



Perceptions of L2 English Apology Strategies across Communicative Scenarios: A Pragmatic Study among L1 Bisaya BSED-English Students

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Abstract

This study investigated the perceptions of L2 English apology strategies among L1 Bisaya Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English (BSED-English) students in terms of appropriateness, sincerity, and effectiveness. Using a quantitative descriptive research design, data were collected from 50 purposively selected participants through a researcher-developed, scenario-based pragmatic evaluation questionnaire consisting of ten communicative situations. Respondents evaluated each apology expression using a five-point Likert scale. The instrument underwent expert review, refinement, and pilot testing, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .927, indicating excellent reliability. Mean, standard deviation, and the Friedman Test were employed to analyze the data. Findings revealed generally favorable evaluations of apology strategies, with higher ratings given to expressions that conveyed regret, responsibility, concern, and reparative intent. The study contributes to interlanguage pragmatics by providing insights into how L1 Bisaya learners evaluate English apologies across communicative contexts.

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Introduction

English plays a significant role in education, professional communication, and intercultural interaction in the Philippines. As one of the primary languages of instruction in higher education, proficiency in English is essential for academic success and effective participation in diverse communicative contexts (Bautista, 2000; Llamzon, 1997). However, successful communication extends beyond grammatical accuracy and lexical knowledge. Language users must also possess pragmatic competence, or the ability to use language appropriately and effectively according to social and cultural expectations (Canale & Swain, 1980; Kasper & Schmidt, 1985). Without such competence, learners may produce grammatically correct utterances that fail to achieve their intended communicative purposes.

Among the various aspects of pragmatic competence, apology speech acts have received considerable attention in interlanguage pragmatics research. Apologies function as mechanisms for expressing regret, repairing social relationships, and maintaining interpersonal harmony following an offense (Cohen & Olshtain, 1983; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). Previous studies have demonstrated that apology strategies vary across languages and cultures because they are shaped by differing social norms, politeness conventions, and communication styles. Consequently, second language (L2) learners may transfer pragmatic features from their first language (L1), influencing both the production and interpretation of apologies in the target language (Odlin, 1989; Ringbom, 1987).

Apologies are among the most widely studied speech acts in pragmatics because they serve an important interpersonal function in repairing social relationships after an offense has occurred. According to Cohen and Olshtain (1983), apologies may be realized through several strategies, including



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expressions of regret, acknowledgment of responsibility, explanations or accounts of the offense, offers of repair, and promises of forbearance. Similarly, Blum-Kulka et al. (1989) identified apology as a face-restorative act that helps maintain social harmony and reduce the negative impact of interpersonal transgressions. The effectiveness of an apology often depends not only on the expression of regret itself but also on the extent to which the speaker accepts responsibility and demonstrates a willingness to remedy the consequences of the offense.

In evaluating apology expressions, three interrelated dimensions are particularly relevant to pragmatic performance: appropriateness, sincerity, and effectiveness. Appropriateness concerns whether an apology is suitable to the social situation, including the relationship between the interlocutors and the demands of the communicative context. This is consistent with the view of pragmatic competence as the ability to select language forms that are appropriate to particular social and cultural circumstances (Canale & Swain, 1980; Kasper & Schmidt, 1985). Sincerity concerns the extent to which an apology communicates genuine regret, acknowledgment of the offense, or concern for the offended party. In apology research, expressions of regret and acknowledgment of responsibility are recognized as important components through which speakers demonstrate their orientation toward the offense (Cohen & Olshtain, 1983; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). Effectiveness, meanwhile, refers to the extent to which an apology addresses the offense and contributes to restoring the interpersonal relationship. This dimension is supported by the communicative and face-restorative function of apologies, in which expressions of regret, responsibility, and repair work together to reduce the social consequences of an offense (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). Taken together, these dimensions allow apology expressions to be evaluated not only according to their linguistic form but also according to their social suitability, perceived genuineness, and potential to accomplish the interpersonal purpose of an apology.

Research on apology speech acts has examined how learners and speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds select and interpret apology strategies. Studies have shown that L2 learners may draw upon pragmatic patterns associated with their first language, resulting in differences in the realization and interpretation of apologies (Al-Asqah, 2014; Bataineh & Bataineh, 2008). More recent research further demonstrates



that apology strategies are sensitive to linguistic and cultural context. Gim and Lee (2021), for example, found differences in the pragmatic functions and interpretations of apology expressions in Filipino and English, suggesting that apparently similar expressions may not perform identical communicative functions across languages. In another study, Pei et al. (2023) found that Chinese EFL learners frequently used explicit apology expressions, explanations, and acknowledgment of responsibility, with higher-proficiency learners demonstrating greater diversity in their apology strategies. These findings reinforce the importance of examining apology strategies from an interlanguage-pragmatic perspective, particularly because learners' evaluations and interpretations may be shaped by both L1 pragmatic knowledge and the conventions of the L2.

Interlanguage pragmatics examines how second-language learners comprehend, interpret, and use language appropriately in social interaction. According to Kasper and Schmidt (1985), pragmatic competence involves the ability to select language forms that are socially and culturally appropriate within a particular communicative context. Learners frequently draw upon pragmatic knowledge from their first language when communicating in a second language, a phenomenon commonly referred to as pragmatic transfer (Odlin, 1989; Ringbom, 1987). Such transfer may influence how learners perceive speech acts, including apologies, requests, refusals, and compliments.

Because pragmatic norms vary across linguistic and cultural communities, learners may evaluate the same apology differently depending on their cultural background and communicative experiences. In multilingual contexts such as the Philippines, where English coexists with Filipino and regional languages, learners' interpretations of apology strategies may reflect both local cultural values and second-language pragmatic conventions. Investigating how L1 Bisaya learners evaluate English apology strategies therefore contributes to understanding the interaction between language, culture, and pragmatic competence in second-language communication.

Within the Philippine context, research on English language learning has largely emphasized grammar, vocabulary development, pronunciation, and



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general communicative competence. Comparatively fewer studies have examined learners' perceptions of apology strategies in English, particularly from an evaluative rather than production-oriented perspective. Recent Philippine research, however, demonstrates the importance of examining apologies as context-sensitive interpersonal acts. Navera and Gustilo (2022), in their analysis of public apologies involving Filipino apologizees, found that apologizers strategically managed information, accountability, credibility, and interpersonal relationships through their apology discourse. Similarly, Gim and Lee (2021) demonstrated that Filipino and English apology expressions may differ in their communicative functions and pragmatic interpretations across contexts. These findings indicate that apology evaluation cannot be understood solely through the presence of an explicit apology expression but must also consider the communicative and sociocultural context in which the expression occurs. Despite these developments, limited attention has been given to how L1 Bisaya learners evaluate English apology strategies, particularly in terms of appropriateness, sincerity, and effectiveness.

Addressing this gap, the present study investigated how L1 Bisaya Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English (BSED-English) students evaluated L2 English apology strategies in terms of appropriateness, sincerity, and effectiveness. Specifically, the study identified the most and least favorably evaluated apology strategies and examined whether significant differences existed across communicative scenarios. By focusing on future English language teachers in a multilingual Philippine context, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of interlanguage pragmatics and provides insights that may inform pragmatic instruction in English language teaching.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to examine the perceptions of L2 English apology strategies among L1 Bisaya BSED-English students at Jose Rizal Memorial State University–Siocon Campus.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How do L1 Bisaya BSED-English students evaluate L2 English apology strategies across the different communicative scenarios in terms of:



- a. appropriateness;
- b. sincerity; and
- c. effectiveness?

2. Is there a significant difference in the respondents' overall evaluations of L2 English apology strategies across the different communicative scenarios?

Hypothesis

(H₀): There is no significant difference in the respondents' overall evaluations of L2 English apology strategies across the different communicative scenarios.

(H₁): There is a significant difference in the respondents' overall evaluations of L2 English apology strategies across the different communicative scenarios.

Methods

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive research design using a cross-sectional survey approach to examine how L1 Bisaya BSED-English students evaluated L2 English apology strategies across different communicative scenarios in terms of appropriateness, sincerity, and effectiveness. Data were collected through a researcher-developed, scenario-based pragmatic evaluation questionnaire informed by established interlanguage pragmatics frameworks on apology strategies and contextual variables (Blum-Kulka et al., 1989; Brown & Levinson, 1987; Cohen & Olshtain, 1983; Trosborg, 1995). The design enabled the systematic collection and statistical analysis of respondents' evaluations across ten communicative scenarios at a single point in time.



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Research Locale

The study was conducted at Jose Rizal Memorial State University–Siocon Campus. The campus provides a multilingual academic environment in which English is regularly used as a medium of instruction alongside Filipino and Bisaya. As pre-service English teachers, Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English students possess sufficient exposure to academic English and pragmatic language use, making them an appropriate population for evaluating English apology strategies. Permission to conduct the study was secured from the appropriate university authority prior to data collection. The identification of the research site was necessary to describe the context and population of the study, while the identities of individual participants were kept confidential throughout the research process.

Research Participants and Sampling

The participants consisted of 50 purposively selected L1 Bisaya Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English (BSED-English) students enrolled at Jose Rizal Memorial State University–Siocon Campus during Academic Year 2025–2026. Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that participants met the specific inclusion criteria established for the study. Specifically, respondents were required to (1) identify Bisaya as their first language, (2) be currently enrolled in the BSED-English program, and (3) voluntarily agree to participate in the study.

The study included 50 participants who met the established criteria and were accessible at the selected research site during the period of data collection. The sample therefore represented the accessible participants who possessed the characteristics required by the study rather than a randomly selected population sample. This approach was considered appropriate for the descriptive and scenario-based nature of the investigation.

Students who did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded from the study. In addition, the 30 respondents who participated in the pilot testing were excluded from the final study to prevent duplication of responses and potential influence on the results of the main data collection. The selected participants were considered appropriate for the investigation because of



their exposure to English language learning and their developing competence as future English language teachers.

Pilot Testing

Prior to the conduct of the actual study, a pilot test was administered to thirty (30) respondents who possessed characteristics similar to those of the target participants but were excluded from the final study population. The pilot testing was conducted to determine the reliability and internal consistency of the Scenario-Based Pragmatic Evaluation Questionnaire used in the study.

Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha revealed a coefficient of .927, indicating excellent internal consistency. According to Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .90 or higher signifies excellent reliability. The result indicates that the items of the instrument demonstrated a high degree of internal consistency in measuring respondents' evaluations of apology strategies in terms of appropriateness, sincerity, and effectiveness.

The pilot-test results provided evidence of the instrument's internal consistency and supported its use in the actual data collection.

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient of the Scenario-Based Pragmatic Evaluation Questionnaire (N = 30)

Reliability Measure	Value
Cronbach's Alpha	.927
Number of Items	30
Interpretation	Excellent Reliability

Note. Cronbach's $\alpha \geq .90$ = Excellent; .80–.89 = Good; .70–.79 = Acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).



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Research Instrument

The study utilized a researcher-developed, scenario-based pragmatic evaluation questionnaire informed by established frameworks in interlanguage pragmatics and research on apology speech acts. The instrument was developed based particularly on the apology strategy classifications of Cohen and Olshtain (1983) and Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), as well as the contextual considerations of power relations, level of imposition, and familiarity discussed in pragmatic and politeness research (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Trosborg, 1995).

The questionnaire consisted of ten communicative scenarios representing different social contexts in which an apology was required. Each scenario presented a specific interpersonal situation followed by an apology expression that respondents were asked to evaluate. The scenarios were designed to reflect variations in the social relationship between the speaker and hearer, the seriousness or level of imposition involved in the situation, and the degree of familiarity between the interlocutors. These contextual variations allowed the same speech act—apologizing—to be evaluated under different communicative conditions.

Three evaluative constructs were used in the instrument: appropriateness, sincerity, and effectiveness. Appropriateness referred to the extent to which the apology expression was perceived as suitable for the given social situation and relationship between the interlocutors. Sincerity referred to the extent to which the apology was perceived as expressing genuine regret, concern, or acknowledgment of the offense. Effectiveness referred to the extent to which the apology was perceived as adequately addressing the offense and contributing to the repair of the interpersonal interaction. These three constructs were selected because they represent complementary dimensions of pragmatic evaluation: whether an apology fits the social context, conveys genuine intent, and successfully addresses the interpersonal problem.

For each scenario, respondents evaluated the apology expression in terms of appropriateness, sincerity, and effectiveness using a five-point Likert scale. The scale ranged from 1 (Very Inappropriate/Not Sincere/Not Effective) to 5 (Very Appropriate/Very Sincere/Very Effective). The resulting



ratings provided quantitative measures of respondents' perceptions of the apology expressions across the ten communicative scenarios.

Prior to the pilot testing and actual administration, the researcher reviewed and refined the questionnaire to improve the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the scenarios and evaluation statements. The revised instrument was subsequently pilot-tested with 30 respondents who possessed characteristics similar to those of the target participants but were excluded from the final study. The pilot-test results yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .927, indicating excellent internal consistency.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, permission to conduct the study was secured from the appropriate university authority. The research instrument was reviewed and refined before its administration and was subjected to pilot testing to establish its internal consistency. After the necessary revisions were incorporated, the final questionnaire was administered to the 50 purposively selected L1 Bisaya BSED-English students who met the established inclusion criteria.

Before answering the questionnaire, participants were informed of the purpose and procedures of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the confidential treatment of their responses. Informed consent was obtained prior to data collection. Participants were also informed of their right to decline participation or discontinue answering the questionnaire at any time without penalty.

The study was considered to involve minimal foreseeable risk because the questionnaire focused on hypothetical communicative situations and did not require participants to disclose sensitive personal experiences. Nevertheless, appropriate ethical safeguards were observed throughout the research process. Participation was voluntary, responses were treated confidentially, and the information collected was used solely for research purposes. No personally identifying information was included in the presentation or reporting of the findings.



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Upon completion, the questionnaires were retrieved and checked for completeness. The responses were then encoded and organized for statistical analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 20. The completed questionnaires and encoded research data will be securely retained by the researcher for three (3) years following completion of the study for purposes of research verification and documentation. Access to the data will be limited to the researcher and authorized research personnel, when applicable. After the retention period, physical questionnaires will be securely destroyed, while electronic files will be permanently deleted from the researcher's storage devices and available backups, subject to applicable institutional policies.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 20) was employed. Descriptive and inferential statistical procedures were utilized to address the research objectives.

To answer the first research question, mean and standard deviation were computed to determine respondents' evaluations of L2 English apology strategies across the ten communicative scenarios in terms of appropriateness, sincerity, and effectiveness. The obtained mean scores were interpreted using an equal-interval scale derived from the five-point Likert response format. The interval width of 0.80 was obtained by dividing the scale range ($5 - 1 = 4$) by the number of response categories (5). The resulting interpretation ranges were as follows: 4.21–5.00 (Very Positive Evaluation), 3.41–4.20 (Positive Evaluation), 2.61–3.40 (Moderate Evaluation), 1.81–2.60 (Negative Evaluation), and 1.00–1.80 (Very Negative Evaluation).

To determine whether there was a significant difference in respondents' evaluations across the ten communicative scenarios, the Friedman Test for related samples was employed. For each of the ten scenarios, the respondents' ratings for appropriateness, sincerity, and effectiveness were averaged to obtain one overall scenario-level evaluation. These ten scenario-level scores, representing the ten communicative scenarios evaluated by the same 50 respondents, were then compared using the Friedman Test. The test was selected because the same respondents evaluated all ten scenarios and



the resulting scenario-level ratings were treated as related measures. Statistical significance was assessed at the .05 level.

The Friedman Test yielded ten related conditions corresponding to the ten communicative scenarios. The analysis therefore used nine degrees of freedom ($df = 10 - 1$). The test results were interpreted based on the chi-square statistic and the associated p-value. A p-value less than .05 indicated a statistically significant difference in respondents' evaluations across the communicative scenarios, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. Conversely, a p-value greater than or equal to .05 indicated that the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

Results and Discussion

Respondents' Evaluations of L2 English Apology Strategies in Terms of Appropriateness, Sincerity, and Effectiveness

Table 2 presents the mean ratings of the respondents regarding the appropriateness, sincerity, and effectiveness of L2 English apology strategies across ten communicative scenarios. The computed mean scores were used to determine how L1 Bisaya BSED-English students evaluated the apology expressions presented in varying social contexts.

Table 2

Respondents' Evaluations of L2 English Apology Strategies Across Different Communicative Scenarios

Scenario	Appropriateness(SD)	Sincerity (SD)	Effectiveness (SD)	Overall Mean	Interpretation
S1	4.64 (.53)	4.62 (.57)	4.60 (.57)	4.62	Very Positive Evaluation
S2	4.54 (.71)	4.80 (.45)	4.64 (.60)	4.66	Very Positive Evaluation
S3	4.48 (.71)	4.62 (.70)	4.48 (.81)	4.53	Very Positive Evaluation
S4	3.00 (1.34)	3.10 (1.37)	3.00 (1.34)	3.03	Moderate Evaluation
S5	3.74 (1.14)	3.70 (1.20)	3.72 (1.16)	3.72	Positive Evaluation
S6	4.96 (.20)	4.94 (.24)	4.96 (.20)	4.95	Very Positive Evaluation
S7	4.66 (.66)	4.64 (.72)	4.64 (.72)	4.65	Very Positive Evaluation
S8	3.58 (1.30)	3.50 (1.28)	3.52 (1.27)	3.53	Positive Evaluation
S9	4.66 (.59)	4.70 (.54)	4.64 (.60)	4.67	Very Positive Evaluation
S10	4.54 (.73)	4.58 (.64)	4.58 (.64)	4.57	Very Positive Evaluation

Note. *M* = Mean; *SD* = Standard Deviation Mean interpretation was based on the equal-interval method for a five-point Likert scale: 4.21–5.00 = Very Positive Evaluation; 3.41–4.20 = Positive Evaluation; 2.61–3.40 = Moderate Evaluation; 1.81–2.60 = Negative Evaluation; and 1.00–1.80 = Very Negative Evaluation.



Table 2 presents the respondents' evaluations of L2 English apology strategies across the ten communicative scenarios in terms of appropriateness, sincerity, and effectiveness. The overall mean scores ranged from 3.03 to 4.95, indicating that the respondents generally evaluated the apology expressions favorably. Seven of the ten scenarios obtained ratings within the Very Positive Evaluation range. Scenario 6 received the highest overall evaluation ($M = 4.95$), followed by Scenario 9 ($M = 4.67$) and Scenario 2 ($M = 4.66$), whereas Scenario 4 received the lowest evaluation ($M = 3.03$), followed by Scenario 8 ($M = 3.53$) and Scenario 5 ($M = 3.72$).

The generally favorable evaluations suggest that respondents did not judge an apology merely on the presence of an explicit apology expression. Rather, the pattern of results indicates that the perceived quality of an apology was associated with the extent to which the expression communicated regret, accountability, concern for the offended party, and an intention to repair the offense. This is particularly evident in Scenario 6, which obtained very high ratings for appropriateness ($M = 4.96$), sincerity ($M = 4.94$), and effectiveness ($M = 4.96$). In this scenario, the speaker explicitly expressed regret and followed the apology with concern for the hearer: "I'm really sorry for bumping into you. Are you okay?" The combination of an explicit expression of regret and attention to the hearer's condition may have made the apology appear appropriate to the situation, sincere in intention, and effective in addressing the interpersonal consequence of the offense. This finding is consistent with apology frameworks that identify expressions of regret and concern for the offended party as important components of apology performance (Cohen & Olshtain, 1983; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989).

The contextual features of Scenario 6 are also important. Unlike the scenarios involving a familiar friend or a student-teacher relationship, Scenario 6 involves a stranger and a relatively immediate interpersonal encounter. Because familiarity is low, the speaker has limited relational knowledge with the hearer. In such a situation, an apology that is brief but accompanied by explicit concern may be especially useful because it directly acknowledges the offense and signals consideration for the other person without assuming an established interpersonal relationship.

Scenario 2 also received a very favorable overall evaluation ($M = 4.66$), particularly for sincerity ($M = 4.80$). The scenario involved a familiar peer



relationship but a high-imposition offense—the speaker broke a friend's phone—and the apology included regret, an explanation of intention, and an offer to pay for the repair. The high sincerity rating may indicate that respondents viewed responsibility-taking and willingness to provide compensation as strong evidence of genuine concern. In a high-imposition situation, merely saying “sorry” may not sufficiently address the consequences of the offense. An offer of repair makes the apology more concrete because it demonstrates an intention to correct or compensate for the harm.

The influence of power relations is particularly visible when Scenarios 3 and 4 are considered together. Both involve a student apologizing to a teacher, but the quality of the apology differs substantially. Scenario 3 presents an apology containing an expression of regret, an explanation for the late submission, and a commitment not to repeat the mistake, whereas Scenario 4 presents the much weaker statement, “Sorry, I was busy,” after a late group task caused delays in a presentation. Scenario 3 received a very positive overall evaluation ($M = 4.53$), while Scenario 4 obtained the lowest overall evaluation ($M = 3.03$). This contrast suggests that the difference cannot be attributed simply to the student–teacher power relationship because the same general power relationship is present in both scenarios. Instead, the results indicate that the content and quality of the apology become particularly important when the interaction involves an unequal power relationship.

In Scenario 3, the apology acknowledges the failure, provides an explanation, and expresses a commitment to avoid repeating the offense. These elements may help demonstrate respect toward the teacher and responsibility for the transgression. In contrast, Scenario 4 offers only a brief explanation—“I was busy”—without explicitly acknowledging the consequences of the delay or expressing a clear commitment to repair the problem. Because the offense affected a group presentation, the imposition was also more consequential than a minor personal inconvenience. The relatively low evaluation may therefore reflect respondents’ perception that the apology did not adequately address either the seriousness of the offense or the effect on others.



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Imposition also helps explain the contrast between the scenarios involving different degrees of offense. Scenario 1 involved a low-imposition offense: forgetting to return a friend's notebook. The apology directly acknowledged the mistake and included a simple promise to return the notebook the following day. Its high overall evaluation ($M = 4.62$) suggests that a relatively simple apology may be sufficient when the consequences of the offense are limited and the relationship is familiar. In contrast, Scenario 2 involved a high-imposition offense because the speaker damaged a friend's phone. The stronger apology, including an offer to pay for the repair, was evaluated even more favorably ($M = 4.66$). This pattern suggests that as the consequences of an offense become greater, respondents may expect a corresponding increase in accountability and reparative action.

The role of familiarity is also apparent when comparing Scenarios 1, 2, and 5. Scenarios 1 and 2 involve familiar peers, while Scenario 5 involves a stranger and a low-imposition offense. Scenario 5 presented only the brief expression, "Oh sorry," after accidentally bumping into someone. Although the situation involved low imposition, its overall evaluation was lower ($M = 3.72$) than those of the familiar-peer scenarios. This suggests that familiarity alone does not determine whether an apology will be positively evaluated. Rather, respondents appear to consider the relationship together with the nature of the offense and the amount of interpersonal attention expressed in the apology.

Scenario 7 provides an especially important finding for the Filipino cultural interpretation. The scenario involved an apology containing an extended explanation: "I'm really sorry, I forgot because I had many things to do, and my family needed me yesterday." Despite the possibility that explanations may sometimes be interpreted as excuses, Scenario 7 received a very positive overall evaluation ($M = 4.65$). The respondents therefore did not appear to interpret the explanation as necessarily weakening the apology. Instead, the explanation may have been interpreted as additional contextual information that helped communicate the speaker's circumstances and intentions.

This finding may be discussed in relation to Filipino pragmatic norms, but the interpretation should be made cautiously rather than presented as a universal characteristic of Filipino speakers. Philippine research has documented the role of relational and cultural considerations in apology



discourse. Navera and Gustilo (2022), for example, found that Filipino public apologies may strategically manage accountability and interpersonal relationships. Thus, the favorable evaluation of Scenario 7 may indicate that respondents were receptive to an apology that combined explicit regret with contextual explanation and relational sensitivity. However, because the present study did not directly measure cultural values such as *hiya* or *pakikipagkapwa*, these concepts should be treated as possible interpretive explanations rather than direct causal findings.

The lower evaluations of Scenarios 8 and 5 further demonstrate the importance of accountability and interpersonal consideration. Scenario 8 stated, “It’s not really my fault, but sorry,” which explicitly limits responsibility while still producing an apology expression. Its overall mean of 3.53 was considerably lower than the highly favorable scenarios. This pattern suggests that the presence of the word “sorry” alone was insufficient to guarantee a high evaluation. Respondents appeared to consider whether the speaker genuinely accepted responsibility and whether the apology adequately addressed the offense.

Scenario 9, in contrast, received a very high overall evaluation ($M = 4.67$). Its apology—“I’m sorry for the mistake. I will fix it immediately.”—combines an explicit expression of regret with a direct offer of repair. This result reinforces the importance of reparative intent in apology evaluation. The high rating suggests that respondents considered an apology more effective when it included not only acknowledgment of wrongdoing but also a concrete commitment to correct the consequences of the offense.

Scenario 10 also received a highly favorable evaluation ($M = 4.57$). The scenario involved accidentally sending incorrect information to a school administrator and used the more formal expression, “I sincerely apologize for the inconvenience caused.” The favorable rating suggests that formality can be perceived positively when it corresponds to the social relationship and communicative setting.

Taken together, the results show that appropriateness, sincerity, and effectiveness were closely related but not necessarily identical dimensions of pragmatic evaluation. The highest-rated scenarios generally combined



explicit regret, acknowledgment of responsibility, concern for the hearer, and corrective action. Conversely, the lower-rated scenarios tended to contain weaker responsibility-taking, limited repair, or explanations that did not sufficiently address the consequences of the offense. These findings support the view that pragmatic competence requires learners to consider not only what linguistic form is grammatically possible but also what expression is socially appropriate in a particular situation.

Is there a significant difference in the respondents' evaluations of L2 English apology strategies across the different communicative scenarios?

For Research Question 2, the Friedman Test was used to determine whether there was a significant difference in the respondents' overall evaluations across the ten communicative scenarios. For each scenario, the ratings for appropriateness, sincerity, and effectiveness were averaged to obtain one overall scenario-level evaluation. Because the same 50 respondents evaluated all ten scenarios, the resulting scores were treated as related samples. The level of significance was set at $\alpha = .05$.

Table 3

Mean Ranks of Respondents' Evaluations Across Communicative Scenarios

Communicative Scenario	Mean Rank
S1	6.23
S2	6.02
S3	5.92
S4	2.40
S5	3.75
S6	7.76
S7	6.58
S8	3.48
S9	6.62
S10	6.24



Table 4

Friedman Test Statistics for Differences Across Communicative Scenarios

Test Statistic	Value
N	50
Chi-Square (χ^2)	190.829
df	9
p-value	< .001
Decision	Reject H_0
Interpretation	Significant Difference

Note. Each scenario-level score was obtained by averaging the respondents' ratings for appropriateness, sincerity, and effectiveness. The Friedman Test compared the ten related communicative-scenario evaluations. χ^2 = chi-square statistic; df = degrees of freedom. Statistical significance was determined at the .05 level.

The results revealed a statistically significant difference in respondents' evaluations across the ten communicative scenarios, $\chi^2(9, N = 50) = 190.829$, $p < .001$. Since the p-value was below the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that respondents' evaluations of L2 English apology strategies varied significantly across the communicative scenarios.

The mean ranks further show the relative pattern of these evaluations. Scenario 6 obtained the highest mean rank (7.76), whereas Scenario 4 obtained the lowest (2.40). These results are consistent with the overall mean evaluations presented in Table 2, where Scenario 6 received the highest rating and Scenario 4 received the lowest. Rather than repeating the scenario-specific interpretations presented under Research Question 1, the Friedman Test confirms statistically that the observed variation across the scenarios was significant.

The finding supports the view that pragmatic evaluation is context-sensitive. Apology expressions may receive different evaluations depending on how their linguistic content corresponds to the communicative situation. This is consistent with apology speech-act frameworks that emphasize the importance of regret, responsibility-taking, and reparative action in apology performance (Cohen & Olshtain, 1983; Blum-Kulka et al., 1989). The result



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also supports previous research showing that apology strategies may vary according to linguistic, cultural, and contextual factors (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2008; Holmes, 1990).

Furthermore, the findings are consistent with previous research on apology speech acts across different linguistic and cultural contexts. Holmes (1990) found that effective apologies frequently contain explicit expressions of regret and acknowledgment of responsibility, both of which were highly valued by the respondents in the present study. Similarly, Bataineh and Bataineh (2008) reported that responsibility-taking and offers of repair positively influenced perceptions of apology sincerity and effectiveness. These similarities suggest that certain features of apology performance may be widely recognized as indicators of sincerity despite differences in cultural background.

At the same time, the favorable evaluation of Scenario 7 highlights the importance of considering cultural and contextual influences in apology interpretation. While some studies have cautioned that explanations may sometimes be perceived as excuses, the respondents in the present study appeared to interpret contextual explanations as sincere attempts to account for the offense. This finding underscores the role of cultural norms and interpersonal expectations in shaping evaluations of apology strategies and supports the view that pragmatic judgments are influenced by both linguistic and sociocultural factors.

Conclusion

The study examined how L1 Bisaya BSED-English students evaluated L2 English apology strategies across ten communicative scenarios in terms of appropriateness, sincerity, and effectiveness. Overall, the respondents evaluated the apology expressions favorably, with seven of the ten scenarios receiving Very Positive Evaluation ratings. The findings suggest that respondents generally valued apology expressions that communicated regret, acknowledged responsibility, showed concern for the offended party, and demonstrated an intention to repair the consequences of the offense.

Scenario 6 received the highest overall evaluation ($M = 4.95$), while Scenario 4 received the lowest ($M = 3.03$). The contrast between highly and moderately



evaluated scenarios suggests that the presence of an explicit apology expression alone does not necessarily result in a favorable pragmatic evaluation. Rather, the content and communicative function of the apology appear to matter, particularly in relation to responsibility, interpersonal consideration, and reparative action.

The communicative scenarios also incorporated differences in familiarity, power relations, and level of imposition, which provide contextual perspectives for interpreting the observed variation in evaluations. However, because these contextual variables were embedded in the scenarios rather than independently tested, their specific effects cannot be established from the present findings. The favorable evaluation of Scenario 7 likewise suggests that contextual explanations may be positively interpreted when combined with an explicit expression of regret, although cultural concepts such as *hiya* and *pakikipagkapwa* were not directly measured.

The Friedman Test showed a statistically significant difference in respondents' evaluations across the ten communicative scenarios, $\chi^2(9, N = 50) = 190.829, p < .001$. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This finding confirms that respondents' evaluations varied significantly across the scenarios, indicating that pragmatic evaluation of apology strategies is sensitive to communicative context.

Overall, the findings underscore the importance of pragmatic competence in L2 English communication. For L1 Bisaya BSED-English students, evaluating and using apology strategies involves more than producing grammatically correct expressions. It requires sensitivity to the relationship between interlocutors, the seriousness of the offense, the level of imposition, the degree of familiarity, and the need for accountability and interpersonal repair. The findings therefore support the integration of explicit pragmatic instruction into English language teaching, particularly through scenario-based activities that allow learners to examine how apology strategies may be interpreted differently across social contexts.



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Theoretical and Pedagogical Implications

The findings of the present study contribute to the growing body of research in interlanguage pragmatics by providing empirical evidence regarding how L1 Bisaya learners evaluate English apology strategies across different communicative contexts. The favorable evaluations of apology expressions containing explicit regret, responsibility-taking, concern for the offended party, and offers of repair support existing theories of apology speech acts proposed by Cohen and Olshtain (1983) and Blum-Kulka et al. (1989). These findings reinforce the view that successful apologies involve more than linguistic correctness; they also require sensitivity to interpersonal relationships and contextual expectations.

The results likewise highlight the importance of pragmatic competence as an essential component of communicative competence. Consistent with Canale and Swain (1980), effective communication depends not only on grammatical knowledge but also on the ability to use language appropriately according to social and cultural norms. The significant differences observed across the communicative scenarios suggest that learners evaluate apology strategies based on how sincerity, accountability, and concern for others are expressed within specific contexts.

From a pedagogical perspective, the study underscores the value of integrating pragmatics instruction into English language teaching. Providing learners with opportunities to analyze authentic speech acts and examine pragmatic variation may enhance their ability to communicate effectively in diverse interpersonal situations. Such instructional practices may help learners develop greater awareness of the social and cultural dimensions of language use, thereby promoting more appropriate and effective communication in English.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, English language teachers are encouraged to integrate pragmatic competence instruction into classroom activities, particularly in teaching apology strategies and other speech acts within authentic communicative situations. Classroom activities such as role plays, scenario-based discussions, reflective tasks, and communicative simulations



may help learners understand how apologies are interpreted in different social contexts. Explicit instruction in pragmatics has been shown to enhance learners' pragmatic awareness and communicative competence (Bardovi-Harlig, 2001). Emphasis should be placed on expressions of regret, responsibility-taking, concern for the offended party, and offers of repair, as these features were consistently perceived as appropriate, sincere, and effective by the respondents.

Educational institutions and teacher education programs may strengthen the integration of pragmatics and intercultural communication into language-related courses. Developing learners' communicative competence requires attention not only to grammatical knowledge but also to the sociolinguistic and pragmatic dimensions of language use (Canale & Swain, 1980). Future English teachers may benefit from opportunities to analyze authentic speech acts and examine how contextual and cultural factors influence communication.

Students are likewise encouraged to develop greater awareness of the pragmatic dimensions of language use. Effective communication extends beyond linguistic accuracy and requires sensitivity to social relationships, communicative intentions, and contextual expectations. Such awareness may contribute to more appropriate and effective communication across different interpersonal situations (Brown & Levinson, 1987).

Future researchers may replicate the study using larger and more diverse samples drawn from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Comparative investigations involving different first-language groups may provide deeper insights into the influence of cultural and linguistic factors on apology evaluation. Researchers may also explore other speech acts such as requests, refusals, compliments, complaints, and expressions of gratitude to broaden the understanding of interlanguage pragmatics in the Philippine context. Furthermore, future studies may examine the influence of Filipino pragmatic norms, particularly relational sensitivity and contextual explanations, on the perception and realization of apology strategies in English.



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