

**DISSECTING GENDER-BASED DIFFERENCES IN APOLOGY
STRATEGIES AMONG EFL LEARNERS AT UIN AR-RANIRY**

THESIS

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THESIS

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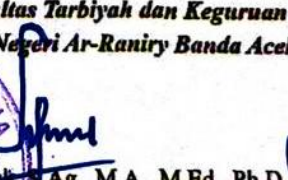
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Dissecting Gender-Based Differences in Apology Strategies among EFL Learners at UIN Ar-Raniry

Adalah benar-benar karya saya, kecuali semua kutipan dan referensi yang disebutkan sumbernya. Apabila terdapat kesalahan dan kekeliruan di dalamnya, maka akan sepenuhnya menjadi tanggung jawab saya. Demikianlah surat pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sesungguhnya.

Banda Aceh, 12 Mei 2026

Saya yang membuat pernyataan



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The researcher realizes that this thesis is far from perfect and still has limitations in terms of content, analysis, and presentation. Therefore, constructive suggestions and criticism are highly welcomed for the improvement of this study and for future research in related fields.

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to find out the types of apology strategies used by male and female students and to see how they express those strategies differently. This research used a qualitative descriptive method. The data were collected through a discourse completion test (DCT) and semi-structured interviews with students of UIN Ar-Raniry. The results show that both male and female students use several apology strategies, such as saying sorry, giving explanations, admitting mistakes, offering repair, and showing concern. Saying “sorry” is the most commonly used strategy and usually appears at the beginning. The findings also show that students often combine more than one strategy in their responses. In addition, the difference between male and female students is not in the types of strategies they use, but in how they express them. Female students tend to give more detailed and expressive apologies, while male students are more direct and simple. Overall, both groups are able to use apology strategies properly in communication.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

A. Background of Study

Apologizing is a complex form of speech act that can involve either a single strategy or a combination of several at once (Salgado, 2011). The choice of strategy is influenced by various factors, such as the severity of the offense, the speaker's level of remorse, the nature of the relationship between the speaker and the listener, and how culturally acceptable the apology is. Moreover, the way apologies are expressed often differ between cultures, making it challenging for second-language learners to apply these strategies accurately (Jones and Adrefiza, 2017). As a result, inaccurate use of speech acts can create communication gaps, cause misunderstandings, and leave negative impressions on native speakers.

Language functions not only as a tool for communication but also plays a significant role in expressing identity, including gender, age, and social roles. According to Ehrlich and Meyerhoff (2017), linguistic practices reflect societal structures, and gendered language use is shaped by cultural and institutional norms. In this case, variation in speech—such as intonation, vocabulary, or politeness—often signals one's social positioning. Furthermore, speech acts such as apologies, requests, and compliments demonstrate how language practices are influenced by social identity and interactional context (Ehrlich and Meyerhoff, 2017).

An apology is a speech act that has been widely examined in various languages and cultures, highlighting the universal nature of apology strategies (Nureddeen, 2008). However, many experts argue that the way these strategies are expressed can differ across languages and cultures, influenced by their purpose, usage patterns, and frequency (Hitomi, 2017). Furthermore, pragmatic transfer from a speaker's native language to the target language also influences how apology strategies are used (Hitomi, 2017). It is important to note that previous studies have shown that females tend to use more polite and emotionally expressive apology forms, while males may prefer more direct and solution-focused strategies (Al-Sallal and Ahmed, 2020; Ogiermann, 2008; Ayubadiah, 2014).

Based on the researcher's initial observations in the English Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry, differences in the way students express apologies can be noticed in daily interactions. In several academic and peer communication situations, male and female students appear to use different apology expressions. Some students tend to express apologies directly and briefly, while others provide additional explanations or emotional expressions. This indicates that gender may influence the use of apology strategies in English communication.

Recent research continues to support the role of gender in shaping apology behavior. For instance, Al-Sallal and Ahmed (2020) found that both male and female Jordanian Arabic speakers tend to use multiple apology strategies, although their preferences and frequencies varied slightly. In a separate study, Elasfar and Mustafa (2021) conducted a systematic review and emphasized how cultural context, power dynamics, and social distance influence the use of apology and request strategies among Arabic EFL learners. Meanwhile, Nisa and Sutrisno (2018) analyzed apology strategies in the Harry Potter movie series and concluded that social factors such as relative power and familiarity shaped the linguistic choices made by characters, with a majority employing indirect strategies like explanation or justification.

Within the Indonesian EFL context, Akmal et al. (2022) explored gender-based differences in politeness strategies among students in university of Aceh. Their findings showed that male students favored more direct and confident expressions (positive politeness), whereas female students tended to be more cautious and polite (negative politeness). Although their study did not focus on apology strategies, it demonstrated that gender significantly influences pragmatic behavior even within a shared institutional setting. This suggests that apology strategies, like other forms of politeness, may also differ by gender.

While these studies provide valuable insights into apology strategies and politeness, research focusing specifically on gender-based differences in apology strategies among EFL learners in Indonesian Islamic university contexts remains limited. Consequently, this study seeks to examine how male and female students at UIN Ar-Raniry employ apology strategies in English and to analyze the extent to

which gender influences their pragmatic choices. Understanding these differences is essential for developing English language instruction that is both culturally sensitive and socially responsive.

As English Education students, they have learned about pragmatics, politeness, and speech acts in their academic courses. Ideally, this knowledge should help them use appropriate apology expressions in real communication. However, in actual interactions, students may express apologies in different ways, and it remains unclear how gender influences their choice of apology strategies. At UIN Ar-Raniry, students are introduced to linguistic and pragmatic concepts, including apology strategies. However, it is still uncertain whether this knowledge is fully applied in their daily communication. In addition, differences between male and female students in using apology strategies have not been clearly identified. Therefore, this gap encourages the researcher to investigate how male and female EFL students use apology strategies in real communication contexts at UIN Ar-Raniry.

B. Research Questions

1. What are the types of apology strategies used by male and female students of the English Department at UIN Ar-Raniry?
2. How do male and female English learners differ in their use of apology strategies?

C. Research Aims

1. To identify the types of apology strategies used by male and female students of the English Department at UIN Ar-Raniry.
2. To analyze the differences in how male and female English learners use apology strategies.

D. Significance of The Study

1. **For EFL Students:** This study provides valuable insights for EFL students into how apology strategies vary between genders in real-life academic interactions. By understanding these differences, students can develop more effective and contextually appropriate communication skills, particularly in situations involving interpersonal sensitivity such

as making mistakes or maintaining social harmony. The findings can also raise students' awareness of pragmatic competence as an essential component of language proficiency.

- 2. For EFL Teachers:** The results of this study are expected to help EFL educators better understand how male and female learners differ in their use of apology strategies. This knowledge can inform teaching practices related to pragmatics, speech acts, and sociolinguistics. Teachers may incorporate gender-aware communicative tasks and foster classroom discussions on politeness and face-saving strategies, encouraging students to reflect on their own language use in real contexts.
- 3. For Future Researchers:** This research contributes to the limited body of literature on gender-based pragmatic variation among Indonesian EFL learners. It can serve as a reference for future studies exploring gender, speech acts, and intercultural pragmatics in educational contexts. Future researchers may build upon this study to examine other speech acts, expand to different institutions, or explore the influence of cultural and social variables in greater depth.

E. Terminology

1. Gender Differences

Gender differences in communication have become a significant area of study. Gender refers to the distinctions between males and females, each having unique communication styles. A study by Mellor et al. (2012) revealed that women are generally more empathetic, while men tend to be less forgiving. According to Itakura and Tsui (2004), men often control the topic of conversation and focus more on their own interests, which may leave women feeling undervalued. Both genders, however, can engage in communication strategies such as showing and acknowledging emotions, allowing others to speak, expressing regret through symbolic acts, demonstrating empathy, and listening without judgment. These patterns are

commonly observed in everyday interactions and are often influenced by psychological or cultural factors.

2. Apology Strategies

In pragmatic studies, apology strategies are part of expressive speech acts that aim to restore social relationships after a norm violation has occurred. According to Leech (2014), most apologies in English tend to be routine and formulaic. Despite this, he identifies three primary semantic strategies commonly used when apologizing. These include: expressing the speaker's regret, requesting forgiveness or pardon from the listener, and using performative expressions, such as explicitly stating an apology. Research by Irawan et al. (2021) indicates that Indonesian students tend to use a combination of IFID and Explanation in their apologies. Wardoyo (2016) observed that students vary their strategies based on social roles, using more complex combinations in formal settings. Hamzah (2023) reported that both male and female students use all five strategies, with IFID being the most common and Promise of Forbearance the least. These studies show that apology strategies are influenced by social context and gender.

3. EFL Learners

EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners are individuals learning English in settings where the language is not commonly spoken in daily life. Nugraha, Lustyantie, and Chaeruman (2022) EFL learners are expected to develop autonomous, self-determined learning behaviors in classrooms where English is taught as a foreign language, especially in non-English-speaking countries. This study specifically focuses on students from the English Department at Ar-Raniry Islamic University in Banda Aceh.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews the relevant literature related to gender differences in language use, apology theory, classifications of apology strategies, and previous studies related to the present research..

A. Gender Differences

Gender refers to the social, cultural, and psychological characteristics associated with being male or female. It influences how individuals behave, interact, and communicate within society. Gender is not only related to biological differences but also to socially constructed roles, expectations, and identities. In communication, gender may affect how individuals express ideas, emotions, and interpersonal meanings. As Talbot (2010, p. 3) states, “Gender affects how we act in the world and how the world treats us. This includes the language we use, and the language used about us.” This suggests that language plays an important role in constructing and maintaining gender identities.

Some languages distinguish vocabulary based on gender. For example, in French and German, words are categorized into masculine, feminine, and neutral forms. In contrast, English does not have such a grammatical system, but it still uses gender-related terms, such as actor–actress, bachelor–spinster, or widow–widower. For example, the sentence “Mary is John's widow” is acceptable, while “John is Mary's widow” is not. Wardhaugh (2006) argues that such distinctions are culturally driven. Phrases like “my cousin is a steelworker” and “my friend is a nurse” illustrate how gender assumptions persist people tend to picture the steelworker as male and the nurse as female, even though the opposite could be true.

In fact, there is no deliberate aim to discriminate between genders through paired terms or the interpretation of gender-neutral words although some may perceive it that way. Social factors also play a role in shaping these perceptions. Historically, the belief that most steelworkers are men and most nurses are women

has influenced how people associate certain jobs with specific genders, often based on visibility and professional dominance in those roles. In recent times, several terms have been modified to encourage gender inclusivity, such as replacing chairman with chairperson and policeman with police officer (Wardhaugh, 2006).

Recent research continues to show that men and women often use language differently. For example, women usually use more descriptive words, especially color terms and emotional expressions. A study by Al-Ali et al. (2022) found that female speakers in Jordan used more color-related vocabulary than males. This supports earlier ideas that women tend to describe things in more detail. In addition, studies also show that women often speak with a higher pitch and more expressive tone. Leyns et al. (2024) and Papeleu et al. (2025) found that both cisgender and transgender women use wider pitch ranges than men. These differences are not just biological (like shorter vocal tracts in women), but are also influenced by how society expects men and women to speak. These studies suggest that gender affects how people speak—not just the words they choose, but also how they say them.

Jiang (2023) explains that communication in China reveals how men tend to use more direct and assertive language, typically aimed at demonstrating competence and authority. In contrast, women are more likely to employ indirect and affiliative speech, which serves to foster emotional connection and maintain social harmony. Women's inclination toward relational talk, including subtle gossip or emotionally supportive discourse, reflects their communicative goals of preserving closeness and reinforcing interpersonal bonds. Meanwhile, men's conflict-oriented speech patterns often serve to uphold status hierarchies and emphasize individual independence.

Recent research emphasizes that gender influences the use of apology strategies in communication. Women tend to apologize more frequently, especially in situations involving social relationships or emotional closeness. This pattern is linked to their tendency to prioritize harmony and empathy in interactions (Schumann and Ross, 2010). For example, women are often willing to say “sorry” even for small inconveniences as a way to maintain positive social connections. Men, on the other hand, generally apologize less often and usually only for serious

transgressions. Their use of apologies is more likely to reflect acknowledgment of responsibility rather than emotional connection (Coates, 2015). Social norms that associate masculinity with authority and emotional control may discourage men from apologizing, as doing so could be perceived as a sign of weakness (Holmes, 2013). Understanding these gendered differences in apology strategies is important, as they play a key role in maintaining relationships and resolving conflicts in everyday interactions.

B. Apology Theory

Apologies are considered a core part of interpersonal communication that aim to repair social relationships after a norm or expectation has been violated. In more recent scholarship, apologies are defined as speech acts that acknowledge the speaker's responsibility for an offense and express a desire to restore harmony (Ishihara and Cohen, 2021). They are deeply connected to both speech act theory and politeness theory, as they involve managing face-threatening acts while preserving social balance (Kadar and Haugh, 2017).

Ogiermann (2019) highlights that apologies are typically produced when a speaker recognizes that their action—whether intentional or accidental—has caused harm, inconvenience, or social disruption. The apology, then, functions as a redressive act intended to address the damage and reaffirm mutual respect. Furthermore, recent research emphasizes that effective apologies can prevent the escalation of conflict and restore trust, especially in culturally diverse or formal settings (Culpeper, Haugh, and Kadar, 2017). As such, apologies are not only linguistic tools but also social strategies for maintaining relationships, reputations, and cooperative interaction.

In evaluating whether an apology is necessary, the speaker must take into account both the positive face (the desire to be appreciated) and negative face (the desire for autonomy) of both themselves and the hearer (Culpeper, Haugh, and Kadar, 2017). This face-sensitive orientation aligns closely with politeness theory and illustrates the pragmatic weight of apologies in interaction. Furthermore, the choice of apology strategy is influenced by multiple situational factors, most

notably the perceived severity of the offense and the relative power or social distance between the interlocutors (Ishihara and Cohen, 2021). In formal or hierarchical relationships, speakers may opt for more elaborate or deferential apology forms to account for the hearer's higher status or sensitivity to offense.

Apologies, therefore, are deeply embedded in the social structure of communication, and their successful execution depends on the speaker's awareness of social norms, relationship dynamics, and the contextual expectations of appropriateness (Kadar and Haugh, 2017).

1. Apology Strategies Classification

Apology strategies have been classified in various ways by different scholars. Olshtain and Cohen (1983), for instance, identified five main types: expression of apology, acknowledgement of responsibility, explanation, offer of repair, and promise of forbearance. Later, Trosborg (1995) expanded this framework into eight categories: expression of apology, explanation or account of the situation, acknowledgement of responsibility, offer of repair, promise of forbearance, concern for hearer, rejection, and minimizing of degree of offense. This study adopts Trosborg's (1995) classification because it provides a more comprehensive model that is particularly relevant for analyzing EFL learners' use of apology strategies.

a. Expression of Apology

Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFIDs)—also referred to as expressions of remorse, conventional, or formulaic apologies—are among the most widely used forms of expressing regret (Todey, 2011). Each language has its own typical IFIDs. In English, the most common examples include “I’m sorry,” “Excuse me,” and “Pardon me.” English speakers also use performative verbs such as “apologize,” “forgive,” and “excuse.” In Indonesian, the word “*Maaf*” is the most frequently used apology performative.

Expressions of apology can be broken down into several subcategories. First, an expression of regret is often signaled through “I’m sorry” and similar phrases. Second, an offer of apology is expressed with phrases like “I apologize.” Finally, a request for forgiveness may appear as “Excuse me,” “Pardon me,” and similar expressions.

In many cases, the speaker adds intensifiers to IFIDs to emphasize sincerity or the seriousness of the offense. This intensification is typically achieved through adverbs (e.g., “I’m really sorry,” “I’m very sorry”) or repetition (e.g., “I’m really, really sorry”). The adverb “really” is especially common in English (Ogiermann, 2009). The use of intensifiers often depends on the severity of the offense and the relative status of the hearer.

b. Explanation or Account of the Situation

In the field of pragmatics, one of the frequently employed strategies in performing an apology is providing an explanation or account of the situation. This strategy entails offering reasons or contextual information to justify the offense, either alongside or instead of a direct apology. The speaker typically presents external factors, such as unexpected events or unavoidable circumstances, to reduce the perception of personal responsibility.

Recent studies have confirmed the prevalence and pragmatic function of this strategy across different linguistic and cultural settings. Chen, Lu, and Wei (2021), in their study of Chinese EFL learners’ email communication, observed that learners frequently included explanations when apologizing. These explanations often co-occurred with direct apology expressions and acknowledgment of responsibility, suggesting that learners use explanations to enhance politeness and clarity in communication.

c. Acknowledgement of Responsibility

The acknowledgement of responsibility is a central strategy in apologetic discourse, wherein the speaker admits fault or accepts blame for the offense committed. This strategy signals the offender’s awareness of

their wrongdoing and often functions as the core of an effective apology (Solikhah and Masruddin, 2020).

Recent studies elaborate that this strategy may range from full and explicit acceptance of blame to more indirect or nuanced expressions. In a cross-cultural study by Alsulaihib (2021), this strategy was frequently used by EFL learners to demonstrate sincerity and social awareness, particularly in high-stakes interactions. Four commonly recognized sub-strategies have been outlined in recent works:

a. Acceptance of Blame

Acceptance of Blame involves a direct acknowledgment of the offense, often accompanied by expressions of regret or guilt, such as “It’s my fault” or “I shouldn’t have done that” (Alsulaihib, 2021).

b. Expressing Self-Deficiency

Expressing Self-Deficiency is an indirect admission where the speaker blames their own limitations, e.g., “I was confused” or “I wasn’t paying attention” (Solikhah and Masruddin, 2020).

c. Recognizing the Hearer’s Right to an Apology

Recognizing the Hearer’s Right to an Apology reflects an admission through acknowledgment of the hearer’s feelings or expectations, for instance, “You’re right to be upset.”

d. Expressing Lack of Intent

Expressing Lack of Intent is used to stress that the offense was not intentional, such as “I didn’t mean to hurt you,” which often co-occurs with other strategies like explanation or offer of repair (Fitriani and Yuliana, 2020).

Furthermore, denial of responsibility can also be seen as part of this strategy's spectrum. In some interactions, the speaker may refuse to apologize by shifting blame or rejecting the offense altogether for example, “It wasn’t my fault” or “There’s no reason for you to be angry.” While not apologetic in nature, such responses still reflect the speaker's orientation toward the responsibility at hand (Solikhah and Masruddin, 2020).

These diverse realizations of responsibility acknowledgment highlight the complexity of interpersonal pragmatics and demonstrate how apology strategies are tailored according to the speaker's intention, social relationship, and cultural norms.

d. Offer of Repair

The offer of repair strategy is utilized when the offender seeks to remedy physical harm or rectify inconvenience caused by their actions. Typically invoked in situations where tangible damage has occurred, this strategy may take one of two forms:

- a. Specific offer of repair: A concrete promise to address the damage (e.g., "I'll pay for the broken window").
- a. General offer of repair: A vague commitment (e.g., "I'll see what I can do") that signals willingness to make amends without committing to a precise action (Hamzah et al., 2022).

The effectiveness of repair offer depends significantly on social context. When direct reparation is not possible or is refused, speakers may resort to compensation, which includes alternative forms of reparation, such as "You can use my new book" (Sun et al., 2023). Both repair and compensation are pivotal in fulfilling face-needs and maintaining relationships.

e. Promise of Forbearance

The promise of forbearance is a pragmatic apology strategy employed when the offender acknowledges potential for repeated transgressions and commits, in the future, to refrain from similar behavior. Typically signaled by future-tense or performative verbs like "promise," this strategy signals a sincere effort to take responsibility and re-establish trust (Ismaili-Alaoui, 2024).

A recent socio-pragmatic study among Moroccan Arabic speakers reports that promise of forbearance was used in 91 recorded apologetic acts (approx. 10% of total), particularly in situations involving trusted

relationships (e.g., damaging a professor's book) (Ismaili-Alaoui, 2024). Often, speakers used formulaic expressions such as "I promise I won't..." to demonstrate their commitment not just to apologize but to change future behavior—thus addressing the hearer's need for reassurance.

f. Concern for Hearer

The Concern for Hearer strategy functions as a face-supporting, empathy-driven component within apology discourse. It is particularly applicable when the offender has caused emotional or physical inconvenience, and is characterized by expressions such as "Are you okay?", "Did I hurt you?", or "Have you been waiting long?", which signal genuine care for the hearer's well-being (Song and Liu, 2023).

g. Rejection

The rejection apology strategy involves the offender refusing to acknowledge fault or denying the necessity of an apology. This behavior may take several forms, such as explicit denial of responsibility, implicit denial, justification, blaming others, or attacking the complainer. For example, saying "It's not my fault" or "She was the one who told me to do it" are ways to avoid accountability. Such tactics often hinder trust building and complicate interpersonal reconciliation (Rahmani et al., 2022).

h. Minimalizing of Degree of Offense

This strategy is employed when the offender avoids full responsibility but attempts to downplay the seriousness of the offense. It can be divided into three sub-categories:

- a. Downplaying the offense by suggesting that the incident is not significant. For example: "Don't worry about it, it's nothing serious."
- b. Questioning the preconditions by challenging the basis of the complaint, often expressing doubt or skepticism toward the accuser. For example: "Since when did I promise to help you with that?"
- c. Shifting blame to others by attributing partial responsibility to a third party or even the complainant. For example: "I told you to check with

him first, not me.” In this case, the offender places blame on others involved.

The rejection strategy refers to situations where the offender refuses to accept fault or denies the necessity of an apology. It may involve several subtypes, such as explicit denial of responsibility, implicit denial, justification, shifting blame, or even attacking the complainant. For example, saying “It’s not my fault,” or “She was the one who told me to do it” are ways to escape accountability. These forms of rejection often complicate the process of interpersonal repair and trust rebuilding (Kim and Park, 2022).

Such strategies are often seen in both personal and organizational communication. In Korean corporate crises, denial and scapegoating are common tactics used to deflect blame (Lee and Chon, 2022). Moreover, cross-cultural studies reveal that rejection patterns may vary depending on cultural values, where some individuals or institutions prefer attacking the accuser over admitting fault (Park and Cameron, 2018).

C. Gender Differences in Apology Behavior

In pragmatics, apology is not only understood as an expression of regret, but also as a social act used to repair relationships, restore harmony, and maintain interpersonal communication. Although apology strategies may appear similar across speakers, previous studies have shown that social factors, including gender, may influence how apologies are delivered. Differences may appear in the level of directness, emotional expression, politeness, and the way speakers respond to the listener’s feelings.

One of the main perspectives used to understand gender differences in language is communication style theory. According to Deborah Tannen, men and women often develop different communication patterns because they are socialized through different interactional experiences. Tannen (2013) explains that women generally use language to build connection, maintain emotional closeness, and

create mutual understanding. In contrast, men often use language to exchange information, solve problems, and express independence. These communication differences may influence how speakers perform speech acts, including apologies. For example, some speakers may focus more on emotional reassurance, while others may prioritize clarity and problem resolution.

This perspective is supported by more recent sociolinguistic research. Alahmad and Alkasassbeh (2020) found that gender influences the linguistic forms used in apology. Their study showed that female speakers tended to use more polite expressions, supportive language, and longer responses when apologizing. Male speakers, on the other hand, often produced shorter and more direct apology expressions. The researchers argue that these differences are closely related to how speakers manage interpersonal relationships and politeness in social interaction.

Further evidence was reported by Al-Azraqi et al. (2024), who investigated gender differences in apology strategies in everyday communication. Their findings revealed that both male and female speakers used similar apology strategies, such as direct apology expressions, explanations, acknowledgement of responsibility, and offers of repair. However, differences appeared in how these strategies were prioritized and combined. Female participants were found to show stronger emotional involvement, more detailed explanations, and greater attention to the listener's feelings. In contrast, male participants tended to emphasize practical solutions, responsibility, and direct responses to the problem.

These theories collectively suggest that gender does not necessarily determine what apology strategies are used, but it may influence how those strategies are expressed in communication. Communication style theory explains the broader social and interpersonal differences between male and female speakers, while recent empirical studies provide evidence that these differences also appear in apology behavior. Therefore, these theoretical perspectives are relevant to understanding how male and female EFL learners may express apology strategies differently in academic and social contexts.

D. Previous Studies

Elasfar and Mustafa (2021) conducted a systematic review of fifteen scholarly articles focusing on apology and request strategies among Arab EFL learners. Their study found that the most commonly used apology strategies were Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFID), explanations, expressions of responsibility, and offers of repair. These strategies reflected a strong influence from sociocultural norms, such as levels of social distance and power dynamics between speakers. The study also emphasized the importance of context in determining whether learners chose direct or indirect forms of apology. The researchers concluded that pragmatic competence in apology-making is shaped not only by linguistic knowledge but also by cultural expectations. However, their study did not explore gender-based variations in apology strategy use. Thus, this research extends their findings by examining gendered pragmatics in an Indonesian EFL context.

Nisa and Sutrisno (2018) analyzed apology strategies within a fictional context by studying speech acts in the *Harry Potter* movie series. Their research aimed to uncover how characters apologized depending on relational status and social power. They found that explanations or accounts of cause were the most frequent form of apology strategy used, often paired with indirect expressions rather than blunt admissions of fault. This tendency highlighted the pragmatic function of protecting face and maintaining politeness in social interactions. Even though the data were drawn from scripted dialogue, the results still reflected real-life patterns of language use and social negotiation. Nisa and Sutrisno's research contributes to understanding how apology functions as a socially conditioned act, even in fictional settings. While informative, the study did not investigate the influence of gender differences or how EFL learners manage apologies in educational contexts. This current research, therefore, takes a different direction by focusing on real-world language production among male and female EFL students.

Al-Sallal and Ahmed (2020) investigated gender-based differences in apology strategies among native Arabic speakers in Jordan. They used a discourse

completion test (DCT) to collect responses from male and female participants in various apology situations. The results showed that both genders relied heavily on IFID and explanations, but women tended to use more polite, expressive, and empathetic forms. Men, while using similar strategies, were generally more direct and less elaborate in their apologies. The study concluded that while overall strategy choice was similar, the intensity and linguistic politeness of the apologies varied by gender. Cultural values surrounding gender roles were seen as a possible factor in shaping these differences. The researchers emphasized that gender identity plays a role in how speakers express regret and maintain interpersonal relationships. This study is valuable in highlighting how pragmatic acts like apologizing are deeply embedded in both gendered norms and language use. However, the research was limited to native speakers and did not explore EFL learners' language production. This study builds upon theirs by applying a gender-based lens to apology strategies among EFL students in Indonesia, specifically at UIN Ar-Raniry.

In the Indonesian EFL context, Akmal et al. (2022) conducted a study at UIN Ar-Raniry that explored gender differences in politeness strategies among English Education students. Their findings showed that male students preferred positive politeness often using more direct and confident expressions while female students leaned toward negative politeness, expressing themselves more cautiously and politely. Using Brown and Levinson's theory, the study confirmed that gender influences pragmatic language use even within the same institutional environment. While their research focused on general politeness strategies, it did not specifically address apology expressions. Therefore, the current study extends their findings by examining gender-based differences in apology strategies among EFL learners at the same institution, offering a more targeted look at pragmatic language use in face-threatening acts like apologizing.

Despite the valuable contributions of these studies, none have specifically examined gender-based differences in apology strategies among EFL learners in an Islamic university context in Indonesia. Therefore, the present study aims to fill that gap by dissecting how male and female EFL students at UIN Ar-Raniry

employ various apology strategies in English. By doing so, this research seeks to uncover distinct patterns of pragmatic behavior and offer deeper insights into how gender may shape apology expressions in EFL settings within Indonesian higher education



CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research design, participants involved, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques. Each of these components is described to provide a clear understanding of the procedures followed by the researcher.

A. Research Design

In this study, the researchers employed a descriptive qualitative research method. Qualitative research is commonly used to explore, understand, and interpret social and human phenomena in their natural contexts. As stated by Nugrahani and Hum (2014), qualitative research is utilized to explore and interpret the meaning behind social and human-related phenomena. Rather than emphasizing measurable or statistically analyzable data, this approach relies on descriptive analysis to explain the subject being investigated. Gill (2020) defines this as a qualitative strategy aimed at gaining insights into individuals' perspectives through detailed interviews.

A descriptive qualitative design was considered appropriate for this study because the objective of this research was to explore and analyze the apology strategies used by male and female EFL learners. Since apology strategies are closely related to pragmatic competence and contextual language use, they cannot be adequately explained through statistical analysis alone. Therefore, this design enabled the researcher to identify, classify, and interpret the participants' responses in depth.

Furthermore, this study focused on examining gender differences in apology strategies among EFL learners at UIN Ar-Raniry. By using a qualitative approach, the researcher was able to identify language patterns, understand the participants' choices in using apology strategies, and describe how male and female students express apologies in different situations.

B. Research Participant

The participants in this study were 10 EFL students from the English Education Department (PBI) at UIN Ar-Raniry, consisting of five male and five female students. This number was selected because, according to Creswell (2009), a sample size of about 10 is frequently enough in qualitative research to reach data saturation, where more interviews are unlikely to produce significantly new information. According to Ary et al. (2010), qualitative research commonly employs purposive sampling, where participants are selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. In this study, purposive sampling was applied to select participants who were considered suitable for providing meaningful data. The inclusion criteria for purposive sampling were as follows:

1. Male and female students of the English Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry.
2. Students who were categorized as EFL learners and actively used English in academic learning contexts.
3. Students who had completed or were currently taking courses related to Linguistics.

Participants who did not meet these criteria were not included in this study. All selected participants were sixth- and eighth-semester students who had completed courses related to Linguistics. This ensured that the participants had sufficient academic exposure to language use and communication in context, which was relevant to the focus of this study.

The participants came from diverse geographical and ethnic backgrounds. Most participants were from Aceh, including Aceh Besar, Banda Aceh, Pidie, Bireuen, and Abdya, and they belong to the Acehnese ethnic group. In addition, one participant was from Medan and another from Pematang Siantar, both of whom have a Javanese ethnic background. In terms of academic level, most participants were in the eighth semester, while others were in the sixth and fourth semesters. This indicates varying levels of academic experience among the participants.

Regarding language proficiency, the majority of participants were categorized at the intermediate level, while a few were at the basic level. Additionally, some participants had prior experience in language-related training, while others had not. This variation may influence their awareness and use of apology strategies. The inclusion of varied gender, academic levels, geographical origins, and personal backgrounds allows this study to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how apology strategies are used among EFL learners.

Before collecting the data, the participants were given clear information about the purpose of the study and what they would do during the research. They were told that joining the study was voluntary, and they could stop participating at any time without any negative consequences. All participants agreed to take part in the study before the data collection began. To protect their privacy, their real names were not used. Instead, pseudonyms were used in all data and reports. These kinds of ethical issues were crucial to qualitative research, particularly when working with student participants (Roberts and Hyatt, 2019).

C. Method of Data Collection

The data in this study were collected using two main methods: the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) and semi-structured interviews. These methods were chosen to obtain both elicited responses and in-depth explanations from the participants regarding their use of apology strategies.

Firstly, the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) was administered to all participants. The DCT consisted of several written scenarios representing situations that required the participants to express apologies. The DCT consisted of three written scenarios representing different social power relationships: high-power, equal-power, and low-power situations. These scenarios were designed to examine how participants expressed apologies in different social contexts. The participants were asked to provide their responses based on each situation. This method was used to elicit participants' apology strategies in a controlled and comparable

context, allowing the researcher to identify and analyze the types of strategies used by male and female students.

Secondly, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants after they completed the DCT. The interviews aimed to gain deeper insights into the participants' responses and to explore the reasons behind their choice of apology strategies. The semi-structured format allowed the researcher to ask guiding questions while also giving participants the flexibility to elaborate on their answers.

The data collection process was conducted in several stages. First, the researcher distributed the DCT to the participants and collected their written responses. Then, based on the DCT results, several participants were selected for interviews using purposive sampling. Finally, the interviews were conducted and recorded, and the data were transcribed for further analysis.

D. Method of Data Analysis

After collecting the data from the participants, the analysis process was conducted to answer the research questions. The data obtained from the Discourse Completion Task (DCT) and interviews were analyzed using a qualitative approach. According to Braun and Clarke (2019), thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns or themes within qualitative data.

According to Braun and Clarke (2019), The analysis was conducted through six stages. First, the researcher familiarized herself with the data by reading and reviewing the participants' DCT responses and interview transcripts repeatedly to gain a deeper understanding of the data. Second, the researcher generated initial codes by identifying relevant expressions, statements, and patterns related to apology strategies.

Third, the researcher searched for themes by grouping similar codes into broader categories. The participants' responses were then categorized based on established apology strategy frameworks. This process addressed the first research question regarding the types of apology strategies used by the participants. Fourth, the researcher reviewed the identified themes to make sure that they matched the coded data and reflected the participants' responses accurately. Fifth, the researcher

clearly defined each theme and gave appropriate names based on their meanings and their relevance to the research questions. And last stage, the researcher wrote up the analysis by clearly presenting the final findings. In this stage, the researcher chose important examples from the data and linked the results back to the research questions and theory.

To strengthen the credibility of the analysis, several strategies were applied. First, member checking was conducted by sharing summaries of the interview responses with the participants, allowing them to confirm or clarify their statements. Second, the researcher maintained a clear and transparent coding process to ensure that the analysis could be traced and verified. Such strategies aligned with Nowell et al. (2017), these strategies help ensure trustworthiness in thematic analysis. In the end, the identified themes were reviewed and interpreted in relation to the research questions and the theoretical framework of apology strategies.



CHAPTER IV

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the researcher presents the findings and discussion of this study. The data were obtained through apology scenarios and semi-structured interviews conducted with male and female students from the English Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry. The findings address the research questions stated in Chapter I, focusing on the types of apology strategies used by male and female students and the differences in how these strategies are performed across genders in apologizing.

A. Finding

This study was conducted using three scenarios in a Discourse Completion Task (DCT), followed by semi-structured interviews. The data obtained aimed to answer the research question about the types of apology strategies used by male and female students and the differences in the use of apology strategies between male and female students

The participants of this study consisted of ten students from the English Department at UIN Ar-Raniry. They were selected purposively, including five male and five female students. The male participants were identified by the initials M1, M2, M3, M4 and M5, while the female participants were F1, F2, F3, F4, and F5. Among the male participants, one was in the eighth semester and four were in the sixth semester. All female participants were in the eighth semester. All participants had taken linguistics classes, which indicates their familiarity with language use and pragmatic aspects.

The study also utilized semi-structured interviews to gain deeper insights into the participants' responses. Each interview lasted approximately 10–20 minutes, during which participants shared their opinions and experiences related to apology expressions in different situations. The findings from both the DCT and interviews were categorized into two main areas, as follows:

1. Types of apology strategies used by male and female students

The findings the first question obtained from both the DCT and semi-structured interviews, which are presented in the tables and explained further through the narrative discussion below.

Participant	IFID	Explanation or Account of the Situation	Acknowledgement of Responsibility	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	Concern for Hearer	Rejection	Minimizing of Degree of Offense
M1	I am vey sorry	I overslept	I take full responsibility, it was my mistake	Let me help you clean it or replace it.	I will not repeat it again			
	I'm so sorry		I didn't mean to spill	Let me help you pick up your papers				
	I'm really sorry					Are you okay?		
M2	I will apologize	Explain why I was late	Take responsibility					
	I will apologize I will apologize		That fell because of me	Help him pick up papers				
M3	I sincerely apologize	I overslept this morning	I take full responsibility		It won't happen again			I'm not in the mood
	I'm so sorry		That was my fault	Let me help clean, I'll replace it				
	Sorry about that	I didn't see you		Let me help you pick those up		Are you okay?		
M4	I will apologize			Help him make another note				I was just joking
	I will apologize make apology			Help collecting papers				
M5	I apologized	Because I fell asleep	Implicit (honesty, admitting fault)				This is not my mistake... your fault	It was an accident
	I apologize	Accident (stating it was an accident)		Replace writing/paper		Asking about notes		
	I apologize			Helping pick up papers		Showing care/help		
F1	I'm really sorry	I overslept this morning	I take full responsibility, it was my mistake			Thank you for your understanding	It was not fully my fault, it was unfair to say sorry	Misunderstanding
	I'm so sorry, Really sorry		I didn't mean to spill	Let me help you clean it or replace it.				
	I'm so sorry	I didn't see you		I'll help you clean it or rewrite the notes if needed		Are you okay?		
F2	I am very sorry	I overslept this morning			It won't happen again	Thank you for accepting it	I didn't do anything wrong	
	I'm so sorry		I didn't mean to do it	Let me help you clean it. I will buy you a new notebook,		Are you okay?		
	Sorry, I'm so sorry	I was walking too fast		help you pick these up		Are they all okay?		
F3	I sincerely apologize	I overslept	it was entirely my fault			Thank you for your understanding	I did nothing wrong so why should I say sorry?	I didn't mean to, it was an accident
	I'm so sorry		I didn't mean to spill	Let me help you clean it or replace it if it's ruined				
	I'm really sorry	I didn't see you		Help you pick up your papers		Are you okay?		
F4	I will apologize						I didn't apologize because I felt I didn't do anything wrong	
	I will apologize			Cleaning her book, replace it				
F5	I sincerely apologize	because I overslept		Help him to sort it out		Thank you for your understanding	I feel I'm not wrong... ego	
	Omg sorry...sorry		I didn't mean to	Let me help you clean it or replace anything that got damaged				
	I'm so sorry, sorry, my bad		My bad					It was an accident

a. Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID)/ Expression of Apology

Based on the findings, both male and female participants used IFIDs (Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices) as one of the most frequently used apology strategies. This strategy appeared through direct expressions such as “sorry,” “I’m sorry,” “I’m really sorry,” “I’m so sorry,” “I’m very sorry,” and “I sincerely apologize.” In most responses, these expressions became the participants’ first reaction before continuing with other strategies. This suggests that directly expressing regret was considered an important starting point in apologizing across different situations.

Male participants consistently began their apologies with direct expressions of regret. M1 stated, *“Sorry, this is my bad, and I want to apologize, and inshallah, I will promise not to do something wrong again.”* In a similar way, M3 explained, *“Usually I apologize, the word I use is like I am very sorry for my mistake.”* These responses indicate that male participants generally preferred to open their apologies with clear and straightforward expressions before continuing with other supporting strategies.

A similar pattern was also found among female participants. F1 explained, *“I’m sorry, I’m really sorry, or I apologize for that.”* Likewise, F2 stated, *“I’m so sorry I didn’t mean to ignore your message yesterday,”* while F3 expressed, *“I’m so sorry I didn’t see you.”* These responses indicate that female participants also relied heavily on direct apology expressions as the opening of their apologies.

Other participants also showed similar responses. M2 stated, *“I will say I’m sorry, it’s really my mistake,”* while M5 mentioned, *“I say like... I’m sorry.”* In female participants, F4 explained that she usually begins by saying, *“I apologize for the situation,”* while F5 simply stated, *“The first word I say is sorry, and after that I will connect it to my mistakes, and then, yeah, try to reach their apologize to me.”* Although the wording varied, all

participants consistently used direct expressions of apology in their responses.

From these findings, it can be seen that IFIDs were consistently used by both male and female participants in all situations, whether apologizing to lecturers, close friends, or junior students. The frequent use of expressions such as “sorry” and “I’m sorry” shows that participants viewed direct verbal apology as the first and most essential step in repairing social relationships after making a mistake.

b. Explanation or Account

Another apology strategy found in this study was explanation or account, where participants gave reasons or background information to explain why the mistake happened. Based on the findings, both male and female participants frequently used this strategy after expressing apology. This indicates that saying sorry alone was often not considered enough, and participants usually added explanations to help the offended person understand the situation more clearly.

Among male participants, explanations were commonly used in a direct and straightforward way. Based on participant’s responses, M1 stated, *“I’m very sorry for submitting my assignment late. I overslept and it was my mistake.”* Similarly, M2 explained in the interview, *“I will say I’m sorry, it’s really my mistake. And I will explain why I make a mistake.”* M3 also used a similar strategy by saying, *“I sincerely apologize for the late submission. I overslept this morning...”* These responses show that male participants often used explanation to clarify the cause of the mistake and avoid misunderstanding.

Female participants also showed strong use of this strategy, but their explanations tended to be more detailed and emotionally connected to the situation. For instance, F1 stated, *“I’m really sorry for submitting my assignment late. I overslept this morning, and it was my mistake.”* Similarly, F2 explained, *“I didn’t mean to ignore your message yesterday,”* and added

that she usually gives explanations so the other person understands her intentions. F3 also stated, *“I didn’t see you there.”* These responses suggest that female participants often used explanation not only to clarify the situation, but also to express sincerity and emotional awareness.

The use of explanation or account in these responses shows that participants often felt the need to provide context behind their mistakes. Rather than simply saying sorry, they tended to clarify what happened so that their apologies could be better understood by the other person.

c. Acknowledgement of Responsibility

In addition to expressing regret and giving explanations, many participants also showed a willingness to openly admit that the mistake was their own. This strategy, known as acknowledgement of responsibility, appeared when participants directly accepted blame or clearly recognized their role in causing the problem. In many cases, this strategy was used to make the apology sound more honest and convincing.

This can be observed in the responses of several male participants. M1 stated, *“I’m very sorry for submitting my assignment late. I overslept, and it was my mistake.”* Likewise, M2 explained during the interview, *“I will say I’m sorry, it’s really my mistake.”* A stronger example appeared in M3’s response, where he stated, *“I sincerely apologize for the late submission. I overslept this morning, and I take full responsibility.”* These responses show that admitting fault became an important part of how participants delivered their apologies.

The same tendency was also found in female participants. F1 stated, *“I’m really sorry for submitting my assignment late. I overslept this morning, and it was my mistake... I take full responsibility.”* Similarly, F3 expressed, *“I sincerely apologize for submitting my assignment late. I overslept, and it was entirely my fault.”* In another case, F4 also mentioned that she apologized because she realized that the situation happened due to her own mistake.

What stands out from these responses is that participants did not try to avoid blame or shift responsibility to other factors. Instead, many of them chose to openly admit their mistakes, suggesting that taking responsibility was seen as an important way to make their apologies feel more genuine and acceptable to the other person.

d. Offer of Repair

Another strategy that frequently appeared in the participants' responses was Offer of Repair. This strategy was used when participants tried to fix the situation or replace what had been damaged as a result of their mistake. Rather than only expressing regret, participants often showed their sincerity through concrete actions to solve the problem or reduce the impact of their actions on the offended person.

This strategy can be clearly seen in several male participants' responses. M1 stated, *"I'm so sorry! I didn't mean to spill the coffee on your notebook. Let me help you clean it or replace it."* Similarly, M3 also responded, *"..I'm so sorry! That was my fault. Let me help clean it. If it's damaged, I'll replace it."* A similar pattern was also found among female participants. F1 stated, *"I'll help you clean it or rewrite the notes if needed."* Likewise, F2 expressed, *"I will buy you a new notebook,"* showing a willingness to compensate for the damage.

Looking across these responses, it becomes clear that many participants did not rely on words alone when apologizing. They often followed their apologies with actions or solutions, showing that repairing the damage was an important part of how they expressed responsibility and rebuilt the relationship with the offended person.

e. Promise of Forbearance

Another apology strategy identified in the participants' responses was promise of forbearance. This strategy appeared when participants promised that they would not repeat the same mistake in the future. In many

cases, this strategy was used after expressing regret and admitting responsibility, showing an effort to rebuild trust and assure the offended person that the same situation would not happen again.

This can be seen in several participants' responses. For example, M1 stated, "*I take full responsibility, and I will not repeat it again.*" In the interview, he also mentioned, "*...and inshallah, I will promise not to do something wrong again.*" Similarly, M3 expressed, "*I assure you it won't happen again,*" showing a clear commitment to avoid repeating the same mistake in the future.

A similar pattern also appeared in female participants' responses. F1 stated, "*I'm really sorry for being late, it won't happen again.*" Likewise, F2 also said, "*I promise it won't happen again,*" when apologizing for submitting her assignment late. These responses show that participants often used future commitment as part of their apology, especially in situations involving responsibility and formal relationships.

What makes this strategy interesting is that participants were not only focused on fixing the current problem, but also on preventing the same mistake from happening again. Through these promises, participants appeared to strengthen the sincerity of their apologies while also rebuilding trust with the offended person.

f. Concern for the Hearer

Besides expressing regret and taking responsibility, participants also showed concern for the hearer in their apology responses. This strategy appeared when participants showed attention to the other person's condition, feelings, or well-being after the mistake occurred. Rather than focusing only on their own actions, participants also tried to make sure that the offended person was physically or emotionally okay.

This strategy can be seen in several responses across different situations. When apologizing after bumping into someone, M1 stated, "*I'm really sorry! Are you okay? Let me help you pick up your papers.*" Similarly,

M3 also said, “*..Sorry about that!... Are you okay?*” These responses show that participants did not only acknowledge their mistakes, but also immediately paid attention to the other person’s condition.

A similar pattern also appeared in female participants’ responses. F1 stated, “*I’m really sorry! Are you okay? Let me help you pick up your papers.*” Likewise, F2 expressed, “*Oops, sorry! I’m so sorry... Are they all okay?*” In another situation, F1 also asked her close friend, “*Are you okay with it?*” after accidentally spilling coffee on the notebook.

These responses suggest that apology was not only expressed through regret or responsibility, but also through empathy and care toward the offended person. By asking about the other person’s condition, participants appeared to show that maintaining the other person’s comfort and feelings was also an important part of apologizing.

g. Rejection

Another pattern found in the data shows that apology is not always given. In some situations, participants clearly choose not to apologize. This is known as rejection, where the speaker feels that they are not responsible for the mistake or believes that the situation is only a misunderstanding. Instead of saying sorry, they defend their position.

From the male participants, this strategy is usually expressed in a direct way. M5 said, “this is not my mistake... your fault,” which clearly shows that he refuses to take responsibility. M3 also explained that he would not apologize if he felt that he did nothing wrong. These responses show that male participants tend to reject apologizing in a straightforward manner, without adding much explanation.

Female participants also show rejection, but their way of expressing it is slightly different. F1 said, “*it was not fully my fault*” and “*it was unfair to say sorry.*” F2 stated, “*I didn’t do anything wrong,*” and F3 said, “*I did nothing wrong so why should I say sorry?*” These responses still

show rejection, but they are usually followed by some explanation. This makes their statements sound less direct and more like giving reasons.

This finding shows that apologizing is not automatic. Participants first think about whether they are really at fault. If they believe they are not wrong, they prefer not to apologize. In this case, keeping their sense of fairness becomes more important than simply saying sorry.

h. Minimizing of the Degree of Offence

Another strategy identified in the data is minimizing of the degree of offense, where the speaker tries to reduce the seriousness of the mistake. In this case, the speaker does not fully deny the mistake, but presents it as something small, unintentional, or not serious. This strategy helps make the situation feel lighter and less tense.

From the male participants, this strategy appears in simple and direct forms. For example, M4 said, “*I was just joking,*” and also added, “*it’s not on purpose.*” These expressions show that the speaker tries to explain that the action was not serious and was done without bad intention. Similarly, M3 mentioned, “*I’m not in the mood,*” which indirectly reduces the seriousness of his reaction by linking it to his emotional condition. These responses show that male participants often use short explanations to make the mistake seem less serious.

Female participants also use this strategy, but often in a more implicit way. F1 referred to the situation as a “*misunderstanding,*” while F2 used the word “*misunderstood.*” F3 also indicated that the action was unintentional by saying “*I didn’t mean to,*” and describing it as an accident. These expressions show that female participants also try to reduce the seriousness of the offense, but they often do it by explaining the situation rather than stating it directly.

This finding shows that participants sometimes try to protect the relationship by making the mistake appear less serious. Instead of focusing

only on guilt, they try to create a more relaxed situation so that the apology can be accepted more easily.

2. Differences in Apology Strategies Between Male and Female Students

This section explains the differences in how male and female participants express apology strategies based on the data. At a general level, both groups use similar strategies. However, the difference becomes clearer when we look at how often these strategies appear, how they are combined, and how detailed the responses are in actual utterances. Despite using similar strategy types, differences were found in how these strategies were prioritized and expressed by male and female participants. The findings the first question obtained from both the DCT and semi-structured interviews, which are presented in the tables and explained further through the narrative discussion below.

Theme	Initial Code	Evidence from Transcript	Interpretation
Differences in the Choice of Main Strategy	Direct apology first	M1: <i>“For the men, directly do something like apologize, and give a little bit explain.”</i>	Male participants tended to start with IFIDs (direct apology expressions) and added explanation only when needed.
	Solution-oriented apology	M3: <i>“If you make a problem, I want to settle it as fast as I can... just to the point.”</i>	Male participants viewed apology as a way to solve the problem quickly and efficiently.
	Explanation with apology	F1: <i>“I usually add an explanation after saying sorry because I want the person to understand the situation.”</i>	Female participants often combined IFIDs + Explanation or Account from the beginning.
	Clarifying intention	F2: <i>“I almost always add an explanation because I want them to know my intentions.”</i>	Female participants emphasized clarity, intention, and mutual understanding.

Theme	Initial Code	Evidence from Transcript	Interpretation
Differences in the Intensity of Apology Expressions	Simple and direct expression	M5: <i>"For men... it's easier... I'm sorry that I made a mistake... That's simple."</i>	Male participants expressed apology in a simple, direct, and practical way.
	Controlled emotional expression	M3: <i>"We don't use the intonation... just to the point."</i>	Male participants tended to minimize emotional expression in apologizing.
	Emotional involvement	F2: <i>"I need to be more expressive and show that I really care about their feelings."</i>	Female participants showed stronger emotional involvement in apologizing.
	Softer and longer apology	F3: <i>"Girls say sorry for everything... Girls also talk more and explain more."</i>	Female participants tended to use softer language and longer expressions.
Differences Based on the Interlocutor	Formal tone to females	M4: <i>"For a boy, I apologize more calmly. For a girl, I apologize more formally."</i>	Male participants adjusted their apology style based on the gender of the listener.
	Tone adjustment	M2: <i>"If I apologize to a female, we have to lower our intonation."</i>	Male participants became more careful in tone and delivery toward female listeners.
	Softer words to females	F1: <i>"When I apologize to females, I usually use softer words and a gentle tone."</i>	Female participants adapted their language to maintain emotional comfort.
	Physical/emotional closeness	F3: <i>"Sometimes I even hug them a little."</i>	Female participants often used emotional warmth or supportive gestures.
Different Strategies in Similar Situations	Emotional comfort affects strategy	F5: <i>"When I apologize to women, I feel like I can be myself... but with men, I feel shy."</i>	Female participants changed their apology style based on emotional comfort and confidence.

Theme	Initial Code	Evidence from Transcript	Interpretation
	Longer explanation to close females	F5: <i>“The more explanation is to the woman.”</i>	Female participants tended to provide more explanation in emotionally comfortable situations.
	Emotional closeness supports directness	M1: <i>“For the close friend... we have same emotional... we can use direct way.”</i>	Male participants preferred direct apologies when relational closeness already existed.
	Immediate problem-solving	M3: <i>“I want to settle it as fast as I can.”</i>	Male participants prioritized efficiency and quick conflict resolution.

a. Differences in the Choice of Main Strategy

One of the clearest differences appeared in the strategy participants chose as their starting point when apologizing. Male participants generally tended to begin with a direct apology expression (IFIDs) before adding further explanation if needed. This pattern was clearly reflected in M1’s interview *“For the men, directly do something like apologize, and give a little bit explain. But, I think the woman, maybe she will explain, and after that, apologize.”*

A similar view was also expressed by M2, who explained *“If the mistake is serious, I use a direct apology. But if it’s something small, like with friends or my best friend, I might be more indirect.”* This tendency was further supported by M3, who stated: *“Because for me, if you make a problem, I want to settle it as fast as I can... Just like, I’m so sorry for that, Just to the point, and then it’s all clear.”*

These responses suggest that male participants often preferred to begin with direct apology expressions and viewed apology as a way to resolve the situation efficiently before giving additional explanation. In contrast, female participants tended to combine Expression of Apology (IFIDs) with Explanation or Account from the beginning, often providing more detailed context about their mistake. This pattern was clearly shown in F1’s interview:

“I’m sorry, I’m really sorry, or I apologize for that. I’m really sorry for being late, it won’t happen again. And I usually add an explanation after saying sorry because I want the person to understand the situation and know that I didn’t do it on purpose.”

A similar pattern also appeared in F2’s response:

“I almost always add an explanation because I want them to know my intentions, not just the mistake. I think it depends on how close I am to the person. If I’m really close to them, I might start indirectly, like explaining first, then say sorry. But if it’s someone I respect, like a lecturer, I go straight to the point and apologize clearly.”

These responses indicate that female participants often considered explanation as an important part of their apology. Rather than only expressing regret directly, they also tried to make sure the other person understood their intentions and the situation behind the mistake.

These findings show a clear difference in how male and female participants began their apologies. Male participants generally started with direct apology expressions such as “sorry” or “I apologize,” followed by brief explanations when needed. Their responses tended to be more straightforward and solution-focused. In contrast, female participants often combined apology expressions with explanation from the beginning. They tended to provide more context and clarify their intentions. This suggests that male participants prioritized directness, while female participants emphasized clarity and mutual understanding.

b. Differences in the Intensity of Apology Expressions

The second difference appeared in how male and female participants expressed the intensity of their apologies. Male participants generally used simpler, more direct, and practical expressions when apologizing. This pattern was reflected in M5’s statement, *“For men... it’s easier for us to apologize. It’s easier. Like... I’m sorry that I made a mistake.... That’s simple.”* A similar perspective was also expressed by M3, who explained:

“But if it’s male, like with my friends, we don’t do that really. We don’t use the intonation, the ups and downs of intonation. Just like, I’m so sorry for that... Just to the point, and then it’s all clear.”

According to M3 and M5's statements, male participants tended to express their apologies in a direct and uncomplicated way. Rather than showing strong emotional expression, they appeared to focus more on admitting the mistake clearly and resolving the situation as quickly as possible.

In contrast, female participants tended to show stronger emotional involvement when apologizing. They often used softer expressions, longer responses, and paid more attention to the emotional side of the interaction. This pattern can be seen in F2's response, "*..When I apologize to girls, I feel like I need to be more expressive and show that I really care about their feelings. Maybe because girls are usually more sensitive and emotional.*" A similar view was also shared by F3, who stated, "*Girls say sorry for everything, even a small thing just to be nice. Boys usually say sorry only when they know they are really wrong. Girls also talk more and explain more when they say sorry.*"

Overall, a clear difference was found in the intensity of apology expressions between male and female participants. Female participants tended to express their apologies with more emotion, softer language, and greater sensitivity toward the listener's feelings. In contrast, male participants generally delivered their apologies in a more direct, simple, and practical way, focusing more on acknowledging the mistake and resolving the situation efficiently.

c. Differences Based on the Interlocutor

Another important difference appeared in how participants adjusted their apology depending on who they were speaking to. The interview data showed that the gender of the listener, the closeness of the relationship, and the level of familiarity often influenced how participants expressed their apologies. This could be seen in their choice of words, tone of voice, level of politeness, and even the way they showed emotional expression.

This pattern was clearly explained by M4, "*For a boy, I apologize more calmly. For a girl, I apologize more formally. Because I'm more used to talking to a boy. So, when I talk to a girl, it's more formal.*" A similar view was also

shared by M2, who stated, *“Because if I apologize to a female, we have to lower our intonation.”*

These statements show that male participants tended to adjust their communication style when apologizing to female listeners. They appeared to become more careful with their tone, more polite in their word choice, and more aware of how their apology might be received. This suggests that for male participants, the gender of the listener influenced not only what they said, but also how they delivered the apology. A similar adjustment was also found among female participants. F1 explained:

“When I apologize to females, I usually use softer words and a gentle tone. When I apologize to males, I’m more direct and simple. I think this happens because females are usually more sensitive, so I try to be more careful with my words.”

F3 also described a similar experience, *“The difference to girls, I speak softly and gently. Sometimes I even hug them a little. But to boys, I just say sorry simply.”* Female participants not only adjusted their language, but also appeared to pay closer attention to emotional comfort and relational harmony. When speaking to female listeners, they often used softer expressions, more emotional warmth, and even physical gestures to show sincerity. In contrast, when speaking to male listeners, their apologies tended to be shorter, simpler, and more direct.

Based on the show that both male and female participants adjust their apology strategies based on who they are talking to. However, they do it in different ways. Male students usually change their tone and become more careful or formal, especially when speaking to females. Female students tend to use softer words and show more care for the other person’s feelings. This means that both groups are similar in adjusting their apologies, but the way they do it is not the same.

d. Different Strategies in Similar Situations

The final difference appeared when male and female participants faced similar situations but chose different ways to apologize. Although the mistake was similar, the interview data showed that personal comfort, emotional

closeness, past experience, and confidence often influenced how participants delivered their apologies.

This pattern was clearly seen in F5's interview:

“When I ask apology to the girl or the woman, I feel like I can be myself and I can reflect what is my mistake or what I do so I must apologize. But when with a man, sometimes it's hard to express my feelings because I feel shy, embarrassed, prideful. So, sometimes I can't express my feelings as I expected.”

She further explained, *“Like, the more explanation is to the woman, but the man is like, okay, I'm sorry. I do make a mistake. But yeah, I'm sorry. Because I'm not enough confident to explain more.”* From these two statements show that female participants did not always use the same strategy in every situation. Even when the mistake was similar, their apology style could change depending on how comfortable they felt with the listener.

A different pattern was found among male participants. M1 explained, *“For the close friend, I think, we have like same emotional, so when we have same emotional with someone, we can use direct way, I mean like apologize.”* A similar view was also expressed by M3, *“If you make a problem, I want to settle it as fast as I can.”* These responses suggest that male participants often preferred to handle similar situations through direct apologies and immediate action, focusing more on solving the issue efficiently.

From the findings show that even in similar situations, male and female participants did not always use the same apology strategy. Female participants tended to give longer explanations when apologizing to their close friends because they felt more comfortable expressing their feelings and explaining the reasons behind their mistakes in detail. In contrast, male participants preferred to use shorter and more direct apologies, as they felt that their close relationship was enough for the apology to be understood without giving a long explanation.

B. Discussion

1. Types of Apology Strategies Used by Male and Female Students

The findings of this study reveal a consistent pattern: apology is not performed as a single act, but as a combination of strategies aimed at repairing social relationships. Both male and female students employ a range of strategies, including expression of regret (IFIDs), explanation or account, acknowledgement of responsibility, offer of repair, promise of forbearance, concern for the hearer, minimizing the offense, and rejection of apology. This overall pattern aligns with Olshtain and Cohen (1983) and Trosborg (1995), who argue that apology is inherently multi-layered. What becomes clear from the data, however, is that these strategies are not used randomly; instead, they are systematically combined to strengthen the effectiveness of the apology.

The findings show that both male and female students use a wide range of apology strategies, as classified by Olshtain and Cohen (1983) and further developed by Trosborg (1995). These strategies include expression of apology (IFID), explanation, acknowledgement of responsibility, offer of repair, promise of forbearance, concern for hearer, rejection, and minimizing of degree of offense. Overall, the data indicate that students are already familiar with different ways of apologizing in various situations. Although both groups use similar types of strategies, differences can be seen in how they express and develop their responses. This suggests that the variation does not lie in the choice of strategy, but rather in the style of communication. In other words, male and female students share similar pragmatic knowledge, but apply it in slightly different ways depending on how they construct their responses.

The most dominant strategy found in this study is Expression of Apology (IFID). Both male and female participants consistently begin their responses with direct expressions such as “I’m sorry” or “I apologize,” which shows that they consider apology as the first and most important step in repairing social relationships. This finding supports Trosborg’s (1995) view that IFIDs function as the core element of apologizing behavior. In many cases, participants also added intensifiers such as “really,” “very,” or repetition to

strengthen their sincerity. This is in line with Ogiermann (2009), who explains that intensifiers are commonly used to show seriousness and emotional involvement. The consistent use of IFIDs across all situations indicates that participants rely heavily on direct verbal expressions as a basic strategy in apologizing.

In addition to IFIDs, Explanation or Account is frequently used by both groups. The findings show that participants rarely say sorry without giving reasons or background information. Instead, they tend to explain what caused the mistake so that the other person can better understand the situation. This supports Chen et al. (2021), who found that EFL learners often combine explanations with apologies to improve clarity and politeness. However, differences can be seen in the way explanations are delivered. Male students tend to give shorter and more direct explanations, focusing only on the main reason. On the other hand, female students often provide more detailed explanations, sometimes including emotional elements or intentions. This shows that explanation is not only used to clarify the situation, but also to express sincerity in different ways.

A similar pattern can be seen in the use of Acknowledgement of Responsibility. Both male and female participants show a clear willingness to admit that the mistake is their own. This can be seen in the participants' responses such as "it's my mistake" or "I take full responsibility," which indicate awareness of the wrongdoing. This finding is consistent with Solikhah and Masruddin (2020), who state that acknowledging responsibility is an important part of a sincere apology. The data also reflect different forms of responsibility, such as direct acceptance of blame, expressing lack of intention, or explaining personal limitations. These variations are supported by Alsulaihib (2021) and Fitriani and Yuliana (2020), who highlight that responsibility can be expressed in both direct and indirect ways. Overall, admitting fault appears to strengthen the effectiveness of the apology.

Furthermore, Offer of Repair is commonly used when participants try to fix the problem or reduce the impact of their mistake. The findings show that

many participants do not stop at saying sorry, but continue by offering solutions, such as cleaning, replacing, or fixing the damaged item. This indicates that apology is not only expressed through words, but also through actions. This finding is in line with Hamzah et al. (2022), who explain that offers of repair can be either specific or general depending on the situation. In addition, Sun et al. (2023) emphasize that compensation plays an important role in maintaining social relationships. The presence of this strategy shows that participants are aware of the need to take responsibility in a practical way.

Another strategy identified in the data is Promise of Forbearance, where participants promise not to repeat the same mistake in the future. Although this strategy is not as frequent as IFIDs or explanations, it still plays an important role in strengthening the apology. By making such promises, participants show their commitment to change their behavior and avoid similar problems. This supports Ismaili Alaoui (2024), who argues that future commitment increases the sincerity of an apology and helps rebuild trust. In many cases, this strategy appears after responsibility is acknowledged, which makes the apology more complete. This indicates that participants understand the importance of maintaining long-term relationships, not just solving the current problem.

Concern for the Hearer is also an important strategy found in this study. Participants often ask about the other person's condition, such as "Are you okay?" or offer help after making a mistake. This shows that they are not only focused on their own actions, but also pay attention to the feelings and well-being of the hearer. This finding supports Song and Liu (2023), who state that showing concern is a key element in maintaining interpersonal relationships. Interestingly, female participants tend to express this strategy more explicitly, often combining it with emotional expressions. This suggests that empathy plays a significant role in how apologies are delivered, especially in maintaining social harmony.

However, the findings also show that apology is not always given. The presence of Rejection indicates that some participants choose not to apologize when they believe they are not responsible for the situation. In this case, male

participants tend to express rejection in a more direct way, while female participants often provide explanations to justify their position. This finding is consistent with Rahmani et al. (2022), who explains that rejection may involve denial, justification, or blaming others. Similarly, Kim and Park (2022) argue that speakers evaluate their level of responsibility before deciding whether to apologize. This shows that apology is not automatic, but depends on how individuals interpret the situation.

In addition, Minimizing the Degree of Offense is used by participants to reduce the seriousness of the mistake. Instead of fully denying the offense, they present it as something minor, unintentional, or not serious. Male participants tend to express this strategy in a direct way, such as saying “it’s just a joke,” while female participants often describe the situation as a misunderstanding or an accident. This reflects Trosborg’s (1995) classification, where minimizing is used to manage the situation without fully accepting responsibility. This strategy helps reduce tension and makes the interaction feel less serious, which may increase the chance of the apology being accepted.

The findings indicate that both male and female students rely on similar core strategies, especially IFID, Explanation, and Acknowledgement of Responsibility. The main difference lies in how these strategies are expressed, where male students tend to be more direct and concise, while female students provide more detailed and expressive responses. From a broader perspective, these findings suggest that students have developed a good level of pragmatic competence. Their ability to combine multiple strategies shows that apology is a complex process involving emotional expression, responsibility, and relationship management. This also indicates that students are able to adapt their communication based on different social situations.

2. Differences in Apology Strategies between Male and Female Students

The findings of this study showed that both male and female participants used similar apology strategies, particularly Expression of Apology (IFIDs), Explanation or Account, Acknowledgement of Responsibility, Offer

of Repair, and Concern for the Hearer. However, although the strategy types were similar, clear differences appeared in how these strategies were prioritized, combined, and delivered during communication. Male participants generally tended to begin their apologies with direct expressions such as *sorry* or *I apologize*, followed by short explanations or immediate actions when needed. Female participants, in contrast, more frequently combined apology expressions with explanation from the beginning and often provided more detailed context about their intentions, feelings, or the reason behind the mistake.

This finding can be understood through gender communication theory proposed by Deborah Tannen, who explains that men often use language in a more task-oriented and information-focused way, while women tend to use language to build interpersonal connection and emotional understanding. This theoretical perspective helps explain why male participants in this study often preferred direct and efficient apologies, whereas female participants were more likely to elaborate their apologies through explanation and emotional expression.

A similar pattern was found in the study conducted by Al-Azraqi et al. (2024), which reported that female speakers tended to combine apology expressions with explanations more frequently than male speakers, particularly in situations involving interpersonal sensitivity. Likewise, Alahmad and Alkasasbeh (2020) found that women generally produced longer and more emotionally expressive apology utterances, while men tended to use shorter and more direct forms of apology. These previous findings are consistent with the present study, where female participants often used softer expressions, longer explanations, and greater emotional involvement, while male participants tended to focus on admitting the mistake and resolving the issue efficiently.

Another important finding in this study was that the choice of apology strategy was also influenced by the interlocutor and the social relationship between speakers. Both male and female participants adjusted their tone, level of politeness, and emotional expression depending on whether they were speaking to lecturers, close friends, or junior students, as well as depending on

the gender of the listener. This finding supports Politeness Theory developed by Brown and Levinson, which argues that speakers modify their language to protect the hearer's social image and maintain social harmony. In this study, female participants often used softer words and more emotionally supportive expressions, especially when speaking to other females, whereas male participants tended to become more formal or lower their intonation when apologizing to female listeners.

Interestingly, even in similar situations, participants did not always use the same apology style. Female participants appeared to adjust their apologies depending on emotional comfort, confidence, and relational closeness, while male participants tended to maintain a more stable pattern by using direct apology expressions followed by practical actions. This finding is also supported by recent research by Castillo (2025), which found that women were generally more flexible in adapting their apology style according to emotional context, while men tended to maintain a more consistent and solution-focused approach.

Based on the researcher's interpretation, these differences may not be caused by gender alone, but also by social experience, personality, emotional comfort, and communicative goals. Male participants appeared to view apology mainly as a strategy to resolve conflict efficiently, whereas female participants often viewed apology as both conflict resolution and relationship maintenance. Therefore, the findings suggest that gender influences not necessarily the type of apology strategy used, but more importantly the way the strategy is realized in social interact

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter consists of two parts. This chapter begins with conclusion and ends with recommendation. The data that has been analyzed as well as the discussion of the research findings were concluded in the conclusion section. In addition, there are recommended suggestions related to this research.

A. Conclusion

This study aims to examine the types of apology strategies used by male and female students and to identify the differences in how those strategies are expressed. Based on the findings and discussion presented in the previous chapter, several important conclusions can be drawn.

First, the findings show that both male and female students employ a wide range of apology strategies when responding to situations that require them to apologize. These strategies include expression of regret (IFIDs), explanation or account, acknowledgement of responsibility, offer of repair, promise of forbearance, concern for the hearer, minimizing the offense, and rejection of apology. Among these, the expression of regret appears as the most dominant and consistently used strategy by all participants. It is typically placed at the beginning of the response, indicating that direct expressions of apology serve as the core element in initiating the repair of social relationships.

Based on the findings, it is also evident that participants rarely rely on a single strategy when apologizing. Instead, they tend to combine several strategies within one response. The data indicate that expressions of regret are frequently followed by explanation or acknowledgement of responsibility, showing that participants attempt to provide clarity about the situation while also taking responsibility for their actions. In addition, some responses include further elements such as offers of repair or promises of forbearance, which strengthen the sincerity and effectiveness of the apology. This suggests that apology is not a simple act, but rather a structured and multi-layered communicative process.

Second, the findings reveal that although male and female students use similar types of apology strategies, there are clear differences in how these strategies are expressed. Female students tend to produce longer, more detailed, and more expressive apology responses. Based on the findings, their responses frequently combine multiple strategies and show greater attention to the feelings of the hearer. They also tend to express responsibility more explicitly, which contributes to a stronger sense of sincerity and emotional engagement in their apologies.

In contrast, male students tend to produce shorter and more direct apology responses. The findings indicate that their responses are generally focused on the main act of apologizing without extensive elaboration. While they still use similar strategies such as explanation or acknowledgement of responsibility, these are often delivered in a more concise and straightforward manner. The findings also show that male students are more likely to reduce the seriousness of the offense, which reflects a different approach in managing the situation. This indicates that male students prioritize clarity and efficiency, while female students emphasize detail and emotional expression.

The findings show that the difference between male and female students is not in the types of apology strategies they use, but in how they express them. Female students tend to give more detailed and expressive apologies, while male students usually give simpler and more direct responses. Even though their styles are different, both groups still understand how to use apology strategies properly to fix relationships and keep good communication.

B. Recommendation

First, for students, it is important to develop a better understanding of how to use apology strategies appropriately in different situations. Students should not only focus on saying “sorry,” but also learn how to combine different strategies such as giving explanations, taking responsibility, and showing concern for others. This will help them communicate more effectively and maintain good relationships in both academic and social contexts.

Second, for lecturers and educators, it is recommended to give more attention to teaching pragmatic competence, especially in the use of apology strategies in real-life communication. Classroom activities such as role plays, discussions, and situational practices can be used to help students understand how to express apologies in a more natural and appropriate way. This is important because language learning is not only about grammar, but also about how language is used in social interaction.

Finally, for future researchers, it is recommended to explore this topic further by using larger samples, different contexts, or different methods, such as observations or experimental studies. Future research can also examine other factors, such as personality, social background, or level of language proficiency, to provide a deeper understanding of apology strategies.



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APPENDIXES

Appendix A Appointment Letter of Supervisor



KEPUTUSAN DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH
NOMOR: 1436 TAHUN 2025

TENTANG:
PENGANGKATAN PEMBIMBING SKRIPSI MAHASISWA
DENGAN RAHMAT TUHAN YANG MAHA ESA

- DEKAN FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN UIN AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH
- Menimbang : a. bahwa untuk kelancaran bimbingan skripsi mahasiswa pada Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh maka dipandang perlu menunjuk pembimbing skripsi;
b. bahwa yang namanya tersebut dalam Surat Keputusan ini dianggap cakap dan mampu untuk diangkat dalam jabatan sebagai pembimbing skripsi mahasiswa;
c. bahwa berdasarkan pertimbangan sebagaimana dimaksud dalam huruf a dan huruf b, perlu menetapkan Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.
- Mengingat : 1. Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003, tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional;
2. Undang-Undang Nomor 14 Tahun 2005, tentang Guru dan Dosen;
3. Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2012, tentang Pendidikan Tinggi;
4. Peraturan Presiden Nomor 74 Tahun 2012, tentang perubahan atas peraturan pemerintah RI Nomor 23 Tahun 2005 tentang pengelolaan keuangan Badan Layanan Umum;
5. Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 4 Tahun 2014, tentang penyelenggaraan Pendidikan Tinggi dan Pengelolaan Perguruan Tinggi;
6. Peraturan Presiden Nomor 64 Tahun 2013, tentang perubahan Institut Agama Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh menjadi Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
7. Peraturan Menteri Agama RI Nomor 44 Tahun 2022, tentang Organisasi dan Tata Kerja UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
8. Peraturan Menteri Agama Nomor 14 Tahun 2022, tentang Statuta UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh;
9. Keputusan Menteri Agama Nomor 492 Tahun 2003, tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang Pengangkatan, Pemindahan dan Pemberhentian PNS di Lingkungan Depag RI;
10. Keputusan Menteri Keuangan Nomor 293/Krnk.05/2011, tentang penetapan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh pada Kementerian Agama sebagai instansi Pemerintah yang menerapkan Pengelolaan Badan Layanan Umum;
11. Surat Keputusan Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor 01 Tahun 2015, Tentang Pendelegasian Wewenang kepada Dekan dan Direktur Pascasarjana di Lingkungan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh.
- Menetapkan : Keputusan Dekan Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh tentang Pembimbing Skripsi Mahasiswa.
- KESATU : Menunjuk Saudara **Dr. Nashriyah, M.A.**
Untuk membimbing Skripsi
Nama : Shofiya Zuhra
NIM : 220203037
Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
Judul Skripsi : Dissecting Gender-Based Differences in Apology Strategies Among EFL Learners at UIN Ar-Raniry
- KEDUA : Kepada pembimbing yang tercantum namanya diatas diberikan honorarium sesuai dengan peraturan perundang-undangan yang berlaku;
- KETIGA : Pembiayaan akibat keputusan ini dibebankan pada DIPA UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Nomor SP DIPA-025.04.2.423925/2025 Tanggal 02 Desember Tahun Anggaran 2025;
- KEEMPAT : Keputusan ini berlaku selama enam bulan sejak tanggal ditetapkan;
- KELIMA : Keputusan ini berlaku sejak tanggal ditetapkan dengan ketentuan bahwa segala sesuatu akan dirubah dan diperbaiki kembali sebagaimana mestinya, apabila kemudian hari ternyata terdapat kekeliruan dalam Surat Keputusan ini.

Ditetapkan di : Banda Aceh
Pada tanggal : 16 Oktober 2025
Dekan,


Saiful Muluk

Tembusan

1. Sekjen Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
2. Dirjen Pendidikan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
3. Direktur Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Kementerian Agama RI di Jakarta;
4. Kantor Pelayanan Perbendaharaan Negara (KPPN), di Banda Aceh;
5. Rektor UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh;
6. Kepala Bagian Keuangan dan Akuntansi UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh di Banda Aceh;
7. Yang bersangkutan;
8. Arsip.



Appendix B Recommendation Letter from The Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY BANDA ACEH
FAKULTAS TARBİYAH DAN KEGURUAN

Jl. Syekh Abdur Rauf Kopelma Darussalam Banda Aceh Telp/Fax. : 0651-752921

Nomor : B-8738/Un.08/FTK.1/TL.00/10/2025

Lamp : -

Hal : *Penelitian Ilmiah Mahasiswa*

Kepada Yth,

Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh
Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry dengan ini menerangkan bahwa:

NIM : 220203037

Nama : SHOFIYA ZUHRA

Program Studi/Jurusan : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris

Alamat : Jalan Prof ismuha Teupeun Bireuen meunasah dayah

Saudara yang tersebut namanya diatas benar mahasiswa Fakultas Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan bermaksud melakukan penelitian ilmiah di lembaga yang Bapak/Ibu pimpin dalam rangka penulisan Skripsi dengan judul ***DISSECTING GENDER-BASED DIFFERENCES IN APOLOGY STRATEGIES AMONG EFL LEARNERS AT UIN AR-RANIRY***

Banda Aceh, 27 Oktober 2025

An. Dekan

Wakil Dekan Bidang Akademik dan Kelembagaan



Berlaku sampai : 28 November 2025

Prof. Dr. Buhori Muslim, M.Ag.

NIP. 197508152001121002

Appendix C Confirmation Letter of Conducting Research at the English



KEMENTERIAN AGAMA REPUBLIK INDONESIA
UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI AR-RANIRY
FAKULTAS TARBIYAH DAN KEGURUAN
PRODI PENDIDIKAN BAHASA INGGRIS

Jln Syeikh Abdur Rauf Kopelma Darussalam Banda Aceh
Email : pbi.fkk@ar-raniry.ac.id. Website : <https://ar-raniry.ac.id>

SURAT KETERANGAN

Nomor: B-201/Un.08/PBI/Kp.01.2/5/2026

Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan Universitas Islam Negeri Ar-Raniry Darussalam Banda Aceh menerangkan bahwa yang nama tersebut di bawah ini:

Nama : Shofiya Zuhra
NIM : 220203037
Prodi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
Alamat : Bireuen Meunasah Dayah, Kabupaten Bireuen, Indonesia

Benar telah melakukan pengumpulan data untuk penelitian pada Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh dalam rangka penyusunan Skripsi yang berjudul:

"DISSECTING GENDER-BASED DIFFERENCES IN APOLOGY STRATEGIES AMONG EFL LEARNERS AT UIN AR-RANIRY"

Demikianlah Surat Keterangan ini kami buat agar dapat dipergunakan seperlunya.

Banda Aceh, 04 Mei 2026
Ketua Prodi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris,

Syarifah Dahliana

Appendix D Informed Consent

Informed Consent Form

Research Project Title : Dissecting Gender-Based Differences in Apology Strategies Among EFL Learners at UIN Ar-Raniry

Researcher : Shofiya Zuhra

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research. You are invited because you are an EFL student of the English Education Department at UIN Ar-Raniry. This research aims to examine gender-based differences in apology strategies used by male and female students in academic interactions.

If you agree to participate, you will be involved in an interview session. During the interview, you will be asked several questions related to how you express apologies in different situations and the reasons behind your choice of certain apology strategies. The session will last approximately 10–20 minutes, and with your permission, the conversation will be audio-recorded for accuracy.

Your participation is voluntary, and the data collected will be used solely for academic and research purposes.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You are free to decline to participate, refuse to answer any question, or withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty, explanation, or any effect on your academic standing. You have the right to review, edit, or withdraw your data before it is analyzed.

Confidentiality

All information you provide will be kept confidential. Your name and any identifying details will not appear in any publication or report. Data will be stored securely and used only for academic and research purposes.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research, please contact: Principal

Researcher:

Shofiya Zuhra

Department of English Language Education, UIN Ar-Raniry Banda Aceh Email:

220203037@student.ar-raniry.ac.id

Phone: 0813 2031 3159

Statement of Consent

I have read and understood the information provided above. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without any consequences. By signing below, I voluntarily agree to participate in this research.

Banda Aceh,2026

Researcher:
Shofiya Zuhra

Participant



Appendix E DCT and Interview Guideline

DCT

Scenario	Answer
You are late submitting an assignment to a professor because you overslept. You meet the professor in their office at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training (FTK) building.	
You accidentally spilled coffee on your close friend's notebook while studying together at the UIN Ar-Raniry Library.	
You are a senior student. You accidentally bumped into a freshman (maba) in the hallway, causing them to drop their stack of papers.	

INTERVIEW GUIDELINE

Research Title : Dissecting Gender-Based Differences in Apology Strategies among EFL Learners at UIN Ar-Raniry
 Time of Interview :
 Date :
 Interviewer :
 Interviewee :
 Position of Interview :
 Purpose : To explore participants' perceptions, reasoning, and awareness regarding their use of apology strategies, and identify gender-based differences.

Interview Questions

1. Can you describe a situation where you apologized to someone on campus?
2. What words or expressions do you usually use when apologizing in English?
3. Which kind of apology do you prefer to do, a direct or indirect apology? Why?

4. What influences your choice to give a direct or indirect apology?
5. How do you feel when your apology is accepted or rejected?
6. Have you ever chosen not to apologize in a situation? What made you decide that?
7. What factors affect your choice of apology strategy? (e.g., social status, closeness, seriousness of the mistake, gender)
8. Do you think the gender of the person you are talking to affects how you apologize? Why?
9. In your opinion, do men and women apologize differently? Please explain.
10. Are there any cultural factors that influence how you express apologies?



Appendix F Sample of DCT and Interview Transcript

a. DCT

F5	
Scenario	Answer
You are late submitting an assignment to a professor because you overslept. You meet the professor in their office at the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training (FTK) building.	"Assalamu'alaikum Sir, I sincerely apologize for submitting the assignment late because I overslept. This was entirely my fault. However, I hope you can kindly understand my situation. Thank you very much for your understanding, Sir"
You accidentally spilled coffee on your close friend's notebook while studying together at the UIN Ar-Raniry Library.	"omg sorry, I really didn't mean to! Sorry, Let me help you clean it or replace anything that got damaged"
You are a senior student. You accidentally bumped into a freshman (maba) in the hallway, causing them to drop their stack of papers.	"I'm so sorry, it was an accident, sorry, my bad, Let me help you pick up your papers"

b. Interview Script

Interviewer : Shofiya Zuhra

Participant :M1

SZ	:Okay my first question is can you describe a situation where you apologize to someone on campus? Before this, did you ever ask apologize with a friend or lecturer?
M1	:Yes, Alhamdulillah, today I would like to answer your question about apologize on campus in campus yeah? So, yes, before I have ever apologized, for the example of a lecturer, hm.. the cause is my fault or my bad. For example, I forgot to tell the lecturer not attending, so I want to apologize. And for my friend on campus, I apologize like, before he did not do something wrong, never do something wrong. And me, not, how to say, yeah, do something wrong to him, and not on purpose, suddenly did something wrong to him, yeah, I will do, I will do apologize.
SZ	:How did the person respond, your friend respond to you?

M1	:Yeah, my friend answer like, for the first, maybe he is kidding to me, but actually he accepted.
SZ	:At the last, he give you the apologies, yeah?
M1	:Yeah.
SZ	:Okay, can you explain to me the words or expression you usually use when apologizing in English? For example, when you say sorry with someone, what you say?
M1	:In English? I say, sorry, this is my bad, and I want to apologize, and inshallah, I will promise not to do something wrong again.
SZ	:So, when you say sorry, do you usually add explanation after say sorry?
M1	:Yes.
SZ	:Why you have to use explanation?
M1	:Because if I not something like explanation, maybe the person doesn't know why I want to say apologize, so I have to say, I mean like explanation.
SZ	:Please explain how do you decide to give a direct or indirect apologies? Direct means like say, I'm sorry, really, but indirect means explaining first or saying it, like this, When you say sorry with someone, usually you say first say sorry, you say sorry, or you first explaining first, and then at the end you say sorry, or you don't say sorry, but you only say in softer way, like, how to say, did you understand?
M1	:I understand. I always say apologize directly, always, after I say sorry, I will explain why I say sorry.
SZ	:So, you don't say in a soft way?
M1	:No.
SZ	:Why, what make you choose that way? Why you choose direct?
M1	:Because, I think, not every single person, I mean like, not everyone can to know, I mean, know what the like code for apologize. So, I always say sorry, and after that I will explain.
SZ	:So, you more like say sorry in direct?
M1	:Yes.
SZ	:Can you describe your feeling and reaction after someone respond to your apology?
M1	:Yes, my feeling, like, Alhamdulillah, I get change, what to say, opportunity again, or second change. So, my feeling, yeah, it's a blessing.

SZ	:So, what do you usually do after that, if the apologies rejected, if apologies accepted?
M1	:Yes, I say Alhamdulillah, accepted.
SZ	:Do you think the gender of the person you are talking to affect how you apologize?
M1	:It depends on the situation, if that person, hmm..I mean like, the best thing. So, the way is different. For example, if I have like close friend, and I say, I mean, that influence or not, Yeah, if bestie, my bestie like, I say apologize, I mean, I use different way, maybe like, I will use close direct.
SZ	:If you say sorry with female?
M1	:Yes, depends on...
SZ	:Oh, so you will say sorry, the same that depends on you close or not?
M1	:Yes.
SZ	:Even to female?
M1	:Yes.
SZ	:Why, why do you think that happens? Why you choose, you will say the same, you will say more close with your close friend?
M1	:Yeah, because, for the close friend, I think, we have like, same emotional, so when we have same emotional with someone, person, we can use direct way, I mean like, apologize.
SZ	:Can you describe a situation when you choose not to apologize, and can you explain why, what are your reason?
M1	:Not apologize?
SZ	:Yeah.
M1	:I think, actually, I often, not never, often to not apologize. For example, if that person always do something wrong again and again, so I have to not apologize. But, not, the cause, the causality is not only do something wrong, but they do something make me like, angry, and I think it never, how to say, not make sense if I apologize.
SZ	:Okay. How did the situation end, usually?
M1	:Situation end?
SZ	:Maybe, you will apologize her or him after two weeks
M1	:If... The situation?
SZ	:So, you will apologize or not at the end?
M1	:For that person?
SZ	:Yes

M1	:No, I'm not apologize.
SZ	:Can you explain your opinion about the differences between men and women in apologizing?
M1	:Okay, we always like, read the men and women apologize in different way. Actually, it's not always true, because not every women do same way to apologize. It's like, yeah, men also, not every men do same way to apologize, because I think every men or women have different way to apologize.
SZ	:So, what is one point that difference between men and women?
M1	:The point? The point about what?
SZ	:I mean, one thing. Like, maybe, if a woman like this, men like this.
M1	:Maybe, for the men, immediately apologize, and give a little bit explain. But, I think the woman, maybe she will explain, and after that, apologize.
SZ	:Too long text, yeah?
M1	:Too long text.
SZ	:Who tends to apologize more often?
M1	:Sorry?
SZ	:Who more say sorry, men and women? Usually, men or women apologize more often?
M1	:Hm...I think, depend, depend on person
SZ	:Can you explain the factor that influence your choice of apology strategies?
M1	:Maybe different. Yeah, I will do like this. If I do something wrong, I mean like, the people have emotional, emotional, emotional feeling.
SZ	:High emotional?
M1	:High emotional. Maybe, after I do apologize, and after that, I make like, social distancing. For, for the better. But, for the people like, just so so. I will stay like, close.
SZ	:What do you mean high emotional?
M1	:High emotional, easily offended.
SZ	:If maybe, any differences when you say apologies with teacher, with lecturer, and your friend?
M1	:I mean, what do you mean?
SZ	:Did you make, did you ask apologies differently? When :you ask apologies with teacher or friend?

M1	:Oh yeah. Exactly, I do different way. Because, for the teacher, after I do apologize, and I will talk to her or him, but not, I mean, not before apologies happen. I mean, not too much again. And, for the friend, after I do apologize, yeah, the situation, back to, back to normal again. So, that's different. Because, teacher have, for me, teacher have high level. So, with the friend, same level.
SZ	:Can you give a little example? When you ask apologies with teacher or friend, maybe when you say with teacher, you first will say what first?
M1	:For the teacher, maybe, I will say, I will appreciate. I always say apologies in, at the end, the subject, at the end, the learning process. So, at the end of every lesson, at the end of every meeting, I always appreciate, thank you, ma'am or sir. Give us, like, knowledge, with passion. And, after that, I will say apologies. We apologize if we have made any mistakes, or if we have behavior that annoys you, sir or madam. So, that's for the teacher. And, for the friend, yeah, I will do apologies when I do something wrong. That's different.
SZ	: Are there any cultural factors that influence how you express apologies?
M1	: Yes, cultural factors can influence how I express apologies. In Indonesian culture, people usually speak politely and sometimes indirectly. We often say “sorry” many times and try to keep harmony. In other cultures, like in Western culture, people are usually more direct when they apologize. They say clearly what their mistake is. So, culture affects the way people choose words, tone, and how direct they are when they say sorry.

Appendix G Research Documentation



AUTOBIOGRAPHY

1. Name : Shofiya Zuhra
2. Place/Date of Birth : Pidie/Desember 15th, 2003
3. Gender : Female
4. Religion : Islam
5. Nationality : Indonesia
6. Address : Bireuen Meunasah Dayah, Bireuen
7. Email : 220203037@student.ar-raniry.ac.id
8. Parents
 - a. Father's Name : Fuadi, Amd
 - b. Mother's Name : Elfi Zariani, Amd
 - c. Father's Occupation : Entrepreneur
 - d. Mother's Occupation : Housewife
9. Educational Background
 - a. Elementary School : MIN 10 Bireuen
 - b. Junior High School : MTSS Jeumala Amal
 - c. Senior High School : MAS Jeumala Amal
 - d. University : UIN Ar-Raniry

