Apology Response Strategies Performed by EFL Learners

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Abstract

This research aims at scrutinizing apology response (AR) strategies performed by EFL learners in one of reputable universities in Indonesia. The research employed descriptive qualitative method in analyzing the data to figure out categories of the AR strategies performed and also to describe the factors which influenced the realization of AR strategies. Samples were selected with purposive sampling technique from 20 students in the final semester of English Department who were ranked as the Top 10 GPA in two available programs, i.e. English education and English literature. The technique in collecting the data used oral discourse completion task (DCT) that contained participants' responses on the given apology situations. In general, the results showed that the four main AR strategies were performed by all the twenty participants with, specifically; 27 out of 33 extended strategies were detected. In detailed, the possible reasons which influence the realization of utterances produced by participants were significant roles of power, relation, setting of situations, and the degree of mistakes which correlated the participants with the addressees.
Keywords: Apology Response Strategies; Interlanguage Pragmatics; EFL Learners.

A. INTRODUCTION

Among pragmatics aspects, speech acts have become very crucial to be understood by learners of English as a second or foreign language to be aware of the ways particular expressions should be uttered in English. Austin, the father of pragmatics, defines speech act as an utterance and the "total situation in which the utterance is issued" (Thomas, 1996: 28). Another linguist, John R. Searle, has then mentioned five basic types of action which are mostly performed in speaking, i.e. representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations (Trosborg, 1994). Among the speech acts, apology, which falls under the expressive type, had gained a good deal of attention among many practitioners and linguists due to its vital social function and most commonly used in many societies (Cordella-Masini in Adrefiza and Jones, 2013).

Researches on apologies have proliferated in pragmatics study, yet most of them largely concentrated on Western language and society (Nureddeen, 2007). Even more, very few studies

have been conducted on apology response (AR) strategies in both Western and Eastern contexts (c.f. Owen, 1983; Holmes, 1995, and Robinson, 2004). A research on AR strategies conducted by Yao Chunlin in 2013 tried to compare and differentiate apology strategies and apology response strategies used by Chinese speakers. The study focused on gender differences in apology frequencies, apology strategies, and apology response strategies. The findings revealed that there were no differences in apology frequencies dealing with the gender issue. Yet, slightly different findings were shown in the areas of apology and apology response strategies where men preferred the IFID (Illocutionary Force Indicating Device) strategies for both while women tended to be more polite by taking the responsibility when apologizing and accepting most of the apologies. Another impressive research was done by Adrefiza and Jones (2013), where they tried to investigate the differences of apology response strategies used by Australian English and Bahasa Indonesia speakers. Their study ultimately focused on the gender and cultural issues. The results showed that the AR strategies in both languages were very complex and no gender differences. In addition, Bahasa Indonesia speakers tended to be more direct compared to their Australian counterparts.

In Indonesia, English plays more as a foreign language than as a second language since it is mostly used only for official and educational purposes instead of also used for the casual daily communication. The hypothesis might arise that most English learners in Indonesia might still be influenced by their customs and L1 linguistic features in performing apology response strategies.

This research takes different points of AR strategies other than mentioned in the previous researches. First, this study focuses on ways of Indonesian speakers perform AR strategies in English. Second, it does not count gender as the contributive variable; yet, it largely focuses on the issue of the realization of AR strategies performed by students of English Department in one of reputable universities in Indonesia. Thus, this research attempts to figure out AR strategies performed by the participants and also to scrutinize factors influence the AR strategies performed.

B. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Interlanguage Pragmatics

Interlanguage pragmatics is the notion used by Selinker (1972) to explain the gap between the L1 and the target language that will help the researcher in scrutinizing the English learners in Indonesia in performing the target language. Interlanguage solely focuses on adult

learners or those who have passed the puberty stage as they cannot be expected to employ the language acquisition device (LAD) as it fossilizes—learners interlanguage stops developing permanently (Tarone, 2006).

Generally speaking, interlanguage pragmatics refers to the gap between learner's L1 and the target language (L2) being learned which might be caused by the transfer of knowledge due to the norms originating from the learner's native language. Kasper and Rose (2002: 5) define interlanguage pragmatics as the ways of L2 learners develop their ability to understand and perform action in the target language. The latter definition is quite relevant to the purpose of this study where it aims to examine how the L2 learners perform apology response strategies in the target language.

Apology Strategies and Apology Response Strategies

The fundamental requirement of a successful apology is that it should carry genuine feelings (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2006). According to Leech (in Trosborg, 1994: 373), apology is a convivial act in which the goal is to maintain harmony between speaker and hearer. Searle himself stated that one who apologizes for doing an unpleasant act expresses regret at having done the unpleasant thing which means that the apology act may take place only if the speaker believes that his prior unpleasant act has caused an infraction which affected another who now deserves his apology (Istifci, 2009). Some experts have proposed strategies in apologizing (e.g. Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1989; Holmes, 1990; and Trosborg, 1994). Holmes provided four categories of apology strategies, they are (1) Explicit expression of apology which includes an offer of apology (IFID), an expression of regret, and a request for forgiveness; (2) Explanation or account; (3) Acknowledgement of responsibility which covers accepting the blame, expressing self deficiency, recognizing H as deserving apology, expressing lack of intent, and offering repair; and (4) Promise of forbearance (in Qorina, 2012).

Compared to apology strategy, researches on apology response (AR) strategies are still considered as very few (Chunlin, 2013). Even so, there are actually few scholars who have included the ARs in their studies. Holmes (1995) suggested that AR strategies could be manifested through an amount of ways from silence to various types of linguistic expressions. She categorized AR strategies into *Accept* (That's OK), *Acknowledge* (That's OK, but please don't do it again), *Evade* (Let's make it another time), and *Reject* (silent) (Adrefiza and Jones, 2013). Slightly similar, Robinson (2004) has also identified identical categories, but, Robinson preferred the term '*Absolution*' instead of '*Acknowledge*' as used by Holmes. Robinson

concluded that absolution was mostly preferred by the native speakers as a way of responding to an apology and the acknowledgement was often reflected through a non-verbal response like shrugging which is considered as a warning or threat. Adrefiza and Jones (2013) attempted to compare AR strategy adopted by Australian English and Indonesian speakers which put more details on gender issue. Basically, Adrefiza and Jones still implement AR strategy principles as drawn by Holmes (1995), however, they added some extended strategies as sub categories for each of the main categories drawn based on the Chen and Yang (2010) research on Compliment Response strategies used by Chinese speakers. The combination of those two studies has resulted in more specific classification of AR strategies used here.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

Purposive sampling technique was used where twenty students of final semester in the English Department ranked as Top 10 GPA in each program, i.e. English education and English literature were selected as the participants. They were assumed to have above average knowledge of English in terms of their linguistics and pragmatics knowledge compared to their juniors or common people, so that there would not be too much gap between the researcher's expectation and the actual conditions. Instrument used was oral DCT as it is a better method compared to the written one (Yuan, 2001) and also DCT is considered as an appropriate instrument for interlanguage research as it can be shortly implemented to the different cultural backgrounds of the participants (Nelson, Carson, Al Batal, and El Bakary, 2002 in Nurani, 2009).

The DCT used was open-item verbal response with a more specific on the situational background provided (Billmayer and Verghese, 2000 in Nurani, 2009). Eight apology situations of DCT were based on Blum-Kulka & Olsthain's format (Masita, 2004) which was then modified into the Indonesian context. The recorded data were then transcribed and classified into main and extended categories. The analysis was done by counting the percentage of each AR strategy, comparing them, and then interpreting the data found based on the principles of descriptive qualitative approach.

D. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data showed that more than one apology response strategy were identified by the participants in a situation since the one who sends the apology may not only ask for apology

once, but more to ensure that the addressee has really forgiven him/her. Hence, flow of the negotiation on each situation by each speaker is crucial to be elaborated. Thus, in making the analysis of the main and extended apology response strategies, first response and final response of the participants were elaborated. The first response strategies are observed to find out the very first and spontaneous utterances produced by each speaker in different situation, while the final responses are observed to see whether or not there are changes after the process of the negotiation.

The Distribution of Main Apology Response Strategies

As the preliminary general conclusion, we might say that most of the participants in both programs, the English Education and Literature students, tend to directly accept the apologies sent to them as the *Acceptance (AC)* seemed to be the most predominant strategy used, shown by its highest percentage in both first and final response (39.4% and 47.5% respectively), while *Acknowledgement (AK)* was the least one based on their total numbers observed with 8.75% and 10.6% for first and final responses respectively. In addition, the pattern of changes on the first and final responses performed by all the complete twenty students in both programs were also quite similar where the *Acceptance (AC),* and *Rejection (RJ)* were arising from 13.75% for the first response to 24.4% in the final while the *Evasion (EV)* was falling from 38.1% in the first to 17.5% in the final response. What could be inferred here was that the participants seemed to be aware in using the strategies. This conclusion appeared to be exceedingly subjective, yet, with the distribution pattern shown where none of the strategies achieved above fifty percent, the participants' knowledge in applying apology response strategies seemed to be adequate enough in giving responses in different situations.

The Distribution of Extended Apology Response Strategies

After analyzing the main apology responses, next is to break them down into the more specific extended strategies. In giving judgments and classifications of which extended strategies performed by the participants, three different means were utilized to assure the validity and reliability. First, to consider choice of words, emotion expressed, and tone of the participants' voices in the recordings. Second, to deliver a brief interview to the participants after the oral DCT was played. Basically, the interview asked one crucial question to the speakers, why they responded in the way they had uttered in each situation. Third, to involve third party raters to give appraisals to the transcriptions and analyses done.

After being compiled from the overall twenty participants, *Dismissal* and *Absolution* took the highest percentages not only in the *Acceptance (AC)* but also among the other extended strategies in the other main strategies with total forty five and forty three appearances respectively. In the *Acceptance (AC)* alone, from nine categories as drawn by Chen and Yang (2010), it was found that the participants realized Dismissal (32.5%), Absolution (30.9%), Request (20.9%), Advice/Suggestion (7.2%), Expressing Empathy (4.3%), Thanking (2.2%), Questioning/Surprise (1.4%), Formal (0.7%), and *Expressing Emotion* (0%).

Moving to the *Acknowledgement (AK)* strategy where *Warning* took its superiority over the other six extended strategies with 48% followed by *Advice/Suggestion* (19.4%), 12.9% for both *Absolution* and *Negation*, and *Evaluating* (6.4%) and two strategies were absence, i.e. *Formal Plus* and *Expressing Emotion*.

Meanwhile, in Evasion (EV), *Questioning/Surprise* seemed to be the most favorite extended strategy used by the twenty participants with 58.43% followed by Request (19.1%), Deflecting/Explaining (17.98%), Advice/Suggestion (3.37%), and Thanking (1.12%). Quite similar to the previous two analyses in this section, *Expressing Emotion* seemed to be the only extended strategy which was absence in the data.

Last but not least is the *Rejection (RJ)* where eleven extended strategies belong here. With 32.8%, *Request* had the highest position. It had quite distant with the other ten extended strategies in which *Evaluating* (19.7%), *Refusal* (16.4%), both *Advice/Suggestion* and *Warning/Threatening* were with 8.2%, *Asking for Compensation* (6.6%), Expressing *Emotion* (4.9%), *Swearing* (1.6%), *Non-Apology "Sorry"* (1.6%) with two extended strategies were absence here, i.e. *Blaming* and *Thanking*, with not even a single utterance found which represented these two strategies.

In total, twenty seven extended strategies were performed by both the English Education and English Literature students. The six missing extended strategies were *Expressing Emotion* in *Acceptance (AC)*, *Formal Plus* and *Expressing Emotion* in *Acknowledgement (AK)*, *Expressing Emotion* in *Evasion (EV)*, and *Blaming* and *Thanking* in *Rejection (RJ)*.

The Realizations of Apology Response Strategies

In *Situation 1* where a professor said sorry to the participant as he forgot to return your term paper that day because he hadn't finished reading it yet, sixteen out of the twenty participants were consistent with the same apology responses in the first and final expressions in only one turn of conversation, i.e. in *Acceptance (AC)*: *Absolution* (5), *Dismissal* (4), and

Request (3); in *Evasion (EV)*: *Deflecting, Explaining*, and *Questioning* appeared once; and *Advice of Rejection (RJ)* also once. On the other hand, the remaining four participants performed two different extended strategies in the in the first and second turn.

Examples of AR strategies in Situation 1

<u>**Speaker N**</u>

The Professor: Well, N, I haven't had time to read your paper yet. So, sorry I can't give it back to you today.

First Response: ***Well, well, okay, Sir. Then, I will come back to you. Umm when should I come to you again?*** (Absolution of AC)

….

Final Response: ***Well, okay. Next week? Deal.*** (Absolution of AC)

<u>**Speaker J**</u>

The Professor: J, I haven't had time to read your paper yet. So, sorry I can't give it back to you today.

First Response: ***How come sir? I have made my paper.. ya..for several night.*** (Questioning of EV)

….

Final Response: ***But you have made promise to me and ya may be you have to consider me as your student so it's your job.*** (Evaluating of RJ)

The phenomena should tell us that most participants tended to accept the apology and felt that they could not demand much to the professor though the situation was actually pretty disappointing for them. This statement is also supported by the result of the interview where most participants felt that they were in the lower position and did not want to demand a lot to the professor as they would still need him a lot in the future. However, there was one in common that had been requested by the participants at the end of the talk which was rescheduling the meeting with the professor.

In *Situation 2* where a junior apologized for being forgotten to bring the participant's book he borrowed which he had promised to return that day, thirteen out of the twenty participants were consistent with the same responses in the first and final expressions with *Rejection (RJ)*: *Request* appeared 3 times and *Suggestion, Warning*, and *Refusal* were all once. The next was *Acceptance (AC)* with 2 *Absolution* and both once *Dismissal* and *Request*; and *Evasion (EV)* with one appearance for *Explaining, Request*, and *Questioning*. The remaining

seven participants shift their mind in responding the Situation 2 as the examples follows:

Examples of AR strategies in Situation 2

> **Speaker A**
>
> The Junior: I'm really sorry, I forgot your book. I had many things to do this morning.
>
> First Response: *I need that book right now. How about I go to your boarding house and take it?* (Suggestion of RJ)
>
> ….
>
> Final Response: *After the class? Oh my God! I think I need that book now! How about I'll take it and you can just wait here and I will go to your boarding house? Is it okay?* (Suggestion of RJ)
>
> ---
>
> **Speaker B**
>
> The Junior: I'm really sorry, I forgot your book. I had many things to do this morning.
>
> First Response: *Oh, really? But, I I have to bring my book for my lecture today. I have a lecture GMD. So, you didn't you didn't bring my book?* (Questioning of EV)
>
> ….
>
> Rina: *Can you take it now?* (Request of RJ)

Overall, it seemed that the participants were dared enough to reject the apology from the junior. In the broader sense, sixteen out of the twenty participants responded this apology situation with pretty high tone that strongly expressed disappointment though they used quite varies strategies of AR. Moreover, the interviews at the data gathering had also explained that in this situation, the participants tended to use high tone, strong words, and dare to request and reprimand the junior as they were in the higher position.

Situation 3 was about a staff manager who apologized for keeping the participant waiting for half an hour for a job interview because he was called to an unexpected meeting. The apology responses appeared in this situation were quite unique since all the twenty participants seemed to have a general convention to give only one constant response. *Acceptance (AC)* appeared as the most superior strategy here with eight *Dismissal*, eight *Request*, and two *Absolution*, while the remaining two were completed by *Questioning* of *Evasion (EV)*.

Examples of AR strategies in Situation 3

> **Speaker T**
>
> The Staff: T, we do apologize for keeping you waiting as the meeting had just finished.
>
> First Response: *It's okay, Sir. I don't mind.* (Dismissal of AC)

...

Final Response: ***It's no problem I wait for you.*** (Dismissal of AC)

Speaker M

The Staff: M, we do apologize for making you waiting as the meeting had just finished.

First Response: ***Well, okay fine.*** (Absolution of AC)

Final Response: ***That's fine.*** (Absolution of AC)

The superiority of *Acceptance (AC)* seemed to be influenced by position of the participants where they were a job applicant that needed the job. In addition, the interviews conducted at the end of the data gathering sessions had also showed that they preferred to be polite and avoided to deliver protest or complaint in that formal situation because they wanted to give good first impressions to the staff manager though actually they were quite annoyed with the situation.

In *Situation 4* where a waiter in the restaurant where the participant was having dinner apologized for bringing the wrong menu after half an hour waiting, 11 participants had different responses in the first and final comments. It means only nine out of the twenty participants expressed constant responses in the first and final expressions, i.e. in 3 *Request* and 1 *Evaluating of Rejection (RJ)*; 2 *Absolution of Acceptance (AC)*; one *Suggestion* and one *Warning of Acknowledgement (AK)*, and 1 *Deflecting of Evasion.*

Examples of AR strategies in Situation 4

Speaker H

The Waiter: I'm terribly sorry for this inconvenience. We will change it right away. While waiting, you may enjoy this menu for free.

First Response: ***It's okay, everybody makes error.*** (Warning of AK)

….

Final Response: ***please don't do it again because somebody could be angry because of this inconvenience.***(Warning of AK)

Speaker N

The Waiter: I'm terribly sorry for this inconvenience. We will change it right away. While waiting, you may enjoy this menu for free.

First Response: ***Well, that's, I did not order this menu, I ordered seafood.*** (Explaining of EV)

….

> Final Response: ***Do not do some kind of this mistake again!*** (Warning of AK)

If we go deeper, the distribution of AR strategies in *Situation 4* were actually quite moderate though actually the very last apology responses showed that most of the participants, i.e. twelve, preferred to reject the apology uttered by the waiter. This moderation could be influenced by the strategy used by the waiter where he did not only send an apology but also offered compensation to the participants with a extra free of charge food.

Slightly similar to the phenomena in *Situation 4*, nine out of the twenty participants also expressed constant responses in the first and final expressions in *Situation 5* with 2 *Request* and 2 *Evaluating of Rejection (RJ)*, 2 *Questioning* and 1 *Deflecting of Evasion (EV)*, and 1 *Questioning of Acceptance (AC)* and also 1 for *Warning of Acknowledgement.* Here, the participants had to respond an apology delivered by their notorious unpunctual friend who came late again to do a joint paper with the participant whilst the due date was the day after that day. That differentiates *Situation 5* to the preceding in that here the relation between the participants and the addressee was in equal position as they were partner in the group discussion.

Examples of AR strategies in Situation 5

Speaker D The Friend: So sorry, I have a lot of stuffs to do. Fiuh. So, how far are we? First Response: ***I think I also same with you, I am a student, I also have another activity but you have done the same wrong in many times.*** (Evaluating of RJ) …. Final Response: ***I think I should reconsider whether you can join my own paper our own paper or not.*** (Evaluating of RJ)
Speaker C The Friend: So sorry, I have a lot of stuffs to do. Fiuh. So, how far are we? First Response: ***Ohhh, what do you think? What time is it now? And you just arrived here?*** (Questioning of EV) …. Final Response: ***Ohh yeah okay. Then sit down.*** (Absolution of AC)

There were many reasons given by the participants in explaining the domination of *Rejection (RJ)*. Most of the participants actually did not completely reject the apology. There

were only four participants who ended the conversation in this situation by asking the friend to leave the group and refuse to put his name on the assignment sheet as the member of the group, while the remaining sixteen still accepted him as the group member with some requirements like doing the rest of the group work or asking some food and drinks as the compensation of his mistake.

Again, in *Situation 6* where the participant's motorcycle was accidentally hit by another rider in the campus parking area, nine out of the twenty participants produced constant responses in their first and final expressions of the conversations where 2 for both *Expressing Empathy* and *Request* and 1 *Absolution of Acceptance (AC)*, 2 *Questioning* and 1 *Advice of Evasion (EV)*, and 1 *Absolution Plus of Acknowledgement (AK)*. The relation gap between the participants and the addressee seemed to guide them to just accept the apology from the rider as they did not know each other. Moreover, the participants also thought that the particular accident was often happened in the public places that it was unnecessary to make it as a big problem.

However, we could not also just ignore the higher power owned by the participants, as the side who were suffered, had also avoided them to directly respond the apology, yet they just asked the rider to bring their vehicle right on its prior position. In fact, this higher position had also given them courage just to reject the apology yet asked the rider for compensation like repairing the scratch on their vehicle.

Examples of AR strategies in Situation 6

Speaker H
The Rider: Oh sorry, Man. I didn't mean it at all.
First Response: ***Please, Man! Don't harm yourself!*** (Advice of EV)
….
Final Response: ***It could be dangerous for the others.*** (Advice of EV)
Speaker G
The Rider: Oops, Sorry sorry sorry. I didn't mean it at all.
First Response: ***Excuse me! Look, there is a scratch on my motorcycle.*** (Deflecting of EV)
….
Final Response: ***Umm I think you can help me to fix the scratch.*** (Asking for Compensation of RJ)

Conversely, in *Situation 7* where the participant's friend offended him/her seriously during a group discussion meeting; but soon after the meeting ended, he apologized to the participant for what he had done; eleven out of the twenty participants were consistent with the same responses in their first and final expressions, i.e. *Acceptance (AC)*: 4 *Dismissal* and one for each *Absolution, Advice, Expressing Empathy,* and *Thanking*; *Acknowledgement (AK)*: one for *Negation Plus* and *Warning*; *Rejection*: 1 *Refusal* . This situation actually had quite similar power and relation to those captured at *Situation 5*. However, the sensitivity rises higher here since the addressee had previously hurt the participants' feelings with his words in the meeting.

Examples of AR strategies in Situation 7

<u>**Speaker F**</u> The Friend: Well, F, I'm sorry for the bad situation during the discussion. Seriously, I did that for the good of our group. First Response: ***Yes, it doesn't matter. But, actually you have broke my heart but just a little.*** (Negation Plus of AK) …. Final Response: ***Yes, it doesn't matter. You said that it is for the better of our group. It doesn't matter.*** (Negation Plus of AK)
<u>**Speaker L**</u> The Friend: Well, L, I'm sorry for the bad situation during the discussion. Seriously, I did that for the good of our group. First Response: ***For the good of our group? But, do you really think that it is necessary to insult me like that?*** (Questioning of EV) …. Final Response: ***Umm give me some more time to think about it, okay? Because it seriously hurt me.*** (Expressing Emotion of RJ)

There were two big screens that could be drawn here. On the one hand, nearly nine participants could accept the apology with no conditions as they realized that this kind of harsh debate often occurred in a meeting situation. Moreover, they also understood that they had to be professional in the meeting and could not include personal feeling in this kind of situation. On the other hand, the other participants seemed to include the personal feelings and dignity as proven by the number of *Acknowledgement (AK)* and *Rejection (RJ)* which give a message that they were completely hurt with what was going on during the meeting.

In the very last situation, *Situation 8*, a public setting as performed in *Situation 6* was again played here. The participants were accidentally hit by another passenger's bag in a bus when he was about to put it off from his shoulder. The consistent responses found here were *Acceptance (AC)*: *Absolution* and *Dismissal* (5) and *Advice* (1); *Acknowledgement (AK)*: 1 for *Warning*, *Absolution Plus*, and *Advice*; and 1 *Request of Evasion (EV)*. The remaining 5 participants change their responses during the negotiation.

Examples of AR strategies in Situation 8

<u>**Speaker Q**</u> The Passenger: Oh, I'm so sorry. Are you okay? First Response: ***Yeah, I'm okay. No problem, Sir.*** (Dismissal of AC) …. Final Response: ***Yeah, I'm sure.*** (Dismissal of AC)
<u>**Speaker G**</u> The Passenger: Oops, I'm so sorry. Are you okay? First Response: ***Oh yeah, I'm okay. But, you can take your bag on the place up there.*** (Advice of AK) …. Final Response: ***It's alright. Everything is alright.*** (Absolution of AC)

The participants thought that the incident was quite normally happened in public transportations. Therefore, it should not be considered as a big problem and also most of them had no problem to let the passenger sitting next to them after the incident.

Overall, *Acceptance (AC)* and *Rejection (RJ)* dominate the AR strategies performed by the participants. An interesting fact shown is that in some situations the participants would first perform *Questioning* of *Evasion (EV)* before giving the final responses. Most *Evasion (EV)* would then turn to *Acceptance (AC)* and *Rejection (RJ)*.

Significant Factors behind the Realizations

The relation between professor-students in Situation 1 has actually similar characteristics with the one in Situation 3, i.e. staff manager-job applicant. Here, the participants are considered as those who have lower position than the addressees have. In terms of power, the participants could also be classified as the inferior side as they find themselves producing polite utterances and tend to accept the apology sent by the addressees. This low-inferior status has

made the *Acceptance (AC)* came as the highest AR strategy used.

Similarly, the domination of *Acceptance (AC)* was also shown in Situation 6 and Situation 8. Here, the relation between the participants and addressees are actually in the equal position, yet the participants have actually superior power since they are the ones who are suffered. The emergence of *Acceptance (AC)* domination is mostly affected by the setting of the incident where both situations happened in the public places, i.e. campus and public transportation, and they have no idea about who the addresses actually are. In addition, the participants thought that such kinds of incidents commonly happened in the public settings that make them unnecessary to make them as big problems.

When the participants were in the higher positions, they would tend to accept the apologies when the relation with the addressee was close enough like in Situation 2, i.e. senior-junior relation. It happens because they prefer to maintain the good friendship with the addressees though they are actually quite disappointed with the situation happened. The response would turn to *Rejection (RJ)* when their higher positions were followed by a distant with the addressee as in Situation 4, i.e. waiter-customer relation. Here, the participants think that they are customers that demand good and professional services as they deserve to have both. Thus, they choose to find other places that could serve them well.

An interesting phenomenon was shown by the responses in Situation 5 and 7. In both situations, the power and relation between the participants and addressees were actually equal, yet the responses produced were very different. In Situation 5 the participants tended to reject while in Situation 7 tended to accept. The difference could be influenced by the degree of the mistakes made by the addressee. In Situation 5, the mistake made by the unpunctual friend was considered as worse since it was not the very first time the addressee made the mistake, while in Situation 7 was vice-versa that the participants could still tolerate.

Overall, participants tend to ignore the situations and prefer to maintain the friendship, good relationship, and positive ambiance around them though actually they feel quite annoyed with the situation happening. However, the ignorance might actually show their apprehension to what might happen when trying to express their real feelings explicitly. This justification is based on some examples when few participants were dared enough to show their disappointments to anyone who had made mistake to them in any kind of situations as like when Speaker J was dared enough to deliver complaints and criticize his professor in Situation 1 and Speaker K without a doubt expressed anger to another passenger in Situation 8. Nevertheless, these minor exceptions could not restrain from the conclusion that the choices of

AR strategies performed by the students are mostly influenced by the relation between the participants and the addressees (close or distant), the power the participants have (high, equal, or low), the setting of situations, and also the degree of mistakes made by the addressees.

E. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The realizations of apology response strategies could not be generalized to all individuals or cultures. Many factors might influence the different realizations of the AR strategies especially to the EFL learners. This research found four factors as the most influential in determining the choices of AR strategies realized by the English department students, i.e. power, relations, situations, and the degree of mistake. Furthermore, the factors are mostly affected by the local cultural wisdom and their very own personal traits. In other words, although the participants use English language in uttering the apology responses, it does not merely guarantee that they also implement the appropriate English ways of communication. Based on the limitations of this research, it is suggested for future studies to take larger sampling to draw better generalization. Future studies may also employ natural conversations to gather more natural data. In addition, some other aspects of pragmatics may also be studied to EFL learners in Indonesia.

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