An analysis of apology as a politeness strategy expressed by the characters in the film entitled “princess diaries 2” (a socio-pragmatics approach)

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Research Background

Language is an important element in human life to do social interaction. By using language, people can express their ideas, thoughts and feelings to others. In short, humans use language to communicate and interact with others. Hamilton et al (in Semin and Fiedler, 1992: 108) state that language is a tool of communication. The nature of any communication will reflect many aspect of the social process, including the speaker’s relationship to his or her audience, his or her goals for this particular communication and the social context in which the communication occurs. It means that the way of the people use the language is influenced by those social factors.

Chaika (1994:6) states that language is multilayered and does not show a one-to-one correspondence between message and meaning. It explains that every meaning can be expressed in more than one way and there are many ways to
express any meaning. Furthermore, the goal of spoken interaction is to communicate things to the hearer by getting him/her to recognize the intention that one has to communicate those things (Searle 1969: 16). The utterances performed by the speaker can be wrongly interpreted and also speakers can say one thing and mean another. The speaker must achieve success in delivering the intention of his utterance. Therefore, the participants of the conversation need to consider the context in which a particular speech act is conveyed. A speech act can occurs within various social contexts.

A speech act is an utterance that serves a function in communication such as apology, request, or greeting. According to Olstain and Cohen (In Nessa and Judd, 1983: 20), the act of apologizing is called for when there is some behavior which has violated social norms, whether the offence is real or potential. When an action or utterance has resulted that one or more persons perceive themselves as the offended, they need to apologize. Yet different degrees of severity in the action or different circumstances related to the behavior may call for different types of apologies and different intensities of such apologies in different social context. It means that the apologizer should aware to the situation of the conversation and the relationship between participants. Thus, the social context, formality and the relationship between participants, which are called social factors, will influence the way of the apologizer convey their apologies.

Furthermore, when we talk about social factors, it means we enter into the politeness scope. Politeness is one of the most important aspects of human communication. It is an expression of concern for other people’s feeling. It involves complex mix of appropriate words, grammar, intonation and tone of
voice when people speak to others. Holmes asserts the making decisions about what is or is not considered polite in any community, therefore involves assessing social relationship along dimensions of social distance and solidarity, and relative power or status. Being polite may also involve the dimensions of formality (1992:297). The speaker is expressing respect towards the person to whom he talks to and avoiding offending them. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the social values of society to speak politely.

Leech (in Trosborg 1995:29) states that politeness is a communication strategy that people use to maintain and develop. Furthermore, Leech points out that different types of situation call for different degree of politeness and attempts a classification according to how illocutionary function relate to social goal of maintaining comity.

The apology is a politeness strategy which has the effect of paying attention to the addressee’s negative face (in Coates and Cameron, 1988: 30). An apology pays attention to the negative face of the addressee by acknowledging a potential imposition, it threatens the speaker’s own positive face by admitting a transgression. Holmes states that an apology is a polite speech act used to restore social relations following an offence. Apologies therefore redress face-threatening behavior, and they acknowledge the need of the addressee not to be imposed upon or offended (http://extra.shu.ac.uk/wpw/politeness/christie.htm). Apologies are not only strategies for avoiding conflict, but also function to maintain the social relation between participants.

Brown and Levinson (1987) define politeness as maintaining hearer’s face, that is, being unimposed on and approved of in certain respects. There are two
kinds of politeness, positive politeness and negative politeness. Positive politeness leads to the expression of solidarity or friendliness toward other, while negative politeness pays people respect and avoids intruding on them, or threatening their face. From that definition, therefore, apologizing can be define as negative politeness since by apologizing for doing a face-threatening act, the speaker indicates his or her reluctance to impinge on the hearer’s negative face and thereby partially redresses that impingement. However, Marina Sbisà states that apologizing can also be positive politeness, since it shows the expression of concerns for the addressee’s well-being, needs, interests, feelings, and so forth (http://www.univ.trieste.it/~dipfilo/sbisa/scuspap.html).

Furthermore, Brown and Levinson (1987:15) asserts that a politeness strategy is employed by the ‘weightiness’. The weightiness is calculated by the speakers from the power difference between speaker and hearer (P), the perceived social distance between speaker and hearer (D), and ranking of imposition (R). Thus, the choice of particular strategy or combination strategies for conveying an apology supposes the consideration of the relationship of power and distance between participants and the seriousness of the offence. Holmes (In Bonvillain, 2003:107) found six typical offences. They are instances of inconvenience, infringement on space, talk, time or possession and social gaffes. Meanwhile, Shaver and Boster identified four types of offences. They are deception, innocuous offence, physical injury and property damage (http://cognition.clas.uconn.edu/jboster/research/workingpapers/shaver.pdf). Those kinds of offences are motivating the speakers to apologize toward the addressee.
Related to all explanations above, the researcher is interested in analyzing the act of apologizing in the film entitled “Princess Diaries 2”. There are some phenomena of apologizing expressed characters with different social background and different situations, topics and also setting that can be analyzed in relation to politeness strategy.

An example of the conversation taken from the film “Princess Diaries 2” below may help to understand the statement above clearer:

The setting of the conversation is in the ballroom where Princess Mia’s birthday party is held. Then, a waiter accidentally brushes Princess Mia’s head with his tray while he was walking offering the cakes.

Waiter : (To some ladies) Cake, ladies?
Princess Mia Thermopolis : (The waiter accidentally brushes her head) Oh dear!
Waiter : (Rising tone) Oh, Your Highness, pardon me, I am so sorry. It was only an accident.
Princess Mia Thermopolis : It's fine, it's fine. No harm, no foul, no bruise.

From the example above, it can be seen that the utterance in the bold type refers to an apology that is uttered as a paying off a debt following an offence. The waiter has caused an offending act by accidentally brushes Princess Mia’s head with his tray that this offending act refers to instance of inconvenience. He has employed negative politeness strategy as her performs an apology after recognizing his offending act and regretting it. Nevertheless, this apologizing act implies a high cost for face for the speaker regarding the difference of social status between the participants. That is why the waiter employs his apology in such polite ways with certain utterance and tone of voice.

The use of address Your Highness as the opening act of apologizing marks
the difference of social status between the addresser and addressee, that also makes the conversation runs in formal situation. The waiter is subordinate to Princess Mia that he must show his respect to the superiority. Then, the double expressions of direct apology “Pardon me, I’m so sorry” indicate that the apology is directed directly by the speaker that shows his feeling guilty. The intensifier ‘so’ also gives more emphasize on his apology. An explanation “It was only an accident.” tries to mitigate his guilt and explain his undesirable offending act that creates an instance of inconvenience toward Princess Mia. Princess Mia’s positive response toward the waiter’s careless behavior and his apology relieves the waiter’s guilty feeling. With smiling, Princess Mia says that she is fine. Therefore, an apology conveyed that shows politeness in interaction has succeeded to prevent conflict toward Princess Mia.

The speech act of apologizing is part of pragmatic study as it belongs to expressive speech act. Nevertheless, since the way to express apology cannot be separated from the relationship between participants regarding to their social status and social distance, it cannot be separated from sociolinguistics. As Trudgill also states that sociolinguistics, then, is the part of linguistics, which is concerned with language as social and cultural phenomenon (1974: 32). Therefore, this research is used socio-pragmatic approach. Based on the phenomenon above, it is interesting to analyze apologies by drawing together studies of politeness and language use between individual interactions in the film entitled “Princess Diaries 2”. The film is chosen as in the film shows various apology expressions expressed by the characters following an offence within different social context.
B. Problem Limitation

This research takes the conversation contain apology expressions in the film entitled “Princess Diaries 2” as the data. There are several kinds of apology. They are apology as sympathy, apology as strategic disarmers and apology as remedial act. Thus, this research will only discuss about apology as remedial act that shows apology expression following an offence.

C. Problem Statements

1. What kinds of offenses motivating the characters to express apologies in the film entitled “Princess Diaries 2”?  
2. How do the characters express their apologies in the film entitled “Princess Diaries 2”?  
3. Why do the characters use the ways to express apologies as politeness strategy in the film entitled “Princess Diaries 2”?

D. Research Objectives

1. To find out the kinds of offenses motivating the characters to express apologies in the film entitled “Princess Diaries 2”.  
2. To know how the characters express their apologies in the film entitled “Princess Diaries 2”.  
3. To reveal why the characters use the ways to express apologies as politeness strategy in the film entitled “Princess Diaries 2”.

E. Research Benefits

This research is expected to give contributions for:

1. The readers to get more understanding about Socio-Pragmatics dealing with speech act of apologizing related to politeness.
2. The students of English Department, especially for those who are interested in analyzing the speech acts of apologizing.
3. The other researcher can use this research as additional reference and information for their further research connecting with the field.

F. Research Methodology

This research applies a descriptive qualitative method. The procedures are collecting the data, classifying them, analyzes them, and finally drawing the conclusion about the data. The data for this research are the conversations between participants contains apologizing act in the film entitled “Princess Diaries 2”. Thus, the researcher uses purposive sampling as the sampling technique. Further explanation of methodology is presented in Chapter III.

G. Thesis Organization

This thesis is divided into five chapters, and each chapter consists of further division. The outline of this research is arranged systemically as follows:
Chapter I: INTRODUCTION, consists of Research Background, Problem Limitation, Problem Statement, Research Objectives, Research Benefits, Research Methodology and Thesis Organization.

Chapter II: LITERATURE REVIEW, consists of Sociolinguistics, Ethnography of Communication, Pragmatics, Speech Acts, Address, Kinesics, Apologies, Politeness, Related Research, and Synopsis of the film.

Chapter III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, consists of Type of Research, Data and Source of Data, Sample and Sampling Technique, Instrument of the Research, Technique in collecting the data, Data Coding and Technique of Analyzing Data.

Chapter IV: ANALYSIS consists of Introduction, Data Analysis and Discussion.

Chapter V: CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDICES