

# APOLOGY STRATEGIES USED BY THE CHARACTERS IN GINNY AND GEORGIA MOVIE SERIES (2021)

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## APOLOGY STRATEGIES USED BY THE CHARACTERS IN *GINNY AND GEORGIA* MOVIE SERIES (2021)

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### Abstract

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This research examines the apology strategies used by characters in the movie series *Ginny and Georgia* (2021), using Trosborg's (1995) theory of apology strategies. The aim of this research is to categorize some types of apology strategies used and find the most commonly used types within the series. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze characters' utterances in the first season, classifying 74 data of apology strategies into four types: indirect apologies, direct apologies, remedial support, and strategic disarmers. Direct apologies, particularly expressions of regret, appeared as the most frequent strategy, appearing 34 times. This preference for expressing regret reflects the characters' goal of resolving problems explicitly. Strategic Disarmers were the second most frequent, used 18 times to reduce tension or minimize conflicts. Indirect apologies, with the sub-types acknowledgment of responsibility and explanation or account, were less frequent, but showed attempts to excuse or explain actions. Remedial Support strategies, while not frequent, pointed out attempts at repairing relationships with the sub-types expressing concern for hearer and offer of repair. The findings show that the characters in *Ginny and Georgia* use different apology strategies to resolve interpersonal interactions, with a focus on direct and explicit communication. The narrative's emphasis on emotional resolution and transparency is highlighted by its use of direct apology strategies.

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**Keywords:** *Apology Strategies, Ginny and Georgia, Trosborg's Theory.*

## INTRODUCTION

An apology usually expressed for several reasons, such as an admission of wrongdoing, an expression of regret, and often an offer to remedy the situation or a promise not to repeat the mistake. Trosborg (1995) says that an apology is a speaker's attempt to take responsibility for an error that occurred, express regret, and, in some cases, offer reparation or assurance that a similar error will not occur in the future. Thus, an apology functions as a face-saving action that helps maintain harmony in social interactions and shows the speaker's empathy and moral responsibility. An apology is an action aimed at restoring or correcting a situation that has arisen, whether due to a social violation, mistake or negligence. According to Brown & Levinson (1978), apology is a form of action used to overcome face-threatening acts (FTAs), namely actions that have the potential to threaten the face (self-esteem) of the interlocutor. When the speaker makes an apology, the speaker admits that he or she has done something wrong or caused harm, and expresses regret or guilt for the action. Searle (1969) says that, apology is a form of illocutionary act, especially in the category of expressive speech act, an act in which the speaker expresses a certain attitude or feeling towards a situation or situation. There are four types of apology strategies according to Trosborg (1995), namely: 1) Indirect Apologies, 2) Direct Apologies, 3) Remedial Support, 4) Strategic Disarmers. The form and manner of an apology can vary depending on the social context, culture, and the relationship between the speaker and listener. Thus, apologies are an important component in maintaining harmony in social interactions and showing empathy and responsibility for actions that have been taken.

Apology strategies which are commonly seen in everyday conversations also present in various forms of communication, such as in movies or in novel. This research examines apology strategies in Netflix series *Ginny and Georgia* which was directed by James Genn and produced by Blue Ice Pictures, Critical Content, and Dynamic Television. The movie series show the complex relationship between a mother, Georgia Miller, and her daughter, Ginny. After years of moving from place to place, Georgia decided to settle down with her two children, Ginny and her younger brother, Austin, in a town called New England, hoping to provide a stable life for them. The apology strategy can be found in this movie series through the characters' utterances.

This research aims to analyze the speech act strategy of apology in the series *Ginny and Georgia* directed by James Genn using the theory of apology strategies from (Trosborg, 1995).

This research examines the types of apology strategy as well as the most frequently types used by the characters in Ginny and Georgia movie series. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to identify the various forms of apology used by the characters.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In admitting mistakes and expressing regret for wrong actions, a person must make an apology. According to Trosborg (1995), an apology is a speech act that aims to acknowledge a mistake or violation committed, and express regret for the action. In Trosborg's view, an apology is an action to repair social relationships that are disrupted as a result of an offense, by admitting mistakes and expressing empathy towards the person affected. Apologies also reflect the speaker's social awareness and moral responsibility as well as a commitment to restoring balance in social interactions.

Several studies related to apology strategies have been conducted. Such as the study conducted by Silvina & Hartati (2023) entitled “Apology Strategy in Disney and Pixar’s Luca Movie: a Pragmatic Approach” and research conducted by Nabilah (2015) entitled “Apology Strategies Expressed By The Characters In The Proposal Movie”. While those studies also investigated apologizing strategies, there are certain things that distinguish them from previous studies. In addition to the use of different theories, previous studies used movies as a source of research data. Meanwhile, this study uses a movie series as a source of research data.

## **METHODS**

The research approach used in this research is qualitative. According to Cresswell (2009), a qualitative approach focuses on exploratory data collection, analysis and interpretation. The data in this research are collected from the utterances of characters in the movie series Ginny and Georgia, analyzes and classifies the types apology strategies through the utterances of characters, and find out the most frequently type of apology strategies that used in the movie series. This research is descriptive qualitative and conversation analysis, which aims to provide actual and precise description of the investigated phenomenon. The first step to analyze the data is identifying and classifying each apology strategies, second is counting all the total apology strategies, third is interpreting the result, and the last step is drawing conclusion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

After classifying the apology strategies used by the characters in Ginny and Georgia movie series, this research found 74 data. The most frequently of apologies strategies used is Direct Apologies: Expression of Regret 34 times used in the movie series. The other apology strategies are Strategic Disarmers 18 times used in the movie series, Indirect Apologies: Acknowledgment of Responsibility 8 times used, Indirect Apologies: Explanation or Account 6 times used, Direct Apologies: Request for Forgiveness 4 times used, Remedial Support: Expression Concern for Hearer and Offer of Repair 2 times used, Direct Apologies: Offer of Apology and Remedial Support: Promise of Forbearance are not found in the movie series. Below is the table of result analysis of apology strategies.

Table 1. The Result Analysis of Apology Strategies

| No | Apology Strategies | Sub-types                        | Frequency |
|----|--------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1  | Indirect Apologies | Acknowledgment of Responsibility | 8         |
|    |                    | Explanation or Account           | 6         |
| 2  | Direct Apologies   | Expression of Regret             | 34        |
|    |                    | Offer of Apology                 | -         |
|    |                    | Request for Forgiveness          | 4         |

|                   |                     |                                  |           |
|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|-----------|
| 3                 | Remedial Support    | Expression Concern<br>for Hearer | 2         |
|                   |                     | Promise of<br>Forbearance        | -         |
|                   |                     | Offer of Repair                  | 2         |
| 4                 | Strategic Disarmers |                                  | 18        |
| <b>TOTAL DATA</b> |                     |                                  | <b>74</b> |

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### **Indirect Apologies**

Indirect Apologies with the sub-types Acknowledgment of Responsibility which the apologizer chooses to accept responsibility for the mistake, he or she may admit the mistake implicitly or explicitly, with varying degrees of acknowledgement of the mistake (Trosborg, 1995). The apologizer does not apologize explicitly with words such as "*sorry*" or "*I'm sorry*," but uses other means that still show awareness of the mistake or its impact.

**(1) IAAR3-GGS1E2** // 43:15-43:27

NORAH: "So we went to, like, three different stores, and finally found the right shade."

GINNY: "Why?"

ABBY: "Cause the cosmetic industry's racist."

GINNY: "No, I mean, why would you do that?"

NORAH: "Oh, we felt bad. You're our friend."

Norah and Abby meet Ginny at her house. They both told Ginny that they had finally found a make-up shade that suited Ginny's skin. Norah gave the make up to Ginny, but Ginny asked why they were looking for make up for her. They admitted that they felt guilty as Ginny's friends who at that time tried to make up Ginny with a shade of make-up that didn't match Ginny's skin color.

The utterance underlined above is an example of Indirect Apologies: Acknowledgment of Responsibility from Trosborg theory. Norah did not directly say, "I'm sorry," or any other formal apology phrase. Instead, she expresses feelings of guilt as a form of indirect acknowledgment that their actions may have had emotional consequences for Ginny. This is in accordance with the indirect apology element in Trosborg's theory, where responsibility is conveyed through feelings of self-blame.

**(2) IAAR5-GGSIE6** // 00:30-00:35

CYNTHIA: "Zach required a stitch! Who knows when he'll next hold a tennis racket?"

GEORGIA: "This is my fault."

Cynthia was not having it and explained about her son, Zach, who was stabbed in the hand with a sharp pencil by Georgia's son, Austin. Zach's hand had to be stitched up because of the incident. Regarding the incident, Georgia as a single mom who was quite busy working, accepted that she was at fault for perhaps not paying enough attention to Austin's behavior, which led Austin to hurt his friend, Zach.

Georgia's apology is not an explicit, "I apologize for what Austin did." Instead, she expresses the self-blame with an implicit admission of responsibility in the form of "This is my fault." by accepting that her shortcomings as a parent may be the cause of Austin's behavior. This strategy is a form of indirect apology that still acknowledges the negative impact of her actions personally or through her son.

### **Direct Apologies**

According to Trosborg (1995), direct apologies are an apology strategy in which the apologizer explicitly states an apology or regret for the wrong that has been done. Direct

apologies are the most direct and explicit form of apology, often using words or phrases such as "I'm sorry." or "Pardon me."

(3) DAER11-GGS1E4 // 04:01-04:26

GINNY: "Why are you friends with Press? He's such a douche."

HUNTER: "Press stuck it out with me when I was on Adderall, and I was, like, a total zombie for three years, which is why we should start with "Adderall Brains. It has a... It has a message. Sorry. I'm sorry. We've been talking about this all night."

GINNY: "It's OK. I know Battle of the Bands is important to you."

Ginny asked why Hunter was friends with Press, who she thought wasn't a good friend. Hunter explained that he was friends with Press because Press was there when he had an illness that required him to take Adderall. Then Hunter said that the opening song for his band that would perform later had to use a song called "Adderall Brains" in a raised voice. Realizing that Hunter immediately apologized to Ginny.

Hunter uses the explicit phrase "Sorry. I'm sorry" to convey regret directly. In Trosborg's theory, Expression of Regret is a form of apology that focuses on expressing feelings of guilt or regret for certain actions. Hunter's words reflect the realization that he may have made Ginny feel uncomfortable by discussing a topic in a raised tone.

(4) DAER20-GGS1E6 // 44:44-44:54

SOPHIE: "Max, I don't have time for this."

MAXINE: "I screwed up at Halloween, and I'm really sorry." SOPHIE: "OK."

After class, Maxine saw Sophie standing in the hallway right in front of her locker having a conversation with someone. Seeing the person leave, Maxine approached Sophie and asked her how she was. Then, Maxine apologizes and actually admits her guilt about what she did on Halloween. That night Maxine tries to tell people about her relationship with Sophie, but Sophie is uncomfortable with it and gets mad at Maxine.

Maxine explicitly uses the phrase "I'm really sorry" to convey regret to Sophie. In Trosborg's theory, Expression of Regret is a form of direct apology where the offender clearly expresses guilt and regret for a specific action. The phrase "I screwed up at Halloween" shows that Maxine specifically acknowledges her mistake on Halloween night.



(5) DAER22-GGS1E7 // 32:44-32:48

HUNTER: "I'm so sorry about Brodie. I know he's my friend and all."

Ginny's friends celebrated her birthday with a house party. They played a game of throwing balls into plastic cups. It was at this point that Brodie wished Ginny a happy birthday. However, Brodie also said something bad as a joke to Ginny. Hunter confronted Brodie and then followed Ginny who left first because she was upset. Hunter expressed his regret for not being able to prevent Brodie from saying bad things to Ginny.

Hunter explicitly uses the phrase "I'm so sorry" to convey his regret to Ginny. In Trosborg's theory, Expression of Regret is a form of direct apology that emphasizes the expression of guilt or regret for certain actions. In this context, Hunter apologizes directly for the behavior of his friend, Brodie, who has hurt Ginny's feelings.

### **Remedial Support**

Trosborg (1995) stated that Remedial Support with the sub-types Expressing Concern For Hearer shows attention to the victim's condition. This strategy can help create a more empathetic relationship between the apologizer and the victim. The apologizer can say "*Are you okay with that?*" which involves expressing sympathy or concern for the impact of the apologizer's actions on the victim.

(6) RSECH-1GGS1E1 // 31:10-31:21

NORAH: "Abby. Come on. Don't ruin it."

JORDAN: "No pants, no dare."

ABBY: "I'm not taking my jeans off. OK?"

JORDAN: "Damn, chill." NORAH: "Abs? You OK?"

ABBY: "No, it's just stupid."

On the night of the school's Sophomore Sleepover, Abby, Norah Jordan, and Brodie preferred to stay in the classroom instead of continuing the night in the hall. They play a game of truth or dare while drinking alcoholic beverages. Jordan dares Abby and Brodie to swap full outfits. But Abby immediately refused the dare because she felt that her body was not ideal in the eyes of people. Abby looked upset about it. Norah tried to convince Abby to accept Jordan's

dare. But Abby looked uncomfortable doing the dare. Then Norah asked about Abby's condition.

In Trosborg's theory, Expressing Concern for Hearer is a form of remedial support that aims to show concern for the feelings or conditions of the person who feels disturbed or uncomfortable. Norah's response "Abs? You OK?" directly shows attention to Abby's emotional condition after Abby looks upset and refuses.

### Strategic Disarmers

According to Trosborg (1995), this apology strategy aims to reduce tension or potential conflict in the conversation. This apology strategy functions as a softener preparing for requests, complaints, and refusals.

(7) SD11-GGSIE6 // 01:58-02:02

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GINNY: "I'm sorry. Are you suggesting the nine-year-old deserved to be stabbed through the hand with a pencil?"

Austin was suspended for stabbing Zach's hand with a sharp pencil and was required to go to therapy. But Georgia refused to let Austin go to therapy and there was nothing to worry about because Georgia thought that Zach deserved such treatment because Zach had been bad to Austin. At that moment Ginny said sorry and disagreed with Georgia's opinion that Ginny thought a nine-year-old child did not deserve to be stabbed in the hand with a sharp pencil.

Ginny opens her statement with the phrase "I'm sorry," which serves as a tool to soften her disagreement or rejection of Georgia's statement. In Strategic Disarmers theory, offenders often use apologies to reduce the tension or emotional impact of the rejection to be delivered. Ginny uses this phrase to show that she understands Georgia's position, but still wants to convey her disagreement in a polite way.

(8) SD13-GGSIE6 // 09:58-10:03

GEORGIA: "Maddie?"

MADDIE: "Sorry, didn't mean to wake you. Thought maybe you had some sleeping pills?"

Georgia, who had not yet fallen asleep, was surprised by Maddie who suddenly opened Georgia's bedroom door and entered her room without knocking. Knowing this, Georgia

immediately turned on her desk lamp and asked why Maddie was in her room. Maddie said she was sorry and didn't mean to wake Georgia from her sleep and then asked if Georgia had some sleeping pills.

Maddie begins her statement with the phrase “Sorry, didn't mean to wake you” before making a request to get sleeping pills from Georgia. In Strategic Disarmers, this element serves to ease any potential tension or displeasure that may arise from a non-ideal situation, such as waking someone up in the middle of the night without knocking. This apology aims to create a more positive situation before making the main request.

(9) SD15-GGS1E6 // 37:52-38:01

GEORGIA: “You can't stay here anymore. <sup>12</sup> *I'm sorry. I've tried. I've really tried. You have no idea. And I can't afford to look after you both.*”

Maddie stayed at Georgia's place and did as she liked. Maddie gave baby Ginny a bath and then left her in the bath, while she was busy painting her nails on the bed. Georgia got upset with Maddie who thought it could have caused Ginny to drown due to lack of attention. Georgia couldn't stand Maddie's reckless behavior anymore and apologized for refusing Maddie's request to stay with her.

Georgia used the phrase “I'm sorry” before refusing Maddie to continue living in her place. In Strategic Disarmers, apologies are often used to soften the emotional impact of a refusal or request that could potentially hurt the other person's feelings. Georgia realizes that telling Maddie to leave is an action that might be offensive, so she uses an apology as a way to reduce tension.

### **The Most Frequently Apology Strategies**

The most frequently used apology strategy in the Ginny and Georgia movie series is Direct Apology, specifically Expression of Regret, which appears 34 times. This is in accordance with the trend in previous studies, such as those conducted by Silvina & Hartati (2023) on Luca movie and Nabilah (2015) on The Proposal movie, in which direct apology dominates due to its explicit characteristic in addressing interpersonal conflicts. The use of Trosborg's theory highlights its firmness in categorizing apology strategies, especially the emphasis on direct forms in repairing relationships. The implications of these findings suggest

that explicit direct apologies with the sub-types expressions of regret are the preferred strategy by characters for addressing and resolving conflict.

## CONCLUSION

This research has analyzed the apology strategies used by characters in the Ginny and Georgia movie series, based on Trosborg's theory. The purpose of this research is to explain the types of apology strategies and to find the most frequently of apology strategies used by characters in Ginny and Georgia movie series. The primary data used in this research are movie transcript. The research design used is a qualitative descriptive method that explains and analyzes based on Trosborg theory, which are Indirect Apologies, Direct Apologies, Remedial Support, and Strategic Disarmers. Based on the data that has been found and discussed in the previous chapter, researcher found 74 data which are divided into 34 Direct Apologies: Expression of Regret, 18 Strategic Disarmers, 8 Indirect Apologies: Acknowledgment of Responsibility, 6 Indirect Apologies: Explanation or Account, 4 Direct Apologies: Request for Forgiveness, 2 Remedial Support: Expression of Concern for Hearer, and 2 Remedial Support: Offer of Repair. Direct Apologies: Expression of Regret is the type that most frequently used in this movie series because it is usually used by characters who express regret and feel the need to do so. This study was limited to the first season of the series Ginny and Georgia. This restriction may have excluded additional data from next seasons that could have provided further insight into the apology strategies used by the characters.

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