. This preference and the variation of overt strategy is, according to Wouk (2006), is nothing to do with cultural preferences but more on the lexical gaps in Bahasa Indonesia which is less various and less comparable with English which has several types of overt apology. However, with their experience in learning English, their limited variation of choosing other types of strategies is quite surprising.

In relation to the use of intensification and vocative expressions, they seem to prefer to use internal modifiers in form of adverbials such as '*really*' (four times by Andi), '*so*' and '*very*' (once for each adverbial by Ana) more than external modifier which was used only once by Ana. It was also found that Andi used various types of vocatives expressions more than Ana. The use of more intensification in by the participants in this study was also interesting to discuss since according to Wouk (2006) than Indonesian people tend to use less intensifiers because of the use of strongest type of apology compared to other countries such as American and Australian English where they are likely to intensify their apology and is similar to Poles, Hungarians and Chilean Spanish which opted to use intensifiers in certain situations especially the ones which is related to social status. With respects to the use of vocatives expressions, it was similar to what Adrefiza in Cedar (2017) found that it was common to see Indonesian people use vocative expressions such as addressing terms to show their politeness.

#### 4.2. Apology strategies of Andi and Ana

In choosing the apology strategy, it was found that Andi preferred to use overt IFID combined with explanation more than other types of strategies with four times use followed by the use of an offer of repair and concern for hearer, twice and once respectively.

I'm really sorry my friend because I didn't come to your graduation party because I had something to do at home (Andi. S2. DCT response)

According to him, it is important for someone to make an explanation when making an apology to make the hearer understand why we did the offense and to make the apology accepted.

It was also interesting to note that he tended to use internal modifier in form of adverbials '*really*' for three times. Besides, he seemed to use vocative expressions in form of kin terms e.g. *my brother*, general familiarizer e.g. *bro*, and honorific noun e.g. *Boss* in all six situations provided. In one case when he passed a paper using his left hand to a stranger, he even repeated the word '*sorry*' for four times combined with the use of general familiarizer '*bro*'.

Sorry sorry sorry bro. Sorry bro. I am focused too much on my work so I don't realize that I gave the paper with my left hand (Andi. S3. DCT response).

And below is the reason why he decided to make such expressions:

That was a severe offense. My speech act should be able to make him understand and accept the offense I did. I used '*sorry*' several times to show how regretful I am doing that. It was very impolite. The use of '*bro*' there to show intimate (Andi. S3. Interview).

From his utterance, we could see how he tried to explain that what he did was not on purpose. We also noticed that the utterance he made indicates how he wanted to show that his apology was sincere and strong by repeating the word '*sorry*' for several times. He also explained that although that his relationship with the hearer was equal in term of status but they did not know each other. To minimize the effect of offense he made and to shorten their distance of relationship, he used a general familiarizer '*bro*' although the hearer was a stranger. The use of other vocatives in all his apology strategies might indicate that he tried to build a familiarizing and solidarity between him and the hearer in order to maintain the level of his politeness (Leech, 2014).

However, it might be questionable whether native speakers use '*bro*' to a stranger. Although Andi clearly stated that he wanted to be more intimate with the hearer, the use of '*bro*' might not be normally used in native speaker context as the vocative '*bro*' is normally used in a circle of friends or where the speakers have been known each other. His inability of using certain term or utterance based on social situations such as social distance as in this context could be considered as sociopragmatics transfer.

Meanwhile, with respect to Ana's apology strategies choice, the data showed that her choice of apology strategies was quite similar to the previous participant in which she tended to use the IFID followed by an explanation after the apology utterance was made except that she also used denying fault strategy and a promise of forbearance in certain situation as in this DCT response.

I'm sorry my sister. I don't mean to do this. I'm just kidding. I won't do that again (Ana. S4. DCT response).

It was light offense. With sister, we always do silly things and joking (Ana. S4. Interview).

In a situation in which she was asked by her older sister to take the falling ruler under the table, she, instead of taking it by her hand, kicked the ruler toward her sister. From the utterance above, it was clear that in order to minimize the offense and to calm down her sister, she made a promise not to do it again in the future and explained that she was trying to make a joke with her sister. She also added

in an interview that that kinds of situation commonly and normally happened between sisters in a family. Seeing her sister angry probably lead them to make a promise in the future. She even considered what she did was a light offense as she said in the interview. Besides using explanation in almost all apology she made, Ana seems to produce apology utterances influenced by her first language as seen in the following expression:

I would like to say sorry. I didn't come to your party because I had another event. Because my relatives came to my house. This is the first time I met them (Ana. S2. DCT response).

The apology utterance above was made when she made a response to situation two (S2) in which she missed her friend's party. From the expression, '*I would like to say sorry*' is not commonly used by native speakers. As stated by Leech (2014), there are three main semantic strategies of apology such as expression of regret as in '*I'm sorry*' or '*I regret*'; using performative utterance as in '*we apologize*' or '*I beg your pardon*'; and asking hearer's forgiveness as in '*Excuse me*' or '*pardon me*' (p. 125). Thus, her apology expression was not semantically accepted as it was probably influenced by her first language in which it is common to hear a person say '*saya mau mengucapkan maaf*' to a hearer for the offense which was made considering that such utterance is considered polite in Indonesian. As stated by Wouk (2006) and Jones & Adrefiza (2017) that that type of utterance is not equivalent with English form. The choice of that type of apology expression is known as pragmalinguistics transfer in which politeness value or illocutionary force realized to specific linguistic aspect in L1 affects how participants perceive and produce form-functional mappings in L2/EFL (Kasper, 1992).

The tendency of Indonesian people to have pragmatic transfer when making an apology utterances, as done by both participants, Andi with sociopragmatics and Ana with pragmalinguistics transfer, was also found in studies of Cedar (2017); Jones & Adrefiza (2017); and Qorina (2012). As found by Qorina, for instance, she found inappropriate apology expression such as "*I hope your forgiveness to me*" and the some utterances which were influenced by the participants' religious beliefs as in '*Astaghfirullohal 'adzim*', '*ya Allah*', etc.

#### 4.3. Participants' apology strategies in each situations

Table 2. Participants' apology strategies in all situations

No	Apology Strategies	Frequency					
		S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6
1	IFID + Giving explanation	2	1	2	1	1	1
2	IFID + an offer of repair	0	0	0	1	2	0
3	Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs)	0	0	0	0	0	0
4	IFID + Denying fault/Rejecting to apologize	0	0	0	0	0	1
5	IFID + A promise of forbearance	0	0	0	1	0	0
6	IFID + Explicit self-blame	0	0	0	0	0	0
7	opt out	0	0	0	0	0	0
8	IFID + Expressing self-deficiency	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	IFID + Concern for hearer	0	0	0	0	0	0
11	IFID + Internal Modifiers (adverbials)	2	1	0	1	2	0
12	IFID + External Modifiers	1	0	0	0	0	0
13	Vocatives expressions	1	1	1	2	2	1

Table 2 above showed the types of apology strategy in each situation. It was found that giving an explanation to strengthen the apology expression is almost spread evenly in all situations ranging from once to twice. Two situations which got higher than the others are situation 1 (S1) and situation three (S3) in which it relates to a situation where the participants passed something with left hand. Although the status of both speaker and hearer is equal in term of age, both participants of the study perceived them in similar way in that passing something using left hand is a severe offense which should be avoided.

That was a severe offense because we are not used to doing that kind of thing. It relates to culture of our country. We are used to being taught of how to use our hand properly and appropriately, for example, using our right hand when giving or offering something to others. That's our culture. I personally always emphasize that when you offer, give or take something, always use our right hand. If you have to use the left hand to others, you should apologize first or ask for permission. As I always tell my children: I'm sorry *Bunda* (mother) because I use left hand. (Ana. S3. Interview)

The interview with Ana indicates that culture influences participant to perceive the level of offense differently. This is in line with Wouk's (2006) explanation that passing using left hand is considered taboo for Indonesian people that they have been taught about this since early age of their life.

Regarding proposing specified offer to repair the harmony between speaker and hearer, table 2 showed that situation five (S5) in which the participants bought wrong office supplies received more attention by the participants. Although all participants thought that the offense made was categorized as less severe and normally happens in work environment, proposing a specified offer is needed to maintain the relationship between them and their boss who has higher status.

It was less severe offense. There are two possibilities why that happened. First, the instructions from the boss were not clear. Second, I might not be focused. So if there is such problem, it still can be fixed by buying the right things or changing the things (Ana. S5. Interview).

The participant's response to the situation showed that sometimes there is always a misunderstanding and misinterpretation between employee and employer on certain activity or certain requests from the boss. However, although the participants thought that there is a possibility that the boss did not give a clear direction so that there was a misunderstanding between them, no participants prefer to deny the fault or refuse to apologize. This is probably because the status of the boss and the participant is different in which the participant was an employee and considered the need to show more respect to the boss and denying the fault would be considered impolite.

Another finding worth noting is the situation related to soaking a stranger with hose. Ana considered that the offense was actually caused indirectly by the stranger not them.

Sorry sorry sorry. I'm busy to water these plants but you make me shocked. So before you come to my home, say greeting! (Ana. S6. DCT response).

The response made by Ana clearly stated that the sudden existence of the stranger made her surprised that she could not control the hose which then made the stranger wet. However, the overt apology utterance was made three times in the response which was assumed that although he denied the fault, he tried to strengthen his apology. As stated by Jones & Adrefiza (2017) that the repetition of apology was possibly made to make a strong and sincere regret.

In relation to situation four (S4) in which the participants made an offense to their older brother or sister by kicking ruler to him/her when he/she asked them to take it, it was discovered that each participant perceived the situation differently, Andi used a specified offer to fix the harmony between them and thought that it was a very severe offense while Ana preferred to use a promise of forbearance strategy and considered it as a normal action among sisters as already mentioned in previous section.

I'm really sorry my brother. I promise I will do whatever you ask me to make you forgive me (Andi. S4. DCT response).

From the response, it seems the Andi feels that he really needs to maintain the harmony between him and his brother. It was seen from the use of intensifier '*really*' in his apology to show how regretful he was combined with the promise he made after expressing apology. The interesting reason of doing that type of apology strategy could be seen in the following interview result:

That was a severe offense. Actually in reality, I will never do that. Because that's really really impolite and ask for forgiveness is not enough. That can break the relationship between me and my brother (Andi. S4. Interview).

As shown in the interview, Andi considered that that kind of actions should not be done, even he would never think of doing that as it will break the relationship between him and his brother so by saying an specified offer to his brother, he expected that his brother would forgive him.

In seeing the situation, Ana thought that doing that is a quite normal action and would not affect much on their relationship, it could probably assumed that this difference was probably caused by the culture of their family and how they perceive the level of intimacy between brothers or sisters in their family. Although, they (Ana and her sister) are different in the status i.e. age, they are very intimate that they always do silly things in their daily relationship which made her believe that it was less severe of offense.

#### **4. Conclusion and recommendation**

To sum up, the present study demonstrated that the participants of the study tended to use explanations of account in almost their apology expressions. It was also found that their English proficiency and their length of studying English could not automatically lead them to produce a varied apology strategies. It was also interesting to find that the participants opted to intensify their apology utterances using some adverbials. Besides, their cultural family background seems to be their consideration how they perceive each situation differently both in term of strategy choice and the degree of their offenses. Furthermore, some pragmatics transfers were also found to be made by the

participants which were influenced by Indonesian pragmatic convention both semantically and socially as in term of general familiarizer misuse.

Considering the findings, it was safe to say that Indonesian students and teachers and probably people in general need to understand the importance not only linguistic competence but more importantly pragmatic competence. Therefore, it was fundamental for English teachers to start thinking and designing how to deliver teaching material by also introducing pragmatic knowledge in the classroom using various activities. For further study, as the study was focused only on two particular participants in certain part in Indonesia which certainly could not be generalized, it might be interesting to explore how apology strategies and probably other speech acts such as request and directives expressions are conceptualized in Indonesia involving large participants coming from different provinces of Indonesia.

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