Lexico-syntactic features of beauty-product warnings in the Philippines

Shielanie Soriano-Dacumos &
Marilu R. Madrunio

Corresponding author:
Shielanie Soriano-Dacumos
*The Graduate School,
University of Santo Tomas,
Manila, The Philippines
University of Rizal System-
Binangonan, Rizal, The
Philippines*
shielaniedacumos@gmail.com

Marilu R. Madrunio
*The Graduate School,
University of Santo Tomas,
Manila, The Philippines*

Abstract

In the Philippines, the increasing number of issues about beauty-product hazards has become an involuntary outrage since mass media exposed the tremors brought by chemical contents in cosmetic items. Under certain circumstances, even if business owners designed and manufactured their products as vigilant and watchful as possible, consumers remain susceptible to a certain degree of risks associated with beauty-product use.

The practicability and viability of upholding consumer safety were made possible as this paper examined 45 beauty product-warning texts in the Philippines. A range of linguistic features, such as signal words (Shuy, 2008), orders of nouns (Lakoff, 1987; Lyons, 1977), synthetic personalization (Fairclough, 1989), tenor and field continuum (Halliday, 1985), attributive adjectives (Marza, 2011), manner, temporal, and spatial adverbs, were employed to determine the lexical features of warning messages. Using qualitative analysis, the results revealed that cautionary texts may have some lapses on the use of noun abstractness, synthetic personalization, field continuum, adjectives, and adverbs. Such an investigation brought up the transparency of communicative features of safety texts.

Moreover, conditional sentences and the use of declarative and imperative sentences were analyzed, which disclosed the manufacturers' practice on anticipating emergencies. The results display significant implications for the product-liability law in the country, which can further bridge consumers' vital access to safety, hence bringing to light the real purpose of product-warning texts in the mainstream Philippine market.

Keywords: Beauty products, consumer safety, lexis, product warnings, syntax

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1.   Introduction

Among the products available in the market, beauty items are purchased based on personal preferences because consumers assumingly are confident that using such products can help enhance and improve their looks and attractiveness. Despite the positive effects of these beauty items, consumers are hardly aware of some possible risks associated with the said products, and the manufacturers seem to fail in communicating cautionary messages or risk warnings to the public. Predictably, these warning texts convey lexical and syntactical features that may cognitively affect the purchase decision of the public.

The inclusion of warning labels in cosmetic items is a method of business compliance among manufacturers. The Consumer Act of the Philippines (1992) specified various beauty products classified as cosmetics, which include skincare creams, lotions, powders, perfumes, lipsticks, fingernail and toenail polish, eye and facial makeup, towelettes, permanent waves, colored contact lenses, hair colors, hair sprays and gels, deodorants, hand sanitizer, baby products, bath oils, bubble baths, bath salts, butters, and many other types of products.

In previous years, the Food and Drug Authority or FDA (2015) (see *www.fda.com.ph*) reported several chemical contents found in beauty products, specifically in makeup, shampoo, skin-whitening lotion, nail polish, and any other personal-care products, that can cause health risks among consumers. Significantly, these products lack safety information, which may restrain the consumers from making informed decisions before purchasing the products. In this context, this paper aimed to analyze the linguistic features of product warning texts found in cosmetics available in the Philippine market, hence helping the consumers make prudent decisions before, during, and after purchasing the said products.

1.1   Domains of Forensic Linguistics

The field of legal language is a compilation of several fields. Its scope could be categorized from verbal arguments in a court during a cross-examination between a lawyer and a crime witness, to uninformed directives given to judiciary members who are obliged to bestow a legal action or judgment upon a court case. Likewise, Forensic Linguistics is applied in analyzing the jargonized terms utilized by legal counsels and their affiliates during a legal consultation, interaction, and proceeding (Mellincoff, 1963), and the written language used in constitutional bylaws, reports, and regulatory legal texts.

Examining the different uses of language, the people involved in employing both speaking and writing, why these people interact in various ways, and what is accomplished through such interexchange manifest the multifold correlations of forensic linguistics with various disciplines (Coulthard & Johnson, 2010).

An example is Heffer's (2008) study on the language of jury instructions from courtroom judges, comparing English and Welsh courts to those in the United States. Based on the results, the judges featured the duty of reconciling the legal essentials with the need to make what they say understandable to the jurors. In ensuring obedience to the law, the courts employed pattern instructions. The US judges, however, adhered to the template much more

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closely than their UK counterparts. Heffer figured out that the distinctive linguistic features of courtroom judges' communication in their instructions could make the process difficult to understand. He, thus, claims that altering more than the linguistic form is needed if jury instructions need to function as they should.

In his earlier book *Language Crimes*, Shuy (1993) identified different crimes associated with language, which include physically nonviolent crimes of bribery, solicitation to murder, sex solicitation, business fraud, selling or purchasing stolen property, perjury, threatening, and any other offenses. Both written and spoken language entail textual tenets that serve as strong evidence in court. In the aforementioned perspectives, it can be assumed that a forensic linguist is required in product liability lawsuits.

Evidently, the language of warning texts enables the interconnection of the two gigantic genres of the marketplace—law and business. The common aspects of language, such as words, spellings, phrases, syntactic structures, and even punctuations, can be evaluated in examining product-warning texts, which basically fall under product liability.

1.2 Liability in Product Warnings

Since product liability laws of the Asia-Pacific region are characterized by diversity (Kellam, 2007), various warning standards and studies have been completed in previous years, and many of these studies have significant findings in the analysis of product warnings.

As manufacturers comply with their duty to warn, it does not mean that the legislative body already safeguards the end consumers. Even so, Brannon (2010) indicates that legal counsels may ascertain that warnings are incomplete and ineffective when submitted to a potential product-liability case. Lawyers who specialize in product-liability cases are aware that occasionally, product warnings grapple between 'adequacy' and 'inadequacy' of thoughts.

Ross and Adam (1998) claim that product-warning adequacy refers to the qualitative characteristics of a warning, while failure to warn addresses the quantitative aspects (i.e., failure to warn asks: *"Is there a warning at all?"* while adequacy asks: *"Was the warning provided adequate?")*. Therefore, the fact that adequate instructions are provided on the product label does not inevitably pardon the duty of the product manufacturer to present an adequate or sufficient warning. Hence, product warning is still mandated to exclaim attention to the perceived risks associated with using the product.

The importance of analyzing language will lead the linguist to conduct a data-driven study, hence assessing the correctness and adequacy of safety warnings in consumer products and mainly avoiding predictable hazards.

A warning is explicit when it informs a consumer on: (1) what to do or avoid; (2) the product-related hazards; and (3) the consequences of unsafe behavior in terms of injuries. Variables such as perceived hazardousness, perceived severity of the injury, intended compliance, comprehension, and recall of the warning are considered and measured, hence producing explicit warnings that are better understood and remembered.

Based on the requirements of the American National Standard Institute or ANSI (2002), the Consumer Act of the Philippines adopted the following requisites for including warning label(s) on every consumer product:

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- Notify the product user of existing dangers;
- Let the consumer learn the gravity of the risk engaged with the particular product; and
- Notify the consumer of the consequences of the risk and tell how to keep away from it.

Republic Act 7394 states that "any Filipino or foreign manufacturer, producer and any importer shall be liable for redress, independently of fault, for the **insufficient or inadequate information on the use and hazards** thereof." The cited criteria for the inclusion of product warnings clarify the cautionary texts' standard contents, specifically in the Philippines.

Warnings should not be too faint or unplanned. Tiersma (2009) and Malik (2010) identified a medication case in New Mexico, where the phrase 'it may damage the kidneys' was written in very small letters. The New Mexico court held this statement as too vague and misleading. According to the court, it should have directly informed the purchasers that 'it will damage the kidneys.'

Sometimes, manufacturers carry the warning message in a mixed content, which becomes a barrier for product users in understanding the warning instructions. On a serious note, the blended message does not produce a thought. Shuy (2008) and Malik (2010) discuss the case of a cleaning product 'Safety-Kleen.' The product's brand name was outstandingly displayed on all four edges of the can in which it was retailed. The can carried much smaller letters in the label that warned the consumers about the risks of using it in a feebly ventilated area. In this case, the label was sufficient, but here, the name of the product weakened the warning, thus resulting in its inadequacy.

1.3   Cosmetics or Beauty Products

The Consumer Act of the Philippines (1992) defines cosmetics as (1) articles intended to be rubbed, poured, sprinkled or sprayed on, introduced into or otherwise applied to the human body or any part thereof for cleansing, beautifying, promoting attractiveness, or altering the appearance, and (2) articles except that such term shall not include soap.

In the Philippines, a network of concerned community, church, school, environmental, and health groups known as EcoWaste Coalition (n.d.) safeguards not only the waste and environmental concerns of Filipinos but the chemical and health issues associated with cosmetics as well.

In its latest bid to promote chemical safety and healthy lifestyle, the coalition as watchdog screened 70 pieces of lipsticks costing P7 to P80 each that were purchased on February 7 from 13 of 2013 in various discount shops in Divisoria, Quiapo, Baclaran, and cities of Parañaque and Pasay.

The collected samples were examined for toxic metals with a portable X-Ray Fluorescence device using the following allowable limits under the ASEAN Cosmetics Directive as reference: 1 part per million (ppm) for mercury, 5 ppm for arsenic, and 20 ppm for lead. At the press briefing, the EcoWaste Coalition reported that 27 of the 70 samples of

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lipstick (39%) were found to contain detectable levels of one or more heavy metals above the ASEAN limits (EcoWaste Coalition, 2013, para 3).

In integrating issues of unlicensed cosmetic products in the Philippines, on December 2-5, 2013, the FDA inspected the health products offered by 15 spa and skin, and beauty and wellness clinics in the cities of San Juan, Muntinlupa, and Taguig. The FDA monitoring revealed that some establishments were using cosmetic products that were not notified nor with market approval from the bureau. Another finding exposed that other unlicensed firms were repacking the products by licensed manufacturers, which is a violation of RA 9711 or the FDA Act of 2009.

In another story, sunscreen and skin-whitening creams, which mostly originated from China, had no market approval from the FDA and were suspected of containing levels of metals such as "lead, cadmium, mercury, and arsenic" beyond allowable limits. The products were declared "unsafe" and carried "imminent danger or injury to consumers because they were not manufactured in compliance with the standards of the Code of Current Good Manufacturing Practice or CCGMP" (Food and Drug Authority [FDA], 2014, para 3).

Since most cosmetic items have been involved in product-liability issues, this research puts a premium on cosmetic products made in the Philippines, hence considering beauty-product warnings as the corpus of the study.

1.4   Research Question

Language use is deemed significant in health-communication information. To delve into the adequacy issues of existing product-warning texts, this research posits the question: What are the lexical and syntactic features of beauty-product warnings in the Philippines? Such an inquiry brings to the fore significant implications for the adequacy requirements of product warnings, realizing the vitality of cautionary texts for consumers.

1.5   Theoretical Framework

Language serves as an important tool in attaining and sustaining effective communication. According to Shuy (2005), communication vitalizes the amount of assigned data transmitted to product consumers. This paper highlights the product warning as the MESSAGE, which is the vital point of information that product manufacturers planned for dissemination. Several researchers of product warnings affirm that product cautionary texts should include four legal elements: signal word, hazard statement, statement of consequences, and instructions for avoiding the hazard (Bowles, 2004; Heaps & Henley, 1999; Sanders & McCormick, 1993). Such contents are all linked with readability, comprehension, recall (Heaps & Henley, 1999; White & Parsons, 2001), and level of safety.

Priming two important points of analysis, the micro-level focused on the investigation of lexical features, while the macro-level concentrated on the syntactical attributes of beauty-product warnings.

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In terms of lexical features, the use of Lyon's (1977) noun entities as adopted by Lakoff (1987) highlights the significance of using nouns on cognitive linguistics. Looking at the first order of nouns as concrete, second order as abstract, and third order as purely mental phenomena, the noun entities were acquainted with perceivability. Moreover, Halliday's Words in Field Continuum (1993) played a significant part in sorting out the words utilized in beauty-product warnings as everyday language, specialized vocabulary, and highly technical words. Concerning the use of signal words, this study adapted what Shuy (2008) applied in analyzing alert lexicons in product warnings based on the ANSI's (2002) and the Global Harmonization Standards' (2013) legal yardsticks on warning the consumers.

Moreover, the adjectives used in the study corpus were examined based on Marzá's (2011) evaluative approach to analyzing attributive adjectives to determine the manufacturers' word choice in describing the hazards. On the one hand, the adverbs were analyzed according to Frey and Pittner's (1999), Pitner's (2000), and Frey's (2000) use of manner adverbs, which may imply the manufacturers' call for the urgency of action in case emergency situation arises. Meanwhile, temporal and spatial adverbs were explored based on Kiefer's (2007) framework on the time point of adverbs, which necessitates the inclusion of time and space references in using beauty products.

In terms of syntactic features, conditional sentences, and imperative and declarative sentences (Pullum, 2011) were measured and examined based on how they present the contents of beauty products' cautionary texts. Likewise, the sentences were analyzed to determine their complexity in terms of structure.

It can be assumed that linguistic features would create a significant impact on the legal-content adequacy of beauty-product warnings, unfolding the vitalities of these messages in facilitating informed decisions among consumers.

2. Method

This research employed a textual evaluation of the linguistic features of beauty-product warnings in the Philippines. The complete description of these linguistic features, particularly on product manufacturers' word choice, was tallied applying frequency and percentage tools.

2.1 Research Corpus

Beauty products otherwise known as cosmetics served as the study corpus. These consumers' items are manufactured to enhance and improve the facial and skin features of product users. In general, working mothers, young lady professionals, female college students, and even housewives use these products.

The specific beauty products under study were selected based on a survey conducted among 45 mothers who visited drug and grocery stores to purchase their top beauty-product needs, which are shown in Table 1.

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Table 1
Surveyed mothers' top beauty product needs

Product	Frequency	Percentage
Baby Powder	12	33.33
Facial Cleanser	8	17.77
Facial Wash	6	13.33
Lotion	6	13.33
Lipstick	5	11.11
Lip Gloss	5	11.11
Press Powder	3	6.66
Total	45	100

As a part of the ethical considerations of the study, the brands and company names of product manufacturers were masked. Each product warning was coded; thus, BP was used to refer to beauty products, while #1 (and so on) was assigned to each product based on the arrangement of warnings in the analysis of the research corpus. Based on the survey, only 45 product warnings were collected and counted because there have been a limited number of beauty products manufactured in the Philippines.

2.2   Data Analysis

This present research was premised on the study of Shuy (1990, 2008) on the adequacy issues of product warnings and on his several examples of linguistic consultations in civil cases that clearly illustrate the theories and techniques employed by linguists in analyzing language evidence. Warning texts are fully applicable to the civil context and to every detail as interesting as any criminal case.

Utilizing the qualitative method of research in analyzing the adequacy of beauty-product warnings in the mainstream Philippine market, each text was examined based on lexical features such as signal words, nouns, synthetic pronouns, field continuum, adjectives, and adverbs. The adequacy issues of product warnings were given importance, specifically in promoting comprehension alongside consumer safety.

To further investigate the linguistic attributes of beauty-product warnings, syntactic features were likewise examined, particularly the conditionals and sentence types.

In processing the data, frequency and percentage counts were computed. Because the aim of the present study was to ascertain the lexical and syntactical features of product-warning texts, the researcher did not utilize complex statistical tools.

3.   Results and Discussion

3.1   Lexical Features

Beauty-product warnings are written using lexical categories that convey a set of values, particularly the product manufacturers' intent of providing safety information. Such features contain actionable data that may impact consumers' healthcare.

3.1.1   Signal Words

In warning the consumers, an alert lexicon (Shuy, 2008) is placed before the main text to establish awareness among product users. Table 2 presents the signal words examined in the study.

Table 2
Signal words used in beauty product warnings

Signal Word	Frequency	Percentage
Warning	11	25
Caution	20	44
Precaution	6	13
Warning and Caution	1	2
Warning and Precaution	1	2
Important	1	2
Total	40	88

According to Wogalter, Jarrard, and Simpsons (1994), the standards usually recommend the terms DANGER, WARNING, and CAUTION to measure the scale of hazard from highest to lowest levels. In identifying the degree of the hazard's gravity, ANSI (2002) designated three color-coded signal words to alert the consumers:

- **Danger (red)** - an impending hazardous event that will end in serious injury or death.
- **Warning (orange)** - a potentially hazardous circumstance that may end in serious injury or death.
- **Caution (yellow)** - a potentially hazardous condition that could end in moderate or slight injury. (p. 186).

The present study examined the validity of these guidelines; hence, this paper analyzed the use of these alert lexicons in the Philippine context.

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Just like any other Philippine product warnings, common among the beauty products was the use of CAUTION as it was incurred in 20 or 44% of occurrences in the corpus, followed by WARNING with 11 or 25%. PRECAUTION attained the incidence score of six or 13%, while both the alert-lexicon combinations WARNING AND CAUTION and WARNING AND PRECAUTION were significantly identified with one or 2% occurrence. The use of IMPORTANT was noted with one or 2% occurrence.

> Caution: Flammable. Contents under pressure. Do not puncture or incinerate container. Do not expose to heat or high temperature. Avoid use on broken or irritated skin. Avoid spraying on eyes, nose, mouth or ears. (BP#13)

> Warning: Not to be used for children under 3 years of age. (BP#20)

The sample corpus illustrates the misuse or inappropriateness of signal words. BP#13 uses the word 'caution,' but the gravity of its content is more serious when compared with BP#20, which only highlights the 'must not' users of the product. Again, this is in contrary to the standard of utilizing signal words.

Another set of alert lexicons is classified as 'double' signal words.

> Warnings and precautions: Not to be used for children under three years of age. Avoid contact with eyes. (BP#10)

> Warning and caution: If eye contact occurs, wash out promptly and thoroughly with water. If severe or prolonged signs and symptoms of scalp irritation, skin discomfort, or other undesirable effects occur association with the use of permethrin shampoo it should be brought to the attention of a doctor or pharmacist. (BP#9)

The results imply that manufacturers of cosmetics are not certain about the value of appropriate signal words to be utilized. BP#10 may signal that the manufacturer aimed at providing a warning before product use, while BP#9 intended to give a heavier warning prior to using the product. The manufacturers express their strong desire to warn the public about the projected risk; however, this can further lead to uncertainty or confusion among Filipino consumers because the meanings conveyed by the signal words seem unclear to product users.

In an attempt to warn the consumers, another signal word was identified.

> Important: If eye is irritated or infected, or if you scratch your eye with the applicator, do not use this or any other eye cosmetic and consult an ophthalmologist (eye doctor) immediately. (BP#15)

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The given extract signals the manufacturer's attempt to soften the tone of the warning signal. On the other hand, the term 'important' implies essentiality, which reflects the manufacturer's intention to get the attention of consumers. However, such a degree of the alert signal may be weak in tone. It was likewise noted that five or 12% of the corpus included 'important' as the signal word in their product warnings. This seems a manifestation of the inadequate and inappropriate use of product warnings in the Philippine market, which the government should act upon to ensure the safety of Filipino consumers.

3.1.2   Order of Nouns

Nouns commonly described as names of places, people, and objects contribute to the specificity issues of product warnings. The following observations were weighed up to determine various concerns confronting the warning discourse of beauty products.

3.1.2.1   Concrete and Abstract Nouns

Concrete nouns include people, animals, places, and objects that could be seen, heard, smelled, or touched. On the other hand, abstract nouns acquaint to something with which a consumer cannot physically interact because it refers to a quality, a concept, an idea, or an event.

In analyzing the corpus, Lakoff's (1987) Cognitive Linguistics, which underscores the ontology of noun entities, was applied, specifically Lyons's (1977) peculiarity of the first three orders of nouns. The summary of results is shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Beauty product warning's order of nouns in terms of concreteness and abstractness

Specificity of Nouns	Orders of Nouns	Frequency	Percentage
Concrete	First	13	29
Abstract	Second	7	16
Abstract	Third	6	13

Classified as the first-order entity, the following is an extract of concrete nouns found in local beauty-product warnings:

Caution: Do not apply on wounded <u>skin</u> and avoid areas near the <u>eyes and mouth</u>. Do not apply on thinner skin like <u>armpits</u> and <u>underarm</u> to prevent irritation. If redness or swelling appears, discontinue use. Do not use with other exfoliating products. (BP#8)

Lyons (1977) labelled the first-order entity as concrete nouns, which refer to persons, objects, animals, and other organisms situated in space and hold reasonable and unvarying perceptual properties. As such, the present study categorized concrete nouns in the first entity. The study found that 29% of the corpus utilized concrete nouns for specificity purposes.

Since they bring some expected combinations of purposes, cosmetics aim to improve the overall beauty of consumers. These beauty products likewise are commonly applied to specific parts of the face and the body in any skin type. The results of the study revealed the commonly used concrete nouns in beauty products, which indicate specific parts of the consumers' body that should be handled with care when using the products. Such provide a hint among the consumers on 'what and where to avoid' unnecessary application of the products, hence promoting safety in using the cosmetic items.

Second- and third-order entities refer to abstract nouns (Lyons, 1977); the former include events, processes, and states-of-affairs located in time. The second-order entity of nouns is believed to occur or take place, or rather to exist. Consider the following extract:

> Precautions: Do not use if skin is peeling, has <u>redness</u>, <u>scratches</u>, <u>cuts</u>, <u>abrasions</u> or with <u>irritation</u>. Do not use to dye eyebrows or eyelashes. It may cause allergic reactions. Not for children below 3 years of age. Keep out of children. It may contain Phenylenediamine. Color result may vary depending on current state of hair. (BP#16)

The terms <u>redness</u>, <u>scratches</u>, <u>cuts</u>, <u>abrasions</u>, and <u>irritation</u> suggest a state of affairs such as painful feeling, which may happen once the consumers improperly use the product. Some common eye injuries, such as redness, abrasions, or irritation, could require immediate treatment or surgery to prevent permanent eye damage resulting in vision loss.

The seven or 16% occurrences of second-order entity of nouns in the corpus suggest that statements of hazards or side effects in beauty products are infrequent among warning texts; hence, the inclusion of nouns in second-order entity may imply the consumers' acceptance or avoidance of risks. However, such a limited percentage carried out in the warning texts echoes the nominal effort of manufacturers to tell the 'state of affairs' that might occur when using the products.

Another abstract term (i.e., temperature) was identified in the analyzed corpus. The following sample warning text shows the use of the said term:

> Warning: Do not expose to heat or high <u>temperature</u>. Avoid spraying directly into eyes. Do not throw container into the environment. (BP#19)

Based on the above extract, second-order entities are observable and have a spatial function (Butler, 2003; Lyons, 1977) as they determine the suitable conditions (i.e., warmth or coldness) where a product should be stored or subjected.

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Another factor considered in this present study was Lyons's (1977) third-order unit of nouns known as abstract entities or propositions, which are outside space and time (Butler, 2003; Lyons, 1977). The following extracts present the use of abstract entities or propositions:

> Important: If the eye is irritated or infected, or if you scratch your eye with the applicator, do not use this or <u>any other eye cosmetic</u> and consult an ophthalmologist (eye doctor) immediately. (BP#15)

> Warning: For external use only. Ask a doctor or pharmacist before use, if you are using <u>other tropical acne medications</u> at the same time or immediately following the use of this product. (BP#29)

Six or 13% occurrences were obtained from the corpus that indicated the 'identity of difference' concept (Miller, 2008), which is perceived as dissimilar or opposite to being or simply the 'same.' This 'otherness' factor may place the consumers in a guessing situation, e.g., which or what are some tropical acne medications to be avoided.

3.1.3   Pronouns

According to Straus, Kaufman, and Stern (2014), a pronoun is a word that replaces a noun such as *I, me, he, she, herself, it, that, they, each, few,* and YOU addressing the message to either a listener or a reader. Significantly, addressing the warning to consumers is an important aspect of communication as it aims to promote safety behavior and to increase warning compliance.

Generally, the second-person pronoun YOU and the possessive pronoun YOUR are typically used in beauty-product warnings. When manufacturers use such pronouns, they tend to speak or communicate with the product users. This manner of addressing people on a single or individual basis is referred to as "synthetic personalization" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 62; Kaur, Arumugam, & Yunus, 2013), a method of addressing the mass audience (consumers) as if they were individuals through the use of inclusive language. This form of addressing the warning text to the product users is observed in the following extracts:

> Important: If the eye is irritated or infected, or if <u>you</u> scratch <u>your</u> eye with the applicator, do not use this or any other eye cosmetic and consult an ophthalmologist (eye doctor) immediately. (BP#15)

> Precaution: The most common side effect of retinoid is irritation. Retinoid exfoliate <u>your</u> skin from the inside-out and during process, <u>your</u> skin can become extra sensitive. However, side effects from retinoid can be minimized. (BP#22)

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Two or 4% of the 45 beauty-product warnings employed the direct addressing to consumers. Communicatively, these two product warnings tend to establish an interpersonal relationship with the readers, one way of articulating the message of the warnings. In the end, the pronoun YOU serves as a generic address to the product consumers or users; thereby, it is an informal type of speech and writing.

3.1.4   Field Continuum

Since Halliday (2003) claims that language is multidimensional, to understand 'register' is to realize its relationship to such dimensions. Halliday introduced the Field Continuum (1985), which provided important points and implications for analyzing the product-warning texts examined in the present study.

Table 4
Field continuum for beauty-product warnings

Field Continuum	Frequency	Percentage
Everyday Language	37	82.22
Specialized Vocabulary	3	6.66
Highly Technical Words	5	11.11

Everyday language refers to the manufacturers' use of common and easily understandable words in warning texts. Specialized vocabulary, on the other hand, is an industry-specific term used and understood by people in a particular field or discipline. According to Halliday (1988), acronyms or ordinary words used with special meanings are classified under this continuum. Importantly, the highly technical words or jargons utilized in product-safety information or messages are categorized under this scale.

Table 4 presents that everyday language obtained the highest frequency of occurrences in the corpus with 37 or 82.22%, followed by highly technical words with five or 11.11% and specialized vocabulary with three or 6.66%. The subsequent discussions explain the use of these words in the field continuum.

3.1.4.1 Everyday Language

Everyday language is tagged by Halliday (1985) as the common language. It is the use of ordinary and familiar words that can aid consumers better understand product-warning texts. Hence, 37 or 82.22 % of the warning texts were written using the 'ordinary' or 'everyday' language. The basic words and phrases employed in such warning texts allow the manufacturers to effectively communicate with the consumers the cautionary measures when using the products.

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> Caution: Content is flammable. Do not use near flames or while smoking.
> Avoid spraying in eyes. Keep out of reach of children. (BP# 21)

The result implies that beauty-product-warning texts tend to effectively communicate its purpose by using causation texts that correspond to the principle of 'general purpose language' (Mernik, Heering, & Sloane, 2005). Such likewise promotes readability, for it hardly puts the consumers in a guessing situation. Importantly, the use of everyday language helps convey clear instructions to the consumers.

3.1.4.2 Specialized Vocabulary

Specialized vocabulary is intended for specialists who understand field- or discipline-specific terminologies. It has been traditionally considered as functional varieties or registers (Biber, 1988; Halliday, 1988) defined in terms of variation in the recurrence of particular linguistic items in comparison with general language or any other registers. As such, this present study considered this linguistic feature because surprisingly, few instances of the use of specialized vocabulary in beauty-product-warning texts were noted. The following extracts present the use of specialized vocabulary:

> Precaution: The most common side effect of retinoid is irritation. <u>Retinoid exfoliate</u> your skin from the inside-out and during process, your skin can become extra sensitive. However, side effects from retinoid can be minimized. (BP#22)

> Caution: Flammable. Contents under pressure. Do not <u>puncture</u> or <u>incinerate</u> container. Do not expose to heat or high temperature. Avoid use on broken or irritated skin. Avoid spraying on eyes, nose, mouth or ears. (BP#13)

The term _retinoid_ is used to refer to a set of substances that boosts vitamin A in the body and serves, for special purpose, as a treatment for skin problems. Meanwhile, the term _exfoliate_ means removing the surface of the skin, and _puncture_ and _incinerate_ are verbs commonly known as 'destroy' and 'burn,' respectively, which in the context of the study, are considered specialized vocabulary. Among the 45 product-warning texts, three or 6.66% used specialized vocabulary hardly convey clear messages to the consumers. Assumingly, product users tend to ignore product-warning texts once they come across specialized terms; thus, such case makes them susceptible to the dangers of product misuse. Likewise, the 6.66 percentage of specialized vocabulary in beauty-product warnings connote that warning instructions carry domain-specific words and phrases that could delay the consumers' understanding of the central concepts of the warning texts.

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3.1.4.3 Highly Specialized Words or Jargons

Coinciding with scientific discourse, highly specialized language is described as "professional jargon" (Halliday, 1985, p. 9), which likewise covers product warnings. The following extract shows the use of a highly specialized word in a product-warning text:

> Precautions: Do not use if skin is peeling, has redness, scratches, cuts, abrasions or with irritation. Do not use to dye eyebrows or eyelashes. It may cause allergic reactions. Not for children below 3 years of age. Keep out of children. It may contain <u>Phenylenediamine.</u> Color result may vary depending on current state of hair. (BP#16)

The results revealed that five or 11.11% of the product-warning texts employed highly specialized language. The use of jargons may place the consumers in a difficult situation when processing information in warning texts, particularly in dealing with or responding to emergencies. It must be noted that product warnings are intended for common consumers and are not limited to scientists, nurses, and doctors. The use of highly technical words may restrict the comprehensibility of warning texts among the buying public. Although most words in the warning texts can be described as everyday language, still the use of jargons hardly facilitates correct inferencing among the consumers, and this seems incongruous with Republic Act No. 7394's call for comprehensibility of product warnings.

3.1.5 Evaluative Adjectives

Evaluative adjectives convey a more precise communicative purpose in identifying the kind and type of risks that product users would face (and should be aware of) once a beauty product has been purchased. These adjectives evoke certain aesthetic feelings the consumers might experience when using the product, hence making them aware of the risks at hand (Marzá, 2011).

3.1.5.1 Attributive

Attributive adjectives are positioned before the nouns (Marzá, 2011). Consider the following extract for analysis:

> Warning/caution: If eye contact occurs, wash out promptly and thoroughly with water. If <u>severe or prolonged</u> signs and symptoms of scalp irritation, skin discomfort, or other <u>undesirable</u> effects occur association with the use of phermethrin ("kwell") shampoo it should be brought to the attention of a doctor or pharmacist. (BP#9)

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The results revealed that nine or 20% of the warning texts used attributive adjectives, which convey to consumers the possible threats that may surface in case of product misuse. Another significant use of an adjective was identified in the following extract:

Flammable. (BP#17)

A one-word adjective makes sense and creates a strong point in describing a warning, which can be an effective way to inform or caution the consumers. To sum, the limited number of attributive adjectives identified in the corpus weakens the characteristics of stated product risks in the warning texts. In the end, the limited use of attributive adjectives hardly ensures a hazard-free use of beauty products.

3.1.6   Adverbs

Traditionally defined as descriptors of verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs, adverbs characterize the significance of time, manner, place, and degree in product-warning texts.

3.1.6.1 Manner

Adverbs of manner are usually formulated by adding -*ly* to adjectives. According to Shaer (2000), manner adverbs in English characterize informal communication, which instantly directs the consumers to do some necessary actions. The following extract proves this point:

Caution: Keep out of reach of children. Avoid contact with eyes, rinse immediately with water (BP#34)

The results revealed that eight or 18% of occurrences in the corpus utilized manner adverbs. This underscores that the conveyed information has the "integrated" prosody (Abeille & Godard, 2003, p. 27) and gives the product users the emotional hint and the intonationality about the manufacturers' desire for the consumers to take necessary actions (i.e., *immediately, thoroughly*) in case of emergency. This likewise promotes the sense of urgency and prudence among the product consumers.

3.1.6.2 Temporal

According to Spejewski (1996), temporal adverb describes when an action is carried out; hence, it is called the 'time' adverb. The findings of the study revealed that nine or 20% of the corpus used temporal adverbs. To specify the time element, frame and durative temporal adverbs were categorized. The following extract shows the use of a temporal adverb in a product-warning text:

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> For external use only. Do not stay <u>too long</u> in the sun, even while using
> sunscreen product. (BP#38)

The above extract conveys the required time when the consumers should monitor their product use; hence, this time monitoring is classified under durative adverb (Curnow & Travis, 2007).

Likewise, frame adverb was identified in the corpus, as shown in the following extract:

> Warning: Should not be used <u>longer than 2 months</u>. Do not apply to broken
> skin. Should not be used on children twelve (12) years below. Do not use
> to treat more than 10 % of the total body surface. Should not be used by
> pregnant women. (BP#10)

Seven or 16% of the corpus employed frame adverbs, which highlight the required age of product users. This finding reflects the chain of specified temporal concepts that detail the period or time interval from a reference point. As a result, it may influence the consumers' behavior in using the products.

3.1.6.3 Spatial

Highlighted by Curnow and Travis (2007), spatial adverb conveys both the notions of location in a place (including textual space) and movement toward or from a place. The adverb of location accounted for 12 or 27% occurrences in the corpus; the most common was the use of the term 'external use only,' as shown in the following extract:

> Caution: For <u>external</u> use <u>only</u>. Keep out of reach of children. (BP#44)

The term 'external use only' was found in 10 or 22% of the corpus, which accounts for a certain part of the human body where the products should be applied. Likewise, 'external use only' warns the product users that the beauty item cannot be drunk.

Essentially, the present study observed the use of a movement adverb, as presented in the following extract:

> Precaution: The most common side effect of retinoid is irritation. Retinoid
> exfoliate your skin from the <u>inside-out</u> and during process, your skin
> can become extra sensitive. However, side effects from retinoid can be
> minimized. (BP#22)

The above extract draws attention to the movement of action from the inner to the outer surface of the skin, and then describes the results of such an action once the consumer used the product.

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3.1.7   Modals

Generally, literature on linguistics has recognized the communicative intent of using modals. Unlike any other categories of product warnings, modals are infrequently evident in the beauty-product warnings under study. Similar to other linguistic studies on product warnings, Halliday's (1985) tenor continuum was utilized to serve as a guide in analyzing the two important extracts in the corpus.

In this paper, modals limitedly appeared in the corpus as they only obtained the incidence score of one or 2%.

> Warning: Should not be used longer than 2 months. Do not apply to broken skin. Should not be used on children twelve (12) years below. Do not use to treat more than 10 % of the total body surface. Should not be used by pregnant women. (BP#10)

> Precautions: Do not use if skin is peeling, has redness, scratches, cuts, abrasions or with irritation. Do not use to dye eyebrows or eyelashes. It may cause allergic reactions. Not for children below 3 years of age. Keep out of children. It may contain Phenylenediamine. Color result may vary depending on current state of hair. (BP#16)

BP#10 signals the manufacturer's strongest desire to warn consumers through the use of *should*. In return, it manifests the consumers' responsibility to comply with and follow the stipulated warning. Moreover, BP#6 shows the use of *may*, which occupied one or 2% occurrence in the corpus.

Essentially, the least frequent use of modals in the warning texts may lessen the manufacturers' need to speak with the consumers, particularly in showing necessity, expressing demand, and providing recommendations for avoiding product risks.

3.2   Syntax

According to Arya, Hiebert, and Pearson (2011), syntax refers to the rules by which signs are combined to make statements. Taking into account the words of a language, syntax sets the signs together to make statements, ask questions, and produce other utterances and written texts. This paper analyzed the types and kinds of sentences that beauty-product warnings utilized.

3.2.1   Conditional Sentence

A conditional sentence is known as the cause-effect pattern of sentence construction. Having two clauses, this sentence type contains the condition clause and the consequent clause that are dependent on each other (Naranayan, 2011). The results revealed that the conditional

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sentence obtained the incidence score of 11 or 24%. Specifically, six or 13% of the corpus utilized the condition-and-consequent-clause format, while the remaining five or 11% were in the thread of the consequent-condition clause. The following extracts illustrate the outcome:

> Caution: For external use only. <u>If product gets into eyes,</u> <u>rinse thoroughly with water</u>. Discontinue use if irritation or rash occurs. <u>If irritation or rash persists,</u> <u>consult a doctor</u>. Keep out of reach of children. Store below 30°C. (BP#36)

> Caution: Eye irritant. Cause moderate eye irritation. For external use only. <u>Harmful if swallowed</u>. Do not apply into eyes and mouth. Do not apply to excessively sunburned or damaged skin. Avoid contact with plastics and synthetic fabrics. (BP#12)

The results highlight that there is a forecasting of future events in beauty-product warnings, particularly in the consequent-condition pattern. The term *harmful* signals the consequence, and therefore, allowed a 'scene-setting' function (Miller & Weinert, 1998); however, the extent of risk specificity (e.g., poisonous, toxic) is not clearly stated. This may conform to the Consumer Act of the Philippines' product-warning criterion on stating the possible risks associated with product use; however, it may place the consumers in a guessing situation because the exact harms have been abstracted.

Moreover, the condition-consequent pattern conveys the reason (e.g., *if product gets into eyes; if irritation or rash persists*) and the action (*rinse thoroughly with water; consult a doctor*) to be taken by the product users once the products have been improperly used. This pattern promptly guides the consumers on what action to take in case of untoward incidents. Likewise, such a pattern can play an important role as an association to the preceding text or to the immediate context of warning (e.g., *If irritation or rash persists, consult a doctor*). More so, a chain reaction takes place when the safety information creates an effect and that effect turns into a cause and creates another effect; basically, one event leads to another (Ciardiello, 2002; Dymock & Nicholson, 2007), yet the 13% occurrence reflects the manufacturer's limited practice in chaining necessary future unsafe events.

In the end, the consequent-condition pattern can stand alone and can function as instructions or mild orders, while the condition-consequent pattern shows a context-dependency bridging between the preceding stated nature of risk and the subsequent action that may be taken by the product users. Regardless of the conditional sentence pattern and function utilized by product manufacturers in presenting safety texts, the total of 24% occurrence in the corpus manifests the limited use of conditional sentences in warning messages. Apparently, this may imply the unrestricted practice of manufacturers in scene-setting the probable risks at hand.

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3.2.2   Sentence Types

Sentences may be classified according to the purposes of the speaker or writer. The four principal purposes of a sentence are declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory. However, beauty-product warnings are combinations of declarative-imperative sentences.

> Warning: This product contains Hydrogen Peroxide. Avoid contact with eyes. Rinse immediately if product comes in contact with them. (BP#18)

The combination method of declarative-imperative sentences obtained 21 or 47% occurrences in the corpus. It could be recalled that imperative sentences issue requests, give commands, or express desires or wishes, while declarative sentences state facts, which carry the property of making a truth claim (Pullum, 2011). This implies that the declarative-imperative structure aims to provide a fact (e.g., *this product contains Hydrogen Peroxide*), while the succeeding sentence gives instructions to the product consumers (e.g., *avoid contact with eyes*). The above extract notifies the consumers on what to do and how to keep away from a possible risk; further directive is provided for emergency reference. However, the association of *this contains Hydrogen Peroxide* is indirectly presented, and its link to the real outcome once it comes contact with eyes is not clearly stated. In such a way, the warning content does not give the consumers any idea as regards possible risks associated with the product use and misuse. In the end, the warning could be directly stated as *this product contains hydrogen peroxide that can cause eye irritation.* By stating the warning in such a manner, the consumers are reminded that something should be done in using the product that contains hydrogen peroxide. The separated presentation of declarative and imperative sentences could somehow weaken the imperative characteristics of product warnings.

Pure imperative sentences, which obtained 20 or 44% occurrences in the corpus, were employed, as shown in the following extracts:

> Warning: Do not expose to heat or high temperature. Avoid spraying directly into eyes. Do not throw container into the environment. (BP#19)

> Caution: Shake gently. Keep out of children's reach.

The high percentage of pure imperative sentences conveys the clear intention of manufacturers in providing necessary information about the do's and don'ts when using beauty products. Condoravdi and Lauer (2012) claim that an imperative sentence expresses a clear content associated with the addressee's future action, while the speaker or writer requires the content to become a reality. Evidently, the nature of hazard and the possible product risk associated with using the items are not stated, hence making the risk statements inadequate.

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4.   Conclusion

The investigation on the linguistic features of beauty-product warnings, e.g., noun entities, pronouns, specialized and highly technical vocabulary, adjectives, adverbs, modals, signal words, indicates the transparency of the communicative features of warning texts. The syntax, i.e., conditional sentence and sentence types, elicits the forecasting of future events, specifically in scene-setting the possible risks associated with product use. However, the separation of sentences presenting a fact and a command (i.e., declarative and imperative) weakens the imperative characteristics of the warning texts, while the conditional sentence manifests a regular directive for product consumers.

The findings further disclosed that beauty-product warnings in the country do not have homogeny or standardized content pattern, which manufacturers could follow in their labeling duties. It is suggested that product manufacturers should follow corresponding moves in crafting the warnings and significantly use standardized and regulated signal words based on the ANSI's (2002) criteria on alerting the consumers (i.e., Danger, Warning, and Caution). The specificity of nature of hazards (e.g., *harmful*) should be properly accounted for, (e.g., poisonous and toxic), while possible consequences should reveal the factual effect once erroneous situation occurs (e.g., *can cause eye irritation*); directives, on the other hand, (e.g., *do not use with other tropical acne medications*) should be directly named (e.g., *salicylic acid*) to avoid guessing or confusion.

The present study intends to promote the significance of cautionary texts, especially to those who are hardly aware of it. This research may help increase the level of awareness not only of beauty-product consumers but of legislators and manufacturers as well on how product warnings should be composed and crafted. It is important for the business players and the legislative personnel to consider the degree and choice of language used in product cautionary contents. By doing such, the consumers can have informed decisions before purchasing beauty products and can avoid health risks associated with product use.

Knowing then the language features of cautionary texts can help equip business players in writing reader-friendly product warnings. Further, the country's officials should strictly implement specific policies concerning the appropriate language and content of product warnings based on the Consumer Act of the Philippines; in this way, the degree of warning inadequacy in the mainstream Philippine market could be lessened. To explore more the essential aspects of this research, another study can be conducted to focus on the design features of product-warning texts in the Philippines.

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