

## Pragmatic Transfer in Intermediate Japanese Language Learners' Apology Speech Act

Nuria Haristiani\*, Devy Christinawati, Sudjianto  
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

\*Corresponding author email: [nuriaharist@upi.edu](mailto:nuriaharist@upi.edu)

Dikirimkan: 29 Juni 2022, Direview: 16 Mei 2023, Direvisi: 23 Mei 2023,  
Diterima: 30 Mei 2023

=====

### Abstract

*This study aims to investigate the apology speech act strategy employed by Japanese language learners at the intermediate level and the pragmatic transfer from L1 to L2 that occurs. The data for this study were gathered using the Discourse Completion Test (DCT), which examined four apology situations focusing on the relationships with the interlocutors. The subjects of this study were 53 intermediate Japanese learners. The collected data were then classified into eight strategies or semantic formulas. The pragmatic transfer in the learner's expression was divided into pragmalinguistic transfer and sociopragmatic transfer. This study found that several factors were related to the pragmatic transfer. First, learners translate L1 phrases literally to the L2, which leads to pragmalinguistic transfer. Second, many variations and combinations in Japanese words and sentences are difficult compared with expressions in Indonesian, especially in the "kasu-kariru" and "motte iku-motte kuru" context. Third, applying a pragmatic function from L1 to the L2, which leads to sociopragmatic transfer. This study is expected to give reference in speech act study, and help understanding interlanguage pragmatic of second language learners.*

**Keywords:** *apology speech act; Japanese language learner; pragmatic transfer*

---

## INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the pragmatic competence of foreign language or second language learners has been studied increasingly under the scope of Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP), which is a new study of second language acquisition (Peng & Gao, 2018). Through the discipline of ILP, various research and development interests seek to investigate three fundamental concerns; the production of L2 pragmatics by learners, pragmatics understanding by L2 learners, and the development of their pragmatics competencies.

Kasper (1992), Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) broaden the scope of ILP to include the study of the emergence of intercultural styles among bilingual speakers and the application of L2 communication strategies. The authors designate five ILP research areas in their article: pragmatic comprehension, production of linguistic action, development of pragmatic competence, pragmatic transfer, and communication effect.

One of the challenges for research in ILP has been the issue of the production of speech acts concerning Leech's (1983) two concepts of pragmatics: sociopragmatics and pragmalinguistics. The former relates to the socio-cultural values that underlie the production and understanding of the illocutionary. And the second concerns linguistic forms to express the illocutionary. For second language learners, especially those concerning communicative language learning and teaching, both elements are essential for surviving in cross-cultural verbal exchange.

Due to a lack of understanding of the socio-cultural rules of the target language, L2 learners' performance of speech acts frequently differs from that of native speakers, according to ILP research (Eviliana, 2015). Consequently, breakdowns in communication may occur. This form of communication failure is referred to as pragmatic failure (Thomas, 1983). One plausible explanation for this is pragmatic transfer. Learners frequently transfer their L1 pragmatic knowledge to L2, expecting it to work. The pragmatic transfer has attracted

the attention of interlanguage pragmatics researchers (i.e., Maeshiba, Yoshinaga, & Kasper, 1996; Wannaruk, 2008; Takahashi, 2000; Osuka, 2021).

Since apologies are complex speech acts comprising a single strategy or multiple strategies concurrently, communication breakdowns are possible. The appropriate application of one or more strategies for expressing an apology in a particular situation is essential for maintaining social relationships (Salgado, 2011). The execution of the apology speech act is frequently culturally specific and difficult for the majority of second- and foreign-language learners to acquire (Kim, 2008). Improper performance may result in severe consequences, including miscommunication and negative impressions from native speakers.

Several previous research on apologizing speech acts shows that the apology strategies used by Japanese Native Speakers (JNS) and Indonesian Native Speakers (INS) are different. The characteristics of JNS in expressing apologies (Haristiani, 2014) are using direct apologies, not giving explanations/reasons, and using simple strategies. However, the characteristics of INS are using explicit expressions, giving many explanations, and using address terms (*yobikake*) such as *Bu* (Ma'am), *Pak* (Sir), etc (Haristiani & Danuwijaya, 2017). A pragmatic transfer may occur when Japanese learners express apologizing in L2 because of the different characteristics.

This study seeks to determine the pragmatic transfer that occurs in the apology speech act performed by Japanese language learners at the intermediate level. The intermediate level was chosen as the research participant on the assumption that learners had acquired knowledge of the apology speech act commonly employed by Japanese speakers through textbooks, classroom activities, and other media.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

### ***Interlanguage Pragmatic***

Interlanguage Pragmatics (ILP) is a new discipline of study that combines pragmatics and interlanguage. According to Bardovi-Harlig (2010), pragmatics is the scientific study of all linguistic behavior aspects associated with contextual meaning. Therefore, contextual language comprehension should not be too far from the definition of interlanguage pragmatics. Interlanguage is defined by Kasper and Rose (2002) as the ability of non-native speakers to comprehend and perform actions in the target language, as well as their development. In other terms, ILP is the study of the second language of the learner (Tatsumi, 2012). Researchers in the field are frequently interested in examining the speech acts of learners' performance in the target language with the aim of enhancing learners' pragmatic competence, despite the field's expansive scope.

### ***Pragmatic Transfer***

Interlanguage pragmatics (ILP) research has shown that second language learners' production of speech acts is influenced by pragmatic transfer from their native language (Morkus, 2018). According to Kasper (1992), pragmatic transfer is the effect of learners' pragmatic knowledge of non-L2 languages and cultures on their comprehension, production, and acquisition of L2 pragmatic information. Based on Leech (1983) in Kasper (1992) classified pragmatic transfer into two categories: pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics. The first is concerned with illocutionary force and values of politeness, while the second is concerned with socially acceptable linguistic behavior. This classification is essential for theoretical and cross-cultural pragmatics, language teaching, and interlanguage pragmatic research.

Positive or negative pragmatic transfer can occur (Osuka, 2021). Positive transfer is regarded as evidence of linguistic socio-cultural and pragmatic

universality. Negative pragmatic transfer, on the other hand, is the inappropriate transfer of native sociolinguistic norms and speech conventions into the target language. This process usually results in pragmatic failure (Thomas, 1983; Morkus, 2018), or the inability to understand the meaning of a target language utterance.

According to Thomas (1983), there are two types of pragmatic failure: (a) pragmalinguistic failure and (b) sociopragmatic failure. The former occurs when a learner attempts to perform the correct speech act but employs the incorrect linguistic means. The latter occurs when a learner fails to perform an illocutionary action that the situation requires.

### ***Previous Studies on Apology Speech Act***

The act of apologizing is ubiquitous in our civilizations. It can occur in both public and private situations. The apology speech act is classified as an expressive speech act (Alfge & Mohammadzadeh, 2021). Apologies are essential for maintaining human relationships.

When social norms are violated, whether the offense is serious or not, apologies are made (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Abe, 2017). As with requests and refusals, the apology speech act is a face-saving act that impacts the offender's "public self-image" (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Krulatz, 2018).

Apology research has primarily focused on comparing apologies in different languages and cultures. The most important of these studies were those conducted as part of the Cross-cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP), which was founded by Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989).

According to Salgado (2011), one of the most important findings of the CCSARP was that speakers of different languages could use the same apology strategies. Numerous studies have uncovered cross-linguistic similarities between the expression of apology (IFID) and the acknowledgment of responsibility. However, apologies vary across cultures based on the contexts

in which they are appropriate, the strategies used in various situations, and the ways in which they are intensified or strengthened.

Apology speech act in Japanese has been studied from various perspectives, including analyzing Japanese apology strategies based on its semantic formula (Yamamoto, 2004; Sato, 2011), as well as in cross-cultural contexts such as Japanese and English (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Sugimoto, 1997), Japanese and Chinese, Japanese and Vietnamese (Abe, 2017), Japanese and Malaysian, Japanese and Indonesian (Takadono, 1999; Haristiani, 2010), Japanese, Indonesia, and Sundanese (Haristiani & Danuwijaya, 2018).

Kumagai (1993) contrasted Japanese and American English apology speech acts. Japanese individuals use fewer emotional expressions and address forms than Americans, according to the study. In contrast, Japanese acknowledged responsibility and commented (e.g., "Are you all right?") more frequently than Americans.

According to Sugimoto (1997), Japanese apologized in more segments than Americans. The Americans were more descriptive than the Japanese. The Japanese preferred reparation, a promise not to repeat the offense, an expression of regret, and a request for forgiveness over the Americans.

In accordance with Haristiani and Danuwijaya (2018), Indonesian and Japanese native speakers employ similar overall strategies but distinct primary strategies based on their relationship with the interlocutor. In addition, the difference in apology speech acts was demonstrated by the utterance level, which reveals the linguistic characteristics of each language.

In other hand, several studies have been conducted on apologizing speech acts in Indonesia, including by Wouk (2005; 2006), Jones & Adrefiza (2017). According to Wouk (2005), Lombok Indonesians are more likely to ask for forgiveness than to apologize in any other way. The way people use upgrading depends on the type of offense and the type of relationship, but there isn't much difference between men and women. Where there are differences, men are more likely to use solidarity-oriented upgrading than

women. Patterns of upgrading were sometimes the same as those found in other studies.

Wouk (2006) argued that in cases of moderate offense, Indonesians employ several strategies, notably overt apologies, and that, similar to many other cultures, the frequency of overt apologies frequently varies with the power of the addressee. Typically, when making explanations, Indonesians are very detailed. There were no significant gender variations in the selection of strategies. According to Jones and Adrefiza (2017), the majority of BI speakers use requests for forgiveness with relatively strong hearer-oriented strategies. Another phenomenon is the distinction between being direct and polite. BI speakers are more likely to be elaborate and less direct in their expression.

The findings of this previous study will be used to inform the apology strategy of Indonesian and Japanese native speakers in order to determine whether there is a pragmatic transfer from L1 to L2 in the apology speech act of Indonesian and Japanese learners.

### ***Previous Studies on Interlanguage Apologies***

Several studies have been conducted on the production of IL apologizing speech acts. Some studies on pragmatic transfer from L1 to L2 are listed below. Al-Zumor (2011) investigated apologies in Arabic, English, and learner production. The use of more than one IFID, the use of different address terms, and the avoidance of certain semantic formulas all demonstrated pragmatic transfer. It was also caused by a lack of L2 exposure.

Dendenne (2016) investigated pragmatic transfer in Algerian EFL learners' IL apologies. He discovered that pragmatic transfer works in strategy wording and word-for-word translation using the DCT (2016). Sociopragmatic behavior is involved in the use of the apology strategy, which appears to be consistent with the L1/mother culture assumptions regarding the evaluation of situational variables.

Abe (2017) analyzed the similarities and distinctions between the apology strategies employed by Japanese speakers of English and Japanese, as well as by Americans speaking English. The findings suggested that the Japanese tendency to use expressions of apology, concern for the interlocutor, and offers of repair when communicating in a second language may indicate the transfer of sociocultural norms.

Tam and Vien (2020) investigated pragmatic transfer among Vietnamese students of English as a foreign language. The efficacy of Vietnamese EFL students was found to involve active pragmatic transfer. Particularly in the Concern and Forbearance strategies, elementary students exhibited greater negative pragmatic transfer than advanced students. In addition, it was discovered that language proficiency influences the execution of Vietnamese pragmatic transfer.

Al-Rawafi, Sudana, Lukmana, and Syihabuddin (2021) examined how students at a senior boarding school employed apology strategies in Arabic and English as a second language. According to the findings, the students' semantic formulations in both languages were identical. They favor the "express regret" and "promise forgiveness" approaches. In addition, pragmatic transfer from L1 to L2 occurred in linguistic domains such as overgeneralization, inappropriateness, grammatical contrast, and conceptual transfer.

Previous research examined pragmatic transfer in apology speech acts performed by English and Arabic learners from a variety of countries, including Arabic, Algerian, Vietnamese, Japanese, and Indonesian. However, studies on the pragmatic transfer of apologizing speech acts by Indonesian Japanese language learners are still uncommon. Radhiya (2011) investigated language transfer in apologetic speech acts of Japanese language learners from Indonesia. The DCT instrument was used in 15 different situations with 15 different interlocutors in this study. Because there were only 20 participants in this study, the results are still very limited. In contrast to previous research,



the purpose of this study is to investigate the pragmatic transfer that occurs in apology speech acts performed in the same situation but with different interlocutors. Furthermore, it is hoped that this study will be able to describe the possibility of pragmatism transfer in the speech acts of Japanese language learners if there are more participant involved.

## **METHOD**

### ***Research Participant***

This study included 53 students from the Japanese Language Education study program at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia's Faculty of Language and Literature Education who had passed the Japanese Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) level N3.

### ***Data Collection***

A Discourse Completion Test (DCT) questionnaire was used to collect data for this investigation. The DCT for this study included a concise summary of the situation. This DCT represented a language-use scenario that college students are likely to encounter on a daily basis. In addition, social distance and social dominance exacerbated the situation. The interlocutors either had an intimate relationship (-distance) or barely knew one another (+distance) in terms of social distance. This study assigned only two values to the social dominance or power relationship between the DCT's interlocutors: status equal (student-student) and status unequal (student-lecturer). Table 1 displays the DCT instrument's components.

Table 1. Apology Situation

No	Interlocutor	Situation
1	Intimate Lecturer (IL)	You borrowed a book from the interlocutor a week ago. Today is the promised day and time to return the book. But you forgot to bring the book today. What do you say when your interlocutor requests the book?
2	Non-intimate Lecturer (NL)	
3	Intimate Friend (IF)	
4	Non-intimate Friend (NF)	

### Data Analysis

The reference for data analysis in this study uses eight types of semantic formulas (*imi koushiki*), which refer to the theories of Fraser (1981), Olshtain & Cohen (1981). Furthermore, the data analysis process was carried out using Haristiani data analysis techniques (2010). Table 2 defines each semantic formula and provides modified examples of its application (Haristiani & Danuwijaya, 2018; Haristiani & Sopiyan, 2019).

Table 2. Semantic Formula of Apology Speech Act

No	Semantic Formula	Coding Scheme	Example
1	<i>Meikakuna shazai hyoumei</i> , an expression of apology	IFID	<i>Hontouni sumimen deshita</i> (I apologize)
2	<i>Houshou no moushide</i> , an offer of repair	REPR	<i>Ashita okaeshitemo yoroshiideshouka</i> (Can I return the book tomorrow?)
3	<i>Sekinin shounin</i> , an acknowledgement of responsibility	RESP	<i>Kyou henkyaku no hon wo wasurete shimaimashita</i> (I forgot to bring the book)
4	<i>Riyuu/joukyou setsumei</i> , account or explanation	EXPL	<i>Mada yonde imasu</i> (Still reading)
5	<i>Maeoki</i> , an opening sentence before entering the topic to be discussed	OPNG	<i>Okari shiteita hon nan desuga</i> (about the book I borrowed).
6	<i>Yobikake</i> , address terms	ADRS	<i>Sensei</i> (teacher or lecturer) and <i>~san</i> (other people)
7	<i>Kandoushi tekina hyoushutsu</i> , emotional expression	EMTN	<i>e!? Are, maji?</i> (really? Are you sure?)
8	<i>Sono ta</i> , a semantic classification not included in the previous category	OTHR	<i>Aa, sou ieba</i> (by the way).

After analyzing the semantic formula in the speech act of apologizing by intermediate Japanese language learners, the study proceeded by identifying the pragmatic transfer from the L1 (Indonesian) to the L2 (Japanese). Within the framework of Kasper's (1993) theory, pragmatic transfer in the content of apology strategies produced by intermediate Japanese learners was then investigated from both a pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic perspective. (1) Pragmalinguistic transfer occurs when the pragmatic speech act conveyed by the speaker in a particular utterance differs systematically from the speech act strategies of native speakers or when speech act strategies are incorrectly transferred from the L1 to the L2. (2) Sociopragmatic transfer is the transfer of language that results from social conditions such as gender, social distance, and relationship closeness.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The DCT data was then classified into coding schemes of apology strategies, and the frequency distribution of each strategy is shown in Table 3. According to table 3, the most commonly used strategies among intermediate Japanese learners are IFID (31.50%), RESP (29.97%), REPR (17.89%), and ADRS (12.39%).

Table 3. The Apology Strategy used by Intermediate Japanese Learner

No	Coding Scheme	Total	Percentage
1	IFID	206	31.50%
2	REPR	117	17.89%
3	RESP	196	29.97%
4	EXPL	15	2.29%
5	OPNG	7	1.07%
6	ADRS	81	12.39 %
7	EMTN	11	1.68%

Compared to the findings of Haristiani and Danuwijaya (2017), the frequency of strategies employed by intermediate Japanese learners is more likely to resemble that of Japanese Native Speakers than that of Indonesian Native Speakers. JNS's three most common apology strategies are IFID (*meikakuna shazai hyoumei*), RESP (*sekinin shounin*), and REPR (*houshou no moushide*). Meanwhile, INS is often RESP, IFID, and REPR.

Several earlier studies on the speech act of apologizing in Indonesian indicated that Indonesians tend to provide an account or explanation when apologizing (Wouk, 2005). However, the learners did not transfer this tendency to the performance of speech actions in Japanese. Al-Zumor (2011) states that explanation is a situation-specific strategy. This may be a situation where "forgetting a book" is sufficient to explain. No additional explanations are likely to be a stronger statement of regret than "I forgot."

Another study on the apology strategies of Japanese language learners from Sundanese and Javanese (Indonesian) found that "speech act indicating expression" and "explain and reason" were the two most common strategies (Savana & Meisa, 2021). In contrast, the findings of this study indicate that "explanation" is not commonly used by learners in present study. This may be related to the different situations and analytic frameworks employed.

### ***The Use of Apology Strategies by Intermediate Japanese Language Learners Based on the Interlocutors.***

The process of apologizing was influenced by several factors, including status and social distance between interlocutors. According to the interlocutor, the use of apology strategies appears in Figure 1. Figure 1 demonstrates that when apologizing to an unequal interlocutor (+ power) versus an equal interlocutor, intermediate language learners tend to employ a different main strategy. The

social distance between the speaker and interlocutor influences the strategy employed.

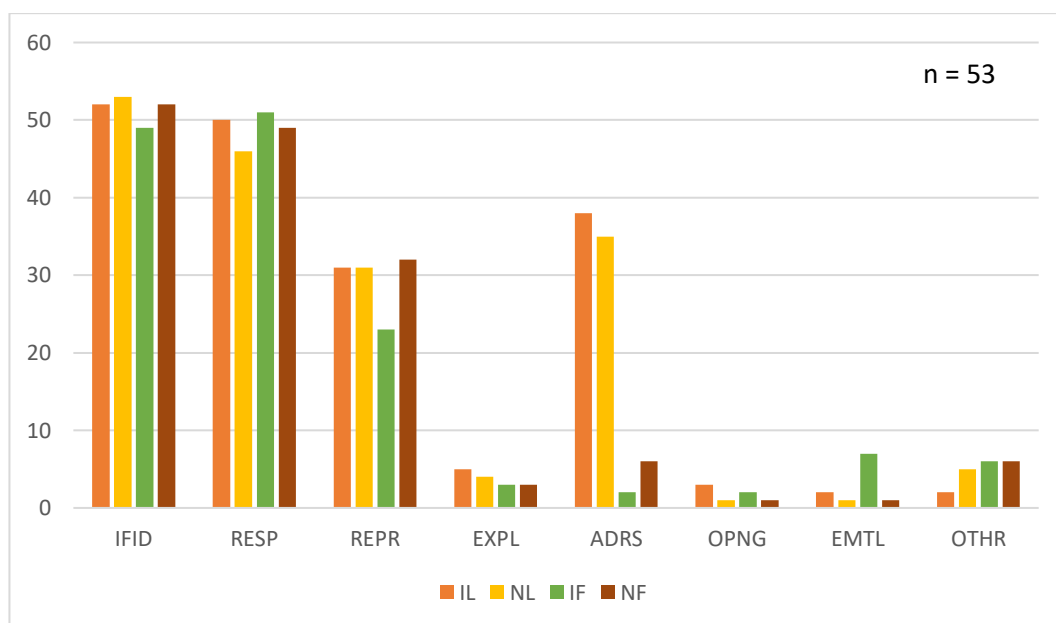


Figure 1. Strategies for Apologizing based on the interlocutors

From Figure 1, in a situation with non-equal interlocutors, both intimate lecturer (IL) and non-intimate lecturer (NL), learners used IFID the most, followed by RESP, ADRS, and RESP as the four main strategies to apologize. The changes in social distance from intimate to non-intimate affect the frequency of the strategies used. When the interlocutor is an intimate lecturer, the frequency of expressing "responsibility" increases more than when the interlocutor is a non-intimate lecturer. On the other hand, the frequency of offering repair tends to increase when apologizing to non-intimate lecturers.

This data shows that when Japanese language learners apologize to non-equal interlocutors, expressing apology is the most important strategy. This is a similar tendency with JNS rather than INS (Haristiani & Danuwijaya, 2017). The use of the address term (*yobikake*) shows that Japanese language learners transfer their L1 culture in the realization of speech acts into L2. In Hayati

---

(2013), Haristiani & Renariah's (2018) research, it has been explained that yobikake, or 'address term' in daily Bahasa, was widely used to show respect and attention. The 'Address term' was also important in addressing the higher-level interlocutor and apologetic language behavior.

Furthermore, when viewed from the situation of apologizing to an equal interlocutor (friend), the main strategies used by learners seem to be different. When the interlocutor is an intimate friend (IF), the main strategies used by Japanese learners are RESP, IFID, and REPR. Meanwhile, when the interlocutor is a non-intimate friend (NF), the main strategies used are IFID, RESP, and REPR. In addition, there is a tendency to decrease the expression of repair strategy when apologizing to an intimate friend. Compared with Haristiani & Danuwijaya's (2017) finding result, this tendency is more like Japanese native speakers than Indonesian native speakers.

Although the apology strategy used by Japanese language learners is more like the strategy used by Japanese native speakers than Indonesian native speakers, indications of pragmatic transfer can still be seen from the level of utterance (Abe, 2017). This tendency will be looked at from two different perspectives: pragmalinguistic transfer and sociopragmatic transfer.

### ***Pragmalinguistic Transfer on Apology Speech Act by Intermediate Japanese Language Learners***

The occurrence of pragmalinguistic transfer is indicated by several cases from these data. This pragmalinguistic transfer refers to the impact of first language (L1) on the use of linguistic structures, i.e., form function mapping (Kasper, 1992; Osuka, 2022). In this study, pragmatic transfer is only observed in the expressions of apology, responsibility, and offer of repair.

#### ***An Expression of Apology (Meikakuna Shazai Hyoumei)***

The use of IFID (Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices) or expression of an apology is the most central strategy for an apology in various languages

(Olshtain & Cohen, 1983). This is the first formula in the apology speech act. Because the number of apology expressions in Japanese varies, many experiences pragmatic failure in this strategy.

(1) B1B-RI39

"Sensei, *gomen shite kudasai*. Hon ga wasurete shimaimashita. Ashita ni wa kitto kaeshimasu."

(Sensei, please forgive me. The book was forgotten. Tomorrow will definitely return it.)

Data (1) is the realization of the student's apology speech act to the non-intimate lecturer. From these remarks, it can be seen that there was a transfer from Bahasa, namely *gomen shite kudasai*. It is directly translated as "*tolong maafkan saya* (please forgive me)." However, *gomen shite kudasai* itself did not exist in Japanese expressions. The commonly used expression is "yurushite kudasai." However, when using it, the speaker must adapt to the context, including who to speak with and under what circumstances.

According to previous research, one of the causes of pragmatic transfer in the realization of learners' speech acts is literal translation from L1 to L2 or word-by-word translation (Dendenne, 2016; Tam & Vien, 2020). Furthermore, this may be influenced by the numerous expressions of apology in Japanese, such as *moushiwake arimasen*, *sumimasen*, *gomenasai*, and so on, making it difficult for learners to select the appropriate expression based on the situation. In Example Data (1), the word "*gomen*" should not be used to apologize to the lecturer, who is not an equal, because "*gomen*" is an informal way to say "I'm sorry." (Beuckmann & Mori, 2018).

Although the learners' main strategies are similar to native speakers', the selection of expressions or *hyogen* in their utterance is still inappropriate when viewed through the lens of social status and social distance. When apologizing to the friend, some learners used *sumimasen* (a formal expression) while in lecturer used *gomenasai* (an informal expression). According to

---

Yamamoto (2004), before the Japanese speaker speaks, they judge the situation that led to the apology as well as the relationship between the speaker and the listener, and then choose the appropriate expression to use. Learners should be more cautious when selecting the appropriate expression because pragmatic mistakes like this can be considered impolite by native speakers (Wannaruk, 2008).

#### *Acknowledgment of Responsibility (Sekinin Shounin)*

This strategy is used to express the form of responsibility for the offenses that have been made. Learners need to be careful because the selection of inappropriate utterance can cause lead a misunderstanding. An example can be seen from data (2).

(2) B1A-R102

"A, *sumimasen. Okari shita hon ga motte iku no wo wasurete shimaimashita.*"

(Uh, sorry. The book that (I) borrowed forgot to take"

Data (2) is the response of the learner in a situation of apologizing to the intimate lecturer. In the utterances (2) *motte iku* showed that there were difficulties for Indonesian learners to distinguish the difference between *motte iku* (to take away) and *motte kuru* (to bring come) which both did not exist in Bahasa. *Motte iku* and *motte kuru* was distinguished by looking at the distribution of goods flow between the speaker and the interlocutors. If the speaker brought the object (book) to the interlocutors, it was more appropriate to change the above expressions to *okari shita hon wo motte kuru no wo wasurete shimaimashita*.

From data (2), it shows that there are variations and combinations in Japanese words and sentences that are difficult to compare with other language expressions, especially in this case is Indonesian. Furthermore, Al-Rawafi, Sudana, Lukmana, & Syihabuddin (2021) stated that pragmatic



transfers like this due to the lack of proficiency in various domains, such as word selection.

#### *An Offer of Repair (Houshou no moushide)*

This semantic “offer of repair” is a situation-specific strategy. Repair is an attempt by the offender to compensate the incurred damage (Al-Zumor, 2011). Pragmatic transfer in this strategy can be seen from the following example.

(4) B1C-RI12

"\*screaming\* *Wasurechatta. Gomenne. Ashita kitto kaeshitene.*

(\*Screaming\* Forgotten. Sorry. Tomorrow, please return it, okay?.)

In the data (4) there was an inaccurate use of *~te ne* (command). If the speaker above uses *ashita kitto kaeshitene* pattern, it means "*tomorrow (please) return it, okay?*". The speaker did not use *houshou no moushide* strategy (an offer of repair) to the interlocutor but instead asked the other person to return the book tomorrow. This utterance might occur misunderstandings.

#### ***Sociopragmatic Transfer on Apology Speech Act by Intermediate Japanese Japanese Learners***

Sociopragmatic transfers also occur in this apology speech act realization by Intermediate Japanese Learners. This was happening due to the cultural differences between the different languages. This results in different perceptions of the same linguistic act, usually resulting in a sociopragmatic transfer in learners' use of a second language. The following was an example that showed sociopragmatic transfer in the intermediate Japanese learners' apology speech act. In this study, sociopragmatic transfer is only seen from the use of address term, and expression of apology.

#### *Address Terms (Yobikake)*

---

The following utterance shows an evidence of sociopragmatic transfer in the use of expression of apology.

(5) B1B-RI27

*"Sensei, hontou ni moushiwake arimasendeshita. Watashi wa wasurete shimaimashita".*

(Sensei, (I am) really sorry. I forgot.)

In the data (5), the speaker used *yobikake* (address term), "Sensei," in the apology speech act strategy because the conversational partner was the lecturer, both in close and distant relationships. The use of *yobikake* was a transfer form of the Indonesian culture by intermediate Japanese language learners.

The use of such an address term is primarily determined by the relationship between addresser and addressee, the social status of the individual involved in the conversation, the interlocutors' age, social status, social relationship, profession, civility, and other factors (Susanto, 2014). In this situation, *yobikake* was used to respect interlocutors in a higher position than the speaker (Hayati, 2013; Haristiani & Renariah, 2018). While according to Kumagai (1993), Japanese people do not use *Yobikake* very often in their apologizing speech acts. Japanese people use honorific forms that are appropriate to the relationship with the other person.

*An Expression of Apology (Meikakuna Shazai Hyoumei)*

The following utterance shows an evidence of sociopragmatic transfer in the use of expression of apology.

(8) B1A-RI17

*Sensei, moushiwake gozaimasendeshita. Sensei kara karita hon wo motte kuru no wo wasurete shimaimashitanode, owabi moushiagemasu. Ashita kanarazu kaeshimasunode, douka o yurushi kudasai.*

*(Sensei, I) really sorry. I'm really sorry because I forgot to bring Sensei's book. I will return tomorrow. Please, forgive me!*

In data (8) students use more than one IFID. This utterance can be categorized as overuse of IFID. Pragmatic transfer was evident in the use of more than one IFID (Dendenne, 2016).

In addition, several studies stated that Indonesian speakers tend to use many strategies in frequent number number while apologizing (Takadono, 1999; Haristiani, 2010; Jones & Adrefiza, 2017), and this result shows a tendency that the learner carries this strategy when realizing his/her apology in L2.

From the finding, it can be concluded that the overall apologizing speech act strategy used by intermediate Japanese learners is more like the strategy of Japanese native speakers than Indonesian native speakers. The three main strategies used are expression of apology (*meikakuna shazai hyoumei*), acknowledgement of responsibility (*sekinin shounin*), and offer of repair (*houshou no moushide*). However, the main strategy used differs from the social relationship status.

Pragmatic transfer can be found in the intermediate Japanese learner's apology speech act. Several factors were found to be related to the occurrence of pragmatic transfer. *First*, learners translate L1 expressions literally to the L2. *Second*, many variations and combinations in Japanese words/sentences are more complicated than Indonesian phrases, especially in "*kariru-kasu*" and "*motte iku-motte kuru*" verbs. *Third*, they sometimes apply the pragmatic function of L1 to the L2, which is seen in their use of *yobikake* (address term). And *Fourth*, the influence of Indonesian language culture politeness strategy, such as "over using of IFID" also appears in this DCT's result. In addition to pragmatic factors, the student's lack of understanding regarding the use of verbs and sentence patterns also affects the expression of their apologizing speech acts.

---

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the apology speech act strategy employed by intermediate Japanese language learners in relation to social dominance (equal and non-equal) and social distance (intimate and non-intimate). This study also investigated the pragmatic transfer between L1 and L2.

This study found that Japanese learners' performance of the apology strategy is more like that of Japanese native speakers than that of Indonesian native speakers. In contrast, the intermediate Japanese learner's apology speech act provides evidence of pragmatic transfer from L1 to L2 with pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic categories. By understanding the possibility of pragmatic transfer, it is hoped that teachers and students will pay greater attention to pragmatic competencies. As noted previously, employing improper strategies in an intercultural context might result in misconceptions and communication breakdowns. A deep understanding of culture and language can facilitate communication in the target language, Japanese, and reduce the possibility of misunderstandings.

In the future, this research will be continued by examining the relationship between Japanese language proficiency level (beginner, intermediate, and advanced) and pragmatic transfer in the speech act of apologizing. Furthermore, this pragmatic transfer research can be carried out in other speech acts, i.e., refuse (*kotowari*), critics, etc.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We express our gratitude and acknowledge the Faculty of Language and Literature Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (FPBS – UPI) for the financial support for this research.

## REFERENCE

- Abe, H. (2017). *The realization of the apology speech act in English by Japanese speakers: Cross-cultural differences, pragmatic transfer, and pedagogical implications*. Language, Literature, and Culture: Graduate School of Literary Studies, Doshisha Women's College of Liberal Art.
- Al-Rawafi, A., Sudana, D., Lukmana, I., & Syihabuddin, S. (2021). Students' apologizing in Arabic and English: An interlanguage pragmatic case study at an Islamic boarding school in Indonesia. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 10(3). doi:<https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v10i3.31740>
- Alfghe, A., & Mohammadzadeh, B. (2021). Realisation of the speech act of request, suggestion and apology by Libyan EFL Learners. *SAGE Open*, 11(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211050378>
- Al-Zumor, A. W. (2011). Apologies in Arabic and English: An inter-language and cross-cultural study. *Journal of King Saud University - Languages and Translation*, 23, 19-28.
- Bardovi-Harlig, K. (2010). *Pragmatics across languages and cultures*. De Gruyter Mouton.
- Beuckmann, F., & Mori, K. (2018). Analysis of speech level in Japanese: Power and rank of imposition on request, invitation, and apology between close participants. *The Japanese Journal of Language in Society*, Vol. 21, pp. 225–238.
- Blum-Kulka, S., & Olshtain, E. (1984) Requests and apologies: A cross-cultural study of speech act realization patterns (CCSARP). *Applied Linguistics*, 5, 196-213. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/5.3.196>
- Brown, P. & Levinson, S. C. (1987). *Politeness: Some universals in the language usage*. Cambridge England: Cambridge University Press.

- Cohen, A.D. and Olshtain, E. (1981) Developing a Measure of Socio-Cultural Competence: The Case of Apology. *Language Learning*, 31, 113-134. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1981.tb01375.x>
- Dendenne, B. (2016,). Cross-cultural and interlanguage pragmatics: Enriching content for Algerian EFL textbooks. A paper presented at the First Maghreb Conference and Exhibition on Teaching and Learning EFL/Rethinking the English Language in the Maghreb: Prospects and perspectives, Ouargla (Algeria).
- Eviliana, N. (2015). Pragmatic transfer in refusals realized by proficient EFL learners English Education Program Sriwijaya University. *Mabasan*, vol. 9, no. 1, 2015, [doi:10.26499/mab.v9i1.155](https://doi.org/10.26499/mab.v9i1.155).
- Haristiani, N. (2014). *Nihongo to Indonesiago no Shazai Koudou no Taishou Kenkyuu*. Hiroshima: Hiroshima University (Unpublished Thesis).
- Haristiani, N., & Danuwijaya, A. D. (2017). A Cross-cultural Sociopragmatic Study: Apology Speech Act Realization Patterns in Indonesian, Sundanese, and Japanese. In *Proceeding of the Tenth Conference on Applied Linguistics and Second English Language Teaching and Technology Conference in collaboration with the First International Conference on Language, Literature, Culture, and Education (CONAPLIIN and ICCOLITE 2017) – Literacy, Culture, and Technology in Language Pedagogy and Use*, pp 313-318.
- Haristiani, N., & Renariah. (2017). Address terms in Japanese, Indonesian and Sundanese - As politeness strategy in apology speech act. 423-428. [10.5220/0007168504230428](https://doi.org/10.5220/0007168504230428).
- Haristiani, N., & Sari, W. A. (2018). A study on Japanese and Sundanese apology expressions; Its' functions in non apology context. *Advances in Social Sciences, Education and Humanities Research*, 254, 338-343.
- Haristiani, N., & Sopiyan, A. (2019). Analisis kontrastif tindak tutur meminta maaf dalam bahasa Jepang dan bahasa Sunda. *Jurnal Lingua Idea*, 10(2), 131-149. <https://doi.org/10.20884/1.jli.2019.10.2.2159>

- Jones, J. F., & Adrefiza (2017). Comparing apologies in Australian English and Bahasa Indonesia: Cultural and gender perspectives. *Journal of Politeness Research*, 13(1), 119 - 89. <https://doi.org/10.1515/pr-2016-0033>
- Kasper, G. (1992). Pragmatic transfer. *Second Language Research*, 8, 203-231.
- Kasper, G., & Rose, K. R. (2002). Pragmatic development in a second language. *Language Learning*, 52(Suppl1), 1-352.
- Kim, H. (2008). The semantic and pragmatic analysis of South Korean and Australian English apologetic speech acts. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 40, 257-278.
- Kumagai, T. (1993). Remedial interactions as face-management: The case of Japanese and Americans. In S. Y. T. Matsuda, M. Sakurai and A. Baba (Eds.), In honor of Tokuichiro Matsuda: Papers contributed on the occasion of his sixtieth birthday (pp: 278-300). Tokyo: Iwasaki Linguistic Circle.
- Maeshiba, N., Yoshinaga, N., Kasper, G. (1995). Transfer and proficiency in interlanguage apologizing. In S. Gass & J. New (Eds.), *Speech act across culture* (pp. 155-187). Berlin: Mouton.
- Morkus, N. (2021) Negative pragmatic transfer and language proficiency: American learners of Arabic, *The Language Learning Journal*, 49(1), 41-65, DOI: [10.1080/09571736.2018.1474247](https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2018.1474247)
- Oktarina, D. R. (2021). Pragmatic transfer in Japanese university students' request. In *Proceeding of the Fifth International Conference on Language, Literature, Culture, and Education (ICOLLITE 2021) – Advances in Social Sciences, Education and Humanities Research* 595, 217-222.
- Olshtain, E. (1989). Apologies Across Languages. In S. Blum-Kulka, J. House & G. Kasper, (Eds.), *Cross-cultural pragmatics: Request and apologies* (pp. 155-173). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.
- Olshtain, E., & Cohen, A. (1983). Apology: A speech act set. In N. Wolfson, & E. Judd (Eds.), *Sociolinguistics and language acquisition* (pp. 18-36). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.

- 
- Osuka, N. (2021). The effect of study-abroad on pragmatic transfer. *Chinese Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 44(1), 3-20.
- Peng, Y. & Gao, X. (2018). A review of interlanguage pragmatics studies. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Contemporary Education, Social Sciences and Ecological Studies (CESSSES)* <https://doi.org/10.2991/cesses-18.2018.119>
- Radhiya, R. J. (2011). Transfer bahasa Indonesia terhadap tindak tutur meminta maaf pada pembelajar bahasa Jepang [Indonesian language transfer in Japanese learners' apology speech act]. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa Jepang ASPBJI Korwil Jabar*, 4 (2), 22–37.
- Rosiah, R. (2013). *Transfer pragmatik pada respon terhadap pujian oleh pembelajar bahasa Jepang*. [Tesis]. Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung, Indonesia.
- Salgado, E. F. (2011). *The pragmatics of request and apologize*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Sugimoto, N. (1997). A Japan–U.S. comparison of apology styles. *Communication Research*, 24(4), 349–370.
- Susanto, D. (2014). The pragmatic meanings of address terms sampeyan and anda. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 4(1), 140-155. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v4i1.606>
- Takadono, Y. (1999). Nihongo to Indonesiago ni okeru Shazai no Hikaku [Comparison of apologies in Japanese and Indonesian]. *Indonesiago to Bunka*, 5, 27-50.
- Takahashi, S. (2000). Transfer in interlanguage pragmatic: New research agenda. *Studies in Languages and Cultures* No. 11, pp. 109-128.
- Thomas, J. (1983) Cross-cultural pragmatic failure. *Applied Linguistics*, 4, 91-112.
- Wannaruk, A. (2008). Pragmatic Transfer in Thai Refusals. *Regional Language Centre Journal*, 39(3), 318-337.



Wouk, F. (2005). Strategies of apologizing in Lombok Indonesia. , 2(2), 277-311.

Wouk, F. (2006). Strategies of apologizing in Lombok Indonesia. *Journal of Politeness Research*, 2, 277-311. <https://doi.org/10.1515/PR.2006.014>

Wouk, F. (2006). The language of apologizing in Lombok, Indonesia. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 38, 1457-1486. doi: 10.1016/j.pragma.2005.09.011

Wulandari, D. (2016). *Analisis kontrastif strategi tindak tutur permintaan maaf bahasa Jepang dan bahasa Indonesia (Dalam film Jepang dan film Indonesia)*. S2 Thesis. Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia.

Yamamoto, T. (2004). Shakaiteki sougo kouji toshite no shazaihyougen - gengo-hyougen sentaku no haikai ni wa naniga aruka [Apologetic expression as a social interaction - What is behind the choice of language expression?]. *Shinshuu Daigaku Ryuugakusei Senta Kiyo*, 5, 19-31.