

Knowledge types and presuppositions

An analysis of strategic aspects of public apologies

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Public apologies are so prevalent in our social lives that they have become a subject of scholarly investigation all over the globe. The present study, which involves coding, frequency counting, and qualitative analysis, examines the strategic aspects of 16 public apologies issued to Filipino apologizees. The results of our analysis indicate that apologizers often choose varied knowledge types and draw upon presuppositions to strategically omit details that can negatively influence their credibility and the reception of their apology. More specifically, apologizers use the audience's presuppositions to avoid presenting common knowledge of the offense that may incriminate them further; they also omit the mention of future action that may hold them more accountable for their transgressions. Our present analysis bolsters the view that although the sincerity of public apologies cannot be exactly measured, they are still performed as part of image repair and management of interpersonal relationships.

Keywords: speech acts, apologies, presuppositions

1. Introduction

In a world where social media reigns, every small action is documented. What was once private, only for those who are close enough to be privy to one's littlest movements, is now public, where one's remotest acquaintance can get a glimpse and even comment on any move one makes. It is no surprise then that apologies, which used to be interpersonal events that happen in the most private of spheres, have now gone public. From motorists who err on the highway to presidents who sin on the national stage, public apologies are even more relevant now than when they first became an important focus of investigation in the 1980s among discourse analysts and sociolinguists (Gonzalez-Cruz 2012, 543; Kampf 2013, 148; Maclachlan 2015; Zhanghong and Li 2020).

Myers (2016) has observed that the speech act of apology has become a ritual, and it is practiced across cultures (Ancarno 2015; Kampf 2013). Such observation is supported by a plethora of research on apologies that is rich in perspective and multicultural in scope (Marrus 2006; Nobles 2008; Page 2014). Most of the work on apologies have employed the speech act theory (Austin 1962; Searle 1979), the concept of face (Goffman 1967), remedial interchanges, and the politeness theory (Brown and Levinson 1987). From the time Austin (1962) proposed that words performed actions and Searle (1979) modified the former's categories, inquiries regarding apologies began. Coupled with Goffman's (1967) concept of Face and its influence on our interactions and Brown and Levinson's (1987) work on apology as a face-threatening act, researchers from different parts of the globe have attempted to dig deeper into this social phenomenon. However, only a handful have focused on presuppositions in apologies (Blum-Kulka and Olshain 1984), which is one of the gaps that this present study aims to fill.

In the local setting, our survey of the literature on this topic reveals that only three studies have investigated Filipino apologies. Mojica (2004, 35) highlighted the usefulness of apologies in doing repair, in affirming a person's self-worth, in meeting a person's face needs, and in mending ruined interpersonal relationships between Filipino couples. Oclaret (2013) compared the apology strategies used by Filipino and Filipino-Chinese senior students and found that the latter have fewer apology strategies. De La Rosa and Castro (2016) did a cross-cultural analysis of public apologies issued by American and Filipino television hosts and observed that the Filipino TV host resorted to self-justification and evasive language to deny responsibility for the offense. These investigations have unearthed a number of strategies, realizations, and functions of apologies in the Philippine setting. An analysis of the strategic aspects of public apologies, more specifically the types of knowledge used during the act of apologizing and the role of presuppositions in making apologies, will reveal the kind of background knowledge apologizers assume their audience has. It is hoped that this investigation will be an addition to the body of research that can help increase the understanding of this ritual of image repair not just within the Philippine context, but also across different cultures.

The present study makes use of categorization, frequency counts, and qualitative description of the strategic link between knowledge types and presuppositions in public apologies issued to Filipino apologizees. Public apologies here refer to apologies made by individuals or groups in a public setting (such as on social media and television), while the Philippine context covers the involvement of any Filipino in the apology, either as the apology giver or receiver. In sum, this present study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. Which knowledge types are commonly used in the selected public apologies?
2. What type of information is left unsaid or presupposed regarding the Act (transgression) done and future actions to be taken to atone for the Act?

2. Theoretical and empirical backgrounds

The present study interweaves previous works on presupposition, knowledge types, and the speech act of apology in order to underpin its analysis. The definition and linguistic cues of presupposition are discussed first; it is followed by the discussion on knowledge types according to Van Dijk (2000, 2004) and Bekalu's (2006) application of Van Dijk's knowledge types in documenting the nexus between knowledge types and presupposition. The last section focuses on the theoretical and empirical underpinnings of the speech act of apology.

2.1 Presupposition

Presupposition is defined as a proposition or an inference that is taken for granted. It serves as a precondition (Huang 2007), mutual knowledge (Levinson, 1983), background knowledge (Yule 2006, 112), or common ground (Stalnaker 2002) for the interlocutor's appropriate interpretation of an utterance or a sentence. Hence, when someone is presupposing something, that person is assuming something or taking it for granted. In other words, presupposition is the preparatory knowledge which acts as a common starting point for communication between the speaker and the hearer. The meaning of what is said (explicit information) rests on what is unsaid (implicit presupposition). The writer/speaker decides what to say explicitly and what to leave the audience to assume. Hence, presupposition directs the interlocutors in the selection and interpretation of information (Saarinen 2008, 345).

However, Saarinen (2008, 345) opines that it is not proper to believe that speakers and hearers always share the same background knowledge or presupposition. The writer or speaker may be communicating to a split audience, with some sharing the writer's/speaker's assumptions while others do not (Sbisà, 1999). Such a case triggers the speaker or writer to give new information as something that is presupposed (Saarinen 2008; Sbisà 1999).

Giving new information as something assumed or presupposed has some benefits. The information may be accepted without criticism because it is implicitly communicated and not explicitly stated. In addition, presuppositions may lend support to the presentation of ideological assumptions as either common knowledge or hiding a value system and standpoints that may be opposed when

expressed explicitly (Saarinen 2008). Hence, presuppositions have a persuasive function as they can be regarded as a potent tool for communicating new information or common knowledge about values and ideologies in an implicit way (Papi 2003).

Presupposition has linguistic devices called presupposition triggers, which give cues to the readers/listeners (Huang 2007; Levinson 1983). These presupposition triggers aid the readers /listeners in the interpretation of an utterance. For example, in “[t]he king of France is/isn’t bald” (Huang 2007), the use of definite description or existential presupposition enables the readers to presuppose that France has a king. Other presupposition triggers are factive predicates (e.g. know, regret), aspectual/change of state predicates (e.g. stop), iterative verbs (e.g. return), iterative adjectives (e.g. again), implicative predicates (e.g. manage), temporal clauses (e.g. After she did it...), cleft sentences (e.g. It was/wasn’t Baird who invented television), and counterfactual conditionals (Huang 2007).

Theoretical studies on presupposition abound in linguistics (Beaver 2001; Huang 2007; Levinson 1983). However, empirical studies on presupposition are sparse. One of these studies is Saarinen’s (2008) investigation of the persuasiveness of the higher education policies of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Union (EU). The study revolves around three focal points: the kind of information that is presupposed in the policies, the kinds of persuasive features the presuppositions represent, and the kind of ideology the presuppositions create. Three policies from OECD and three from the EU are selected. Only the introduction sections that focus on the concept of ‘quality’ are analyzed. Texts with no mention of quality are not included in the study. The first part of the investigation uses Levinson’s (1983) presupposition triggers but focuses only on existentials, factives, change of state verbs, and temporals. Top findings of Saarinen’s study indicate that the persuasiveness of the policies’ presuppositions is not argumentative in nature. Instead, presuppositions help in depicting quality in higher education as a phenomenon that already exists. Had these evaluations of quality been explicitly argued, the assertions would have been open to challenge and scrutiny. Saarinen (2008) concludes that presupposition promises more persuasive powers than explicit avowals do.

2.2 Presupposition and knowledge types

Another empirical study on presupposition is Bekalu’s (2006) work on news discourse. Bekalu analyzes the presupposed knowledge types in news discourse in selected Ethiopian Newspapers written in English. The investigation determines whether or not the presupposed information is fair or unfair and whether it is used for ideological purposes. The study is underpinned by a combination of

frameworks: Van Dijk's 2000 and 2004 works on the typology of knowledge and presuppositions as part of Cognitive Discourse Analysis and Sperber and Wilson's (1995) Relevance Theory (RT).

In his article "Cognitive Discourse Analysis," Van Dijk (2000) defines presuppositions as "a set of meaning conditions of a sentence: what we must know in order to understand a sentence (or sequence of sentences)" (33). These presuppositions are further supported by "expressions in the text" that "signal" them (Van Dijk, 2000). As an example, Van Dijk (2000) uses the statement "even the terrorists took pity on the victims" and explains that the word "even" reveals a presupposition about the usual behavior of the terrorists, which is "pitiless" or the opposite of taking pity on others. He believes that these types of presuppositions in news discourse become controversial when the suggested propositions in the presupposition are assumed to be true when, in fact, they are not. Van Dijk (2004), in a paper that solely focuses on news discourse, stresses the importance of this kind of knowledge management as part of continuous information modification in the public sphere. One of the headings clearly states his position: "No News Without Knowledge" (71). His main preoccupation in this paper is to examine what kind and how much knowledge is given and received in news presentations. For example, he claims that journalists modify their audience's knowledge through reports, and it is crucial for journalists to assume just how much their audience knows. He notes the influence of built mental models in how news is perceived by the audience and that, typically, journalists only need to provide information that the audience does not have yet; the rest of the work is done by the existing mental models the audience has gathered from previous world knowledge. However, he bemoans the lack of explicit categorization of the types of knowledge that can help in the method of processing and analyzing discourses.

Because of this deficiency, Van Dijk (2005, 73) has outlined six criteria providing categories by which types of knowledge can be characterized: Scope, Specificity, Concreteness, Reality, Objects, and Firmness. Scope includes six subtypes of knowledge, namely: Personal, Interpersonal, Group, Institutional, National, and Cultural. Bekalu (2006, 150) has used these knowledge types to determine the types of knowledge presupposed in the articles he analyzed.

To support Van Dijk's categorization of knowledge types, Bekalu (2006) uses Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson 1995) to examine the amount of cognitive processing effort expended by the readers in activating the presupposed background knowledge. By analyzing five news articles written in English and published in three Ethiopian newspapers, he concludes that the number and quality of presuppositions that the audience forms dictate how open they are to receiving the news content. Bekalu (2006) has claimed that most Ethiopian newspaper readers do not want to invest time sifting through content that requires them to

presuppose information that they have to ascertain or accept as true; they want to get information through the most accessible and acceptable language possible. And since these Ethiopian readers are more comfortable with their native language, Amharic, the additional hurdle of English discourages them from seeing the news as relevant to them. On the other hand, although English-speaking expatriates living in Ethiopia have a better grasp of these English-language news articles, they do not have the necessary background knowledge or context to make sense of the new information. In Bekalu's (2006) analyses, the types of knowledge invoked in the articles are, more often than not, socio-political and specific regional/national knowledge types that English-speaking expatriates most likely do not possess. Bekalu's (2006) study has documented that certain types of knowledge are unfairly presupposed in discourse, obscuring issues for political and ideological reasons – a finding that is corroborated by Saarinen's (2008, 344) statements and further bolstered by the analysis in the present study.

2.3 The speech act of apology

It has been claimed that the current society lives in an “Age of Apology” (Kampf 2013) due to the robust production of research on this field. Starting from Austin's (1962) seminal work on speech acts up to the present, most especially in the last 20 years, studies on apologies have been quite ubiquitous (Harris, Grainger, and Mullany 2006; Kampf 2013; Weyeneth 2001). The perspectives, definitions, and propositions have been vast, and the studies cited in this paper are but the most recent work on public apologies. One of the most notable works of recent times is Zhanghong and Li's (2020, 52–61) investigation on the apologies of Chinese celebrities posted on Weibo, a Chinese micro-blogging site. Drawing on Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984) Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP), they observe that Chinese celebrities frequently use IFID (Illocutionary Force Indicating Device) and “Explanations” or “Accounts” as the most common strategies in apologies and that they rarely use “Offer of Repair.” In their effort to restore their image and offset bad impressions, Chinese celebrities utilize “Mortification and Reduce Offensiveness.” As regards the types of IFID they use, “Being shamed or being embarrassed” (“羞愧”), “self-examination” (“反省”), and other mitigating tools unique only to Chinese culture are used. Zhanghong and Li's (2020) investigation is an important documentation that sheds light on Chinese image management in the context of social media.

Another notable work is Murphy's (2015) “Revisiting the apology as a speech act.” In this study, he analyzes the case of UK parliamentary apologies, something that has been examined by previous researchers. What differentiates this particular article is its reexamination and redefinition of the speech act of apology.

Murphy (2015) mentions the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Patterns (CCSARP) project by Blum-Kulka and Olshtain in 1984, which he attempts to modify given the occurrence of apologies that do not fit felicity conditions outlined in the project. Murphy (2015) points to Searle and Vanderveken's (1985, 176) definition of apology, which is, "if a speaker apologizes for something it must be for something that he [sic] has done or is otherwise responsible for," along with Ogiermann's (2009, 176) propositional content of an apology that states that it should be a past action done by a speaker. Murphy (2015, 178) rejects both of these propositions, claiming that a person only needs to be indirectly responsible for an act done "to be able to felicitously apologize for it." He also adds that apologies can be given in advance, and the action being apologized for does not necessarily have to be in the past (Murphy 2015, 182). In summary, he presents a new set of felicity conditions for apologies, which are the following:

Propositional content: An act done, or to be done in the future, by the speaker or someone for whom the speaker is a formally recognized representative.

Preparatory condition: Speaker believes that the apology recipient, or a contextually relevant third party, believes that the act was an offence against the recipient (or someone whom the recipient represents).

Sincerity condition: Speaker regrets the act or one of its consequences

Essential condition: Utterance counts as an apology.

Boyd (2011, 301) has also taken the redefinition of apology to another level by enumerating seven sequential components of an artful apology which are the following: Revelation (Explanation), Recognition (Empathy), Responsiveness (Timeliness), Responsibility (Internal Attribution), Remorse (Guilt), Restitution (Compensation), and Reform (Change). He also includes the other side of these components, which are Evasion, Estrangement, Tardiness, External Attribution, Guile, Abrogation, and Complacency. To see if these components are present in apologies, Boyd (2011) has analyzed seven well-publicized apologies, and he has been able to show that there is a pattern in their construction of apologies. Even though this present study does not make use of these sequential components, some of Boyd's (2011) observations contribute to the analysis of the present data, specifically his points on Revelation (that apologizers often choose to evade rather than explain), Responsibility (that apologizers can admit their own faults, put the blame on other factors, or apologize for something other than the actual transgression), and Remorse (that apologizers can either show guilt or use guile to veil their misbehavior).

The work of Myers (2016) corroborates Boyd's (2011) analysis in that it also exhibits some of the latter's assertions and shows public apologies in action via the political stage. Based on his analysis of US federal and state laws and evidentiary issues, Myers (2016) regards apology as "taking responsibility" (176). He specifically talks about the aptly named "I'm sorry" laws – laws that exempt types of apology statements from being used as proof of guilt during trials. These emphasize both the creativity and the restrictions concerned in crafting an apology. Myers (2016) draws on Coombs and Holladay (2008) who argue that partial apology may be just what is needed in some situations. Most importantly, he acknowledges that apology is risky and may not be a cure-all for public relations crises.

In his study of 345 Israeli apologies, Kampf (2009) echoes Coombs and Holladay's (2008) sentiments. He views apology as a tool for the restoration of one's image even though it is a face threatening act that humiliates the apologizer and lessens their symbolic power. Kampf (2009) also agrees with previous studies regarding the importance of acknowledgment, which goes hand in hand with an Illocutionary Force-Indicating Device (IFID) in creating an ideal apology. Because of this, it becomes tricky for political players who get involved in a conflict or controversy since they are made to choose between restoring public image or maintaining socio-political clout.

Hence, Kampf (2009) opines that there is a negotiation between the apologizer and the apologizee. He points to a few strategies used by an offender to minimize responsibility and achieve one's end. The first is the use of evasive or equivocal language. Its use may pacify some recipients of the apology without having to increase the risk the apologizer faces. Another common tactic is the non-performative apology. Kampf (2009) defines this type of apology as not consisting of an active verb. He further divides this into three categories: (1) expression of willingness or duty to apologize, (2) promise to apologize, and (3) reference to past act of apologizing. He states that although these violate Grice's maxim of manner, they protect the offender from full-blown negative consequences. Lastly, and perhaps most significantly, given that the current study deals with presuppositions, Kampf (2009, 2266–2267) enumerates linguistic terms that apologizers use to mask the offense and omit the exact nature of the wrong, and these are incident, hurt/harm/damage, words, mistake, and about that. The present study draws upon Kampf's (2009) aforementioned framework as the present findings also affirm that nomenclature makes a definitive impact on the production and reception of apologies.

Another study that aligns with Kampf's (2009) observations on cautious language is Bentley's (2015) study which posits that the apologizer goes a step further than evading responsibility and strategically shifts the blame to other parties, such as victims, fellow offenders, and even third-party observers. Using balance theory

and co-orientation theory, he notes that offenders can minimize their participation through identification and division/dissociation. For example, an apologizer does not have to directly apologize for the offensive act; he can simply dissociate himself from it by saying it was not him, or he was not in his right frame of mind. He can also create this division from the act by dissociating with people who are identified with it. Here, the pseudo-apology can achieve the effect of image repair because it allows the offender to convince the audience that he and the act are separate entities.

Finally, studies by Ancarno (2015) and Kampf (2013) deal with the reception of public apologies, specifically with how the media plays a role in how the offender and his words are perceived by the spectating public. Ancarno's (2015, 139) work likens apologies to "politeness in the public sphere" and foregrounds the comments of news writers on political public apologies. He focuses on the explicit evaluative statements showing the news writers' perspectives on apologies (Hunston and Thompson as cited in Ancarno, 2015). Although the focus is on the reactions to the apologies, Ancarno (2015) reiterates Kampf (2009) in saying that wording is important to an apology's success in order to regain the reputation of the apologizer. What is unique in Ancarno's (2015) research is that he mentions the media's vital role in either supporting or criticizing apologies, which would then influence how it is disseminated to the public. Most importantly, Ancarno (2015) acknowledges the cross-cultural presence of apologies that ultimately have a bearing on how an apology is viewed and consequently received.

Kampf's (2013) observations are similar to Ancarno's (2015) in that even though the former's data source is different, for it concentrates on Israeli press-reported apology-related utterances from 1997 to 2004, he takes the view that the speech act of apology is a social drama wherein the media dilutes the force of public speech acts. He specifies that the media presence in a public apology appears in different stages and has different effects. The media can play the role of an adjudicator in these special instances, instead of merely being vehicles of information. Next, the media can assert its belongingness to society by contributing to (perhaps a short-lived) social harmony. Media outlets are able to exercise a manipulative arm under the public's nose because they can position themselves as being part of the public that they are attempting to influence. Lastly, the sensational nature of public apologies acts as fodder for the spectators; hence, they benefit the media by generating widespread interest. It is known that the media gains its power from the breadth of their reach; therefore, the "social drama" of apology is only effective when it has a wide fanbase that follows every chapter of the story. Kampf (2013) then makes the point that the media takes a representative role and, on behalf of the public, questions apologies and their sincerity. This adds another

layer of nuance to the process of crafting an apology that is made to appease those directly and indirectly affected by it.

In pursuing the view of apologies as a social drama, Cels (2015) adds that the performance of the apology itself is often neglected and that, in fact, dramaturgy can also matter to those the apology is directed to and to those who witness the apology. Dramaturgy here refers to the setting up of the scene, the division of roles, and the acting of players in the play or drama. Cels (2015) proposes that the analysis of the apology be expanded to how the “stage” for the apology is set since it adds meaning to the apology and how it is perceived. He further justifies this perspective by highlighting the fact that apologies are not taken out of context and, therefore, should never be analyzed without the contextual factors.

Supplementing this expansion of the scope of analysis on apology is Towner’s (2010) work on Rwandan Apologetic Rhetoric, which situates the participation of third parties as another aspect that is overlooked. Towner (2010) states that this is so because apologies are often studied using the Western lens, and this approach takes for granted that different social and cultural dynamics can also cause differences in apologetic rhetoric. In his work, he positions third-party participants as not just witnesses, but also as mediators, evaluators, and even offenders, depending on the context of the apology. The highly collective nature of Rwandan society foregrounds the impact of cultural values in the cause, delivery, and acceptance or rejection of public apologies.

Finally, Compton’s (2016, 357) study on regretted apologies shows that apologizers verbalize that they are “sorry for saying sorry.” He uses Benoit’s (1997, as cited in Compton, 2016, 354) five primary image repair strategies in analyzing the regretted apologies of politicians and celebrities: (1) denial, (2) evasion of responsibility, (3) reduction of offensiveness, (4) corrective action, (5) and mortification. This research is important because it discusses a different type of an apology, but Compton (2016) cautions against its constant use because some of the strategies might become less effective when repeated.

Given these previous explorations, the current study situates itself in this niche, guided by the aforementioned assertions and by applying Bekalu’s (2006) framework in analyzing apologies, albeit with some modifications. In his study, Bekalu (2006) uses a combination of Van Dijk’s 2000 and 2004 works on the typology of knowledge and presuppositions and Sperber and Wilson’s (1986, 1995) Relevance Theory to analyze his data. This present study takes only Van Dijk’s typology of knowledge focusing on Scope.

Scope has been chosen as the focal category because it deals with the extent to which information is shared, thereby being directly related to what a participant presupposes another participant to know. It has six subtypes: Personal, Interpersonal, Group, Institutional, National, and Cultural (Bekalu 2006, 151). These

six typologies are used in our present study to answer the first research question regarding which knowledge types can be found in the selected apologies.

As for presuppositions, this study uses Bekalu's (2006) definition that refers to the listener's background knowledge, which the speaker believes the former possesses and does not need to be reiterated. These are discourse presuppositions which are taken-for-granted concepts that go unsaid to help communication become more efficient. Bekalu (2006, 150) has chosen to concentrate on discourse presuppositions, and this study's assertions do too.

3. Methods

3.1 Data source and data gathering

Sixteen (16) public apologies comprised the data source of this study. These apologies were chosen based on their availability online and the popularity of the incidents prompting each of these apologies. In this case, top Google results were selected because those reflect not only recent incidents, but also those that have been most discussed by the public. The apologies were taken from public websites, such as news outlets and human-interest websites, as well as social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter.

To delimit the study, we only selected the apologies that were written in English and made by public figures towards Filipino citizens (public or private). A public figure is defined in this study as a person or an entity (e.g. a business leader/company, a social media personality, a politician, a celebrity) that has an influential position in the society or "has participated in a particular public controversy" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2021).

3.2 Data analysis

To further narrow the scope of the study to the linguistic aspect of apologies, only the written manuscripts were analyzed. No paralinguistic elements (such as gestures and/or voice tone) were included. The apologies were then divided into T-Units (one sentence is equal to one T-Unit) to easily categorize the information. All together the sixteen (16) apologies contained 149 sentences; hence, there were a total of 149 T-Units analyzed. These T-Units were further segmented into a categorized table for easier analysis. The table included the following information: Apology Number, Apology Name (based on the apologizer's name), T-Unit Number, T-Unit, Knowledge Type, and Presupposition.

During this coding stage, each T-Unit was tagged with one or more knowledge types (i.e., Personal, Interpersonal, Group, Institutional, National and Cultural). Bekalu's (2006) definitions of the knowledge types were applied in this study. Personal knowledge is knowledge that only the apologizer has; Interpersonal knowledge is knowledge that the apologizer shares with people directly or indirectly involved in the apology, such as his or her family and the apologizee; Group is when the apologizer either invokes (inclusive) or shares (exclusive) the knowledge to or with a particular set of people (e.g. fans, supporters); Institutional is similar to Group in that it can also be inclusive or exclusive, but the range of the set is more delineated (e.g. school, church, organization); National, on the other hand, invokes the knowledge of a country; and finally, Cultural is knowledge that goes beyond geographic borders and can be shared by multiple nationalities.

Afterwards, frequency counting was performed to answer the first research question and report on the patterns identified in the qualitative analysis. As for the second research question, it was answered by extracting presuppositions from each T-Unit, with a single T-Unit containing one or more presuppositions. Specifically, the analysis focused on the propositional content of apology, which is the Act done by the speaker that merits his/her apology. The analysis proceeded to answer the question: "What type of information is usually left unsaid regarding the Act done and future actions to be done to atone for the Act (guilt)?" Assertions were also made as to why this information was left unsaid and what the consequences were for leaving them implicit. The next section summarizes the results of the tabulation and analysis.

4. Results and analysis

The frequency count for the first research question regarding knowledge types (Table 1) shows that the most prevalent knowledge type is Personal with 37.34%, closely followed by Group with 24.68%. On the other hand, Cultural knowledge type is the least used type in the data with only three (3) occurrences, making up 1.86%.

Here are excerpts that exemplify the knowledge types:

- (1) Personal: Apology [1]; T-Unit [2]
 Speaker: Christopher Ad Castillo (a director)
 Offense: Threatening online messages
 Target: Petersen Vargas (a director)
 Addressee: "You work hard on a film and that becomes personal and I understand that not everyone will like it."

Table 1. Knowledge types in apologies

Knowledge type	Frequency (<i>N</i> = 158)	Percentage (<i>N</i> = 158)
Personal	59	37.34%
Interpersonal	20	12.66%
Group	39	24.68%
Institutional	33	20.89%
National	4	2.53%
Cultural	3	1.9%
Total	158*	100%

In the selected public apologies, there is a considerable amount of information that only the apologizer is aware of, which includes, but is not limited to, personal feelings and intentions. The prevalence of this type of knowledge may be due to its nature. Since the knowledge is personal, it necessitates being made public for the apologizer to have his/her side be known and understood, with the hopes of seeming more sympathetic to the receivers.

In this example, the knowledge type is considered personal because the speaker is the director of the film involved in the apology and his perspective of working on the film and feelings towards the reception of the film are exclusive to him. In T-Unit [2], he shares his knowledge of how difficult it had been to work on it and expounds on his belief that people will have varied opinions towards his work.

- (2) Group: Apology [5]; T-Unit [49]
 Speaker: Regina Ip (a politician)
 Offense: Accused of racist and sexist remarks in her article
 Target: Filipino maids in Hong Kong
 Addressee: “Unfortunately, the way my article was misinterpreted in some quarters has led many to believe that I was sexist or racist and was pointing a finger at the Filipino maids.”

As for the Group knowledge type, the 24.68% consists of information that a number of people know because they are either directly or indirectly involved in the apology. In the corpus, these involved parties include apologizees, families and relatives of apologizees, colleagues, supporters, witnesses, and organizations. In the apologies analyzed, this type of knowledge is used in two ways: first, to highlight that the apologizer has beliefs similar to other people, thereby minimizing the gravity of the error; or second, to acknowledge that the apologizer has beliefs different from others, thus prompting the apology.

In this example, the knowledge type is considered a Group Knowledge type because it directly involves a number of people: the politician apologizing for her remarks in an article and the people who read the article and branded the politician “racist” or “sexist.” Some of these readers included the Filipino maids who were allegedly critiqued in her article. The speaker here is using the Group Knowledge type in the second way, and that is to indicate the difference in beliefs between her and others with regard to how offensive her remarks were intended to be.

- (3) Interpersonal: Apology [2]; T-Unit [11]
 Speaker: Melissa Mendez (an actress)
 Offense: Bodily harm
 Target: Rey Pamaran (a businessman)
 Addressee: “This incident has caused a lot of pain and trouble to me and my family, as well as the other party involved.”

The Interpersonal knowledge type, which accounts for 12.66%, is similar to the Group knowledge type, albeit it only involves those directly affected by the apology. The use of interpersonal knowledge is expected because for the apology to even exist, apologizers and apologizees are meant to share the same information. If an apologizee or a third-party witness does not react in a way that makes it necessary for the apologizer to perform an apology, then the apology will not be produced. Another use for the interpersonal knowledge type is to garner support for the apologizer. He or she can invoke the shared feelings of those involved to temper the reactions of the apology receivers.

In Apology [2], T-Unit [11], the Interpersonal Knowledge Type is invoked because the speaker/apologizer specifies the negative effects (pain and trouble) shared by the speaker, the speaker’s family, the addressee, and the addressee’s family, all of whom are directly affected by the incident and the apology stemming from the incident. It differs from the Group Knowledge

Type because other witnesses or readers of the apology do not share the same information.

- (4) Institutional: Apology [13]; T-Unit [108]
 Speaker: BAYO (A Filipino-owned clothing company in the Philippines)
 Offense: A mixed-race ad campaign that was viewed as racist/discriminatory towards Filipinos
 Target: “[T]hose who have been offended or felt discriminated against”
 Addressee: “Our company and our partners have always taken pride in being pro-Filipino as we continue to celebrate our uniqueness and achievements.”

- (5) National: Apology [7]; T-Unit [75]
 Speaker: Miss Universe Germany Sarah-Lorraine
 Offense: Verbal criticism, saying that Miss Colombia should have won Miss Universe
 Target: Miss Universe Philippines Pia Wurtzbach
 Addressee: "Congrats to our friends of Philippines for winning the crown after all."
- (6) Cultural: Apology [12]; T-Unit [101]
 Speaker: Alec Baldwin (an actor)
 Offense: Comment on getting a mail-order bride from the Philippines
 Target: "Anyone who took offense"
 Addressee: "Such anger and frustration about the issue of sex trafficking is understandable."

The same logic operates in the occurrence of the Institutional, National, and Cultural knowledge types. They occur less frequently in the data (with the Cultural knowledge type occurring the least at 1.9%) because most of the selected apologies, although public, are directed to limited recipients, with the rest acting merely as an audience to the "social drama" (Kampf, 2013).

For the Institutional Knowledge Type, T-Unit [108] is an example because it discusses the value of pride that is supposedly held by specific institutions. In this case, these institutions are the company issuing the apology (Bayo) and its shareholders/partners. Their involvement is highlighted by the verbiage "[o]ur company and our partners" and the mention of actions taken to promote a certain ideal (i.e., "we continue to celebrate our uniqueness and achievements").

On the other hand, an apology is likely to reach National knowledge when the error being apologized for deals with highly political or diplomatic matters of a country, such as the verbal criticism of a national beauty pageant contestant (Apology [7], T-Unit [75]). This apology involves representatives of two countries (Germany and the Philippines) who are considered members of the national sphere.

Lastly, Cultural knowledge can deal with widespread social conventions, such as the avoidance of negative stereotypes against a particular group of people, which is what Apology [12] includes. In T-Unit [101], the Cultural Knowledge Type is invoked because it relies on a widely held societal belief that sex trafficking is immoral and illegal, and thus is an issue that causes "anger and frustration." The T-Unit validates the existence of this knowledge by expressing that such emotions are "understandable."

As regards the second research question, the following patterns emerge from the presuppositions extracted from the T-Units:

1. Apologizers presuppose that the audience is already aware of what they are apologizing for.
2. Apologizers presuppose that the audience is already aware of specific actions to be done after the apology.

The first pattern is based on the observation that a majority of the apologies no longer mention the transgression or what is being apologized for. In addition, wrongs are glossed over by other words such as “shortcoming,” “misunderstanding,” and vague terms such as “event,” “what I did” or “what happened.” This finding supplements Kampf’s (2009) generic names for offenses (i.e., incident, hurt/harm/damage, words, mistake, about that).

The interesting finding on the linguistic choices of apologizers to omit or only vaguely refer to their offenses is exemplified in the following excerpts:

- (7) Apology [4]; T-Unit [28]

“I do want to apologize for what happened the other night.”

This excerpt is from an apology by American boxer, Floyd Mayweather Jr., who was accused of making racist remarks against Manny Pacquiao, a Filipino boxer. Although the direct speech act of apology via the performative verb “apologize” is present and the apologizer alludes to these remarks in the next sentences, the first sentence omits the cause of the apology through the use of the gloss “what happened,” presupposing that something did happen, leaving the recipient/s of the apology to figure out what it is. In addition, Mayweather Jr. used the generic term “everybody” to address his recipients, failing to mention Pacquiao who was the subject of his tirade.

- (8) Apology [2]; T-Unit [10]

“In light of the recent incident that involved me and Mr. Rey Pamaran, I would just like to simply apologize for my untoward actions and move on from this.”

This is part of an apology given by Melissa Mendez, an actress, to a private individual, Rey Pamaran. In the excerpt, Mendez mentions the offense only as a “recent incident.” Although she includes the names of the addressee, she does not elaborate on this incident or the “untoward actions,” other than to say that she is apologetic and would like to move on.

- (9) Apology [7]; T-Unit [68]

“She is really sorry if the video suggests anything else than that.”

This line comes from the apology of Miss Universe Germany to Miss Universe Philippines (and by extension, to Filipinos). The rest of her apology touches on the controversy regarding the incorrect announcement of Miss Colombia as Miss Universe 2015; however, it does not detail which video she refers to and what

exactly was said in the video that viewers may have misinterpreted. In the T-Unit before it (T-Unit [67]), Miss Germany states, “[a]s well for Pia Miss Philippines that she didn’t have her real crowning moment” to give a little context of the event that preempted the video, but again, she does not go further into the statements she is apologizing for.

(10) Apology [16]; T-Unit [145] and [146]

“We regret the upload of the recent video on Malaysia. The video was developed locally by an agency and uploaded in error and the contents were NOT approved by Aegis Corporate.”

This is an excerpt from an apology by Aegis, a Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) company, for a Malaysian advertisement that disparaged the Philippines as an unsuitable country for business. The company mentions where the offensive statements were found, and that it was not approved for publication. However, the exact verbiage in the video is left out of the apology. The reader can only get a sense of what the offensive statements were because further in the statement, the company highlights the good experience they had in the Philippines and that it has been a “key to [their] success” (T-Unit [148]), thereby alluding that the statements in the video contained the opposite message.

The second pattern of presupposition works along the same vein as the first: there is another piece of information missing, and this time, it is what happens after the apology. Apologizers are expected to atone for their perceived sins through concrete action (Boyd, 2011). Most of the apologies in the data, however, seem to not follow this guideline. There are those that allude to future action, but not concrete, detailed plans of action. Words like “re-examination” are frequently used, as shown in Apology [14] below:

(11) Apology [14]; T-Unit [121]

“We also assure you, our beloved people, that we shall re-examine the manner of our collaboration with government agencies for purposes of helping the poor, making sure that pastoral sensibilities are respected and the highest ethical standards are observed.”

For Example (11), an apology made by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) mentions a re-examination of the “manner of collaboration” with government agencies for charitable reasons, but the steps of this re-examination and what changes it entails are omitted in the apology. Another sentence (T-Unit [125]) mentions an examination of values, but once again, the process (and which values it will affect) is entirely left out. This apology was released in response to allegations that some bishops accepted luxury vehicles bought with the funds of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO).

Coincidentally, any specific mention of PCSO or the vehicles is likewise omitted in the official transcript.

In Aegis' apology (Apology 16) regarding a discriminatory video released under its name, the company does not only leave out the exact statements in question; it is also unclear about how it will handle the creation of future marketing materials. In fact, its apology only includes what the company purports to be practices already in action that should prevent the distribution of any derogatory material. This is shown in Example (12) below:

- (12) Apology [16]; T-Unit [147]: "We are a global company and strongly care about the broader communities in which we operate and are fully committed to both diversity and inclusion."

As can be deduced from T-Unit [147], how exactly the company is committed to diversity and inclusion or more specifically, how these ideologies manifest in company policies is not stated, but this part of the apology can perhaps substitute for an act of reparation.

More commonly occurring than the allusions exemplified in Examples (11) and (12) are the complete omissions of post-apology measures. It can be deduced that the offenders believe that the apology ends once it is issued. However, when working within the paradigm of presupposition, it can also be argued that the recipients of the apologies might also assume that the most basic post-apology action will be done, and that is for the apologizers not to re-offend. Because the offenders have been called out on their behavior and have chosen to release a public apology, a valid presupposition would be that the public apology will deter them from committing the same mistake, lest they face legal repercussions or greater backlash and possible loss of good social standing or business profit. Another view is that the apologizers have intentionally omitted the mention of future actions because this is additional work on their part. The explicit enumeration of any reparative steps attaches them even more to the offense that they are trying to disassociate from. In short, the omission of further action works in two ways: first, it shifts the burden of apology work to the audience or recipients by having them extract the implications of "future action" from the apology; and second, it frees the offender from additional commitment that is more difficult to deny and, if not fulfilled, can more likely lead to even more public grievance.

5. Discussion

If there is one assertion that this paper can make with confidence and can be supported by research that has come before it (Boyd, 2011; Kampf, 2009; Myers,

2015), it is that apologies are strategic. Consequentially, presuppositions that are formed within these apologies are equally calculated. This can be seen in the prevalent knowledge types and themes that emerge from the presuppositions extracted from the data. For example, although the Personal knowledge type is the most prevalent among all knowledge types, it only accounts for 37.34%. The rest of more than 60% of knowledge is supposedly shared by people apart from the apologizer; therefore, the information in the apologies is positioned as though the essential facts regarding the apology (what is being apologized for, who is apologizing, and who is receiving the apology) are already part of the audience's contextual knowledge and that further elaboration is no longer necessary. Saarinen (2008, 344) rationalizes this approach by saying that presuppositions are assumptions of common ground that allow the speaker to choose which parts can be made implicit or explicit. Selecting which details will be left as presuppositions is largely based on how the speaker thinks the information will be interpreted. If the speaker decides that making the information explicit will negatively influence its reception, then he or she can present it as "common ground" to ease audience acceptance. Lewis (1979) calls this "accommodation."

The results of our present analysis show that Personal knowledge type is prevalent because apologies seem to be similar to confessions, wherein the apologizer expresses internal thoughts, feelings, and knowledge that the audience is yet to be made aware of. However, because Interpersonal, Group, Institutional, National, and Cultural knowledges are invoked, it is possible for apologizers to obscure the offense. In the case of the public apologies discussed, the apologizers' presuppositions contain mostly two things: that both the act/offense and the restitution for the act/offense are already understood, and thereby no longer necessary to repeat. By relying on these propositional contents, the apologizers did not have to risk their reputation in the performance of the apology.

Therefore, when Boyd (2011) asks how an offender can offer an apology for an offense that is left unsaid, the analysis of this study's data seems to provide a partial answer. Stephen (2015, 773) calls this "plausible deniability," a strategy used to avoid incriminating oneself because of legal implications that are associated with direct statements. By invoking knowledge types that include the audience as a knowledge source, apologizers can maintain the practice of omitting particular pieces of information and still be able to offer an apology. Moreover, Kampf (2013, 151) states that the public context influences the reception of apologies because although it is the mode through which the apology can be delivered, it also impacts the reception and credibility of the apology. Since it is quite difficult to quantify sincerity because it depends on how the apology is received and who is receiving it, there comes a point wherein the invocation of the word "apology" may be sufficient to fulfill the social obligation. Hence, apologizers can

employ different tactics that enable them to repair their reputations and, at the same time, evade legal consequences (Myers 2016; Kampf 2013; Kampf 2009). Through proper word choice, they can “determine [their] liability for the offense” (Kampf 2009, 2263).

Sbisà (1999) strengthens this argument by stating that presuppositions even have the power to persuade. In the case of these public apologies, presuppositions work in favor of the apologizers because the latter can still omit the more socially unacceptable parts of the apology; yet, by the mere token of calling it an “apology,” they can persuade hearers into accepting it as such, regardless of their degree of sincerity. This strategic function of presuppositions in apologies aligns with the Filipino concept of *Hiya*, which is commonly defined as an aversion to embarrassment (Lasquety-Reyes 2016). Because Filipinos value self-esteem, a culture of sensitivity has been built around this social value; any behavior that can put one’s self-esteem under attack is avoided at all costs (Hays 2008). Hence, indirect or evasive apologies may be a product of using presupposition as a tool to avoid self-incrimination, protect the apologizer’s self-esteem, and ensure that he or she will not feel “*hiya*” or deep shame that may lead to, at worst, ostracism.

6. Conclusion

This paper examines how the strategic aspects of the speech act of apology are employed by apologizers towards Filipino apologizees through their utilization of knowledge types and presupposition. The results of our analysis indicate that apologizers frequently utilize the Personal knowledge type because apologies involve personal confessions that contain thoughts and feelings that only the apologizers are aware of. Their frequent use of Interpersonal, Group, Institutional, National, and Cultural knowledges raise the possibility that these are utilized in order to obscure the apologizers’ offenses. This conclusion can be substantiated by our analyses of the apologizers’ presuppositions, which contain mostly two things: the assumption that the act/transgression has already been made known to the apologizees and the omission of the mention of restitution for the act that may hold them more accountable to their transgressions. By relying on these propositional contents, the apologizers have persuasively delivered their apologies without opening themselves up to further risks. Much like Bekalu’s (2006) conclusion, these omissions have served to obscure information to meet self-serving purposes. Our present analysis supports the view that although the sincerity of apology cannot be exactly measured, its performance is a necessary feature of human interaction for image repair and management of interpersonal relationships.

Despite the restrictions imposed by our limited dataset, the findings on the strategic employment of knowledge types and the kind of presupposed information in public apologies that are discussed in this paper support previous assertions regarding the complexities of public apology. They bolster the view that although public apologies perform the act of being sorry, there are instances wherein the performance veils the possibility that the apologizers are barely or not even sorry at all. Apologizers manipulate the linguistic tools and types of knowledge available at their disposal in order to perform this ritual that fulfills multiple functions.

It is hoped that the study will prompt further inquiry into the intricacies of this social ritual, which is embedded in a cultural context where communal practices and conventions highly influence the way it is created and used. It is recommended, then, that more studies in the local setting be done using other approaches, such as corpus linguistics, cultural linguistics, and intercultural rhetoric. There can be a comparison of public apologies across cultures given the context of global communication in our time, either coming from the apologizers' perspective or based on the recipients' attitudes. The medium of public apologies can also be a subject of inquiry since written and oral modes have apparent differences that can most likely influence the construction and dissemination of public apologies. In connection with this, the effect of media, as shown in Kampf (2013), can also be explored given the social context where some companies monopolize the dissemination of national information. Finally, it is also recommended that corpus linguistic studies be done to collect and observe the lexical realizations of apology to see if there is a pattern of usage in different cross-cultural contexts. In sum, public apologies carry with them layers of meaning-making, discourse, negotiation, and intent that can be analyzed and exhausted in a multitude of ways. In fact, the current body of data still contains uncovered linguistic realizations that researchers are welcome to revisit and reexamine in the future.

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