

“SO SORRY”: HOW DIGITALLY MEDIATED APOLOGIES ARE ENACTED VIA
YOUTUBE IN AMERICAN ENGLISH AND BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE

by

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(Under the Direction of Sarah E. Blackwell and Pilar Chamorro Fernández)

ABSTRACT

The present study investigates the use of pragmatic apology strategies by YouTube micro-celebrities in online apology videos. It aims to better understand what apology strategies are being used by American English and Brazilian Portuguese speaking YouTubers in digitally mediated apologies. This study investigates similarities and differences in strategy use across languages using a mixed-methods approach of qualitative and quantitative analysis. It highlights the potential enregisterment of the “YouTube apology” as a socially recognizable set of linguistic forms and argues that this enregisterment is spread from the United States to Latin America, specifically Brazil, through digital imperialism pointing to the potential of a globally enregistered form.

INDEX WORDS: Pragmatics, internet pragmatics, apology, YouTube, DMC, identity, register, enregisterment, Portuguese, digital imperialism

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Apology	3
1.2 Goals and Guiding Questions	9
1.3 A Brief Overview of Methodology	10
1.4 Hypotheses	11
1.5 Structure of Thesis	13
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	15
2.1 Speech Act Theory	16
2.2 Apology Strategies	21
2.3 Studies on Apology	24
2.4 Rapport Management and Identity Creation	28
2.5 Digital Imperialism and Global Enregisterment	41
3 METHODS	45
3.1 YouTube as A Data Source	45
3.2 Procedure	47
4 RESULTS	55
4.1 Research Questions	55

4.2 Extra-linguistic Results	56
4.3 Qualitative Results	60
4.4 Quantitative Results	66
4.5 Summary	69
5 DISCUSSION	70
5.1 Strategy Use by AE and BP YouTubers	70
5.2 Discussion of Research Questions	78
6 CONCLUSION	84
6.1 Key Findings and Conclusions of The Study	84
6.2 Limitations of the Current Study	86
6.3 Future Research	87
REFERENCES	89
APPENDICES	
A Examples of Coded Apology Transcripts	99
B AE YouTuber Coding Tables	102
C BP YouTuber Coding Tables	105

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Example Table of Level of Severity	49
Table 2: Apology Strategy Coding Schema	50
Table 3: Sample Coding Table for Strategy Use by Video	53
Table 4: Video Information and Extra-linguistic Variables	58
Table 5: YouTube Celebrity Offense Severity	59

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: Representation of Wolfson (1988) Bulge Theory of Social Distance	30
Figure 2: Levels of Bell's (1984) Audience Design Adapted from Hawthorn (2013)	35
Figure 3: Adapted Diagram of Face Wants in Constructing Identity (Bedjis, Held, and <i>Maaß</i> , 2014)	37
Figure 4: Total Token Counts of Strategy Use by Language	61
Figure 5: Total Token Counts of Strategy Use per AE YouTuber	62
Figure 6: Total Token Counts of Strategy Use per BP YouTuber	65
Figure 7: AE Trends of Take Responsibility and Promise of Forbearance Over Video Time	67

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the era of the internet, when news travels at the speed of Wi-Fi and social media shapes many aspects of our lives, celebrities can rise and fall from power and interest in an instant. With the widespread use of apps such as Tik-Tok, Instagram, and YouTube, a plethora of information and content is shared via video, which has become the basis for content creators and social media celebrities to reach their fan base and the public. While typically used for entertainment with attention grabbing or informational videos, these platforms have also become places for the dissemination of the latest pop-culture news, airing of wrongdoings, and en masse apologies delivered by celebrity figures. This latter use, apologies meted out via social media, is the main interest of the current study. Employing social media to impart apologies has afforded social media celebrities who have been “cancelled”¹ the opportunity to issue their apology to both their fans and the general public. The concept of an “apology video” is perhaps best represented by the content creators on the platform YouTube, a video-based social media platform that was launched in 2005. It is currently the second most used social media platform in both the United States (U.S.) and worldwide (Shepherd, 2025). Since the early 2000s, it has become a trend for YouTube content creators to make public apologies via this platform when their actions warrant repair. One of the most well-known YouTube apologies is that of Logan

¹ The concept of cancelling a celebrity is often a response by the general public to an offense made by the celebrity, that was “triggered by ideological incompatibilities such as religion, racism, animal rights, LGBTQIA+ and environmental issues” (Costa & Azevedo, 2023, p. 289).

Paul, a daily-life vlogger who needed to apologize after filming and posting a vlog containing insensitive content to his YouTube channel. In the video, he and others can be seen filming and reacting to encountering a victim of suicide in the background of the video while on a hike in Aokigahara, Japan. This incident caused international backlash and was picked up by major news outlets in the U.S. and abroad. Subsequently, Paul then issued an apology video for this incident via his YouTube channel stating:

I've made a severe and continuous lapse in my judgment, and I don't expect to be forgiven. I'm simply here to apologize. So, what we came across that day in the woods was obviously unplanned and the reactions you saw on tape were raw. They were unfiltered. None of us knew how to react or how to feel. I should have never posted the video. I should have put the cameras down and stopped recording what we were going through... but I didn't and for that from the bottom of my heart I am sorry. I want to apologize to the Internet. I want to apologize to anyone who's seen the video. I want to apologize to anyone who has been affected or touched by mental illness or depression or suicide, but most importantly I want to apologize to the victim and his family. For my fans who are defending my actions, please don't. They do not deserve to be defended. The goal with my content is always to entertain, to push the boundaries, to be all inclusive. In the world I live in, I share almost everything I do. The intent is never to be heartless, cruel or malicious. I don't expect to be forgiven, I'm just here to apologize. I'm ashamed of myself. I'm disappointed in myself and I promise to be better. I will be better. Thank you (Paul, 2018)

In exploring YouTube apology videos, it is of interest to consider how this new digitally-mediated format for the speech act of apology may be changing both speaker and

viewer/audience expectations about how apologies are being delivered and received in an increasingly global digital world.

To investigate these concepts, the current study explores how apologies are made by YouTubers cross-linguistically. Twenty videos, 10 from American English speaking (AE) YouTubers and 10 from Brazilian Portuguese speaking (BP) YouTubers have been analyzed for the use of six apology strategies based upon Blum-Kula et al.'s (1989) CCSARP Coding Manual for Apologies. In doing so, this study focuses on better understanding YouTubers' use of these strategies in their online apologies. It also examines whether or not a patterned use of these strategies has become a mainstream, cross-linguistic template in an age of digitally mediated globalization. Additionally, this study aims to seek evidence supporting the hypothesis that the "YouTube apology video" register has spread from the U.S. to Brazil as a byproduct of digital imperialism from Eurocentric countries to those of Latin America (Quijano, 2000).

In Section 1.1, I provide an overview of pragmatic apology, rapport and identity management, and enregisterment. In Section 1.2, I detail the goals of the current study and guiding research questions. Section 1.3 provides a basic outline of the methods used, and Section 1.4 describes the hypotheses formulated for the current study. Finally, Section 1.5 outlines the structure of this thesis and the content discussed in each chapter.

1.1 Apology

When a person says *I'm sorry* to someone for something they did, they recognize that they "have broken a social norm and are responsible for whatever harm this has caused"

(Wolfson, 1988, p. 27). Apologies rely on speakers recognizing they have committed some offense, acknowledging that a repair must be made, and then making an apology. Though a typical apology may call for a sincere and vulnerable plea for forgiveness in hopes of repairing the relationship, that may not always be the case. Lakoff (2015) observes that apologies may actually perform various functions and express many feelings. Aside from expressing regret and aiming for atonement, apologies may act as “[a] conventional greasing of the social wheels, ... expressions of sympathy, advance mollification for intended bad behavior, and formal public displays of currently ‘appropriate’ feeling” (Lakoff, 2015, p. 295). In these terms, apologies are often used, especially by YouTubers and canceled celebrities, as appropriate displays of socially acceptable behavior with little other intent behind them than regaining popularity and, as Lakoff describes, “greasing the social wheels.” This is supported by Costa and Azevedo (2023) who find that for cancelled brands, making “an ‘apology’ ... leads to brand forgiveness, a decrease in the intention to cancel the brand and an increase in purchase intention” (p. 289) by the public.

1.1.1 Apology as a Pragmatic Act

We may understand apology as a social necessity, however, in analyzing apologies through a linguistic lens, a deeper understanding of this speech event can be reached. In the field of pragmatics, Austin (1962) contends that an apology is a speech act. A speech act occurs when a speaker produces an utterance with the intention of accomplishing a particular objective. As a speech act, when an apology is made it is enacting the apology in real-time. A speaker uttering an apology is not just stating a fact or describing an action; instead saying *I’m sorry* or *I apologize* constitutes an act of apology performed by the speaker and directed to the addressee

for an offense. Successfully enacting speech acts requires the fulfillment of the locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts on behalf of the speaker and hearer (Austin, 1962).

Levinson (1983, p. 236) summarizes these three acts as:

(i). **locutionary act**: the utterance of a sentence with determinate sense and reference

(ii). **illocutionary act**: the making of a statement, offer, promise etc. in uttering a sentence, by virtue of the convention *force* associated with it (or with its explicit performative paraphrase)

(iii). **perlocutionary act**: the bringing about of effects on the audience by means of uttering the sentence, such effects being special to the circumstances of utterance

The locutionary act conveys the sense and reference of the utterance, creating a link between the words and the speech event they are referring to (Austin, 1962; Márquez Reiter & Placencia, 2005). In the case of apology, the perlocutionary act links the words being said to the context of the offense they are apologizing for. The illocutionary act indicates the speaker's intentions in conducting the speech act: they may express sympathy, regret, or a want to repair the relationship. The perlocutionary act is the "uptake" (Austin, 1969) of the act by the hearer; whether or not they accept the apology and judge it as sincere.

This study focuses on better understanding the illocutionary act of apology, as it provides insight into the speaker's reason for apologizing and intended outcome when completing the apology speech act. In attempting to mitigate the harm of an offense and make an apology, speakers can use several apology strategies to enact this speech act. These strategies include overtly stating one's intentions by using an Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) (Searle

& Vanderveken, 1985). IFIDs are linguistic elements that indicate the illocutionary force of an utterance. In the case of apologies, some IFIDs include, *I apologize for... or I'm sorry I...*. This strategy may be used along with those identified by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) such as Taking Responsibility, giving an Explanation or an Account of events surrounding the offense, making an Offer of Repair for any physical or psychological harm, Promising Forbearance or to never commit the offense again, and taking No Responsibility (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Lakoff, 2015; Wagner & Roebuck, 2010; Xu & Yan, 2020). These six apology strategies will become the basis of the current study. By implementing the theoretical concepts associated with speech act theory and a framework of analysis comprised of these apology strategies, the current study aims to characterize apologies expressed in the digital genre of YouTube videos. This in turn will shed light on the ways YouTubers effectively manage relationships, rapport, and identity creation between themselves and their audience listeners.

1.1.2 Identity Creation as Rapport Management

Apologies are a human response to perceived hurt and attempt to mitigate a non-ideal situation and repair relationships. When YouTubers apologize, they are typically addressing their apologies to both their fanbase and the general public in an attempt to repair their relationships with these groups. They must take their audiences into account when tailoring their apology strategy to a particular demographic. Research regarding online audience management suggests that the audience for a given post, be it an X post (formerly Twitter), YouTube video, or Instagram Reel, is potentially as large as the number of active users on a given platform (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). However, most social media users address a subset of these billions of

potential viewers when they consider what they are posting. In executing this “audience management” (Marwick & Boyd, 2011), content creators find the need to balance self-conscious presentations of identity and authenticity on social media. Managing this balance of identities (the conscious brand persona and the authentic self) becomes essential when YouTubers apologize. The YouTubers must attempt to repair their previously constructed identity to maintain their brand while also aiming to embody more fully the “new,” more genuine, identity they create through the “sincere” apology video. Apology making requires vulnerability in admitting fault for a wrong and is a valuable opportunity for creators to express sincerity and authenticity. However, apologists on social media are also attempting to maintain their brand image and online persona when they deliver their on-line apology.

1.1.3 Enregisterment and Digital Imperialism

My hypothesis throughout this study is that YouTubers who need to apologize tend to navigate audience management and their identity on the platform through the specific and targeted use of the pragmatic apology strategies outlined in Section 1.1.1. I argue that in creating a linguistic system of apology strategies tailored to YouTube audiences, the patterned use of these strategies can be considered a register of communication. Enregisterment is the process by which a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms (Agha, 2003), which are often accompanied by characterological features and identity work. In accessing this register, I propose that YouTubers are able to navigate the identity demands of the platform, while also being less vulnerable, by using the register of the “YouTube apology”. In using this register, they “fit in” with other YouTubers who have also

issued an apology which, in turn, allows them to negotiate meaning and construct what Eckert and Wagner (2005) term a stable group identity. As the register becomes socially salient in the mainstream cultural consciousness, I propose that as the apologists enregister this format of digitally-mediated apology into the genre of “YouTuber apology videos,” they also lend themselves legitimacy on the platform, specifically with their followers and, more broadly, the general public.

Though the “YouTube apology” may be a register in the U.S., amongst American English speaking (AE) YouTubers, evidence from theories of digital imperialism suggests that as a world power and online powerhouse, the digital footprint of the U.S. spans much further than its national borders and extends to Latin America. As a world power, the U.S. “articulated ... a new pattern of power [one where all] forms of labor, production, and exploitation were in ensemble around the axis of capital and the world market” (Quijano, 2000, p. 216). This capitalist structure enabled the U.S.’s European roots to dominate New World narratives and reconstruct social historical identities of native populations to align with Eurocentric expectations and systems of power (Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2000). According to Bourdieu (1977), capital is not just physical labor and production but also language. Linguistic capital is an expanded form of linguistic competence and includes the “capacity for ... regular discourse” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 646) and the ability to appropriately produce language in context. In discussing linguistic capital and digital imperialism collectively, these appropriate contexts or linguistic markets are determined by the power of the U.S. reaching into Latin America through political influence, trade, and more recently the internet. It stands to follow that the language and online presence and practices of those situated in Latin America, and in the case of my research, Brazil, would be shaped by the linguistic structures evident in the U.S. Therefore, if the patterned use of apology

strategies has become a mainstream register in American English, a cross-linguistic template may be transferred through digital-colonialism from Eurocentric countries, this case the U.S., to those in Latin America, specifically Brazil (Quijano, 2000).

1.2 Goals and Guiding Questions

This thesis takes into account existing research in pragmatics, digitally mediated communication (DMC), and sociolinguistics to investigate socially negotiated and digitally mediated acts of apology by YouTubers across languages and countries. It also aims to understand what apology strategies are being used by YouTubers in this potentially enregistered genre of videos. In addition, this study will investigate whether this proposed register has spread to YouTube content creators in Brazil through globalization and digital imperialism. The research questions stemming from these goals are:

1. What strategies of apology making are observed in YouTubers' performance of the speech act in AE and BP videos?
2. How do the apology strategies used by AE and BP YouTubers pattern similarly or differently? Are they affected by the severity of the offense committed and the culture-specific norms of the speech community they are used in?
3. What patterns emerge across both AE and BP videos that suggest the "YouTube apology" is enregistered globally?

1.3 A Brief Overview of Methodology

To investigate how apologies are made in the digital space, two sets of data, in AE and BP, were collected and analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative means. To collect the data, YouTube apology videos in both AE and BP were selected based on their alignment with the level of severity of the offense being apologized for and whether or not the YouTuber apologizing was a YouTube native². As Wolfson (1990) points out, what people apologize for is determined by cultural expectations “with respect to what people owe one another” (p. 16). Wolfson also suggests that time, respect of property, the obligation to not cause others discomfort or put them in danger, and not making others responsible for one’s own welfare are common topics of everyday apology in AE. Since the necessity to apologize relies on social norms being broken and the apologizer feeling a level of responsibility, levels of severity of the offense in the YouTuber videos were determined based on whether the offense being apologized for caused discomfort to viewers and/or danger to those personally involved in the committing of the offense. The three levels of severity attributed to the videos include -severe, +severe, and ++severe and are described in the Methods section. Ten videos were chosen in each language, AE and BP, for a total of 20 videos. This number of videos was determined as sufficient to establish intra-category reliability as “10 subjects per group provide a minimum of 84% power to detect reliable effects at $p < .05$ ($\eta^2 = 0.08$; $n = 10/\text{group}$)” (Özçalışkan, 2009)

Transcripts of each selected YouTube (YT) video were compiled into a corpus titled YT-Apologies. The video transcripts were then qualitatively coded for apology strategy use and extra-linguistic features of the videos were also recorded. A coding scheme adapted from Blum-

² YouTube native refers to YouTube content creators who gained and maintain a majority of their platform and follower base on YouTube.

Kulka et al.'s (1989) CCSARP coding manual was created and used to code the apology videos. The coding scheme used for this study includes six categories of apology strategy: IFID, Take Responsibility, Explanation/Account, Offer of Repair, Promise of Forbearance, and No Responsibility. Each instance of a strategy being employed was coded for the minute in which it occurs in the video. This time-sampling format borrowed from Guilloteaux and Dörnyei (2008), enables the analyst to account for how the apology strategies are used in context with one another “whereby relevant... events are recorded every minute in an ongoing manner” (p. 61). When coding transcripts for apology strategies, each token of an IFID, either explicit or implicit, was coded individually. For all other strategies, sections of similarly themed text, that aligned with a specific strategy, were coded as one occurrence of that strategy. For examples of this coding see Appendix A.

After obtaining the strategy frequency counts for all 20 videos, a quantitative, statistical analysis was conducted using R (v4.4.3; R Core Team, 2021). The coded data set for each language was run as a linear mixed-effects regression model using the lme4 package (v1.1-26; Bates et al., 2015) and any significance or interaction was noted based on Chi Squared tests. This model designated all six apology strategies as the dependent variable, minute of token occurrence as the independent variable, and Celebrity (a proxy for speaker) as a random effect.

1.4 Hypotheses

The first research question formulated for this study was: What strategies of apology making are observed in YouTubers' performance of the speech act in AE and BP videos? In light of this question, it was predicted that IFIDs and Explanation/Account would be the most

frequently used strategies by all of the YouTubers. This hypothesis is supported by earlier research that found IFIDs and Explanation/Account were the most commonly used strategies in online corporate apologies; (Choi & Mitchell, 2020; Page, 2014, Xu & Yan, 2020) as well as for face-to-face apologies in Spanish (Wagner, 1999; Wagner, 2004; Wagner & Roebuck, 2010).

The second research question guiding this study is as follows: How do the apology strategies used by AE and BP YouTubers pattern similarly or differently? Are they affected by the severity of the offense committed and the culture-specific norms of the speech community they are used in? Based on previous research on differences in apology strategies in varieties of Spanish (Márquez Reiter, 2000; Wagner, 2004, Wagner & Roebuck, 2010), I expected that there may be cultural differences in how apologies are made in AE and BP. As Wanger and Roebuck (2010) observed in their study, differences in speech community and cultural expectations change what apology strategies are acceptable in Spanish spoken in Panama City, Panama and Cuernavaca, Mexico. They found that Panama City speakers prefer the No Responsibility strategy and use IFIDs five percent less than their Cuernavacan counterparts.

The final research question for this study focuses on enregisterment. It asks: What, if any, patterns emerge across AE and BP videos that suggest the “YouTube apology” is enregistered globally? I expected that the “YouTube apology” has become enregistered in the AE apology videos via linguistic patterning and identity formation employed by the AE and BP YouTube apologists in their videos. It was expected that YouTubers would rely on this register to lend legitimacy to their apologies and enact an authentic YouTube celebrity identity. Furthermore, I expected that there would be similar patterning of apology strategies amongst AE and BP videos as a consequence of the spread of online trends from the U.S. to Brazil via globalized online spaces considering these two countries support the two highest number of monthly active

YouTube users (Shepherd, 2025). Therefore, YouTubers from each country, Brazil and the U.S., were expected to apologize in similar ways despite cultural differences because of the influence of digital imperialism (Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2000). I anticipated that these patterns of strategy usage would emerge, pointing to a globalized register of the “Apology Video”.

1.4.1 Summary

In carrying out this study the aim was to add positively to the fields of sociolinguistics, pragmatics, and digitally mediated communication research by expanding on the limited current work on social media apology in linguistics, which has until now focused primarily on platforms such as X (formerly Twitter) (Page, 2014). This study will also engage with research surrounding digitally-mediated speech acts, providing particular insight into apology strategies and the importance of their enactment in an increasingly digital world. Furthermore, this study will illuminate the patterns of digital globalization and cross-linguistic influence through enregisterment.

1.5 Structure of Thesis

Chapter 2 reviews existing literature in pragmatics, DMC, and sociolinguistics with a focus on pragmatic apologies, identity creation and digitally mediated rapport management, and enregisterment and digital imperialism. Research on apology strategies and the classification framework adapted and used in the current study are also included. Chapter 3 discusses the data and highlights the reason for using YouTube as a data source. Additionally, the methodology

used in the present study, including both the qualitative coding and the quantitative analysis, are detailed. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the current study's data analysis, and Chapter 5 discusses these results and their relation to the study's research questions and previous research. Conclusions are presented in Chapter 6, including addressing the current study's strengths and limitations and offering suggestions for future research in this line of inquiry.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Apologies can be thought of as a speaker's "implicit self-judgment ... against themselves [as] a recognition that they have broken a social norm and are responsible for whatever harm this has caused" (Wolfson, 1988, p.27). Wolfson here explains the motivation behind an apology, the speaker recognizing a harm has been committed, acknowledging the need for repair, and acting on this judgment to produce an apology. Though we may automatically think of an apology as a request for forgiveness of a past wrong, as Lakoff (2015) observes, apologies may actually perform various functions and express many feelings. Apologies can be used as, "[a] conventional greasing of the social wheels, ... expressions of sympathy, advance mollification for intended bad behavior, and formal public displays of currently 'appropriate' feeling" (Lakoff, 2015, p. 295). Lakoff notes that in these instances, apology places a heavy psychological burden on its maker and its recipient, asking for sincerity and vulnerability from the apologizer and acceptance from the hearer in hopes of repairing the relationship. While this intensity of feeling may be aptly judged during in-person apologies, what happens when they are made online through the screen of a computer may be quite different.

This chapter contains an overview of literature related to pragmatic approaches to apology and the influences of audience and identity management when enacting it as a digitally mediated speech act online. Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project's (CCSARP) coding manual for apologies will be discussed, which is the basis of the

framework used in the current study to investigate apology strategy usage. This chapter also explores the influence of digital imperialism on the transference of linguistic capital from the dominating powers of the U.S. to Latin America and the effect this may have on the transmission of enregistered forms through the internet.

Pragmatic approaches to apology are explored in Section 2.1 while the apology strategy framework is explained in Section 2.2. Section 2.3 introduces past work on the study of apology in face-to-face interactions, discourse completion tasks (DCTs), and digitally mediated communication (DMC). Identity and rapport management are discussed in Section 2.4 and enregisterment and its global spread through digital imperialism will be explored in Section 2.5.

2.1 Speech Act Theory

2.1.1 Austin's Speech Act Theory Framework

As a communicative tool, apologies act as an acknowledgement of perceived harms and an attempt by the speaker to repair their relationship with the person who has been hurt by their actions. In viewing apology through a linguistic lens, it is helpful to first understand the concept by outlining Austin's (1962) Speech Act Theory. Generally, a speech act occurs when a speaker produces an utterance with the goal of accomplishing some objective beyond just transmitting information; the language we use is performing an action (Austin, 1962; Birner, 2013; Márquez Reiter, & Placencia, 2005; Schiffrin, 1994). Márquez Reiter and Placencia, in their review of Austin's Speech Act Theory, explain that "speech act theory rests upon the central notion of language as action" and that speech act theory "attempts to define the links between meaning, language, and action" (p. 5). As Austin (1975) maintains, "to do or say these things is to make plain how the action is to be taken or understood, what action it is" (p. 70). Initially, Austin

proposed a specific type of speech act that he called a *performative*. According to Austin, a performative does not describe or report a thing occurring, but instead “the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, the doing of an action” (1962, p. 5). In other words, for performative speech acts, “to utter something - either orally or in writing - is to do something” (Birner, 2013, p. 175). Austin categorizes apologies as performatives, noting that when one produces an apology, stating *I apologize* or *I’m sorry*, the utterance counts as the actual act of apology from the speaker to the hearer for committing some offense. Specifically, the speaker simultaneously says the words and performs the action. In offering an example of a promise as a performative Austin argues that a performative is “not a description, because (1) it could not be false, nor therefore true;” and (2) saying it and meaning it “makes it a promise” (Austin, 1975, p. 70). He calls these two conditions a “performative formula” and explains that this formula, such as saying “‘I promise’, makes it clear how what is said is to be understood and even conceivably ... ‘states that’ a promise has been made” (Austin, 1975, p. 70).

However, Austin notes that to be effectively carried out, the performative must meet several felicity conditions, or be ‘happily’ accomplished (Austin 1962; Márquez Reiter, & Placencia, 2005). These felicity conditions include:

- A. Following conventional procedure in appropriate circumstances
 - B. Executing the performative correctly and completely
 - C. The speaker having the requisite feelings, thoughts, and intentions when carrying it out
- (Austin, 1962, Birner, 2013).

If one of these felicity conditions is unmet, the speech act is infelicitous, or goes wrong, and in the case of apology, it may not be accepted or judged sincere. Violating Condition A. and/or Condition B. results in a “misfire” (Austin, 1962) or a failed realization of the speech act. For

example, if someone apologizes by saying “I’m really sorry *if* I offended, hurt, or disappointed anyone with all of this” [emphasis added] (Arvid, 2020), the inclusion of *if* results in the speaker avoiding responsibility and not completing the speech act correctly and completely. Austin (1962) notes that “When an utterance is a misfire, the procedure which we purport to invoke is disallowed or is botched and our act ... is void without effect” (p. 16). A violation of Condition C. results in an abuse of sincerity and belief in the truth of the act, though the performative act itself is achieved. In this case, an abuse results in hollow or empty words and a speech act that has not been implemented (Austin, 1962). An abuse, however, is often difficult to judge by an outside observer of an apology who cannot know the exact intent of the apologizer. This often makes abuses in instances of apology opaque. An example of an abuse would be if a person made an apology about a serious offense but said it with amusement in their eyes or a smile on their face. This type of mismatch between the utterance of an apology, a commonly somber moment, and the positive emotions displayed, would risk an insincerity abuse and an infelicitous performative. Under the appropriate felicitous conditions, a speech act will follow societal norms and expectations, carry intent, and have forces and functions the act necessarily carries out (Birner, 2013).

Despite these classifications and felicity conditions, Austin found discrepancies in his distinction of performatives as a specific type of speech acts upon while encountering counterexamples. He then turned his attention to the general contents of a speech act and the forces that the speaker hopes to achieve in expressing a speech act. According to Austin (1962), when carrying out a speech act, three aspects or forces used to felicitously complete a speech act come into play, which are applicable to the analysis of apology. The first aspect is the locutionary act, which is the act of uttering words that convey the basic meaning, its sense and

reference, linking what is said to the context in which it is said. Second, the illocutionary act establishes the speaker's intentions, with Austin (1962) stipulating that there is a distinction here between attempting a particular speech act and actually pulling it off. The third necessary aspect of a speech act is the perlocutionary act, which is the resulting effects of carrying out the speech act or the outcome negotiated between the interlocutors. Austin (1962) considered this the "uptake" of the utterance or speech act or the consequences of the speech act (Márquez Reiter & Placencia, 2005). Additionally, Birner (2013) describes speech acts as follows:

The locutionary act is the act of saying something with a certain meaning and reference ... the illocutionary act is what you intend to do by means of saying it ... [and] the perlocutionary act ... is the effect that the speech act has on the thoughts, feelings, or actions of the addressee (p. 187).

The locutionary force of apologizing signals to the hearer that there was an offense perpetrated by the speaker, that the speaker acknowledges this fact, and that they are making an apology to repair the harm caused by their wrongdoing. The illocutionary act expresses the speaker's intention behind apologizing, for example, to show regret or to change the hearer's attitude towards the speaker, their relationship, and/or the offense committed (Birner, 2013). The perlocutionary effect in the case of apology is the actual effect of the apology on the relationship between the speaker and the hearer. It entails whether the apology is accepted by the hearer and if the speaker is judged to be sincere.

Though originally apologies were performatives, Austin recategorized the verb *apologize* as a behabitive. Behabitives, according to Austin's new categorization, were a class of words with an illocutionary force related to behavior. More accurately, *apologize* is a behabitive or verb

having “to do with attitudes and reactions to social behavior” (Márquez Reiter, & Placencia, 2005). In analyzing apology, this illocutionary force is useful for better understanding the apology’s function and providing insight into the speaker’s reason for apologizing, their intentions, and their motivations for wanting to repair their image and relationship with the addressee. In addition, this illocutionary act is best able to be analyzed linguistically as it is observable and thus quantifiable based on the strategies used when a speaker makes an apology.

2.1.2 Searle’s Speech Act Proposal

Searle (1969) concurred with Austin that speech acts play an essential role in communication, as he affirmed that speech acts are the basic units of linguistic communication and that producing a speech act is performing an action. However, his categorization of speech acts and their forces differed from those of Austin. Searle moved away from the performative distinction and considered apologies as expressive illocutions that convey the psychological state of the speaker expressing them (Searle, 1969; Searle, 1976). Similarly, Lakoff (2015) maintains that “apology, more than most speech acts, places psychological burdens ... on its maker” (p. 295). Searle’s definition of apology as an expressive, along with his characterizing the locutionary act in terms of its propositional content, set him apart from Austin. He proposed propositional content conditions, commonly referred to as speech act rules. Specific to speech acts, Searle created four types of speech act rules: propositional content, preparatory, sincerity, and essential rules. Propositional content rules require the proposition of the utterance to contain specific semantic content particular to the speech act uttered (e.g., a request refers to a future act of the hearer). Preparatory rules are the conditions in the world that need to be present for a

speech act to be felicitous. Sincerity rules are the conditions that make a speech act sincere, and the essential rules denote the outcome of an act, or what the speech act “counts as” (e.g., in a request the utterance counts as an attempt to get the hearer to do something; uttering an apology counts as expressing remorse for a past act to the hearer) (Searle, 1969; Márquez Reiter, & Placencia, 2005).

Additionally, Searle (1979) suggested that “differences in propositional content ... are determined by illocutionary force indicating devices” (p. 7). These Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs) are the elements in the utterance that “[operate] on the propositional content to indicate ... the direction of fit between the propositional content and reality” (Searle, 1979, p. 17). Though this “fit” is presupposed for expressives like apology, the force behind it, which links propositional content to reality, is still there. Concretely, Searle (1969) explained that IFIDs are linguistic indicators for illocutionary force, such as the use of performative verbs (e.g., *I promise...*, *I approve...*), word order, intonation and prosody, and certain adverbs in utterances.

2.2 Apology Strategies

In attempting to mitigate this psychological burden and give the appropriate force behind their apologies, speakers can use several strategies to express apologies based on factors such as the relationship with the interlocutor and the seriousness of the offense (Wagner & Roebuck, 2010; Wolfson, 1988). These strategies can range from explicit ones, like simply stating *I apologize for ...* or *I’m sorry that I ...*, to more ambiguous and indirect forms, including through the expression of presuppositions and implicatures that the hearer must interpret as an apology.

Lakoff (2015) identifies several motivations speakers have for making apologies including, expressing responsibility either by accepting that they have caused harm to another or in order to “minimize the utterer’s responsibility for ... others” (p. 296). An apologizer may also acknowledge wrongdoing, express a desire for forgiveness, renounce their bad behavior, attempt to convey sympathy, or simply deny that a wrong even occurred. Examples of these strategies, which have been adopted from Lakoff’s (2015) work, are provided below. The first example demonstrates an explicit apology, while the remaining examples represent implicit forms.

- (1) a. I apologize for calling you so late at night (explicit)
- b. I admit I broke the vase (responsibility)
- c. It was wrong of me to have stolen your wallet/I shouldn’t have stolen your wallet
 (wrong-doing)
- d. Can you forgive me for yelling at you (wish for forgiveness)
- e. I’ll never hit him again as long as I live (abjuration of bad behavior)
- f. I’m sorry that I don’t have the time to meet with you today (sympathy)
- g. I’m sorry, you’ve got it all wrong! I didn’t break the vase, she did (denial)

Lakoff (2015) also notes that speakers may use excuses, justifications, and explanations simultaneously with these apology strategies to lessen the negative effects on the relationship between themselves and the person they are apologizing to. These strategies suggested by Lakoff are echoed by Wagner and Roebuck (2010) and Xu and Yan (2020), who adapt Blum-Kulka et al.’s (1989) CCSARP Coding Manual for Apologies in their analyses.

2.2.1 Blum-Kulka et al. (1989)

Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) develop a coding scheme for apology strategies that can be used to identify how apologies are being made cross-culturally. They establish five central strategies for making an apology, which include using Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFID), Take Responsibility, Explanation or Account, Offer of Repair, and Promise of Forbearance. These five central strategies can be further supported by language users' use of intensifiers to show extra concern for the offense, or, speakers can use downgraders which are attempts to "divert the hearer's attention from [the speaker's] responsibility for the offense" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 293).

The first of the five strategies presented in the coding manual developed by Blum-Kulka, et al. (1989) is the use of IFIDs, which are "formulaic, routinized expressions in which the speaker's apology is made explicit" (p. 290). As the authors point out, IFIDs were first discussed by Searle in his 1969 study in which he revised Austin's (1962) Speech Act Theory. Some IFIDs used in making apologies in English are *I apologize*, *I'm sorry*, or *forgive me* (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). The second strategy included in the coding scheme, Taking Responsibility, is motivated by an attempt to appease the addressee, to take the blame for the offense, or in some cases, to admit the facts of the offending event but "abstain from openly accepting responsibility" (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989, p. 291). The third strategy, Explanation and Account, allows the apologizer to explain external mitigating circumstances that caused the offense to occur, such as saying *I missed the bus* to apologize for being late. The fourth strategy involves Offers of Repair, which occur when the speaker attempts to compensate the hearer in some way for the offense they caused. The offer must be related directly to the present offense and be appropriate to the context of the offense and the speech event. According to Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), the last

strategy, Promise of Forbearance, is used “whenever the speaker’s sense of guilt is strong enough” (p. 293) that they feel they must promise that they will never commit the offense again.

One adaptation that was made to the scheme was the addition of a specific category for the speaker not taking responsibility for the offense. This category, not original to Blum-Kulka et al.’s scheme, helps to account for Lakoff’s strategy of responsibility taking, which includes forms of denial and taking no responsibility for the offense. Wagner and Roebuck (2010) include the strategy “No + Taking Responsibility (speaker = -animacy)” to describe this. They use +/- animacy to account for whether the speaker assumed responsibility for the offense (Wagner, 2004; Wagner & Roebuck, 2010). For example, they categorize the Spanish expressions of *se + me + verb*, *no fue mi culpa* ‘it wasn’t my fault’, and *me + verb* (3PL no referent)³ under this category (Wagner & Roebuck, 2010). This strategy has been adapted for the current research as No Responsibility and henceforth will be referred to as such.

2.3 Studies on Apology

2.3.2 Cross-Cultural Apologies

Investigations of apologies have been conducted in English and other languages with native speakers and foreign language learners to better understand the pragmatic constructions and competences needed to perform this speech act. Many cross-linguistic studies using Blum-Kulka et al.’s framework demonstrate that IFIDs are the most used strategies cross-linguistically

³ Examples of *se me + verb* include: *Se me olvidó el libro en casa* ‘I forgot the book at home’ and an example of *me + verb* (3PL no referent) is *me dejaron esperando* ‘they left me waiting’.

(Beeching, 2019; González-Cruz, 2012; Liu & Ren, 2016; Wagner, 1999; Wagner & Roebuck, 2010; Xu & Yan, 2020). Beeching (2019) found that simpler or more formulaic forms of IFIDs like *I'm sorry* or *excuse me*, and their translated counterparts, are more frequent in English and French while forms like *pardon* or *regret* are less common. This finding is supported by Márquez Reiter (2000) who found that British English speakers used more formulaic expressions of apology than Uruguayan Spanish speakers. However, all of these studies note that not all speakers of the same global language “have and will use a closed set of linguistic strategies in the same way when they apologize” (Wagner & Roebuck, 2010; p. 254). While there are commonly used strategies such as IFIDs and offering an Explanation or Account, Wagner and Roebuck (2010) and Wagner (1999) find that in the Spanish varieties of Cuernavaca, Mexico, Panama City, Panama, and Granada, Spain, differing apology and politeness strategies are used. In these studies evidence is provided to refute the claim that “the speech act of apologizing [is] subject to universal principles of verbal interaction” (González-Cruz, 2012, p. 549). Wagner (1999) found that speakers in Cuernavaca and Granada perceived and responded to apologies differently. For example, Cuernavaca speakers “rated apologies as stronger when an IFID preceded rather than followed another strategy” (Wagner 1999: 166) when several strategies were used in tandem. In their 2010 study, Wagner and Roebuck also found that Panama City speakers had a preference for using the No Responsibility strategy, in that they preferred to not take responsibility for the offense committed by using responses like *no fue mi culpa*, ‘it wasn’t my fault’. Márquez Reiter (2000) also found that apologies in British English and Uruguayan Spanish differed based on cultural expectations and the interplay of power, social status, and politeness in these societies or speech communities. The variations of apology strategies across languages points to the continual need for community-based investigations as it remains

“obvious that an apology is a socially and culturally defined communicative function”
(González-Cruz, 2012, p. 550).

2.3.3 Digitally-Mediated Apologies

Research on apology strategy usage in YouTube videos, and digitally mediated communication (DMC) in general, has been conducted using two approaches. The first approach is grounded in linguistic investigation, relying on pragmatic theory using Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) as the basis for strategy definition. The second approach stems from public relations research regarding interpersonal apology as crisis response as investigated by Benoit (2014) and Schmitt et al. (2004). Research in this area (Darby & Schlenker, 1982; Sandlin & Gracyalny, 2018; Schlenker & Darby, 1981), finds that using the strategies proposed by Benoit (2014) and Schmitt et al. (2004)⁴, lead to more positive sincerity judgments by addressees and higher chances of forgiveness. Despite the difference in theoretical framings, much of the work on digital apologies in English has found that IDIFs, or their counterpart Mortification, are the most frequently strategies used by apologizing parties (Choi & Mitchell, 2022; Karlsson, 2020; Sandlin & Gracyalny, 2018; Sari, 2016). Briefly defined, mortification “consists of remorseful acknowledgement of an offense and [a] request for forgiveness” (Karlsson, 2020). Mortification is most commonly enacted using verbs that can be identified as IFIDs such as ‘apologize’, ‘regret’, ‘excuse’, ‘sorry’, ‘pardon’, and ‘forgive’ (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 2009; Sari, 2016). Sandlin and Gracyalny (2018) state that of their 32 viewed apologies, 93.8% used mortification

⁴ Image repair strategies include Denial, Evasion of Responsibility, Reducing Offensiveness, Corrective Action, and Mortification (Benoit, 2014).

strategies. Additionally, statements admitting fault and expressions of remorse were the most used interpersonal strategies in their research, followed by admitting damage and offering compensation (Sandlin & Gracyalny, 2018). These strategies generally align with Take Responsibility and Offer of Repair set out in Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) coding scheme. Choi and Mitchell (2022) find similar patterns of apology, discussing that YouTubers “overemphasized the phrase ‘I’m sorry’ [in videos] ... emphasizing on the mortification strategy” (p. 102). This aligns with Roschk and Kaiser’s (2013) findings that using multiple IFIDs together to intensify the apology repairs damage more effectively. Xu and Yan’s (2020) investigation into corporate apology strategies used by Chinese internet corporations found that while Chinese corporations most commonly use IFIDs, the strategy of image repair is also significantly used in apology. This image repair strategy consists of strategies that align with Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) Promise of Forbearance and Offer of Repair.

Despite the wealth of research on the speech act of apology in English and varieties of Spanish, little has been investigated in the Portuguese language for both in-person and digitally mediated apology. A recent study by Storto, Negreiros, and Dias (2022) explores the semiotic landscape of online apology videos in BP. In their qualitative analysis of three well-known internet personalities’ apology videos, they found that the influencers construct a victim persona or “ethos” around the offense committed. The researchers observed: “esse ethos foi reforçado pela imagem de inocente, de indivíduo sem culpa, por aquele que não teve a intenção de dizer ou fazer algo” [this ethos was reinforced by an image of innocence, of an individual without fault, one that had no intention of doing or saying something offensive] (Storto, Negreiros, & Dias, 2022, p. 19). Although the influencers did not utilize specific apology strategies identified in

other literature, the authors did identify a persona constructed through the use of No Responsibility.

2.3.4 Conclusions of Apology Research

As evidenced in previous linguistics and public relations research, strategies for making apologies can be used as linguistically quantifiable tokens of illocutionary force. The research demonstrates that the need to apologize can take many forms and is often motivated by maintaining social relationships and/or responding to public or societal pressure to do so, as in expressing the “appropriate” feelings in order to rebuild public image and regain trust (Xu & Yan, 2020). This obligation to apologize has been examined in domains such as in-person, cross-linguistic apology (González-Cruz, 2012; Liu & Ren, 2016; Su & Lu, 2023; Válková, 2014; Wagner, 1999, Wagner & Roebuck, 2010), corporate apology (Diulio & Arendt, 2018; Page, 2014; Xu & Yan, 2020) and DMC (Choi & Mitchell, 2022; Diegoli, 2025; Karlsson, 2020; Sandlin & Gracyalny, 2018; Sari, 2016; Storto, Negreiros, & Dias, 2022) in an attempt to better understand how brands, companies, and individuals are “apologizing for their past and current behaviors” (Choi & Mitchell, 2022, p. 102).

2.4 Rapport Management and Identity Creation

In examining these pragmatically grounded theoretical concepts regarding apology, research on rapport and audience management and identity creation is also important to consider. By exploring these frameworks together, apologies can be examined as ways to effectively

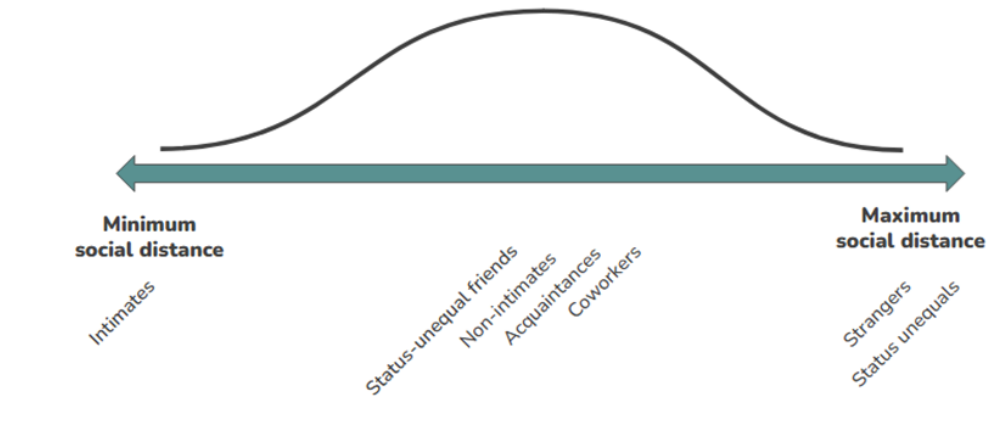
manage rapport and craft a digitally-mediated identity between online speakers and digital hearers. In the case of YouTuber apologies, exploring the dynamic relationship between the YouTuber and viewer within the Bulge (Wolfson, 1989), highlights audience management techniques that affect apology strategy usage. YouTubers rely on audience management techniques that actively attempt to construct positive rapport with their viewers and create a likeable and sincere identity that will be accepted by the community. In digitally mediated communication (DMC), the audience of a post, be it an X post, video, or reel, is potentially as large as the number of active users on a given platform. YouTube has over 2.5 billion monthly users and more than 122 million daily platform users (GMI, 2025; Shepherd, 2025), thus the potential reach of a YouTuber's platform could include this volume of viewers. However, in their videos, most YouTubers are addressing a subset of users when they consider what they are posting. YouTubers constantly "have a sense of [their] audience in every [digitally] mediated conversation" (Marwick & Boyd, 2011, p. 115) and they use it to manage audience engagement and identity creation.

2.4.1 Wolfson's Bulge Theory

In engaging with audience and identity management, YouTubers must consider the relationship they have with their viewers. Under Wolfson's Bulge Theory, social distance and power between interlocutors can be evaluated. It posits a continuum of social relationships that fall within the bounds of a bulge of negotiable speech acts (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Representation of Wolfson (1989) Bulge Theory of Social Distance



At the ends of the “Bulge”, existing on opposite ends of social distance, are relationships with intimates on the far left and strangers and status unequals on the far right. These relationships and the speech acts they contain are less open to negotiation and more fixed; “the more status and social distance are seen as fixed, the easier it is for speakers to know what to expect of one another” (Wolfson, 1988, p. 33). However, the relationships in the Bulge are seen as dynamic or open to negotiation among participants. Depending on where in the Bulge an addressee exists, the strategies used by the speaker to apologize may differ. For the YouTuber and their viewers, the relationship may fall under non-intimates or acquaintances. Additionally, as Steinkuehler and Williams (2006) propose, social media sites can act as digital third places. First proposed in sociological theory, third places are described as a place for informal sociability such as coffee shops and bars in the real world; this is contrary to first and second place, which are the home and the workplace, respectively. Steinkuehler and Williams (2006) reconceptualized this idea

from physical spaces to describing the internet as a third place for informal sociability where the line between audience member and friend can be blurred. This is especially evident as YouTubers tend to broadcast many aspects of their daily lives on their platform. Fanbases can consider the YouTuber as more than a complete stranger, often developing parasocial relationships with the people they watch on the screen. Conceptualizing the YouTuber-viewer relationship as existing within the Bulge allows for dynamic negotiation of social distance and power within the relationship in an attempt to gain trust (Xu & Yan, 2020). The dynamism of this relationship allows YouTubers opportunities for successful apology and the development of a positive public image built on their repentance for mistakes. Conversely this also carries the risk of falling from ‘grace’ and being ‘canceled’ by the viewers (Diulio & Arendt, 2018). The theories of speech acts, politeness, relationship negotiation, and face (See sections 2.1 and 2.5.2) are considered essential to the success or failure of an apology, especially as it relates to digitally mediated communication.

2.4.2 Politeness and Face Theory: Impact on Apology Making and Audience Management

The research of Wagner and Roebuck (2010) accounts for politeness strategies used by speakers of apologies. Accompanying the choice of apology strategy, Politeness and Face Theory are also important in apology making. In tandem, these theories account for the desire of interlocutors to avoid unpleasantness in a given conversation and mitigate what Lakoff (2015) cites as the “psychological burden” of apologies on both parties. Politeness Theory accounts for variables in social relationships, including both positive and negative politeness strategies that honor in-group solidarity and individual independence respectively (Birner, 2013; Wagner &

Roebuck, 2010). Politeness Theory also aids in accounting for the dynamic forces of power, social distance, and cooperation (Kasper, 2005) within apology making. These forces affect which apology strategies and sub-strategies are used by speakers. Face Theory, originally proposed by Goffman (1967), relates to the image one claims for themselves through the pattern of behaviors they display to others. This image is shaped by a need of the speaker to be accepted and appreciated by others (maintaining positive face), and the need for autonomy and freedom (maintaining negative face) (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987; Goffman; Renkema, 2004). When someone apologizes, they are responding to a Face Threatening Act (FTA) that violates their positive face, or their need to be appreciated and accepted by others. An apology then is an attempt to preserve this positive face and their relationships with the offended party. Simultaneously, the apologizer is also trying to avoid violating their addressee's negative face; treating them as a person who can make an independent choice to forgive, or not, on their own.

Thus, the navigation of face preservation is essential to a successful apology. Facework operates in tandem with politeness strategies to mitigate harm and complete a successful apology. Politeness, which can be linguistically realized in strategies like those of Blum-Kulka, House, and Kasper (1989), in conjunction with concepts of cooperation and linguistic etiquette (Kasper, 2005) is used to varying degrees based on the intensity of the threat to face (Brown & Levinson, 1978, 1987). Apology strategy usage helps to mitigate the FTA of committing a harm towards another person. This harm or the weight of the face threat is determined by factors including the degree of imposition, the weight of a specific act in a specific culture, the social distance between the speaker and the addressee, and the power the addressee has over the speaker (Birner, 2013). The use of these factors can be represented in formula format $W(FTA) = R + D + P$ (Brown & Levinson, 1987). In other words, the weight of the FTA is equal to the rate

of imposition (R), the social distance between interlocutors (D), and the power dynamic between them (P). The rate of imposition relies on how far a cultural norm has been overstepped by the apologizing party or the severity of the offense. Wolfson (1999) discusses that people apologize for occurrences deemed harmful based on cultural expectations “with respect to what people owe one another” (p. 16). She suggests that imposition on a person’s time, respect of both personal and public property, the obligation to not cause others discomfort or put them in danger, and not making others responsible for one’s own welfare are common topics of everyday apology in the US (Wolfson, 1999). Goffman (1971) also suggests that apologies should be at least proportional to the offense they are designed to rectify and therefore the greater the FTA the more important remediative facework during the apology should become. However, this apology/offense equivalence or proportionality is not always the case when it comes to real world interactions as seen in the work of Heritage and Raymond (2016) and Heritage, Raymond, and Drew (2019). YouTubers often need to apologize for a wide range of offenses from racist comments to far more excessive violations of social expectation such as grooming or sexual harassment allegations. This raises the rate of imposition, the W(FTA) score, and thus the weight of the apology, as cultural norms are also overstepped.

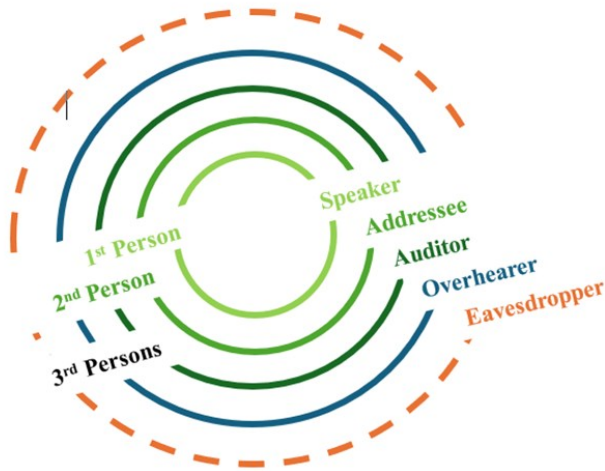
2.4.3 Audience Design

Public relations professionals often encourage public figures, like YouTubers, “to use social media to apologize so they can directly communicate with their audience” (Choi & Mitchell, 2022, p. 102). In following the “second wave” of sociolinguistics, when ethnographic methods were used to explore how “locally-relevant facts about participants” (Anderson et al.

2022) play a role in how variation is realized at the macro-level (Eckert, 2012), audience design becomes an essential piece of the how and why apologies are made, especially by public figures. The need to apologize is often motivated by maintaining social relationships and/or responding to public or social pressure to do so. In order to express “appropriate” feelings of remorse and rebuild public image and trust, apologizers attempt to adapt their apology strategy to match audience expectations. Bell’s (1984) study of radio announcers changing their speech style to address different audiences, either converging or diverging from speech norms, became the foundation of much audience design work. Audience design refers to the speaker “designing their speech to the needs of a particular audience” (Meyerhoff, 2019, p.48), the motive behind this shift in behavior, and knowing who the audience is and responding in kind. Speakers become aware of their audience and manage their speech based on who they believe is listening. Bell proposes a hierarchy of these hearers, contending that “the person we are directly talking to has the greatest impact on how we talk” (Meyerhoff, 2019, p. 49). However, there are often other listeners such as auditors, overhearers, and eavesdroppers (Bell, 1984) who have less power over the speaker's choice in speech. Bell claims that an addressee is a known person taking part in the speech event who is acknowledged by the speaker and directly addressed. Auditors are known to be part of the speech act and their presence is acknowledged but they are not directly addressed in the speech context. Overhearers and eavesdroppers conversely are not acknowledged in the speech event nor are they directly addressed, however, overhearers may be known to be present to the speaker while eavesdroppers are not. Bell explains that based on a person’s relationship to the speaker in this scheme, the speaker will modify their speech accordingly. The dynamics of audience power over the speaker are shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Diagram of Levels of Bell's (1984) Audience Design Adapted from Hawthorn (2013)



Applying this concept to online spaces, a given video's audience is potentially billions of people. A YouTuber may not have the security of knowing exactly who is watching their video or who they are directly addressing, whether it be a fan, a casual viewer, or a person new to their platform. Taking this into consideration, the lines between the active players in Bell's audience design begin to blur. This is especially true in the case of YouTuber apologies as they often gain traction on the platform, reaching a wider audience than their normal fanbase. The viewership can continue to expand when the need for redress is discussed on mainstream news sites, resulting in a wider potential audience that is less informed about the YouTuber and platform norms. In summary, there is likely a fanbase of subscribed viewers that functions in the position of addressee, a group of non-subscribed but consistent viewers acting as auditors, thousands of overhearers, and an unknown number of unacknowledged eavesdroppers from the general public who are viewing out of curiosity. The differences between these latter three groups may be indistinct, leaving the YouTuber unaware of who is watching their videos, even if they

acknowledge the nebulous “general public”. Understanding audience design in this way lends support to the importance of face work and identity management in DMC.

2.4.4 Identity Management

Following Bell’s audience design research, a more speaker-centered body of research emerged with the third wave of sociolinguistics. Speaker design is another way of exploring the relationship between the speaker and their audience. A theory proposed by Coupland (1980) suggests that a speaker’s variation in speech is partially due to their relationship with the audience while also reflecting the speaker’s wish to project a specific identity to the addressee. Speaker design contributes to the concept of audience management by incorporating the speaker-centered concept of identity management in speech acts. As Bedijs, Held and Maaß (2014) state in their work, “a key feature of Social Media is the self-presentation of the participants” (p. 10). Social media users create user profiles where they reveal as much or as little detail about themselves as they wish. Yet, their platform identity is also constructed by:

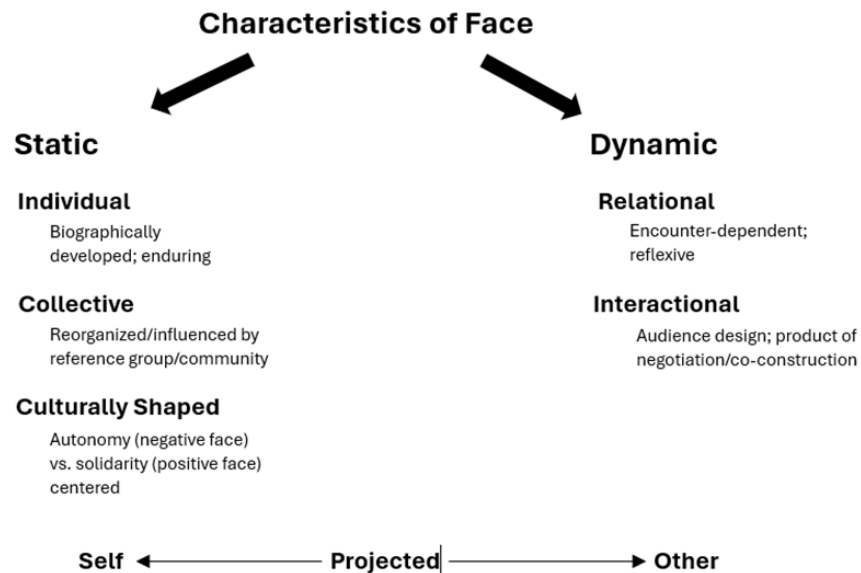
Other users [who] develop a perception of their identity not only on the basis of their profile but also on every individual contribution, every shared piece of content and every comment on contributions and contents provided by other users. (Bedijs, Held & Maaß, 2014, p. 10)

While YouTubers construct an identity based on what they explicitly choose to share, they also express it in the less curated moments of their digital contributions to a given platform. While to a large extent the presentation of an online identity is a matter of choice and curated aspects of

the self, it is also inextricably linked to their real life as they bring aspects connected to this “real world” identity into the digital space. In creating an identity and using “audience management” (Marwick & Boyd, 2011), content creators must balance self-conscious presentations of identity and authenticity on social media. They do this in part by navigating face and identity in communication forms that have been characterized as faceless, bodiless mass media (Bedijs, Held & Maaß, 2014; Herring, 2001). Facework has both an individual dimension related to biographical “real life” events and experiences, and a cultural socialization dimension in regards to mutually constructed identities. These dimensions can be seen below in Figure 3 as elements of static and dynamic characteristics of face. Appealing to these positive and negative face wants, “face, therefore, stands for self-consciousness and at the same time represents the self-esteem established and acknowledged in social contacts” (Bedijs, Held & Maaß, 2014, p. 16). Bedijs, Held and Maaß (2014) propose that this interplay is evoked by interaction with others and that face “exists only as *projected face*, ... which is continually repositioned and focused through the mirror of others” (p. 16-17). They demonstrate this view of face through the diagram shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Adapted Diagram of Face Wants in Constructing Identity (Bedijs, Held and Maaß, 2014)



As content creators, YouTubers must be consciously working against this tension of overproduced projected persona and showing their “real” self while contending with context collapse (Marwick & Boyd, 2011). Context collapse occurs when multiple audiences are collapsed into one. This necessitates creators to present a singular, personal identity on a platform, leading to the repositioning of several different groups on a single platform. Digital audiences are made up of diverse groups of viewers who may not typically be brought together outside this digital space (Boyd, 2008). These audiences may include groups with whom interaction would result in a differing construction of identity such as family, coworkers, acquaintances, and strangers. Because of this content collapse, relationships to viewers span all of Wolfson's Bulge. Thus, the typical “bricolage” (Eckert, 2019; Podesva, 2009; Zimman, 2017) of identity that can be accessed and selected from in face-to-face conversations cannot occur,

forcing the YouTuber to create a singular persona on the platform and in created content. This makes the management of this singular persona heavily reliant on the enactment of the micro-celebrity identity and the balance of authenticity and platform persona.

The balance of having a constructed self that is mediated through interaction with others in collapsed contexts of DMC finds purchase with social media influencers who must manage their constructed self as a part of a brand, yet allow their authentic self to seep through their online persona. This results in a “micro-celebrity” status and identity for YouTubers as proposed by Marwick and Boyd (2011). The term micro-celebrity “assumes an intrinsic conflict between self-promotion and the ability to connect with others” (p. 128) on the part of the content creator. For YouTubers this identity means “appealing to multiple audiences, creating an affable brand, and sharing personal information” (Marwick & Boyd, 2011, p. 127), all while walking the line between projected face and platform persona and an authentic self image. Managing this identity becomes essential when YouTubers apologize, as they attempt to repair their previously constructed identity to maintain their brand persona while also aiming to embody more fully the “new” identity they negotiate through the apology video. Apologizing allows YouTubers to increase intimacy, establishing a “closer” relationship with viewers by highlighting their “authentic” apologetic self, and repairing their constructed brand image and lending themselves credibility. YouTubers attempt to show their ability to maintain the micro-celebrity identity through enactment of apology strategies. They rely on the illocutionary force of apology strategy usage and the perceived perlocutionary effects they achieve to manage their audience and their own identity.

2.4.5 Enregisterment

When one hears the words “YouTube apology”, a general concept or even a specific apology video comes to mind. The concept of an “apology video” has gained traction in mainstream culture and is considered a new genre of digital media (Choi & Mitchell 2022). In following the design and genre traits of the stereotypical “apology video”, the YouTube micro-celebrities risk less vulnerability while also “fitting in” with other YouTubers who have done the same. This collective use of apology strategies and format allows them to negotiate meaning and construct a stable group identity (Eckert & Wagner, 2005, Podesva, 2007). It is reasonable then to propose that in this creation, they also construct a linguistic system of apology strategies that can be considered a register of communication. As Válková (2014) suggests that apologies are described as “speech-act-sets”, utterances of related speech acts strung together, and evidence of formulaic apology constructions have been investigated (Beeching, 2019; Márquez Reiter, 2000), it is understandable to posit that in-group patterns for apology strategy usage may emerge and become a register. These findings suggest that the apology makers enregister this format of digitally-mediated apology into “YouTuber apology videos” in AE and “Retratação YouTube” (Storto, Negreiros, & Dias, 2022) in BP. The use of these forms lends YouTubers legitimacy on the platform with other YouTubers, followers and, more broadly, the general public.

Enregisterment is the process through which a linguistic repertoire becomes differentiable within a language as a socially recognized register of forms (Agha, 2003). Agha (2003) argues that the link between enregistered language and the social value it carries is due to specific cultural values and the creation of social personae linked to language use. This concept was explored by investigating enregisterment of Received Pronunciation (RP) in Britain, linking class with particular accents. Agha finds enregisterment of RP in Britain, as it has come to be a

socially meaningful register through mass circulation of media that links class with language as a social commodity. Enregistered forms are often supported by constructed social personae through characterological values and embodiment practices, “reflexively formulat[ing] cross-modal icons or images of personhood” (Agha, 2005). The personas created by YouTubers rely on the micro-celebrity identity and are typically a somewhat “fluid self-construction” (Eckert, 2019, p. 753) of the person they claim to be online. However, when repositioned by the use of enregistered apology strategies, “particularly salient social distinctions” (Eckert, 2019, p. 753) emerge based on the use of this register and solidify their micro-celebrity identity and the apology video register.

2.5 Digital Imperialism and Global Enregisterment

The “YouTube apology” may be a video genre (Choi & Mitchell, 2022) and potentially a register in the U.S. amongst AE-speaking YouTubers and their American audiences. However, as the internet is a global space, this register may span to other locations around the world. Evidence from research regarding digital imperialism suggests that the U.S, in particular, continues to exert its influence over Latin America as a world power and online powerhouse. Mignolo (2000) goes as far as claiming that modernity, including the internet, cannot be truly understood without first acknowledging and understanding its colonial roots. The digital footprint of the U.S. reaches much further than its national borders and projects its influence on Latin America through colonial ties and Mignolo’s (2000) concepts of the rhetoric of modernity, logic of coloniality, and grammar of de-coloniality. He argues that modernity, despite being considered a progressive force, is obfuscated by the continual influence of colonial domination

through racial, social, and economic systems of power. The concept of “rhetoric of modernity” (Mignolo, 2000) maintains that Eurocentric ideas of progress and development, and emphasis on reason, have been used to justify imperialism and harmful colonial action. Mignolo’s (2000) “logic of coloniality” addresses the continual domination of colonial systems of power, knowledge, and worth in Latin America despite the formal termination of colonialism by Eurocentric powers. Despite the removal of the highest source of external power, Eurocentric ideals are still embedded in institutions and the public consciousness of Latin America, with the Western world still defining modern values, ideas of success, and advancements in technology. In his exploration of de-coloniality, Mignolo (2000) contends with how to deconstruct continued exertions of colonial power and narratives in Latin America. Quijano (2000) supports this idea of Latin America having a rich and unique cultural perspective on the world that should be recognized as separate from its Eurocentric influences. He argues:

Latin America is an original and specific historical experience, not only some particularity within a general universal pattern ... [that] the Eurocentric perspective of knowledge is and always has been unable to catch ... [despite] most of us ... [Latin Americans] trying to understand and enact that experience precisely from such a Eurocentric perspective. (p. 215)

Quijano (2000) focuses directly on the U.S.’s influence on Latin America as an emerging world power in the 19th and 20th centuries as the U.S. “articulated ... a new pattern of power [where] forms of labor, production, and exploitation were in ensemble around the axis of capital and the world market” (p. 216). The emergence of capitalist structures embedded in the economy of the U.S enabled its European roots to dominate New World narratives. Enforcing these narratives surrounding knowledge, values, and status reconstructed the socio-historical identities

of native populations to align with Eurocentric expectations and systems of power (Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2000). According to Bourdieu (1977), capital is not just physical labor and production but includes language. Linguistic capital is an expanded form of linguistic competence and includes the “capacity for ... regular discourse” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 646) and the ability to produce language appropriately in context. The value of a particular language is determined by the symbolic power relation effects it has on a specific market. Institutions like government and education often have a hand in what language is valued in a specific market, based on legitimacy of the speaker and audience (Bourdieu, 1977). For those in Latin America, following the “logic of coloniality” (Mignolo, 2007), these linguistic markets are determined by the capitalist imperial power of the U.S. via the influence of politics, trade, and more recently the global reach of the internet. Thus, it can be deduced that the language and online presences of those situated in Latin America would be shaped by the dominant, valuable linguistic markets of the U.S. and their ensuant systems of power. YouTubers engage with this online linguistic market as they navigate “self-conscious commodification” (Marwick & Boyd, 2011, p. 119) of their content and vie for cultural value via “the algorithm”; how the platform chooses what video to show to viewers or not. The position of the internet as a reproduction of everyday systems of power and the transference of embodied registers can be summarized by Bedijs, Held and Maaß (2014):

Social Media are fundamentally platforms for social encounters [and] they generate ... performed sociality in the form of a virtual marketplace, structures, modalities, and procedures of everyday interaction are reproduced in such a way that they literally “embody” social being and social relations in the ongoing communication. (p. 11)

In recognizing social media, specifically YouTube, as a place for the transference and navigation of linguistic structures and personal identity, exploring how YouTube functions to enact apologies in the digital space is essential in aiding understanding of how the internet shapes language use.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The methods used in this research were designed to identify and analyze tokens of apology strategies used in 20 YouTube apology videos made by American English (AE) and Brazilian Portuguese (BP) speaking YouTubers. The methods also seek to determine which strategies are used in each language and how AE and BP apology strategies compare to each other based on token counts and patterns of usage that emerge. In doing this work, the current study aims to better understand apology strategy use in digital spaces and examine the usefulness of Blum-Kulka et. al.'s (1989) apology coding manual for the study of digital pragmatics. It also aims to add to the scant research on pragmatic apologies in BP and the very small body of work on digital apologies, or “retratação YouTube” (Storto, Negreiros, & Dias, 2022), in BP.

Section 3.1 introduces and contextualizes YouTube as a platform and explains its importance in investigating digitally mediated apologies. Section 3.2 describes the nature and quantity of the data collected and discusses the design of this study, explaining the procedure of collecting, coding, organizing, and analyzing data. Finally Section 3.3, discusses the quantitative approach used to support the findings of the qualitative coding and analysis.

3.1 YouTube as A Data Source

As the internet has become a main source of social interaction, real-time news dissemination and information spread platforms such as X, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube

have become primary ways in which both content creators and individuals connect with their followers and the world. For the current study, YouTube was selected as the site of inquiry. YouTube is a video-based social media platform that has grown its user-base since its launch in 2005. In the U.S. alone, YouTube has 238 million users, with 62% of all U.S. internet users accessing it daily (Shepherd, 2025). It is currently the second most used social media platform in the U.S. and the world, globally hosting over 2.5 billion monthly users and more than 122 million daily platform users (GMI, 2025; Shepherd, 2025). Both the U.S. and Brazil are within the top three countries with the most active YouTube users (GMI, 2025). In addition, world-wide over 500 hours of video content are uploaded to the platform each day.

As a major social media platform, YouTube can be used as a powerful research tool especially as “YouTube videos are considered publicly available information” (Hu, 2019) under the U.S.’s fair use copyright exception (“Rules and Policies”, n.d.). YouTube can “provide a wealth of freely accessible visual, textual, and metrics data by which to examine and visualize trends, analyse content and communities, and observe culture” (Sui et al., 2022, p.1). However, in approaching YouTube as a data source, taking “pre-emptive steps to promote consistency and replicability” (Sui et al., 2022, p. 7) of any research done using the platform is necessary. For the current study these steps include making a record of what search terms were used, the date of the search, which videos were pulled from which channels, and how they were obtained on the platform using the search query or recommended videos. Additionally, to minimally influence the search results, videos should be searched for in an incognito browser or with no account with history and cookies cleared (Sui et al., 2022).

3.2 Procedure

In order to investigate how apologies are made on YouTube, the data were analyzed via both quantitative and qualitative means. First, YouTube apology videos in both AE and BP were searched based on both search query terms and recommended videos by YouTube's algorithm. YouTube search results, including individual videos and channels, are sorted by default based on their "relevance" (Sui et al., 2022, p. 7) to the search terms. For the current study, search terms, including *apology video* as a broad search term, were used resulting in several compilations of apology videos. From these compilations, relevant videos were extracted. Specific search terms were also used to target certain YouTuber apologies that were determined as essential to the genre. The criteria for selecting these specific videos was based on overall cultural relevance of the offense and apology. For example, Logan Paul's offense and apology reached national news outlets in the U.S. and therefore his YouTube apology video is a well-known representative of the genre that reached national acclaim. Search terms in English that included these YouTuber specific queries were *Logan Paul apology video* and *James Charles apology*. In addition to direct search queries, the platform's recommended videos were also used. For example, in searching *James Charles apology*, YouTube recommended apology videos by other beauty influencers, YouTubers who post makeup tutorials and reviews, including Jeffree Star and Laura Lee. In Portuguese search terms used included *retratação*, and *celebridade/blogueiro/influenciador pede desculpas*.

Once a search of apology videos was conducted, videos from AE and BP were selected based on their alignment with the severity of offense criteria listed in Table 1. As Wolfson (1990) emphasizes, what people apologize for is determined by cultural expectations "with respect to what people owe one another" (p. 16). She suggests that time, respect of property, the

obligation to not cause others discomfort or put them in danger, and not making others responsible for one's own welfare are common topics of everyday apology in AE in the U.S. Since the necessity to apologize relies on social norms being broken and the apologizer feeling a level of responsibility, levels of severity were determined based on whether the offense being apologized for caused discomfort or danger. As there have been no previous studies on common topics of apology in BP, causing discomfort or danger as an apology topic was expected to be representative of apologies in both languages, as this would constitute a transgression of social norms in both societies. Three levels of severity were determined based on levels of danger and discomfort: the first is low discomfort to viewers and low danger to personally involved individuals; the second is discomfort to viewers and danger to those involved with the offense; and the third is severe discomfort to viewers and high danger to those involved. Each level of severity also corresponds to the responsibility for the offense felt by the YouTuber, which in turn necessitates the apology. The lowest level of severity is a need to save positive face, the second, to maintain the credibility of their platform, and the third, to avoid legal repercussions. Each level is represented as -severe, +severe, and ++severe, as all offenses result in some violation along a severity scale.

All the YouTubers selected for analysis are regarded as micro-celebrities through their fame on YouTube and are also considered YouTube “natives”. Being a YouTube native implies that the celebrity holds micro-celebrity status, or enacts this identity on the platform (Marwick & Boyd, 2011), and that they began and gained much of their popularity and fanbase on YouTube. In total, ten micro-celebrity apology videos in each language, AE and BP, were chosen, for a total of 20 videos. This number of videos was determined as sufficient to establish intra-category reliability.

Table 1*Example Table of Level of Severity*

Three Levels of Severity of Offense	Language	
	English	Portuguese
++severity (severe discomfort; high danger; avoid legal repercussions)		
+severity (discomfort and danger; save platform)		
- severity (low discomfort/danger; save face)		

Transcripts of each YouTube video selected for this study were auto-generated and subsequently checked for accuracy by the researcher. These were then compiled into a corpus titled YT-Apologies. Once the corpus of videos was created, the video transcripts were individually qualitatively coded for apology strategy use by both the researcher and a language informant assistant who is a native speaker of BP and conducted co-analysis on half of the BP data. Extra-linguistic data related to the video and YouTuber were recorded at this time. To code each video, the apology strategy scheme in Table 2 was used. The strategies in Table 2 were adapted from Blum-Kulka et al.'s (1989) CCSARP coding manual for apologies with modifications based on the work of Lakoff (2015), Wagner and Roebuck (2010), and Xu and Yan (2020). The rationale for using the CCSARP coding manual for apologies as the base framework for this study, along with the adjustments of the new category No Responsibility from the No + Take Responsibility (speaker = -animacy) strategy of Wagner and Roebuck (2010), was motivated by the findings in these studies. As a linguistically based study, these

works rely heavily on the fields of pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and cross-cultural communication.

Table 2

Apology Strategy Coding Schema⁵

Apology Strategy	Example
IFID	
A. direct B. indirect	<i>A. I apologize</i> <i>B. I am sorry</i>
Take Responsibility	
A. explicit self-blame B. lack of intent C. hearer justification D. expression of regret	<i>A. It was my fault</i> <i>B. It wasn't my intention</i> <i>C. You have the right to feel mad/disappointed</i> <i>D. I am embarrassed/I am heartbroken</i>
Explanation/Account	<i>There was a lot of traffic</i>
Offer of Repair	
A. General B. Specific C. Image D. Relationship i. fulfilling human relation wants ii. inviting further interaction	<i>A. I will do better</i> <i>B. I will do x, y, and z</i> <i>C. Highlighting personal beliefs and standards or past achievement</i> <i>i. Acceptance of criticism and want for public understanding and support</i> <i>ii. Inviting and requesting public engagement</i>

⁵ Examples of these strategies can be found in Appendix A as they were used to code the video data..

Promise of Forbearance	<i>It will never happen again</i>
No responsibility	
A. unplanned occurrence B. speaker as victim	A. <i>It fell</i> B. <i>It fell on me</i>

The coding scheme includes six categories of apology strategy with corresponding sub-strategies. The six primary apology strategies include: use of an Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID), Take Responsibility, Explanation/Account, Offer of Repair, Promise of Forbearance, and No Responsibility. The final strategy, No Responsibility, is an adaptation unique to the present research and is based on Wagner and Roebuck's (2010) sub-strategy No +taking responsibility (speaker = -animacy), which they proposed to account for the speaker not taking accountability for their actions saying *no fue mi culpa* 'it wasn't my fault'. The motivation to include No Responsibility as a separate strategy was the use of this strategy in Wagner and Roebuck's research as a stand-out subcategory, especially for speakers of Spanish in Panama City, Panama.

Table 3 represents a sample coding table used for apology video analysis. It collapses all the strategies and sub-strategies of Table 2 into the six primary apology strategies and accounts for how they are used in context with one another. In addition, it tracks the total number of tokens of each apology strategy used per video and total strategy usage overall in each video and in each language. Table 3 accounts for strategies used in context by adapting the time-sampling format of Guilloteaux and Dörnyei's (2008) Motivation Orientation of Language Teaching (MOLT) scheme. The MOLT scheme was originally intended to capture motivation strategies

used by teachers in language learning classrooms with the behavior and motivational state of students judged in real-time. The scheme is relevant to the current study for its time-sampling format “whereby relevant... events are recorded every minute in an ongoing manner” (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008, p. 61). In this investigation, the time-sampling format was used, and each instance of a strategy token was coded for the minute in which it occurred in the video. For instance, Minute 1 corresponds with 00:00-00:59 seconds of the video, Minute 2 represents timestamps 00:60 to 01:59 seconds, and so on. This affords a better understanding of the overall pattern of which strategies were used in context with each other within each video and when compared across all videos. The adapted coding format in Table 3 includes six apology strategies and accounts for each strategy as it is used per minute in the ongoing monological conversations produced by the YouTubers and directed towards their audiences. Additionally, token density per minute was calculated to normalize the data for both the AE and BP datasets. This was calculated by dividing the total number of tokens per minute by video length in minutes.

Table 3*Sample Coding Table for Strategy Use by Video*

minute		Apology Strategy																							
		Video:								Video:								Video:							
		IFID	Take Responsibility/Explanation/Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility/Explanation/Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility/Explanation/Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility									
	1																								
	2																								
	3																								
	4																								
	5																								
Total Tokens per Strategy																									
Total Strategies per video																									

Each token of an IFID, either explicit or implicit, was coded individually. For instance, in Paul’s opening line “I’ve made a severe and continuous lapse in my judgement, and I don’t expect to be forgiven. I’m simply here *to apologize*. So, what we came across that day in the woods was obviously unplanned and the reactions you saw on tape were raw” [emphasis added] (Paul, 2018), *to apologize* was coded as one instance of an IFID. For all other strategies, sections of similarly themed text that aligned with a specific strategy were coded as one occurrence of the strategy. The opening lines of Paul’s video, “I’ve made a severe and continuous lapse in my judgement, and I don’t expect to be forgiven” was coded as Take Responsibility, “to apologize” as an IFID, and “what we came across in the woods that day was obviously unplanned” as Explanation/Account. All 20 videos were coded by the researcher and the language informant

coding assistant in this manner, and inter-rater reliability was reached between the two. An example of how each video transcript was coded can be found in Appendix A, with one example from AE and one from BP.

3.2.1 Quantitative Analysis

After obtaining the strategy frequency counts for all 20 videos, a quantitative, statistical analysis for each language was conducted using R (R Core Team, 2023)⁶. As the study targeted multiple independent variables, Chi square tests were first run for each variable pair. Those that returned significant effects were then analyzed using linear mixed-effects regressions. Each model included Celebrity as a random effect and the variables of interest as fixed effects. The goal of these regression models was to determine whether the independent variables interacted significantly, and identify how the positive or negative estimates predicted their co-occurrence.

⁶ Data Accessibility Statement: The R code used in this project may be made available upon request.

CHAPTER 4

STUDY RESULTS

This chapter discusses the results of both the qualitative and quantitative analyses of the 20 YouTube apology videos that make up the YT-Apologies corpus data. Ten videos in each language, American English (AE) and Brazilian Portuguese (BP), were then coded for six apology strategies using the methods described in Chapter 3. Section 4.1 restates the research questions and goals of this project. The extra-linguistic results pertaining to the YouTubers' videos and the severity of offense they are apologizing for are presented in Section 4.2. Section 4.3 explores the qualitative results of the apology strategy coding in AE and BP, and Section 4.4 provides the results of the supporting quantitative analysis.

4.1 Research Questions

This paper considers research in pragmatics, digitally mediated communication (DMC), and sociolinguistics to investigate how acts of apologies are made by American English (AE) and Brazilian Portuguese (BP) speaking YouTubers in the digital third-space of YouTube (Steinkuehler & Williams, 2006). The current research aims to better understand digital apology through an investigation of the apology strategies being used by YouTubers in this genre of videos. It secondarily seeks to find evidence that this speech act has become a socially recognizable register online in the U.S, which, through globalization and digital imperialism, has spread to YouTubers in Brazil. The research questions stemming from these goals are as follows:

1. What strategies of apology making are observed in YouTubers' performance of the speech act in AE and BP videos?
2. How do the apology strategies used by AE and BP YouTubers pattern similarly or differently? Are they affected by the severity of the offense committed and the culture-specific norms of the speech community they are used in?
3. What patterns emerge across videos that suggest the "YouTube apology" is enregistered globally?

To address research question 1, evidence from the coded YT-Apologies corpus transcripts is provided in Section 4.3. In satisfying Research Question 2, the transcripts forming the corpus were analyzed using the coding table exemplified in Table 2 (see Section 3.2). The 20 videos of the corpus were coded for the six apology strategies and the results were compared for similarities or differences in apology strategy patterning in AE and BP. Any similarities identified were analyzed qualitatively to investigate research question 3 and explore the possibility of global enregisterment of the "YouTube apology".

4.2 Extra-linguistic Results

4.2.1 Demographic Results

The 20 videos, 10 in AE and 10 in BP (see Table 4, Section 4.2.1), ranged in their posting date from 2018 to 2024. Each video was posted by a micro-celebrity content creator, meaning that the influencers in the videos analyzed gained their popularity on YouTube and maintain the majority of their content creation, fanbase, and engagement on YouTube. Both the AE and BP YouTubers apologized for various offenses, including insensitive video content, denigrating

another content creator, racist comments or actions, and harassment. The majority of apologizers in both groups were male, with seven male AE speakers and seven male BP speakers and three female speakers of each language. The videos ranged in length from under one minute to almost 30 minutes, with an average length of 8 minutes and 31 seconds across all videos. The AE videos were on average longer than their BP counterparts, with AE videos having an average length of 9 minutes and 28 seconds, while the BP videos had an average length of 7 minutes and 14 seconds. Though overall video length was not found to be significant, it was found that the shorter the video the more strategy tokens per minute were used after the token density per minute had been normalized. Table 4 below presents the extra-linguistic data coded for each video, including the YouTuber, YouTuber gender, the year the video was posted, video length, language, and the offense being apologized for. The decision to code only Year Posted, and not the exact date each video appeared on YouTube, was made because some videos were removed from the YouTuber's own platform and were analyzed from secondary source platforms that reposted the original content. However, the reposted videos still included the year the original video was posted on the YouTuber's own channel.

Table 4*Video information and extra-linguistic variables*

YouTuber	Gender	Year Posted	Video Length	Language	Offense
Logan Paul	M	2018	01:44	English	Insensitive video content
James Charles	M	2021	14:16	English	Grooming allegations
Colleen Ballinger	F	2020	10:20	English	Grooming allegations
David Dobrik	M	2021 (March 16)	02:31	English	Knowledge of sexual harassment within his creative team
David Dobrik	M	2021 (March 23)	07:16	English	Previous apology attempt and same sexual harassment claims
Shane Dawson	M	2021	20:29	English	Blackface, racism, and allegations against other creators
Jeffree Star	M	2020	10:36	English	Allegations against another creator
Laura Lee	F	2018	04:43	English	Racist comments and insensitive photograph with another creator
PewDiePie (Felix Avrid)	M	2017	01:35	English	Racist comments during a livestream
Gabbie Hanna	F	2024	17:18	English	Unprofessional conduct
Monark	M	2022	00:45	Portuguese	Insensitive comments against Jews and support of Nazi ideals
Laura Nesteruk	F	2020	02:57	Portuguese	Unfair hiring processes and discrimination based on race
Daniel Penin	M	2024	13:12	Portuguese	Extortion of fanbase
Mamae Falei	M	2022	08:16	Portuguese	Sex tourism and suggestive recordings
Felipe Valentim	M	2024	01:39	Portuguese	Insensitive video content
Fernanda Costa	F	2019	09:29	Portuguese	Harassment of a woman asking for money on the street
Julio Cocielo	M	2018	06:07	Portuguese	Racist comments
Carlinhos Maia	M	2019	06:18	Portuguese	Allegations against another creator
Felipe Neto	M	2024	01:08	Portuguese	Online betting and gambling
Karen Bachini	F	2022	29:13	Portuguese	Negative comments towards celebrities/models and romanticizing poverty

4.2.2 Severity of Offense

Severity of offense was also accounted for and offenses were listed in Table 4. Each offense was categorized based on the three levels of offense that align with threatening a person's physical and/or emotional well-being. The highest level of offense, ++severity, aligns with content that places the YouTuber and others personally involved in the event in high danger, while making the viewer highly uncomfortable while watching. An example of this includes Paul's filming of a dead body which placed those personally involved in the video filming in physical and emotional danger and caused viewers high discomfort. An example from the BP videos is Falei, who put himself and the women he commented about in dangerous or uncomfortable situations and made viewers severely uncomfortable hearing his derogatory comments towards women and engagement in sex tourism. This severity level also signifies that the apology was made as an attempt to avoid legal repercussions. This is the case with Monark, Nesteruk, and Penin who would all be facing potential heavy fines or jail time in Brazil for their racist comments, as it is criminalized there. Videos categorized as +severity were those in which the people personally involved were placed in some danger and viewers were made uncomfortable. In such cases, YouTubers delivered apologies for these offenses to save their personal "brand" in the eye of the public and avoid potential disciplinary action due to violating YouTube's community guidelines. For example, Dobrik's offenses placed his female coworkers in an unsafe environment of sexual harassment though viewers may not have been fully aware of it. In addition, as he was not the one doing the harassing, he was trying to save his own image and that of the channel to maintain his celebrity status. Finally, -severity videos align with low danger to the people directly involved and low discomfort to the viewer. For example, Hanna and Bachini both apologized for negative comments against other creators which would be low

physical danger and low discomfort to viewers of this content. Often this type of apology is made by the YouTuber to save face as substantiated by Brinke and Adams, (2015) and Dekavalla (2020). The results of this three-level categorization are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

YouTube celebrity offense severity

Severity of Offense	Language	
	English	Portuguese
++severity (severe discomfort; high danger; avoid legal repercussions)	Logan Paul James Charles Colleen Ballinger	Monark Laura Nesteruk David Penin Mamae Falei
+severity (discomfort and danger; save platform)	David Dobrik David Dobrik Shane Dawson	Felipe Valentim Fernanda Costa
- severity (low discomfort/danger; save face)	Laura Lee PewDiePie Jeffree Star Gabbie Hanna	Julio Cocelo Carlinhos Maia Felipe Neto Karen Bachini

4.3 Qualitative Results

The tables presenting the results obtained from coding the AE YouTuber apology videos, presented in Appendix A, indicate that using an Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID) is the most preferred strategy across all videos and severity levels. It was the most frequently used strategy in five videos, including those of Logan Paul, David Dobrik, Laura Lee, and Gabbie Hanna. In Paul's video for example, he uses four tokens of IFID in this excerpt from the first minute of his video:

(2) from the bottom of my heart *I am sorry*. I want to apologize to the Internet. I want *to apologize* to anyone who's seen the video. I want *to apologize* to anyone who has been

affected or touched by mental illness or depression or suicide, but most importantly I want to *apologize* to the victim and his family [emphasis added] (Paul, 2018)

Across all AE YouTuber apologies, Explanation/Account was the second most used strategy, followed by Take Responsibility. In his apology video, Charles uses Take responsibility in Minute 2, using the sub-strategy of explicit self-blame (See Table 2 for sub-strategies):

(3) I want to make it really really clear that I fully understand my actions and how they are wrong there's no excuse for them and I don't plan on making any in this video either (Charles, 2021)

However, one outlier in the AE data is the apology made by Colleen Ballinger, whose preferred strategy is No Responsibility, which makes up 10 out of 18 tokens of her total strategies used. The token counts of overall strategy usage in each language are presented in Figure 4 and the token counts of strategy use by each YouTuber are presented in Figure 5.

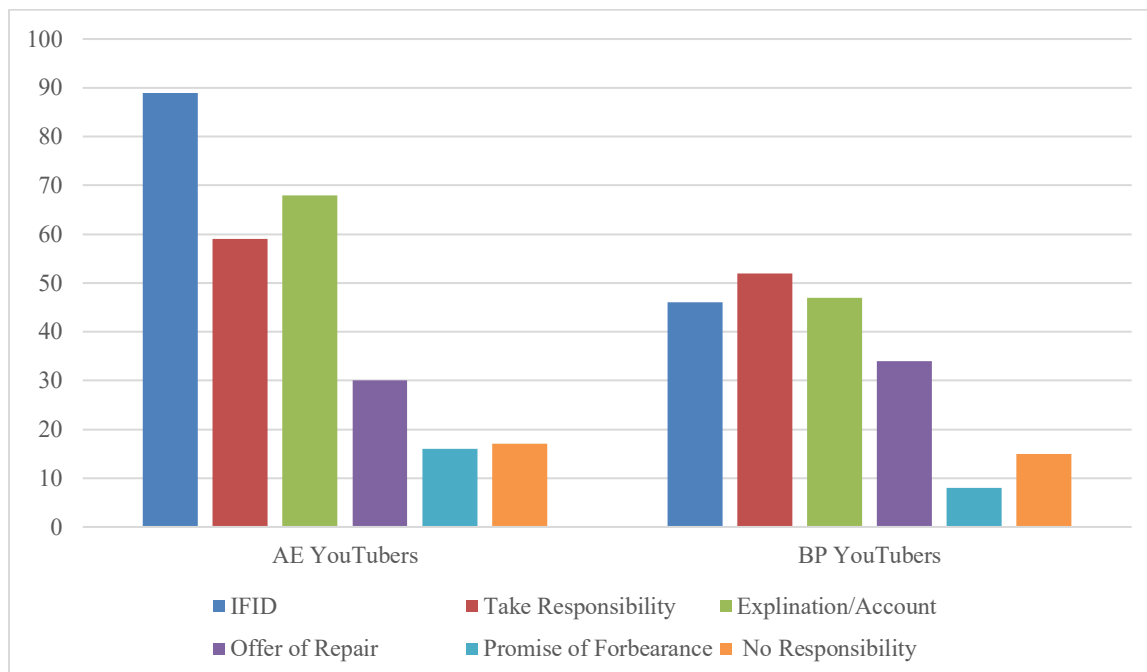


Figure 4

Total Token Counts of Strategy Use by Language

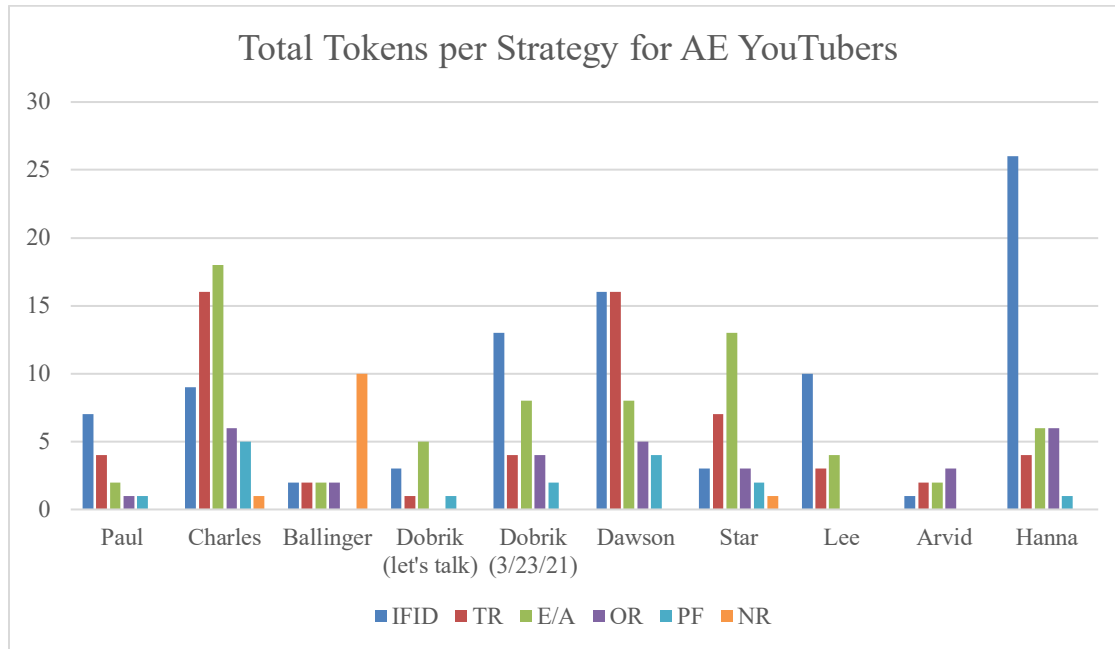


Figure 5

Total Token Counts of Strategy Use per AE YouTuber

Note: IFID (Illocutionary Force Indicating Device); TR (Take Responsibility); E/A (Explanation/Account); OR (Offer of Repair); PF (Promise of Forbearance); NR (No Responsibility)

Based on the time-sampling format used in the coding tables (see Appendix B), it appears that Offer of Repair and Promise of Forbearance occur most frequently together in the latter part of the videos. Specifically, in the case of videos shorter than 5 minutes, these two strategies were used within the last minute, and they occurred in the second half of the videos when the apology was longer than 7 minutes. This can be evidenced in the token counts of Promise of Forbearance

and Offer of Repair in the same minute in the videos by Paul, Dobrik (03/22/21), and Dawson. These strategies used in tandem can be evidenced by the following excerpts where the Promise of Forbearance is in *italics* and the Offer of Repair in **bold**. All examples occur within the same minute of the video they are taken from.

(4) I'm disappointed in myself and *I promise to be better*. **I will be better**. Thank you.
[emphasis added] (Paul, 2018).

(5) that I'm embarrassed and that **this won't happen again** ... I want to be able to *have a place of checks and balances, I want to have HR and I want to be able, um, to have people communicate discomfort in a way that's that's comfortable to them*. ... I think it is important to show that change is possible and that I'm learning, maybe even forgiveness is possible. *I want to use this opportunity to step up and own my mistakes* [emphasis added] (Dobrik, 03/22/21, 2021)

In this instance Dobrik utilizes a Promise of Forbearance first and then goes on to use the Offer of Repair sub-strategies of Specific and General respectively (See Section 3.2 Table 2). Based on the percentage of total strategy tokens of Offer of Repair and Promise of Forbearance when they appear in the same minute, using these two strategies together was favored by YouTubers apologizing for ++severity events. Additionally, based on the normalized token per minute data across languages, the shorter the video the higher the density of tokens per minute.

4.3.2 BP Results

The results of the BP strategy coding, presented in table format in Appendix C, show that BP YouTubers, like AE YouTubers, also favor using IFIDs, Take Responsibility, and

Explanation/Account. However, contrary to the AE videos, Take Responsibility is the most used strategy based on total token counts per strategy. Explanation/Account and IFIDS are the second and third most common strategies, respectively. Offer of Repair is the fourth most used strategy across BP videos, but, unlike in the AE apology videos, this strategy does not typically co-occur with Promise of Forbearance in the BP videos. This is exemplified in the excerpt below.

(6) eu não sei nem como corrigir esse erro então eu só tenho a pedir desculpas mesmo e **a melhorar** [I don't even know how to correct this mistake so I just have to apologize and **improve**] [emphasis added] (Bachini, 2022)

Overall, concurrent use of Offer of Repair and Promise of Forbearance is less likely in BP videos, appearing within the same minute in only two videos, those of Coceilo and Bachini. However, when used in tandem, Offer of Repair and Promise of Forbearance occur within the last 2 to 5 minutes of the video.

(7) Eu sei que agora daqui pra frente eu tenho que **influenciar as pessoas que me seguem de uma forma positiva e com respeito a todos** ... lamento do fundo do meu coração essa lição, esse tombo que eu tomei vai servir pra isso *nunca mais se repetir* [**I know from now on I have to influence my followers in a positive way with respect to everything** ... I regret this lesson, this fall I had, from the bottom of my heart, and it will serve to *ensure that this never happens again*] (Cocielo, 2018)

The BP YouTubers also use No Responsibility more frequently than the AE YouTubers did, as the strategy appears in seven out of ten videos compared to only four of the ten AE videos. The strategy token counts for each BP YouTuber are presented in Figure 6 below. To place the token

counts in context, an example of No Responsibility appears in Costa's video as she begins her apology by blaming the misinterpretation of her actions by the public:

(8) Eu tô bem doente, bem, bem esfriada e totalmente assustada com tudo que está acontecendo porque é por causa das stories que eu postei ontem e que eu fui extremamente mal interpretada [I am very sick, very cold, and very scared by everything that is happening because of the stories I posted yesterday which were extremely misinterpreted] (Costa, 2019)

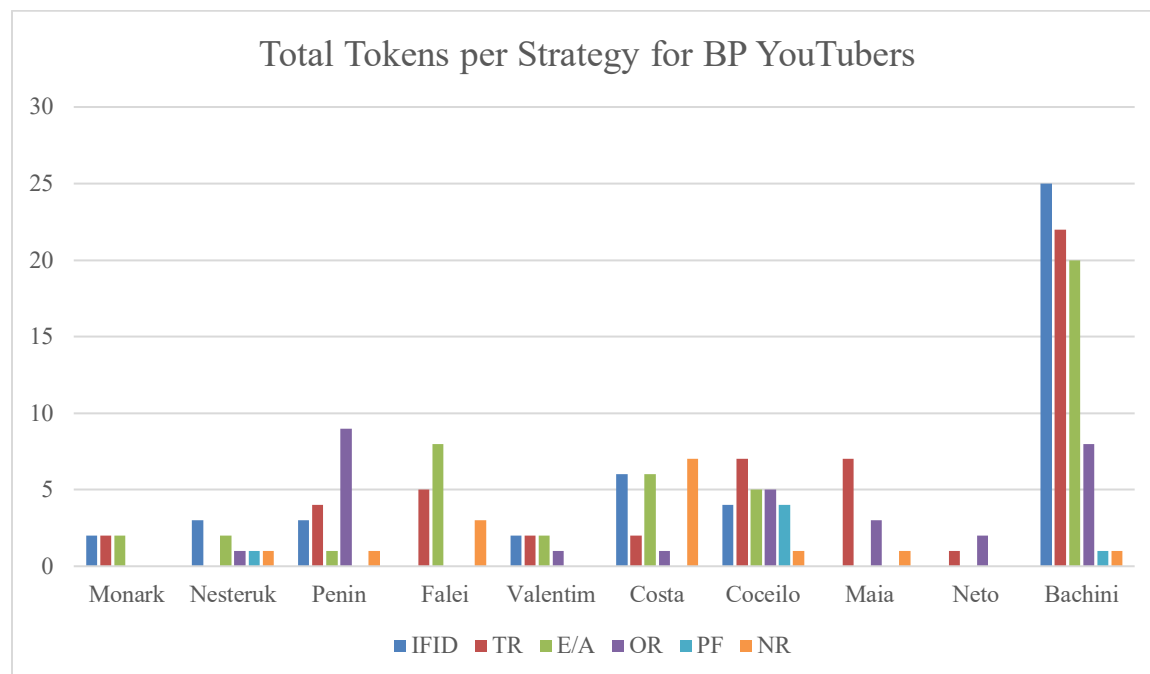


Figure 6

Total Token Counts of Strategy Use per BP YouTuber

Note: IFID (Illocutionary Force Indicating Device); TR (Take Responsibility); E/A (Explanation/Account); OR (Offer of Repair); PF (Promise of Forbearance); NR (No Responsibility)

4.4 Quantitative Results

4.4.1 AE Linear Mixed Effect Model Results

Linear mixed effects models were used to determine interactions between the six apology strategies analyzed in the AE and BP videos and the minute they occurred in. The model found that Offer of Repair positively predicts the use of Promise of Forbearance ($\beta=0.57852$, $p=1.81e-05$), meaning that an AE YouTuber who uses an Offer of Repair is also positively predicted, or more likely, to use a Promise of Forbearance in their apology. An equally significant interaction was found between Promise of Forbearance and Offer of Repair; use of Promise of Forbearance also positively predicts a use of Offer of Repair ($\beta=0.57852$, $p=1.81e-05$). This confirms that these two strategies are used in tandem based on statistical significance in AE YouTube apologies, as is suggested in the qualitative analysis. The statistical analysis indicates that concomitant use of IFID and Take Responsibility ($\beta=0.16327$, $p=0.0033$) positively predicted the other. In addition, use of No Responsibility and Explanation/Account predicting each other was marginally significant ($\beta=-.3254$, $p=0.212214$)

The other significant interaction found when using linear mixed effects modeling is the Minute of the video predicting use of a specific strategy. A significant interaction exists between Minute and Take Responsibility and Promise of Forbearance. Minute negatively predicts Taking Responsibility ($\beta=-1.6658$, $p=0.02484$) suggesting that in the AE videos the strategy of Take Responsibility occurs earlier in the video. Conversely, Minute positively predicts the use of Promise of Forbearance ($\beta=3.1970$, $p=0.00815$), suggesting that AE YouTubers who employ Promise of Forbearance will use this strategy more at the end of videos. Though Take Responsibility and Promise of Forbearance were not significant at specific minutes in the model, Figure 8 represents the trends of these two strategies over time.

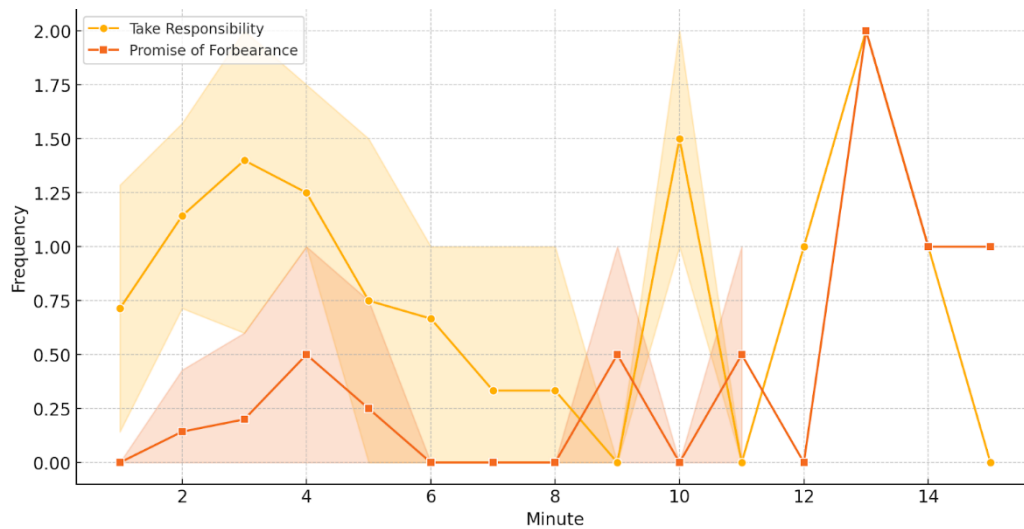


Figure 7

AE Trends of Take Responsibility and Promise of Forbearance Over Video Time

Figure 7 shows that Promises of Forbearance are more likely to occur at minute 4, 9, 11, and 13. These quantitative findings support the qualitative findings of this research for AE YouTube videos, which find that in videos shorter than 5 minutes, Promise of Forbearance was often used within the last minute, or in the second half of the videos longer than seven minutes. The quantitative results suggest that use of Offer of Repair and Promise of Forbearance significantly predict use of the other and that Promise of Forbearance is more likely to occur towards the end of the video. The quantitative results also showed that Take Responsibility was more likely to occur towards the beginning of the AE videos.

4.4.2 PB Model Results

The results of the BP linear mixed effects models found significant effects for strategy interaction in five out of seven models. For the BP videos, the use of an IFID significantly predicted the use of the Take Responsibility strategy ($\beta=0.3866$, $p=0.0021$) and marginally predicted the use of Promise of Forbearance ($\beta=0.5638$, $p=0.0540$). This suggests that the use of an IFID in a BP video positively predicts that the YouTuber will also use the strategy Take Responsibility. In examining the interaction between Take Responsibility with all strategies, the use of Take Responsibility ($\beta=0.54070$, $p=0.01326$) also positively predicts IFID use ($\beta=0.27425$, $p=0.00409$). For example, they can be seen as strategies used within the same minute by Bachini in the following excerpt:

(9) Em vez de eu falar sobre as maquiagens dela ... ou qualquer outra coisa, eu falei uma merda gigante que a Selena Gomez ... eu peço perdão peço desculpa muito por isso que eu falei [instead of talking about her makeup ... or something else, I said some huge shit about Selena Gomez ... I ask for forgiveness, I'm very sorry for what I said] (Bachini, 2022)

Explanation/Account was also found to interact significantly with Minute, being positively predicted at Minute 3 ($\beta=0.81841$, $p=0.008496$), Minute 15 ($\beta=1.61196$, $p=1.61196$), and Minute 17 ($\beta=2.61196$, $p=0.000191$). Offers of Repair were also significant by Minute with an Offer of Repair being positively predicted at Minute 10 ($\beta=1.088102$, $p=0.00559$), Minute 25 ($\beta=2.001509$, $p=0.00151$), and Minute 29 ($\beta=2.001509$, $p=0.00151$). It is important to note that the predictions after minute 14 for the BP videos are only significant for Bachini's video, as it was the only video longer than 14 minutes (29:13). These findings also support the qualitative

results of this study, and specifically, the observation that IFID and Take Responsibility are frequently used strategies in the BP videos, and that Offer of Repair and Promise of Forbearance are not strategies that occur often in tandem in the BP data. Additionally, when Offer of Repair does occur, it is used towards the ends of the apology videos.

4.5 Summary

Both the qualitative and quantitative results provide evidence for research question 1 and research question 2, shedding light on strategy use in AE and BP. While the strategy use ranking differs by language, both AE and BP have the same three most used strategies: IFIDs, Take Responsibility, and Explanation/Account. It was statistically significant that the AE YouTubers use Offer of Repair and Promise of Forbearance in tandem, and these strategies are likely to occur more frequently towards the ends of videos. BP YouTubers are more likely to use No Responsibility than are the AE Youtubers, based on total token counts across videos. BP YouTubers are less likely to produce an Offer of Repair and Promise of Forbearance concomitantly. In addition, BP YouTubers use of an IFID and Take Responsibility are positively predicted with each other and Explanation/Account is predicted to occur earlier in the video.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the relevant results from Chapter 4 as they relate to the existent research in apology strategy usage. Section 5.1 focuses on strategy use by AE and BP YouTubers, with Section 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 breaking down the results by language. Section 5.2 discusses how the findings of the current research address the research questions posed by this study concerning overall strategy usage, how AE and BP YouTubers utilize strategies similarly or differently, and the global enregisterment of the “YouTube apology” via digital imperialism.

5.1 Strategy Usage by AE and BP YouTubers

IFIDs, Take Responsibility, and Explanation/Account are the three most used strategies by token count in both AE and BP (See Figure 4). These findings align with other cross-linguistic research findings, including studies using discourse completion tasks (González-Cruz, 2012; Su & Lu, 2023; Wagner, 1999, Wagner & Roebuck, 2010) and those examining digitally mediated apologies (Choi & Mitchell, 2022; Karlsson, 2020; Page, 2014; Sandlin & Gracyalny, 2018; Sari, 2016; Storto, Negreiros & Dias, 2022; Xu & Yan, 2020). This previous research finds that IFIDs are the most commonly used apology strategy across both areas of investigation. This body of research also found that Take Responsibility and Explanation/Account are also heavily used, though the extent to which varies by study. However, it is evident from the analysis of the

AE and BP video data in the current study that the patterning of these three strategies differs by language, pointing to cultural differences in the manner in which the apology is delivered.

5.1.1 American English YouTuber Apology Strategy Patterning

When addressing apology strategy usage in the YouTube videos by both AE and BP speakers, potential cultural differences emerge. The AE data demonstrate that IFIDs are the most used strategy by total token counts across videos, with Take Responsibility and Explanation/Account the second and third most used strategies respectively. This finding patterns with previous research on apologies in AE that addresses digital pragmatics and public relations (Choi & Mitchell, 2022; Karlsson, 2020; Sandlin & Gracyalny, 2018; Sari, 2016). Several of these studies find that YouTubers “overemphasized the phrase ‘I’m sorry’” (Choi & Mitchel, 2022, p. 102) and suggest that high use of IFIDs, or using multiple IFIDs together, intensifies the apology and repairs damage more effectively (Roschk & Kaiser, 2013). For example, in looking at Paul’s apology Choi and Mitchell explain that he engages in “message repetition of the ‘I’m sorry’ ... repeat[ing] ‘sorry’ seven times in a two-minute video” (2022, p. 8). There are also instances across the AE data of high use of IFIDs which is noted in the coding table in Appendix B. Frequent implementation of IFIDs such as saying “I’m just here to apologize” (Paul, 2018) or “I’m so sorry” (Lee, 2018) can be seen in examining the videos of Paul, Lee, Dobrik *03/22/21*, and Hanna, all of which use several IFIDs together per minute or in succession. As Dobrik states in *03/22/21* “I’m sorry for that, I’m sorry for everybody I’ve let down; I’m sorry to my family and I’m sorry to my friends” (2021). In fact, these IFID tokens account for half of Paul, Lee, and Hanna’s total strategy tokens per video.

In addition to IFIDs being heavily used, an overarching pattern of apology strategy usage emerges in the AE data. For example, if the video is longer than 5 minutes, IFIDs will appear after the first minute. However, IFIDs will typically be used within the first minute of videos shorter than 5 minutes. This may be a noteworthy finding as total video length seems to determine when a strategy is appropriately used. Perhaps with longer videos, those over 5 minutes, the YouTubers prefer to explain the situation before issuing an IFID, which is exemplified in the videos of Star, Dobrik 03/22/21, Dawson, and Ballinger. For videos shorter than 5 minutes, it appears that an IFID is issued immediately due to having less time to express the apology. However, two exceptions to this occur in Arvid and Dobrik *Let's Talk*, in which IFIDs start occurring in the second minute despite the overall video length being shorter than 5 minutes. For Arvid, this may have been motivated by overall use of higher token counts of Offer of Repair, Explanation/Account, and Take Responsibility before the explicit apology. Arvid may have intended the explanation of his action and his offered repairs to be enough proof of his repentance over overusing or emphasizing an IFID. The outlier of Dobrik's *Let's Talk* was deemed an unsuccessful apology by audiences, as evidenced by him needing to make an additional, longer apology video, 03/23/21 to respond to his failed first apology. Therefore, *Let's Talk* may not contain the "right" components to achieve a successful apology in the eyes of viewers. In other words, Dobrik may not have used the most effective strategies in the typical order based on audience expectation and may not have fulfilled the necessary felicity conditions for making an acceptable apology. Based on the patterning shown in the other videos, it can be surmised that not using an IFID before minute two of his 2 minute and 33 second video was regarded as insufficient by viewers and necessitated Dobrik to reissue a lengthened apology that used appropriate strategies in succession.

In addition to IFID use, several other patterns emerge in the AE videos including using the strategy of Explanation/Account throughout the video, even though the YouTubers did not always directly express fault using this strategy. This pattern of use of Explanation/Account can be seen in the videos of Paul, Charles, Dobrik, Lee, Star, and Hanna exemplified in the sample coding of Paul's video in Appendix A and token counts from Appendix B. The strategies of Offer of Repair and Promise of Forbearance are often used in tandem by AE YouTubers and most frequently appear as a closing strategy across videos. These strategies appear concomitantly in Paul, Charles, Dobrik (03/23/21), Dawson, and Star within the last 1 to 3 minutes of their videos, depending on overall video length. Examples of these strategies are presented in (10) and (11) with the Offer of Repair in *italics* and the Promise of Forbearance in **bold**.

(10) I'm ashamed of myself. I'm disappointed in myself and **I promise to be better.** *I will be better.* Thank you. (Paul, 2018)

(11) *I promise that I'm going to show you through my actions* and **I promise that whatever I do next will be putting good into the world and it won't be putting hate or drama or anything negative** (Dawson, 2021)

This data points to Offer of Repair and Promise of Forbearance being used as a type of sign-off or conversation closer, signaling repentance and a good-will promise to never commit the offense again. This finding, though unique for its time-sampling format, is supported by Choi and Mitchel (2022), Page (2014), and Xu and Yan (2020) in their findings on the use of Offer of Repair and Promises of Forbearance by YouTubers and online corporations in expressing apology. These studies found an accentuated use of the Offer of Repair and Promise of

Forbearance by YouTubers and online corporations to show sincerity and improve public image of the person or business.

One of the six apology strategies, No Responsibility, also presents an interesting pattern for AE YouTubers. In most cases, it appears that No Responsibility is seen as an unsuccessful strategy to utilize, resulting in an insincere apology in AE. This strategy occurs in only three videos, those of Charles, Ballinger, and Star. Both Charles and Star use this strategy only once before going on to use additional IFIDs, Offers of Repair, and Promises of Forbearance. For example, Charles blames the minors he was talking with for “flirting first” thus rejecting the responsibility for interacting with minors and grooming them: “at the same time like they dm'd you first, they lied to you, they flirted first like you didn't use your fame, money, and power to get anything” (Charles, 2021). However, he then goes on to discuss the flaws in this thinking and uses the strategy of Take Responsibility. Ballinger, however, uses No Responsibility in ten out of eighteen total strategy tokens in her 10-minute video. Even though she uses several other apology strategies, including two instances of IFIDs, the apology may not be judged as sincere by the viewer based on the content of the video surrounding the IFIDs. Both instances of IFIDs occur in the same verse of her apology video, which she delivered as a song. Verse 3 of this song is quoted below, showing that immediately after stating the indirect IDIF *I'm sorry*, she uses the strategy No Responsibility, stating she will not concede that she was “100 percent in the wrong” or admit “to lies and rumors” (Ballinger, 2020) about her offense blaming others, which calls into question how sincerely this apology was delivered by Ballinger.

Oh, *I'm sorry* I didn't realize
That all of you are perfect, so please, criticize me
Bring out the daggers made from your perfect past

And stab me repeatedly in my bony little back
I'm sure you're disappointed in my shitty little song
I know that you wanted me to say that I was 100% in the wrong
Well, *I'm sorry*, I'm not gonna take that route
Of admitting to lies and rumors that you made up for clout. [emphasis added] (Ballinger, 2020)

Ballinger takes a defensive stance and shirks all responsibility for the accusations against her especially by saying that they are all lies and rumors. She uses the strategy No Responsibility to deliver this apology, but it is generally a disfavored strategy in online apology. As found in Xu and Yan's research (2020), No Responsibility appears to be a culturally motivated strategy that is judged as more appropriate in some speech communities and not others. This is supported by Wagner & Roebuck (2010) who find that Spanish speakers from Panama City, Panama prefer No Responsibility more than those from Cuernavaca, Mexico. Based on the negative reception of Ballinger's video by viewers and the larger YouTube community, as observed in several response videos, parodies, and commentary videos, it is evident that using No Responsibility more than once is not an appropriate strategy in AE to enact an apology.

5.1.2 Discussion of Brazilian Portuguese Apology Strategy Patterning

Based on total token counts across all videos, The BP YouTubers favor Take Responsibility followed by Explanation/Account, IFID, and Offer of Repair in descending order (See Figure 4). While their top three strategies by token count are also the most commonly represented strategies identified in public apology research (González-Cruz, 2012; Su & Lu,

2023; Wagner, 1999; Wagner & Roebuck, 2010; Xu & Yan, 2020), their underuse of IFIDs does not pattern with existent cross-linguistic literature. These studies indicate that IFIDs are the most frequently used strategies across several languages including Mandarin Chinese and several dialects of English and Spanish. The BP YouTube apologies analyzed in the current study do not show this trend. This difference in IFID usage may be a product of cultural differences in the expression of apology or based on the confines of the digital media format used to film the video. Several of the BP apologies were filmed using YouTube Shorts which are vertically filmed videos of 60 seconds or less (Spangler, 2024). Many of the BP apology videos were filmed in this format, and were therefore either shorter than 1 minute, or compiled from several YouTube Shorts.

Another notable pattern emerges when examining IFID usage. BP apologies tended to use IFIDs later in their videos, and several had no IFIDs whatsoever. Costa, Nesteruk, Bachini, and Coceilo favored IFIDs in the last half of their videos, while all but Bachini used zero IFIDs in the first two to five minutes of their videos. In addition, use of IFIDs was absent in Falei and Maia's videos. The use of IFIDs towards the ends of videos may suggest that in the case of BP, this strategy is used as a closing of the conversation, like Offer of Repair and Promise of Forbearance in AE (Choi and Mitchel 2022; Page, 2014; Xu and Yan, 2020). Similar to the findings for the AE data, Explanation/Account was used by several BP YouTubers including Bachini, Costa, Valentim, Monark, and Falei. This suggests that Explanation/Account is a component feature of the digital (YouTube) genre of apologies in both languages.

BP YouTubers use Offer of Repair and Promise of Forbearance less often than their AE counterparts. However, Offer of Repair occurs more frequently and as a stand-alone strategy (See example 6 Section 4.3.2). This is strikingly different from the AE YouTuber's use of this

strategy. Promise of Forbearance is used in only three videos, those of Coceilo, Nesteruk and Bachini. Coceilo and Bachini's videos contain the only tokens of Promise of Forbearance used in tandem with Offer of Repair.

(12) *Eu sei que agora daqui pra frente eu tenho que influenciam as pessoas que me seguem de uma forma positiva e com respeito a todos ... lamento do fundo do meu coração essa lição, esse tombo que eu tomei vai servir pra isso nunca mais se repetir* [*I know from now on I have to influence my followers in a positive way with respect to everything ... I regret this lesson, this fall I had, from the bottom of my heart, and it will serve to ensure that this never happens again*] (Cocielo, 2018)

Curiously, unlike in the AE videos, the BP YouTubers used No Responsibility more frequently across all videos. This strategy shows up in seven out of the ten BP videos but is found in only three of the ten AE videos. While most BP YouTubers use one to three tokens of No Responsibility (Nesteruk, Penin, Falei, Bachini, Coceilo, Maia), Costa favors this strategy, making up 7 of 22 total strategy tokens or 32% of her total tokens used. Though the AE YouTuber Ballinger uses this strategy 56% of the time, BP YouTubers consistently use No Responsibility more frequently than AE YouTubers. This result may demonstrate cultural differences between Brazil and the U.S. in terms of appropriate mollification and apology strategy use. As demonstrated in AE YouTuber's overall apology strategy patterns, No Responsibility is an unacceptable strategy to use more than once and often leads to judgments of insincerity from viewers. Contrastingly, the more prolific use of No Responsibility found across videos in BP suggests that the use of this strategy may be a more acceptable form of apology in Brazilian culture. Existent research lends support for the use of No Responsibility as a cultural

norm in some Latin American communities as supported by Wagner (1999) and Wagner and Roebuck (2010).

5.2 Discussion of Research Questions

5.2.1 Addressing Research Questions 1 and 2

In addressing Research Question 1, *Which strategies are observed in AE and BP YouTubers performance of apology?*, this study found that, similar to cross-linguistic trends (Wagner, 1999; Wagner, 2004, Wagner & Roebuck, 2010; Xu & Yan, 2020), the three most commonly used strategies in AE and BP were IFIDs, Take Responsibility, and Explanation/Account. It was also observed that both languages used apology strategies identified originally by Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) in some capacity, demonstrating that Blum-Kulka et al's (1989) framework is helpful in addressing apology construction by YouTube influencers.

In relation to Research Question 2, which focused on appraising similarities and differences between AE and BP apology videos, several similarities in strategy use were identified⁷. Both AE and BP videos used three similar strategies most often: IFID, Take Responsibility, and Explanation/Account. However, there were also poignant differences in the apologies offered by AE and BP YouTubers, including which of the top three strategies were preferred in each language. AE utilized IFIDs more consistently in that they occurred in higher token counts across videos, which is confirmed in the existent research regarding apology (Choi

⁷ How do the apology strategies used by AE and BP YouTubers pattern similarly or differently? Are they affected by the severity of the offense committed and the culture-specific norms of the speech community they are used in?

& Mitchell, 2022; Karlsson, 2020; Page, 2014; Sandlin & Gracyalny, 2018; Sari, 2016; Wagner, 1999; Wagner, 2004, Wagner & Roebuck, 2010; Xu & Yan, 2020). AE and BP also patterned differently with regard to Offer of Repair and Promise of Forbearance usage. While the AE YouTubers used these strategies concurrently and at the ends of their videos, the BP YouTubers favored Offer of Repair independently from Promise of Forbearance. Finally, and importantly, it was discovered that BP YouTubers preferred the use of No Responsibility over AE creators, which is in contrast with the findings from the AE video apologies.

In determining if there were patterns of strategy use that correlate with the severity of the committed offense, no significant differences in use of apology strategies across severity categories were found between the two languages. Meaning that all videos, regardless of severity level used similar apology strategies. This finding was also reported by Heritage and Raymond (2016) and Heritage, Raymond, and Drew (2019) who found that the proposed proportionality between the apology and the offense, or in other words, that the apology is suitable to the severity of the offense (Goffman, 1971), is not always true in interaction. This suggests that, though the severity of offense may be high, the apology may not be ‘equivalent’ in sincerity or weight in mitigating the face threatening act of the offense. This finding can be supported by the current research, as Ballinger’s ++severity actions do not receive a proper apology, and Dobrik’s first apology, *Let’s talk*, was not deemed proportionally appropriate to the offense.

Data from this study suggests that there are differences in the structure of apology strategy patterning based on cultural norms for apology making in both languages. This cultural variation is supported by the research of Diegoli (2025), which examines cultural variation of English and Japanese audiences’ response to Will Smith’s apology video after slapping Chris Rock at the Academy Awards. Diegoli (2025, p. 68) argues that “culture-specific moral orders

play a role in the negotiation” of acceptable apologies as English viewers negatively evaluated the sincerity of the apology video, while Japanese viewers expected an apology from Rock as well as Smith. Differences in cultural expectations surrounding apology are evidenced in the current work. For example, the higher use of IFIDs and Offers of Repair and Promise of Forbearance in AE contrasts with BP YouTubers preference of Take Responsibility and more frequent use of No Responsibility across videos. But, due to the lack of pragmatic apology investigation in BP, no comparisons can be made between the patterns found in the present study and findings from previous work on this language.

5.2.2 Research Question 3 and Enregisterment

The patterning of apology strategies, while somewhat varied across AE and BP, may suggest that the “YouTube apology” is an enregistered form. This supposition addresses research question 3: *What, if any, patterns emerge across videos that suggest the “YouTube apology” is enregistered globally?* This enregisterment is most evident in AE YouTube apology videos. It appears that there is a distinct pattern of linguistic apology strategy structure across videos. For AE YouTubers, the typical format includes using IFIDs within the first minute of videos shorter than 5 minutes and the first five minutes of videos longer than 10 minutes. AE YouTubers also use Explanation/Account throughout the video to build the narrative, and Offer of Repair and Promise of Forbearance are used together in the last minutes of the video, serving as closure to the conversation. This consistent patterning of apology strategy usage suggests that AE YouTube apologies are a socially recognized register of linguistic forms (Agha, 2003; Agha 2005; Eckert, 2019). The data presented in the current study suggest that the linguistic repertoire of online

apology videos has become differentiable within a language. This finding is further supported by Beeching (2019) and Márquez Reiter (2000) who found evidence of formulaic apology constructions being used more frequently by English speakers over speakers of French and Spanish.

This socially recognized register becomes especially apparent when examining the apologies of Dobrik. The *03/22/21* video is Dobrik's response to and a re-apology for both the offenses discussed in *Let's Talk* and this failed first apology attempt. The strategies used by Dobrik shift from his first video *Let's Talk* to his second *03/22/21* as he attempts to access and utilize the linguistic strategies and stable group identity (Eckert & Wagner, 2005, Podesva, 2007) constructed by other YouTubers who also had to make apology videos. This group identity, negotiated through apology, leans into the vulnerable side of the micro-celebrity identity. The micro-celebrity identity appeals to multiple audiences while walking the line between projected platform persona and an authentic self-image. In other words, the identity is constructed based on a balance of a created, brand persona, with a sincere expression of self to produce the ultimate likeable YouTuber. Like those YouTubers who apologized before him, Dobrik is leaning into the vulnerable, sincere, and authentic micro-celebrity identity rather than the brand persona that represents his channel in his *03/22/21* video. From the *Let's Talk* video to the *03/23/21* video, Dobrik triples his video length and uses all the apology strategies more frequently as measured by an increase in token counts in all categories. Interestingly, his use of IFIDs expands the most between the two videos, nearly tripling from three in the first video (*Let's talk*) to 10 instances in the second (*03/22/21*). He also takes more responsibility for his actions in the second video, *03/22/21*, as compared to the first apology attempt, and utilizes Offer of Repair and Promise of Forbearance concomitantly more often. In shifting towards greater use of these strategies, he

aligns more with the other YouTubers like Charles, Paul, Dawson, and Star. Dobrik's cognizance of needing to re-apologize and his shift in strategy usage and patterning point to a collective use of apology strategies and format by YouTubers who need to make an apology that negotiates meaning within the context of the constructed YouTuber micro-celebrity identity. The need to converge on the sincere micro-celebrity identity when apologizing (Eckert, 2000, Eckert, 2019; Marwick & Boyd, 2011), while using the linguistic strategies of apology, suggests that the "YouTube apology" is an enregistered form in AE.

The findings of this study also lend support for the hypothesis that this register has traveled to BP YouTuber apologies through digital imperialism. AE is a global language and the U.S. is a digital powerhouse with three out of the top five most used social media platforms being U.S. owned companies (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) and the U.S. boasting almost 239 million daily YouTube users (Shepherd, 2025; Walsh, 2024). Though it is not as evident in strategy use across all videos, the apologies of Penin, Cocielo, and Bachini are of particular interest for this register's global influence. Like the AE YouTubers, all three of these BP YouTubers utilize a similar overall strategy use pattern. Penin uses IFIDs including "eu tô aqui para pedir desculpa" [I'm here to apologize] (Penin, 2024) within the first minute of his video and favors them in the first half of his video. He also uses Offer of Repair as a closing strategy at the end of his video, accounting for four of the nine tokens of this strategy. Cocielo also uses this closing strategy of making an Offer of Repair in the last 2 minutes and 7 seconds of the video and, similar to the strategy patterns of the AE YouTubers, he pairs an Offer of Repair with a Promise of Forbearance. Finally, Bachini's apology video exhibits the most similarity with the AE YouTubers. She makes four separate apologies for different topics throughout her nearly 30-minute video. She uses strategies that align with several AE patterns, including the use of IFIDs,

Take Responsibility, and Explanation/Account as her three most favored strategies. Bachini also uses Offer of Repair and Promise of Forbearance together at the end of several apology segments in her video. Additionally, she uses Explanation/Account throughout her video, as did several AE YouTubers. With these patterns appearing across three BP YouTuber's apologies, there is evidence to suggest that the enregistered AE "YouTube apology" has traveled via digital imperialism (Mignolo, 2007; Quijano, 2000) to BP YouTubers in some capacity. This may indicate that the "YouTube apology" is a globally enregistered, socially recognized register of linguistic forms.

Overall, the AE and BP YouTubers used all six strategies included in the adapted framework from Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) however, there were several cultural differences in how these strategies were used in each language. The top three strategies by token count, IFIDs, Take Responsibility, and Explanation/Account were used to different degrees in AE and BP and several strategies like Promise of Forbearance and Offer of Repair were used more in AE and BP respectively. In addition, BP YouTubers preferred No Responsibility over their AE counterparts. Based on the similarities in strategy usage in AE and BP, it can be understood that there is evidence to support the global enregisterment of the YouTube apology as a register of linguistic forms that has potentially spread through digital imperialism from the U.S. to Brazil.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The final chapter provides an overview of the current investigation, summarizing its most significant findings and proposing areas for improvement and future research. Section 6.1 details the key findings and relates them to the research questions and hypotheses presented in Chapter 1. In Section 6.2, I acknowledge several limitations of the current study, and in Section 6.3, I suggest areas for future research.

6.1 Key Findings and Conclusions of the Study

Findings from this research demonstrate a clear patterning of apology strategy usage in both American English (AE) and Brazilian Portuguese (BP) apology videos. AE YouTubers prefer using IFIDs along with Offer of Repair and Promise of Forbearance together, and they disfavor No Responsibility. A clear pattern also emerges when examining the overall structure of AE strategy use. AE YouTubers tend to begin with the use of IFIDs early in their videos and utilize Explanation/Account throughout. Finally they typically close their videos with an Offer of Repair in conjunction with a Promise of Forbearance. The use of this overarching apology structure by Dobrik in his *(03/23/21)* second apology attempt after a failed first attempt suggests that there is a more felicitous way to launch an apology, using appropriate strategies in the proper order. This “formula” for making a successful YouTube apology provides evidence of the

enregisterment of this linguistic event in AE. By contrast, the BP YouTubers tend to prefer to Take Responsibility and make Offers of Repair as stand-alone strategies. They also use No Responsibility more frequently in their videos. This thesis provides evidence that despite these differences, there is evidence to support the existence of a global register for the YouTube apology. In three of the ten BP videos, the data suggest that the enregistered form of the AE YouTube apology may be influencing BP apology strategy use and patterning. I argue that this is occurring via digital imperialism spreading from the U.S. to South America, and specifically to Brazil, via globalization from the widespread use of the internet. In this way, AE may be leading the way in changing the linguistic landscape of digitally mediated apology. AE YouTuber's language use habits and patterns are broadcasted globally through digital media and adopted by other groups around the world. As the scope and landscape of the global internet is ever-changing, this study serves as a starting point for the continued investigation of digitally enregistered linguistic forms and inquiry of digitally mediated pragmatic speech acts.

This research contributes positively to the fields of pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and digitally mediated communication (DMC) and their cross-disciplinary interface. It highlights the importance of expanding pragmatic research beyond face-to-face interaction or discourse completion tasks and may set in motion additional research regarding digitally mediated speech acts. In analyzing YouTube videos, this research explores how apologies are made using the spoken content of videos. This could be further examined along with the visual content of the videos, so as to offer additional insights in discourse analysis and embodied enregisterment regarding this genre of language use. This study's use of an interdisciplinary coding schema combining Blum-Kulka et al.'s, (1989) pioneering work which has influenced speech act research in pragmatics, coupled with work from second language acquisition and motivation

(Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008), is innovative in capturing apology strategy use per minute of video. This unique coding scheme allows for analysis to be conducted both by investigating individual strategy tokens and how these tokens are used in context with each other minute by minute, and by examining overarching patterns that occur at certain points in the video. In addition, the present study adds positively to the scarcity of research on the speech act of apology in BP, as well as BP YouTube apologies. It also offers new insights into digitally mediated apology in AE and the formation of a register surrounding this linguistic form. In contributing to the academy in these ways, the current research also lays the groundwork for opportunities for future research into the topic of digitally mediated socio-pragmatics.

6.2 Limitations of the Current Study

Despite the positive and innovative findings that this study contributes to the fields of socio-pragmatics and DMC, there are several shortcomings of the current research. First and foremost, while this study is the first to investigate BP apologies using pragmatic frameworks for apology construction, the lack of previous research on in-person or digitally mediated apologies in BP makes comparisons with additional data from BP impossible. This in turn limits the current study in making any concrete claims about culturally specific BP apology strategy use. Additionally, while there was no significance between severity of offense and which apology strategy is used, a limitation of this study is the categorization of severity. The categorization may be unique to this study and not representative of the true severity of the offense. An additional shortcoming of the current work is the small sample size of only 10 videos per language. Though 20 videos constitute one of the largest sample sizes compared to

previous research on the topic of YouTuber apologies, an analysis of more videos would result in more generalizable findings regarding both the AE and the BP YouTube apology register.

6.3 Future Research

There are several avenues for additional research based on the current study, as digital pragmatics and sociolinguistics are a fruitful area for investigation in the ever-expanding domain of the internet. For example, it would be meaningful to explore digitally mediated apologies in other languages, including European Portuguese and other dialects of English. Studying apology strategy patterns in other languages in which their digital media is highly influenced by online AE content could advance the understanding of AE “YouTube apology” enregisterment and its transference via globalization. In addition, investigating similarities and differences in apology videos posted in several languages for the same offense by the same YouTuber may provide essential information about cultural differences and variation based on expected forms of apology. Analyzing apology videos longitudinally may prove fruitful as well, in that this would capture changes in strategy use in the “YouTube apology” register over time. This can be examined by studying YouTubers who offer more than one apology video, including serial apologies made in short succession, like Dobrik, or made over a span of several years. Exploring more thoroughly additional demographic influences on strategy usage in online apologies, such as gender identity, may reveal important information about apology as a speech act and identity construction. Another avenue of research may be the perlocutionary effect of these apologies. Examining viewer comments, video likes/dislikes or why a YouTuber may be motivated to apologize, such as monetization of videos or brand deals outside of the platform, would be

useful. Finally, I would like to build up findings from a pilot study I conducted in 2024 regarding how registers can become embodied by their speakers as a collection of semiotic strategies or practices that express the identity of the register (Eckert, 2000; Eckert, 2019; Podesva, 2009). In this pilot study I investigated embodiment of enregistered forms in YouTube apology videos by examining background setting, camera shot/angle, and YouTuber attire. This pilot study of six videos yielded promising results, suggesting that the YouTube apology may be both enregistered and embodied by the YouTuber who makes the apology. Initial findings indicate that for AE and BP YouTubers, close camera angle, use of non-branded clothing and filming in neutral, home-like environments were used in tandem with the linguistic register of forms intended to project a sincere, authentic side of the speaker's micro-celebrity identity. This suggests that enregisterment of the "YouTube apology" spans beyond the verbal component and utilizes semiotic strategies to lend legitimacy to the apology maker. Additional study in this area is warranted in order to understand this process more fully in AE and BP.

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APPENDIX A

Examples of Coded Apology Transcripts

Logan Paul:

I've made a severe and continuous lapse in my judgment, and I don't expect to be forgiven <Take Responsibility>. I'm simply here to apologize <IFID>. So, what we came across that day in the woods was obviously unplanned and the reactions you saw on tape were raw. They were unfiltered. None of us knew how to react or how to feel <Explanation/Account>. I should have never posted the video. I should have put the cameras down and stopped recording what we were going through <Take Responsibility>... but I didn't and for that from the bottom of my heart I am sorry <IFID>. I want to apologize <IFID> to the Internet. I want to apologize <IFID> to anyone who's seen the video. I want to apologize <IFID> to anyone who has been affected or touched by mental illness or depression or suicide, but most importantly I want to apologize <IFID> to the victim and his family. For my fans who are defending my actions, please don't. They do not deserve to be defended. The goal with my content is always to entertain, to push the boundaries, to be all inclusive. In the world I live in, I share almost everything I do <Explanation/Account>. The intent is never to be heartless, cruel or malicious <Take Responsibility>. I don't expect to be forgiven, I'm just here to apologize <IFID>. I'm ashamed of myself. I'm disappointed in myself <Take Responsibility> and I promise to be better <Promise of Forbearance>. I will be better <Offer of Repair>. Thank you (Paul, 2018)

Felipe Neto:

Eu divulguei a casa de aposta. Eu vou corrigir o meu erro dedicando o dobro da energia e dedicando o dobro daquilo que ganhei para conseguir corrigir o meu erro <offer of repair> porque eu sei que hoje foi o maior erro da minha vida. Então, assim como eu tô fazendo com casa de aposta, eu faço com os erros que eu cometi em relação à esquerda, em relação ao progressismo e vou fazer em relação a qualquer outro erro que eu cometa... <take responsibility> porque eu vou cometer mais erros. O importante é a gente ter ciência de que a gente tem como corrigir os erros e é isso que eu busco fazer. Então, de fato, eu vou sempre tentar entender o que que tá acontecendo de fato e o que que é a verdade por trás disso <offer of repair>. Nem sempre eu vou chegar nessa resposta, mas eu vou tentar fazer o público ir comigo nessa jornada pela busca porque é justamente na busca que a gente descobre nosso caminho. A gente pode não chegar a lugar nenhum, mas a gente vai trilhar uma jornada e essa jornada é o que define quem nós somos. E eu quero que as pessoas tenham uma jornada baseada em Literatura e não baseada em líderes carismáticos que só gritam.

[I revealed the betting house. I will correct my mistake by dedicating twice as much energy and twice as much as I earned to correct my mistake <offer of repair> because I know that today was the biggest mistake of my life. So, just as I am doing with the betting house, I will do with the mistakes I made in relation to the left, in relation to progressivism and with any other mistake I make... <take responsibility> because I will make more mistakes. The important thing is for us to be aware that we can correct our mistakes and that is what I seek to do. So, in fact, I will always try to understand what is really happening and what is the truth behind it <offer of repair>. I will not always reach this answer, but I will try to take the public with me on this journey of

searching because it is precisely in the search that we discover our path. We may not get anywhere, but we will follow a journey and this journey is what defines who we are. And I want people to have a journey based on Literature and not based on charismatic leaders who just shout.

APPENDIX B

AE YouTuber Coding Tables

minute		Apology Strategy																	
		Video: So Sorry Logan Paul						Video: “holding myself accountable” James Charles						Video: hi. Colleen Ballinger					
		IFID	Take Responsibility	Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility	Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility	Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility
		1	5	2	1				1										1
		2	1	2	1	1	1		2	2						1			
		3								1	1					1	1		1
		4								1	1				1			1	2
		5							4	2	1				1				1
		6								1	2								1
		7								1	2	1				1			1
		8								1	2								1
		9							1		2					1			1
		10								2	2			1					1
		11									1		1						
		12								1		1							
		13								2		2	2						
	14							2	1	2	1	1							
15										1	1								
Total Tokens per Strategy		6	4	2	1	1	0	9	16	18	6	5	1	2	2	2	2	0	10
Total Strategies per video		14						52						18					
Minute		Apology Strategy																	
		Video: Let’s Talk David Dobrik						Video: 03/22/21 David Dobrik						Video: Taking Accountability Shane Dawson					

		IFID	Take Responsibility Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility		
	1		2					1	1				1					
	2	2	1	2			3	1	1					1				
	3	1		1		1	2	2	2				1	1				
	4						4	1	2	1	1		1					
	5						2			1	1		3	1				
	6						2		1	1				1				
	7								1				2	1				
	8													1				
	9												2	2	1			
	10														1			
	11													2		1	1	
	12												3		2			
	13															1		
	14												1	1	1	1		
	15													1				
	16															1	1	
	17																	
	18												3	2				
	19												2	1	1			
	20														1	1	1	
	21																	
Total Tokens per Strategy	3	1	5	0	1	0	13	4	8	4	2	0	16	16	8	5	4	0
Total Strategies per video	10						31						49					
minute		Apology Strategy																
		Video: Laura Lee apology video Laura Lee						Video: Jeffree star APOLOGY VIDEO 2020 Jeffree Star						Video: My Response PewDiePie (Felix Avrid)				
		IFID	Take Responsibility Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility		
		1	3					1	2				1	2	2			
		2	1		1			1	2	1			1	1		1		
		3	3	2	1				2			1						
		4	1	1	1			2	2		1							
		5	2		1			2	1	2								
		6						1	1									
7								1										

	8									1											
	9									2	1										
	10								1	1											
	11																				
Total Tokens per Strategy		10	3	4	0	0	0	3	7	13	3	2	1	1	2	2	3	0	0		
Total Strategies per video		17							29							8					
minute		Apology Strategy																			
		Video: A Long Overdue Apology Gabbie Hanna																			
		Take Responsibility Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	
	1																				
	2	3		1																	
	3	4			2																
	4	4		1																	
	5	2			1																
	6	3	1	1	1																
	7	2																			
	8	1	1	1																	
	9	1	1		1																
	10	1		1	1																
	11	1																			
	12	3	1	1		1															
	13	1																			
	Total Tokens per Strategy		26	4	6	6	1	0													
Total Strategies per video		43																			

APPENDIX C

BP YouTuber Apology Coding Tables

minute	Apology Strategy																		
	Video: Monark							Video: Laura Nesteruk						Video: Daniel Penin					
	IFID	Take Responsibility	Explanation/Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility	Explanation/Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility	Explanation/Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	
	1	2	2	2								1	1	1		1			
	2									1									
	3						3		2		1		1	1					
	4													1	1			1	
	5																1		
	6																2		
	7																1		
	8																		
	9												1						
	10															1			
	11													1		1			
12															2				
Total Tokens per Strategy		2	2	2	0	0	0	3	0	2	1	1	1	3	4	1	9	0	1
Total Strategies per video		6						8						18					
minute	Apology Strategy																		
	Video: Mamae Falei							Video: Felipe Valentim						Video: Fernanda Costa					
	IFID	Take Responsibility	Explanation/Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility	Explanation/Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility	Explanation/Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	
	1			1			1	1	1									1	
2		2				1	1	1	1	1				1				1	

	3			1												2			
	4			1												1			1
	5			1										1					1
	6		1	2			1							1		1			1
	7		2	1										1					
	8						1							1		1			1
	9			1										1	1				
	10													1	1		1		1
Total Tokens per Strategy		0	5	8	0	0	3	2	2	2	1	0	0	6	2	6	1	0	7
Total Strategies per video		16						7						22					
minute		Apology Strategy																	
		Video: Julio Coceilo						Video: Carlinhos Maia						Video: Felipe Neto					
		IFID	Take Responsibility Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility			
	1		1		1		1		2				1	1	1		3		
	2		1		2				2		1								
	3		2	2	1				2		1								
	4		2	2							1								
	5	1	1	1		2			1										
	6	2			1	1													
	7	1				1													
Total Tokens per Strategy		4	7	5	5	4	1	0	7	0	3		1	1	1	0	3	0	0
Total Strategies per video		26						11						5					
minute		Apology Strategy																	
		Video: Karen Bachini																	
		IFID	Take Responsibility Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility	IFID	Take Responsibility Explanation/ Account	Offer of Repair	Promise of Forbearance	No Responsibility			
	1	2																	
	2	1	2	1															
	3	4	2	1															
	4																		
	5																		

	6		1																
	7	3	3	1															
	8	3	2	1															
	9			1															
	10	2		1	2														
	11																		
	12																		
	13			1															
	14			1															
	15	1	1	2															
	16	1	2																
	17		1	3	1		1												
	18			1															
	19			1															
	20	1	1																
	21			1															
	22		2	1															
	23	2	1	1															
	24			1															
	25		1		2	1													
	26	1	1		1														
	27	1		1															
	28		1																
	29	3	1		2														
	30																		
Total Tokens per Strategy	25	22	20	8	1	1													
Total Strategies per video	77																		