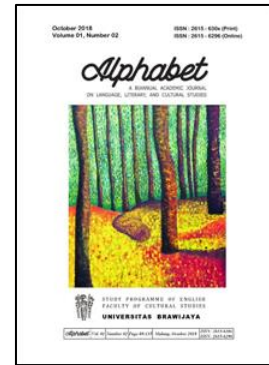


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Apology Strategies Used by Chad Griffin Addressed to The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community

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Abstract

Apology Strategies is a study of speech act investigating how people use language as a mean to repair certain condition between speaker and hearer. There are many ways for people to deliver an apology. We often experience and hear a speaker apologizes without saying the word “sorry” or “apologize”. This article discusses Chad Griffin’s apology as the HRC (Human Right Campaign) leader to the LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) Community. The result of this research shows that there are twenty-one apology utterances delivered by Chad Griffin. From those utterances there are ten utterances are identified as belong to the category of Indirect Apology strategy, thirteen utterances belong to the category of Remedial Support, three utterances belong to Direct Apology Strategy and only one utterance is as Evasive Strategy.

Keywords: apology strategies, LGBT, HRC (Human Right Campaign).

Apology strategies are only a part of linguistics aspects that is called *speech act*. Language learners are not familiar with apology strategies because it is rarely discussed in class while learning speech act. Austin (1962) has stated that a speech act is doing an action by using words. A successful speech act is when the three aspects of it are complete. In line with the previous statement, Yule (1996) highlighted that there are three related acts of an action which is done or performed by producing utterances. Those are namely, locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act.

Additionally, Searle (1976) has proposed five-way classifications of illocutionary as general functions of speech acts. Those are directives, representatives, expressives, commissives, and declaratives. In this article, we focus on

the expressive classification because the apology is included as an expressive speech act. According to Bergman and Kasper (1993), an apology is defined as compensation because an offense done by a speaker is inflicting a kind of damage and it is costly for the hearer. It is in line with the opinion of Bataineh & Bataineh (2006) that apology strategies are the methods used by individuals to perform the speech act of apology such as a statement of remorse and reparation. There are many studies on apology having been done nowadays since apology is a common expression of everyday life. Conducting a study on apology means dealing with something natural that is found on a daily basis by using language. According to Olshtain and Cohen (1983), when social norms are violated, normally an apology should follow to reestab-

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lish the social relationship between the doer and the complainer.

In another source, Goffman (1971) views apologies as remedial interchanges serving to re-establish social harmony after a real or virtual offence. Furthermore, Blum Kulka, House and Kasper (1989) stated that concerning the notion of face, apologizing is threatening the speaker's positive face because the speaker admits that she/he has offended the hearer's face. There are various ways for people to deliver an apology expression, so-called as apology strategies (Trosborg, 1995). He continued that there are five strategies in apology strategies, namely: *opting out, evasive strategies, indirect strategies, direct strategies, and remedial support*. Their categories support those five strategies, and its sub-categories support each category. This study used Trosborg's theory to analyse the apology utterances delivered by Chad Griffin.

In this study, we investigate the apology strategies used by Chad Griffin at his 2014 Southern Comfort Conference speech. Chad Griffin is a political strategist who starts his carrier in the press office of President Bill Clinton's White House at the age of 19, becoming the youngest West Wing staffer ever. Chad Griffin was born on July 16, 1973, Hope, Arkansas (Lockwood, 2017). Griffin is the current president of HRC (The Human Rights Campaign), which is America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer equality. HRC also represents more than 1.5 million members and supporters across the United States. As the largest national lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer civil rights organization, it envisions a world where LGBTQ people are ensured of their basic equal rights, and can be open, honest and safe at home, at work and in the community (Human Rights Campaign, n.d.). Its mission is to improve the lives of LGBTQ people worldwide by advocating for equal rights and benefits in the workplace, ensuring families are treated equally under the law, and increasing public support around the globe. In this research, we investigate Griffin's 2014 apology

addressed to the LGBT people. He apologized for his failure to represent and serve the LGBT people over the years and because many issues are surrounding the equality for LGBT people (Merevick, 2014).

A previous study on apology strategies done by Fitriani in 2012 examined the differences of apologies used by men and women. She argued people often assume that the utterances used by women are different from those used by men, especially concerning politeness. Women are often considered more polite than men because of their social roles. In many communities, women are regarded as the ones who are responsible for transmitting politeness and cultural value. Fitriani was interested in knowing the facts about the differences of utterances used by women and men. The result of her study was quite surprising because most of the female chose not to apologize when they made mistakes, while male respondents chose to apologize when they made mistakes explicitly. It leads to the social thought and social label that says, "women are more polite than men", is not characteristically so in her study.

The present study aims to investigate the apology strategies used by a certain person to find out the meaning and the purpose of the apology and also to figure out why there are many people dislike the apology but still accept it. At the end of Griffin's speech, it seems that LGBT and transgender community accepted his apology as can be seen from the video posted on YouTube. At the end of the video, it can be seen that people who attended the conference clapped their hands and many of them shed tears as they seemed to accept Griffin's apology. However, after the speech, many people expressed their dislikes toward the speech. One of those who disliked the apology was Barney Frank or Barnett Frank by the real name (Busey, 2014).

METHOD

In conducting the research, we used a speech as the data source while the data were all utterances, which were considered as apology utterances by the speaker in his speech. The

speech was about the inequality of transgender people, and also about LGBT. The speaker is the president of HRC who stands for (Human Right Campaign). We obtained the speech from YouTube, which means that the speech is in the form of video. The phenomenon of LGBT has been the trending topic all over the world for the past several years.

In this research, Chad Griffin's speech was used as the source of the data. In our opinion, speech is more natural since it is a monologue and developed by him. Unlike another script, such as dialogue made by a certain person to be used by another person and it has a different purpose. Also, this speech was chosen because we found several apology utterances, which were involved from the beginning up to the end of the speech that can be analyzed using Trosborg's theory of apology strategies (1995). We applied several steps to analyze the data. Firstly, we classified the data into five strategies of apology based on Trosborg's theory. In order to make it clear, we classified the data into five strategies with their categories and sub-categories. After categorizing the apology strategies, we gave a brief description of each apology strategy utterance and the meaning behind it. The next step, we analyzed the context and situation regarding the speech in order to determine what apology strategies used by Chad Griffin. Next step, we examined or interpreted Griffin's purpose in choosing a certain type of apology strategy, which was aimed to provide a broader explanation of the findings. Finally, we drew the general conclusion based on the research findings.

RESULT

Types of Apology Strategies

The result of the study shows that there are twenty-seven utterances found as apology strategies. One utterance is categorized as evasive strategy, ten utterances are categorized as indirect apology strategy, three utterances are categorized as direct apology strategy, thirteen utterances are categorized as remedial support,

and there is no utterance categorized as opting out.

Evasive Strategy

The example of detailed information of utterance containing evasive apology strategy can be found in the following analysis:

“And I'm going to tell you the honest truth: I had no idea the conference was happening before that night.”
(minimizing the degree of offence)

Description

The utterances that highlighted in the bold sentence was the first apology strategy utterances by Chad Griffin in his speech. Before saying those utterances, he explained about his situation regarding the certain transgender conference. He was not there at the conference at that time. The conference was held after some transgender women were murdered in Ohio in 2013. As the president of HRC, he should have attended the conference but he did not. Due to his absence, he apologized to those who have attended the conference.

The condition at that time was, two events are happening at OSU building. On the second floor was the dinner of HRC and on the third floor was a transgender conference. It can be seen from the first paragraph up to the fifth paragraph. It can be inferred that HRC did not cooperate with that conference which is a clear sign of separation between HRC, which the largest civil rights organization and the transgender community. The separation between HRC and transgender community can be seen from the fifth paragraph up to the last paragraph of the script.

In the first utterance, Griffin tried to minimize the degree of offence by saying, “I had no idea the conference was happening before that night.” Also, Griffin also expressed an apology in the form of *explicit acknowledgment* by saying, “And I'm going to tell you the honest truth.” Furthermore, the last apology strategy type he delivered in the first datum is *expressing the lack of intent* by saying the sentenc-

es that were previously displayed. The sentences indicate the lack of intent from the speaker.

Interpretation

Chad Griffin's apology is in the form of an indirect apology strategy and evasive strategy. By saying those utterances, he tried to mitigate his offence which is an evasive apology strategy and also tried to acknowledge the audience that needed the explanation for why he did not attend the conference at that time. It is his explicit acknowledgment to the hearer that indicates an indirect apology strategy. He delivered this kind of apology because he acknowledged that the audience deserved to know the truth about the last conference in which he did not come and he said it explicitly. If Chad Griffin did not apologize for this kind of offence, he would surely be considered as a president who ignored his responsibility to apologize. The audience needed to know why he did not come to the conference and why he did not know about the conference.

Indirect Apology Strategy

The example of detailed information of utterance containing indirect apology strategy, can be found in the following analysis:

“And as the nation's largest LGBT civil rights organization, HRC has a responsibility to do that struggle justice, or else we are failing at our fundamental mission.” (accepting the blame).

Description

The researcher categorizes the utterance as an apology strategy and it belongs to *accepting the blame*, which is a part of the indirect apology strategy. The reason is based on the context and the analysis of the previous datum.

Chad Griffin as the president of HRC was not able to cover and protect all LGBT in the nation at that time. In other words, whether he realized it or not, he admitted that HRC had failed its fundamental mission.

Interpretation

Based on the analysis, Griffin admitted that HRC had made some mistakes in their duty to provide protection. So, in this case, by saying the utterance Griffin and HRC prepared themselves to be blamed by the people. The utterance signals that they were the ones to blame because of failing their fundamental mission. Griffin used this kind of apology to make the people know that he on behalf of HRC, was sorry for the loss of members of LGBT communities. Furthermore, Griffin let the audience know that the people have the right to blame HRC.

Direct Apology Strategy

The example of detailed information of utterance containing direct apology strategy is found in the following analysis:

“HRC has done wrong stuffs to the transgender community in the past, and I am here to formally apologize” (offer of apology).

Description

The context starts to change from this datum. For the first two data, his apologies were for his absence in the previous conference. The script covers the third datum up to the seventh datum. He started by saying, “So I am here today, at Southern Comfort, to deliver a message. I deliver it on behalf of HRC and I say it here in the hopes that it will eventually be heard by everyone who is willing to hear it.” After saying that, Griffin said what is shown in the third datum.

In this datum, the utterance is not his first utterance of apology. However, this is his first direct apology delivered to the audience and the victim. By saying the sentence, Griffin expressed an apology called offer of apology. An offer of apology is a sub-category of direct apology strategy. That sentence was uttered shortly after Chad Griffin ended his explanation and situation regarding the previous conference.

Interpretation

In this utterance, Griffin sincerely tried to apologize to all LGBT in the United States. The sentence was uttered after he explained the situation when HRC did not put enough concern towards transgender and LGBT. Therefore, he tried to apologize and admitted that he, on behalf of HRC, apologized for the past. His purpose was simply to apologize to the audience and every LGBT in the United States. He knew that the audience wanted him to deliver a direct apology and say sorry to the people.

Remedial Support

The example of detailed information of utterance containing remedial support strategy, can be found in the following analysis:

“That’s why, in the next session Congress, HRC will lead the campaign for a fully-inclusive, comprehensive, LGBT civil rights bill. A bill with non-discrimination protections that don’t stop at employment, but that finally touch every aspect of our lives—from housing, to public accommodations, to credit, to federal funding, to the education we all need to succeed and thrive.” (promise of forbearance)

Description

The previous sentences belong to the category of a promise of forbearance. As we can see from the sentences, HRC promised the LGBT to lead the campaign for LGBT rights which involved every aspect of LGBT life from housing to education which they need to succeed in life. It is an apology strategy because by understanding that sentences, it means that after all this time, HRC is still unable to fight for those things promised in the sentences. That is why by saying those utterances Griffin hoped that it made up for the inability of HRC to provide that to the LGBT. HRC has not been very effective to be said.

Interpretation

Those promises show that HRC is still unable to fight for the bill for the sake of LGBT. It showed that HRC does not work at their best to protect the LGBT. His promises in other show the flaws of HRC itself. That may be the reason why many people did not like his apology.

DISCUSSION

Interpretation of the Findings

As shown in the previous section or the explanation, indirect apology strategy and remedial support dominate most of Griffin’s apology utterances. Many people disliked his apology speech. It is possibly because of the indirectness in Griffin’s apology. However, even though many people disliked it, they are accepted his apology. Also, there are many apology utterances in the form of promises. In the writer’s opinion, this type of apology has been very effective for Griffin. The acceptance of the speech itself proves it. However, promises he gave to the people reveal HRC’s flaws and mistakes, such as their being unaware of their surrounding world and inability to provide LGBT insurance for the protection of their rights.

There are many things HRC needs to be taken care of. Griffin and HRC need to be better than before in the effort to protect the LGBT. They have to maximize their efforts to make the world a better place for the LGBT. It can probably be said, if the discriminations and crimes or any other issues did not happen or raised, Griffin and HRC would never work on any extra effort to provide protection to the LGBT, such as ENDA and the bills for LGBT discriminations and possibly there will be no a better HRC for the future. Those are the interpretations from the writer after reading the transcript and watching the video several times.

Contribution to Apology Strategies Research

This research is an apology strategies research using a qualitative method, which is

rarely to be found in the journals. Usually research on apology strategies is conducted using a quantitative method. For example, Bagherinejad and Jadidoleslam (2015) investigated about apology strategies used by Iranian EFL learners. Their study used a quantitative method that makes the difference with the current research. Besides, a different method in research can go to a significantly different result. In their research, they wanted to know if gender and English proficiency level can affect the use of apology strategies used by the learners. Their research was interesting to research because it investigated the interplay between proficiency level and gender, but they applied a relatively old theory of apology strategies proposed by Cohen and Olshtain in 1987.

Another previous study by Blatz, Schumann, and Ross (2009) investigated the apologies done by several governments toward minority groups. In the article, they discussed the psychology behind the apology addressed by the governments using a qualitative method. So, they applied both apology strategies and psychology.

The two previous studies have weaknesses that this study can fill in. The first one is on the method. There are many apology strategies research using a quantitative method but this research applied qualitative research that becomes the novelty of this research.

The results of this research show that there should be an additional explanation of the meaning of the apology strategies used by the speaker and also why the speaker chose a certain type of apology strategy. It is to get a better understanding of the context and in order to help the writer to determine what apology strategies used by Chad Griffin. The result of the first previous study is only limited at identifying the types of apology strategies because it applied the quantitative method. It is also lacked description on the meaning behind the apology utterances.

Meanwhile, the results of the second previous study were mainly focusing on the psychological aspect of an apology, which makes it more into critical discourse analysis. Therefore,

this research can contribute to a new knowledge of apology strategies, which was conducted using a qualitative method. Also, this research gives a new way to determine the apology utterances by looking at the context and situation when the apology utterances are produced.

This current research will be one of a few research in apology strategy published in the journal using the qualitative method. Furthermore, this research is a pure apology strategy research intended to find the purpose behind the apology delivered by a certain person. Usually, apology strategy researches use qualitative method combined with other theories, so that this research is expected to present an alternative perspective in the study of apology strategy.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

There are significant numbers of data found from the data source. They consist of twenty-one apology utterances. From those twenty-one apology utterances found in the research, they contain four out five strategies proposed by Trosborg (1995). Those four strategies are an evasive strategy, indirect strategy, direct strategy and remedial support. From those four strategies, two strategies stand out the most that are remedial support and indirect apology strategy. A category from remedial support that is called promise of forbearance, is the most frequent apology used by Griffin. It results in the fact that many people disliked the speech because there were many indirectness in his apology. However, the people still accepted the apology because of the promises to make a better future for LGBT.

The context of the speech also determines the findings of the research. In the previous chapter, there are some scripts to help the writer explain the context of the speech and determine the apology strategy in the utterances. Also, from the scripts the writer can interpret the purpose behind every apology utterance. The results show that most of Griffin's purpose is convincing the people that there will be a better HRC, better services and better

protection for every LGBT in the United States.

As explained in the previous chapter, this research is an apology strategies research without any addition of the other linguistics theories. The writer suggests the next researcher combine the apology strategies research with other linguistics theory since it will help to broaden the result of the study. It will make more detailed and informative research to be done. Also, the next researcher who is interested in conducting apology strategies research can use other theories such as Goffman or Bruce Fraser since their theories are rarely used. Also, using other apology strategy theories may help the next researcher to find something new that this research cannot find. Furthermore, the next researcher can also investigate other related issues, which need further investigation using different data sources such as drama and novel.

Apology strategies research might result in a significantly different result if the research is done using mix methods because it will provide a better answer and broader discussion that this research cannot provide. If the next researcher can do so, it will contribute to the knowledge of apology strategies.

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