

AN ANALYSIS OF APOLOGY STRATEGIES IN CHARACTERS' UTTERANCES IN SPIDER-MAN HOME TRILOGY MOVIES

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AN ANALYSIS OF APOLOGY STRATEGIES IN CHARACTERS' UTTERANCES IN *SPIDER-MAN HOME TRILOGY* MOVIES

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Abstract. This research aims to analyze the types of apology strategies and find out the most dominant type of apology strategies in Spider-Man Home Trilogy movies. Spider-Man Home Trilogy Movies consist of Spider-Man Homecoming, Spider-Man Far From Home, and Spider-Man No Way Home. This research used a descriptive qualitative method. The researcher used Ishihara and Cohen's (2010) theory of apology strategies. The result of this research is 116 apology strategies in the Spider-Man Home Trilogy movies, which are divided into 90 An Expression of an Apology, 15 Acknowledgment of Responsibility, 5 An Explanation or Account, 4 An Offer of Repair and 2 A Promise of Non-Recurrence. An Expression of an Apology is the most dominant apology strategy in the Spider-Man Home Trilogy movies because complex relationships and conflicts between characters. The protagonist character dominates An Expression of an Apology type of apology strategy compared to the antagonist, who does not do it often. This is because the protagonist experiences complex relationships with his surroundings and conflicts with antagonists that impact his real life. To resolve the conflict, the direct apology strategy An Expression of an Apology is needed to repair the relationship.

Keywords: Apology, Apology Strategies, Pragmatics, Spider-Man

INTRODUCTION

In everyday life, language has an important role in the support system of communication. Communication is usually an important interaction in human life between speakers and listeners with the aim of making human relationships and also providing explanations of information, thoughts, ideas, symbols, and so on Pradipta & Sugiharti (2022). Khofiyaa & Silalahi (2022) said that communicating a certain context or topic is needed for the listener to understand the meaning of the speaker's utterance. When someone communicates with another person, their response can be used to see how successful the communication is. Effective communication happens when the speakers are conscious of how they use language to convey their intended meaning, and the listeners comprehend that meaning.

When people speak, they accomplish particular objectives through both what they say and the act of saying it. That is what is meant by the term "speech act" in social communication. Speech act is a pragmatics study that is related to communication and utterance. Speech acts, as expounded by Austin (1962), refer to the actions that are

performed through the use of speech. Yule (1996) says that an utterance in performing an action is usually called a speech act.

In speech acts, misunderstandings or misinterpretations can occur. Therefore, it is necessary to be able to recognize and interpret speech acts so that communication can be effective, apologies are included in these speech acts. Apologies are also a part of good manners and speech acts. Based on the classification of speech acts proposed by Searle (1965) apologies fall into the expressive category used by the speaker to convey their feelings.

An apology strategy needs to be carried out so that the apology can hit the target and be more effective. An apology strategy is a strategy used by a person (speaker) to perform an apology speech act for the offense that has been committed as a form of regret. Ishihara & Cohen (2010) further stated that a complex speech act, such as an apology, will consist of a kind of strategy used by competent speakers with some regularity. Ishihara & Cohen (2010) stated, there are five types of apology strategies involve 1) An Expression of an Apology (EXAP), 2) Acknowledgement of Responsibility (RESP), 3) An Explanation or Account (EXPL), 4) An Offer of Repair (REPR) and also 5) A Promise of Non-Recurrence (RECU).

An Expression of an Apology applies to any word, phrase, or statement that includes a verb, including "sorry," "excuse me," "forgive," or "apologize". It is more common to use the words "I apologize..." in writing than in spoken conversation. Whenever the one offering the apology feels compelled to do so, they may demonstrate it. Usually, to emphasize something, one employs an amplification word like "really" or "very"; an example would be "I'm really sorry".

Acknowledgement of Responsibility employs an explanation of the situations leading up to the offense as an indirect way to apology. It is the purpose to straighten out the record with this explanation. It can occasionally be seen as excuse. The offender admits that the incident was their responsibility. There are several levels of acknowledgment of this strategy, ranging from the highest to the lowest. At the highest level of intensity is a full admission of guilt: "This is entirely my fault." At a lower level are statements of self-deficiency: "I'm confused/I don't see/you're right." At an even lower level is the statement of lack of intention: "I didn't mean it." At an even lower level is the implied admission of responsibility: "I could be wrong, but I believe I gave the right direction." Finally, the person apologizing may refuse to take the blame at all, resulting in a denial of responsibility: "It wasn't my fault," or even "It was your own fault."

Using an Explanation of Account strategy, the speaker describes the situations leading up to the offense. The speaker also uses this strategy as an indirect way to apologizing. The goal of this strategy is to correct the misunderstanding. This strategy might be a more accepted form of showing regret. For instance, showing up to a meeting late and explaining it with a statement like "The bus was late" in situations where public transit is unreliable.

Using an Offer of Repair, those who apologize offers to take an action or pay some kind of payment to make up for any damage the offense may have caused. This strategy is specific to the situation and should be employed only after genuine damage has occurred. As an example, if someone is running late for a friend's appointment, they may say something like, "How can I make it up to you? Can I treat you to lunch on Friday?" Or someone not capable to attend an appointment might offer "Would you be willing to reschedule the meeting?".

With a Promise of Non-Recurrence, the one who apologizes promises not to make the same mistake again while employing this strategy. Compared to the other methods, this one is less common and situation-specific. Saying "*I will never forget your birthday again*" is an example of what to do if someone knows someone whose birthday they forget.

These strategies of apology which normally occur in real-life conversation also exist in various forms of communication, one of which is the movie. In this research, the researcher used the "Spider-Man Home Trilogy" which consists of 3 movies. The Spider-Man Home Trilogy was created and produced by Marvel Studios with Tom Holland as Peter Parker, Spider-Man. Each of Marvel Studios' Spider-Man movies, including *Homecoming*, *Far From Home*, and *No Way Home*, explored similar themes and clear overarching storylines, detailing Spider-Man's origin story in the MCU. In this movie, the apology strategy can be found through the characters.

There are several previous researches that is relevant to the current research. Two article journals have been found to help identify gaps and avoid duplication of existing research. First, an analysis by Maghfiroh & Ratih (2023) titled "*Exploring Apologizing Strategies in the Movie 'Captain Marvel'*". This research used descriptive qualitative methods and the sources of data were the movie and its script. The theory was used by Kramer-Moore and Moore's theory. There are 4 findings in this study that show two different types of apology strategies, namely directive and expressive apologies. The similarities between Maghfiroh & Ratih's research with this research is that both of them analyzed apology strategies with science fiction action movies as a source of data. However, the theories used are different. Maghfiroh & Ratih's research used a theory from Kramer-Moore and Moore. Meanwhile, this research uses a theory from Ishihara & Cohen (2010).

Second, an analysis by Larasati (2014) titled "*Apology Strategy Used by The Characters in Four Cartoon Movies*". This research used a descriptive qualitative method and a movie as a source of data, to analyze apology strategies with Olshtain and Cohen's theory. The results show that based on 37 data that have been found, the most dominant type is an expression of an apology and an explanation or account of the situation. An acknowledgment of responsibility, an offer of repair, and a promise of forbearance follow them. The similarities between Larasati's research with this research are that both of them analyzed apology strategies with movies as a data source. However, the theory used and the genre of the movie are different. Larasati's research used a theory from Olshtain and Cohen and four different genre movies. Meanwhile, this research uses a theory from Ishihara & Cohen (2010) and science fiction action movies.

It is shown by the explanation of the two studies above that those research has several weaknesses. Because in the first study, (Maghfiroh & Ratih, 2023) only discussed apology strategies in one film. Then, the second research by Larasati (2018) discusses apology strategies in three different and unrelated films. In addition, they also use different theories, (Maghfiroh & Ratih, 2023) use Kramer-Moore-Moore theory and Larasati (2014) uses Olshtain & Cohen theory. In this case, the researcher discusses apology strategies in the Spider-Man Home Trilogy, which consists of three related films, namely *Spider-Man Homecoming*, *Spider-Man Far From Home* and *Spider-Man No Way Home*. This research used Ishihara & Cohen's (2010) theory. Therefore, it can be said that there has been no research that discusses apology strategies in Spider-Man Home Trilogy Movies using Ishihara & Cohen's (2010) theory. Therefore, this research is important to do.

From the explanation above, several problems can be formulated including what types of apology strategies are used by characters in Spider-Man Home Trilogy Movies and also what is the dominant type of apology strategy in Spider-Man Home Trilogy Movies. This research aims to describe the types of apology strategies in Spider-Man Home Trilogy Movies and also find the dominant types of apology strategies in Spider-Man Home Trilogy Movies.

METHOD

This research employs qualitative method to seek out and explain the data to be accurate description of the facts investigated. Plans and processes for research to specific methods of collect and analyze data are all part of qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). An instrument of research is a tool for measuring, observing or documenting the data (Creswell, 2013). In this research, Google as a search engine and the internet is one of the instruments used to search for movies and transcripts. In addition, the researcher is also included in this research instrument to analyze the conversation and identify the apology strategies used in the movies. The data source are utterances used by the characters in Spider-Man Home Trilogy movies. The researcher downloaded the script on May 18, 2024 at 20.47. and watch the movies on the web <https://idlix.cfd>. The researcher found 116 data which are character utterances in Spider-Man Home Trilogy Movies. The data collection procedures are conducted by researchers including 3 steps. In the first step, the researcher watched all the movies and read the scripts of all the movies. In the second step, the researcher found character utterances that contained apology strategies in all the movies. In the third step, researchers provided data codes on the data that had been identified and classified. In analyzing the data, researchers used descriptive techniques. In this research, the characters' utterances with apology strategies are accurately described based on the facts in the movies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Result of Apology Strategies

After the researcher analyzed the data with Ishihara & Cohen's theory (2010), the researcher found several type of apology strategies in Spider-Man Home Trilogy Movies as follows:

Table 1. Frequency of Apology Strategies

No	Apology Strategies	Frequency
1.	An Expression of an Apology	90
2.	Acknowledgement of Responsibility	15
3.	An Explain or Account	5
4.	An Offer of Repair	4
5.	A Promise of Non-Recurrence	2
TOTAL DATA		116

After classifying the apology strategies that appeared in the Spider-Man Home Trilogy movies, the researcher found 116 data. The most dominant is An Expression of an Apology 90 times appeared. The other apology strategies are Acknowledgement of Responsibility 15 times appeared, An Explain or Account 5 times appeared, An Offer of Repair was found 4, and A Promise of Non-Recurrence which only 2 times appeared

in the whole movies.

B. Discussion

B.1. An Expression of an Apology

EXAPISM1 // 02.22-02.5²

ANNE MARIE HOAG: "I apologize, Mr. Toomes, but all salvage operations are now under our jurisdiction. Please turn over any and all exotic materials that you've collected, or you will be prosecuted.1"

TOOMES: "Ma'am, what am I- Please. Come here. Hey, lady, come on. Look... I bought trucks for this job. I brought in a whole new crew. These guys have a family. I have a family. I'm all in on this. I could lose my house."

ANNE MARIE HOAG: "*I'm sorry, sir.* There's nothing I can do."

In the Spider-Man Homecoming movie, Adrian Toomes is a cleaning crew leader working at Avengers Tower. Toomes and his crew were cleaning up alien artefacts lying among the ruins. Then Anne Marie Hoag, a director of the Damage Control Department, made her way to the rescue site with her crew. She stated that by Executive Order 396B, all post-battle clean-up operations are now under her jurisdiction. Anne thanked Toomes for the work he did but she would take it from here. A confused Toomes questioned who Anne and her crew were. He also tries to explain that he has a contract over this clean-up operation. However, Anne insisted that all clean-up operations be transferred under her jurisdiction. Anne also made a statement that they had to hand over all the exotic materials that had been collected, or they would be prosecuted. Toomes pleaded and stated that for this clean-up operation, he even had to buy a truck. He brought a whole new crew, they had families to support. Anne regretfully said that there was nothing she could do to change this situation.

The above utterance was expressed by Anne Marie Hoag when expressing her apology and regret to Adrian Toomes. Anne apologized because there was nothing she could do to change the situation at that time, where Anne had to take over the cleaning operation at Avenger Tower. Anne Marie Hoag's apology, "I'm sorry, sir. There's nothing I can do," includes apology strategies. By directly saying "I'm sorry," she provides an immediate and clear expression of regret, acknowledging the distressing situation Toomes is in. This direct expression of regret is crucial for showing empathy and understanding towards Toomes' predicament. Although she follows with "There's nothing I can do," which indicates her inability to change the circumstances, this explanation helps to clarify that her apology is sincere but constrained by her lack of power to alter the outcome.

B.2. Acknowledgement of Responsibility

RESP9SM3 // 52.39-52.40

FLINT MARKO: (holding up his hands) "Easy, buddy."⁴

PETER PARKER: "*It's actually my fault that you're here.*"

MAX DILLON: "Like... Like the universe? Or the woods? I hate the woods."

PETER PARKER: "I meant the universe, sir."⁸

In the Spider-Man No Way Home movie, Peter Parker appears to be in a strange situation with two unfamiliar men in the woods. One man, Flint Marko, puts his hands up defensively when approached by Peter, suggesting tension. The other man, Max Dillon, seems disoriented and confused about where they are or how they got there. Peter

confessed to both of them that it was his fault they were in this part of Earth, where Peter lived. Peter explained that they were from different universes.

The above utterance was expressed by Peter when he realized his mistake that caused the damage. He fully realized that he was wrong, and the people around him were affected. The line “It's actually my fault that you're here” shows that Peter understands the existence of Max Dillon and Flint Marko is his fault. Peter messed up Dr. Stranger's spell, which caused the chaos of the universe so that many characters from other universes entered his universe. This can be seen in the statement, which demonstrates an apology strategy that includes the highest level of acknowledgment of responsibility, a full admission of guilt.

B.3. An Explain or Account

EXPL2SM2 // 07.13-07.38

10 Happy Hogan arrives late through the door]

HAPPY HOGAN: It's my My Blip beard. Cause I grew it. In the Blip. It's a Blip beard.

MAY PARKER: I see. Yeah.

6
HAPPY HOGAN: “Ee, e, u... Anyway, the reason I'm late is because this was misplaced at the office. Can you believe it? Because it's enormous. Not the amount, the size. The amount's nice too. They're generous. Pepper Potts said, “Sorry she couldn't be here.””

In the Spider-Man Far From Home movie, Happy Hogan arrives late and apologizes to Peter and May Parker. He compliments May on her new dress and she also comments on his new beard, which he calls his "Blip beard" grown during the five-year period between Infinity War and End Game when half the population was wiped out. Happy seems flustered as he tries to explain why he was delayed, mentioning something large was misplaced at his office. He references the item and an accompanying gift as coming from Pepper Potts, who was unable to attend. May clues into Happy's odd behavior and excuses herself to the kitchen. She tells Peter to greet guests, implying this is some type of celebratory gathering at their home where Happy shows signs of awkwardness around May, hinting at a potential romantic connection forming between the two.

In this utterance expressed by Happy, he explains the situation behind the offense committed. This strategy aims to set the record straight. Happy explained that the reason why he was late was a donation board that was misplaced in his office. Happy acknowledges his lateness and provides a specific reason for it. By stating that the item was misplaced at the office, he admits to an oversight or mistake that caused his delay. This is an acknowledgment of responsibility as he is explaining the cause of his tardiness.

B.4. An Offer of Repair

REPR3SM3 // 43.23-43.36

PETER PARKER: Sir?

4
STEPHEN STRANGE: [stops, sighs and turns around] Now what?

PETER PARKER: “I know this is my mess, and I swear to you that I'll fix it, but I'mma need some help”

In the Spider-Man movie No Way Home, Peter has caused some sort of problem or “mess” that Strange is now helping him to solve. Strange tells Peter to send him

information about the problem immediately so that he can deal with it. However, as Strange turns to leave, Peter stops him and admits that this problem is his own, but he needs help to solve it.

In the utterance above, Peter Parker expressed his mistake by apologizing and taking action to correct the mistake. This is seen in the first part of the statement, "I know this is my mess," serving as an acknowledgment of responsibility and accountability. Peter immediately took responsibility for the problem, realizing that it was his fault and it was his responsibility to deal with it. The second part of the statement, "I swear to you that I will fix it," represents an offer of repair. Peter made a firm commitment to resolving this issue and vowed that he would take the necessary actions to rectify the situation. This shows his willingness to take concrete steps to make improvements. However, the last part of the statement, "but I need help," adds a layer to the offer of repair. Not only does Peter promise to fix the problem, but he also admits that he'll need someone else's help to solve it. This shows humility and recognition that he cannot solve this problem alone. By first taking responsibility, then offering a firm commitment to fix the problem, and finally asking for help, Peter used a combination of apology strategies with offers of repair.

B.5. A Promise of Non-Recurrence

RECU2SM3 // 02.14.13-02.13.31

PETER PARKER: You're gonna forget who I am.

NED LEEDS: What?

MJ: Peter, what are you talking about?

PETER PARKER: *"It's okay... I'm gonna come and find you, and I'll explain everything. I'll make you remember me. It'll be like none of this ever happened. Okay?"*

In the movie *Spider-Man No Way Home*, when Dr. Strange is about to cast a spell so that everyone forgets the events and figures that existed at that time, Peter is honest by saying that MJ will forget who she is. This makes MJ and Ned confused. But Peter calms them down that he will make MJ and Ned remember him and claims that it will be like nothing happened.

This utterance was uttered by Peter Parker who felt guilty that later MJ and Ned would forget who Peter was, he promised to find them, explain everything, and remind them who Peter was. The opening line, "It's okay...", serves as an acknowledgment and potentially an attempt to calm the situation. Peter realized that something had happened that required apology or explanation. The following lines feature Peter's vow not to repeat it are "I'll explain everything.", "I'll make you remember me.", and "It's like this never happened." These statements demonstrate that Peter is committed to improving the situation and ensuring that the problematic event is effectively eliminated or reversed. He promised to take action to restore the previous situation, as if "none of this ever happened." The reassuring tone of "It's OK..." and the closing "Okay?" further strengthen Peter's efforts to introduce amendments and prevent this problem from continuing.

B.6. The Most Dominant of Apology Strategies

The most dominant apology strategy in the *Spider-man Home Trilogy* movie is An Expression of Apology with a total of 90 data. This strategy dominates the apologies in the movies because this movie is about complex relationships and conflicts between

characters. To resolve the conflict, the direct apology strategy An Expression of an Apology is needed to repair the relationship. An apology might be stronger when the one offering it feels the need to do so. This can be seen from Spider-Man/Peter Parker is often sorry for the consequences of his actions as a superhero that end up hurting others. Though, he did not directly take responsibility for those actions because most of the time he is acting out of necessity to save lives and fight villains. Most of the apology strategies that emerge in the Spider-Man Home Trilogy movie are not only used by Spider-Man/Peter Parker but also the other characters. Since the other characters in the movies also commit offenses or mistakes and they apologize to repair the relationship.

The second most frequently used apology strategy is the Acknowledgement of Responsibility with 15 data. The Acknowledgment of Responsibility involves statements that take the blame or admit fault for the infraction or offense. While Spider-Man expresses regret more often, there are some instances in which he directly acknowledges his role in causing harm through his superhero duties and missions. Other characters also perform the Acknowledgment of Responsibility apology strategy, because they realize that they caused the infraction. They can say it at the highest level of full acceptance of blame or even at the lowest level of no acceptance of blame at all.

CONCLUSION

Based on the deep data that has been found and discussed in the previous chapter, researchers found 116 data which are divided into 90 An Expression of an Apology, 15 Acknowledgment of Responsibility, 5 An Explanation or Account, 4 An Offer of Repair, and 2 A Promise of Non-Recurrence. An Expression of an Apology is the dominant type of apology strategy used in this movie because it is usually used by characters who express regret and feel the need to do so. The regret is due to damage or offenses committed in everyday life. Based on the explanation, the different apology strategies in Spider-Man Home Trilogy movies illustrate how characters express their apologies based on specific and different situations.

This research focuses on analyzing apology strategies in Spider-Man Home Trilogy movies. The result of this research can be useful as a reference for research on other apology strategies. Furthermore, university students can utilize this research to add insight or have a better understanding about apology strategies through the findings that have been explained. Therefore, for future research, it is recommended to analyze with a more in-depth focus for example on one character or only on one type of apology strategy. Additionally, exploring apology strategies with other expert theories in this field can be a suggestion for the next research.

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