

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this chapter, the writer explains the theories and the earlier studies related to her topic. The writer uses the main theories about type of apology strategies proposed by Trosborg (1995). The theory were used to analyze and answer the writer's research questions.

2.1. Review of Related Theories

This section presents the theories that would be used to help the writer to analyze the data. The main theory that used by the writer is the theory about type of apology strategies proposed by Trosborg (1995, pp. 373-387) supported by Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989, p. 291).

2.1.1 Apology

According to Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989, p. 12) apology is “an attempt by the speaker to make up some previous actions that interfered with the hearer's interests, counteracts the speaker's face wants. By apologizing, the speaker acknowledges that a violation of social norm has been committed and the speaker admits to the fact that he or she is at least partially involved in its case” (p. 12).

According to Trosborg (1995, p.373), there are three roles involved in solving the unpleasant situation between the speaker and the hearer, which are a *complainer* or a person who complaint, *complainee* or a person who receive the complaint and a *complaint* or an expression of dissatisfaction. The complainee has to make the complainer feels that the complainee is sorry for the inconvenient situation which has happened between them. Therefore, in responding to the complaint, the complainee is supposed to be highly hearer-supportive, to be a good-listener to the complainer, and to promise a repair to the complainer.

In responding to the complaint which come from the complainer, a complaineer have a choice to chose what kind of apology that he or she wants to choose. The complaineer can accept the responsibility to apologize or even reject it as her / his respond. Trosborg (1995, pp. 373-387) says, there are nine types of apology that can be chosen, which are denying responsibilities, minimizing offense, acknowledging of responsibilities, explanation or account, expression of apology, offer of repair, promise of forbearance, expressing concern for hearer, and checking. Each of them will be explained more below.

2.1.1.1 Denying Responsibilities

According to Trosborg (1995, pp. 378-379) there are several types of denying responsibilities which are:

a) Explicit denial of responsibilities

In this type, the complaineer explicitly denies that an offence has occurred or that the complaineer is responsible for it (p.378).

Examples:

- "I know nothing about it, I can assure toy's kind"
- "You know that I would never do a thing like that"

b) Implicit denials of responsibilities

In this type, the complaineer evades responsibility by ignoring a complaint or talks about something else (p. 378).

Example:

- "Am I late?"

c) Justification

In this type, the complaineer provides argument in which he or she seeks to persuade the complainer that no blame can be attached to him (p. 378).

Example:

- "I missed the bus"

d) Blaming someone else

In this type, the complainee seeks to evade responsibility by blaming someone else. In this case, the complainee may blame a third party or even the complainer himself (p. 378).

Examples:

- “Traffic is always so heavy in the morning”
- “The bus was late”

e) Attacking someone else

If the complainer lacks an adequate defense for his own behavior, the complainee may choose to attack the complainer instead. This is also another way of evading responsibility, although in most cases it is a more abusive strategies than blaming someone else strategy (p. 379).

Example:

- “It’s your own fault; I’m the one to be offended”.

2.1.1.2 Minimizing Offense

This strategy is closely related to the strategies in which the complainee fails to take on responsibility. The difference lies in the facts that the complainee doesn’t deny responsibility. Instead, the complainee seeks to minimize the degree of offense, either by arguing that the supposed offense is of minor importance, in fact is ‘hardly worth mentioning’, or by querying the preconditions on which the complaint is grounded (p. 379). This category has three subcategories which are:

a. Minimizing

In this sub-category, the complainee seeks to minimize the degree of offense by arguing that the supposed offense is of minor importance (p.379).

Examples:

- “Oh, what does it matter, that’s nothing”
- “What about it, it’s not the end of the world”

- b. Query preconditions, in this sub-category the complaineer attempts to throw doubt on the modalities of a precious arrangement which he or she broke (p. 379).

Example:

- “Are you sure we were supposed to meet at 10?”

- c. Blaming someone else, in this subcategory, the offense committed by the complaineer can be excused by an offence committed by a third party (p. 379).

Example:

- “I don’t know traffic could be that heavy this morning.”

2.1.1.3 Acknowledging Responsibility

When a complaineer chooses to take on responsibility he or she can do implicitly or explicitly and with varying degrees of self-blame. The sub-categories below are all hearer-supportive and self-demeaning and they are ordered with respect to the degree of recognition with which the complaineer accepts the blame, from low to high intensity (p. 379).

- a. Implicit acknowledgment

In this sub-category, the complaineer chooses to take on responsibility he or she can do implicitly (p.379). Some examples are:

- “I can see your point”
- “Perhaps I shouldn’t have done it”

- b. Explicit acknowledgment

In this sub-category, the complaineer chooses to take on responsibility he or she can do explicitly (p.379).

Example:

- “I’ll admit I forgot to do it”

c. Expression of lack intent

According to Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989, p. 291), in this subcategory the complainees explicitly states that he or she had not intended to hurt the hearer through his or her offence. An example is:

- 'I didn't mean to upset you'

Another example provided by Trosborg (1995, p. 379) is:

- "I didn't mean to".

d. Expression of self-deficiency

According to Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989, p. 291), in this subcategory the complainees intended to appease the hearer by placing a continuum strong self-humbling. An example is:

- 'I am so forgetful'

Other examples provided by Trosborg (1995, p. 379) are:

- "I was confused"
- "You know I am bad at..."

e. Explicit acceptance of the blame

According to Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989, p. 291), in this subcategory the complainees explicitly acknowledge the fact that he or she has been at fault. Some examples are:

- 'My mistake'
- 'It is my fault'

Other examples provided by Trosborg (1995, p. 379) are:

- "It was entirely my fault"
- "You're right to blame me"

2.1.1.4 Explanation or Account

A complaine may tries to mitigate his guilt by giving an explanation or account to the complainer. Various kind of mitigating circumstances serve as indirect apologies and may be put forward on their own or in addition to direct apologies (p. 380).

a. Implicit explanation

In this sub-category, the complaine chooses to mitigate his guilt by giving an explanation or account implicitly (p.380).

Example:

- “Such things are bound to happen”

b. Explicit explanation

In this sub-category, the complaine chooses to mitigate his guilt by giving an explanation or account explicitly (p.380).

Example:

- “Sorry, I’m late, but my car broke down”

2.1.1.5 Expression of Apology

An apologizer may choose to express his apology explicitly. A small number of verbs apply and the expression is a routine formula generally accepted to express apology. The semantic content may be an expression of regret, an offer of apology, or a request for forgiveness as in the examples below (p. 381).

a. Expression of regret

In this sub-category, an apologize choose to express his / her apology explicitly. This sub-category is the inexplicit or indirect form of the act of apologizing (p.381).

Example:

- “I am sorry for”

b. Offer of apology

In this sub-category, an apologize choose to express his / her apology explicitly. A small number of verbs apply and the expression is routine formula generally accepted to express apology (p. 381).

Example:

- “I apologize”

c. Request for forgiveness

In this sub-category, an apologize choose to express his / her apology explicitly in the form of explicit performative constructions (p. 381).

Examples:

- “Excuse me”
- “Pardon me”
- “Forgive me”

2.1.1.6 Offer of Repair

An apologizer may offer to ‘repair’ things which have cause the inconvenience situation between the complaine and the complainer. Then a repair may be offered in its literal sense or as an offer to pay for the damage. In a situation in which actual repair is not possible or not wanted by the complainer, the complaine may offer some kind of ‘compensatory’ action or ‘tribute’ to the complainer (p. 382).

a. Repair

In this sub-category, the complainer offer a repairsto pay for the damage (p. 382).

Examples:

- “I’ll pay for the cleaning”
- “I’ll repair for the broken”

b. Compensation

In this sub-category, the complainer might offer a compensation if actual repair is not possible or not wanted by the complainer (p. 382).

Example:

- “You can borrow my dress instead”

2.1.1.7 Promise of Forbearance

With respect to the future behavior, an apologizer or the complainee can promise either never to perform the offense in question again, or to improve his behavior in a number ways. His or her utterance is often signaled by the performative verb *promise*, for example, “It won’t happen again, I promise” (p. 383).

2.1.1.8 Expressing Concern for the Hearer

In order to pacify a complainer, the complainee may express concern for his or her well-being, his or her condition etc (p. 385). An example is “I know this is very inconvenience, but I’ll you know when it’s done”.

2.1.1.9 Checking

In this type, the complainee can ask to check the object first to make sure about the damage (p. 385). Some examples are:

- “May I look first to the glasses?”
- “Let me check it first”

The above apology strategies show that there are some ways to express apology to others. This is the main theory that the writer would apply in this study. The deescription of each major category and sub-category helps the writer to analyze her data which is in *Bahasa Indonesia*. The writer is going to use both of major categories and the sub-categories of apology strategies proposed by Trosborg (1995, pp. 373-387).

The writer also has another theory concerning the importance of apology in the workplace which would described below.

2.1.2 Apology in the Workplace

Chapman and Thomas (2006, p. 5) state that successful companies should understand the power of an apology. It can determine the relationship between the companies, employees and customers. A study done by Chapman and Thomas (2006) revealed how customer feels more satisfied when they are served by a bank officers rather than a post office officer. The reason is the bank officers always apologize for customer's inconvenience for waiting wait to the service.

Furthermore, the study also reveals how the hospitals in the University of Michigan Health System have been encouraging doctors to apologize for mistake since 2002. The system's annual attorney fees have since dropped from three million to one million dollars, and malpractice lawsuits and notices of intent to sue have fallen from 262 filed in 2001 to about 130 per year only because the doctors start to apologize for the mistakes rather than just handle the case to the lawyer.

Moreover, Chapman and Thomas (2006) also found that creating a positive emotional work environment enhances the productivity of employees. Thus, a company should have the vision of not only apologizing to customers and clients but teaching employees how to apologize effectively to one another. The

result is the employees live with less stress and anxiety, while the company gains profits from their increased productivity.

From the theories presented in 2.1.1 and 2.1.2, it can be concluded that there are several types of apology strategies that can be chosen by customer service officers of *Mandiri* Bank and *Mega* Bank. To point out which apology strategies are often used by the customer service officers of *Mandiri* Bank and *Mega* Bank, the writer needs to observe the utterance of the customer service officers. Next, in section 2.2, the writer presents a review of related studies that describe two studies related to the topic of apology strategies.

2.2. Review of Related Studies

As her related studies, the present writer used two studies from previous researchers in the same field as this study. Those previous studies were conducted by Pratatiwulan (2006) and Christiani (2008). Each study will be explained further below.

2.2.1 A Study of Apology Strategies Used by Male and Female Travel Agents in Surabaya Telephone Conversation by Male and Female Call Center Agents in *Telkom 147* Surabaya (Pratatiwulan, 2006)

Pratatiwulan's research is about apology strategies produced by male and female call center agents at *PT. Telkom* Surabaya. In her research Pratatiwulan wanted to find out (1) types of apology strategies that used by the *Telkom* call center agents, (2) the differences between male and female call center agents in using the apology strategies. She used the theory from Trosborg (1987) about apology strategies, Tannen (1990) about gender differences and Holmes (1990) about different politeness between male and female when they apologize. These theories helped her to classify and analyze the apology strategies used by the respondents.

In her research, Pratatiwulan used *Telkom 147*'s call center agents as her respondents. Pratatiwulan found out that when handling a complaint, the use of middle part level of apology strategy was likely to be expressed by all call center agents. In fact she found out that females were trying to be more cooperative to the customers by giving explanation of the situation and indirectly express an apology to the customers for an unpleasant situation. She also found out that females made an approach by using less powerful words, explicit explanations and showing compensatory act.

Pratatiwulan's study and the present writer's study are also similar in terms of the main theory that is used for examining the type of apology strategies namely Trosborg's apology strategies (1987). However, there are also differences between Pratatiwulan's study and the writer's study. As the object of the research, Pratatiwulan only focused on state company, while the present writer focused on both private and state company. Furthermore, Pratatiwulan focused more on the gender distinction, while the present writer did not apply that variable on her study.

Pratatiwulan's study provided an insight for the writer's present study. After reading Pratatiwulan's study about apology strategies, the present writer got some additional information that the gender distinction influenced males' and female's decision to choose which apology strategies would be used in handling the complaints. Furthermore, the findings inspired the writer to observe whether another variable, i.e. working place, would influence the use of apology strategies. Therefore the present writer would like to observe whether customer service officers of a private public company would use the same apology strategies as the ones used by customer service officers of state public company.

2.2.2 The Apology Strategies Used by 5 Male and 5 Female *Indosat* Customer Servicers in Surabaya (Christiani, 2008)

Christiani's research is about apology strategies used by 5 male and 5 female *Indosat* customer service officers in Surabaya. In her research, Christiani wanted to find out (1) types of apology strategies used by the *Indosat* customer servers, (2) the differences of apology strategies made by male and female *Indosat* customer servicers towards different age group customers, (3) the reasons behind the different use of apology strategies. She used the theory from Trosborg (1987) about type of apology strategies, Tannen (1990) about gender differences and Holmes (1990) about different politeness between male and female when they apologize. These theories helped her to classify and analyze the apology strategies used by the respondents.

In her research, Christiani used 5 male and 5 female *Indosat* customer servicers as her respondents. Christiani found out that when handling a complaint, females were trying to be more cooperative to the customers, to attempt to repair the customer's problem indirectly and to directly express an apology to the customers for an unpleasant situation. She also found out that the differences of apology strategies used by the male and female customer servicers were affected by the customer's social class. Besides that, she also found out that males were often giving an explicit explanation about the customer's problem but they were not reluctant to compensate.

The present writer chose Christiani's studies because she also focuses on apology strategies. Moreover, Christiani's study and the present writer's study are also similar in terms of main theory used to examining the type of apology strategies; it is Trosborg's apology strategies (1987).

However there are also differences between Christiani's study and the writer's study. Christiani's study focused private company, while present writer focused private and state companies. Moreover Christiani's study focused more on the social distance, while the present writer did not apply that variable on her study.

Christiani's study provided an insight for the writer's present study. In fact, after reading Christiani's study about apology strategies, the present writer

got some additional information that the social distance influenced the way male and female decision in choosing which apology strategies that they use in handling the complaints. Moreover, the findings inspired the writer to observe whether another variable, i.e. working place, would influence the use of apology strategies. Therefore the present writer would like to observe whether customer service officers of a state public company would use the same apology strategies as the ones used by customer service officers of private public company.