

An Analysis Speech Act of Apology Strategy Reflected in Little Women Movie Directed by Greta Gerwig

Reza Ayu Amalia¹, Mujazin²

^{1, 2}*Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta*

¹a320190024@student.ums.ac.id, ²muj825@ums.ac.id

Published: 30/12/2023

How to cite (in APA style):

Amalia, R. A., Mujazin. (2023). An Analysis Speech Act of Apology Strategy Reflected in Little Women Movie Directed by Greta Gerwig. *RETORIKA: Jurnal Ilmu Bahasa*, 9(3), 415-420. Doi: 10.55637/jr.9.3.7680.415-420

Abstract-Communication is an important aspect for humans to interact with each other. In communicating, humans do not escape mistakes, be it in the form of speech or in action. Therefore, humans need an apology strategy to correct the mistakes they have made in speech or actions. The purpose of this study is to examine the types of apology strategies and also the apology factors used by the characters in the film *Little Women* directed by Greta Gerwig. This research is a qualitative descriptive study. The data in this study are the apologies uttered by the characters in the *Little Women* film directed by Greta Gerwig. The source of the data in this study was taken from the film *Little Women* directed by Greta Gerwig and also the transcript of the film. Data was collected by downloading the film and film transcript, then the researcher examined it using Trosborg's theory to examine apology strategies and Fraser's theory to examine apology factors. The researcher found 5 types and 11 sub types of apology strategies according to Trosborg's theory used in conversation. in the film "Little Women" directed by Greta Gerwig. There are 5 types of apology factors, including the nature of the infraction, the severity of the infraction, the situation in which the infraction occurred, the relative familiarity between the interactants, the sex of the interactants. The researcher also found 8 types of apologies and 21 different sub-types of apology strategies according to Trosborg's theory.

Keywords: Apology Strategy, Apology Factors, Trosborg's Theory, Fraser's Theory

I. INTRODUCTION

Communication is transferring intentional meanings from one entity or group to another through symbols with semiotic laws concurrently comprehended by (Sintamutiani et al., 2019). Every individual is a social being who communicates with others daily by delivering messages using language, symbols, and images. Individuals use communication in society. When people speak, they have to deal with the language elements themselves and describe other non-language elements of the conversation, such as the interlocutor or the

people involved in the communication, the issues being discussed, the time of day, places of exchange and, so on. Everything related to a language, such as meaning, intent, and information, depends on the context of the language event.

Language also an important aspect used by humans to communicate, interact, and cooperate with other people. Language conveys messages or information or talks to others (Lestari & Hartati, 2020). With language, listeners can understand everything the speaker wants to convey. Communication or information is successful if the

listener understands what the speaker is saying or has the same meaning as the message. Humans also cannot be separated from language activities in their lives (M. Joharis Lubis & Fitri Noviyanti Nasution, 2021). As humans, we must have the ability to communicate well to be accepted by every individual in society. However, it is not only the ability to communicate well, but also we have to know and understand linguistics is critical to underscore understanding of words. Be it words from books, magazines, newspapers, films, or other works. The purpose of this linguistic analysis of *Little Women* is to decipher the movie's vocabulary and its context in order to decipher its meaning.

Since language is the main primary communication for everyone, studying linguistics is very important. Linguistics is that examines language or language phenomena that occur in humans. When humans communicate, there is a reciprocal relationship between the two. The reciprocal relationship is talking and understanding. How do people arrange words and make meaning to understand what people say or what we say to others (Patricia, 2021). Linguistics has two branches, namely micro linguistics and macro linguistics. Micro linguistics includes phonology, morphology, and syntax, while macro linguistics includes semantics and pragmatics.

One of branch in linguistics is pragmatics. Pragmatics is that studies language structure from the outside to investigate how linguistic units are used in communication. Pragmatics is a science that studies the state of human language use, which is essentially determined by the context in which language explains itself and underlies it. According to (Wijaya & Helmie, 2019). Pragmatics is the study of how people understand and use the meanings conveyed by speakers and writers. What the speaker said may be deduced by the listener, who can then understand what the speaker meant. Pragmatics researches speaker meaning rather than word meaning as it focuses on speakers' intentions rather than words themselves (Sintamutiani et al., 2019).

Among the pragmatic domains is speech act. Pragmatic features of speech act include the interaction between speakers and listeners or between writers and readers, and it may also be described as a theory that investigates the meaning of language through the connection

between speakers' claims and their actions (Fitria, 2019). Speech act theory was proposed by the English philosopher J.L. Austin, who defines speech as expressing a confident attitude when someone says a sentence. Tanjung (2021) also stated that speech act is activities carried out using words or utterances. Apology, complaint, praise, invitation, promise, and request are some of the more precise English terms for synonyms. In this study, the writers focused on knowing the apology strategy in the *Little Women* Movie directed by Greta Gerwig.

Expressive speech act that maintains harmony between speakers and hearers is called apology. According Hartantri (2020) apologizing is an act of kindness and courtesy whose social objective is to keep the peace between the speaker and the listener. In short, an apology is an integral part of human existence, particularly in contexts requiring communication and interaction. The existence of an apology is closely related to our daily lives when carrying out communication activities and acting.

According to Trosborg, a person usually regrets his actions or speech by expressing an apology and saying "sorry," "apologize," or "excuse." This can be found in everyday life. For example, someone doesn't recognize their old friend, because they haven't seen each other in years. "Excuse me, who are you? Sorry I don't remember you. Can you introduce yourself and tell me your name?" An example of a well-written apology that includes an explanation is this one. In movies, we often see characters apologizing for their actions.

Movie can represent and construct social conditions that can define and create social reality can touch hearts and influence people's mindsets. In the movie, some conversations occur between characters. Usually, we can find expressions of apology when the characters are conversing. People use apologies when those people make mistakes in conversations or actions in real life and movies. The researcher in this study utilized Greta Gerwig's *Little Women* as the target of her investigation. The study's investigator is interested in *Little Women*'s characters' methods of apologizing and the elements that influence their choices.

Before conducting this research, the researcher surveyed several studies on the topic of apology strategies. The following is previous research on apology strategies conducted by Nisa & Sutrisno (2018) in their research entitled "The

Apologie Strategies in Harry Potter Movie Series. Next, the previous study conducted by Maulida (2019), in her research entitled Apology Strategies Used by Students at the University of Balikpapan. Previous study conducted by Jessy & Sembodo (2019), With their research entitled "A Comparative Study of Apology Strategies produced by Indonesian and Australian Bridge Players." Another previous study by Attieh & Khalil (2019), in their research entitled A Study of Apology Strategies Used by Bahdini Kurdish students concerning English. And there is still a lot of research on other apology strategies. So far, researchers have not found research on apology strategies in the film Little Women directed by Greta Gerwig. Therefore, the researcher is interested in examining the apology strategy and the apologizing factors used by the characters in the film Little Women directed by Greta Gerwig.

II. METHODS

This study employed descriptive methods of qualitative research. Qualitative research is an analytically-heavy descriptive investigation. As is more common in qualitative research, the subject's point of view can influence the meaning-making process. This study set out to dissect Greta Gerwig's Little Women for its apologies and the elements that went into crafting those speeches. This research is based on the characters' actual words of regret from Greta Gerwig's Little Women movie. Greta Gerwig's Little Women served as the data source for this research. The Little Women movie's subtitles and screenplays found online also contributed. The following is a link to the movie script: <https://variety.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/little-women-by-greta-gerwig.pdf>. Thank you for your attention to this matter. First, you'll need to download the movie and screenplay. Then, while viewing the movie, pay close attention to the script and read it word for word. Then, you'll need to identify the utterances, categorize them, and last, code the data. Reducing data, displaying data, and making conclusions or verifying conclusions are the data analysis strategies.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After doing research, researchers managed to find the purpose of this research. The researcher found an apology strategy expression using Trosborg's theory in the "Little Women"

Movie directed by Greta Gerwig.

There are 41 expressions of apology. The writer found 5 types and 11 sub types of apology strategy according to Trosborg's theory used in the conversation in the "Little Women" Movie directed by Greta Gerwig. In the type of minimizing of the degree, 4 apologies strategies were found, in the sub-type of minimizing 1 utterance, queering precondition 1 utterance, and blaming someone else 2 utterances. The second type of apology strategy is acknowledgment of responsibility, the researcher found 2 utterances in the explicit acknowledgment sub-type, 3 utterances in the expression of lack of intent sub-type, 2 utterances in the expression of lack of deficiency, and 2 utterances in the explicit acceptance of the blame sub-type.

Furthermore, it is found in the type of explanation of account apology strategy. In this type, there are 2 utterances in the implicit explanation sub-type and 3 utterances in the explicit explanation sub-type. Then on the type of expression of apology, 9 utterances were found in the sub-type of expression of regret, and 13 utterances in the sub-type of request for forgiveness. Last, researcher found 1 utterance in the type of apology promise of forgiveness strategy. The subtype of expressions of apology that is most commonly employed in this study is the one that asks for forgiveness. In the subtype of requests for forgiveness, the researcher discovered thirteen expressions of regret.

The following are examples of conversations that use the apology strategy according to Trosborg's theory which is reflected in the "Little Women" Movie directed by Greta Gerwig.

3.1 Minimizing of the Degree (MO)

Refusing to take responsibility, as in the rejection method, is the same as trying to minimize the offense's severity. The apologetic party is not rejecting responsibility, which is the distinguishing feature. Instead, he tried to downplay the extent of the violations by arguing that the alleged offenses were insignificant and not even worth recording or by challenging the assumptions underlying the complaint. Finally, the apologizer may only take part of the blame.

Data 34/MO/MNM (01.10.23 → 01.10.27)

Context:

The conversation takes place at the union army fund, while Marmee and the other women serve as volunteers in the army warehouse. One of the women told Marmee to go home and take care

of her daughter, because Beth was sick. But Marmee chose to stay there because if she returned she would feel ashamed of her country. Susan Robbins: "***No offense meant but you should still be ashamed.***"

Marmee: "I know, I am."

By using the word "*no offense*," Susan directly expressed an apology to Marmee for the words she was about to say. This utterance is to minimize her guilt. In this utterance, Susan uses an apology speech strategy in the form of minimizing the degree of offense in the minimizing sub-type according to Trosborg's theory.

3.2 Acknowledge of Responsibility (AR)

It is possible for the one offering the apology to do so openly or secretly, with or without laying guilt at their own feet. The subcategories listed below are all supportive and self-deprecating, and are arranged according to how seriously the apologizer takes responsibility for their actions (from low to high intensity). The apologizer also offers an open apology for the mistake.

Data 30/AR/EAK (01.02.09 → 01.02.31)

Context:

This conversation going on at Meg's house. When Meg was sitting with John and discussing the cloth that Meg bought. John was already looking somber. Because really surprised also heard the statement from Meg.

Meg: "***I don't mean to waste your money***, but I can't resist when I see Sallie buying all she wants, and pitying me because I don't. I try to be content, but it is hard, and, and I'm tired of being poor.

John: "I was afraid of this. I do my best, Meg."

Meg apologized to John, and once again he explained openly and candidly about her sutras. By saying the word "*I don't mean to*," Meg didn't mean to waste the money John gave her, but Meg also explained why she bought it openly. John is very afraid of Meg. In this case, the utterance uttered by Meg is included in the acknowledgment of responsibility type in the explicit acknowledgment sub-type according to Trosborg's theory.

3.3 Explanation of Account (EC)

The apologizer may offer an explanation or narrative to help them feel less guilty. The person who apologizes details the circumstance clearly.

Data 2/EC/EXP (11.10 → 11.13)

Context:

This conversation took place at a party when Jo was following Fred and saw him on the sly. Then Jo meets a random person who speaks many languages and asks her to dance. Jo, who did not understand the man's language, then apologized for rejecting this man's invitation to dance on the grounds that he could only speak English, but this man still asked Jo to dance.

Jo: "I'm sorry, I only speak English..."

Young Man: "Come dance!"

Jo apologized to the man, and explained to the man explicitly that she could only speak English. Jo apologized by expressing her sorry sentence, I am sorry, then explained about Jo's situation, in fact that she could only speak English. Apologizing by explaining the actual situation, is included in the type of explanation of accounts, in the sub type explicit explanation according to Trosborg's theory.

Data 27/EA/EoR (01.00.34 → 01.00.39)

Context:

This conversation took place at Annie Moffat's house. When Meg was dressed up in a beautiful dress and ready to dance with the other guests. Meg met with Laurie who was also at the event. Meg asked Laurie if Laurie liked how Meg looked at that time. But Laurie answered no because according to Laurie her appearance was too much. Instantly Meg's face changed and sulked at Laurie.

3.4 Expression of Apology (EA)

Those who offer an apology have the option of being explicit. There are several suitable verbs. The statement is a general formula for expressing apology. For examples forgive, please, excuse, sorry, so sorry.

Laurie: "***Please forgive me and come dance.***"

Meg: "I'm afraid it would be too disagreeable for you".

In this case, Laurie expressed her apologies to Jo for what she said earlier. By saying "*please forgive me*," Laurie asked Meg for forgiveness, so that Meg would forgive him and dance with him. Laurie felt guilty for what he said. In this conversation, Laurie uses an apology strategy in the type of expression of apology with the sub-type of request for forgiveness.

3.5 Promise of Forbance

The speaker takes ownership of the situation by showing regret when they apologize.

Data 10/PF (20.33 → 20.38)

Context:

The conversation took place in the party room, Laurie chased Amy to apologize and explain the mistake he had made but Amy kept walking, then Laurie stopped Amy by pulling Amy's hand. Laurie said he promised to be good for her by holding her hand.

Amy: "Ah you like that, you old vanity-with all these good things to enjoy, you can find nothing to do but dawdle."

Laurie: "*I'll be good for you, Saint Amy, I'll be good!*"

In this case, regretfully, Laurie said that to Amy. He acknowledged the mistakes he had made. Laurie said the words "*I'll be good for you, I'll be good,*" an expression of indirectly apologizing and promising not to repeat and commit the offense again and promising to be good for Amy. The apologies used by Laurie are included in the promise of forbance type according to Trosborg's theory.

Factors that impact the articulated approach of apologies were also identified by the researcher. The element of apologies is investigated by researchers using Fraser's hypothesis. The study's authors identified 41 elements that could prompt an apologies. Apology considerations may be categorized into five broad categories: offense kind, infraction severity, context, degree of acquaintance between the parties involved, and sex. Eight utterances on the type of infraction, six on the type of severity, nine on the situation in which the infraction occurred, fifteen on the type of relative familiarity between the interactants, and three on the sex of the interactants were found by the researcher. The most important or commonly utilized element in this study regarding the frequency of apologies is the level of familiarity between the interactants. Because there are a lot of family tensions in the film that is part of our research, which is a family film.

Also discovered in this study were variations in Trosborg's recommended technique for apologizing. Apologies come in eight main varieties and twenty-one subtypes. Explicit denial of blame, implicit denial of duty, rationalization, evading accountability, and attacking the complainant are the five subtypes of this form of rejection. The second category includes three subcategories that pertain to reducing the severity of the offense: minimizing, queering the prerequisite, and blaming another

party. Thirdly, there is the admission of responsibility, which may be further broken down into six distinct forms: implicit, explicit, lack of intent, self-deficit, embarrassment, and explicit acceptance of guilt. The explanation of account is the fourth category; it is further subdivided into explicit and implicit explanations. Apology is the fifth category, and there are three subtypes within it: remorse, offering an apology, and asking for forgiveness. Repair offers, of which there are two subtypes (compensation and repair), make up the sixth category. The last group includes expressions of care for the audience, and the seventh is a vow of forgiveness. Types seven and eight do not include any subtypes. The authors provide a detailed description of each data point in their investigation.

IV. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to analyze the "Little Women" movie for its depiction of characters' apologies and the aspects that contributed to their effectiveness. Also, in accordance with Trosborg's hypothesis, this study aimed to identify variations in apologetic tactics. The results of this study show that there is more to the apology technique than merely apologizing. Many different approaches are typically utilized while apologizing. A few examples include begging for forgiveness, providing an explanation, or denying the wrongdoing.

The authors of this investigation uncovered 41 pieces of data related to apologies. Based on Trosborg's theory, the author identified five main types of apologetic tactics and eleven subtypes utilized in the dialogue of the "Little Women" film. The subtype of expressions of apology that is most commonly employed in this study is the one that asks for forgiveness. The characters in "Little Women" seldom employ the promise of grace as a strategy.

Among the researcher's other discoveries are the elements that impact an individual's method for apologizing. Based on Fraser's view, there are five distinct aspects that contribute to an apology. The factors that are taken into consideration include the type of offense, its seriousness, the context in which it happened, the level of acquaintance between the parties involved, and their gender. In this study, the relative familiarity factor between the interactants is commonly utilized as the apologetic factor. For the simple reason that films featuring numerous arguments inside families are the focus of this study. The sex of the interactants

is an underutilized variable in this research.

Moreover, according to Trosborg's view, there are distinct variations in the methods used to provide an apology. This study used Trosborg's theory to identify eight main categories of apologetic methods and twenty-one subcategories.

REFERENCES

- Attieh, A., & Khalil, A. R. (2019). *A Study of Apology Strategies used by Bahdini Kurdish Students with Reference to English*.
- Fitria, T. N. (2019). An Analysis of Directive Speech Act Found in "Koi Mil Gaya" Movie. *Journal of Pragmatics Research*, 1(2), 89–99. <https://doi.org/10.18326/jopr.v1i2.89-99>
- Hartantri, M. E. (2020). *A Study of Apology Strategy Used by Female Characters in Thirteen Reasons Why Season 1 Thesis*.
- Jessy, F. M., & Sembodo, T. J. P. (2019). A Comparative Study of Apology Strategies produced by Indonesian and Australian Bridge Players. 6(2), 218–227.
- Lestari, T., & Hartati, E. (2020). A Pragmatics Analysis of Speech Act in Thor Movie. *ELTICS: Journal of English Language Teaching and English Linguistics*, 4(2), 47–59. <https://doi.org/10.31316/eltics.v4i2.524>
- M. Joharis Lubis, & Fitri Noviyanti Nasution. (2021). Language Politeness in Tere Liye's Novel "Leaves that Feel Never Hate the Wind" Deixis Study. *LingLit Journal Scientific Journal for Linguistics and Literature*, 2(3), 132–140. <https://doi.org/10.33258/linglit.v2i3.518>
- Maulida, N. (2019). *Apology Strategies Used by Students in University of Balikpapan*. 4(1), 1–14.
- Nisa, I. K., & Sutrisno, A. (2018). Apology Strategies in Harry Potter Movie Series. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, 1(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.12928/eltej.v1i1.230>
- Sintamutiani, D. P., Fitriani, D., & Inayah, R. (2019). An Analysis of Speech Act Classification in Beauty and the Beast. *PROJECT (Professional Journal of English Education)*, 2(4), 429. <https://doi.org/10.22460/project.v2i4.p429-435>
- Tanjung, I. I. (2021). The Expressive Speech Act in the Lovely Bones Movie. *Jurnal Ilmiah Spectral*, 7(2), 86–99. <https://doi.org/10.47255/spectral.v7i2.76>
- Wijaya, F. R., & Helmie, J. (2019). An Analysis of Directive Speech Acts in the Fault in Our Stars Movie Script. *Jurnal JOEPALLT (Journal of English Pedagogy, Linguistics, Literature, and Teaching)*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.35194/jj.v7i1.300>