

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
HUMANITIES, PHILOSOPHY
AND LANGUAGE
(IJHPL)
www.ijhpl.com



AN INVESTIGATION INTO APOLOGY STRATEGIES AND LEXICOGRAMMATICAL REALIZATIONS OF APOLOGY UTTERANCES IN ENGLISH CONVERSATIONS

Ngo Thi Hien Trang^{1*}

¹ Faculty of English, University of Foreign Language Studies – The University of Danang, Vietnam
Email: nhtrang@ufl.udn.vn

* Corresponding Author

Article Info:

Article history:

Received date: 15.02.2022

Revised date: 01.03.2022

Accepted date: 25.03.2022

Published date: 31.03.2022

To cite this document:

Ngo, T. H. T. (2022). An Investigation Into Apology Strategies And Lexicogrammatical Realizations Of Apology Utterances In English Conversations. *International Journal of Humanities, Philosophy and Language*, 5 (17), 107-120.

DOI: 10.35631/IJHPL.517008

This work is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)



Abstract:

This research aims to investigate the types of apology strategies and lexicogrammatical realizations of apology utterances in English conversations extracted from films with romance and family contexts. A theoretical framework of the study was provided to set a light for the researcher to follow. In order to find the answer to four research questions, this study made use of the coding system of the apology strategy taxonomy by Trosborg (2011), and the lexicogrammar approach by Halliday and Matthiessen (2013). This is descriptive qualitative research with the support of the quantitative. The findings of this research depict the whole picture of apology strategies used by bottom by the characters in English-language conversations from film scripts and subtitles. To make it specific, *direct strategies* were the most frequently used, whereas, the newly-discovered apology strategy of *mixed apology strategy* stood at the bottom. Regarding lexicogrammatical realizations of apology utterances, the pattern of [*Apologizer + Verb + Apologizing*] reached its peak which included 2 lexicogrammatical realizations namely [*I'm sorry*] and [*I beg your pardon*].

Keywords:

Apology Strategies; English Conversations; Frequency; Lexicogrammatical Realizations; Patterns; Utterances.

Introduction

There have been many studies which were conducted to investigate apology strategies. Demester (2006) only investigated explicit apologies which means that all apologies in his analysis contained an explicit expression of apology, such as I'm sorry or excuse me. There

are, nonetheless, numerous apologies that do not contain an explicit expression of apologies. However, since he exploited a corpus analysis for his research, he could not cover all possible types of apologies, which was why he had only focused on explicit apologies. Ngo and Luu (2022) investigated the response strategies and their lexicogrammatical realizations of apology response utterances in English conversations. This study confirms that English film characters utilized acceptance more than rejection when responding to apologies. Furthermore, direct positive responses were also preferred to indirect positive responses. However, it seems that there have not been many studies on patterns and lexicogrammatical realizations which concentrate on apology utterances; therefore, the researcher decided to choose “*An Investigation into Apology Strategies and Lexicogrammatical Realizations of Apology Utterances in English Conversations*” to carry out this study.

With the aim at identifying apology strategies and clarifying the patterns and lexicogrammatical realizations of apology utterances in English conversations extracted from English films, the researcher carried out this article in order to find the answers to the four following research questions:

- (1) What are the types of apology strategies in English conversations?
- (2) What are the patterns of apology utterances in English conversations?
- (3) What are lexicogrammatical realizations of apology utterances in English conversations?
- (4) How often do apology strategies, patterns, and lexicogrammatical realizations of apology utterances appear in English conversations?

Literature Review and Theoretical Backgrounds

Two relatively recent studies on intercultural pragmatics (Shardakova, 2005; Shariati and Chamani, 2010) have highlighted how exposure to a second culture affects the speakers' L1 apologies, inducing them to be closer to those of native speakers. Also, the results of both studies revealed that the preferences for employing apology strategies seemed to be culture specific, emphasizing the importance of culture in influencing the choice of these strategies. In two recent studies of ‘learners’ refusals’, the phenomenon of pragmatic transference appears – an investigation of the speech act of refusal of Thai EFL learners’ realization (Wannaruk, 2008), and of Iraqi EFL learners (Qadoury, 2011). As for those who recorded conversations in natural settings, Le (2011) was taken as an example. She investigated the linguistic variation of politeness employed by Vietnamese as an L1 learner in two settings, Australia and Vietnam; and found evidence of pragmatic transference of Australian culture and Australian English in the L1 Vietnamese in Australia. The study showed that Vietnamese living in Australia were more linguistically polite than those living in Vietnam and used significantly more politeness markers. Those aforementioned researches help the researcher have an overview into apology strategies.

The act of apologizing has been investigated by many researchers and linguists in the field of sociolinguistics. As Reiter (2000, p.44) states, “*apology is a compensatory action for an offense committed by the speaker which has affected the hearer*”. Gooder and Jacobs (2000, p.233-241) point out that “*The proper apology acknowledges the fact of wrong doing, accepts ultimate responsibility, expresses sincere sorrow and regret, and promises not to repeat the offense. Some of the features of the proper apology are the admission of trespass, the implied acknowledgement of responsibility, an expression of regret, and a promise of a future in which injury will not recur.*”

Representatives, instructions, commissives, expressives, and declarations are the five categories that Searle (1969) divides speech acts into. A second approach to distinguishing sorts of speech acts can be made on the basis of structure and function, according to Searle (1969); we have a direct speech act. We have an indirect speech act when the syntactic form of an utterance does not match its apparent illocutionary power.

Despite the fact that there have been a number of perspectives on the category of apology strategies, the apology strategy taxonomy proposed by Trosborg (2011) is used as the foundation for the investigation of apology strategies in this article. *Direct strategies* (expression of regret, request for forgiveness, and offer of apology), *indirect strategies* (acknowledgement of responsibility and explanation or account), *evasive strategies* (minimizing, querying precondition, and blaming someone else), *opting out* (explicit denial of responsibility, implicit denial of responsibility, justification), and *remedial support* (expressing concern for the hearer, offer of repair, and promise of forbearance) were classified by Trosborg (2011) into 5 primary categories in general and 15 subcategories in particular.

Language is studied in three ways namely semantics, phonology, and lexicogrammar. Many linguists regard grammar and lexis as distinct ideas; however, Halliday and Matthiessen (2013) defined lexicogrammar, also known as lexical grammar, as a term which emphasizes the connection between vocabulary and structure.

This study used Searle's (1969) speech act theory to examine the act of apologizing, Trosborg's (2011) apology strategy taxonomy to find out apology strategies used in English conversations, and Halliday and Matthiessen's (2013) lexicogrammar to identify the patterns and the lexicogrammatical realizations of apology utterances.

Methodology

Data Collection

There were two data sources including film scripts downloaded from film websites and film subtitles taken from watching English films. The films with romance and family contexts which have been released since 2015 were collected, indicating that the data represents the most up-to-date strategies of apologies and keeps up with communication trends. These English films were produced in America where English is spoken as a mother tongue language.

There were 557 minimal adjacency pairs in conversations which were extracted from scripts and subtitles in romance and family films in English. Since explicit and implicit verbal apologies in English conversations are the scope of this study, the description of a typical sample is as follows. Regarding an adjacency pair in a conversation which includes explicit apologies with different performative part of speech, it might comprise utterances which includes explicit performative markers of apologizing act such as *afraid*, *apologise*, *apology*, *excuse*, *forgive*, *pardon*, *regret* and *sorry* in English. Utterances in an adjacency pair might not include explicit apologizing markers but still perform the act of apologizing implicitly were also collected.

Data Analysis

The following steps were conducted in order to analyze the data of the research. First of all, English-language film scripts and subtitles were downloaded and taken from romance and family film contexts. The researcher picked up 557 utterances of apologies that matched the

description of data mentioned above. After that, the researcher categorized the apology strategies based on Trosborg's (2011) apology strategy taxonomy. Following that, the researcher grouped utterances with the same patterns and found the lexicogrammatical realizations of these apology utterances thanks to the lexicogrammar approach developed by Halliday and Matthiessen (2013).

Findings and Discussion

Apology Strategies in English Conversations

This research used the apology strategy taxonomy developed by Trosborg (2011) to investigate what apology strategies that characters from romance and family film contexts often make use of in their conversations in English. This apology strategy taxonomy includes five different categories namely *direct strategies*, *indirect strategies*, *evasive strategies*, *opting out*, and *remedial support*.

From the conversations extracted from English film scripts and film subtitles, the researcher found out that there were two more strategies to express apologies or to illustrate the act of apologizing. The first one was entitled *no apology* by the researcher since the apologizers said anything; however, the apologizees responded that they understood that the apologizers wanted to apologize. Since the scope of this research is on verbal apologies, this type of apology strategy was not added into Figure 1. The other apology strategy was the integration of several apology strategies when making apologies; therefore, this new apology strategy was entitled *mixed apology strategy* and subsequently added into Figure 1. This figure highlights the information about the occurrence of apology strategies in English conversations extracted from scripts and subtitles of romance and family film contexts.

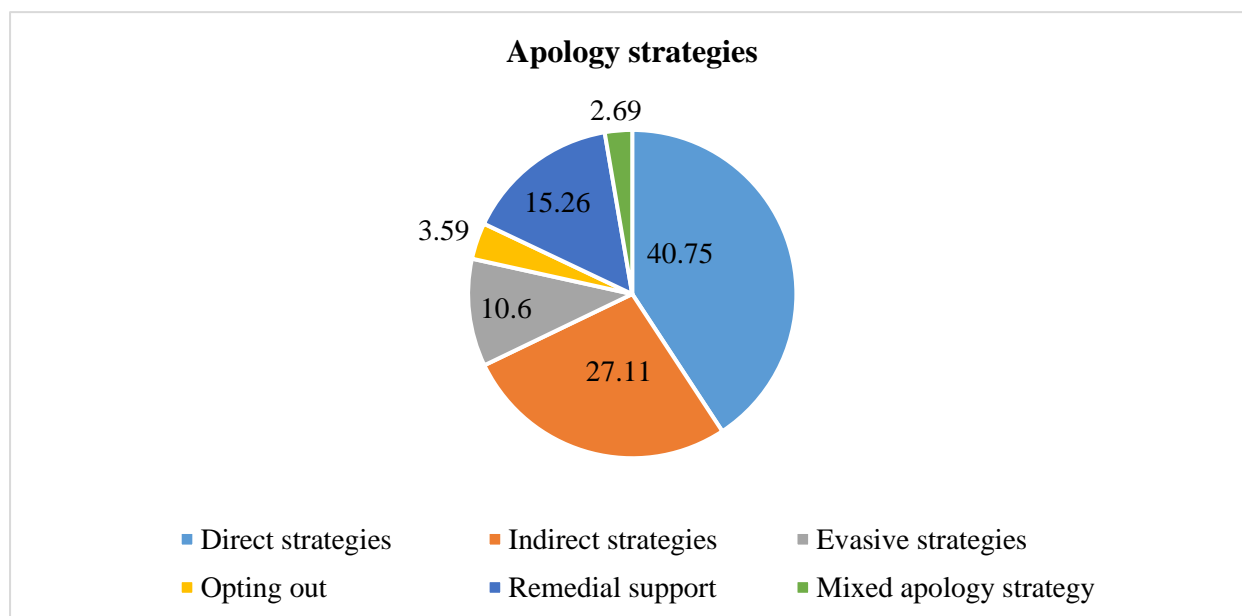


Figure 1. Occurrence of Apology Strategies in English Conversations

As Figure 1 demonstrates, *direct strategies* were the most frequently-used apology strategy which accounted for 40.75% (n=227) and was more than 15 times higher than the new type of apology strategy known as *mixed apology strategy* which made up the least at 2.69% (n=15). Ranking the second, third, and fourth were *indirect strategies*, *remedial support*, and *evasive*

strategies at 27.11% (n=151), 15.26% (n=85), and 10.56% (n=59), respectively. The *direct strategies* were 1.5 fold compared to *indirect strategies*, nearly 3 fold as opposed to *remedial support*, and nearly 4 fold in comparison with *opting out*. There was nearly 1.5 fold among the bottom two strategies namely *mixed apology strategy* and *opting out* at 2.69% and 3.59%, respectively.

In daily life, people perform many kinds of speech acts, in which the combination of apologizing and apology responding is an example of a pair of speech acts, known as pragmatic acts. However, the way of apologizing and apology responding is influenced by the beliefs, customs of the culture, and the psychological state of the apologizers and apologizees. To apologize someone for the offence, English can make use six types of apology strategies which are in line with the apology strategy taxonomy developed by Trosborg (2011) including *direct strategies*, *indirect strategies*, *evasive strategies*, *opting out*, *remedial support*. Besides, the researcher found out one new apology strategy which can be added to the apology strategy taxonomy developed by Trosborg (2011) and named it *mixed apology strategy*. Of the first five apology strategies, *direct strategies* are the only one using performative markers of apologies; whereas, the others do not. In *mixed apology strategy*, performative markers of apologies can also appear in case the apologizers make use of *direct strategies* together with some other apology strategies. The analysis of examples below provides a clear understanding about apology strategies in English conversations.

Direct Strategies

Direct apology strategies in English are explicitly understood as they are named refer through a set of performative expressions of apology, apology markers, or IFIDs which were termed by Olshtain and Cohen (1983) including *afraid*, *apologise*, *apology*, *excuse*, *forgive*, *pardon*, *regret* and *sorry*.

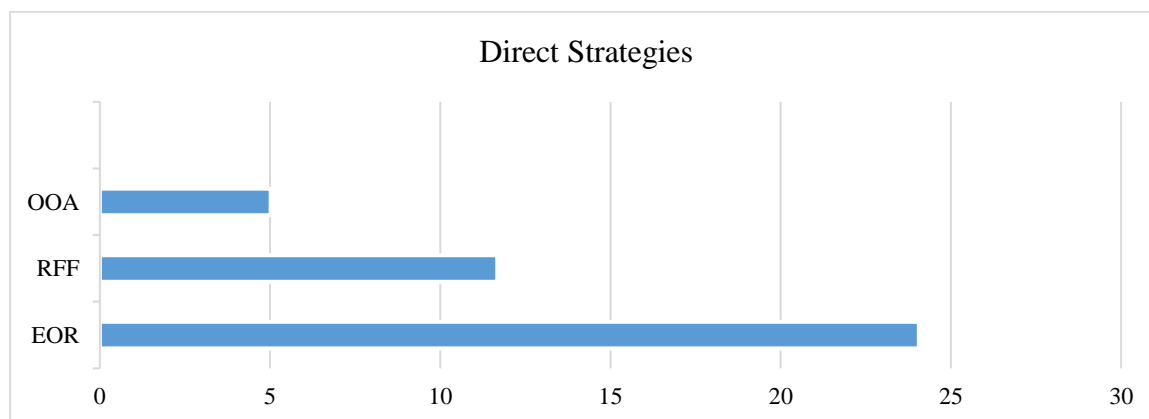


Figure 2. Frequency of Direct Strategies in English

Figure 2 demonstrates three macro levels of *direct strategies* namely *expression of regret* (EOR), *request for forgiveness* (RFF), and *offer of apology* (OOA) which made up 24.06% (n=134), 11.67% (n=65), and 5.02% (n=28) respectively. Looking at the data in more details, the researcher recognized that the top was more than twice higher than the second highest of this kind, and nearly five times higher than the least.

This can be interpreted as evidence of *direct strategies*' universality. This was in line with prior (Holmes, 1990, 1995; Hussein and Hammouri, 1998; Deutschmann, 2003; Shardakova, 2005; Bataineh, 2008; Sari, 2009; Shariati and Chamani, 2010; Nikmah, 2012; Altayari, 2017; Qari, 2017) which indicated that the most commonly used *direct strategies* in English was *expression of regret*. This apology strategy's high frequency in the corpus is thought to be due to its utility and effectiveness, as well as the fact that it is less demanding for speakers (Holmes, 1990). It is desirable because it allows offenders to make amends and restore the relationships that they have shattered for the least amount of money feasible (Nikmah, 2012). This was in line with Sari (2009), who stated that the most common method utilized in his corpus, which included a film called *Pretty Women*, was *expression of regret*. Furthermore, in another study on apology in the *Twilight* film, Nikmah (2012) discovered that *expression of regret* and *offer of apology* were the most frequently utilized. It is worth noting that *expression of regret* is a direct apologetic approach in which the offender acknowledges his or her regret for their wrongdoing. However, Shariati and Chamani (2010) found that *request forgiveness* and *expression of regret* were the most and least common apology strategies, respectively, in their research of apology expressions in Persian.

The conversation below show how expression of regret occurs in conversation.
(Example 1).

Aunt Cam: *I'm sorry.*

An: *Why? Why are you leaving, where are we going?*

The context of this conversation was that aunt Cam wanted to leave her daughter and went away with her boy friend. She said *sorry* for what she was going to do which could hurt her child.

Indirect Strategies

Compared to *direct strategies*, *indirect strategies* were taken advantage of by the apologizers to express their apologies to the apologizees indirectly or implicitly, which meant that there was no use of performative expressions or verbs. In a specific context, the apologizees listened to what the apologizer uttered and understood that they were apologizing. At macro level, *indirect strategies* included two categories of *acknowledgment of responsibility (AOR)* and *explanation or account (EOA)*. The former was more than 2.5 times as much as the latter, at 19.39 % (n=108) and 7.72% (n=43), respectively. The micro level of *acknowledgment of responsibility* included 6 different categories such as *implicit acknowledgment (IA)*, *explicit acknowledgment (EA)*, *expression of lack of intent (ELOI)*, *expression of self-deficiency (EOS)*, *expression of embarrassment (EOE)*, and *explicit acceptance of the blame (EAOB)*; whereas, there were only 2 groups at micro level of *explanation or account* namely *implicit explanation (IE)* and *explicit explanation (EE)*. Vollmer and Olsthain (1989) also discovered that the most popular strategy was *acknowledgement of responsibility*.

Figure 3 describes the frequency of all micro levels of *indirect strategies*. The two most outstanding ASs were *explicit acknowledgment* at 8.62% (n=48) and *explicit explanation* at 6.28% (n=35). The two sub-categories of *expression of self-deficiency* and *implicit acknowledgment* stood at quite the same level at around 3%, considered to be the third highest in *indirect strategies*. There was also a similarity percentage of less and more than 1.5% in *implicit explanation* and *expression of lack of intent* at 1.44% (n=8) and 1.62% (n=9),

respectively. The *expression of embarrassment* at 2.33% (n=13) was 2.5 times higher than the least sub-category of *explicit acceptance of the blame* at 0.9% (n=5).

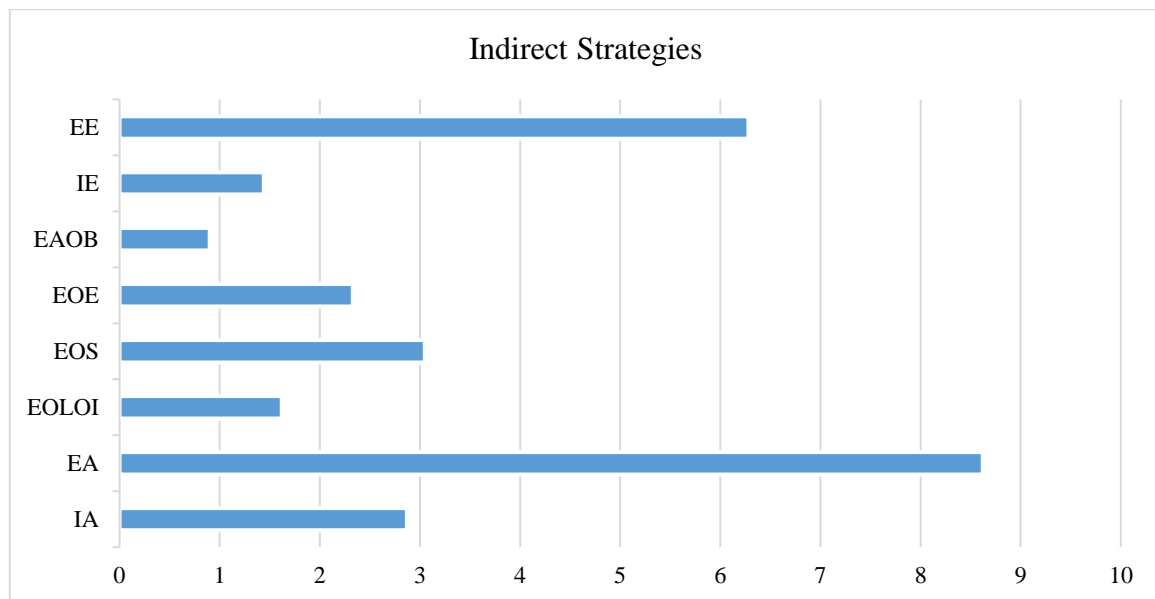


Figure 3. Frequency of Indirect Strategies in English

In example 2, the apologizee agreed with the blame for mistakes on the apologizer. (Example 2).

Ardi : *This is my mistake. You're right to blame me.*

Selly : *I hope you will not do this again later.*

In the conversation, Ardi showed his regret and also agreed with the blame of the apologizees on the mistakes they did to the apologizers. It is shown when he said, "*This is my mistake. You're right to blame me*".

Evasive Strategies

In this strategy, the apologizers do not deny the responsibility but minimize the degree of offense. There are three kinds of this strategy known as *minimizing (M)* at 5.39% (n=30), *querying precondition (QP)* at 1.44% (n=8), and *blaming someone else (BOE)* at 3.77% (n=21).

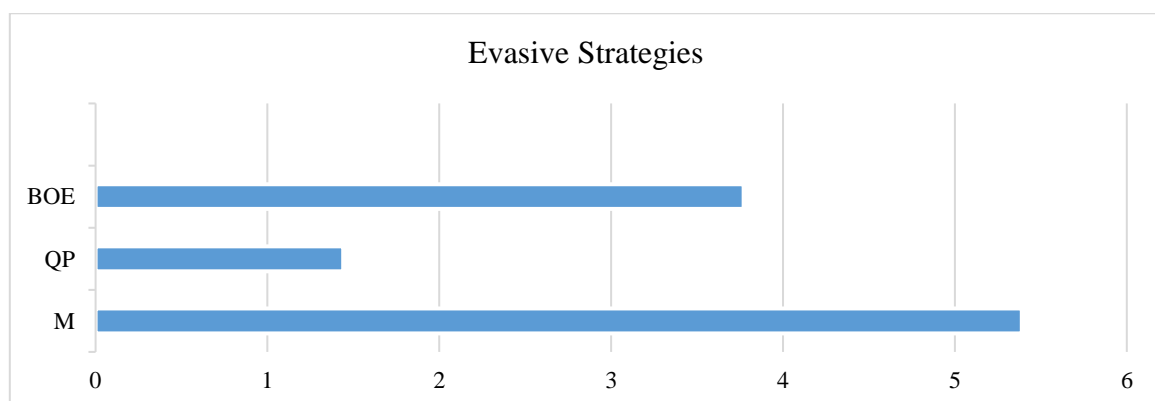


Figure 4. Frequency of Evasive Strategies in English

In example 3, the apologizer tried to lessen the degree of offense by saying that the offense was not a big problem.

(Example 3).

Irene : *What about it, it's not the end of the world.*

Rose : *What?*

The context of the conversation was when Irene lost Rose's book and she thought that her mistake was not serious and it was not a big problem. So, she uttered an apology by said, "*What about it, it's not the end of the world*". The category of this apology strategy in this conversation was *minimizing* because she reduced her mistake.

Opting Out

The strategy of *opting out* is used if the apologizer denies the responsibility because that person feels not guilty. What stands out from Figure 5 is that there are four kinds of opting out namely *explicit denial of responsibility (EDOR)* at 2.15% (n=12), *implicit denial of responsibility (IDOR)* at 0.54% (n=3), *justification (J)* at 0.9% (n=5), and *attacking complainer* at 0% (n=0). However, the last one was not found in the data collection.

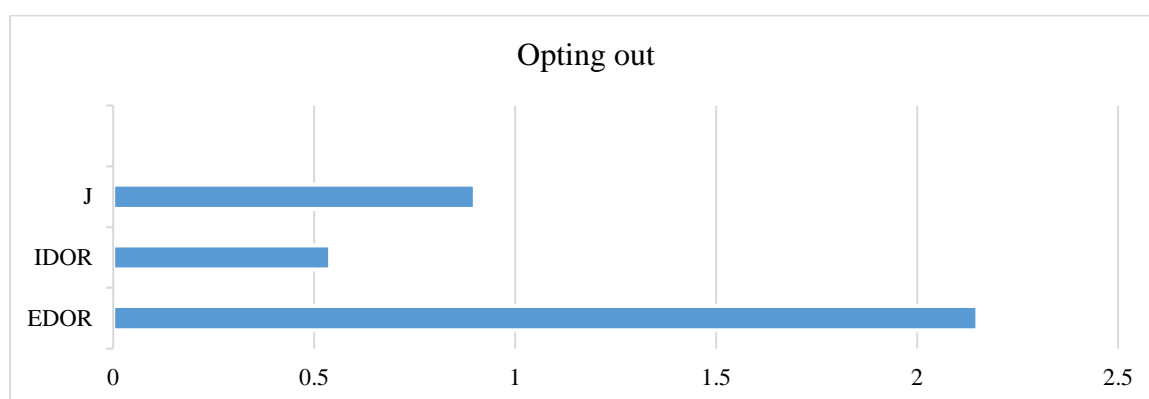


Figure 5. Frequency of Opting Out in English

In example 4, the apologizer implicitly denied that she should be responsible for the offense.

(Example 4).

Julie : *This is obviously your fault.*

Tom : *I don't think that's my fault.*

In this category, the apologizer tried to implicitly deny about the offenses that she did by saying, "*I don't think that's my fault*". It shows that she did not want to be responsible for the mistake implicitly. It can be categorized that her apology strategy used by her was *implicit denial of responsibility*.

Remedial Support

This strategy is used by the apologizer when the situation cannot be controlled anymore. Then, the apologizers commit the responsibility and have no defense. There are three types including *expressing concern for hearer (ECFH)*, *offer of repair (OOR)*, and *promise of forbearance (POF)*.

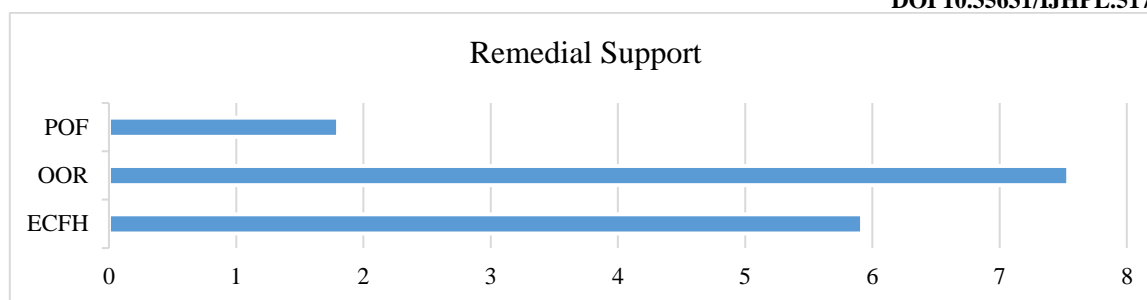


Figure 6. Frequency of Remedial Support in English

As shown in Figure 6, *offer of repair* took its superiority at 7.54 % (n=42) and was more than 4 times higher than the least of *promise of forbearance* at 1.8% (n=10).

In Abdi and Biri (2014), *promise of forbearance* was the least often used apology strategy. The same method was also found to be the least common among German speakers by Vollmer and Olsthain (1989). It is worth mentioning that promise of forbearance is a type of apology strategy in which the speaker, in addition to shouldering the responsibility for what misdeed he has committed, gives a promise of never committing that offense again. The reason for the scarcity of this strategy might be to its nature which requires two conditions: First, the offense committed must be of a serious one and second, the apologizer himself needs to come to this understanding that the severity of the offense makes promise of never doing it again the only and the most effective alternative to repair the damage and redeem himself.

Example 5 illustrates the compensation which was used when the apologizer could not repair; therefore, the apologizer offered the compensatory action.

(Example 5).

Tiffany : *I will buy you a new book.*

Jessica : *Thank you.*

The context of the conversation above happened when Tiffany ripping some pages of Jessica's book unintentionally. Then, she offers to buy a new book as the compensation for the offences that she did. In conclusion, the compensation used by the apologizer as the compensatory act for the damage thing caused by him.

Mixed Apology Strategy

Mixed apology strategy was found as the new one since it was not listed in the apology strategy taxonomy by Trosborg (2011). The apologizers tended to use *mixed apology strategy* when they were aware that they had made a serious mistake which caused damages and hurts either physically or mentally to the apologizees. Even though the occurrence of this type is rare at 2.69% (n=15), it should be enlisted as one of apology strategies. The apologizers uttered expressions of several different apology strategies to show their attitudes towards the offense they made. There were two trends of using this apology strategy. The apologizers could employ some ASs in one turn, or in several different turn as analyzed in the following examples.

(Example 6).

The staff: *Oops, Sorry sorry sorry. I didn't mean it at all.*

The manager: *No way. Huhm.....*

In this example, the apologizers used *expression of regret* in *direct strategies* when uttering the performative marker of this kind “sorry”. After that, the staff explained that he or she did not intend to make the offense when saying “*I didn’t mean it at all*” and this was *expression of lack of intent* in *indirect strategies* at the macro level or *acknowledgement of responsibility* at the micro level. The combination of these two apology strategies was uttered in only one turn.

Another example which should be taken into consideration about the use of this AR in different turns of an exchange.

(Example 7).

The passenger: *Oops, I’m so sorry.*

First response: *Oh yeah, you can take your bag on the place up there.*

The passenger: *Well, everywhere is full, I’m afraid.*

Final Response: *It’s alright. Everything is alright.*

At first, *expression of regret* was used and when the apologizee responded by suggesting to take the bag away, the apologizer in this turn combined two strategies of *implicit explanation* in *explanation or account of indirect strategies*, and *expression of regret* in *indirect strategies* when saying “*I’m afraid*”.

Lexicogrammar Realizations of Apology Utterances

Table 1 below highlights information about the occurrence of apology patterns and their lexicogrammatical realizations of apology utterances.

Table 1. Distribution of Patterns and Lexicogrammatical Realizations of Apology Utterances in English

No.	Patterns	Lexicogrammatical Realizations	n	%
1	Apologizing	Sorry	39	16.81
		Pardon		
		My fault		
		My apology		
2	Apologizing + Apologizer	Forgive me	25	10.78
		Excuse me		
		Pardon me		
3	Apologizing + Apologizer + Preposition + Explanation	Pardon me for <i>Gerund/ NP</i>	5	2.15
		Forgive me for <i>Gerund/NP</i> but <i>Clause</i>		
		Excuse me for <i>Gerund/ NP</i>		
4	Apologizing + Apologizer + Demonstrative+ Conjunction + Explanation	Forgive me this but <i>Clause</i>	1	0.43
5	Apologizing + Apologizee	Sorry, <i>proper name</i>	15	6.47
6	Apologizing + Explanation	Forgive my <i>NP</i>	1	0.43
7	Apologizing + Preposition + Explanation	Sorry for <i>NP/ gerund</i>	17	7.33
		Sorry to <i>VP</i>		
8	Apologizing + Preposition + Apologizee	My apology to <i>pronoun/proper name</i>	1	0.43
9	Apologizer + Apologizing	I apologize	3	1.29

10	Apologizer + Apologizing + Apologizee	I forgive you	1	0.43
11	Apologizer + Apologizing + Condition sentence	I apologize if <i>Clause</i>	1	0.43
12	Apologizer + Apologizing+ Preposition + Explanation	I apologize for <i>NP/ that Clause/ Gerund</i>	26	11.2
		I'm sorry about/ for <i>NP/ that Clause/ Gerund</i>		
13	Apologizer + Apologizing + Explanation	I apologize that <i>Clause</i>	7	3.02
		I regret that <i>Clause</i>		
14	Apologizer + Verb + Apologizing	I'm sorry	44	18.98
		I beg your pardon		
15	Apologizer + Verb + Intensifier +Apologizing	I'm really sorry	24	10.34
16	Apologizer + Verb + Intensifier + Apologizing + Preposition + Explanation	I'm truly sorry for what happened	1	0.43
17	Apologizer + Verb + Apologizing + Explanation	I'm afraid that <i>Clause</i>	12	5.18
		I'm sorry that <i>Clause</i>		
18	Apologizer + Verb + Apologizing+ Apologizee	I want to apologize to <i>proper name/ pronoun</i>	2	0.86
19	Apologizer + Emphatic form +Apologizing	I do apologize	1	0.43
20	Apologizer + Intensifier +Apologizing+ Explanation	I do apologize for <i>NP/Gerund</i>	3	1.29
21	Apologizee + Modal verb + Apologizing + Apologizer	You can forgive me	3	1.29
		Would you excuse me?		
		I Modal verb apologize for <i>NP/Gerund</i>		
Total			232	100

There are 227 direct strategies using performative expressions namely *sorry*, *apology*, *apologize*, *fault*, *excuse*, *pardon*, *regret*, *forgive*, and *afraid*. Also, 5 more utterances using performative expressions in *mixed apology strategy* were collected. In total, 232 utterances of apology which contained performative expressions were found from 557 minimal adjacency pairs of pragmatic acts of apologizing and responding. As can be seen from Table 1 and Figure 7, form 14 with the pattern [*Apologizer + Verb + Apologizing*] reached its peak at 18.98% (n=44) which included 2 lexicogrammatical realizations namely [*I'm sorry*] and [*I beg your pardon*]. It was slightly higher than the second highest of form 1 [*Apologizing*] at 16.81% (n=39) which comprised of 2 lexicogrammatical realizations such as [*Sorry*], [*Pardon*], [*My fault*], and [*My apology*]. Form 2 [*Apologizing + Apologizer*], form 12 [*Apologizer + Apologizing+ Preposition + Explanation*], and form 15 [*Apologizer + Verb + Intensifier +Apologizing*] experienced quite the same occurrence at the approximation of 11%, to make it more detailed, 10.78% (n=25), 11.2% (n=26), and 10.34% (n=24), respectively. There are 7 forms ranking at the bottom of the list at 0.43% including form 4 [*Apologizing + Apologizer +*

Demonstrative + Conjunction + Explanation], form 6 [*Apologizing + Explanation*], form 8 [*Apologizing + Preposition + Apologizee*], form 10 [*Apologizer + Apologizing + Apologizee*], form 11 [*Apologizer + Apologizing + Condition sentence*], form 16 [*Apologizer + Verb + Intensifier + Apologizing + Preposition + Explanation*], and form 19 [*Apologizer + Emphatic form + Apologizing*].

If Table 1 describes 21 patterns and their lexicogrammatical realizations with specific details, Figure 7 provides the overview frequency of patterns only.

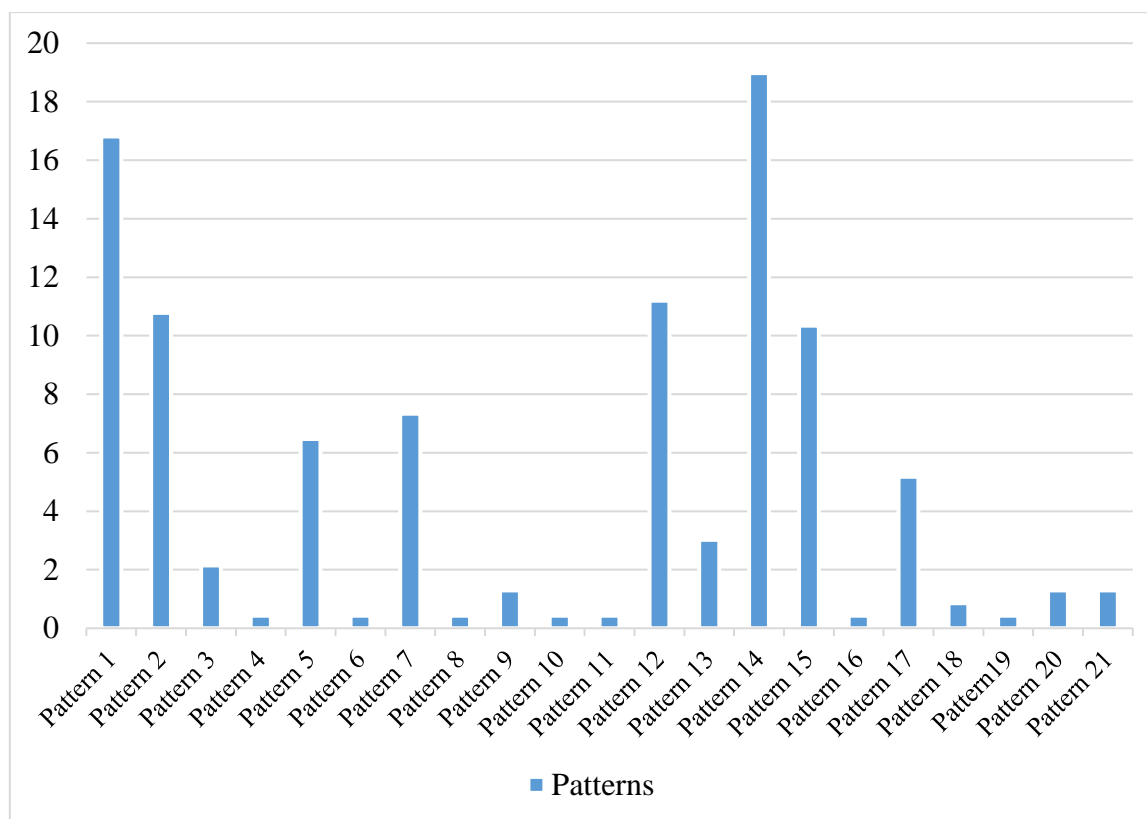


Figure 7. Pattern Distribution of Apology Utterances in English

Conclusion and Implications

In conclusion, the results of this study paint a picture of the apology strategies utilized by characters in English-language conversations from film scripts and subtitles. Specifically, *direct strategies* were the most frequently used and the newly-discovered of *mixed apology strategy* sank at the bottom. The pattern of [*Apologizer + Verb + Apologizing*] peaked in terms of lexicogrammatical realizations of apology utterances, with two lexicogrammatical realizations including [*I'm sorry*] and [*I beg your pardon*].

The results of this study can be applied in grammar and writing skill. According Rao (2007), writing skill helps learners encourage critical thinking and analyzing skills, organize ideas, and develop the ability to summarize ideas; therefore, there is no shadow of a doubt that writing plays an important role in acquiring a foreign language. Students at Faculty of English, University of Foreign Language Studies – The University of Danang, Vietnam have to study different types of formal and informal emails of which writing an apology email and an apology

response email is one of the components in writing that students have to acquire for their study, exams, and language proficiency tests of Vietnamese Standardized Test of English Proficiency as well. Being aware of 21 forms and their corresponding lexicogrammar realizations of apologies helps students have more options in writing to diversify their structures with flexibility since grammar is one of the writing criteria.

Funding: This research is funded by University of Foreign Language Studies – The University of Danang under grant number T2021-05-20.

References

- Abdi, R., & Biri, A. (2014). A Study of Apology Speech Act in Sitcoms: Implications for Language Teaching and Learning. *Journal of Modern Research in English Language Studies*, 1(3), 57-37.
- Altayari, D.R. (2017). A Sociolinguistic Study of the Speech Act of Apology by Saudi Speakers. *Humanity & Social Sciences Journal*, 12 (2), 37- 44.
- Bataineh, R. F. (2008). A cross-cultural comparison of apologies by native speakers of American English and Jordanian Arabic. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 40(4), 792-821.
- Demester, G. (2006). *Explicit apologies in English and Romanian: A construction grammar approach*. Paper presented at the 11th International Pragmatics Conference, Melbourne, Australia.
- Deutschmann, M. (2003). *Apologising in British English*. Doctoral dissertation, Umeå universitet.
- Halliday, M. A. K., & Matthiessen, C. M. (2013). *Halliday's introduction to functional grammar*. Routledge.
- Holmes, J. (1990). Apologies in New Zealand English. *Language in society*, 19(2), 155-199.
- Holmes, J. (1995). Sex differences and apologies: One aspect of communicative competence. *Readings on second language acquisition*, 362-385.
- Hussein, R., & Hammouri, M (1998). Strategies of Apology in Jordanian Arabic and American English. *Grazer Linguistische Studien*, 7(49), 37-50.
- Le, P. T. (2011). *Translational variation in linguistic politeness in Vietnamese: Australia and Vietnam*. Doctoral dissertation, Victoria University.
- Ngo, T., & Luu, K. (2022). A Lexicogrammar Approach to Analyze Response Strategies to Apology in English Conversations. *International Journal of English Language Studies*, 4(1), 45–50. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijels.2022.4.1.6>
- Nikmah, M.T. (2012). *Analysis of apology as a politeness style of expressed by the characters in the twilight saga movie*. Unpublished MA thesis. State Institute of Islamic Studies, Salatiga, Indonesia.
- Qadoury, A. (2011). Pragmatic Transfer in Iraqi EFL Learners' Refusals. *International Journal of English Linguistics*, 1(2), 166-175.
- Qari, I. (2017). *Politeness study of requests and apologies as produced by Saudi Hijazi , EFL learners , and British English university students*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Roehampton.
- Rao, Z. (2007). Training in brainstorming and developing writing skills. *ELT Journal*, 61(2), 100-106.
- Sari, D.P. (2009). *Apologizing acts in the film entitled "Pretty woman"*. Unpublished MA thesis. Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta, Indonesia.

- Searle, J. R. (1969). *Speech acts: An essay in the philosophy of language* (Vol. 626). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shardakova, M. (2005). Intercultural pragmatics in the speech of American L2 learners of Russian: Apologies offered by Americans in Russian. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 2(4), 423-451.
- Shardakova, M. (2005). Intercultural pragmatics in the speech of American L2 learners of Russian: Apologies offered by Americans in Russian. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 2(4), 423-451.
- Shariati, M. & Chamani, F. (2010). Apology strategies in Persian. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 42(6), 1689-1699.
- Trosborg, A. (2011). *Interlanguage pragmatics: Requests, complaints, and apologies* (Vol. 7). Walter de Gruyter.
- Vollmer, H.J., & Olshtain, E. (1989). The language of apologies in German. In S. Blum-Kulka & J. House & G. Kasper (Eds), *Crosscultural pragmatics: Request and apologies* (pp. 197-218). Albex.
- Wannaruk, A. (2008). Pragmatic transfer in Thai EFL refusals. *RELJ journal*, 39(3), 318-337.

Biodata: Ngo, T. H. T has more than 10 years of teaching experience at Faculty of English, UFLS-UD, Vietnam. She got her MA in 2013 and is currently a Ph.D candidate in the English Language. Her expertise and interests include language teaching methodology and English linguistics. She has published papers in conference proceedings and WOS and SCOPUS journals.