

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Research

Language is the fundamental basis for human communication in daily life. Language serves as a means or medium for expressing thoughts, building relationships with others, and conveying meaning. This explanation is in line with what was expressed by (Yule, 2010) language is defined as a system of arbitrary vocal symbols used by humans to communicate. However, in practice, the words spoken by humans do not always accurately represent the intended meaning. This discrepancy between literal meaning and intended meaning highlights just how important it is for people to understand the mechanisms underlying perception in language.

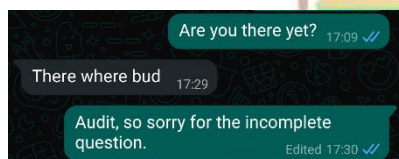
Pragmatics plays a crucial role in explaining this phenomenon. In essence, Thus, pragmatics reveals the underlying meaning that determines the success or failure of communication. Era of massive digital systems, the role of pragmatics is becoming increasingly important as conventional communication has shifted to online platforms such as WhatsApp. It has become the most popular online chat application among students for academic, social, and personal reasons, allowing for quick and effective engagement without the limits of time and geography.

On the contrary, online communication also presents challenges, particularly in expressing intentions clearly without misinterpretation that can lead to ambiguous meanings among interactants. Leech (1975, p. 6) describes it as the investigation of meaning in relation to situational context. In contrast, in the context of communication, various challenges arise that are faced by

many people, one of which is how individuals manage mistakes or situations that require an apology in online messaging media. Apologies are an important aspect of social interaction that can affect interpersonal relationships. Many people in reality have lost their manners and have difficulties to apologize genuinely when sending messages in online chats or express themselves in ways that are often misunderstood by the person they are talking to. Whereas Mey (1993, p.6) emphasizes its importance to understand how language functions in real-life human communication as being influenced by social norms.

This phenomenon is highly relevant among university students especially English Department students who are expected to have strong communication skills and a competent understanding of the language. However, despite their linguistic competence, their ability to use appropriate apology strategies in digital interactions remains an interesting area to explore.

Here is an example of chat conversation:



Student: “Are you there yet?”

Peer: “There where bud?”

Student: “Audit, so sorry (1) for the incomplete question (2)”

The context of the conversation above is a missed communication between a student and a close friend (indicated by the term “bud” from “buddy”). However, the student realized that the question they initially sent was not very clear, which could potentially lead to a misunderstanding. Therefore, the student sent a follow-up message to clarify their intent. The purpose of this conversation was not only to obtain information but also to correct the previous message in order to resolve the recipient’s confusion.

In utterance (1), the speaker used an Explicit Apology Expression marked by the IFID “so sorry.” Based on the apology strategy proposed by Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984), this strategy

serves as a direct marker of the speaker's intention to apologize, showing the speaker's awareness that she/he cannot fulfill the mutual agreement. The used of the intensifier “so” strengthens the degree of apology, indicating sincerity and emphasis. **In utterance (2), the speaker applied Explanation of Account.** The speaker provides reasons or explanations for the mistake to clarify why it occurred, as indicated by the phrase “**for the incomplete question**”.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the types of apology strategies used by English Department students at Universitas Andalas and to identify the factors influencing their choice of apology in WhatsApp communication. This is supported by the theory of Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), which provides a basic specification of these apology strategies, and further developed by Trosborg (1995), who added dimensions of responsibility and social context. This combination makes the analysis more comprehensive.

1.2 Research Questions

This research was focused on answering the following questions:

1. What types of apology strategies are employed by English Department students class of 2022 in their online chat interactions?
2. What factors influence English Department students class of 2022 in choosing apology strategies in online chats?

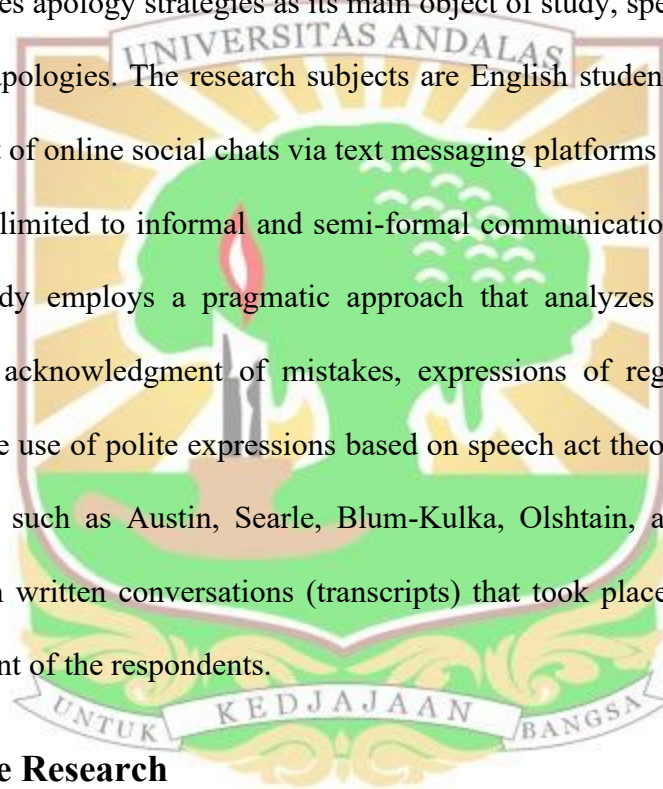
1.3 Objectives of the Research

In general, this research is aimed to analyze the types and factors of apology used by the English Department students class of 2022 Universitas Andalas. This thesis is written in order to find two main things:

1. To find out the types of apology used by the students of English Department class of 2022 in their interaction in online chat.
2. To describe the factors that influencing the choice of apology strategies among English Department students class of 2022 in online chat.

1.4 Scope of the Research

This study examines apology strategies as its main object of study, specifically utterances that contain elements of apologies. The research subjects are English students who communicate in English in the context of online social chats via text messaging platforms such as WhatsApp. The focus of the study is limited to informal and semi-formal communication between students and their peers. This study employs a pragmatic approach that analyzes linguistic strategies in apologies, including acknowledgment of mistakes, expressions of regret, providing reasons, compensation, and the use of polite expressions based on speech act theory and apology strategy models from experts such as Austin, Searle, Blum-Kulka, Olshtain, and Trosborg. The data collected comes from written conversations (transcripts) that took place within a specific time frame, with the consent of the respondents.



1.5 Method of the Research

1.5.1 Data and Source of Data

Data has been defined differently by various researchers. In research, data refers to the information that the researcher collects in order to answer the research question. As stated by Creswell (2012), data refers to information the researcher collects from participants by asking questions or observing behavior, which later becomes evidence for addressing the research

problem. Beside that, based on Best & Kahn (2006), data are the raw materials of research that must be systematically collected and analyzed in order to generate knowledge and understanding.

In this analysis, the data was collected from WhatsApp chat platforms used by English Department students class of 2022 Universitas Andalas. Approximately 20 students participated in this study by submitting 2–3 screenshots containing apologies in English or mixed Indonesian-English expressions.

The author used a purposive sampling technique because the data was selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. Initially, the writer collected approximately 80 apology conversations from the participants. However, not all expressions were selected as research data. Some conversations were not selected because, such as, the apology expression was unclear, the context was incomplete, and there was repetition of similar data. All personal information such as names, profile pictures, and phone numbers was anonymized to maintain participant privacy and research ethics. The author selected only 43 expressions from 20 conversations based on the following criteria:

1. The conversation contained a clear apology.
2. The context of the conversation was easily understandable.
3. The interaction occurred between peers (not with lecturers or parent).
4. The apology was in English or a mixed language that included an apology in English.
5. The data represents casual and non-toxic conversations.
6. The expressions contain apology strategies relevant to the theories of Blum-Kulka, Olshtain and Trosborg.

1.5.2 Data Collection

The data was taken by obtaining permission and consent from the students to share screenshots from their chat that contained the expression of apologies. The results from the screenshots were transcribed in the research documents to be analyzed. Approximately 20 data samples will be collected from 20 English Department students from the class of 2022. This data collection process utilized indirect observation and documentation techniques, as the writer did not intervene or participate in the conversations but instead collected data that had already occurred (Creswell, 2014).

In collecting the data, there are several steps to be applied.

1. The writer announced to the English Department student group of class of 2022 named "*Keluarga Inggris*" that the researcher would conduct research related to WhatsApp chat analysis with a focus on apologies between peers and would request several screenshots which would later be collected in a g-form.
2. The writer informed the students that the study required 20 participants, but the more participants, the better the data collection.
3. Third, each participant was asked to submit 2–3 screenshots of their WhatsApp conversations with their peers. The screenshots had to meet certain criteria: the chats had to contain an apology expressions in English (e.g., "I apologize...", "I am sorry...", "excuse me..."), possibly accompanied by an explanation or promise of forbearance; they could be written in English or a mix of English and Indonesian as long as the apology appeared in English; and they had to represent various communication contexts such as

private chats or group conversations. They also had to be casual topics without any toxic or violent language.

4. The writer collected and reviewed the screenshots while ensuring ethical considerations by anonymizing all personal information, including names and phone numbers before analysis.

1.5.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative-descriptive approach. This qualitative approach was chosen because it best aligns with the research objectives, which focused on understanding the function of language in context and interpreting meaning from students' perspectives in everyday communication situations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Researchers identified and classified various apology strategies that emerged in the data, such as explicit explanation of apology, explanation of account, acknowledgment of responsibility, offer or repair, and promise of forbearance, in accordance with speech act theory and the apology strategy model proposed by Blum-Kulka, Olshtain, and Trosborg (Blum-Kulka, 1989; Trosborg, 1995). Additionally, the social context of the conversation was also considered to understand how these strategies were used effectively. The analysis process is carried out in stages, starting from data collection, transcription, categorization of strategies and factors influencing choice of apology, to the interpretation of the pragmatic meaning of each apology utterance.

1.5.4 Presenting the Result of Analysis

After analyzing the data of each strategy and factor influencing choice of apology, the results of the analysis were presented based on the research questions. This research is presented

descriptively. Furthermore, the result of the analysis also presented using the table to make it clear and easy to understand the types of apology strategies and the factors influencing the choice of apology strategies that used by English Department students class of 2022 in online chat (WhatsApp). The table also show the frequency to determine the dominant pattern of each strategy and factor influencing the choice of apology strategy.

Example of Presenting the Result of Analysis

Table 1. Types of Apology Strategies

NO	Datum	Utterences	Types of Apology Strategies				
			Explicit expression of apology	Acknowledgment of responsibility	Explanation of account	Offer or repair	Promise of forbearance
1	1						
2	2						
3	3						

Table 2. Factors Influencing the Choice of Apology Strategies

NO	Datum	Utterences	Types of Apology Strategies				
			Orientation Toward Solidarity	Cultural Background	Gender	Intensity of Relationship	Personal Factors
1	1						
2	2						
3	3						

1.6 Definition of Key Terms

A). Pragmatics: Pragmatics is a branch of linguistics that studies how language is used in communication and how meaning can change depending on the context perceived by the listener (Yule, 1996, p. 3).

B). Speech Act: The concept of speech acts is significant in pragmatics because it helps us understand how language is used not only to convey information but also to carry out social actions (Austin (1962)).

C). Apology: An apology is a verbal act that aims to acknowledge a mistake to the actual or potential audience affected by the speaker's mistake. Apologies are used to express

regret and take responsibility for social transgressions, whether intentional or unintentional, and to promise not to repeat them (Olshtain, E., & Cohen, A. D. (1983), p. 20).

D). Apology Strategies: Apology strategies are several communication options used by a speaker to express regret or sadness for actions that have offended or harmed someone. These strategies include acknowledging mistakes, expressing regret, offering redress, explaining offensive actions, and promising to refrain from such actions in the future. Speakers may use one or a combination of these strategies depending on the severity of the offense, the relationship between the speaker and the listener, and the cultural norms governing politeness and face-saving (Olshtain & Cohen (1983), p. 21).

E). WhatsApp Application: WhatsApp is an online messaging application that allows its users to communicate in real-time by sending text messages, voice messages, and other content via an internet connection.

