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Article

Apology Strategies in Situational Comedy: Ifid Analysis

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A B S T R A C T

Sometimes when someone who has made mistakes or says a statement which causes offence to others, she/he needs to maintain that kind of situation in response by apologies. The research aims at describing the strategies of apology in situational comedy. The data of this research were collected from dialogues that consist of apology in *The Big Bang Theory*. The data were analyzed qualitatively by examining the theory of apology strategy by Cohen and Olshtain (1986). Findings have shown that there are five strategies of apology utterances namely IFID, IFID + Explanation, IFID + Explanation + Requests, IFID + Responsibility + Requests and IFID + Explanation + IFID.

INTRODUCTION

As a human being we need to interact each other. We have to convey something in appropriate way to create our good relation with other people. In line with Fitriani (2012) to minimize the effect of face threatening act to hearers, speakers must choose appropriate strategies of communication.

In social interaction, we can give information, ask someone to do something, refuse something and apology. Sometimes when speakers who have made mistakes, or they have said a statement which causes offence to others, they need to maintain that kind of situation in response by apologies. Ahmed (2017) adds in general, an act of apology occurs as a result of a particular offence. Then, by the time someone apologizes, he or she does not really want to describe a state of affairs but rather aims conventionally to express an inner feeling and repair a damage either by unerring his words or by practically doing a repair. Grainger and Harris (2007) emphasize that in social relation, we have to show the crucial social and

psychological significance of apologies and we need to establish and maintain social harmony. In line with this, Okumura and Wei (2000) say that apologizing aims at maintaining, restoring and enhancing interpersonal relationships.

On the other side, Fraser, Olshtain and Cohen in Al Adaileh (2007) state apologies can be seen as constituting two processes taking responsibility for an offensive act, and expression of regret for the offence committed or as an act of redress used when in social norms have been violated by a real or potential offence. Olshtain and Cohen (1983) indicate apologising as a speech act that is usually called for when some behaviour have caused a violation of the social norms.

In daily life, Wardoyo (2017) states that apology plays essential role between speakers and hearers. This statement in line with what Kitao and Kitao (2013) say that apologies play an important part in maintaining human relationships. In social relation, apology can be packed in a good language. We can see that kind of

apology not only in daily life communication, but also in situational comedy. Expressing apology can be seen in situational comedy called *The Big Bang Theory* in short (TBBT). Sometimes the character explicitly apologizes in their utterances. The research investigates apology strategy of the character in TBBT. The researcher chooses TBBT as the main data because there are interesting forms of apology utterances by the character in this sitcom. The way they apology is incredible and mostly appears in the conversation and creates a humor.

Cohen and Olshtain in Kitao and Kitao (2013) propose expression of apology. They are Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) by using some sorts of performative English words such as expressions of regret “*sorry*”, an offer of apology “*I apologize*”, and request for forgiveness “*excuse me*”, “*forgive me*”. The IFID is usually a formula that can be followed by explanation or justification, expression of responsibility, offer repairs, and promise forbearance. Wardoyo (2017) adds that this strategy is when someone expects not to perform the same offence or mistake in the future. It indicates with the words such as a promise. Wipprecht (2004) also adds that the use of the IFID as an explicit expression of apology that shows the acceptance of the need to apologize on the speaker’s side and also the acceptance of the cost to do so.

Some researchers have carried out apology strategy in some particular researchers such as conducted apology strategies. Most studies that are conducted within interlanguage pragmatics have concerned with specific to particular target and native languages. Wardoyo (2017) conducts apologies by English Students of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. This study focused on students’ apologies based on (Cohen & Olshtain, 1986) theory. The study finds out that students of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati used several strategies to express apologies. Dominantly, to the lecturer, the student use IFID followed by explanation (40%), IFID (20%) and IFID followed by request (13,3%). While when they are asking apology to their friends in case of several reason, they mostly use IFID+Promise (53%), IFID+ Explanation (20%), and IFID+Explanation+Offer Repair (13,3%). Previous studies on apology have also revealed the main differences between males and females when they produce apologies. Uгла, Jafre and Abidin (2016) explore apology strategies of English uttered by Iraqi EFL students. Results of the study revealed that Iraqi EFL students used a variation of apology strategies, they were well realized of how to use adequate apology forms to meet the requirements of specific situations and relationships, and they felt they need to explain and avoid interpretation of their response as an apology.

Fitriani (2012) explains that there are differences in apology strategy used by female and male in expressing apology strategies. The differences are female put explicitly apologizing as the fourth mostly used strategy, whereas male put explicitly apology as the second mostly used strategy; and more female respondents refuse to apology than male respondents. It brings us to the sole clue that in some conditions the social label that says ‘women are more polite than men’ should be reconsidered and re-observed. They have revealed how females apologize more often than males. Tehrani, et. al. (2012) also investigate gender differences on the act of apologising of Iranian undergraduate students. (Sugimoto, 1997). The researcher compares the strategies used by male and female respondents. The results explain that the statement of remorse is the strategy most frequently used by male and female respondents across the sample and to elaborate, female participants use this strategy more frequently than male participants. Moreover, primary strategies used by the male respondents are accounts, compensation reparation, negative assessment of responsibility, while those used by female are compensation, showing lack of intent to do harm, accounts, reparation.

Rajabi (2015) also investigates Iranian EFL Learners in case of explicit instruction of apology speech act based on pragmatic development. The results show that explicit instruction is a facilitative tool that supports students use the proper apology strategies in different situations. Kargar, Sadighi, and Ahmadi (2012) also explore Iranian EFL Learners in apology speech act production by low-intermediate EFL learners. The study aims to conduct the relative effectiveness of different types of pragmatic instruction including two collaborative translation tasks and two structured input tasks with and without explicit pragmatic instruction on the production of apologetic utterances. Meanwhile, Khaled (2011) conducts the use of apology by Tunisian university students. Discourse completion test (DCT) is used to elicit apology strategies. The findings point out that Tunisian university students used statement of remorse most for three kind situations where the offended is to a close friend, old in age and having the power to affect the offender's future. Handayani (2015) analyzes kinds and forms of expressive speech act in Hannah Montana Session 1. The research findings show that there is expressing apology include in ten kinds of expressive speech act. Then Akbar (2007) analyzes at extracting and categorizing the strategies used in the speech act of apologizing in Persia. Persian apologetic utterances are collected with a Discourse Completion Test (DCT). The research indicated that Persian apologies are as formulaic in pragmatic structures and the values assigned to the two context-external

variables were found to have significant effect on the frequency of the intensifiers in opposite situations.

During the last decades, a large number of studies have been conducted on apologies in many languages to a degree that enables scholars to claim that research on apologies, even apologies in across culture perspectives. Majeed and Janjua (2014) try to investigate apology speech acts used by Urdu based on gender. This research showed different genders express apologies in different situations.

Al Ali (2012) investigates whether Saudi native Arabic speakers and Australian native English speakers differed from each other in case of apology strategies. Sadeghi (2013) explores the similarities and differences on the strategy used in speech act of apologizing in Southern Kurdish (Kermanshahi Kurdish) and Persian children. Ancarno (2015) conducts when are apologies 'successful' in public. This study focuses on British and French apology press uptakes.

On the flip side, TBBT as the main data was conducted by Harared and Wijana (2014) in cooperative principles approach, Harared (2017) in implicature perspective, and Harared (2020) in refusal strategies by the character of TBBT. A considerable amount of research has been investigated by several researchers, but little of apology research in situational comedy lately. Hence, additional studies of apology are needed to enrich study in TBBT as the data. It is of interest to compare apology used in dialy communication and in situational comedy. This research tends to focus on apology in situational comedy based on the structure of IFID analysis..

METHOD

This research was descriptive research of which procedure resulted in descriptive data both in oral and written from the observed people or behavior. This research describes apology strategies used by all characters of *The Big Bang Theory*. The data of this research were excerpts which contained apology strategy used by the characters in *The Big Bang Theory*. The data were taken from their utterances based on its scripts.

The research technique in this present analysis:

In this stage, for the data collection, the researchers collected the manuscripts and sorted out of 3 seasons of *The Big Bang Theory*. The manuscript was sorted out and was highlighted to seek the form of apology strategy used in such stretch of speech among characters for them engaging in the conversation in both formal and in informal situation of talk.

The researchers sorted the script out and highlighted; the researchers transcribed the data of the stretch of apology

that was used in the conversations by organizing and describing the presentation of transcription conventions which include three main important ways to do as follows.

First, numbered every instance to refer to specific lines as the readers could easily find the instances and check the context they require. Numbering is an effort to ease the researchers to show the interaction orderly. Second, used transcription conventions to transcribe a stretch of speech relied in the interaction. The aim of the transcription conventions was to capture the situation of talk and to inform readers of what situation happened in the interaction. And third, gave every name of the characters as it was beneficial for readers to know the speakers who involve in the interaction in each stretch of speech. The researchers collected the data from apology utterances in this present research. It adopted the refusal strategy by examining the interplay of speech acts in describing apology strategy in its structure. The researchers identified, classified, and presented in the form of description. In conclusion, after analyzing the data, the researchers described a conclusion according to the analysis. Here, the researchers made a valid conclusion and noted in a description of the apology strategy used in such discourse contexts (i.e., conversation).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Expression of apology in TBBT can be revealed in a variety ways. The following section describes the apology strategy used by the characters and it can be seen in the following examples:

1. Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID)

Based on the data, there are several characters using IFID for their strategies in expressing apologies in TBBT. One of them who uses structure of IFID is Leonard. The data as follows:

S03E22

- Leonard* : Hey.
- Sheldon* : Hello. (Sniffing)
Why do I smell methacrylate?
- Leonard* : Oh, uh, clear nail polish. I had a mani-pedi.
Anyway, I may owe you **an apology**. (1)
- Sheldon* : There's doubt?
- Leonard* : I did agree to the thermostat setting, and I shouldn't have tried to change it.
- Sheldon* : That's not an apology.
Simply an acknowledgement that I was right.
- Leonard* : Okay, **I'm sorry**. (2)
- Sheldon* : There you go.
- Leonard* : So, we're good?

Sheldon : *Good what? (smiling)*
 Leonard : *Never mind.*
Okay if I watch some TV?
 Sheldon : *Go ahead.*

As demonstrated above, data number (1) and (2), the character only uses one IFID *an apology* and *I am sorry*. The use of IFID means that Leonard realizes that he has made mistakes, and he tries to express his sorry. IFID is preceded by words “anyway” and “okay” by Leonard, it means that he expresses positive politeness strategies to Sheldon, his roommate. The use of those words indicates they have close relationship.

2. IFID+ Explanation

Based to the data, there are several number of strategies used by the characters in TBBT. There are IFID+ Explanation. The IFID+ Explanation strategies used are:

Raj : *Sorry I'm late, but I was in the hallway, chatting up Penny. (3)*

To illustrate (3) above, Raj shows apology with IFID+ Explanation construction. In this case, Raj thinks others will ask himself for his lateness, so he apologizes and then explains why he comes late.

(Leonard makes a joke and Everybody Laugh, Except Penny)

Penny : *Oh, Sorry, I Just Had Heard It Before. (4)*

In this case, Leonard makes a joke and everybody laughs, except Penny. Penny expresses the apology (4) and explains why she just flat, and then Penny adds and explains that she just had heard that (joke) before.

Leonard : *Excuse Me; Is There Anything You Would Apologize For?*

Sheldon : *Yes. I'm Sorry I Tried to Blow up Your Head. (5)*
It Was Uncalled For.

Evidently in (5), Leonard insists Sheldon to apology for what happened in the seminar. Then, Sheldon expresses the apology about his terrible attitude by saying IFID and followed by explanation.

S03E03

Leonard : *Morning. [greeting]*
 Sheldon : *Penny made French toast. [upset]*
 Leonard : *Sorry I haven't given her your schedule yet. (6)*

Obviously, Sheldon seems upset because Penny makes wrong breakfast in the morning. It supposed to be *oatmeal* day not *French toast* day and Leonard says

apology (6) with IFID *sorry* and followed by explanation that he hasn't given Penny Sheldon's schedule for breakfast.

3. IFID+ Explanation+ Requests

In line with the data, there is IFID+ Explanation+ Requests. The IFID+ Explanation strategies as follows:

S03E04

Sheldon: *:I'm sorry, i believe you've misunderstood. I'm not giving you the job. (7) I'm simply affording you the opportunity to apply for it. Please, have a seat, we'll get started with the interview.*

As demonstrated above (7), Sheldon shows apology with IFID+ Explanation+ Requests construction. He starts with IFID *I'm sorry*, followed by explanation about miscommunication and at the end he requests the hearer to have a seat in the last utterances.

4. IFID + Responsibility + Requests

There are two strategies of the character that use IFID + Responsibility + Requests. The data of strategies in expressing apologies performed by Sheldon using IFID and followed by responsibility and request are:

Sheldon : *I am truly sorry for what happened last night. (8)*

I take full responsibility. And I hope that it won't color your opinion of Leonard, Who is not only a wonderful guy, but also, I hear, a gentle and thorough lover.

As manifested in (8) above, Sheldon uses IFID+ Responsibility+ Requests structure to put himself as the one who sneak out to clean Penny's apartment in the middle of the night. He starts with IFID *I am truly sorry* that followed by all taking on responsibility and ends with request in the last statement which is the word *hope* indicates as the request utterance.

S03E01

Leonard : *We came to apologize and bring you home (9)*

Why don't you pack up your stuff and we'll head back

Evidently in (9), Leonard persuades Sheldon back to university. He makes apology by using IFID+ Responsibility+ Requests structure. He starts with IFID *to apologize* that followed by all taking on responsibility *to bring him home* and ends with request in the last utterance.

5. IFID + Explanation + IFID

There is only a datum which uses a strategy using IFID + Explanation + IFID. The data as follow:

Penny hurts Howard's feeling, and she asks for an apology.

S02E12

*Penny : I just want to **apologize** for something that i have said [pause].. about you. I've been informed that you have feelings, and apparently i have hurt them, **i'm sorry** (10)*

Obviously, in (10) Penny uses IFID + Explanation + IFID structure to put herself as the one who has hurt someone's feeling. She starts with IFID **apologize**, followed by explanation and finishes with IFID **i'm sorry** in the last statement.

CONCLUSION

Confirming to the explanation previously in discussion, all things are considered that the characters of TBBT used various strategies in expressing apologies. When they are expressing apologies, they use some sorts of apology's structures such as, IFID, IFID + Explanation, IFID + Explanation + Requests, IFID + Responsibility + Requests and IFID + Explanation + IFID. It is hoped that the findings of this discussion can contribute to Pragmatics study and enrich the study of apology in Linguistics, especially in situational comedy. Suggestions for future research, it may also be possible to explore the use of IFID, what it means or the sequences of apology or with other perspective in Pragmatics.

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