

APOLOGY ROUTINE FORMULAE IN HUNGARIAN*

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This paper describes the forms and functions of Hungarian apology routine formulae (RF) used by Hungarian adults in a written Discourse Completion Test. Five apology RF types are identified, their choices being influenced by such factors as the offence type and its severity, the social role of the interlocutor and the offender's gender. Two main apology RF types, *Ne haragudj* 'Don't be angry' and *Elnézést* 'Excuse me' are shown to perform complementary communicative functions of restoring harmony in familiar vs. unfamiliar settings. Gender differences in the use of RF types present on various levels of analysis demonstrate that males and females choose different ways to restore social harmony and may attach importance to different aspects of the context.

1. Introduction

This study is a contribution to cross-cultural apology studies, to studies on apology and gender and to sociopragmatic research on Central European languages. While research on apologies has paid relatively little attention to apology routine formulae (RF), focusing on identifying and classifying other apology strategies, the goal of the present paper is to demonstrate that Hungarian apology RF, while bearing similarity to direct apology expressions in other languages, have language-specific forms¹ and functions, performing distinct jobs in the process of restoring harmony between the offender and the offended party, and are sensitive to such contextual parameters as the social role of the offended party in relation to the offender, the type of offensive action, its severity and the offender's gender.

In the following I will first review apology research (section 2) focusing on the relationship between apology, politeness and culture (2.1), apology and gender (2.2) and cross-cultural apology studies (2.3), then in section 3 I will present the study: its participants (3.1), methodology

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¹ Hungarian *Ne haragudj* 'Don't be angry' is quite unique as an apology RF. It is also found as an apology RF in Polish (*Nie gniewaj się*, Suszczyńska 1999) but, as Wouk (to appear) notices, in no other language that has been so far researched for apology.

(3.2) and then proceed to a detailed analysis of the data from a number of perspectives (3.3). Finally, in section 4 I will summarize the conclusions.

2. Research in apology: a review

Within speech act theory, apology was assigned to the category of expressives the illocutionary point of which was “to express the psychological state specified in the sincerity conditions about the state of affairs specified in the propositional content” (Searle 1976, 12). Still, the approach attempting to describe apology in terms of felicity conditions did not successfully account for real life instances of apology (Owen 1983, 117–135)² and a more complex, functional view of apology was adopted. Under the influence of Goffman’s (1971) concept of remedial work,³ apology was viewed not merely as an expression of S’s emotions but as an act that remedies an offence and restores social equilibrium and harmony. This view on apology is present in the majority of apology studies (Fraser 1981; Edmondson 1981;⁴ Leech 1983;⁵ Owen 1983;⁶ Holmes 1989; 1990; 1995; Meier 1995⁷) although with some differences in the terminology and in

² Owen’s (1983) attempt to apply Searlean felicity conditions to her examples of real life apologies, which in her study meant utterances that contained ‘key’ words or expressions such as *apologize*, *sorry* or *I’m afraid*, proved unsuccessful as not all the instances could be defined as sincere expressions of regret and the preparatory conditions became indeterminately complex and circular, being derived from the facts they were expected to account for.

³ In Goffman’s (1971, 139) words, “The function of remedial work is to change the meaning that otherwise might be given to an act, transforming what could be seen as offensive into what can be seen as acceptable.”

⁴ Defining apology, Edmondson (1981, 280) says: “the most predictable function of this illocution in discourse is that it counts as an attempt on the part of the speaker to cause the hearer to withdraw a preceding complaint: it is an attempt to restore social harmony.”

⁵ Leech (1983, 124–125) resorts to a mercantile metaphor when he argues that “an apology implies a transaction, in that it is a bid to change the balance-sheet of the relation between S and H”, from interpersonal imbalance to the restoration of equilibrium, or at least the reduction of disequilibrium, between S and H.

⁶ Owen (1983, 62) defines apology as a primary remedial move in a remedial exchange.

⁷ Meier (1995, 388) views apology as part of repair work, which remedies damage to S’s image (incurred by S’s behaviour which fell below the expected standard) and in this way leads to the convergence of S’s and H’s worlds, which in turn restores social harmony.

the conceptualizations of the restoration process. As Norrick (1978, 280) observes, “more is at stake in [...] an act of apologizing than expressing regret; [...] apologies are made with the hope of being forgiven, or that the addressee will dismiss the matter.”

2.1. Apology, politeness and culture

The politeness aspect of apology has been central to apology studies, being approached in a number of ways. Holmes (1995, 155) defines apologies as “face supportive acts” focused on redressing face-threatening behaviour and this way restoring equilibrium between S and H. Within Brown and Levinson’s framework, apologies first of all function as negative politeness strategies redressing H’s negative face,⁸ or his/her want for non-imposition (Brown–Levinson 1987, 187). Still, there are clear instances when apology redresses H’s positive face as when apologizing for introducing H to a third party using a wrong title (Holmes 1990, 162). Further, Goffman’s (1971, 144) definition of apology as representing “a splitting of the self into a blameworthy part and the part that stands back and sympathizes with the blame giving, and, by implication, is worthy of being brought back into the fold” clearly suggests that apology can restore S’s own social image.⁹ Specifically, apologies that follow S’s social gaffes are attempts to restore S’s own face. Finally, in many contexts apologizing, being costly to S, may be perceived as a face-threatening act (Brown–Levinson *op.cit.*, 68) that leads to face loss not face restoration.

Another perspective on the issue of politeness is offered by Meier (1995, 387), who argues that politeness be better conceptualized in terms of appropriateness judgments within a particular speech community. She

⁸ To Goffman (1967, 5–10) the term *face* means the positive social value a person claims for himself/herself, or “an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes”, “the most personal possession [...] on loan to him from society” that is sustained through ritual and role management. In Brown and Levinson’s (1987, 61) terms, face is the public self-image that every member wants to claim for himself/herself, consisting of negative face, with its claims to freedom of action and freedom from imposition, and positive face, the positive self-image that is appreciated and approved of by others.

⁹ A view of apology as saving exclusively S’s image when he/she behaves below the standard expected relative to a particular reference group is posited by Meier (1997, 197–8), who further states that “RW [repair work] repairs the damaged image by reaffirming shared values, thereby assuring the hearer that the speaker is a bona fide member of the group, who can be counted on to act appropriately in the future.”

argues that “what should be at issue [...] is not an absolute measure of [...] politeness, but rather the social interpretation of particular linguistic behavior within a particular speech community.”

A culture-specific dimension of apology comes to the fore when we consider the fact that the universality of the positive/negative concept of face, as defined by Brown and Levinson's (1987) model, has been challenged as not adequately representing speakers' communicative concerns in different cultures.¹⁰ Many researchers studying politeness in non-Western cultures like Japan and China (Ide 1989; Ide 1998; Matsumoto 1988; 1989; Gu 1990; Mao 1994; Yu 2003) found that the concept of negative politeness with its emphasis on individual autonomy was not compatible with the collective orientation of Japanese or Chinese society. Also, culture-specific concepts of face often differed in content from the positive/negative face model (Gu 1990). Indeed, Coulmas (1981b, 89) found that “while thanks and apologies may exist as generic types of activities across cultures, it is obvious that the pragmatic considerations of their implementation are culturally defined.” This means that not only does Japanese have standardized apology expressions that differ in form from those found in Western societies,¹¹ but that their communicative functions can only be understood when interpreted in terms of the Japanese ethics of indebtedness, a culture-specific concept that cannot be properly grasped in terms of the positive/negative face dichotomy.

Among the studies that questioned the universality of Brown and Levinson's framework and investigated politeness phenomena in their cultural context,¹² the majority of which focused on distant non-Western societies, there is little research that addresses such issues in relation to Central European languages. Wierzbicka's (1985; 1991) research on Polish and also Russian linguistic routines that reflect a cultural “ethos” of those communities is such an exception. Meier (1992, 3), in her study of Austrian German apologies, complained that “Austrian German suffers from neglect [...], being subsumed [...] under an assumed generic German language, albeit erroneously so.”

¹⁰ A detailed, critical review of politeness theories can be found in Kasper (1990).

¹¹ For instance, *sumimasen*, translated according to context, either as ‘Thank you’ or as ‘I’m sorry’, literally means ‘this is not the end’.

¹² Attempts to reconcile the universal and culture-specific aspects of politeness have been proposed (Mao 1994; O'Driscoll 1996; Spencer-Oatey 2000b; Spencer-Oatey –Jiang 2003), although have not yet been generally applied in cross-cultural or intracultural studies.

In her analysis of apologies¹³ of Midwest American and Austrian German university students she found culture-specific differences in apology strategies that could not be explained in terms of positive/negative politeness. For instance, Austrians, more often than Americans, used excuses and other “avoidance oriented” strategies, which were not instances of negative politeness but, as Meier (1996b, 159) following Ringel (1991) argued, were motivated by a sense of reduced responsibility and lack of control, the feeling of personal helplessness, and the sense of inevitability, of *Schicksal* (‘fate’), attitudes that developed under the Habsburg Monarchy. In my own research on Hungarian apology strategies I found a preference for self-denigration (*I’m terribly clumsy/careless*) both among Hungarian students, as compared with American and Polish students (Suszczyńska 1999), and among Hungarian adults (Suszczyńska 2003). This behaviour is similar to expressions of negative feelings among Austrians (*I hate it when I do that*) observed by Meier (1996b, 160).¹⁴ Such similarities may not be accidental although more research is needed to properly account for these phenomena.¹⁵

2.2. Apology and gender

The relationship between apology and gender was most systematically researched by Holmes (1989; 1990; 1995). Using an ethnographic ap-

¹³ Meier (1996a) uses the term *repair work*, which is equivalent to apology broadly understood, including apologetic illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs), excuses and other strategies that speakers use to remedy an offence.

¹⁴ Meier (1992), discussing Austrian German, refers to Clyne (1984, 120), who wrote that “in many aspects, Austrians communicate in a way more similar to Czechs, Slovenians, Hungarians, and Northern Italians than to Germans (especially North Germans).”

¹⁵ As Meier (1996b, 153) observes, making assertions regarding the value and belief system of particular societies leads to a controvertible territory. Value systems are not monolithic but dynamic and variable. In practice culture-specific concepts are explained on the basis of researchers’ own knowledge of a particular culture (Obeng 1999), supported by the works of recognized philosophers (for instance, Gu’s 1990, 238 reference to Confucius) or sociologists, but are also derived from interviews with community members (Bharuthram 2003) or arrived at with the help of procedures used in social psychology. Okumura and Wei (2000), who investigated apology strategies of British and Japanese women, asked the respondents to provide 20 answers to the question “Who am I?”, a procedure known as the Twenty Statements Test (TST), and demonstrated that the women’s strategy choices reflected important cultural differences that existed in their concepts of self.

proach, Holmes examined apologies of adult Pakeha New Zealanders and found a great number of gender differences in the distribution of apologies in her corpus. New Zealand women, for example, both produced and received the majority of recorded apologies. Further, apologies were most frequent between women, while apologies between males were rare. While males apologized more for time and property offences, females used more apologies for space and talk offences, the differences reflecting gender-specific concerns and norms in interaction. Men often regarded apologies between equals as superfluous, apologizing more to strangers than to friends and colleagues (in accordance with Brown and Levinson's claim that politeness increases together with increasing distance) and giving more weight to status difference and the seriousness of offence. On the other hand, women apologized as often to strangers as to friends (most often to their female friends), which is more in accordance with Wolfson's "bulge" model (1988), where more politeness can be found in less fixed relationships. Women also apologized more for lighter offences and regarded offences against female friends as more serious than those against strangers.

Holmes (1995, 161) also examined the overall use of apology RF in her corpus and did not find any gender differences in the overall use of RF in her corpus. Still, New Zealand males tended to use more formal RF types like *I apologize* more often than women, which might indicate that men regard apologies as signals of social distance, more appropriate with strangers than among close friends and in cases of more serious offences.

On the whole, Holmes in her study suggests that women and men may regard apologies as doing different jobs. Men consider apologies mainly as admissions of inadequacy and thus as self-oriented face-threatening acts, which, if possible, need to be avoided. On the other hand, women perceive apologizing as "other-oriented", as acts aimed at restoring and maintaining relationships, and tokens of concern or solidarity.

While Holmes's research reports considerable gender differences in the performance and conceptualizations of apology in adult Pakeha New Zealanders, studies examining apology in other languages mention only minor gender differences in the use of apology strategies (e.g., Meier 1992; 1998; Márquez Reiter 2000). Also, many cross-cultural studies (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989) did not examine gender differences at all. Further cross-cultural studies using compatible research methods and investigating males' and females' perceptions of contextual factors are needed to describe and explain the effect gender may have on the choice of apology strategies.

2.3. Cross-cultural research in apology and apology RF

A new chapter in cross-cultural, intercultural and interlanguage apology studies opened with the launching of the CCSARP (Cross Cultural Speech Act Realization Project). Following Fraser's (1981) work on apology strategies, cf. Cohen–Olshtain (1981), Olshtain–Cohen (1983) defined a “speech act set” of apology formulae, further developed by Blum-Kulka–Olshtain (1984) and adopted by CCSARP (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, 291ff) as their coding manual.¹⁶ The strength of the CCSARP speech act set as a universal unit of apology analysis was supported by Olshtain's (1989) findings, which revealed considerable similarity in the use of apology strategies in Hebrew, Australian English, Canadian French and German: IFID and Expression of responsibility were identified as all-purpose strategies, while Repair, Explanation and Concern were situation-specific. Olshtain also found that the same social and contextual factors and the same level of offence resulted in similar apologies in her data.¹⁷ Trosborg (1987; 1995),¹⁸ comparing apologies of native British English and Danish speakers elicited by means of a role play found that there were no significant differences in the use of the main apology strategies and concluded that the two nations shared similar cultures.

Examining the overall use of apology RF, Olshtain (1989, 165–8) found that, in spite of some differences, Hebrew, Australian English, Canadian French and German students tended to use apology RF in all situations to similar degrees. Also Meier (1996b), comparing apologies of American and Austrian German students, did not find statistically significant differences in RF use between the two groups except for one context of time offence where American students used RF significantly more often than Austrians, which Meier attributed to the high value placed on time in American society.

Olshtain (1989) found that RF use and its intensification correlated with social distance, status and severity of the violation. RF intensifi-

¹⁶ The main apology strategies used in these studies are (1) Illocutionary force indicating devices (IFIDs), (2) Taking on responsibility, (3) Explanation or account, (4) Offer of repair, and (5) Promise of forbearance.

¹⁷ Olshtain (1989, 171) adds an important caveat to her findings: the fact that very few culture-specific tendencies were found may be an artefact of the data collection instrument, a Discourse Completion Test, which contained cross-culturally similar situations, representing a student's life on a campus in a Western society.

¹⁸ Trosborg used her own, modified version of the CCSARP manual, although compatible with the original.

cation rose with higher severity of offence, but diminished as the apologizer's status became higher. Also, Hebrew speakers tended to prefer RF with strangers and in more formal situations than with friends and acquaintances. Vollmer and Olshtain (1989), analysing German apologies, revealed that the choice of strong or weak forms of apology RF depended on the level of severity of offence and on the assumed expectation of an apology to take place. Contrary to expectations, they found that power did not correlate significantly with RF selection, although intensification of RF did. On the other hand, Meier (1997) found that in her Austrian German data RF was most frequent in asymmetrical relations.

Bergman and Kasper (1993, 95) showed that, especially for American English speakers, for some offences the relationship between the severity of offence and the use of RF was reverse, suggesting two possible explanations for this phenomenon: either S may avoid admitting responsibility or, conversely, the offender may feel that a RF is not adequate for a major offence. Trosborg (1987; 1995) evinced the same phenomenon for British English and Danish speakers and provided the very same explanation.

Regarding RF types, the CCSARP manual provided a list of cross-culturally comparable illocutionary force indicating devices (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989, 290) that were earlier grouped into three RF types in Olshtain–Cohen (1983, 22) as (a) an expression of regret (*I'm sorry*), (b) an offer of apology (*I apologize*), (c) a request for forgiveness (*Excuse me, Forgive me, Pardon me*). This three-fold division has become accepted in many subsequent studies.

On the whole, many researchers (Owen 1983; Olshtain–Cohen 1983; Rintell–Mitchell 1989; Trosborg 1987; 1995) found great uniformity in the analysed data in using an expression of regret (*sorry*) as the main apology RF. *I apologize* was very rare in spoken English; for instance, Owen (1983, 63) in her corpus of British English apologies found only two such instances. Trosborg (1995, 399) also commented that this RF type was used only a few times by her native subjects, while requests for forgiveness (*Forgive me, Excuse me*,¹⁹ *Pardon me*) were not found at all.

Still, some studies provide enough information to conclude that in many languages more than one RF type are frequently used and that

¹⁹ *Excuse me*, according to Borkin and Reinhart (1978), functions as a ritualistic apology formula used for breaches of etiquette (e.g., small territory invasions) and not for personal offences, being used prior to an offence, so it is not surprising that it did not appear in the elicited data. For the same reason *Excuse me* does not appear in Owen's (1983) study which also focused on apologies following an offence.

RF forms may be sensitive to contextual parameters and gender. Holmes (1995) found that both women and men used the same range of apology strategies and in similar proportion, although men tended to use formal sub-strategies (e.g., *I must apologize*) more often, which may mean, as discussed above, that they either regard apologies as signals of social distance or use them only in relatively serious offences. Hebrew examples found in Olshtain (1989) contain such RF types as 'I apologize' or 'Forgiveness', although the details of their distribution in the data are not provided.

Vollmer and Olshtain (1989), after first grouping German RF variants into eight categories according to their meaning, finally regrouped them for reasons of cross-cultural comparison into the three major groups. It turned out that an expression of regret was frequent in all contexts, while an offer of apology was not. A request for forgiveness was used in a context when the offender was of lower status and there was social distance between the participants, which suggested that this RF type made a more intense apology than the expression of regret. Still, Vollmer and Olshtain (1989) commented that the range of variation in RF was considerably narrower than they had expected.

Meier (1992; 1997), on the other hand, found that Austrians, at least when compared to Americans, showed more variety regarding RF sub-strategies. While the American participants showed a strong preference for the expression of regret, Austrians most often used two RF sub-strategies, expression of regret (*Es tut mir leid*) and exoneration request (*Entschuldigung*), without significant difference between the two. Both RF types occurred in relatively high frequencies in all the situations, displaying no constraint on their use according to type of offense, its seriousness or interlocutor relationship. Still, when Meier (1997, 201) examined variants of exoneration request, she found that the form *Entschuldigung* ('excuse') was used much more frequently than *verzeihen* ('forgive') and that the latter was used twice as often by females than by males. In Meier (1992) we also find the information that the two most common exoneration requests tended to appear in different situations. Summing up, Meier's research suggests that in Austrian German there are some gender differences in the use of RF types and that some RF types may be sensitive to contextual parameters.

My study (Suszczyńska 1999) comparing apology strategies of American, Polish and Hungarian students supported earlier findings that the expression of regret (*I'm sorry*) was a dominant apology RF type used by Americans, while at the same time revealed that Polish and Hungarian

participants displayed a much greater variety of forms and showed preference for other apology RF than the expression of regret. The findings concerning Hungarian were further supported by another study examining apology strategies of Hungarian adults (Suszczyńska 2003) where gender differences in apology RF use were observed.

The following section will further explore the use of Hungarian apology RF and its types, in a systematic way examining their overall distribution in the data, their sensitivity to contextual parameters such as the type and severity of offence and the social identity of the interlocutor and gender preferences in their choice.

3. The study

3.1. The participants

While the majority of apology studies using elicited data examined university students, I decided to examine adults. Two groups of participants, all of them practising high school teachers, took part in the study. The first group participated in a written DCT (Discourse Completion Test) questionnaire (see 3.2) and consisted of 102 teachers (52 females and 50 males), the average age being 31.6 for the females, ranging from 22 to 52, and 36.5 for the males, ranging between 23 and 55. Half of them were the students of the upgrading program²⁰ offered by the Institute of English and American Studies, University of Szeged, the other half were their colleagues at work, whom they recruited to participate.²¹ The tests were distributed to the group during their weekend classes in Szeged and were returned to me either personally or by mail.

After I had received responses to the DCT, I planned to conduct the test assessing the offensiveness of the examined DCT situations but unfortunately, by that time only part of the originally examined group was available and some new participants, all of them EFL teachers from the same schools, were recruited.²² The second group consisted of 80

²⁰ The upgrading program is a two-year MA course for EFL teachers with a BA degree.

²¹ This is an instance of snowball sampling (Seale–Filmer 1998, 139), helpful in gaining access to people who would otherwise be out of reach for the researcher.

²² The fact that the DCT and the offence severity test were not filled by exactly the same group of participants is of importance as we cannot be sure whether

participants (41 females and 39 males), the average age for the females being 31.8, ranging from 24 to 48, and for the males 35.4, ranging from 24 to 54.

I chose the above-mentioned groups of EFL teachers mostly because of their accessibility. Besides, the groups could be said to represent “a community of practice”, defined as “an aggregate of people who come together around mutual engagement, in some common endeavor” (Eckert–McConnell–Ginet 1998, 490) and who share a repertoire of verbal resources, ways of talking, beliefs and values, and are situated in similar power relations. Such relatively homogeneous groups of participants were better suited for a small-scale convenience sample study.

3.2. The data collecting instrument and procedure

As mentioned above, two types of questionnaires were used: a production DCT questionnaire²³ in an open item, free response format²⁴ (Kasper 2000, 327–8) to obtain the participants’ written responses (see Appendix 1) and a rating-scale questionnaire (5-point rating scale), where 1 stood for ‘not offensive’ and 5 for ‘very offensive’, to elicit respondents’ assessment of the severity of offence in the same contexts.

I chose a written DCT for two reasons. First, the great majority of the participants lived in different parts of Hungary and in such circumstances a written DCT that could be taken home was a convenient option. Next, I felt that this method was less intimidating for my participants than other elicitation techniques such as an oral DCT or a role-play.

the respondents of the DCT actually perceived the seriousness of the offences in the same way as did those who filled the assessment test. Still, as both groups are EFL teachers working in the same schools, I believe that the results of the assessment test can be used for the present study.

²³ Although production questionnaires do not elicit natural responses (Beebe–Cumings 1996) and have been subject to criticism (Turnbull 2001), they enable researchers to collect large amounts of data quickly, to control contextual variables and to establish an initial set of strategies for a particular speech act. As Kasper (2000, 329) argues, “When carefully designed, production questionnaires are useful to inform about speakers’ pragmalinguistic knowledge of strategies and linguistic forms by which communicative acts can be implemented, and about their sociopragmatic knowledge of the context factors under which particular strategic and linguistic choices are appropriate.”

²⁴ In my DCT I did not use rejoinders and the participants could opt out if they felt they would rather say nothing (Bonikowska 1988).

The DCT consisted of thirty situations, twenty-four of them calling for apology and six eliciting other speech acts like an invitation or a praise,²⁵ which enabled the participants to produce responses other than apologies.²⁶ The apology situations differed in the type and severity of offence as well as in the nature of participants' relationship and were partly versions of situations found in other apology studies, and partly adapted from oral interviews with 13 participants (9 females and 4 males) who shared with me their experiences concerning apologizing and who later also participated in the written DCT. As a result, the DCT contained many situations taken from the participants' experiences at work and in relationships with their partners or spouses.

The descriptive statistics and a t-test for equality of means were carried out with the help of the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). In order to investigate the connection between the use of RF (and other strategies), the offence type and the S–H relationship, the situations were grouped according to offence type and H's social role in relation to S (see Appendix 2).

3.3. Data analysis

3.3.1. Apology RF and its sub-categories in the data

While in my earlier study (Suszczyńska 1999) I used the CCSARP coding categories, in my more recent research (Suszczyńska 2003) I followed Meier's model of repair work,²⁷ which views apologizing as a negotiation of the relationship between the offender and the offended party. In her model, apology RF are the most explicit means used to bring about the convergence between S's and H's worlds. In the present study, based on new data, I follow the same perspective on RF.

²⁵ Every fourth situation in the DCT was a non-apology situation.

²⁶ In my earlier study (Suszczyńska 2003) some participants complained that they found the DCT monotonous and having to apologize all the time made them uncomfortable.

²⁷ Meier (1992) groups RW strategies into three orientations according to the way in which they (attempt to) bring about convergence between S and H. The $S \rightarrow H$ orientation, where S accepts H's perspective on the offence, includes such strategies like statements of violation, self-blame and an offer of redress; the $S \leftarrow H$ orientation, where S presents his/her version of events, includes excuses, justifications and appeal to H's understanding; finally, the $S \rightarrow \leftarrow H$ orientation, where S directly aims at reconciliation and absolution, contains apology RF and appeals for the restoration of the status quo between S and H.

The apology RF is the most straightforward and explicit way used to perform apology and the most frequently used strategy in my data, the females (17.00) using it significantly more often than the males (14.46) ($p = 0.012$).

In Hungarian, apology RF is realized by five main RF sub-categories or types, glossed as *Bocsánat* ('Forgiveness-nom'), *Ne haragudj* ('Don't be angry'), *Elnézést* ('Excuse-acc'), *Sajnálom* ('I'm sorry') and *Bocs*, a casual, abbreviated form of *Bocsánat*, which I posited as a separate Hungarian apology RF in Suszczyńska (2003) due to its distinct communicative function. Although the present study focuses on the Hungarian RF sub-categories as "units" for analysis, it needs to be mentioned that each of them has a variety of extended linguistic forms, can be internally intensified, and *Bocsánat*, *Ne haragudj* and *Elnézést* also have T- and V-variants. *Bocsánat* ('Forgiveness-nom') and *Elnézést* ('Excuse-acc') are themselves neutral in terms of T/V-distinction, while *Bocsáss meg* ('Forgive-imp-T') and *Elnézésedet kérem* ('I ask your forgiveness-T-acc') and *Bocsásson meg* ('Forgive-imp-V') and *Elnézését kérem* ('I ask your forgiveness-V-acc') represent the T- and V-variants respectively. Regarding *Ne haragudj*, it is itself a T-form, the V-form being *Ne haragudjon*. Such forms appeared in my data although with rather low frequency.

Naturally, the above-listed apology RF could be, with some effort, grouped into the three CCSARP categories, that is, (a) an expression of regret (*Sajnálom*), (b) an offer of apology (*Bocsánat*), (c) a request for forgiveness (*Elnézést*, *Ne haragudj*, *Bocsánat*, *Bocs*). The expression of regret is least problematic, but an offer of apology is more so, as it requires a performative verb or expression (like *I apologize* in English or *Przepraszam* in Polish). In Hungarian the closest functional equivalent to *I apologize* is *Bocsánat*,²⁸ although due to its meaning it could also be classified as a request of forgiveness. Still, it is the request for forgiveness category that I find the most problematic as it puts under the same heading three or even four functionally different Hungarian RF. For these reasons I follow Owen's (1983) "key word" approach.

Table 1 summarizes the distribution of the main five apology RF types in the whole data, together with the t-test results concerning gender difference, while Figure 1 presents the same results visually.

²⁸ *Bocsánat* appears as equivalent to *I apologize* and *Przepraszam* in dictionaries and in private communication with my Hungarian students this equivalence was supported.

Table 1
Apology RF types in the data

ROUTINE FORMULA	SUM (N = 102)	GENDER	MEANS	SIG. (2-TAILED)
RF2 <i>Ne haragudj</i>	492.00	Male	3.6800	.001
		Female	5.9231	.001
RF3 <i>Elnézést</i>	449.00	Male	4.4400	.884
		Female	4.3654	.885
RF5 <i>Bocs</i>	260.00	Male	2.5400	.966
		Female	2.5577	.966
RF1 <i>Bocsánat</i>	230.00	Male	2.3800	.614
		Female	2.1346	.616
RF4 <i>Sajnálom</i>	159.00	Male	1.2200	.060
		Female	1.8846	.059

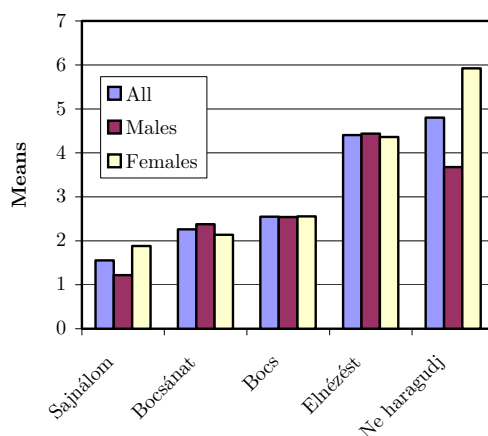


Fig. 1
Apology RF and gender

As can be seen in Table 1 and Figure 1, the distribution of apology RF types in the whole data is uneven, the most frequently used formulae being *Elnézést* and *Ne haragudj*, and the least frequently employed one being *Sajnálom*. Also, there are some interesting gender differences to be observed in the distribution of RF types in the data. First, *Ne haragudj* is used significantly more often by the females ($p = 0.012$) than by the males. *Elnézést* is used with the same frequency by both the men and the women, but for the females *Elnézést* remains only the second choice

due to their preference for *Ne haragudj*, while for the males *Elnézést* is the most frequently used RF type in the data. The second visible, although statistically not significant ($p=0.06$) gender difference appears in the use of *Sajnálom*, the other RF type preferred by the females. As for the remaining RF types, *Bocs* is used practically with the same frequency by both genders, while the males use *Bocsánat* slightly more frequently than the females. The above-mentioned global-level differences and similarities concerning the frequencies of particular RF types and gender preferences in their distribution need to be further explored on the level of individual situations. The following section will examine RF and its types in context.

3.3.2. Apology RF in context: general observations

In order to further disambiguate the use of apology RF and its types in the Hungarian data it is necessary to have a look at the distribution of RF across the DCT situations (see Figure 2).

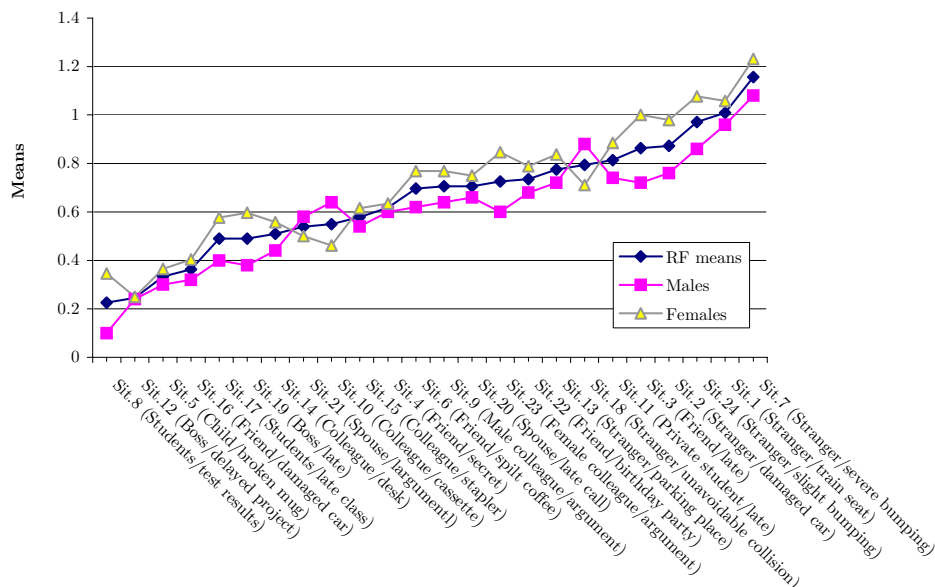


Fig. 2

Apology RF use across situations

In my data apology RF have been used in all the situations, forming an apology RF continuum, from very low to quite high RF means in indi-

vidual contexts. A closer look at the situations at the two ends of the continuum reveals a fact observed elsewhere in apology studies, namely, that many situations at the “low” end of the continuum represent much more severe offences²⁹ than those at the “high” end. Indeed, the relationship between severity of offence and RF means in my data appears to be quite intricate. The negative correlation between the RF means and the offensiveness means calculated with the Excel program is rather weak ($-.453$), still it demonstrates that there is some tendency in the data to use less RF in some of more offensive contexts. It should be added that this tendency is compensated by the positive correlation ($.689$) between offence size and the overall strategy use, that is, as the offensiveness grows, so does the amount of employed strategies (but other than RF).

It is also interesting to observe that among the individual RF types, *Bocsánat*, *Elnézést* and *Bocs* display weak negative correlation with offence size, that is, the participants are expected to use these RF types more readily with less serious offences. On the other hand, *Ne haragudj* and *Sajnálom* show weak positive correlation with severity of offence, which means that as the offensiveness grows, the two RF types are expected to be employed more often. This difference in correlation is in an intricate way related to gender, as *Ne haragudj* and *Sajnálom* are most often chosen by the females, while *Elnézést* is the first choice for the men.

Another aspect of the RF continuum concerns gender difference on the level of individual situations. As Figure 2 demonstrates, in many situations the females used more RF than the males but altogether there are four situations where the difference is statistically significant: Sit. 24 (Stranger/slight bumping), Sit. 8 (Students/test results), Sit. 23 (Female colleague/argument) and Sit. 19 (Boss/late), while in Sit. 17 (Students/late class) the level of significance is $p = 0.075$. All those situations indicate contexts where gender difference will be relevant on a more global level. The situations where the males used more apology RF than the females did not produce statistically significant results, Sit. 18 (Stranger/

²⁹ It should be noted that in my data there were hardly any gender differences in the offensiveness rankings. The only statistically significant difference was found in Sit. 2 (Stranger/damaged car), ranked as more offensive by females. The offensiveness means for all the situations were 2.99 for males and 2.96 for females. The males ranked Respect offences, and offences against spouses and students slightly higher than the females, while the females found offences against the boss as slightly more serious, although the differences were not significant. Still, while both genders agreed as to the degree of offensiveness they chose different strategies when trying to amend the wrong.

unavoidable collision) showing the biggest — although statistically not significant ($p=0.07$) — difference where the males outdid the females. It should be added that in that particular context the males often reproached H for blocking the way so the RF itself might have a reproachful rather than conciliatory undertone.

While significant gender differences in the use of apology RF indicate contexts where there was a difference in the perception of the need to explicitly apologize for an offence, it should not be ignored that in many situations both the males and the females chose apology RF with almost the same frequency. In Sit. 12 (Boss/delayed project), Sit. 5 (Child/broken mug), Sit. 16 (Friend/damaged car), Sit. 15 (Colleague/stapler), Sit. 20 (Spouse/late call) and Sit. 1 (Stranger/train seat) there were no significant gender differences concerning the use of RF and its types, the exception being Sit. 4 (Friend/secret), where in spite of the almost identical RF means, there was significant gender difference concerning the use of *Bocsánat* and *Bocs*, the fact that will be discussed below.

3.3.2.1. Apology RF types in situations

Besides differences in the apology RF use in context, there were differences in the use of RF types in particular situations.

Bocsánat was used significantly more often by the males in Sit. 7 (Stranger/severe bumping) and in Sit. 18 (Stranger/unavoidable collision), two situations ranked low for their offensiveness and at the same time having the highest frequency of *Bocsánat* in the whole data. The males also used this RF type more often than the females in Sit. 21 (Spouse/argument) ($p=0.08$), ranked high on the offensiveness scale, although the frequency of *Bocsánat* in this situation was much lower than in the collision situations mentioned above. On the other hand, the females used *Bocsánat* significantly more often in Sit. 17 (Students/late class), ranked as little offensive, and in Sit. 4 (Friend/secret), perceived as highly offensive, the two contexts where the males did not use *Bocsánat* at all. On the whole, *Bocsánat* was most often used, and particularly by the men, in collisions with strangers, although always as the second choice after *Elnézést*. In the remaining contexts this RF type was used much less frequently.

As for *Ne haragudj*, it was always the females who used it significantly more often than the males and in numerous contexts: in Sit. 24 (Stranger/slight bumping), where the males did not use it at all, in Sit. 7 (Stranger/severe bumping), Sit. 6 (Friend/spilt coffee), Sit. 22 (Friend/

birthday party), Sit. 11 (Private student/late), Sit. 9 (Male colleague/argument) and Sit. 23 (Female colleague/argument). Besides, the females used *Ne haragudj* more than the males in Sit. 13 (Stranger/parking place) ($p = 0.62$). All in all, *Ne haragudj* was used with high frequency, and as the first choice, in the majority of contexts involving familiar, equal status interlocutors. The participants, and in particular the males, used it definitely less frequently with students, the boss and strangers.

Elnézést is a RF type that did not display many instances of significant gender difference on the level of individual situations. Still, it was more often the males than the females who used it more. Thus, the males used significantly more *Elnézést* in Sit. 9 (Male colleague/argument) and Sit. 23 (Female colleague/argument), and also in Sit. 10 (Colleague/cassette), the difference not being significant ($p = 0.85$). On the other hand, the females used *Elnézést* significantly more often just in Sit. 8 (Students/test results). The situations where *Elnézést* was used most, and often as the participants' first choice, involve all the situations with strangers. It was used much less frequently with familiar, equal status addressees.

Interestingly, *Sajnálom* never displayed significant gender difference on the level of individual situations. The overall higher frequency of *Sajnálom* in the female responses seems to be due to the fact that the males used it in a more limited range of contexts than the females. The situation where both genders used *Sajnálom* often, the females more than the males, was Sit. 2 (Stranger/damaged car), ranked as quite offensive. Less frequently, *Sajnálom* was also used in Sit. 6 (Friend/spilt coffee), in Sit. 4 (Friend/secret), in Sit. 22 (Friend/birthday party) and in the personal Respect situations with colleagues. Neither the males nor the females used *Sajnálom* in Sit. 15 (Colleague/stapler) and Sit. 14 (Colleague/desk).

Finally, *Bocs*, used with the same frequency by both genders in the whole data, displayed significant gender differences on the level of particular situations. The males used it significantly more often in two situations where the females did not use *Bocs* at all: in Sit. 10 (Colleague/cassette) and in Sit. 4 (Friend/secret), both ranked high for offensiveness. As for the females, there were many situations where they used *Bocs* more often than the males, for instance Sit. 14 (Colleague/desk), Sit. 15 (Colleague/stapler) and Sit. 3 (Friend/late), although the difference was never significant. To sum, *Bocs* was used most often in less serious offences with familiar, equal status addressees and sometimes as the participants' first

choice. Its use in the contexts of more serious offences is more typical for the males, and can be considered as an attempt to play down the severity of the transgression.

Table 2 and Table 3 below present the division of labour between the apology RF types across the DCT situations.

Table 2
Significantly preferred apology RF types in situations

<i>Ne haragudj</i>	Off. size	<i>Elnézést</i>	Off. size
Sit. 22 (Friend/birthday party) (F*)	3.11	Sit. 24 (Stranger/slight bumping)	1.57
Sit. 11 (Private student/late) (F*)	3.12	Sit. 1 (Stranger/train seat)	1.98
Sit. 5 (Child/broken mug) (F)	3.22	Sit. 17 (Students/late class)	2.33
Sit. 9 (Male coll./argument) (F)	3.26	Sit. 8 (Students/test results) (F*)	2.85
Sit. 23 (Fem. coll./argument) (F*)	3.32	Sit. 13 (Stranger/park. place) (M)	3.03
Sit. 21 (Spouse/argument)	3.44	Sit. 19 (Boss/late) (F)	3.38
Sit. 10 (Colleague/cassette)	4	<i>Bocs</i>	Off. size
Sit. 4 (Friend/secret)	4.15	Sit. 14 (Coll./desk) (F)	1.94
Sit. 16 (Friend/damaged car) (F)	4.47	Sit. 3 (Friend/late) (F)	2.46

Table 2 shows all the situational contexts (17) where the participants significantly preferred one RF type over the others, the choice being mainly between *Ne haragudj* and *Elnézést*, although in a couple of situations the first choice was *Bocs*. As it was observed earlier in this section, neither *Bocsánat* nor *Sajnálom* appeared as the significantly most frequently used RF type in any of the situations. Gender-wise, Table 2 indicates that a particular RF type, being the first choice for both the males and the females, was used significantly more often by the females (F*), while (F) or (M) mean that the females or the males used a particular RF type more often than the other gender, although the difference was not statistically significant. The absence of any such indication means that both genders applied a particular routine as their first choice and with roughly the same frequency. Table 2 also contains information concerning the participants' estimations of offence size.

As can be seen, *Ne haragudj* is chosen as a significantly most preferred strategy in nine situations, all of them being interactions with familiar or close social equals, their seriousness ranging from mildly to quite serious offences. In almost all of these situations the females used *Ne haragudj* more than the males. On the other hand, *Elnézést* was significantly chosen for unequal status interactions or for interactions with

strangers, the offensiveness ranging from trivial to mildly serious. In half of these contexts there is no gender difference in the use of *Elnézést*.

Comparing the *Ne haragudj* and *Elnézést* 'lists', the situations involving students and the child need a word of commentary. Sit. 11 (Private student/late) belongs to the *Ne haragudj* group, which suggests that a private student as a recipient of apology is perceived more as a social familiar or even equal. On the other hand, while the situations involving students in class belong to the *Elnézést* group, which means that this category of students is viewed as socially more distant and unequal. The reason for this difference lies in the fact that for the examined group of teachers private students are an important source of extra income, and infractions against them can be perceived as costly. Also, teachers meet their private students, many of them adults, in their homes, so familiarity naturally develops. Sit. 5 (Child/broken mug) is also worth consideration as it belongs to the *Ne haragudj* group although the offended party is in an unequal relationship with the offender. Still, emotional closeness and affect together with the young age of the offended party downplay or reduce, at least in this context, power difference.

Finally, there are only two situations where the significantly first choice was *Bocs*. Both of them are non-serious offences against familiar addressees.

Table 3 presents those situations where the choice of a RF type was either not statistically significant, or two RF types were selected with almost the same frequency, or the males and the females differed in their preferences.

Table 3

Not significantly preferred apology RF types in situations

	OFF. SIZE	MALES	FEMALES
Sit. 18 (Stranger/unavoidable collision)	1.95	<i>Elnézést/Bocsánat</i>	<i>Elnézést</i>
Sit. 15 (Colleague/stapler)	2.14	<i>Ne haragudj/Bocs</i>	<i>Ne haragudj/Bocs</i>
Sit. 7 (Stranger/severe bumping)	2.44	<i>Bocsánat/Elnézést</i>	<i>Elnézést</i>
Sit. 20 (Spouse/late call)	2.62	<i>Bocs/Ne haragudj</i>	<i>Bocs/Ne haragudj</i>
Sit. 6 (Friend/spilt coffee)	2.78	<i>Elnézést/Bocsánat</i>	<i>Ne haragudj</i>
Sit. 2 (Stranger/damaged car)	3.77	<i>Elnézést/Sajnálom</i>	<i>Sajnálom</i>
Sit. 12 (Boss/delayed project)	4.08	<i>Ne haragudj</i>	<i>Elnézést/Sajnálom</i>

The RF choices presented in Table 3 provide some support for the previous findings summed up in Table 2. The choice of *Elnézést* in Sit. 18 (Stranger/unavoidable collision), Sit. 7 (Stranger/severe bumping) and Sit. 2 (Stranger/damaged car) corresponds to similar uses of this RF

type presented in Table 2. Also, Sit. 15 (Colleague/stapler) and Sit. 20 (Spouse/late call) representing offences of medium severity committed against socially familiar addressees are good candidates for either *Bocs* or *Ne haragudj*. The presence of *Sajnálom* in Sit. 2 (Stranger/damaged car) and in Sit. 12 (Boss/delayed project), used more by the women, suggests that this RF type fits quite severe transgressions against addressees who are distant either in terms of familiarity or in terms of status and where not much can be done in terms of remedy. *Bocsánat*, used more readily by the males, appears to be an alternative to *Elnézést* in space collisions. The two situations where the male and female reactions clearly differ are Sit. 6 (Friend/spilt coffee) and Sit. 12 (Boss/delayed project). The females perceive this situation as belonging to the *Ne haragudj* group, that is, as an offence against a socially close interlocutor, while the males seem to focus more on the offence itself, and probably on their own failure. The choice of *Ne haragudj* by the males in Sit. 12 (Boss/delayed project) is surprising considering the fact that in Sit. 19 (Boss/late) both genders used mainly *Elnézést*. The number of RF instances in this situation is very low, so any generalizations are difficult to make. Still, while *Elnézést* in this context recognizes status difference between the interlocutors, *Ne haragudj* may be an attempt to reduce the distance and this way facilitate the restoration process. Further investigation of the participants' motives would be necessary to make more substantial claims.

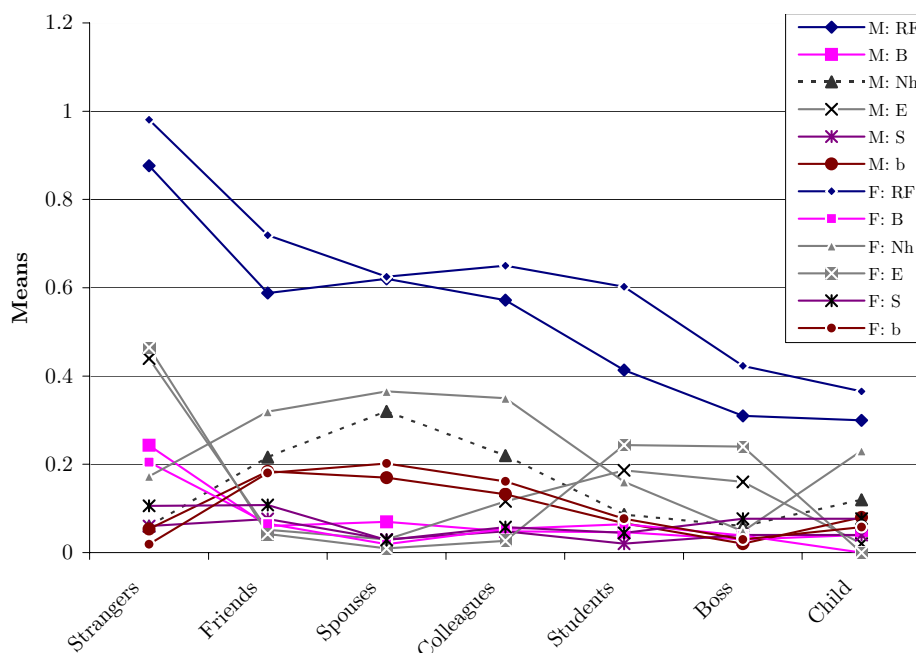
As the final level of analysis, I will examine the use of all RF and its sub-categories in the data, grouping the situations according to the social role of the offended party and according to offence type, as can be seen in Figure 3 and Figure 4 below.

3.3.2.2. Apology RF in context: H's social role

Figure 3 (overleaf) demonstrates a number of important and not accidental regularities (see also Table 4).

Both the males and the females use apology RF most frequently with strangers, the females using it more often than the males ($p = 0.074$). The high RF means with strangers are partly due to the fact that three stranger situations involve bodily collisions that are most easily manageable with a mere RF, although other situations with strangers (Space and Property offences) also evince more explicit RF use than situations with more familiar interlocutors.

Friends received significantly more RF from the females than from the males ($p = 0.022$) and the same is true about students ($p = 0.003$). On



M – males, F – females; B – *Bocsánat*, Nh – *Ne haragudj*, E – *Elnézést*, S – *Sajnálom*, b – *Bocs*

Fig. 3

Apology RF types and H's social role

the other hand, both genders had the same RF means when apologizing to their spouses, displaying a kind of convergence in a relationship that is at the same time most intimate and at least theoretically equal. Finally, the females used more RF with the colleagues and the boss, although the difference was not statistically significant.

The low RF means with the boss look intriguing, especially that both Sit. 19 (Boss/late) and Sit. 12 (Boss/delayed project) were assessed as quite offensive. The answer may partly lie in the fact that apology RF are often found as not adequate for major failures. Also, both situations were instances of emergency, where immediate remedy was required rather than a performance of verbal routines. But then, perhaps, the participants found apologizing in these contexts rather costly and decided not to denigrate themselves in front of their superior.³⁰ The participants'

³⁰ The participants revealed to me that their relationship with their boss was often informal and friendly and they were more like colleagues. Still, friendliness and informality do not seem to be salient in the two analysed contexts.

Table 4
Distribution of apology RF types according to H's social role

MALES	OFF. SIZE	RF	B	Nh	E	s	b
Strangers	2.456	0.877	0.243	0.06	0.440	0.060	0.053
Friends	3.395	0.588	0.06	0.216	0.052	0.076	0.184
Spouses	3.032	0.62	0.07	0.32	0.03	0.03	0.17
Colleagues	2.930	0.572	0.048	0.22	0.116	0.048	0.132
Students	2.766	0.413	0.047	0.087	0.187	0.020	0.067
Boss	3.728	0.31	0.03	0.06	0.16	0.04	0.02
Child	3.215	0.3	0.04	0.12	0.02	0.04	0.08
FEMALES	OFF. SIZE	RF	B	Nh	E	s	b
Strangers	2.456	0.981	0.205	0.173	0.465	0.106	0.019
Friends	3.395	0.719	0.065	0.319	0.042	0.108	0.181
Spouses	3.032	0.625	0.0192	0.365	0.0096	0.029	0.202
Colleagues	2.930	0.65	0.054	0.35	0.027	0.058	0.162
Students	2.766	0.603	0.064	0.160	0.244	0.045	0.077
Boss	3.728	0.423	0.038	0.048	0.240	0.077	0.030
Child	3.215	0.3654	0	0.2308	0	0.0769	0.0577

own reflections and comments would be a good source of information in that matter.

Both genders used apology RF least frequently with their own child, the qualification being that there was altogether one child situation in the DCT. Still, if we compare Sit. 5 (Child/broken mug) with Sit. 2 (Stranger/damaged car) and Sit. 6 (Friend/spilt coffee), all of them property offences, it turns out that RF means in the child situation are much lower than in the other two contexts.

To summarize, the females used more apology RF than the males to all their interlocutors except their spouses. Also, the males clearly differentiated in the use of RF between their social equals like friends, spouses and colleagues and social minors, i.e., their students, while the females used RF as frequently with their students as with their colleagues, although with an important difference concerning the RF type.

On the level of the RF types, Figure 3 shows a number of important tendencies. First, two dominating RF types are *Ne haragudj* and *Elnézést* and their distribution across interlocutors' categories appears to be complementary: whenever *Ne haragudj* use goes up, *Elnézést* goes down and vice versa.

Both genders used *Ne haragudj* most often when apologizing to interlocutors who are socially equal and close, that is, to friends, spouses and colleagues. The females used *Ne haragudj* to the three groups of interlocutors with almost the same frequency, while the men used it most often with spouses. Also, the females used this RF type more often than men with distant interlocutors, i.e., strangers and with social minors, the students and the child. It is worth noticing that both the males and the females hardly used *Ne haragudj* with their boss. On the whole, the women used *Ne haragudj* more frequently than the men and more often to all types of interlocutors except the boss.

As for *Elnézést*, it was a RF type used most often with strangers, with no gender difference regarding frequency. Both the men and the women also used *Elnézést* with socially unequal interlocutors, the students and the boss, in both contexts the females using more *Elnézést* than the males. On the other hand, the males used this apology RF type with colleagues, while the females hardly did. The females never used *Elnézést* with the child, and as for the males, there was just one instance of this RF type used in this context.

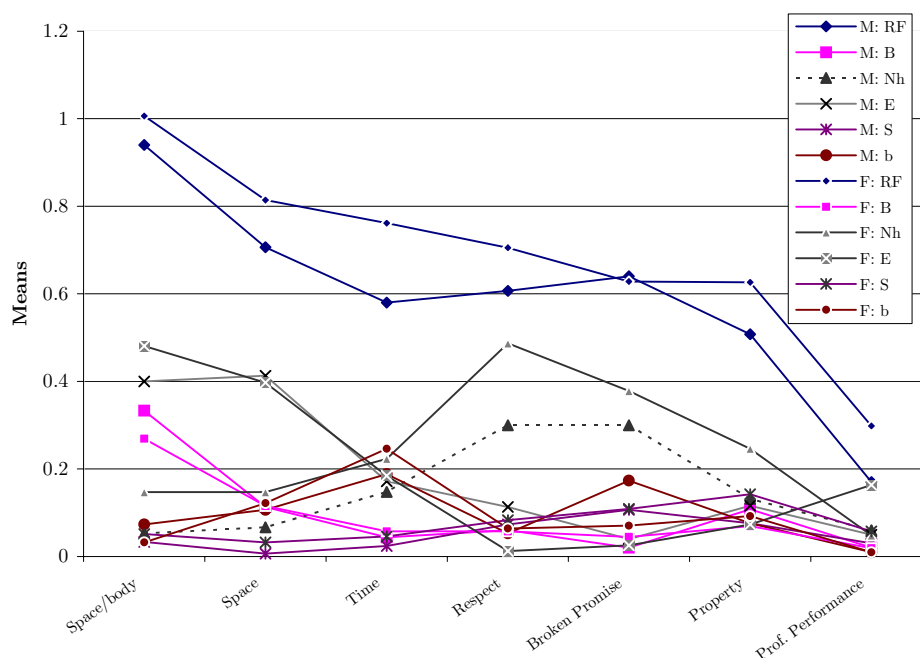
Bocs appears as a RF used mostly with socially close equals: friends, spouses and colleagues, the women using it slightly more with colleagues and spouses. Both the men and the women hardly used *Bocs* with strangers, although the men used it more often than the women in that context. The *Bocs* curve is similar to that of *Ne haragudj*. Still, *Bocs*, as observed earlier, seems to assume not only friendly relationship but also that the offence is not serious, so its occurrence is necessarily limited.

Bocsánat is a RF used most often with strangers, the men using it slightly more often than the women. There are very few instances of this RF type used with the other types of interlocutors, although the men used it more than the women with their spouses. Also, the women never used *Bocsánat* with their child.

Sajnálom, more frequent in the female responses, was used with low frequency with all types of interlocutors. The females used it slightly more often than the men with all the interlocutors except their spouse, where both the men and the women used it with the same low frequency.

3.3.2.3. Apology RF in context: offence type

Figure 4 presents the distribution of apology RF and its types according to the type of offence (see also Table 5).



M – males, F – females; B – *Bocsánat*, Nh – *Ne haragudj*, E – *Elnézést*, S – *Sajnálom*, b – *Bocs*

Fig. 4

Apology RF types and offence type

As can be seen, the RF is most frequently used in the Space/body offences, being the most efficient strategy to remedy such unintentional bodily collisions. The Space offences, which just like the Space/body transgressions were assessed as only mildly offensive, come second in RF use. Although in both contexts the females used more RF than the males, the difference is small and not significant statistically.

On the other hand, in the Time offences the gender difference was significant, the females using RF more often than the males in all the time situations, especially when apologizing to students, to the friend and to the boss. This finding is interesting in the light of Holmes's research where it was males who apologized more for Time transgressions, which, as Holmes (1995, 185) observed, may suggest that men have different priorities than women.³¹ Still, it should be remembered that Holmes worked

³¹ Holmes (1995, 168) suggested that it may be the case that males more than females perceive time as a very valuable commodity.

Table 5
Distribution of apology RF types according to offence type

MALES	OFF. SIZE	RF	B	Nh	E	S	b
Space/body	1.987	0.94	0.33	0.053	0.4	0.033	0.0733
Space	2.312	0.707	0.113	0.067	0.413	0.007	0.107
Time	2.781	0.58	0.044	0.148	0.172	0.024	0.188
Respect	3.340	0.607	0.06	0.3	0.113	0.073	0.053
Broken promise	3.755	0.64	0.02	0.3	0.04	0.107	0.173
Property	3.276	0.508	0.108	0.132	0.116	0.076	0.076
Prof. performance	3.462	0.17	0.02	0.06	0.05	0.03	0.01
FEMALES	OFF. SIZE	RF	B	Nh	E	S	b
Space/body	1.987	1.006	0.269	0.147	0.481	0.051	0.032
Space	2.312	0.814	0.115	0.147	0.397	0.032	0.122
Time	2.781	0.762	0.058	0.223	0.185	0.046	0.246
Respect	3.340	0.705	0.058	0.487	0.013	0.083	0.064
Broken promise	3.755	0.628	0.045	0.378	0.026	0.109	0.071
Property	3.276	0.627	0.069	0.246	0.073	0.142	0.092
Prof. performance	3.462	0.298	0.019	0.048	0.163	0.058	0.010

with a different type of data and analysed whole apology responses (with or without RF).

The females also used more RF in the personal Respect offences, especially with their female colleague, although the difference was not statistically significant. As for the Broken promise offences, this offence category consists of situations that, compared to Time or Space offences, are less homogeneous in terms of offence type and also vary in their offensiveness. On the whole, both the men and the women used RF with the same frequency in this context, although the males apologized more for forgetting to bring the cassette, while the females for not going to the birthday party.

There is a significant gender difference in the Property offences, the females using more RF than the men in all property situations. Again, Holmes's research produced opposite results, which Holmes (1995, 170) found consistent with a popular belief that men value things more than women. Whether the Hungarian findings mean that the females find things more values than the males is a matter for further investigation.

Finally, the Professional performance failures have lowest RF means, the females using more RF than the males, although not significantly.

This type of offence or failure is definitely face-threatening for the offender and this may be a reason for low RF frequency.

On the level of apology RF types, it is interesting to observe that certain offence types show preference for certain apology routines. Thus, *Elnézést*, with no gender difference, was the most preferred RF type in the Space offences and was also the first choice, especially for the females, in the Space/body failures. The females also used *Elnézést* more often than the males in the Professional performance failures, while the males, unlike the females, used it in the Respect offences. *Ne haragudj* was the most often used RF type in the personal Respect and the Broken promise offences, the females using it in these contexts definitely more often than the males. The females also favoured *Ne haragudj* in the Property offences. On the other hand, there was no preferred RF type in the Time offences, three different RF types clustering at the same frequency level. The Professional failure and Property infractions showed the same phenomenon in the case of the male participants.

Here also, just like in Figure 3, *Ne haragudj* and *Elnézést* show opposite tendencies in many contexts: high frequency of *Ne haragudj* goes together with low frequency of *Elnézést*.

As for the remaining apology RF types, *Bocsánat* can be found relatively frequently only in the Space/body offences, the males using it slightly more often than the females, the remaining offence contexts showing low occurrence of this RF type. *Bocs* appears most frequently in the Time offences, where the females used it more often than the males, and in the Broken promise offences, where the males used it more than twice as often as the females. Finally, *Sajnálom* is most often used in the Broken promise offences and then, by the females, in the Property offences, although the frequency of occurrence of this RF type in all the contexts is low.

Concerning the relationship between the apology RF types and offence size, Tables 4 and 5 show that the contexts assessed as least offensive, i.e., the offences against strangers and the Space/body and Space transgressions show strong preference for *Elnézést*. On the other hand, the most serious offences are less predictable on the basis of mere offensiveness ranking. The transgressions against the boss take *Elnézést*, the Broken promise offences show preference for *Ne haragudj*, while in the Professional performance failures the females most often use *Elnézést*, the men, however, do not have a favourite RF type. Clearly, the choice of a particular RF is motivated simultaneously by a number of different factors, some of which have not been considered in the present study.

3.3.3. Apology RF types: what they convey

In this section I will look at the findings of the present study in the light of native speakers' own understandings of what the Hungarian RF convey in interaction when used after an offence took place. It is important to mention that what was described were the particular apology forms and not types. Thus, the description of *Ne haragudj* referred to its most often used T-form and not to the V-form, *Ne haragudjon*. Those understandings were collected during an informal discussion in class with my university students and cannot be taken as complete and exhaustive descriptions. Still, they may provide some basis for interpreting the results and may help define the different 'jobs' Hungarian RF types perform in interaction.

As for *Ne haragudj*, my students characterized it as personal and 'other-oriented', conveying such emotions like remorse, a hope to be forgiven, considerateness for the offended party's feelings and for the relationship itself, and as appropriate to use with friends and close acquaintances, especially in personal offences. My students also agreed that what *Ne haragudj* most centrally conveys, when contrasted with the other RF types, is that the offender wants the offended party to know it is important for him/her, that the offended party think of him/her as a friend again, that their good relationship be restored. As *Ne haragudj* was most often used in contexts where the relationship between the parties was close prior to the offence, the data supported the students' insights. The fact that the women used *Ne haragudj* more often than the men supports Holmes's claim that when apologizing women are more relationship and solidarity oriented than men.

Elnézést was described as formal, reserved and implying V-form usage between the parties, appropriate to use with strangers and higher status addressees. My students made it clear that using *Elnézést* does not convey interpersonal closeness or friendly feelings and may sound distancing when used in close relationships or in personal offences. The distribution of *Elnézést* in the data seemed to fit the description as *Elnézést* was most often used to restore relationships that were socially distant and characterized by status difference. Thus, it seems that what *Elnézést* mostly conveys is that the offender recognizes the transgression and wants to amend the breach but does it from a distance, without personal involvement.

The above specifications throw some light on the gender differences observed in the use of *Elnézést*. Thus, while the females approached col-

leagues the same way as friends, using *Ne haragudj* and almost never *Elnézést*, the males used more *Elnézést* with colleagues in all types of infractions, and especially in the personal Respect offences. Such a difference may suggest that the males did not consider colleagues as very close interlocutors or that they used *Elnézést* as a distancing device. As for the females, their more frequent use of *Elnézést*, when apologizing to the boss, especially in the delayed project context, and with students in class, in particular in the test results situation, suggests that the females may be more sensitive to status difference in interaction and more concerned about their professional performance.

As for *Bocs*, my students characterized it as very informal and familiar, assuming the T-form usage and equal status between the parties, appropriate to use by young people, between familiar social equals and for small offences. They also confirmed that this RF type may sound playful, unserious, or even inconsiderate if used in the wrong context. My data supported part of the specification as *Bocs* was used mostly to friends, spouses and colleagues, and hardly ever to strangers or to social un-equals. Still, as regards severity of offence, the male participants more often than the females used *Bocs* in the Broken promise offences, ranked as serious. In the cassette situation the males used it significantly more often than the females, and in the secret situation the females did not use *Bocs* at all. Using *Bocs* in these contexts seems to imply that either the offender did not consider the offence as serious because it happened between good friends, or that he chose *Bocs* in its 'playful' function to lighten up the atmosphere or that he was inconsiderate towards the addressee. A further analysis of individual responses and the participants' commentaries would be necessary to decide which was the case.

Sajnálom also received competing characterizations. On the one hand, it was described as expressing genuine sorrow, conveying S's non-intentionality and empathy towards H, and as appropriate to use in contexts where little could be done to restore the damage. The contexts where *Sajnálom* was most probably used this way were the damaged car and the spilt coffee situations, in both contexts the females using it more often than the males. The female tendency to use *Sajnálom* more frequently in many other contexts may suggest they were more prone to view offences as irreversible. On the other hand, *Sajnálom* was characterized as superficial, expressing indifference and lack of considerateness for the offended party. Although this aspect of *Sajnálom* has not been investigated in my analysis, some instances of *Sajnálom* in the secret and personal Respect situations suggest it was used with such an intention.

Finally, *Bocsánat* was characterized as a strong and unambiguous apology, polite but formal, impersonal and official, and not necessarily sincere. In my data this RF type was mostly used with strangers in Space/body offences, where, indeed, what was required was a straightforward, unambiguous strategy that would efficiently repair the breach. Also, in this context the males used it more often than the females. *Bocsánat*, with significant gender differences, was also used in other contexts involving familiar interlocutors and serious offences. Still, it seems that the factors influencing those choices were more complex and at that stage are difficult to disambiguate.

4. Concluding remarks

The analysis of Hungarian RF and its types in context has demonstrated that the apology RF choices in the data were influenced by such contextual factors as the offence type and its seriousness, the social role of the interlocutor and the offender's gender. It has been further established that two dominating RF types were *Ne haragudj* and *Elnézést*, the remaining apology routines being used less frequently. The distribution of *Ne haragudj* and *Elnézést* as well as the remaining RF types across the examined contexts suggested that they performed distinct communicative jobs in the process of restoring social harmony. *Ne haragudj* was mostly used to remedy infractions with social equals and indicated involvement with the offended party, while *Elnézést* was employed to restore breaches with strangers and in unequal encounters and indicated distance between interactional partners.

The analysis of gender differences in the choices of apology RF revealed similarities in the overall tendencies in RF use in context although a number of statistically significant differences in RF choices suggested that the males and females had distinct interpretations and orientations to contextual factors. The females used more RF than the males, which suggested that in the same set of contexts they felt a greater need to apologize than the males. The differences in the choices of apology RF types, in particular more frequent use of *Ne haragudj* by the females and gender differences in the use of *Elnézést*, further suggested that the women were more other- and solidarity oriented, more sensitive to status difference and more concerned about their professional performance. On the other hand, in certain contexts the males more often used RF types to imply distance or downplay the severity of offence.

The politeness aspect of Hungarian apology RF types posits questions in need of investigation. Within Brown and Levinson's (1987) model of positive and negative politeness, *Ne haragudj* and *Bocs* could be classified as the former, *Elnézést*, *Bocsánat* and *Sajnálom* as the latter, although such a superficial division would conceal the culture-specific distinctions in conveyed meanings. Also, both the data and the native speakers' insights suggest that there are subtle differences in politeness between Hungarian apology RF that need to be disambiguated. Further research, investigating such questions like the (degrees of) appropriateness of particular apology RF types in different contexts, as perceived by males and females, and the reasons underlying such perceptions, would help reveal the underlying cultural assumptions informing apology behaviour (cf. Meier 1998, 215).

The present study has a number of limitations that have their import on its findings. The scope of the analysis was limited to apology RF alone, analysed in isolation, independently of other apology strategies that accompanied RF and may have influenced the way they functioned. The results were also influenced by the data collection instrument, which imposed certain contexts on the participants, although there was a choice to opt out. Supplementing the present study with naturally occurring conversational data would be the necessary next step to take.

Appendix 1: Apology situations³²

Sit. 1 (Stranger/train seat)

A vonaton véletlenül nem a jegy által megadott helyet foglalja el. Nem-sokára fölbukkan az igazi tulajdonos, mire Ön megnézi a jegyét, és rájön, hogy rossz helyen ül.

³² Some of the situations below were taken from other apology studies. Sit. 4 (Friend/secret) and Sit. 13 (Stranger/parking place) come from Meier (1992), Sit. 2 (Stranger/damaged car) is found in Cohen – Olshtain (1981) and in Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), Sit. 7 (Stranger/severe bumping), Sit. 8 (Students/test results), Sit. 24 (Stranger/slight bumping) were used by Cohen – Olshtain (1981), while Sit. 16 (Friend/damaged car) appears in Bergman – Kasper (1993). Also, a situation describing personal conflict at work, represented by Sit. 9 (Male colleague/argument) and Sit. 23 (Female colleague/argument) in my DCT, appears in Blum-Kulka et al. (1989), Cohen – Olshtain (1981) and Bergman – Kasper (1993). Time offences and small property offences (like spilling food) are also found in the above-mentioned sources.

[You accidentally occupy someone else's seat on a train. Soon a passenger comes to claim his/her seat and then you realize your mistake.]

Sit. 2 (Stranger/damaged car)

Megállt parkolni. Ahogy tolatott kifelé, véletlenül nekimegy egy másik jó márkájú autónak, amelyik ezáltal megkarcolódik, és behorpad az ütközője. A tulajdonos kiszáll, és elég idegesnek látszik, majd Ön is kiszáll, és odamegy hozzá.

[When you are backing out of a parking place, you run into another, quite expensive car, scratching the side and denting the bumper. The driver gets out and looks quite angry. You also get out and walk towards him/her.]

Sit. 3 (Friend/late)

Egy közeli barátjával megbeszéltek egy találkozót, hogy egyszerűen csak leüljenek beszélgetni. Ön késve érkezik. Mire belép a kávézóba, a barátja már egy félig üres pohár üdítő mellett ül egy asztalnál.

[You are late for a get-together with a friend at a coffee house. When you arrive, your friend is sitting over a half-empty glass of a soft drink.]

Sit. 4 (Friend/secret)

Egy közeli barátja elárulja Önnek, hogy válni készül, és már kialakulóban van egy új kapcsolata. Arra kéri Önt, hogy senkinek se árulja el a dolgot, mert még egyelőre titok. Mégis, egy másik alkalommal, mikor egy közös ismerőssel beszélget, kicsúszik a száján a hír. Ön nem sokára megtudja, hogy a barátja már tudomást szerzett arról, hogy Ön nem tartotta meg a szavát. Pár nappal később összefutnak egy közös ismerősnél, és a barátja elég szemrehányóan néz Önre.

[A close friend of yours tells you he/she is going to get divorced and has already been seeing someone else but asks you to keep the news secret. Still, when you are talking to a mutual friend the news slips out of your mouth and the close friend soon learns you blabbed his/her secret out. A few days later, when you already know that your close friend has been informed about your indiscreetness, you run across him/her at someone else's place and he/she gives you a very reproachful look.]

Sit. 5 (Child/broken mug)

Egyik nap Ön véletlenül eltöri a gyermeke kedvenc bögréjét. Ahogy szedi össze az eltört darabkákat, a gyermeke éppen belép a konyhába, és meglátja, mi történt.

[One day you accidentally break your child's favourite mug. The child just enters the kitchen and sees what has happened.]

Sit. 6 (Friend/spilt coffee)

Egyik nap vendégségbe megy ismerőseihez. Leülnek kávézni, és egy óvatlan pillanatban Ön kiönti kávéját a tiszta asztalterítőre.

[You are visiting your friends. You are having coffee together when you suddenly spill the contents of your cup over a clean tablecloth.]

Sit. 7 (Stranger/severe bumping)

Egy áruházban nekimegy egy másik vevőnek úgy, hogy az megtántorodik.

[You so much bump into another customer at a department store that he/she staggers.]

Sit. 8 (Students/test results)

Ön a múlt órán dolgozatot íratott az osztállyal. Amikor ma kiosztotta a kijavított tesztek, panaszkodva, hogy az eredmények nem túl jók, a diákok hamar jelezték, hogy lehet, hogy hiba van a javításban. Ön megnézte, és látta, hogy bizony igazuk van.

[Last week your students wrote a test. Now you distribute the corrected papers, complaining about poor results, when some of the students tell you there are mistakes in your corrections. You have a look at the tests again and realize they are right.]

Sit. 9 (Male colleague/argument)

A tanáriban kialakult egy vita és Ön felemelt hangon beszélt egy férfi kollégájával. Most már lecsillapodott, a kollégának viszont úgy látszik rosszul esett az egész.

[There is a heated discussion in the teachers' room and you raise your voice when arguing with a male colleague. Now the discussion is over and emotions are down but the male colleague looks offended.]

Sit. 10 (Colleague/cassette)

Egy kolléga kölcsönadott Önnek egy kazettát (vagy egy másik tananyagot) amit mára sürgősen visszakért, mert a mai órája erre az anyagra épül. Amikor a kolléga közeledik Önhöz, Ön rájön, hogy otthon felejtette.

[Your colleague lent you a cassette (or some other teaching material) and asked you to bring it back today because he/she absolutely needed it for his/her class. When you meet the colleague in the teachers' room you realize you have forgotten to bring the cassette.]

Sit. 11 (Private student/late)

Ön elkésett a magánórájáról. Amikor végre sikerül hazaérnie, a tanítvány már az ajtó előtt várakozik.

[You arrive late for your private English lesson at home. The private student is waiting in front of your front door.]

Sit. 12 (Boss/delayed project)

Az igazgató(nő) megkérte Önt, hogy készítsen egy évváró programtervet, vagy annak egy részét, és röviden mutassa be a megbeszélésen. A terv sajnos még nincs kész. A megbeszélés előtt Ön beszélni szeretne erről az igazgatóval/igazgatónővel.

[Your boss asked you to prepare a program for the end of the school year and present it at a teachers' meeting but the program is not ready yet. You want to talk to your boss before the meeting.]

Sit. 13 (Stranger/parking place)

Ön egy áruház előtti parkolóba akart beállni. Sajnos minden hely foglalt volt, kivéve egyet, amely az áruház dolgozóinak volt megjelölve. Ön mégis úgy döntött, hogy beáll oda, és gyorsan igyekszik elintézni a vásárlást. Amikor húsz perc múlva kijött és a kocsához sietett, ott állt egy áruházi dolgozó kocsija és benne a vezető ingerültnek látszott.

[You want to park your car in front of a department store but the only free space is the place reserved for the employees of the store. As no other place is available you decide to park your car there. When twenty minutes later you hurry out of the store, you see an employee waiting in his car, looking quite irritated.]

Sit. 14 (Colleague/desk)

Ön az óra után a saját asztalához sietett, hogy lepakolja a könyveit, füzeteket, melyek egy része a szomszédos kolléga asztalára esett. A kolléga éppen hogy megérkezett és szeretné letenni a saját dolgait, amit most az Ön ott lévő holmija nehezé tesz.

[After class you rush to your desk to put down all your books and papers. Part of your stuff spills over the desk of your colleague who at that moment arrives and has nowhere to put his/her own things.]

Sit. 15 (Colleague/stapler)

Önnek szüksége volt a tűzőgépre és mivel a sajátja valahol eltűnt, kölcsönvette a kolléga tűzőgépét, amit elfelejtett visszatenni. A szünetben a kolléga keresi a tűzőgépét.

[You need a stapler but cannot find your own so you borrow one belonging to your colleague and then forget to put it back. During a break your colleague is looking for his/her stapler.]

Sit. 16 (Friend/damaged car)

Ön kölcsönkérte a barátja jó márkájú kocsiját. Sajnos, amikor hátrafelé tolatott, nem vett észre egy kis oszlopot és csúnyán meghúzta az ajtó oldalát. Most éppen találkozik a barátjával a lakásában, hogy visszaadja a kocsit kulcsait.

[You borrowed your friend's expensive car. Unfortunately, when you were backing out of a parking place, you did not notice a small post and badly dented the side door. Now you meet your friend to return the car keys.]

Sit. 17 (Students/late class)

Ön tíz percet késve érkezik az órára, mert váratlan megbeszélése volt előtte. Most éppen belép az osztályba.

[Due to an unplanned staff meeting you arrive ten minutes late for your class. Now you enter the classroom.]

Sit. 18 (Stranger/unavoidable collision)

Egy áruházban nekimegy egy másik vevőnek. Aligha tudta volna ezt elkerülni, mert a másik elállta az utat.

[You bump into another customer at a department store. You hardly could have avoided doing so because he/she was blocking the way.]

Sit. 19 (Boss/late)

Úgy alakultak a dolgok, hogy végül elkésett az iskolából. Amikor a tanáriba belép, a szoba már teljesen üres, csak az igazgató(nő) tartózkodik benn, és Önre néz.

[It so happens that you arrive late at the school. When you enter the teachers' room there is nobody there except your boss, who is looking at you.]

Sit. 20 (Spouse/late call)

Megígérte a párjának (kedvesének), hogy hívni fogja egy megbeszélte időpontban, de ez csak egy fél órával később sikerül. A párja fölveszi a telefont.

[You promised your spouse/partner to call him/her at a particular time but managed to do so only half an hour later. Your spouse/partner answers your call.]

Sit. 21 (Spouse/argument)

Amikor este munka után találkoztak a párjával/kedvesével, vita/szóváltás alakult ki a közös munkabeosztás és egyéb családi dolgok körül. Egy kicsit összecsaptak, Ön felhúzta magát, felemelt hangon beszélt. A párjának/kedvesének ez rosszul esett és most sértődöttnek látszik.

[When you meet your spouse/partner at home after work you both have an argument concerning household duties and other family matters. The discussion becomes quite heated and you raise your voice. Now your spouse/partner looks hurt.]

Sit. 22 (Friend/birthday party)

Megígérte egy barátjának, hogy elmegy a születésnap bulira, de végül nem tudott elmenni. A következő napon felhívja a barátját telefonon.

[You promised your friend to come to his/her birthday party but finally you could not go. Next day you call your friend on the phone.]

Sit. 23 (Female colleague/argument)

A tanáriban vita alakult ki, és Ön felemelt hangon beszélt egy kolléganőjével. Most már lecsillapodott, a kolléganőn viszont látszik, hogy rosszul esett neki.

[You are all having a heated discussion in the teachers' room and you raise your voice when arguing with a female colleague. Now the dis-

cussion is over and emotions are down but the female colleague looks offended.]

Sit. 24 (Stranger/slight bumping)

Egy áruházban egy kicsit összeütközik egy másik vevővel.

[You slightly bump into another customer at a department store.]

Appendix 2: Situations grouped according to offence type and according to H's social role

Offence Type

Time offences

Sit. 3 (Friend/late)

Sit. 20 (Spouse/late call)

Sit. 11 (Private student/late)

Sit. 17 (Students/late class)

Sit. 19 (Boss/late)

Space offences

Sit. 1 (Stranger/train seat)

Sit. 13 (Stranger/parking place)

Sit. 14 (Colleague/desk)

Space/body offences

Sit. 7 (Stranger/severe collision)

Sit. 18 (Stranger/unavoidable collision)

Sit. 24 (Stranger/slight collision)

Property offences

Sit. 2 (Stranger/damaged car)

Sit. 16 (Friend/damaged car)

Sit. 5 (Child/broken mug)

Sit. 6 (Friend/spilt coffee)

Sit. 15 (Colleague/stapler)

Respect offences

Sit. 9 (Male colleague/argument)

Sit. 21 (Spouse/argument)

Sit. 23 (Female colleague/argument)

Broken promise offences

Sit. 10 (Colleague/cassette)

Sit. 22 (Friend/birthday party)

Sit. 4 (Friend/secret)

- Professional performance failures
 - Sit. 8 (Students/test results)
 - Sit. 12 (Boss/delayed project)

H's social role

Intimates

- Sit. 5 (Child/broken mug)
- Sit. 20 (Spouse/late call)
- Sit. 21 (Spouse/argument)

Friends

- Sit. 3 (Friend/late)
- Sit. 4 (Friend/secret)
- Sit. 6 (Friend/spilt coffee)
- Sit. 16 (Friend/damaged car)
- Sit. 22 (Friend/birthday party)

Colleagues

- Sit. 9 (Male colleague/argument)
- Sit. 23 (Female colleague/argument)
- Sit. 10 (Colleague/cassette)
- Sit. 14 (Colleague/desk)
- Sit. 15 (Colleague/stapler)

Students ($S > H$)

- Sit. 8 (Students/test results)
- Sit. 17 (Students/late class)
- Sit. 11 (Private student/late)

Boss ($S < H$)

- Sit. 12 (Boss/delayed project)
- Sit. 19 (Boss/late)

Strangers

- Sit. 1 (Stranger/train seat)
- Sit. 13 (Stranger/parking place)
- Sit. 2 (Stranger/damaged car)
- Sit. 7 (Stranger/severe collision)
- Sit. 18 (Stranger/unavoidable collision)
- Sit. 24 (Stranger/slight collision)

Child

- Sit. 5 (Child/broken mug)

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