

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This section summarizes and provides input based on research findings regarding the strategies and social function of apologies in various power relations. The summary serves to highlight key points of the research findings, while the suggestions are provided as a follow-up to the findings. It is hoped that this input will be beneficial to all parties involved and will inform future studies and practices.

A. Conclusion

This study aims to explore apology strategies and the social functions of apologies applied by participants in various power relationships, such as higher–lower (HL), lower–higher (LH), and equal power (E). The results show that all apology strategies described by Blum-Kulka & Olshtain (1984), including Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID), Taking on Responsibility (TOR), Explanation or Account (EXPL), Offer of Repair (REP), and Forbearance (FOB), appear in all three types of power relationships. However, the power relationship influences the way these strategies are applied linguistically, especially in terms of formality, politeness, expression of responsibility, and interpersonal orientation shown in the apology.

In the lower–higher (LH) context, participants in this study appeared to use formal, cautious, and respectful language more frequently, particularly in the IFID, REP, and FOB strategies. They also tended to demonstrate a clearer acceptance of responsibility to avoid negative judgment from those with higher authority. Conversely, in the higher–lower (HL) context, those involved in this study appeared to use direct, flexible, and less formal language than before, given their greater control over the conversation as individuals of higher social status. However, some still maintained a degree of formality in their apologies, suggesting that higher social position does not completely eliminate politeness orientations in social interactions. On the other hand, in the equal (E) context, apologies were more often made in a more flexible and informal manner, as more equal social relationships facilitate more comfortable interactions and symmetrical negotiations. Nevertheless, those involved in this study still adopted a fairly complex combination of strategies across various power relations, so the complexity of apologies is not entirely influenced by the level of power.

In addition to apology strategies, this study also shows that power relations influence the social function of apologies and how participants in this study understand their position in an interaction. In a higher-lower context, participants interpreted their position as a form of responsibility in maintaining good relationships, being fair, and showing concern for the interlocutor. In a lower-higher situation, apologies served to show respect for authority, maintain professional relationships, and maintain a polite and

responsible self-image. Meanwhile, in an equal context, apologies emphasized honesty, empathy, and efforts to repair interpersonal relationships in a balanced manner. Several participants in this study also indicated that social positions in apologies can change depending on the situation, especially when the mistake caused harm to the interlocutor. This suggests that power relations in apologies are not always fixed and hierarchical, but can also be influenced by the impact of the mistake and the dynamics of the interaction that occurs in a particular situation.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that power relations do not directly determine the presence or absence of a particular apology strategy, but rather influence how the strategy and social function of apologies are implemented in interactions. Participants in this study indicated that in the context of hierarchical relationships, apologies tend to be delivered with a different level of formality, caution, and focus on politeness than in equal relationships. In addition to influencing the linguistic implementation of strategies, power relations also influenced how participants in this study understood their position in apology interactions, whether as a form of moral responsibility, respect for authority, or an attempt to maintain interpersonal relationships. Nevertheless, participants in this study still demonstrated a complex implementation of strategies and social functions focused on maintaining social relationships across power spheres. Therefore, the implementation of strategies and social functions in apologies is influenced

not only by power, but also by interpersonal sensitivity, moral responsibility, and the desire to maintain harmonious relationships.

B. Suggestion

Although this study provides insight into the strategies and social functions of apologies within various power dynamics, it still has limitations. The study relied on the Discourse Completion Test (DCT) as its primary tool, supported by interviews, meaning the data obtained did not fully reflect natural interactions in everyday communication. Furthermore, this study specifically examined the impact of power relations on the strategies and social functions of apologies. Therefore, other factors that could potentially influence how people apologize, such as gender, level of intimacy, severity of the offense, and cultural background, were not included in this study.

Future research is recommended to incorporate these social factors to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the use of apologies across various communication contexts. Furthermore, in English language teaching, it is highly recommended for teachers to incorporate pragmatics learning into classroom activities by presenting a variety of communication situations that reflect differences in power relations. In this way, students not only learn about the linguistic forms of apologies but also understand how social interaction, level of formality, and communication goals influence language use in real-life interactions. The learning process must also ensure that students have the opportunity to practice applying language in a variety of

communication situations so that they can adjust their language choices appropriately to the relationship between the speaker and the interlocutor and the conditions they face.