

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### A. Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the types of apology speech act strategies produced by sixth-semester English Education students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang, the strategy most frequently used, and how these apology strategies were linguistically realized across gender, based on the students' written responses to two contrasting situations of the Discourse Completion Test (DCT): Situation 1, in which a student apologizes to a lecturer (the heaviest FTA weight in the instrument), and Situation 6, in which a student apologizes to a classmate acting as group leader (the lightest FTA weight in the instrument). Based on the findings and discussion presented in Chapter IV, the following conclusions are drawn.

- 1 In Situation 1, the students realized five of the six coding categories adapted from (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983), namely Expression of Regret (IFID), Explanation or Account, Taking Responsibility, and Promise of Forbearance, produced either alone or in combination, while one response did not realize any apology strategy and was categorized as Non-apology/Other. No response met the criterion for Offer of Repair. Based on the combination of strategies used, six distinct strategy patterns were identified. In Situation 6, by contrast, all five apology strategy categories were realized including Offer of Repair, which did not occur at all in Situation 1 together with two unclassifiable responses, resulting in twelve distinct strategy patterns, twice as many as in Situation 1. This

indicates that the students' apology behavior became noticeably more varied when the offense concerned a peer relationship rather than a lecturer. Expression of Regret (IFID) was the strategy most frequently used by the students in both situations, appearing in 78 of the 79 responses in Situation 1 and in 74 of the 79 responses in Situation 6, confirming its role as the core, almost obligatory element of the students' apologies regardless of the severity of the offense or the social distance toward the offended party. At the level of strategy combination, Expression of Regret combined with Explanation or Account (ER+EX) was the most dominant pattern in both situations, produced by 47 students in Situation 1 and by 38 students in Situation 6, indicating that most students did not consider a bare apology sufficient and felt the need to justify their offense. Taking Responsibility was considerably more frequent in Situation 6 (11 of 79) than in Situation 1 (5 of 79), suggesting that students were more willing to explicitly admit personal fault when the consequence of the offense extended beyond themselves to their entire group, whereas Offer of Repair entirely absent in Situation 1 appeared only in a small number of Situation 6 responses (4 of 79), reflecting the lack of an immediate remedy for an already-missed group exam. The comparison between Situation 1 (heavy FTA weight) and Situation 6 (light FTA weight) demonstrates that offense severity and social distance systematically influence the students' choice of apology strategy, even while Expression of Regret remains the constant core. As

the offense became lighter and the offended party shifted from a lecturer to a classmate, the students' strategy patterns became more varied (from six to twelve distinct patterns), Taking Responsibility became more frequent, and Offer of Repair emerged as a viable strategy for the first time. This confirms that the students' pragmatic competence is not limited to a single fixed formula for apologizing, but includes the ability to adjust their strategy selection according to the social weight of the offense, consistent with (Brown & Levinson, 1987) politeness framework.

- 2 In Situation 1, Expression of Regret was used almost equally by female (60 of 61) and male (18 of 18) students, confirming its status as a near-universal core strategy regardless of gender. Female students, however, showed a stronger tendency toward the elaborated ER+EX pattern (39 of 61) than male students (8 of 18), reflecting a more rapport-oriented and explanation-based apology style, whereas male students more frequently produced a short, single-strategy apology (6 of 18) or elaborated their apology with a Promise of Forbearance (3 of 18) rather than an explanation. In Situation 6, Expression of Regret again remained dominant for both groups (female 58 of 61 vs. male 16 of 18), but the gender pattern for elaboration reversed: female students used Taking Responsibility considerably more than male students (10 of 61 vs. 1 of 18), while male students relied more on Explanation or Account than female students (12 of 18 vs. 33 of 61). Taken together, the results across both situations consistently show that female students in this study favor

a more elaborated, relationally oriented apology style whether through explanation in Situation 1 or through explicit personal accountability in Situation 6 while male students more often either produce a brief, single-strategy apology or elaborate through an external justification rather than an admission of fault. These differences should be interpreted with caution due to the unequal number of female (n=61) and male (n=18) respondents in the sample. At the sentence level, this quantitative pattern was paralleled by concrete linguistic differences: female students' apology sentences tended to be longer and more elaborated, combining two or three clauses, opening with a politeness formula, and adding hedges or intensifiers such as "very," "so," or "sincerely," whereas male students' apology sentences were typically shorter, single-clause constructions that stated the reason or promise directly without such softening devices. This gender-related variation shows that the pragmatic competence of sixth-semester English Education students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang in constructing English apologies is realized differently between female and male students: both groups share the same core strategy of Expression of Regret, but they draw on a different mix of supporting strategies elaboration through explanation, personal accountability, or a brief single-strategy apology and they shift that mix differently once the social distance and severity of the offense change. This confirms that the students' pragmatic competence in constructing

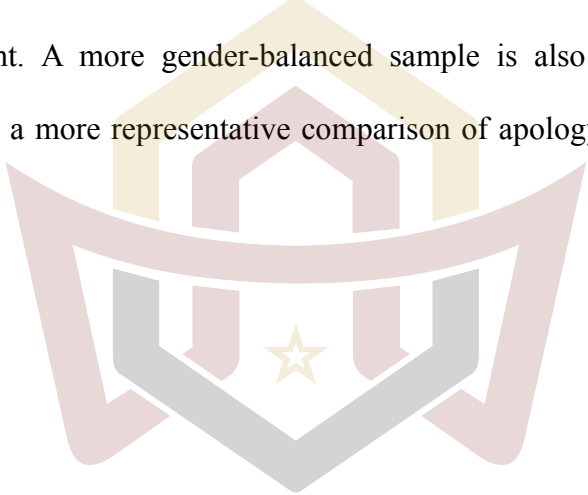
English apologies is not simply present or absent, but is shaped jointly by gender and by the social variables of the situation itself.

## **B. Suggestion**

Based on the conclusions above, the following suggestions are offered to English lecturers and educators, students, and future researchers.

- 1 For English Lecturers and Educators. Since Expression of Regret combined with Explanation or Account was the students' dominant apology pattern, lecturers are suggested to design instructional activities that draw students' attention to the fuller range of apology strategies available, encouraging them to move beyond a bare expression of regret and to elaborate their apologies according to the social context such as power, distance, and the severity of the offense using appropriate explanations, acknowledgements of fault, or promises. This is expected to strengthen the pragmatic competence students will need in their future role as English teachers.
- 2 For Students. Students are suggested to be more aware that a socially appropriate apology in English often requires more than a single expression of regret. Considering the social distance, power relation, and severity of the offense when deciding which combination of strategies to use is expected to help students communicate more effectively and appropriately in both academic and everyday interactions.
- 3 For Future Researchers. Since this study analyzed students' responses to only two of the six situations included in the DCT instrument Situation 1

(heavy FTA weight) and Situation 6 (light FTA weight) and involved an unequal number of female and male participants, future researchers are suggested to extend the analysis to the remaining four DCT situations (Situations 2 through 5), which represent moderate FTA weights and different combinations of power, distance, and imposition, in order to examine whether the strategy patterns identified in this study remain consistent across the full range of social variables covered by the instrument. A more gender-balanced sample is also recommended to allow for a more representative comparison of apology strategies across gender.



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