

KULLIYAH OF LANGUAGES & MANAGEMENT IUM



RESEARCH IN ENGLISH FOR COMMUNICATION

EDITOR
Khairil Azwar Razali

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Published by:

Kulliyah of Languages & Management (KLM)

International Islamic University Malaysia, Edu Hub Pagoh, 84600 JHR.

Tel.: 06-9742601

Fax: 06-9742655

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First Print July 2021

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Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia

Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

RESEARCH IN ENGLISH FOR COMMUNICATION / Editor Khairil Azwar Razali.

ISBN 978-967-46701-7-7

1. English language--Research.
2. English language--Spoken English.
3. Communication--Research.
4. Government publications--Malaysia. I. Khairil Azwar Razali.
428.2072

Printed in Malaysia by:

Print Expert Sdn Bhd

20, Jalan Bunga Tanjung 2/16,

Seksyen 2, 40000 Shah Alam

Selangor

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Foreword

The number of research done on the topic of communication, especially in English, has been extensive. Nevertheless, there have always been more left to study as the language, as well as our communication needs, evolves continuously.

This book is an effort to address a number of important issues related to English for Communication, as well as teaching and learning English. In the first chapter, issues related to graduates' ability to communicate is discussed. Communication skills have been highlighted as one of the top concerns among the employers, hence this paper surveyed Malaysian employers' perceptions of what to be considered as good communication skills. This chapter concludes that grammatical accuracy as to be very important when it comes to good communication skills among the young graduates.

The second chapter highlights a study on students' motivation and attitudes in learning English. A survey was carried out to identify the motivation and attitudes of the Tourism students at IIUM towards learning English. From the survey, it has been found that the students are motivated by both practical and academic reasons such as getting a job, carrying out their tasks efficiently and to further their studies. The findings also found a strong positive correlation between motivation and attitudes in second language learning.

In the third chapter, a study using Conversation Analysis discusses the apology sequences used in WhatsApp. Apology strategy is considered as a fundamental speech act in a conversation between interlocutors as one way to maintain good relationship (Halimeh, et. al., 2015). From the analysis, it was found that the two strategy used by the students in group chats were (1) expression of apology with explanation and (2) an expression of apology with an offer of repair.

The fourth chapter discusses a topic on translation study. Scanlation, a term that refers to fan-made translation of comics from a language to another language, is studied where the use of formal equivalence in translating a manga entitled *Orange* is analysed. This study found that the scanlation version utilized formal equivalence more frequently in comparison to its official English translation version. Dynamic equivalence is more pronounced when translating word that has no equivalent in English or to reduce cultural gaps with the target language culture.

The fifth chapter highlights the relationship between contextual factors and the use of taboo words among university students. As the meaning of many taboo words change over the years, the use of taboo words is becoming a norm in daily conversations. this research sought to examine the contextual factors

namely emotion, social location, and formality that lead students to use taboo words, and found that only emotion has a positive relationship with the use of taboo words. Meanwhile, social location and formality did not have a positive relationship with the use of taboo words.

The sixth chapter discusses the framing within political communication. In this paper, a qualitative-based study was done on the news and social media's framing of 'Keling' in Malaysian politics. Findings of the study reveal that the word 'keling' has been discussed within conflict frame, human interest frame and morality frame. As politicians have the power to influence public perceptions, they have the power to exert an ideology on a certain matter, therefore they have to be mindful of what being said and done.

The final chapter explores the relationship between Korean lifestyle and consumers' purchase intention among Malaysian young consumers. A survey was carried out among the students of Kuliyah of Languages & Management, IIUM Pagoh. The survey was designed for those who have been exposed to Korean lifestyle and distributed via online platforms. The analysis shows strong correlations between Korean fashion and cosmetic products with consumers' purchase intention.

Materials in this book is not only relevant in terms of its subject content, but also important in highlighting the different methods of research employed in research in communication fields.

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IIUM STUDENTS' WHATSAPP GROUP CHAT: A STUDY ON APOLOGY SEQUENCES USED IN INSTANT MESSAGING INTERACTION

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ABSTRACT

The WhatsApp messenger application serves as one of the unlimited instant messaging in the 21st Century and has been used widely by most students as one of the main platforms of communication in the university. This paper aims to study Apology Sequences used in WhatsApp interaction among university students at the Kulliyah of Languages and Management, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). Apology strategy is considered as a fundamental speech act in a conversation between interlocutors as one way to maintain good relationship (Halimeh, et. al., 2015). The study employed Conversation Analysis (CA) as an approach in investigating the sequential organization of apologies strategies of university students' WhatsApp group chats. From the data collection of about 40 apology sequences found in the students' WhatsApp group chat, it was found that the two-strategy used by the students in group chats were (1) expression of apology with explanation and (2) an expression of apology with an offer of repair.

Keywords: WhatsApp interaction, Conversation analysis, apology sequences, group chat

INTRODUCTION

Apology strategy is basically a fundamental speech act that occurs in conversations between interlocutors as one way to maintain good relationship (Halimeh, et. al., 2015). Aydin (2013) stated that the apology speech act holds a crucial place in human communication as a face-saving act of speech. Hence, an apology is the acknowledgement of responsibility for a wrongdoing (or an offense) which can be followed by expressions of remorse, forbearance, and repairing when it is appropriate. This will usually happen when two parties are involved, one who commits the offense and the other one is the offended party (Lazare, 2010).

Hiba and Maryam (2014) stated that two of the most known speech act instruments used in past studies were Data Completion Test (DCT) and closed role play, such as in the study by Eslami (2012) and Eslami and Mardini (2010). Past studies revealed that from the speech act data taken from the DCT, the apology strategies can be categorized to five contexts which were:

- a) *an expression of apology* which refers to an act of doing or saying something (Pogoni, 2013).

Example: "I am sorry"

- b) *an explanation or account of the situation* refers to giving a statement to cause the offense which is beyond the offender's control (Abdulmalek & Nimehchisalem, 2016).

Example: "traffic is always so heavy in the morning"

- c) *an acknowledgement of responsibility* refers to a situation when associating with someone or something for when a person holds responsibility for something that had happened (Wright, 2008).

Example: "It was my mistake"

- d) *an offer of repair* refers to a situation when the providing the apologizers with help to repair or rectify the unfavourable circumstances that had happened (Prachanant, 2016)

Example: “I will see what I can do about it”

- e) *a promise of forbearance* refers to a situation when the offender feels guilty, he or she needs to promise not to repeat the act (Shatha, 2012)

Example “It would not happen again”

Other the studies that have used DCT were Sadeghi (2013), Al-Sobh (2013) and Qorina (2012) and in these studies, they also found that the apology strategies used were apology and regret, explanation, and the offer of repair. Hence, past studies that used DCT to examine apology strategies in speech act were done by using surveys in which participants were asked to complete a set of questionnaires and do role-playing. However, in this paper, we used CA on examining apology sequences in interaction among participants in a mundane conversation through instant messaging.

With the emergence of technology and smartphones, instant messaging (IM) has become one of the most commonly and frequently modes used for communication (Hornung, 2015; Bond-Barnard, et. al., 2016). The IM has made it easy for people to share information in form of texts, photo, audio files and videos to personal contacts or to group chat (Bere, 2012; 2013). WhatsApp is considered as one of the most popular IM application being used by university students (Gasaymeh, 2017).

IM interaction such as group chats encompasses the interaction between more than two interlocutors and maintaining a good relationship among the participants in the group chat is crucial in order to succeed in communication.

Using the conversation analysis (CA) approach, the aim of this paper is to discuss the apology sequences used in WhatsApp group chat interaction among university students at the Kulliyyah of Languages and Management, IIUM. In our study, we have examined how apology strategies were used by the students as ways to maintain harmony in a WhatsApp group chat interaction.

METHODOLOGY

The main data of the study were collected from the WhatsApp group chats of the Kulliyyah of Languages, IIUM female and male students' conversations residing at the university's accommodation. It was estimated that a total of 212 female students and 170 male students were members in the WhatsApp chat group who were mainly undergraduate students. This study used conversation analysis as the method to analyze the data. Focusing on analyzing apology sequences in the WhatsApp group chats, the apology sequences which involved the usage of apology strategies and responses were recorded and screen captured and a total of about 40 apology sequences were identified in the WhatsApp group chat.

The extracts presented in this paper are organized into a two-line transcription in which the first line is an orthographic representation of the original talk and the second line is the idiomatic English translation. The transcript organization is generally used for languages that closely follow the English word order (Hepburn and Bolden, 2013). In other words, the translation brings the original source language into contemporary language expression and to make sense of the language. Basically, the translation plays its part of the analysis of the original talk which need to be informed by what is known about English and not just a perfunctory step in the transcription process. Hence, in representing the data, the accurate translation and sentences are grammatically constructed instead

of direct translation. This is to provide clear understanding of the extracts presented in this paper.

The Malay language is entirely used in the conversation and every conversation in Malay is translated to English which is enhanced in the italics form but the point of apology strategies involved will be in bolded form. The transcriptions with spaces of numbered lines are for references and spelling mistake in the transcript is not corrected as this paper presented the actual messages extracted directly from the WhatsApp group chats. Following this, anonymity of the participants is observed in which the names presented were not their real names. The messages are replicated exactly the same as how it was sent and responded as well as the time of messages received are also presented in the data.

FINDINGS

The findings from the analysis of the IIUM students WhatsApp group chats, it was found that the strategies occur in the apology sequences were (1) an expression of apology with explanation and (2) an expression of apology with an offer for repair.

An expression of apology with explanation

In Extract 1, participant A has initiated a greeting followed by a question about the availability of a transporter (line 1). The question is not particularly addressed to a certain participant but to the members of the group chat. Then participant B responded and asked where participant A heading was to (line 2). Participant A responded by saying she wanted to go to her hostel and is hoping for participant

B to illicit the preferred action. However, participant B elicited a dis-preferred response by replying with a sorry (line 4) as expression of apology in her utterance for her incapability to help. Participant B then allocated her explanation that if participant A was from hostel, she could give her a ride with her. However, participant B could not give her a ride as participant A's request is from the faculty to the hostel. Following participant B's statement in line 4, she enclosed her statement with a ☺ smiley emoticon probably to add a friendly and easing response. Following this, participant A texted "xpe2" which meant that "it is okay" and the digit "two" indicates a repetition for the statement "it is okay" and this marked as her final turn when there is no response from participant B as well as a closure to the apology sequence (line 5).

Extract 1: Available transporter

- 1 2:41 A: Salam.ade transporter yg available x skrng?
Peace be upon you. Any transporter available now?
- 2 2:41 B: nk ke mana tu sis?
Where would you like to go sis?
- 3 2:42 A: Dr kuliyyah nk ke mahallah
From the faculty to the hostel.
- 4 2:42 B: ohh maaf. kalau dr mahallah sy boleh tumpangkan sekali ☺
ohh sorry. If you are from the hostel, I can give you a ride. ☺
- 5 2:43 A: Ooo..xpe2
Ooo, it's okay it's okay.

Extract 2 Pokemon Go

- 1 10:47 A: Salams, sekadar nak bertanya, mohon jgn kecam...
Peace be upon you, I just want to ask but please do not bash me.
- 2 : siapa kat sini yg main dan masih active bermain Pokemon Go?
Anyone here an active player of Pokemon Go?
- 3 10:48 B: 🙋
- 4 10:48 A: Masih active ke? Sbb kalau ye, nak ajak gi muar minggu dpn,
Still active? If yes, I want to invite you to go to Muar next week,
- 5 : main
to play it.
- 6 10:48 B: Hahaha
Hahaha
- 7 : Sori
Sorry.
- 8 10:49 B: Ni otw nak balik kelantan dah
Now, I'm on my way back to Kelantan.
- 9 10:49 A: Okay sad
Okay, I'm sad
- 10 : Hahaha
Hahaha.

In Extract 2 above, participant A started his conversation and made his inquiry regarding Pokemon Go, a type of augmented reality mobile game. As shown in line 1, participant A greeted to show politeness and said he just wanted to ask and add a request for others not to criticize him before making an inquiry. Then in line 2, participant A proceeded with questioning if anyone in the group are still actively playing Pokemon Go. Following this, in line 3, participant B positively responded with 🙋 a hand-raising emoticon which indicated that participant B played Pokemon Go. Then in line 4, participant A asked participant B if he is still actively playing it and if he does, he wanted to invite him to play

along at Muar town in the coming week. However, participant B responded with a laughter “hahaha” (line 6) followed by apology (line 7) and an explanation in line 8 in which he mentioned that he will be on his way back to Kelantan by then. The apology sequence closed when participant A replied “okay sad” (line 9) and laughter “hahaha” (line 10).

Both Extract 1 and Extract 2 displayed the used of expression of apology with explanation by the interlocutors. The next findings focus on the second strategies in the apology sequences found in the data which is an expression of apology with an offer for repair.

Apology with an offer for repair

The Extract 3 below is a conversation involving two participants. It started with participant A initiating a question regarding motorcycle helmet’s availability and the corresponding response is then made by participant B in order to respond to participant A’s inquiry.

In Extract 3, participant A started her conversation with a greeting as to show politeness to the group members who she addressed as “sisters” and asked if anyone has any helmet (line 1). This prompted participant B to respond to participant A where in line 2, participant B texted that she has one but the helmet is at her motorcycle. Following the response from participant B, participant A asked if she could borrow it from participant B and added a 😊 smiley emoticon at the end of her statement (line 4) which could probably to prompt a preferred action from participant B.

Extract 3 Helmet

- 1 3:03 A: as salam sister semuaaa siapa ada helmet?
Peace be upon to all sisters, does any of you have a helmet?
- 2 : nk pnjam bleh tk?
May I borrow it?
- 3 3:06 B: Wassalam. Sy ada.. Tp kt moto helmet tu
Peace be upon you too. I have it. But the helmet is on my motorcycle.
- 4 3:10 A: boleh tk kalau nk pnjam? 😊
May I borrow it? 😊
- 5 4:31 B: Sori late. Klw tdek lg.
Sorry for the late reply. If you still don't have a helmet.
- 6 : Bleh amik kt moto honda wave parking moto blok 3
You can take my helmet from honda wave motorcycle at block 3.
- 7 5:22 A: takpe sis, dah settle dah thanksss 💖
It's okay sister, it is settled thanks. 💖

However, there is a huge gap time delay in which participant B replied by texting “sorry late” as an expression of regret for responding late to participant B and followed by an explanation with offer of repair in which she said that if participant A is still in need of a helmet, she could take the helmet at her motorcycle that is parked at block three. Following this is another huge time gap and participant A replied in line 7 and ended her turn by responding with “takpe sis” which means that it is okay as the matter is already settled and closes the turn with a thank you as well as a 💖 heart emoji indicating her gratitude towards participant B.

In Extract 4 below, the apology sequence is longer in turns as there are six participants involved in the interaction regarding the person-in-charge of the storage room.

Extract 4 Storeroom keeper

- 1 10:40 A: Assalamualaikum
Peace be upon you
- 2 : Utk B3, selain sis Asma' siapa lagi yg in charge ye?
For Block 3, other than sister Asma', is there anyone else in charge of this block?
- 3 : ~ store room
~ storeroom
- 4 10:49 B: Waalaikumussalam . Setakat ni mmg dia sbb kncl dekat dia .
Peace be upon you too. As far as I know, the key is usually with her.
- 5 11:14 A: Oh... Sbb cuba contact xdapat ☹..
Oh...Because I tried to contact her but I couldn't reach her ☹
- 6 : TQ
Thank you.
- 7 11:17 C: Mmenag store kunci ke sekarang ni?
Is the store locked right now?
- 8 11:18 B: X sure.. kjp sy naik check
I'm not sure, wait and let me check it.
- 9 11:19 B: Kunci
It is locked.
- 10 11:28 B: Ad ke sister2 berdekatan dgn sis Asma skrg?
Is there any sister who is now with sister Asma?
- 11 : Sbb sy balik esok pagi.
Because I will go back home tomorrow morning.

12		: Lepas solat subuh terus gerak 😊.	<i>After subuh prayer, I will straight head back home 😊.</i>
13	11:33	D: Sama jugak 😊	<i>Same with me.</i>
14	11:33	E: Same 😊	
15	11:43	F: ada no telefon dia tak?	<i>Does anyone have her telephone number?</i>
16	11:44	G: Maaf semua	<i>Sorry everyone</i>
17		: Saye ade dkt surau td	<i>I was at the mosque just now</i>
18		: Discussion	<i>I had a discussion</i>
19		: Skrg saye ade di dpn stor	<i>I am in front of the store right now.</i>
20	11:45	G: Ssiape nk ltk brg bole dtg	<i>If anyone wants to drop their things, you can come over.</i>
21	11:46	G: Mari2	<i>come come</i>
22		: Stor da bukak	<i>The store is open.</i>

In line 1, participant A started with a greeting then texted her inquiry about the person-in-charge of the block three's storeroom besides sister Asma. Participant B answered with a dis-preferred action, as shown in line 4, informing that she only knew that the person-in-charge of the block three's storeroom is only sister Asma. Participant A then responded to participant B (line 3) informing that she could not reach sister Asma on the phone and added a nervous smile emoticon 😊 and then acknowledge with a thank you note to show her appreciation for the

reply. Following this, participant C took the next turn in line 4 and asked a similar question as well as an inquiry if the storeroom was locked. Participant B then responded to participant C with a preferred response by saying that she was not sure and will check if the storeroom was locked at the moment.

Later, participant B responded that the storeroom was locked. Participant B then took the next turn in line 10, 11 and 12 in which she asked if other members in the group were with sister Asma because participant B needed to put her things in the store as she was leaving the next morning too. Following her statement, participant B added a nervous smile emoticon 😊 in her statement possibly to express her concern. Then participant D and participant E responded that they were in the same situation as participant B. Both participant D and participant E used emoticons that showed faces with 😓 cold sweat and 😊 nervous smile.

At last, in line 16, participant G, whom could be the person-in-charge of the store room, responded in the group chat in which she took the turn by expressing her apology to everyone and then provided an explanation or account why she was not able to attend to the questions regarding the store room earlier which was because she had a discussion at the mosque (line 17-line 18). Participant G then offered a repair where she stated that she was at the front of the store and was ready if anyone wanted to put their things in the store room (line 19-line 20). Participant G ended her turn by saying “mari2” which meant “come” for two times to indicate her affirmation by being there and that the store is opened (line 21-line 22).

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings there were two apology strategies in the apology sequences identified and analyzed in this study:

- 1) An expression of apology with explanation or account
- 2) An expression of apology with an offer for repair

In both of the apology strategies mentioned above, it was found that the participants tend to say sorry along with a laughter such as “haha”. This could be considered as a small humour uttered indirectly or directly when the participants apologize. According to Awang, Maros and Ibrahim (2012), they mentioned that humour can assist to lessen the tension, conflicts and reduces social distance between members in a group. Therefore, saying sorry with a laughter in group chat interaction can lead to the maintenance of harmony and group cohesiveness to become stronger.

Another notable finding is that the participants often use emoticons when they apologize. This could be because, in typed messages interaction, it is hard to convey the meaning of sorry as it is a non-face-to-face interaction and participants have the tendency to interpret the same message differently. The limitations in IM are numerous as the receiver of the message could not figure out the gesture of the speaker, the speaker’s voice intonation, the facial expressions and a limitation to figure out the definite meaning lies behind the messages (Annamalai & Salam, 2017). Thus, emoticons could help to encounter the implications in imitating the speaker’s intended expressions and gestures and WhatsApp has provided features for example like voice notes and images to encounter the miscommunication that tends to happen in a group chat. Furthermore, the emoticons could assist greatly in relaying the speaker’s message precisely and for readers to understand the message appropriately.

The preference found in the apology sequences of the WhatsApp group chats interaction among IIUM students in the Kulliyah of Languages and Management can be perceived to be chained to so many influences and forms. With the use of conversation analysis (CA) as the analytical approach to this study, the apology strategies discovered in the WhatsApp group chats were (1) an expression of apology with explanation or account and (2) an expression of apology with an offer for repair. However, in order to see a distinct progression line within a conversation in WhatsApp group chat or in any other IM platforms, recommendation for further study is needed to uncover the organization of turn-taking and topic management in a chat group in IM.

CONCLUSION

Instant messaging has served features in allowing conversation to take place similar to face-to-face communication such as some of real physical cues to be delivered through IM. This paper discussed on the apology sequences occurred in WhatsApp interaction among university students at the Kulliyah of Languages and Management, International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM). The two apology strategies found involved ways of expressing apology, making requests and giving responses; (1) expression of apology with explanation and (2) an expression of apology with an offer of repair. WhatsApp group chat also offers students to socialize better in which communication strategies could be applied as ways to maintain harmony.

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This book is a collection of research reports on the areas related to English for Communication. The book attempt to highlight certain issues that are considered as critical in English for Specific Purposes. The topics discussed in this book are semantic (taboo words), translation study of fan-made scanlation of Japanese manga, conversation analysis on WhatsApp messages, motivation and attitudes towards learning English, and also on employers' perceptions on what is considered as good communication skills. This book does not only highlight the subject contents, but also methodologies used within English for Communication field.

ISBN 978-967-467-017-7

