From Vlogpologies to Digital Dialogues: Decoding YouTubers' Speech Act and Audience Comments

จากวิดีโอคลิปขอโทษสู่การสนทนาบนสื่อดิจิตอล :
การถอดรหัสวัจนกรรมของยูทูปเบอร์และความคิดเห็นของผู้ชม

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Abstract

        This study aims to investigate the apology strategies used by famous YouTubers in their vlogpologies, as well as to explore

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the potential relationship between these strategies and the tones expressed in the comment section. The researchers employed purposive sampling to select eight video clips created by eight well-known YouTubers, along with the top ten most-liked comments of each video, resulting in a total of eighty comments. The speech act set developed by Cohen and Olshtain (1981) was utilized as a schema to analyze the apology strategies. Zhang's (2016) content analysis approach was applied to code, categorize, and interpret the tones expressed in the comments in addition to the tone interpretation method proposed by Pearl and Steyvers (2013).

The findings indicated that acknowledgement of responsibility, expression of apology, and explanation or account were the most frequently used strategies. The analysis of the comments section revealed that the tones expressed in response to the videos were divided between positive and negative feedback, with some videos receiving mixed responses. However, no significant relationship was observed between the apology strategies and the tones expressed in the comments. The results of this study have implications for our understanding of the dynamics of speech act of apology in the digital era and highlight the importance of considering various factors that can influence audience responses to apologies, i.e. intensity of offense, familiarity with the person being apologized to, or relative authority that each of an interactant has (CARLA, 2021).

Keywords: speech act of apology, YouTubers,
comments analysis, types of tones

บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ เพื่อศึกษากลวิธีการขอโทษในวิดีโอของ
ยูทูปเบอร์ที่มีชื่อเสียงและศึกษาความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างกลวิธีการขอโทษกับความ
คิดเห็นของผู้ติดตามในคอมเมนต์ โดยเก็บข้อมูลวิดีโอจากช่องยูทูปของ
ยูทูปเบอร์ที่มีชื่อเสียงจำนวน 8 คลิป และเก็บข้อมูลความคิดเห็นในคอมเมนต์
ใต้คลิปที่ได้รับยอดไลค์มากที่สุด 10 อันดับแรกของแต่ละคลิป รวมทั้งสิ้น 80
คอมเมนต์ วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลกลวิธีการขอโทษโดยใช้แนวคิดกลวิธีการกล่าว
วัจนกรรมขอโทษของ Cohen and Olshtain (1981) ใช้วิธีการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา
ของ Zhang (2016) ในการเข้ารหัส จัดกลุ่มและตีความหมายคอมเมนต์โดยใช้
แนวคิดการตีความหมายความคิดเห็น (Tone interpretation) ของ Pearl and
Steyvers (2013) ผลการวิจัยระบุว่ากลยุทธ์การขอโทษที่ยูทูปเบอร์ใช้มากที่สุด
ได้แก่ การแสดงความรับผิดชอบ (Acknowledgement of responsibility)
การแสดงความขอโทษ (Expression of apology) และการให้คำอธิบาย
(Explanation or account) ในส่วนการวิเคราะห์ความคิดเห็นของผู้ติดตามใน
คอมเมนต์พบว่า สามารถแบ่งความคิดเห็นออกเป็น 2 กลุ่ม ได้แก่ ความคิดเห็น
เชิงบวกและเชิงลบ โดยพบความคิดเห็นทั้งที่เป็นเชิงบวกและเชิงลบในวิดีโอ
บางส่วน อย่างไรก็ตาม ไม่พบความสัมพันธ์ที่มีนัยสำคัญระหว่างกลยุทธ์การ
ขอโทษและทิศทางของความคิดเห็น ผลการศึกษานี้มีนัยยะสำคัญในการสร้าง
ความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับวิวัฒนาการของการกล่าววัจนกรรมขอโทษในยุคดิจิทัล และ
เสนอว่า ควรพิจารณาปัจจัยต่าง ๆ ที่อาจมีอิทธิพลต่อความคิดเห็นของผู้ติดตาม
ต่อการขอโทษ เช่น ความรุนแรงของความผิด ความสนิทสนมระหว่างผู้ขอโทษ
และผู้รับคำขอโทษ หรืออำนาจของคู่สื่อสารแต่ละฝ่าย (CARLA, 2021)

Introduction

The advancement of modern technology has revolutionized various aspects of life, offering convenience and alternative monetary transactions. Social media platforms i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube have provided opportunity for people to express opinions, connect with others, and engage in discussions on diverse topics. With over 4.26 billion users in 2021, social media platforms have become a worldwide phenomenon for sharing stances and sentiments, with its popularity estimated to continuously grow further. (Dixon, 2023).

YouTube has become a leading video sharing platform with 2.1 billion active monthly users in 2023 (Shepherd, 2023; Auxier & Anderson, 2021). It enables people to share experiences, talents, and interests through videos while receiving feedback from their audience. Popular YouTubers, recognized as influential figures, create engaging content to maintain their audience and attract new viewers. However, some YouTubers compromise their values in pursuit of popularity, leading to criticism from the public who sometimes question their ethics and self-control (Storms, 2022; Grant & Kim , 2020).

When YouTubers face backlash for their immature behavior, they are aware of the potential negative consequences on their

reputation and financial stability. To address this, they often post apologetic videos in an attempt to prevent further damage to their image as marketable figures (Karlsson, 2020). However, these apology videos commonly receive mixed responses from viewers, further complicating the situation (Kakkar & Samora, 2020). In response to controversial situations, YouTubers employ various strategies and create different types of video content (Kakkar & Samora, 2020; Karlsson, 2020). The comments generated by viewers reflect diverse opinions expressed with varying tones, highlighting the importance of verbal strategies used in apology videos (Sandlin & Gracyalny, 2018).

As defined by Pearl and Steyvers (2013), tones in a message are expressions of mental states, such as emotions, attitudes, and intentions that are conveyed, apart from basic semantic content to readers or receivers through text or written form (Pearl & Steyvers, 2013). There are three types of tones: positive, negative, and neutral available for YouTube followers to identify their affective attitudes towards those comments. Zhang (2016) has offered clarifications of the 3 types of tones. The scholar explains that a positive tone is usually represented through optimistic terms and is a kindly approach to others, while a negative tone in the comment includes opposing words, such as pessimistic or aggressive words. In contrast, a neutral tone usually does not show any negative or positive sentiments (Zhang, 2016).

Tones identification in spoken language or face-to-face communication is uncomplicated as communicators could sense others' feelings from a variety of cues throughout the conversation i.e. facial expressions, the pitch found during the communication, and the non-verbal signs represented (Planalp, 1996). These elements, on the

other hand, disappear in written language resulting in increased complexity when interpreting a message.

Analyzing the apologetic strategies employed in vlogpologies by famous YouTubers offers significant contributions in two key areas. Firstly, for the sake of English learning and teaching, the findings provide valuable pedagogical implications by uncovering how English apologies evolve in the digital era. Additionally, exploring the audience's feelings, attitudes, and responses to these vlogpologies helps us better understand the nuanced tones and the relationship between apology strategies. Moreover, content creators can directly benefit from these insights, as they gain valuable knowledge to enhance their own apology techniques and effectively engage with their audience.

Objectives

The purpose of the study was to investigate apology strategies used in YouTubers' vlogpologies and the tones in the comments. Moreover, the apology strategies and the tones were examined to reveal whether the relationship between the two elements exists.

Research Questions

The present study attempts to address the following research questions.

1. What are the apology strategies used in vlogpologies by YouTubers?

2. What are the tones in the comments on vlogpologies?

3. To what extent do the apology strategies and the tones relate to one another?

Literature Review

This part outlines related literature adopted as theoretical frameworks in this study.

1. YouTubers' Vlogpologies

YouTube is a dynamic multimedia content network created in the year 2005 aiming to provide people with a space to share their voices and expose them to the rest of the world (YouTube, 2023). This fast-growing video platform can provide an opportunity to begin a new occupation related to content creation called "Youtuber."

According to Tastyedit (2023) YouTube evolves fast, so Youtubers must keep up with trends on the platform to be successful in the long run. Youtubers uploading videos earn a small amount of money whenever anyone watches the commercials displayed at the beginning of their videos (Holmbom, 2015). Hence, gaining more views appears to be a pivotal mission among these social media figures until YouTubers conduct immoral actions and eventually suffer from criticism (Grant & Kim, 2020; Storms, 2022). Vlogpologies refers to the phenomenon in which YouTubers publish remorse for their actions (Kakkar & Samora, 2020) and this genre of videos has been trending in the YouTube Creator's community. Kakkar and Samora (2020) examined YouTubers' vlogpologies that are controversial and found variations in the use of apology

phrases per minute, ratios of likes to dislikes, and cuts per minutes.

Thus, how Youtubers extend and broadcast their apologies on YouTube is an interesting linguistic phenomenon which can depict how apologies evolve in this digital platform. The study of this phenomenon might also shed light on how English is used to serve the purposes of these YouTubers.

2. Speech Act of Apology

Speech act of apologies associate with expressions of regret, rationales of the offense, and repair for the offense (Morris & Chiba, 2016). Cohen and Olshtain's (1981, p. 119) Classification of Apology Strategies was chosen for this study due to its widespread recognition and comprehensive categorization of apologetic behaviors. The framework has been successfully employed in previous research (Abudin & Sundari, 2021; Kakkar & Samora, 2020; Karlsson, 2020). Five possible strategies have been proposed for making an apology as follows:

Table 1

Classification of Apology Strategies (Cohen & Olshtain, 1981, p. 119)

Types of Strategies	Sublevels of Strategies	Examples
An expression of an apology	An expression of regret	"I'm sorry."

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Types of Strategies	Sublevels of Strategies	Examples
	An offer of apology	"I apologize."
	A request for forgiveness	"Excuse me" or "Forgive me."
	An expression of an excuse	(An excuse that serves as an apology)
Acknowledgement of responsibility		"It's my fault." "I was confused/I didn't see/You are right."
An explanation or account		"The bus was late."
Offer of repair		"How can I make it up to you -- why don't I buy you lunch on Friday?"
A promise of forbearance		"It won't happen again."

As outlined in Table 1, there are five categories of apology strategies performed by native speakers. "An expression of an apology" is the most common strategy used by both native and nonnative speakers (Cheng, 2013; Bergman & Kasper, 1991). The speaker uses a word, expression, or sentence containing a verb such as "sorry," "excuse," "forgive," or "apologize." Likewise, when the offender

realizes that he/she has done something wrong, the individual can accept the blame by using "acknowledgment of responsibility" such as "It's my fault" or "I was confused." In addition, "an explanation or account" how the speaker explains himself/herself of conducting the offense is another available choice. Moreover, most native speakers "offer repair" for the offense by using expressions such as "How can I make it up to you." Finally, a promise not to do it again or a "promise of forbearance" is also employed.

The speech act of apology encompasses five primary strategies found in different languages. However, the choice of strategy or combination of strategies depends on the specific context and varies across language and cultural groups. In this study, the classification of apology strategies was utilized to analyze vlogpologies by YouTubers involved in controversies, aiming to examine the dynamic of English apologies on this particular social media platform.

3. Classification of Tones

Tones in a message refers to expressions of mental conditions, such as emotions, attitudes, and intentions that are conveyed, apart from basic semantic content to readers or receivers through text or written form (Pearl & Steyvers, 2013). Zhang (2016) explored tones in YouTube comments about controversies on genetically modified (GM) food considering various dimensions, including attributes, valence, sources cited for supporting opinions, commenting motivations, and additional characteristics such as uncertainty, interactivity, and hostility present in these comments. The researcher categorized

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tones into three groups: 1) a positive tone is usually represented through optimistic terms and is a kindly approach to others, 2) a negative tone in the comment includes opposing words, such as pessimistic or aggressive words, and 3) a neutral tone usually does not show any negative or positive sentiments. (Zhang, 2016, p. 56)

Table 2
Classification of Tones (Zhang, 2016)

Raw data	Types of Tones		
	Positive	**Negative**	**Neutral**
"funny this is GMO food is a lot safer because…"	/		
"sorry "…*but most of your food is GMO"* *"kind of sad that…"*		/	
"GMO…OMG It tastes just like gluten."			/

Table 2 provides an example of classification of tones based on Zhang's (2016) study. The table presents three categories of tones: positive, negative, and neutral. It indicates that the raw data, which is not specified in the given information, can be categorized into these three tone types.

4. Previous Related Studies

Several previous studies examine the behaviors and strategies employed by public figures and content creators in

their apology videos, as well as the reactions and attitudes of the audience as outlined below.

Sandlin & Gracyalny (2018) examined the verbal behaviors and emotions displayed by public figures apologizing on YouTube and their relationship to audience perceptions of sincerity and forgiveness. The study analyzes 335 segments of video from 32 public apologies on YouTube spanning from 2009 to 2014, and 1971 posted responses. The findings revealed that public figures' behavior can affect the attitudes of commenters.

Additionally, a recent study by Kakkar & Samora (2020) investigated vlogpologies of 34 YouTubers with a documented controversy with different degrees of severity in the offences committed. The purpose was to determine how the numbers of subscribers to each channel changed after each vlogpology was launched considering many elements on the clip, i.e., apology phrase frequency, editing frequency, and sincerity of apologizers. The findings revealed that the audience seemed to be negative when too many apology phrases were provided, as well as the editing frequency was too high.

Furthermore, Loisa (2021) examined the frequency and distribution of apology strategies used by YouTube content creators in their apology videos and compares the strategy usage of male and female creators. The study found that YouTubers recognize and utilize many kinds of strategies to express an apology, although they do have certain preferences, and there

are differences in the choices of apology strategies between men and women.

These studies contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics and effectiveness of apologies in the digital world, highlighting the importance of considering various factors in shaping audience perceptions and reactions.

Research Methodology

This part outlines more details about the samples and the instruments applied in this study. In addition, it also presents the data collection procedures and data analysis.

1.Samples

Our research aimed to achieve an in-depth analysis and understanding of the content and sentiment within the specific context of YouTubers involved in publicized incidents that received significant attention or media coverage. The samples were taken from two distinct sources. Firstly, we collected eight vlogpologies created by YouTubers involved in documented controversies. Secondly, we selected the top ten comments with the highest number of likes under each vlogpology, resulting in a total of 80 comments. This purposive sampling approach allowed us to thoroughly examine and explore the nuances of the phenomenon under investigation.

2. Instruments

In this study, two research instruments were employed. Firstly, Cohen and Olshtain's (1981) framework of apology strategies with five categories of apologetic expressions was used to investigate the apology strategies employed by the YouTubers examined. Secondly, Zhang's (2016) explanation of tones was applied to analyze the top-10 comments in the vlogpologies by the aforementioned eight YouTubers. The framework considered variables such as comment characteristics, opinion valence, responsibility attribution, uncertainty, hostility, and interactivity as a guideline for analyzing tones in the comments. The coding scheme included three types of tones: positive, negative, and neutral, each with a corresponding code symbol and an explanation for coding the data.

3. Data Collection Procedure

Purposive sampling was employed in selecting vlogpologies with the following features: 1) a vlogpology from famous YouTubers gaining over one million views, 2) uploaded between 2016 to 2021, a crucial time in the evolution of vlogpologies and witnessed notable social phenomena related to apology videos on YouTube (Sampson, 2022), and 3) the maximum length of videos is up to 10 minutes.

As a result, eight vlogpologies were selected including apology clips produced by 1) PewDiePie, 2) Kubz Scout, and 3) Jojo ASMR who had been involved in incidents in which racial

slurs were used, while 4) CallMeCarson faced a controversy for inappropriately texting a minor. Likewise, 5) Logan Paul filmed a suicide scene in Japan's suicide forest for entertainment, 6) Jarvis used cheats in Fortnite, 7) David Dobrik was unintentionally involved in a sexual harassment scandal, and 8) Keemstar falsely accused someone of being a pedophile without solid evidence, causing harm to their life.

4. Data Analysis

The analysis of apology strategies consists of 2 steps ranging from transcribing the messages on the 8 vlogpologies and identifying the strategies used in the transcribed data taking Cohen and Olshtain (1981)'s apology sets as a framework. The researchers worked in a group reading and coding the transcriptions of the vlogpologies line by line. For instance, when CallMeCarson, a sample YouTuber mentioned, "Next year I will donate a 100 percent of my profit to charity," it was marked as an offer of repair strategy considering Cohen and Olshtain (1981)'s framework.

After that the finding was submitted to a native English speaker lecturer and the corresponding author of this study to ensure the correctness of the coding.

To analyze the tones in the comments, the researchers collected the top 10 comments from each video and stored them in Google Docs. The comments were then categorized based on the words used and the context, following Zhang's (2016) tone analysis framework. This approach aligns with the suggestion by

Pearl and Steyvers (2013) that a more comprehensive analysis of sophisticated linguistic features should be conducted to better understand the tones in social media comments. Finally, the corresponding author verified the categorization of the comments to ensure accuracy.

In examining the relationship between apology strategies and tones, the study calculated the frequencies of each strategy in the vlogpologies and compared the percentages of different tone types across the eight clips. It is noteworthy that the study did not specifically focus on the severity of the offenses committed. The coding process was carefully reviewed and validated by the corresponding author and the research team to ensure the validity and reliability of the data analysis procedures.

Findings

This section presents the findings of this study in three parts: the apology strategies used in the vlogpologies, the tones in the comments, and the relationship between the strategies and the tones.

1. The Apology Strategies Used in the Vlogpologies

Regarding Research question No. 1, "What are the apology strategies used in vlogpologies by YouTubers?" the apology strategies found in vlogpologies are listed in Table 3.

Table 3

Frequency of Apology Strategies Used in YouTubers' Vlogpologies

YouTubers	Strategy	Percentage (%)
1.Pewdiepie (n=7)	Acknowledgement of responsibility	57.1
	An expression of apology	14.3
	An explanation of account	14.3
	A promise of non-recurrence	14.3
	An offer of repair	0
2. Logan Paul (n=10)	Acknowledgement of responsibility	40
	An expression of apology	30
	An explanation of account	20
	A promise of non-recurrence	10
	An offer of repair	0
3. Jarvis	Acknowledgement of responsibility	50

YouTubers	Strategy	Percentage (%)
(n=14)	An expression of apology	14.2
	An explanation of account	14.2
	A promise of non-recurrence	21.4
	An offer of repair	0
4. CallMeCarson (n=2)	An offer of repair	100
	Acknowledgement of responsibility	0
	An explanation of account	0
	An expression of apology	0
	A promise of non-recurrence	0
5. David Dobrik (n=21)	Acknowledgement of responsibility	42.8
	An expression of apology	28.5
	An explanation of account	14.2

YouTubers	Strategy	Percentage (%)
	An offer of repair	4.7
	A promise of non-recurrence	9.5
6. Keemstar (n=11)	Acknowledgement of responsibility	45.4
	An expression of apology	18.1
	An offer of repair	18.1
	An explanation of account	9.1
	A promise of non-recurrence	9.1
7. Kubz scout (n=28)	Acknowledgement of responsibility	42.8
	An expression of apology	32.1
	An explanation of account	21.4
	A promise of non-recurrence	3.5
	An offer of repair	0

YouTubers	Strategy	Percentage (%)
8. Jojo ASMR (n=7)	An explanation of account	71.4
	Acknowledgement of responsibility	14.2
	An expression of apology	14.2
	An offer of repair	0
	A promise of non-recurrence	0

Table 3 reveals the percentage of apology strategies used in the eight YouTubers' vlogpologies. Overall, the most used apology strategies were acknowledgement of responsibility, an expression of apology, and an explanation of account, respectively.

Almost 60 percent of the strategy proportion used by Pewdiepie was acknowledgement of responsibility (57.1%) i.e. *"I always find it extremely immature and stupid and I hate how I now personally fed into that part of gaming as well."* An expression of apology, an expression of account, and a promise of non-recurrence were equally found in the apology video (14.3%).

Likewise, forty percent of the strategy used in Logan Paul's vlogpology was acknowledgment of responsibility such as "*I've made a severe and continuous lapse of my judgment and I*

don't expect to be forgiven," followed by an expression of apology (30%) and an explanation of account (20%), respectively.

Fifty percent of apology strategy used in Jarvis's video was expressions like, *"I know I have to take accountability for my actions and you know I'm gonna I'm gonna do my best…"* which were categorized as acknowledgement of responsibility (50%), while the second-most used strategy was a promise of non-recurrence (21.4), followed by an expression of apology and an explanation of account with the same percent of 14.2.

In contrast, it was obvious that only one apology strategy found in CallMeCarson's video was an offer of repair (100%). The expressions such as, *"I plan to donate 100 of my profits to charity with…"* or *"I just want to do my own thing and raise money for some people…"* on his vlogpology.

In David Dobrik's vlogpology, the most frequent apology strategy found was acknowledgement of responsibility (42.8%) such as *"I needed to apologize for my past actions and I've never done this correctly…,"* followed by an expression of apology (28.5%) and an explanation of account (14.2%), respectively.

In Keemstar's apology video, the amount of acknowledgement of responsibility i.e. *"I feel horrible I mean I know the responsible thing to do was to do what we did…"* was just slightly less than half of the total (45.4%), followed by an expression of apology and an offer of repair which were used in the same percentage, 18.1%.

In the meantime, acknowledgement of responsibility such *as "I can't believe how disrespectful and offensive"* was mostly found in Kubz scout's video (42.8%), followed by an expression of apology (32.1%) and an explanation of account (21.4%), respectively.

Jojo ASMR mostly delivered the strategy of an explanation of account i.e *"I don't use the hard r version I'm simply quoting another person's use of it"* in his video (71.4%) with a smaller proportion of an expression of apology (14.2%) and acknowledgement of responsibility (14.2%).

2. The Tones in the Comments

Regarding the second research question, "what are the tones in the comments on vlogpologies?" the types of tones in comments found in each video are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

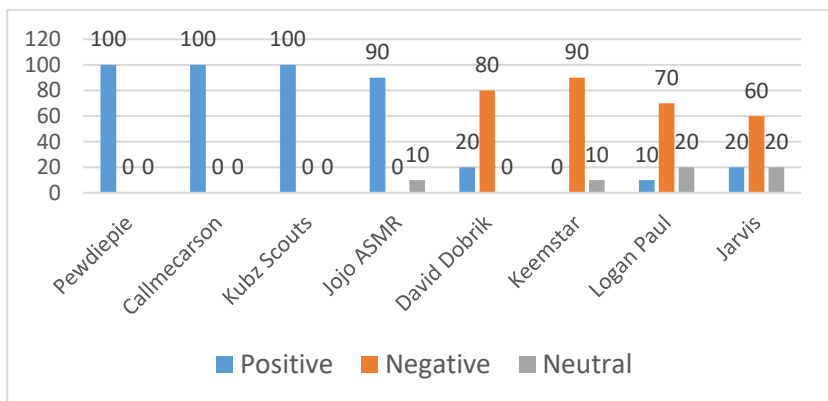The Percentage of Tones in Comments the Vlogpologies

Figure 1 illustrates proportions of tones in three categories. It was obvious that 50 percent of the YouTubers had over 90 to 100 percent positive responses. These included Pewdiepie (100%), CallMeCarson (100%), Kubz scout (100%), and Jojo ASMR (90%), respectively. The examples include comments i.e. *"This situation is hard to have a stance on, but I think him wanting to do good with his platform is a better alternative than nothing. Best of luck to you Carson"* to CallMeCarson's apology and "…*I don't think anyone will misunderstand your point (but if I see any people who have, I'll make sure to direct them to this video*" to Jojo ASMD's.

On the other hand, the other half received a high percentage of combined responses with negative-tone predominance, i.e., Logan Paul showed 70% negative, Jarvis 60% negative, David Dobrik containing negative 80%, Keem star 90% negative. The examples include the response *"…when aimbot misses and accidentally shoots your career to death"* to Javis and *"bully - apologize – repeat."*

Despite the two major tones found in the comments, the least common tone was "neutral" which was found in four vlogpologies by Jojo ASMR, Keemstar, Logan Paul, and Jarvis with only 10-20% each. For example, *"his voice is so different when he isn't doing asmr…"* was posted below Jojo ASMD's vlogpology since the audience noticed that Jojo does not usually speak during ASMR videos.

3. Relationship between Apology Strategies and Tones in the Comments

According to the last objective which is to find the relationship between apology strategies and tones, Table 4 presents the relationship between tones and apology strategies.

Table 4

The Relationship between Tones and Apology Strategies.

YouTubers	Apology strategy (%)	Positive (%)	Negative (%)	Neutral (%)
Pewdiepie	(57.1%) Acknowledgment of responsibility (14.3%) An expression of apology (14.3%) An explanation or account (14.3%) A promise of non-recurrence (0%) An offer of repair	100	0	0
Logan Paul	(40%) Acknowledgment of responsibility (30%) An expression of apology (20%) An explanation or account (10%) A promise of non-recurrence (0%) An offer of repair	10	70	20
Jarvis	(50%) Acknowledgment of responsibility	20	60	20

YouTubers	Apology strategy (%)	Types of Tones		
		Positive (%)	Negative (%)	Neutral (%)
	(21.4%) A promise of non-recurrence (14.2%) An expression of apology (14.2%) An explanation or account (0%) An offer of repair			
CallMeCarson	(100%) An offer of repair (0%) An expression of apology (0%) Acknowledgment of responsibility (0%) An explanation or account (0%) A promise of non-recurrence	100	0	0
David Dobbrik	(42.8%) Acknowledgment of responsibility (28.5%) An expression of apology (14.2%) An explanation or account (9.5%) A promise of non-recurrence (4.7%) An offer of repair	20	80	0
Keemstar	(45.4%) Acknowledgment of responsibility (18.1%) An expression of apology (18.1%) An offer of repair	0	90	10

YouTubers	Apology strategy (%)	Types of Tones		
		Positive (%)	Negative (%)	Neutral (%)
	(9.1%) An explanation or account (9.1%) A promise of non-recurrence			
Kubz Scouts	(42.8%) Acknowledgment of responsibility (32.1%) An expression of apology (21.4%) An explanation or account (3.5%) A promise of non-recurrence (0%) An offer of repair	100	0	0
Jojo ASMR	(71.4%) An explanation or account (14.2%) An expression of apology (14.2%) Acknowledgment of responsibility (0%) An offer of repair (0%) A promise of non-recurrence	90	0	10

Table 4 illustrates the relationship between tones and apology strategies. The results can be divided into two parts considering the proportion of tone types in the comment. The first group was dominated by a positive tone, while a negative tone was the majority in the other groups. The positive-tone

dominant group consisted of the vlogpologies created by four YouTubers; Pewdiepie, CallMeCarson, Kubz Scouts, and Jojo ASMR. It was found that each YouTuber used various strategies in their apology videos, but the majority was acknowledgement of responsibility and an expression of apology.

The second group shown in this table was the YouTubers that received more comments with negative tones. Similarly, to the previous group dominated by the comments with positive tones, the YouTubers gaining negative tones also used various apology strategies to construct their apology videos with acknowledgement of responsibility as the most common strategies.

As a result, considering the similar apology strategies used in both groups with positive and negative comments, we acknowledged that apology strategies might not play significant roles in the audience's attitudes.

Discussion

The present study investigated the apology strategies employed by YouTubers in their vlogpologies and the tone of the top comments in response to the videos. Additionally, the study aimed to investigate whether a relationship exists between the apology strategies used and the tone of the comments.

Regarding apology strategies, the data analysis revealed that all five apology strategies - expression of apology, acknowledgement of responsibility, explanation of account,

offer of repair, and promise of non-recurrence - were present in every video analyzed in this study. Moreover, the most frequently employed strategies were acknowledgement of responsibility, expression of apology, and explanation of account. These findings are consistent with prior research conducted by Abudin and Sundari (2021), Loisa (2021), and Sabilla and Jusmaya (2020), who studied apologies on social media and discovered similar apology strategies.

The analysis of tones in the comments revealed a mixed pattern of responses, with some videos receiving predominantly positive or negative feedback, while others generated mixed reactions. For instance, Logan Paul's apology video elicited a varied range of comments, with 10% positive, 70% negative, and 20% neutral responses. These findings corroborate earlier research on the impact of verbal and nonverbal cues on audience reactions to public figures (Sandlin & Gracyalny, 2018).

While the investigation into the relationship between tones and apology strategies did not yield significant correlation, indicating that the effectiveness of apology strategies may be influenced by societal contexts, it is essential to consider the omission of severity of offenses in this study. Therefore, caution is necessary when interpreting the conclusion, as the intensity of the offense can potentially affect the audience's attitudes. Furthermore, the transition to online platforms introduces unique characteristics, including the absence of nonverbal cues, the ability to reach a broad and diverse audience, and the potential for anonymity or pseudonymity. These factors play a

significant role in communication dynamics and shape how apologies are perceived and received.

The findings align with prior studies suggesting that several situational factors, such as the apologizer's past behavior, the frequency of apology phrases, and editing, contribute to shaping attitudes towards social media figures. For instance, Sandlin & Gracyalny (2018) who discovered that public figures' behavior can affect the attitudes of commenters. Additionally, recent studies conducted by Kakkar & Samora (2020) explained that apology phrase frequency and editing frequency had a significant impact on the audience's attitudes towards an apology.

This research study makes a valuable contribution to English pragmatic teaching by offering insights into the effectiveness of apology strategies in diverse contexts, particularly in online communication. The examination of audience tones in response to apologies helps students gain a comprehensive understanding of varied reactions and the influence of verbal and nonverbal cues. Moreover, comprehending the distinct characteristics of online interactions, such as the absence of nonverbal cues and the potential for anonymity, equips students with effective communication strategies in digital contexts.

In light of the research findings, the following suggestions will be beneficial to future studies. Firstly, exploring the effectiveness of each apology strategy in other contexts and

cultures is suggested due to the fact that selection of a particular apology strategy or a combination of strategies is dependent on the unique circumstances within a given language and culture group (CARLA, 2021). Secondly, identifying the contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of apology strategies e.g. the severity of the offense, cultural norms, and the audience's demographic characteristics will be beneficial to the field. Such research could help to develop a broader understanding of the relationship between apology strategies and their effectiveness in different contexts.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study scrutinized the apology strategies used by eight YouTubers in their vlogpologies and the tones of the comments in response to the videos. The results revealed that all five apology strategies were present in the videos analyzed, with acknowledgement of responsibility, an expression of apology, and an explanation or account being the most frequently employed strategies. Next, the analysis of tones in the comments revealed a mixed pattern of responses, with some videos receiving predominantly positive or negative feedback, while others generated mixed reactions from the audience. However, little to no correlation was found between the tone of the comments and the apology strategies used, suggesting that the effectiveness of apology strategies may be highly situational.

The study suggests that future research could investigate the effectiveness of each apology strategy in other contexts and cultures, while considering contextual factors i.e. intensity of the offence, social power or distance that influence the effectiveness of apology strategies might reveal more in-depth understanding. Overall, this study provides important insights into the use of apology strategies on social media and shed light on the need for further research in this area.

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