EXPLICIT APOLOGIES IN ENGLISH AND ROMANIAN. A CONSTRUCTION GRAMMAR APPROACH

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1. Introduction

The study of apologies has attracted numerous scholars who have investigated English and numerous other languages. This speech act has been analyzed mostly in the context of English as a second or foreign language, with a focus on the way non-native speakers produce and perceive apologies. Other studies have investigated apologies from a linguistic perspective describing the way native speakers use this speech act. Insofar as the methodologies used by these studies are concerned, most research has used data collected through elicitation methods, rather than actual language in use. While the results of studies using different written or oral elicitation instruments provide valuable data as to how speakers think they might apologize in different situations, there is still a need to investigate how this speech act is used in real language contexts. The main aim of the present study is to investigate apologies in American English and Romanian using corpus data gathered from actual language in use.

Besides using real language as the source of apologies, the present study also aims to apply current theoretical frameworks to the analysis of this speech act. We believe that a Cognitive Linguistics approach and the theoretical framework provided by Construction Grammar will be effective in distinguishing the different forms and functions of apologies. We believe that combining these theories with a discourse analysis methodology using language corpora can provide a viable alternative to previous methods of studying this speech act.

As mentioned above, apologies have been the focus of research in numerous languages. Unfortunately, Romanian is one of the languages that have been understudied insofar as this speech act is concerned. In a previous study we found that apologies in Romanian can function differently than those in English (Demeter, 2006). However, since that study used elicited data as source of the analysis, there is still a need to analyze how apologies are used in actual Romanian language. The present study using corpora is, therefore, a natural continuation of our previous findings.

The present study is organized into six chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 will provide an overview of previous approaches to the study of apologies. It will focus on the methodologies used to collect apologies as well as on the way the studies categorized this speech act. The findings of previous studies will also be discussed. The chapter will also provide the necessary background for the theoretical framework used in our analysis. Construction Grammar, as well as other approaches such as corpus linguistics, mental spaces, blending, and approaches related to categorization and interactional discourse will also be discussed.

Chapter 3 will introduce the research questions of the present study and give detailed information about the different corpora used. Also, the procedures used in analyzing the data will be described, including details about the conventions used in the study.

The results and discussion part of the study will be divided into two chapters. Chapter 4 will discuss apologies in English, covering both spoken and written discourse, while Chapter 5 will discuss results in spoken and written Romanian.

Chapter 6 will provide the overall conclusions to the study. A summary of the main findings will be provided, as well as a discussion of the implications of the study. Finally, limitations and possible future research will also be discussed.

2. Literature Review

The aim of the present study is to investigate the construal of explicit apologies in American English and Romanian from a Construction Grammar perspective. Before analyzing the use of apologies in the two languages, we will first provide the necessary background information on the speech act of apology, as well as on the theoretical framework that will be used in our analysis. The present chapter will first provide an overview of previous approaches to the study of apologies while highlighting some of the areas of concern that the different approaches and methodologies pose. Then, we will discuss the theoretical framework of a new, and we believe, more effective, approach to the study of this speech act, namely Construction Grammar. Finally, we will also discuss some theoretical aspects of the corpus linguistics methodology used in analyzing data in this study.

2.1. Previous Approaches to the Study of Apologies

Studies have defined apologies in different ways. Most previous studies consider the apology as the speech act that is required when the social norms of politeness demand the mending of a behavior or of a linguistic expression that has offended another person (Trosborg, 1995), or when somebody is offended due to the fact that personal expectations are not fulfilled (Fraser, 1981). When defining apologies, one must also take into consideration the possibility of a speaker apologizing for somebody else's behavior

(Holmes, 1990). In all cases, an apology involves the interaction of two participants, namely the person apologizing and the person receiving an apology.

The apology has received great attention over the last years, with studies analyzing the way this speech act is perceived and produced in a single language, whether in English (Bharuthram, 2003; Butler, 2001; Deutschmann, 2003; Edmundson, 1992; Holmes, 1990; Risen & Gilovich, 2007) or in other languages (Cohen & Shively, 2007; Demeter, 2006; Jebahi, 2011; Kotani, 1999; Suzuki, 1999; Trimbitas, Lin, & Clark, 2007; Vollmer & Olshtain, 1989; Wouk, 2006). Other studies were comparative analyses of two or more languages (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Guan, Park, & Lee, 2009; Jung, 2004; Lubecka, 2000; Márquez-Reiter, 2000; Tamanaha, 2003), with special attention given to the way non-native speakers use this speech act (Bataineh & Bataineh, 2006; Chang, 2010; Cohen, 2005; Garcia, 1989; Kasper & Rose, 2002; Rintell & Mitchell, 1989; Trosborg, 1995). These studies have used different approaches and methodologies, some more effective than others. We will discuss the main approaches that previous studies on apologies have taken next.

The overwhelming majority of the studies on apologies have used a sociopragmatic approach based on the speech act theory framework. Searle (1969) and Austin (1975) were the forerunners of contemporary speech act theory, which encompasses the way people apologize, promise, request, and perform other linguistic acts. Speech acts are considered a complex combination of utterances, locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts (Bach & Harnish, 1979). The sociopragmatic component of the theory was introduced later, when Wierzbicka (1991) claimed that most of the early definitions of speech acts were ethnocentric and failed to take into

consideration what she believed to be one of the most important characteristics of speech acts, namely cultural specificity. She claims that cultural values and characteristics such as indirectness, objectivism, courtesy, and cordiality are reflected in the way speakers produce speech acts. Finally, Mey (1993) claimed that speech acts need to be both situationally and socially oriented.

The main procedure in the study of apologies (or of any speech act for that matter) has been to collect or elicit data and then categorize the different instances of apologies using different categories or taxonomies. We will first discuss the different collection methods used in these studies, followed by the taxonomies used in the analysis of apologies. Finally, we will provide an overview of the most important findings of existing studies on apologies.

2.1.1. Data Collection Methods

Even though there seemed to be a consensus in previous studies that naturally occurring data represent the best source for analyzing speech acts (Beebe & Cummings, 1995; Kasper & Dahl, 1991), most research has not used such data, mostly because they are very difficult to collect while at the same time controlling for variables. As a result, most of the previous studies on apologies have used data collected through more controlled means, such as several versions of discourse completion tests (DCT), role-plays, interviews, and written questionnaires (Cohen & Olshtain, 1994). Such controlled approaches presupposed that the researcher already knew how and when apologies or other speech acts might be used, requiring researchers to acknowledge these limitations when discussing their results. A smaller number of studies have used observation, recording, ethnographic methods, or corpora as data.

2.1.1.1. Discourse Completion Tests (DCT)

The most popular instrument used in speech acts studies is the discourse completion test (DCT). The DCT is a written instrument that contains a series of incomplete discourse fragments requiring an apology. The sequences occur in different situations and are devised to reflect a variety of social relations between speaker and hearer, as well as different degrees of offense severity. Each sequence starts out with information about the situation, the speakers, and the social relationship between the speakers. This is followed by an incomplete dialogue in which only the first turn is given, and the subject completing the DCT has to provide the second turn containing the speech act (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). Some DCTs also provide a third turn, with the offended speaker replying to the apology. An example of such a discourse sequence as used in one of the most cited studies on apologies (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984, p. 198) is given in Figure 1.

2. At the professor's office
A student has borrowed a book from her teacher, which she promised to return today. When meeting her teacher, however, she realizes that she forgot to bring it along.
Teacher: Miriam, I hope you brought the book I lent you.
Miriam: _____
Teacher: OK, but please remember it next week.

Figure 1. Sample discourse sequence used in DCTs

The assumption in this instrument is that subjects provide the apology they believe they would use when finding themselves in the specified situation. The reason a written instrument was devised to collect speech acts that seem to be inherent to spoken discourse is that a written survey allows for a large number of participants to be

questioned in the study, resulting in a large number of instances of the speech act being studied.

The source of the situations used in DCTs varies. Some situations were created by the researchers themselves, in an attempt to cover a wide variety of settings (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Jebahi, 2011; Trosborg, 1995). Other studies have used television shows as the source of the situations in order to come closer to naturally-occurring contexts (Butler, 2001; Edmundson, 1992). The assumption of these studies is that even though such shows are the product of a pre-written script, the language used is close to naturally occurring speech and can be considered as representative of some aspects of real life spoken language (Quaglio, 2009).

There are two main concerns that the DCT raises. First, both the situations requiring an apology and the apologies provided themselves are either hypothetical or staged, and not naturally occurring. Studies using this instrument acknowledge this limitation but place greater value on the possibility of collecting a large number of apologies in relatively controlled situations over the fact that they should be naturally occurring. The type of data thus collected is referred to in such studies as “authentic” data (Blum-Kulka, et al., 1989).

The second concern, which applies to any written instrument, is that since the DCT is a written instrument, it may not be an accurate representation of the spoken discourse in which the apologies would be used. Another criticism of written instruments as opposed to oral ones, for example, is that they do not provide enough context for the situation that elicits the apology or for the persons involved (Wolfson, Marmor, & Jones, 1989). Furthermore, some of the possible apology strategies, such as avoiding or

postponing an apology, could be left out in written questionnaires (Beebe & Cummings, 1995), as such instruments force the respondent to provide an apology to all the situations in the survey. Finally, apologies mostly occur in interactive spoken discourse, a setting that is not reproduced by the written instruments.

2.1.1.2. Role-Plays

Another instrument often used is role-play. With this instrument, participants are given a situation that involves some sort of an offense, and a description of the role they have to play in the interaction. They are given a few minutes to prepare their role-play, which is then followed by the actual enactment. There are two types of role-play, namely open and closed role-plays. In the case of the first type, the participants can interact freely, while in the case of the latter, the participants mostly play out their part with few interactions. A sample open role-play is provided in Figure 2 (Jung, 2004, pp. 115-116).

> The following situations are hypothetical situations that might have already happened to you or you might run into this kind of situations later in your life. Upon reading each situation, along with the interlocutor, improvise the conversation which might follow until the agreement is reached between you and the interlocutor.
>
> <SITU 1> Not showing up at a friend's party
> You were invited to the party of one of your good female friends last night. You told her you were going to go, but you did not. She is quite upset because she told all of her friends about you, and they were expecting to see you. Besides, this is the second time that you did not show up at a party to which you told her that you were going. The last time, you called her at the last minute to let her know. This time, she calls you the next morning.
>
> Friend: Hey, what happened last night?

Figure 2. Sample open role-play

At first sight, this instrument seems to be more effective, as it seems to be closer to actual situations and does involve some interaction, which would be an advantage over written instruments. However, role-plays can sometimes result in unnatural behavior on the part of the subjects (Jung, 2004). In addition, while open role-plays provide a wider context in which the speech act is produced as opposed to closed ones, data obtained with this instrument are more difficult to transcribe and code and offer less control of the variables involved in the study (Kasper & Dahl, 1991). Though the role-play can provide more context and interaction, the situations in which the subjects have to apologize are, nevertheless, created by the researcher based on either previous studies or on what the researcher believes these situations can be. Certain apologies cannot be elicited as not all possible situations are used. Also, participants in role-plays tend to confine themselves strictly to the task at hand and their role, without interacting freely as they would in real life communication.

2.1.1.3. Field Observation

A less frequently used method of collecting data is through observation and recording of naturally occurring language. Holmes (1990) collected 183 apologies in New Zealand English with the help of her students using the ethnographic method, which she later used for two of her studies. Holmes' students were asked to write down the next twenty apologies they encountered. The students were also asked to write down any contextual details that might be helpful for the analysis.

The same method was also employed to collect apologies in spoken Persian, with 500 apologies collected after observing 1250 speakers (Shariati & Chamani, 2010). However, as it was the case with Holmes' (1990) study, the apologies were written down,

rather than recorded. More recently, Hatfield and Hahn (2011) reported a study on apologies collected through personal observation. One of the researchers and several research assistants collected 180 apologies over a period of one year. However, they supplemented these apologies with 70 more apologies from informant recollection, television dramas, and media. Thus, the study had only partial data that were naturally occurring.

Though the language collected though observation seems to be a better representation of how apologies are used in real situations than previously discussed methods, field observation also has some shortcomings. First, in most of the studies discussed above, the data were written down, rather than recorded, and therefore the data are only as reliable as the transcription. Also, it is very difficult to collect enough instances in a variety of situations to allow for a thorough analysis, which has led most studies using data collected through observation to supplement them with data from other sources.

2.1.1.4. Corpus Analysis

Another source of data in studies on apologies is language corpora. There is, however, one issue that needs clarification. Many studies on apologies refer in their analysis of the data to a corpus of apologies, even though what they call a corpus was created by means of administering DCTs and written questionnaires. This is not what we mean by corpus. In the present study, the term corpus is used to refer to an electronic collection or database of actual language, either transcripts of spoken language or texts of written language such as newspapers or magazines. The key difference here is that in our view of a corpus, the data it contains represent language that actually occurred in real

contexts and not language elicited through means of a DCT or other elicitation instruments.

In a corpus approach, specific forms of apologies, mostly explicit apology lexemes such as *sorry, apologize, apology, excuse, forgive,* and the like are searched in one or more corpora. The instances found are then analyzed in order to establish the function they perform in the specific situation in which each instance occurs. Frequencies for each function are provided, followed by a qualitative analysis of sample instances for each form and function.

One study that used a corpus analysis approach was carried out by Aijmer (1996). Aijmer used the London-Lund Corpus to investigate the use of explicit apologies. The British National Corpus, which contains language from over 1700 speakers in different contexts and situations, was used by Deutschmann (2003), who investigated the forms and functions of apologies as well as their social and conversational variation, and also by Ruzaitė and Čubajevaitė (2007), who investigated apologies in business spoken communication. In a previous study, we used The Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE) as a source for data in analyzing explicit apologies construed by using the lexeme *sorry* in academic spoken English (Demeter, 2009). Unfortunately, only these few studies on apologies have used corpus data in their analysis.

The corpus analysis approach is not without limitations. Due to the large amount of data available for search, it is necessary to search for specific lexemes to find apologies. Thus, this approach is limited to finding those apologies that contain explicit expressions of apology, other apologies being difficult, if not impossible, to find.

Furthermore, an extensive analysis of each instance in context is then needed in order to establish the functions of these apologies, which is a highly time consuming endeavor.

2.1.1.5. Summary

The data collection methods described above are the ones most often used in studies on apologies, though the list is not an exhaustive one. Kasper and Dahl (1991) analyzed the methods used in 39 studies of interlanguage pragmatics. In this study, the DCT and role-plays were considered appropriate for studying the production of speech acts, while multiple choice surveys and interview tasks were mostly used for studying the perception of speech acts. One solution that was offered by Cohen and Olshtain (1994) as a response to the criticism of DCTs and role-plays was the use of a combination of DCTs, role-plays and/or observation, which would increase the reliability of the findings through triangulation of data. However, this solution would not address the limited contexts and situations included in these instruments. Unfortunately, the concerns DCTs and role-plays themselves raise are still not solved.

In summary, because all these instruments discussed in this section have validity issues, previous studies on apologies based on speech act theory and the sociopragmatic approach may not be an accurate representation of how this speech act is produced. While these studies are valuable for their investigation of how socio-cultural aspects might influence the perception and production of apologies, the analysis of the strategies used to apologize based on elicitation methods has not captured all the functions and meanings that different instances of each category can have. Unlike DCTs and role-plays, corpus analysis allows for the analysis of real language, while also allowing for the analysis of a larger number of apologies than field observation.

2.1.2. Categorizing Apologies

Once the data are collected, the next step in the study is categorizing the apologies. The premise of the studies using the speech act theory framework is that speakers choose from a set of predefined choices the one that is most appropriate to the given situation. The chosen apology is referred to as an apology strategy. Speakers could use different strategies in order to mend the offense, and the choice of strategy depends on the severity of the offense. Studies have used different taxonomies, but none of them had an exhaustive list of apology strategies, different instruments and different subjects producing different sets of strategies.

The taxonomy that has probably been used by most studies on apologies was the one proposed by the Cross-Cultural Speech Act Realization Project (CCSARP) (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). This taxonomy includes the following strategies: using an illocutionary force indicating device (IFID) such as “I’m sorry;” taking on responsibility (e.g. “You know me, I’m never on time”), giving explanation or account of what happened (e.g. “The bus was late”), offering to repair the offending act (e.g. “I’ll pay for the damage”), and promising forbearance (e.g. “This won’t happen again”). Any of these strategies can potentially be used either by themselves or in any combination.

While the taxonomy presented above has been used by many subsequent studies, some of those studies expressed concerns about the validity of the taxonomy. One of the problems that Vollmer and Olshtain (1989) encountered when attempting to code and analyze the data in their own study was that the CCSARP methodology could not be used adequately for the combinations of different strategies that the German speakers used. Thus, according to Vollmer and Olshtain the categories used by the CCSARP were too

broad and nonspecific, while in the German data sometimes what would be a single category following the CCSARP methodology could actually be considered a combination.

An additional problem is that the strategies used in the CCSARP study were created on the assumption that all participants were willing to apologize in all the situations provided. Olshtain and Cohen (1983) proposed two additional strategies for the case when the speaker does not feel the need to apologize. These were a denial of the need to apologize (e.g. “There was no need for you to get insulted”) and a denial of responsibility (e.g. “It wasn’t my fault”). Additional categories were introduced by Bergman and Kasper (1993), who distinguished the following categories: an intensified IFID containing an intensifier for the speech act verb (e.g. “I’m **terribly** sorry”), minimizing the effects and severity of the action (e.g. “I’m only 10 minutes late”), and verbal redress (e.g. “It won’t happen again”).

These strategies were further specified by later studies, as subcategories were created for most of these basic strategies. Thus, Holmes (1990), delimited subcategories for the explicit expression of apology strategy, namely offer apology/IFID (e.g. “I apologize”), express regret (e.g. “I’m afraid”), request forgiveness (e.g. “forgive me”). The largest strategy, an acknowledgment of responsibility, was divided into accept blame (e.g. “It was my fault”), express self-deficiency (e.g. “I was confused”), recognize the hearer as entitled to an apology (e.g. “You’re right”), express lack of intent (e.g. “I didn’t mean to”), and offer repair/redress (e.g. “We’ll replace it for you”). Finally, some more radical strategies were suggested by Trosborg (1995), namely blaming someone else, attacking the complainer, and even not accepting that an apology is necessary.

Although the strategies mentioned above seem to be common to many languages, the studies did not make any claims about universality. Studies on languages other than English have found some culturally specific categories, as well, including, but not limited to, a “feel-good” apology (Kotani, 1999), acting helpless, leaving or resigning, and even committing suicide (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990). Kotani (1999) defines the “feel-good” apology as the apology strategy used by a speaker in order to make the person being apologized to feel good, whether responsible for the offense or not. The strategies described by Barnlund & Yoshioka (1990), namely acting helpless, leaving or resigning, and committing suicide, are specific to speakers of Japanese. Unlike all other strategies described in this section that are verbal strategies, these three represent nonverbal strategies consisting of a certain behavior acting as an apology. The fact that such strategies are not present in all languages clearly shows the importance of context in the production of apologies, whether this context is cultural, social, or situational.

As we have seen in the discussion of different apology strategies, a large variety of taxonomies have been used in studies of apologies. However, there are a number of apology strategies that were common in most of these studies. Table 1 shows the most commonly used strategies sampled in previous studies and provides examples for each of them (as found in Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Trosborg, 1987).

Table 1

Basic Apology Strategies Used in Studies on Apologies

Strategy	Examples
Avoiding or postponing an apology	'I want to be always the same! As you know me.'
Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID)	'I'm sorry!'; 'I apologize!'
Intensified IFID	'I'm so sorry!'; 'I very, very sorry!'; 'Sorry, sorry, sorry!'
Providing a justification	'I forgot at what time the wedding was and… I was fishing.'
Acknowledgment of responsibility	'I know I am late…'
Offer of repair	'I promise I'll buy another set of plates.'
Blaming someone else or denying of responsibility	'The traffic was terrible.'
Promise of non-recurrence	'I promise you this will never happen again.'

While some of these strategies, such as promise of non-recurrence, for example, are clearly defined in different studies, other strategies are fuzzier insofar as their definition is concerned. Strategies such as the IFID, for example, seem to contain a variety of apologies that may or may not actually be part of the same category. Most studies have considered apologies as set words or phrases, and no distinction has been made between the different meanings or functions that different instances of each category might have in different contexts. For example, by definition in speech act theory, when a speech act is performed, a certain linguistic form is uttered in order to perform an action (Austin, 1975), which is called the function of the speech act. The concept of strategy used in most studies represents a combination of form and function. For example, as a strategy, the IFID was considered the generic explicit apology.

However, one and the same form can have different functions. Consider the examples in (1) and (2).

(1) BILL HEMMER: OK. In our audience today, we have a number of daughters here, who have attended CNN work day with their fathers. And Natasha has a comment. Go ahead, Natasha.
15th AUDIENCE MEMBER: I don't think it's fair that boys don't get to come to work with their parents, because boys should just get to come same as girls.
BILL HEMMER: Come where? **I'm sorry**.
15th AUDIENCE MEMBER: Come to work with their parents.
BILL HEMMER: Oh, I see, OK.
(COCA, CNN_TalkBack, CNN_TalkBack / 19960425)

(2)
ROSE: This one is Friday
at nine thirty at the Mega Center.
GRANT: The bank
right?
GRANT: That's the bank.
GRANT: X X...
ROSE: It's one of five West Adams
on the seventh floor ...
GRANT: At what time ?
ROSE: Nine.
ROSE: **I'm sorry**
it's nine to ten+thirty .
GRANT: Okay
I have a clue that she gave me
but I'll make arrangements on it.
(SBCSAE, SBC026 Hundred Million Dollars)

From a taxonomic point of view, “I’m sorry” is an IFID in both examples. However, the form has different functions in the two examples. While in (1) it functions as a generic apology, in (2) the function of this apology seems to be more than just an IFID, as it also performs a function at the discourse level, in that it also acts as a discourse marker introducing a repair. The taxonomic categories used in the studies on apologies discussed above cannot account for this difference in function, as both

examples would be labeled merely as IFIDs. More problematic issues concerning these categories will be discussed later during the data analysis part of the study.

In summary, there is a great variety in terms of the taxonomies used in the studies of apologies. While some of the categories described above seem to be a useful way of describing apologies, yet other categories are more problematic, as one and the same strategy appears to contain apologies functioning in different ways. Therefore, there is a need for a better way of categorizing apologies that would make use of those aspects of existing categories that have proved effective but also provide alternatives for the problematic ones.

2.1.3. Findings of Previous Studies

We have so far discussed the different collection methods and taxonomies used to categorize apologies in previous studies. In order to understand why some of the issues discussed are problematic, it is necessary to present an overview of the most important findings that studies using different collection methods and different taxonomies have reported.

The overwhelming majority of studies on apologies have investigated the use of this speech act in discourse elicited based on spoken discourse situations. At first sight, this bias seems justified, as one might assume that speech acts mostly occur in spoken interaction. However, there have been a few studies that have examined the way this speech act is used in written discourse. We will discuss the findings of studies of these two types of discourse next.

2.1.3.1. Apologies in Spoken Discourse

As we have already mentioned, most studies have examined the use of apologies in spoken discourse settings. Insofar as the findings reported are concerned, they have varied to some extent based on the source of the apologies analyzed. Most studies using elicited data collected by means of DCTs and role-plays have reported similar results, and therefore they will be discussed together. However, studies using naturally occurring language, whether collected by means of observation or language corpora, have reported somewhat different results than studies using elicited apologies, and therefore will be discussed separately.

Studies on native speakers of English using elicited data have reported apologies given in a large variety of situations requiring an apology, sometimes called offenses. These offenses have been classified into different types, including social gaffes, impolite talk / talk offenses, inconvenience / inadequate service, violating personal space, damage or loss to possessions, lack of consideration, mistakes and misunderstandings, forgetting something, hearing offenses, requests, breach of expectations and breach of consensus (Butler, 2001; Deutschmann, 2003; Edmundson, 1992; Holmes, 1990). A summary of these types of offenses and examples for each are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Summary of Types of Offenses Requiring an Apology in Previous Studies on Apologies

Type of Offense	Examples
Social gaffes	Speaking while eating (Holmes, 1990)
Impolite talk/talk offenses	Interrupting the speaker (Holmes, 1990)
Inconvenience	Shop assistant not being able to staple documents (Deutschmann, 2003; Holmes, 1990)
Space offenses	Violating one's personal space (Holmes, 1990)
Damage or loss to possessions	Losing someone's pen (Holmes, 1990)
Mistakes / misunderstandings	Misunderstanding someone (Deutschmann, 2003)
Breach of expectations or consensus	Not keeping an agreement (Deutschmann, 2003)
Being late / time offenses	Arriving late for an appointment (Holmes, 1990)

While most of these types of offenses seem self-explanatory, the last two, breach of expectations and breach of consensus seem to need clarification. The difference between these two is that the situations categorized as breach of expectations imply not fulfilling something implicitly expected, while those categorized as breach of consensus imply not fulfilling something explicitly agreed upon. Also, the types of offenses presented in Table 2 have different degrees of severity. The most severe ones are, according to Holmes (1990) those that involve loss of or damage to possessions, followed by space and time offenses, while the least severe ones are social gaffes, talk offenses, and inconveniences.

Though different studies on English have reported different findings, mostly due to the fact that they used different taxonomies in their analysis of the data, some findings have been confirmed by multiple studies. A large number of studies on apologies in both

English (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Owen, 1983; Trosborg, 1995) and other languages (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Trosborg, 1987) have shown that the Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID), such as "I'm sorry," for example, was by far the most frequently used form of apology, whether used by itself or in combination with other strategies. The apology strategies most often used by speakers in the most common situations (Blum-Kulka, et al., 1989; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Holmes, 1990; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Sugimoto, 1999) are given in Table 3. The situations are ordered by the severity of the offense, with less serious offenses on top and more serious ones at the bottom. The level of severity is based on Holmes (1990) discussed above. The examples in the table are taken from the studies themselves.

Table 3

Summary of Common Apology Strategies Given to Common Situations in Previous Studies on Apologies

Type of Situation	Most Often Used Strategy	Example
Social gaffes	IFID	'I'm sorry'
Mistakes / misunderstandings	IFID (Often with interjections such as Oh!, Yeah!)	'Oh! Sorry!'
Inconvenience	IFID / IFID + Explanation	'I beg your pardon. I thought you said wine and soda'
Impolite talk/talk offenses	IFID + Explanation or justification	'I'm sorry. I didn't mean to stop you'
Violating one's personal space	IFID + Explanation	'Sorry miss. I was in a hurry'
Being late	IFID + Acknowledging responsibility or Explanation	'I'm sorry I'm so late' 'The bus was late'
Breach of expectations or consensus	(Intensified) IFID + Explanation	'I'm really sorry. I thought you meant tonight'
Damage or loss to possessions	Offer of repair or restitution	'I'll pay for the damage'

These findings were reported by studies mostly using DCTs and role-plays as a data collection method. Studies using natural data, whether collected through observation or in the form of language corpora, reported results that were both similar and different than the ones reported by studies using elicited data. Thus, Holmes (1990) confirmed the fact that "I'm sorry" was by far the most frequently used form of apology in New Zealand English, whether by itself or in combination with other strategies. Her study also showed that 95% of the apologies she investigated contained an explicit expression of apology, which is a much higher percentage than what had been reported by other studies. Furthermore, Holmes found that the more severe the offense, the more elaborate the apology, and thus several strategies would be used in one and the same apology. Overall, however, Holmes claims that her results confirm the viability of the existing taxonomies of apology strategies.

Findings such as Holmes' (1990) that 95% of apologies contain an explicit expression of apology, open the possibility for language corpora studies to use explicit apology lexemes to search for apologies in large corpora. Aijmer (1996) investigated the use of apologies in the London-Lund Corpus. According to Aijmer, apologies containing *sorry* were indeed the most frequent ones when compared to apologies containing other lexemes such as *apologize* or *forgive* among others. The study also reported that apologies containing *sorry* tended to be neutral, unmarked apologies, while those containing *apologize* would be mostly used in formal situations. One of the distinctions that Aijmer makes that had not been made in other studies is between retrospective and anticipatory apologies. The retrospective apology is used to apologize for offenses that already occurred; whereas, anticipatory apologies are used to anticipate an offense, such

as in “I’m sorry, but I’m unable to keep this appointment.” This distinction is very important, since anticipatory apologies had not been reported by studies using DCTs and role-plays as data collection methods. Those instruments provide an offense that requires an apology, and therefore all the elicited apologies are retrospective.

Another corpus used as source for apologies is the British National Corpus. Deutschmann (2003) examined the forms and functions of apologies using the interactions of over 1700 speakers in different contexts and situations, from formal to informal. Deutschmann searched the corpus for the IFIDs *afraid*, *apologise*, *apology*, *excuse*, *forgive*, *pardon*, *regret*, and *sorry* and investigated the apology strategies that occurred with the IFID. According to Deutschmann, strategies that involved minimizing responsibility were four times more frequent than strategies acknowledging responsibility. However, unlike Aijmer (1996), Deutschmann focused on the relationships between formulaic expressions of apologies and social variables, and only tangentially discussed the relationship between these forms and the apology strategies they involve. Instead, he classified the apologies into three main categories: those taking on responsibility, those minimizing responsibility, and those with double usage.

Finally, Ruzaitė & Čubajevaitė (2007) used a subset of the British National Corpus to investigate the use of apologies in business communication containing the expressions *sorry*, *apologise*, *pardon*, and *excuse me*. They found that apologies were highly routinized, with those containing “sorry” being the most frequent ones, which confirms previous findings. However, Ruzaitė & Čubajevaitė (2007) reported a category of apologies that had not been reported by studies using DCTs and role-plays, namely tentative apologies. These seem to be characteristic to some extent of business

communication. An example of such an apology is “I should perhaps apologize on behalf of the hotel for the temperature in the room this morning” (Ruzaitė & Čubajevaitė, 2007, p. 73). According to the authors, such apologies are less sincere, as they are mitigated by their tentativeness. The authors also acknowledge for the first time the fact that apologies are used for offenses involving interuptions and self-correction. However, the study considers all the apologies as formulaic expressions of apology, or IFIDs, without differentiating the functions of these apologies at the discourse level, considering them formulaic expressions of apology. The focus of the study is more on what forms occur for which offense rather than on what the specific function of the form is in different contexts.

The findings reported by studies using corpora as a source for apologies suggest that such an approach can allow researchers to find categories of apologies that exist in real language that cannot be obtained through data elicitation instruments such as DCTs or role-plays.

The last issue that needs to be discussed insofar as the findings of studies on apologies are concerned is the similarities and differences of findings reported in different languages. Most studies on languages other than English have shown that the choices of apology strategies are culture specific. Barnlund and Yoshioka (1990) have shown that critical cultural variables determine the speakers’ choice of apologies, such as the fact that Japanese speakers used more direct apologies, while American speakers tend to be less direct. For example, according to Barnlund and Yoshioka (1990) Japanese speakers used explicit apologies such as “I am very sorry;” whereas, the American speakers preferred not to use explicit apologies but rather provide an explanation.

Moreover, studies on Japanese have also reported apology strategies specific to this culture, such as a "feel-good" apology, reported by Kotani (1999), acting helpless, leaving or resigning, and even committing suicide, reported by Barnlund and Yoshioka (1990), strategies we have already discussed in 2.1.2.

Japanese is not the only language for which language or culture specific apology strategies have been reported. Vollmer and Olshtain (1989) reported that in the case of German, the category IFID has a weak and strong form. For example, IFIDs that are truly sincere, are considered strong IFIDs, and are expressed with intensifiers or verbs expressing regret. Weak IFIDs are considered the ones merely expressing sympathy on the part of the speaker. Márquez-Reiter (2000), reported that intensified illocutionary indicating devices exist in most apologies in English, but that they are considered inappropriate in the case of Uruguayans. In Sudanese Arabic, speakers have been found to avoid strategies such as taking on responsibility, intensifying IFIDs, or promising forbearance for fear of losing face, preferring the more neutral category of IFID (Nureddeen, 2008).

Suszczynska (1999) also found that there are differences across the three languages she investigated, namely English, Hungarian, and Polish. For example, English speakers preferred to use IFIDs containing "I'm sorry" and "excuse me," while with the Hungarian apologies there was a high percentage of assuming responsibility, which was the most often used strategy after the IFID. As far as Polish apologies are concerned, 85% of the respondents used the Polish expression equivalent to "I'm sorry," which was always intensified. Language specific findings have also been reported in Persian. The IFIDs were almost always used combined with a request for forgiveness (Shariati &

Chamani, 2010). The existence of such differences in the use of apologies across languages suggests that there is a need to investigate how apologies are used in different languages, especially in those languages that have not been studied yet.

Insofar as Romanian is concerned, we have previously investigated the use of apologies in a thesis (Demeter, 2006). That study used a DCT to collect apologies from college level speakers of Romanian in a Romanian university. We reported that an overwhelming proportion of apologies were combinations of strategies, rather than single ones. Also, the IFID was found to be the most often used apology, whether by itself or combined with other strategies.

This complexity and variety of apologies used in Romanian was confirmed by Trimbitas et al. (2007), the only published study of apologies in Romanian we have found. The study investigated how ethnic Romanians living in the United States apologize. In this study, Trimbitas et al. (2007) interviewed 15 participants, some in Romanian and some in English. The study found that the choice of apology depended on whether the person apologized to was a stranger or not, with formal apologies, such as "Please excuse me, that was my mistake," being used with strangers, and informal ones, such as "Sorry, I shouldn't have said that," with known interlocutors. The apologies used in informal situations were also reported to be uttered in a more relaxed tone. Also, a wide range of apologies were found to be used, with preference being given to strategies such as remedy or promise in the case of people close to the person apologizing. The main forms reported as being used to apologize in Romanian are "Îmi cer scuze, a intervenit ceva şi n-am putut veni" [I apologize, something came up and I couldn't make it] or "Iartă-mă, îmi pare rău, promit să nu se mai întîmple," [Please forgive me, I'm so

sorry, I promise this won't happen again] or " "Scuze că + cauză + lasa că + soluție," [I'm sorry that + cause + let me/I will + solution] or "Îmi pare rău că s-a întimplat aşa, mă voi revanşa" [I'm so sorry this happened, I will make it up to you] (pp. 412-413). However, these are only a limited number of possible forms, which is a result of the fact that the methodology used was an interview, and only recollections of apologies were provided. Furthermore, the authors only describe the different forms used to apologize in Romanian, without discussing the relationship between these forms and their functions, or between the forms and the situations in which they are used, except for a distinction between formal and informal contexts and use.

Both these studies of Romanian apologies used elicited data as the source for the apologies. Consequently, there is a need to investigate how this speech act is actually used in real, naturally occurring language.

2.1.3.2. Apologies in Written Discourse

As already stated, studies on apologies have mostly focused on how this speech act is produced in spoken discourse. This focus is to be expected, as speech acts mostly occur in interactive communication. To the best of our knowledge, there is only one study that looked at how apologies are used in written discourse. However, it investigated electronic communication, which some consider to be a new medium distinct from spoken and written discourse, as it is a blend of features from both discourses (Baron, 1998). For example, in informal contexts in email people tend to use the same style of communication as they do in their speech, but instead they put it in writing. Moreover, new structures and features emerge in emails, such as abbreviations for example.

Hatipoğlu (2004) investigated 126 e-mail messages in English and found that the apologies used had characteristics of both spoken and written discourse, but also some characteristics that were not found in either, that seem to be specific to electronic communication. The apologies are similar to those used in spoken discourse in that the most frequently used category of apologies was the IFID, just as in spoken discourse. The IFIDs used most frequently were "I apologise," "I'm sorry," "excuse me," and "forgive me." However, formal rules of writing could also be observed in the emails, which make them closer to written discourse. Finally, Hatipoğlu claims that the use of nominal apologies instead of verbal ones, that is the use of "apologies" instead of "I apologize," is specific to email messages. An example given by the author is "Looking forward to next week's lecture, **apologies** again for not having been able to attend this week" (Hatipoğlu, 2004, p. 26). Besides differences in form, Hatipoğlu also reported emerging functions, such as apologizing for the irrelevance of the content or for cross-posting a message. These were claimed to be specific to email messages, and have not been found in either spoken or written discourse. However, some of Hatipoğlu's claims are questionable, as the forms claimed to be specific to email might appear in less formal written discourse, such as in letters or notes, for example.

Both the scarcity of studies on written discourse, as well as the interesting findings of the single study on this medium of communication suggest that there is a need to investigate how apologies function in written language. The most prevalent question is the extent to which such apologies would be similar to spoken discourse or specific to written discourse.

2.1.4. Summary

The review of the previous studies on apologies has highlighted some areas of concern in the current practices of speech act research. First, it seems that the elicitation methodologies and instruments used by most of the studies in examining apologies (or any speech act for that matter) do not capture the full extent of functions that this speech act can have. This is a shortcoming of the nature of any elicitation instrument as the data thus collected may not be a true representation of all the possible instances that occur in actual language use. Only a few studies have used real language, whether through field observation or corpus data. The findings of these studies suggest that there are both forms and functions that exist in real language use that cannot be arrived at by elicitation methods. We propose that discourse analysis using corpora would be a more appropriate approach as it analyzes real language produced in real situations.

Second, we have seen that the way apologies were categorized by these studies was also problematic, as they did not allow for a clear distinction of the different functions and uses of these apologies. As we have seen in our discussion of the two examples of "I'm sorry" in (1) and (2) functioning differently, but being both categorized as IFIDs (see section 2.1.2), categorization has neglected the importance of the fact that apologies occur in an interactional context, and that there are features of interactional discourse that contribute to the construal of apologies. Thus, analyzing the interactional context in which speech acts occur, including important aspects such as repair or interruptions, would allow for identifying relationships between form and function at the discourse level that would not be possible using traditional speech act methodologies.

Finally, written discourse has been neglected in the study of apologies. As the only study on this topic has shown, apologies in this medium of communication cannot only exhibit characteristics of both spoken and written discourse, but also emerging characteristics specific to written speech acts. This seems to warrant further examination of apologies in written discourse.

Considering these areas of concern, it seems clear that a new approach to the study of apologies is needed for a better understanding of how this speech act functions in real situations in actual language. Insofar as the source of apologies is concerned, we believe that corpora are the most appropriate in the case of apologies, as they provide real language. Corpus analysis has already proved to be an effective method by the few studies described in this section. Moreover, we believe that combining corpus analysis with the theoretical framework proposed by Construction Grammar would also allow for a more effective differentiation of the different meanings that apologies can have in different contexts. The next section will provide the necessary background regarding the theoretical framework used in our analysis of explicit apologies.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

In light of the concerns outlined in the previous section, we believe that an alternative approach to the study of apologies is needed. One such possible approach is in terms of Cognitive Linguistics, whose main tenet is that language is an instance of general cognitive abilities (Croft & Cruse, 2004). In such an approach, the analysis should rely both on communicative-functional and cognitive aspects (Moeschler, 2004; Nuyts, 2004; Wolf & Polzenhagen, 2006). According to Wolf and Polzenhagen (2006), pragmatics should focus on a meaning-based analysis of its scope, by integrating function

into the framework of cultural conceptualizations. Applying Wolf and Polzenhagen's (2006) claims to the study of apologies, the analysis of this speech act should focus on the relationship between form and meaning in the wider context or frame in which it is produced, rather than merely in a hypothesized function, as was the case with previous studies. Such an approach is supported by Nuyts (2004), who believes that what is transmitted by languages comes from the speaker's knowledge of the world. Furthermore, a cognitive view of pragmatics asserts that communication is an endeavor that requires the cooperation of the speakers, and that meaning is constructed by all the participants in the interaction (Bara, 2010). Based on such a view, apologies that are co-constructed by several participants in the interaction are not only possible, but very likely to occur. Finally, like anything else transmitted through language, speech acts are also conceptualizations, and the context in which they are construed is not only important, but actually contributes to their meaning.

Most previous studies of apologies have neglected to distinguish adequately between the form and the function of apologies in their categorization. For example, we have shown in examples (1) and (2) in our discussion of apology categories in section 2.1.2, that the IFID category makes no distinction between the different functions that one and the same form, "I'm sorry," can have. The generic function under which they are grouped is that of an illocutionary force indicating device, which is too broad a categorization. However, in a Cognitive Linguistics approach, there is no one-to-one relationship between these two elements, as one and the same form can have different functions based on the context in which it occurs. One of the frameworks within Cognitive Linguistics that focuses on the relationship between form and meaning is

Construction Grammar. We believe that this framework will allow us to distinguish more precisely the different uses of this speech act. A discourse analysis methodology using corpora will allow us to investigate how this speech act is used in actual language. An overview of the theoretical background concerning Construction Grammar, corpus linguistics, as well as some other considerations needed for our analysis, will be provided next.

2.2.1. Construction Grammar

Construction Grammar is one of the numerous theoretical frameworks that comprise Cognitive Linguistics. This framework is a reaction to the model in traditional grammar in which there are no idiosyncratic units that have a meaning which would be larger than a single word. This model is problematic, as there are numerous types of constructions whose meaning cannot be determined based solely on the meaning of their constituents. Also, a certain word used in one particular construction may convey a different meaning than when used in another construction. Different utterances that generative grammar would consider as being identical in terms of the meaning they conveyed have different meanings as these utterances construe different conceptualizations. Speakers have several options at their disposal when construing meaning (Croft & Cruse, 2004). For example, when one decides to use a passive construction instead of an active one, the choice corresponds to the general cognitive function of perspective.

Construction Grammar proposes a solution to the failure of traditional grammar to explain many phrases and sentences that do not conform to the rule-governed system based on the separation of grammar into different components (phonology, syntax, and

semantics). The main claim of Construction Grammar is that semantics should be mapped on the entire construction instead of on individual words (Croft & Cruse, 2004; Fillmore, Kay, & O'Connor, 1988; Goldberg, 1992). Consequently, the basic unit in Construction Grammar is the grammatical construction.

2.2.1.1. Defining Construction Grammar

The construction grammar framework incorporates a vast variety of theories, ranging from more formalist ones such as Head-Driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG) (Pollard & Sag, 1994) or Sign-Based Construction Grammar (SBCG) (Sag, 2007) to cognitive linguistics approaches (Croft & Cruse, 2004; Fillmore, et al., 1988; Goldberg, 1992). The present paper will use the latter view on construction grammar, which defines a construction as "a syntactic configuration, sometimes with substantive items (e.g. *let alone*), sometimes not, with its own semantic and pragmatic meaning" (Croft & Cruse, 2004, p. 255). By definition, a construction is a pairing of form and meaning, the theory stating that if there is a change in form, there should also be a change in meaning, and vice-versa. Table 4 shows the different types of constructions at different levels as well as examples of each construction as proposed by Croft and Cruse (2004).

Table 4

Types of Constructions Proposed by Croft & Cruse (2004)

Construction type	Traditional name	Examples
Complex and (mostly) schematic	syntax	[SBJ *be*- TNS VERB *-en by* OBL]
Complex, substantive verb	subcategorization frame	[SBJ *consume* OBJ]
Complex and (mostly) substantive	idiom	[*kick*- TNS *the bucket*]
Complex but bound	morphology	[NOUN *-s*], [VERB - TNS]
Atomic and schematic	syntactic category	[DEM], [ADJ]
Atomic and substantive	word/lexicon	[*this*], [*green*]

As can be seen in Table 4, constructions exist at all levels of grammar, from that of the morpheme to that of syntax. Also, constructions exist at different levels of generalization. Some constructions are purely substantive, meaning that there is no schematicity or variation in the construction. Individual words such as “this” or “green” are examples of such constructions. Other constructions are purely schematic, and they represent syntactic categories such as noun or adjective. Most constructions, however, are a combination of substantive and schematic elements, such as [SBJ *be*- TNS VERB *-en by* OBL], which is a representation of the passive construction in English. One possible instantiation of this construction can be “The dog was seen by the boy,” where “the dog” is the subject (SBJ), “was” is the past tense of the verb be (*be*- TNS), “seen” is the past participle of the verb see (VERB *-en*), and “by the boy” is the agent (*by* OBL).

A classic example used by construction grammar to demonstrate how meaning is conveyed by an entire construction is Fillmore’s (1988) analysis of the idiom “let alone” in which the meaning of the idiom is completely different than the sum of the meanings

of its constituents, as a strict compositional view would suggest. Goldberg (1995) uses ditransitive constructions as examples of how cognitive grammar can be used to explain the polysemous meanings of such constructions, something for which previous theories of grammar could not account. A ditransitive construction is a construction containing a ditransitive verb (requiring two objects), an indirect and a direct object. For example, the sentences “She fed lasagna to the guests” and “She fed the guests lasagna” have been considered as having the same meaning by traditional grammar. According to Goldberg (1995), the two sentences are different constructions and therefore should have different meanings based on the definition of a construction as a pairing of form and meaning. A change in form should determine a change in meaning and a change in meaning should determine one in form. In the sentences above, the first sentence is less polite than the second one. She bases this difference on volitionality of the subject and semantic constraints of the first object required by a ditransitive construction. In other words, in the ditransitive construction, due to the fact that the verb “feed” is used mostly in relation with babies and animals, the sentence “She fed lasagna to the guests” is impolite, as it may imply that the guests were not willing to have lasagna. However, since the ditransitive construction, “She fed the guests lasagna,” implies that the recipients, namely the guests, are willing recipients, this construction is more polite, and therefore has a slightly different meaning than the sentence “She fed lasagna to the guests.” This distinction is part of the pragmatic content of the construction. Also, the two constructions also differ in the givenness of the recipient, in that in the ditransitive construction the recipient is old information, while in the other construction the recipient

is new information. The choice of construction, therefore, determines the specific meaning of the sentence.

Insofar as the relationship between Construction Grammar and pragmatics is concerned, pragmatic meaning has been part of the Construction Grammar approach from the beginning, as part of the meaning of idioms such as the ones discussed above comes from the pragmatic meaning of the construction (Nikiforidou, 2009). Idioms are not the only constructions in which pragmatics is evident. The meaning of constructions such as "Can you pass the salt?" can only be understood if the pragmatic principle of a request is taken into consideration. Likewise, apologies also display pragmatic information that contributes to the meaning of the construction.

The advantages of a Construction Grammar approach for the study of apologies are significant. Apologies would no longer be viewed as a set of a priori strategies that speakers choose from, but rather as construed on-line based on different factors such as the situation in which the apology is required, the experience of the speakers involved, and the context in which the speakers are situated. Also, a better explanation of form-meaning pairings is possible which would allow for a more precise delimitation of apologies, such as those that previous research has grouped together under the category IFID.

2.2.1.2. Discourse Level Constructions

One of the shortcomings of the Construction Grammar theory proposed by Goldberg (1995) and Croft and Cruse (2004) is that it mostly deals with syntax level constructions in written discourse. The question is how constructions manifest themselves at the discourse level and in the highly interactive medium of spoken

language. Recent developments have emerged in the theory of Construction Grammar that claim that the theory can be feasibly used at the discourse level (Lukeš, 2007; Östman, 2005) and that it can account for the interactivity of spoken discourse (Brône, 2009; Fried & Östman, 2005; Günthner, 2006).

Thus, just as constructions are conventionalized pairings of form and meaning at the level of syntax, there are discourse patterns that are highly conventionalized in the same way, and these patterns can be considered conventionalized constructions (Fried & Östman, 2005). Östman (2005) gives the example of the discourse frame for horoscopes, in which text is expected to be organized around patterns such as predictions about money, love, and work. Because these are highly conventionalized, they can be considered constructions at the discourse level.

Fried and Östman (2005) also showed that meaning can emerge from conversational patterns and this meaning can only be understood by considering all the utterances in the exchange, even if they are across different turns. The authors give the example of pragmatic particles in Czech and Solv as instances of such conversational patterns. We believe that such patterns can be called constructions as they function in the same way as constructional turn units in Conversation Analysis (CA) theory. A turn can then become a schematic representation inside a construction, just as a clause can be at the sentence level.

2.2.1.3. Construction Grammar across Languages

One important aspect of a Construction Grammar approach that pertains to the present study is the way constructions are realized cross-linguistically. According to Croft (2005) “there are no universal constructions” and “all constructions are language-

specific" (p. 277). Boas (2010) supports this claim, but also states that there are some constructional properties that can be used to describe more than one language, while other properties are language specific. One conclusion that can be inferred from this, according to Boas, is that the relationship between form and meaning can also depend on typological differences that different languages exhibit.

Consequently, several studies have investigated the way specific constructions are used in two or more languages, using a contrastive analysis methodology. Most of these studies found both constructions used similarly across languages and language specific constructions. For example, in an investigation of the caused-motion and ditransitive constructions in English and Thai, Timyam and Bergen (2010) found that these two constructions exist in both languages, and that in both languages the meaning of the construction determines the types of verbs that can occur in these constructions. However, in spite of the fact that these two constructions exist in both languages, they function differently. For example, in English, the ditransitive construction is preferred in cases when the theme is longer than the recipient, such as in "Give me the letter to John" (Timyam & Bergen, 2010, p. 162), where "the letter to John" is the theme, and "me" is the recipient. In Thai, however, speakers prefer the caused-motion construction in such situations, as it makes communication less ambiguous.

The existence of both similarities and differences in the use of constructions across languages was also reported by Gurevich (2010) in a study of conditional constructions in English and Russian. Thus, while both languages make the distinction between the different types of conditional constructions with the help of morphological features, the specific features used are different in the two languages. English makes

tense distinctions; whereas, Russian makes distinctions between the different moods of the verb, imperative, conditional, and declarative.

Therefore, it is important to study the types of constructions that are used for apologies in different languages, which is one of the motivations for including Romanian in this study. It is also important to analyze constructions contrastively in different languages in order to establish whether there are any cross-linguistic constructional properties, or whether constructions are indeed language specific without mappings across languages.

2.2.2. Corpus Linguistics

Another tenet of Cognitive Linguistics is that it is a usage-based model of language, which implies that researchers should analyze the way real language is used (Geeraerts, 2006). One of the most common means of analysis in Cognitive Linguistics is using language corpora. As the present study also uses corpora as the source for the apologies, it is also necessary to provide a short overview of corpus linguistics.

Corpus linguistics is defined as "the study of language based on examples of real life language use" (McEnery & Wilson, 1996, p. 1). It makes use of large electronic databases called corpora, which contain samples of language that are representative for a certain type of language, such as written or spoken language. The electronic nature of these databases make it possible for researchers to analyze extensive amounts of text (Baker, 2006).

According to Biber, Conrad and Reppen (1998) the most important advantage that corpus linguistics brings to the study of language is the shift from the traditional emphasis on structure to that on language in use. Another advantage is that it allows for a

quantitative analysis of the distribution of certain patterns in use. Such statistics facilitate researchers in providing functional analyses and interpretations of language. Finally, corpus linguistics provides researchers with the ability to study language as function in context (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001). Based on these claims, the search for apologies in corpora and frequency analysis should be followed up by a discourse analysis of the instances in the broader context in which they appear.

The usefulness of a corpus approach to studying apologies has already been demonstrated by the very few studies that employed this methodology that we have discussed in section 2.1.1.4. Corpus linguistics seems an appropriate methodology to study apologies, as it offers the type of real life data that is not influenced by observer effect when collected, and also offers the possibility to control for different variables if the corpus is large enough. An analysis based on language in use is needed in order to understand how apologies are actually produced and perceived by speakers, as opposed to how they would be hypothetically produced in the case of studies using elicited data. As only few such studies that analyze apologies in corpora have been conducted, further research is needed.

2.2.3. Categorization

We have seen in our discussion of the different taxonomies of apologies (see section 2.1.2) that the way apologies were categorized by different studies may not always be accurate. Apologies that were labeled as being part of a certain category displayed differences in function that would suggest that they rather belong to different categories, or that there are different degrees of category membership inside these

categories. It seems necessary, therefore, to rethink the way apologies are categorized in order to better distinguish the different meanings that one and the same form can have.

Cognitive Linguistics seems to be helpful in this area, as well, since categorization is also a basic cognitive function of human beings. Thus, prototype theory (Geeraerts, 1988; Rosch, 1973, 1978), conceptual categorization (Barsalou, 1983, 1985), and radial network of cognitive typologies (Brugman & Lakoff, 1988) are theories that could inform the way apologies are categorized in the present study.

Membership in a category cannot always be decided based on a list of features that the exemplar needs to have, as generative grammar viewed categorization. Rather, it is a result of a basic cognitive function through which human beings construe meaning (Rosch, 1973, 1978). Thus, according to Barsalou (1983, 1985), categories are conceptual, but not static. It is suggested that membership in a category is graded (some items are more central, while others are peripheral), takes place on different levels (basic, superordinate, and subordinate), and most importantly, it is a result of a dynamic construal (as one and the same exemplar can be the member of different categories based on context and on the frame in which it is used).

The concept of categorization is taken even further by Brugman and Lakoff (1988), who claim that all members in a category (whether prototypical or peripheral) are interconnected, either directly or through other members in a "radial structure, with a central member and a network of links to other members" (p. 478). The authors demonstrate their claim with the polysemous word "over." They describe each sense of the word, and also present schemas of both those senses and how they are linked in the radial network. In other words, there is one meaning that is considered prototypical at the

center of the network, with variants radiating away from the center. Brugman and Lakoff (1988) conclude that such networks are necessary in order to understand the link between the different meanings of polysemous words.

If we apply these theories to our categorization of apologies, we find that there may be degrees of membership, and that some categories of apologies are actually part of a continuum, rather than being fixed. We will discuss the way this view on categorization affects the way we categorize apologies in section 4.1 on categorization issues during our discussion of the findings.

2.2.4. Mental Spaces and Blending

Another advantage of Cognitive Linguistics is that it allows for the analysis of what Pascual (2006) calls fictive interaction. This concept is important in relation to the distinction between spoken and written discourse, as writers in written discourse sometimes simulate an interaction with the reader or a third party. In order to understand what fictive interaction is, we first need to discuss two other concepts, namely mental spaces and blending.

According to Croft and Cruse (2004), some utterances cannot be explained by traditional truth-conditional semantics, as those utterances are only true in someone's beliefs, but not in reality. Such is the example "Giorgio believes that Gina bought a sports car" (p. 32), which may only be true in Giorgio's mind. Fauconnier and Turner (1996, 1998) call this possible reality a "mental space." Mental spaces are defined as "small conceptual packets constructed as we think and talk, for purposes of local understanding and action" (p. 113). They are of different types, three being more important: input space, generic space, and blended space. The concept of the blended space is defined as

combining the elements of several input spaces, some that are common in the input spaces (and these also form the generic space), others that are only present in one of them. New structures emerge in the blended space.

One of the well-known examples used to illustrate the concepts of mental space and blended space is the debate of a philosopher with Kant (Fauconnier & Turner, 1996). In this debate, a philosopher has the following discourse during a seminar:

> I claim that reason is a self-developing capacity. Kant disagrees with me on this point. He says it's innate, but I answer that that's begging the question, to which he counters, in *Critique of Pure Reason*, that only innate ideas have power. But I say to that, what about neuronal group selection? He gives no answer.
>
> (Fauconnier & Turner, 1998, p. 145)

This debate can only take place in a mental space, as Kant is not alive at the time when the philosopher is giving this seminar. In this mental space, features are taken from two input spaces. One input space is that of the philosopher giving the seminar and making his own claims. The second input space is that of Kant's claims that were presented in his writings. These features from these two input spaces are blended into a new space, which is called "blended space." The debate between the philosopher and Kant is taking place only in this blended space, where the philosopher and Kant are debating at the same time. Such a debate cannot exist in reality, it can only exist as a hypothetical blended space (Fauconnier & Turner, 1998).

According to Fauconnier and Turner (1996, 1998), this basic cognitive function, that is conceptual integration or blending, not only can be used to analyze and explain

grammatical constructions for which traditional grammar cannot account, but it is actually a central process in grammar and thought.

While the example of the debate with Kant is in its entirety occurring in a mental space, there are other instances when smaller instances of blending occur in otherwise real interaction. Pascual (2006) refers to such instances as "fictive interaction," and defines it as "a self-sufficient discourse unit conceptualized within a non-factive communicative occurrence, which functions syntactically and semantically as a grammatical constituent" (p. 245). By non-factive Pascual means an occurrence that does not actually happen in reality, it only exists in this conceptualization as a fictive interaction. Such units can exist, according to Pascual, at the lexical, phrase, and clause level and they are integrated in real communication. One example that Pascual uses to illustrate this concept is "You need to go with the attitude that *yes, I can do this*." Here, "yes, I can do this" is the fictive interaction unit embedded in a real interaction sentence. Another example Pascual (2006) gives is "I think there are a lot of people within the Democratic Party who […] felt like, "*okay, I don't want to go through that again.*" (p. 252). In this example, not only the utterance "okay, I don't want to go through that again" is fictive, but also the person described as uttering it.

Insofar as apologies are concerned, these concepts and theories can be used to explain some apologies that represent what Langacker (1999) called virtual speech acts. He claims that fictivity can exist not only at the level of situations, as described above, but also at level of the illocutionary force. In such instances, the speaker is only simulating the actual frame of the speech act but actually violates it on purpose. One example that Langacker (1999) gives is "That was a brilliant move, [in response to

something obviously stupid]" (p. 90). We will see in our discussion of written discourse that apologies can occur in fictive interaction in both English and Romanian (see sections 4.3.1 and 5.2.1).

2.2.5. Interactional Discourse

Finally, one of the aspects of spoken discourse that most previous studies on apologies have ignored is the interactional context in which apologies occur. Interactional context as related to pragmatics is defined here as occurring in natural speech, and it entails specific features that need to be considered, such as repetition, co-construction, asides, the mechanics of turn-taking and dealing with topics (Wiberg, 2003). These features influence both production and comprehension during interactions and cannot be reproduced in DCTs and written questionnaires. Though role-plays are interactional in their nature, the fact that they are staged and the participants follow their roles relatively strictly also prevents the occurrence of some interactional features that nevertheless influence the way speech acts are produced. We will therefore discuss some such features that may contribute to the construal of apologies in spoken discourse.

Phenomena such as co-construction, interruptions, and repair have mostly been studied by conversation analysts, who consider them a crucial component to conversation. Though the model of conversation based on turn-taking originally put forward by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) was based on one speaker speaking at a time, simultaneous speech is actually very common in conversations (Coates, 1989). Some of this simultaneous speech involves a co-construction of the discourse. Jacoby and Ochs (1995) defined co-construction as "the joint creation of a form, interpretation, stance, action, activity, identity, institution, skill, ideology, emotion, or other culturally

meaningful reality" (p. 171). While this definition encompasses co-construction at all levels of human communication, for our study we are interested mainly in the joint creation of form and meaning, which would suggest that apologies, and speech acts in general, can also be co-constructed. Moreover, co-construction also implies a negotiation of meaning through both verbal and non-verbal cues. This negotiation is embedded in the social nature of interaction (Rojas-Drummond, Albarrán, & Littleton, 2008). An example of such co-construction and negotiation is given below, in an interaction between three children:

12 DIEGO: Let's say they want to arrive at, hum…

13 ARNOLD: Arrive at a…

14 NANCY: Arrive at a waterfall!

15 DIEGO: No, Let's say they want to arrive at the sun!

16 ARNOLD: No.

17 DIEGO: Yea, arrive at the sun…

18 NANCY: Yea!

19 ARNOLD: No, I know, they want to arrive at the lake that gives magical energy!

20 DIEGO: No, look…(speaking at the same time).

21 NANCY: Shhh, let's try to speak one at a time… (Rojas-Drummond, et al., 2008, p. 184)

In this example, the children co-construct a sentence in a story, with Diego not being sure where the protagonists want to arrive. Arnold and Nancy help him out, Arnold merely repeating part of the sentence in line 13, but Nancy proposing a waterfall as a

destination. Diego proposes another destination, the Sun, but Arnold disagrees in line 16. However, Diego insists and Nancy agrees with him that the Sun is a good destination. Arnold proposes another destination in line 19, at which point the co-construction becomes an overlap, the children speaking at the same time, which Nancy points out in 21. As we can see in this example, the children participate in creating a sentence in the story by negotiating and co-constructing its meaning.

Not all instances of simultaneous speech or overlap are, however, instances of co-construction. Some instances are the result of an interruption, which occurs due to a speaker's attempt to take the floor during the turn of another speaker (Murata, 1994). Interruptions can, in their turn, be co-operative or intrusive. The latter can be of three types, namely topic changing interruptions, floor taking interruptions, and disagreement interruptions (Murata, 1994). The present study is concerned with intrusive interruptions, as these are the ones that would trigger an apology on the part of the speaker who is interrupting. Based on the organization of turn-taking in conversation put forward by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974), a conversation is structured in terms of turns. The decision on when a speaker can take a turn following another speaker's turn is based on what the authors call transition-relevant places. These are cues such as an intonation unit break or falling intonation in speech, among others, that signal the fact that the speaker is ending his or her turn, and another speaker can take the floor. When a speaker attempts to take a turn in a place in the conversation where there is no transition-relevant place, the speaker is considered to be interrupting the turn. An example of such an intrusive interruption is given next.

178 A : Yeah some- but I think it different there's a difference in food isn't there?

I mean if

+ 179 R: specially hall foods are very fattening (Murata, 1994, p. 395).

In this example, speaker A is speaking about food, and speaker R takes the floor in line 179. The reason this is considered an interruption is because speaker R starts to speak in the middle of A's sentence.

Interruptions are not the only feature of the interactional context that could influence the speech act of apology. Repair also occurs very frequently in spoken discourse. A distinction needs to be made between "repair" and "correction." While "correction" implies that an error has occurred that needs to be corrected, "repair" is used in a conversation to replace not just an error, but any potential "trouble source" (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). The following is an example of repair.

B: He had his uh Mistuh W- whatever k- I can't

think of his first name, Watts on, the one that wrote // that piece,

A: Dan Watts (Schegloff, et al., 1977, p. 364).

Here, speaker B cannot think of a full name, and gives only the last name, "Watts." In the next line, speaker A corrects speaker B by providing the full name of the person, "Dan Watts."

Self-repair is the type of repair that is done by the same speaker who produced the information that needs to be repaired, as exemplified below:

Hannah: And he's going to make his own paintings.

Bea: Mm hm,

Hannah: And- or I mean his own frames (Schegloff, et al., 1977, p. 366).

Unlike in the previous example, where the full name was provided by another person, in this example Hannah corrects herself. First, she gave the incorrect information in “his own paintings,” which then she corrects by saying “or I mean his own frames.”

Repair refers not only to replacing one piece of information with another, but also to clarifying or refining the “trouble source” (Schegloff, et al., 1977). Most of the self-repairs are “same-turn repairs,” that is they happen in the same turn as the utterance which needs to be repaired (Fox, Hayashi, & Jasperson, 1996). Finally, according to Fox and Jesperson (1995), self-repair is highly organized and patterned, as well as signaled by lexical and syntactic cues.

In sum, co-construction, interruptions, and repair are features of interactional discourse that can potentially influence apologies. While they might appear in role-plays or other oral instruments used to elicit speech acts (though they rarely do), these features do not manifest themselves in any written instruments.

2.2.6. Purpose of the Study

As this review of literature has shown, there are several areas of concern regarding how previous studies have analyzed apologies. We believe that the theoretical framework presented in this chapter represents a more effective and precise approach to analyzing this speech act. Consequently, the purpose of the present study is to investigate the constructions that are used to express explicit apologies in American English and Romanian. The term explicit apology is used here to refer to those apologies that contain an explicit expression of apology, sometimes formulaic, such as for example “I’m sorry.”

In order to fulfill this aim, the methodology that will be used in the present study is discourse analysis using corpus data as the source for apologies. This is in accordance

with the main tenet of Cognitive Linguistics that studies should investigate language in use.

3. Method

The present study investigated the construal of explicit apologies in English and Romanian from a construction grammar perspective. A discourse analysis approach using corpora was used to answer the following research questions:

1. What constructions are used to apologize explicitly in spoken and written American English?
2. What constructions are used to apologize explicitly in spoken and written Romanian?

In this chapter, we will provide information about the corpora that were used in this study. We will also describe the procedures used in analyzing the data, as well as the conventions used in discussing the examples.

3.1. The Corpora

Several corpora were used for both languages in order to provide a variety of sources for the analysis. Both general spoken discourse corpora and written business corpora were chosen for each of the two languages. The corpora were chosen in such a way so that the contexts in one language would match those in the other language. Each corpus will be presented in detail next. Also, since only a few corpora exist in Romanian, the English corpora were chosen in such a way so that they are comparable to the Romanian ones.

3.1.1. The Romanian Corpora

Two corpora were used for the spoken discourse part of the analysis. The first one was a collection of sample transcripts from "Corpus de română vorbită" – CORV (Corpus of Spoken Romanian) published by Dascălu Jinga (2002) totaling 33,579 words. CORV contains transcripts of recordings of spontaneous spoken language in a variety of settings. Some samples were transcripts of recordings of spontaneous interactions recorded by the researcher herself. These were mostly free conversations among relatives, friends, or acquaintances. Other samples were transcriptions of telephone conversations, as well as television and radio programming, more specifically talk shows and interviews. Even though such shows are based on a script, they nevertheless contain extensive portions of unscripted dialogic interaction. Table 5 shows the different settings and contexts in which the recordings were made (Dascălu Jinga, 2002).

Table 5

Settings of the Recordings in CORV

Spontaneous Interactions	Phone and Media Interactions
Family conversations and dialogues	Phone conversations among family members
Private conversations and dialogues	Radio conversations
Public monologues (conference presentations)	Radio monologues (Reading the news)
	Television conversations (Talk shows)
	Television monologues (News)

The transcripts in the available sample represented 220 minutes of recordings selected from a total of 1575 minutes of the entire CORV corpus. The recordings were made between 1981 and 2001. Only this part of the CORV corpus is available so far.

The second corpus of spoken Romanian was a 61,811-word selection of transcripts of over 50 hours of recordings of contemporary verbal interactions (Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu, 2002). The corpus contained transcriptions of telephone, radio, or television shows, but also casual conversations between relatives, friends, or even strangers. These were called by Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu dialogic interaction. There were also samples of monologic interaction, when only one speaker was present in settings such as voice messages or sports commentary. Sample settings for both types of interaction are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Sample Settings for Dialogic and Monologic Interaction

Dialogic Interaction	Monologic Interaction
At the bus stop	Direct messages
In the train	Sermon
On the street	Speech in the Parliament
Visiting friends	Pleading in the court
Gossip	Voicemail messages
Asking for directions	Television sports commentary
In the courthouse	Radio sports commentary
In the police station	
At the doctor's office	
At the pharmacy	
Party meeting	
Press briefing	
Friends on the phone	
Relatives on the phone	
Phone conversation with customer service	
Television interview	
Television talk show	
Radio call-in show	

While only these two small corpora were available for spoken discourse, a somewhat larger corpus was used for the written discourse part of the analysis. The Corpuseye Romanian Business Corpus (Greavu, 2007) contains 21.4 million words and it is a compilation of articles from two Romanian finance magazines, namely "Revista Capital" and "Adevărul Economic." The articles taken from the first magazine were published between 1998 and 2005, while those from the latter between 1999 and 2004. Both magazines cover economic analyses and investigations, interviews, as well as general business news. They also have sections dedicated to answering questions received from subscribers and readers.

3.1.2. The English Corpora

As mentioned before, the English corpora were selected in order to match the size, context, and settings found in the Romanian corpora. Thus, two corpora were used for spoken discourse, and one for written discourse.

The English spoken corpus chosen to correspond to the casual interaction settings in the spoken Romanian corpora was The Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (SBCSAE) (Du Bois, Chafe, Meyer, & Thompson, 2000; Du Bois, Chafe, Meyer, Thompson, & Martey, 2003; Du Bois & Englebretson, 2004, 2005). The total number of words in the corpus was 390,535. The corpus contains mostly transcripts of face-to-face interaction in different settings, as well as of classroom and lecture discourse from a variety of regions in the United States. Some of the types of discourse contained in the corpus are presented in Table 7 (The Department of Linguistics at the University of California Santa Barbara, 2010).

Table 7

Types of Discourse Represented in the SBCSAE

Type of Discourse	
Face-to-face conversation	Telephone conversations
Card games	Food preparation
On-the-job talk	Classroom lectures
Sermons	Story-telling
Town hall meetings	Tour-guide spiels

Since the spoken Romanian corpora also contained interactions in the media, such as press briefings, television and radio shows, a second spoken English corpus that contains such discourse was selected. The spoken language section of the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA) (Davies, 2008) was therefore used. This is the largest one of the corpora used in this study, as it contains 81,806,485 words. It contains unscripted conversation from 1990 to 2009 from several television and radio shows. Sample shows used as a source for the spoken section of the corpus are presented in Table 8 (Davies, 2008).

Table 8

Sample Shows Used as a Source for the Spoken Section of the COCA

Sample Sources
All Things Considered (NPR)
Newshour (PBS)
Good Morning America (ABC)
Today Show (NBC)
60 Minutes (CBS)
Hannity and Colmes (Fox)

Finally, the written financial discourse section of the COCA was used to match the written financial business corpus used for Romanian. This section contained 5,368,557 words and consisted of articles published between 1990 and 2009 in five financial magazines. The list of the magazines used is given in Table 9 (Davies, 2008).

Table 9

List of Magazines Used as Sources for the Financial Magazines Section of the COCA

Sources
Changing Times
Forbes
Fortune
Inc.
Money

3.1.3. Summary of Corpora Used

To summarize, two spoken corpora and one written one were used for both Romanian and English in order to give a mix of both casual spontaneous interaction and media interaction. The spoken corpora provide a variety of settings and contexts ranging from free face-to-face conversation—such as casual everyday conversation—to more controlled interaction—such as press briefings or television and radio shows. A summary of the different types of corpora used for both Romanian and English, as well as of the number of words in each type is given in Table 10.

Table 10

Number of Words in the Corpora Used

	Romanian	English
Spoken Discourse	95,390 words	82,197,020 words
Written Discourse	21,400,000 words	5,368,557 words

As can be seen in Table 10, the sizes of the corpora in the two languages were not similar. The Romanian written corpus was larger than the English written corpus. The greatest discrepancy was in the spoken discourse corpora, where the Romanian one was the smaller, and the English one was the larger. In order to make the results comparable across the two languages, relative frequencies per million words will also be given during the discussion of the results. Furthermore, since the COCA part of the spoken English corpus was very large, only a subset of it was used for the analysis. Details about how this subset was arrived at will be given next during our description of the data analysis procedures.

3.2. Data Analysis

The corpora described above were analyzed using different concordance and search tools. For some of the corpora MonoConc Pro 2.2 (Barlow, 2004) was used, while for others the online search interfaces provided by each corpus were used. As discussed in 2.1.2, explicit apologies are those apologies containing a lexical item or expression with an inherent apologetic meaning, mostly referred to in previous studies as an IFID. Different such lexical items used in the two languages were the starting point of the data analysis. The detailed procedure for analyzing the different corpora is presented next.

3.2.1. Procedures

In an untagged corpus, a corpus linguistics methodology entails searching for instances and concordances of certain lexical forms in an electronic database. The forms used to identify apologies were known in the literature on apologies as explicit expressions of apology (Holmes, 1990), Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983), and formulaic apologies (Deutschmann, 2003). Therefore, the first step in the present study was to decide for which lexical items to search. In order for the comparison across the two languages to be valid, it was necessary to use such items that would have equivalents in the two languages. Considering that the Romanian corpora were smaller and therefore more restrictive in terms of analysis, lexical items for Romanian were decided first. The items were taken from the few existing studies on apologizing in Romanian that collected apologies using a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) (Demeter, 2006) or interviews (Trimbitas, et al., 2007). Table 11 shows the lexical items and expressions used for the search in the Romanian corpora.

Table 11

List of Explicit Expressions of Apology Used for the Search in the Romanian Corpora

Romanian	English
îmi pare rău I.DAT seem.1ST.SG bad	I'm sorry
ne pare rău we.DAT seem.1ST.SG bad	we're sorry
scuze pardons	sorry
scuzați excuse.IMP.2ND.PL	excuse me
mă scuzați I.ACC excuse.IMP.2ND.PL	excuse me
ne scuzați we.DAT excuse.IMP.2ND.PL	excuse us
îmi cer scuze I.DAT ask.1ST.SG pardons	I apologize
ne cerem scuze we.DAT ask.1ST.PL pardons	we apologize
cerem scuze ask.1ST.PL pardons	we apologize
cerând scuze ask.GER pardons	apologizing
iartă- mă forgive.IMP.2ND.SG I.ACC	forgive me
iertați forgive.IMP.2ND.PL	forgive me
iertați- mă forgive.IMP.2ND.PL I.ACC	forgive me
mă iertați I.ACC forgive.IMP.2ND.PL	forgive me

The reason so many terms were used in the search for Romanian is that there is great morphological variation for the explicit expressions of apology. Romanian is a highly inflectional language, with verbs having different forms depending on the person and number of the subject. For example, if one person was apologizing, the singular form

of the verb is used, such as “îmi cer scuze” (I.DAT ask.1ST.SG pardons, ‘I apologize’); whereas, when several persons are apologizing, the plural form “ne cerem scuze” (we.DAT ask.1ST.PL pardons, ‘we apologize’) is used. Furthermore, the pronouns that accompany the verbs also need to agree with the verb, which accounts for the difference in form between “îmi” (I.DAT) and “ne” (we.DAT) in the examples above. The indirect object pronoun in these expressions is optional, and can occur either before or after the verb, which adds more variation. Finally, in Romanian the imperative also varies based on the number of the recipients of the command, which accounts for the distinction between “iartă-mă” (forgive.IMP.2ND.SG I.ACC, ‘forgive me’) and “iertați-mă” (forgive.IMP.2ND.PL I.ACC, ‘forgive me’). The plural form is also used as a polite form when there is only one recipient of the imperative.

The lexical items used for search in the English corpora were based on the Romanian items given in Table 11, in order to make the apologies comparable. Table 12 shows the list of lexical items used for English:

Table 12

List of Explicit Apology Lexemes Used for the Search in the English Corpora

Lexical Items
sorry
excuse
apologize
apologizing
forgive

As the different corpora used for the study came from different sources, different tools had to be used to search them. However, the following general procedure was used for all corpora:

1. A simple search was carried out on each corpus for the lexical items presented in Table 11 for Romanian, and in Table 12 for English, respectively. The following tools were used for the different corpora:
    a. MonoConc Pro 2.2 (Barlow, 2004) was used to search the two spoken Romanian corpora as well as the SBCSAE.
    b. The online search function provided on the Corpuseye website at http://corp.hum.sdu.dk/cqp.ro.html was used for the written business Romanian corpus.
    c. The online interface provided by the COCA website at http://www.americancorpus.org/ was used for the spoken and written financial magazines sections of the COCA.
2. The search resulted in a list of instances of the lexical items. All the items for the three Romanian corpora as well as for the written English corpus were considered for analysis. Due to the fact that the search on the COCA spoken English corpus resulted in a large number of occurrences ranging up to over ten thousand in one case, this number was reduced in order to make the analysis manageable. Consequently, we used the "Sample 100" option in the online interface for each of the lexical items in Table 12 to generate a random list of 100 occurrences to use for further analysis. We will refer to this sub-set

of the spoken English corpus as the analysis corpus, while the term extended corpus will be used to refer to the entire spoken English corpus.

3. Each of the instances in which the lexical items or expressions appeared was then analyzed manually in order to establish whether they conveyed an apology or not. The criteria used to determine whether the construction was an apology or not were contextual. The situation in which the lexical items appeared and other items in their vicinity were analyzed in making this decision. Those items that were not part of an apology were discarded. Examples of such discarded items in Romanian and English respectively are given in (3) and (4). For the example in Romanian, the gloss is given only for the utterance in which the lexical item appears, which is bolded.

(3)
B: în rest ce faceți.
'How are you otherwise?'

A: uite am făcut o gripă de-asta urîtă: de-abia mi-am mai revenit un pic acuma că vocea mi-e: încă
'Well, I've got this bad cold: I've just barely recovered a little but my voice is still'

B: da se simte după voce
'Yes, you can tell from the voice'

A: da da
'yes yes'

B: da da
'yes yes'

A: și am cam tras-o așa săptămîna asta destul de urît.
'And I've been sort of dragging it pretty bad the whole week'

B: **a îmi pare rău**
ah I.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad
'Ah, I'm sorry'

cred că de la vremea asta de afară
'I think it's because of the weather'

A: da cred cred.
'Yes, I think, I think.'
(CORV)

In (3), speaker B uses the lexical expression "îmi pare rău" (I.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad, 'I'm sorry') to express empathy for the health condition of speaker A. Also, the utterance does not follow an offense, which is necessary for an apology to exist as we have defined it in section 2.1. This lexical item is therefore not part of an apology. Neither is the one in (4), taken from the spoken English corpus.

(4) Mr. ANDERSON: And you had gra -- graduated from Howard University...
ANCHOR: No. Hansen... gone to Howard. Did some...
[…]
ANCHOR: You know, I didn't stay to graduate – **I'm sorry I didn't** -- but when I came to Howard, I wanted to be a playwright, and so I studied all the things I thought would make me a playwright
(COCA, NPR_Weekend, ACTOR,AUTHOR,ACTIVIST OSSIE DAVIS PROFIL)

In (4), the speaker expresses regret that he did not graduate from Howard University, and therefore the lexical expression "I'm sorry" is not part of an apology. However, "I apologize" in (5) is an apology.

(5) TONY-PERKINS-ABC-# (Off-Camera): I have a confession to make, 'cause your garden looked terrible. When you and Mike were in Maine, Rhonda and I happened to be up at Martha's Vineyard and we happened to stop by your garden...
DIANE-SAWYER-# (Off-Camera): You picked my tomatoes?
TONY-PERKINS-# (Off-Camera): We picked your tomatoes.
DIANE-SAWYER-# (Off-Camera): That's where my tomatoes went.
TONY-PERKINS-# (Off-Camera): They're actually very, very good. So I, **I apologize. We didn't know that would be all of them**.

DIANE-SAWYER-# (Off-Camera): That's right. Two tomatoes. One massacred fig. That's it.
(COCA, ABC_GMA, SUMMER VACATION DIANE SAWYER SHARES HER VACATION STORY)

Unlike in (3) and (4), an offense is identifiable in (5), namely the fact that Tony Perkins and Mike picked Diane Sawyer's tomatoes. The speaker apologizes for this offense and also provides an explanation for it.

4. The instances that were confirmed to be apologies were then analyzed in order to establish a schematic construction of which the lexical item or expression was an integral part. In order to be considered a construction the lexical items needed to form a unit of syntactic representation with its own semantic and pragmatic interpretation (Croft & Cruse, 2004). Also, in order to justify them as constructions as opposed to isolated collocations of lexical items, constructions needed to have at least two occurrences in the corpus. Table 13 shows sample constructions and examples from the COCA.

Table 13

Sample Constructions

Construction	Example
[*I'm sorry I* VP]	"I 'm sorry I mispronounced your name a moment ago"
[*I apologize for* GERUND-CLAUSE]	"I apologize for for being late and everything"
[*I apologize for that*]	"I apologize for that"

5. The instances were then grouped by the construction of which they were a part. Some constructions had only one occurrence in the corpus, and therefore

as there was not enough evidence to establish them as constructions, we referred to them as possible constructions. An example of such a construction was [*excuse me* CLAUSE], as in (6).

(6) BLITZER: But you know friends who were inside whose fate remains unclear?
FRAVALA: **Excuse me, I couldn't understand that**
(COCA, CNN, Interview With Rhode Island Fire)

6. For some constructions occurring in the spoken English corpus, a second search was performed on the extended corpus, this time for the full construction, in order to establish the relative frequency of the construction. This was possible due to the fact that COCA is a partially tagged corpus, and therefore it was possible to search for "I'm sorry I [verb]" for example. The results of this second search were then again manually analyzed in order to establish whether they were apologies or not. The relative frequency of the construction was then calculated based on the occurrences deemed to be apologies and instances of the specific construction searched for. In some cases, however, when the construction was mostly substantive, with few generalizations that would allow for a tagged search, such a second search was not possible. A search was not possible for some schematic constructions containing clauses or utterances, either, as only parts of speech are tagged in COCA, not clauses and utterances. This step was only performed for the spoken English corpus, for which the initial search results were limited to 100 per lexeme. For the other corpora, all the instances found in the first search were used, so a second search was not needed.

7. Each construction was then analyzed again in the broader context in which it appeared in order to establish the situation and context in which it was uttered.
8. Finally, the apology was analyzed in the context and situation in which it appeared in order to establish the category to which it belonged based on its function. One of our aims was to establish the usefulness of the taxonomies used in previous studies to categorize apologies (see the discussion in section 2.1.2). We have not used a predetermined list of apology categories in our categorization of apologies. Rather, we looked at the apology first, and if one of the existing categories fit that apology, we used the category, if it did not, then we created a new category to better fit the function of the apology. Since some of the existing categories proved problematic, we had to revise the taxonomy to better fit our data. Since we consider this revision part of our findings, we will discuss the revised categorization at the beginning of our discussion of apologies in English in section 4.1.

In order to make these procedures clearer, we will use the spoken section of the COCA to illustrate the procedures outlined above. The lexical item *sorry* was first entered in the search box of the COCA online interface, and "Spoken" was selected as the section of the corpus. The search resulted in 10,746 occurrences of the lexeme *sorry*. We then used the "Sample 100" link to generate a list of 100 random occurrences of this lexical item. Once the list of 100 occurrences was established, we have manually analyzed each instance in order to establish whether the lexeme was part of an apology or not. This was achieved by clicking on the item in the list displayed in the online interface.

The lexeme was then analyzed in this expanded context to establish whether it was part of an apology or not. In this particular example, the lexeme was part of an apology, and the apology was "I'm sorry I mispronounced your name a moment ago." The next step was to establish the construction used to express this apology. In order to do that, this particular instance was analyzed in the context of other similar apologies in order to establish possible generalizations. Thus, when compared to other apologies such as "I'm sorry I don't know" and "I'm sorry I misheard you" we were able to establish that the explicit expression of apology "I'm sorry" was present in all such instances, and therefore the construction would have to contain these lexical items. This was also the case with the personal pronoun "I." However, the verb that followed these lexical items varied in the different instances of the apology, and therefore a generalization could be made that a verb phrase followed these lexical items. Consequently, all these apologies were expressed by the construction [*I'm sorry I* VP], where VP stands for a verb phrase.

As mentioned above, the results of the search in COCA were limited to 100 per lexeme due to the large number of results. When the form of the construction permitted, a second search was performed on the extended spoken English corpus to establish the relative frequency of the construction. The construction in this example, [*I'm sorry I* VP], allowed for such a second tagged search in the COCA. We therefore searched for "I'm sorry I [v*]" in the corpus, where [v*] stood for a verb. This search resulted in 150 instances of this construction. Each instance was analyzed again in the extended context, to establish whether it expressed an apology or not. Out of the 150 instances, 134 proved to be apologies.

The last step was to establish the meaning of the apology in order to decide what category it belongs to. By analyzing the apology in the expanded context, we established that in the apology "I'm sorry I mispronounced your name a moment ago" the speaker was acknowledging responsibility for mispronouncing another person's name. Thus, this particular apology belongs to the category "Acknowledging responsibility."

The data were then analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. The quantitative analysis included frequencies of use of the different constructions that used the discussed lexical items for an apology. The qualitative analysis then aimed at making the connection between the different constructions and their meaning, as well as at comparing their use in the two languages.

3.2.2. Coding Reliability

In order to ensure the accurateness of the data analysis, a native speaker of Romanian in addition to me and one of English were asked to categorize the apologies in terms of their meaning. For this process, a separate meeting was set up with both native speakers to explain the necessary steps they needed to take. Supporting materials were provided that contained the following:

1. Definitions of apologies;
2. An explanation of what is understood by the meaning of the apology;
3. A list of possible meanings with examples from the corpora; this list was compiled based on the meanings identified during the data analysis process;
4. Instructions on the steps they have to take in order to categorize the data;

The data sheet provided contained the output from the concordance tool used to search the corpora with the searched lexical items highlighted in bold letters and given in

context. Both items categorized as apologies and some items categorized as not being apologies were included (see section 3.2.1 for the description of the categorization process) in order to ensure that items were properly labeled as apologies or not apologies. The collaborators had to perform two steps for each of the items in the data sheet:

1. To decide whether the lexical item highlighted in the sample was part of an apology or not;
2. To provide the meaning of the apology by either choosing one of the meanings in the list provided as supporting material, or, in case none of the meanings applied, to provide their own meaning for the apology.

The results of the corroboration process were then analyzed. Those cases that did not confirm our categorization were then given to a third person in order to establish the meaning of the apology. For the English data, 24 of the 733 instances analyzed required a third person, while none of the instances in the Romanian data required one.

3.3. Conventions Used in the Study

This section will discuss some of the conventions that have been set for the present study. These pertain to the way the examples are presented in the two languages, how they are cited, and some notes regarding the format of the examples.

3.3.1. The Format of the Examples

The examples given in the present study are taken from the corpora used for the analysis described in section 3.1.1. While the format of the examples from the written corpora follows standard conventions of written discourse, there are some aspects of the examples from spoken corpora that need to be discussed.

First of all, due to the fact that the spoken corpora represent transcripts of spoken language, they do not follow the punctuation and capitalization rules of written text, but rather transcriptions conventions. In order to preserve the authenticity of the examples, they are provided throughout this study exactly as they are in the original transcript with a few notable exceptions. Some of the transcripts contain metadiscourse markings, such as pause lengths, intonation patterns, and timing codes that correspond to the sound recordings. These metadiscourse markings have been removed from the examples so that they do not interfere with the clear understanding of the texts. Also, the lines in most of the transcripts represented intonation units. These units were not kept in our examples, the lines being adapted to highlight the apology constructions.

A second aspect that needs to be discussed is the way the examples in Romanian are given. First, the original text in Romanian was given. Then, for the lines of text representing the context in which the apology occurred, a translation was provided beneath the text in Romanian between single quotes. For the apology constructions themselves, the original text in Romanian was given in bold letters. Then, a morpheme by morpheme gloss was given line by line beneath the original text. This was necessary due to the fact that Romanian is a highly inflectional language. A complete list of the abbreviations used in the glosses is given in Appendix A. In order to keep the gloss aligned with the corresponding word in the original text above, the construction was broken up in several lines. A translation of the entire apology construction was then given after all the lines containing the construction in original and the gloss. An example is given in (7) for illustration.

(7) A: sărut mîna Cosmin Burlacu la telefon
'Hello, this is Cosmin Burlacu speaking'

îmi cer mii de scuze dar la
I.DAT ask.1ST.SG thousands of pardons but at

ora la care vă sun adică
hour.DEFART at which you.PL.ACC call.1ST.SG ie

cinci şi jumătate sunt aşteptat la o lucrare.
five and half am wait.PASTPART at one job

'I apologize, but at the time of this call, ie. five thirty, I am expected for a job.'

(IONESCU, 79)

3.3.2. Citation Convention for the Examples

Information about the corpus from which each example is taken is given in parenthesis right after the example. The correspondence between the names used in the citations and the corpora is given in Appendix B. When more detailed information is available about the source of each transcript and a title of that transcript in the database, this information will also be provided. Thus, the order of the information in the citation is as follows: name of the corpus, name of the source, title of the article or transcript from which the example is taken, as in the following example: (COCA, Fortune, America's Hottest Investor).

The results of the data analysis will be reported next. First, the apologies occurring in spoken and written English are discussed next in Chapter 4. The results of the analysis of the Romanian apologies will be discussed in Chapter 5. The conclusion section of the chapter on Romanian apologies will also contain the comparison of the way the different constructions are used in the two languages.

4. Apologies in English

The aim of the present study was to investigate the construal of explicit apologies in American English and Romanian from a Construction Grammar perspective. Moreover, the relationship between the meanings of the apologies and the constructions used to express them was also to be investigated in the two languages. The present section is organized around the three research questions of the study. Thus, it will first discuss the constructions used in English, followed by those used in Romanian. Finally, the comparison between the constructions used in the two languages will also be discussed.

4.1. Categorization Issues

The first research question of the present study aimed at finding the constructions that are used to apologize explicitly in English. As mentioned in the method section, the first step in the analysis was to evaluate the usefulness of the taxonomies established and widely used in previous studies on apologies in the context of a construction grammar approach. The apology had to be part of a construction as defined in the literature review section, namely "a syntactic configuration, sometimes with substantive items (e.g. *let alone*), sometimes not, with its own semantic and pragmatic meaning" (Croft & Cruse, 2004, p. 255). In the case of this study, the explicit lexical items presented in the method

section needed to be part of the construction. Finally, the context in which the apology occurred also contributed to how it was classified.

While some of the apologies could be clearly classified in one of the categories established by previous studies, other apologies in the corpora could not be fitted in any existing category, and new ones had to be created. These issues with categorization are described in this section. The apologies that posed most of the problems in terms of placing them in one of the established categories were the ones that previous studies labeled as Illocutionary Force Indicating Devices (IFIDs). As discussed in section 2.1.2, the IFID is a direct apology expressed by a highly routinized and conventionalized explicit formulaic expression such as “I’m sorry” (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984). Most previous studies on apologies considered the IFID as a separate category, even though it could combine with other categories.

4.1.1. IFID vs. Co-constructed Apologies

The most common issue with this type of apology involved those cases in which the so-called IFID seemed to occur by itself in the apology, without any elaboration. One such example is given in (8), where “I’m sorry” is indeed by itself in the intonation unit.

(8)
KENDR: A cookie baking set.
MARCI: Al right.
MARCI: Al right.
KENDR: Mm.
KEVIN: Rubber Maid.
MARCI: Oh.
MARCI: Let me see it.
KEN: &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh.
KEVIN: You can't squash it.
KENDR: Mm.
MARCI: Oh...
KENDR: Rubber Maid.
MARCI: neat.

KEVIN: Twelve pieces.
KENDR: Yay.
KEVIN: &=GASP.
KEN: That's XX...
MARCI: Oh that's X.
KENDR: Wow.
KEVIN: Oh that includes all the teaspoons though.
MARCI: In blue.
KENDR: In blue
that's not my color.
WENDY: It's not green.
I'm sorry.
KENDR: &=tsk.
MARCI: They don't come in green.
KEVIN: We bought it before you had an apartment.
KENDR: No my plates are blue
that's okay.
(SBCSAE, SBC013 Appease the Monster)

In this example, Kendra receives a cookie baking set as birthday present. However, the teaspoons are blue, while Kendra's favorite color is green. As Wendy is aware of the fact that Kendra's favorite color is green, she apologizes for the fact that the color of the teaspoons is not green, that is it does not meet Kendra's expectations, by using the apology "I'm sorry." This apology would be categorized as an IFID by traditional speech act studies. However, the interaction did not stop here. Following the non-linguistic verbal response by Kendra, Marci believes that Wendy's apology was not enough, and steps in to complete the apology stating that the set does not come in green. Moreover, Kevin also contributes to the apology by providing an explanation, "We bought it before you had an apartment." It is therefore clear from this example that if the apology is analyzed in its full discourse context it is not just an IFID. Instead, the expression is part of a more elaborate apology construction that spans across several turns of several speakers. As more than one speaker participates in the speech act, the apology

does not fit any of the existing categories. Therefore, a new category was created for such instances, namely "Co-constructed apologies."

However, while the categorization problem has been solved in Example (8), a theoretical issue still remains as to how such apologies construed in an interactive spoken discourse fit the Construction Grammar framework. As discussed in the literature review section (see 2.2.1.2), constructions can manifest themselves at the discourse level and in the highly interactive medium of spoken language (Fried & Östman, 2005). A turn can then be a schematic representation inside a construction, just as a clause can be at the sentence level. Consequently, in (8), Kendra's nonlinguistic response "&=tsk" is part of this co-constructed construction because it is only because of this turn that Marci's and Kevin's elaborations of Wendy's apology occur. Without Kendra's turn, the participants in the conversation could have considered Wendy's apology as sufficient. The construction that expresses the apology in Example (8) could thus be represented as [$^{\text{SPEAKER1}}$[*I'm sorry* TURN] $^{\text{SPEAKER2}}$[TURN] $^{\text{SPEAKER3}}$[TURN]]. Since the format used in this study to denote construction is the one used by Croft and Cruse (2004), and since their Construction Grammar theory does not include constructions spanning several turns, we adapted Croft and Cruse's (2004) format to allow their use at the higher discourse level.

4.1.2. IFID vs. Fictive Apologies

Co-constructed apologies are not the only type of apologies that emerge from examining IFIDs in discourse. Three other categories emerged from the data analysis. The first one is illustrated in (9).

(9) At an age when most of his contemporaries have either retired or given up the daily grind of running publicly traded funds, the 67-year-old Heebner is putting up the best numbers of an already exemplary 30-

> year career. He's Barry Bonds without the steroids. "He's a rock star -- he's Bono," quips his Irish-born (and U2-loving) analyst Catherine Columb. Given that U2 hasn't put out a good album since Joshua Tree -- **sorry, Catherine** -- Bono should feel flattered. (Of course, it's doubtful that Heebner, who by his own admission spends most of his waking hours thinking about the markets, could pick either Bonds or Bono out of a lineup.) Just how good has Heebner been? We may well be witnessing the most dazzling run of stock picking in mutual fund history.
> (COCA, Fortune, America's Hottest Investor)

Example (9) is taken from an editorial in "Fortune," and it occurred in written discourse. The author of the editorial quotes a positive reference to the U2 singer Bono, from analyst, Catherine Columb. The author contests the positive reference, stating that "Given that U2 hasn't put out a good album since Joshua Tree […] Bono should feel flattered." He therefore disagrees with Catherine Columb, and he apologizes for this to her by saying "sorry, Catherine." This apology, therefore, is not a real one, nor is the offense that the apology is mending. What happens here, in fact, is a fictive interaction, as defined by Pascual (2006), and discussed in the literature review in section 2.2.4. The author is simulating a fictive interaction with Catherine Columb. This interaction is only possible in the blended space that is created by the writer of the editorial. As discussed in 2.2.4, a blended space is created by using elements from two input spaces. In this case, one input space is that of the author writing the editorial, and the second input space is that of Catherine Columb, who is writing about Bono. The two occur at different points in time, and therefore it is not possible to have a real interaction. The "conversation" between the author and Catherine Columb is only possible in the blended space, similar to the conversation between the philosopher and Kant that we have discussed in the literature review (see 2.2.4).

Since this apology is not real, and only occurs in a fictive interaction taking place in a blended space, it does not function the same way as an IFID, which occurs in real interactions. Since there is a distinction in function, similar to the example of the co-constructed apology, this type of apology cannot be justified as belonging to the same category of IFID. We will therefore refer to such apologies as fictive apologies.

4.1.3. IFID vs. Repair Apologies

Besides co-constructed apologies and fictive apologies, the third category to emerge from our data analysis was that of repair apologies. An example of such an apology is given in (10).

(10)

ROSE:	This one is Friday at nine thirty at the Mega Center.
GRANT:	The bank right?
GRANT:	That's the bank.
GRANT:	X X...
ROSE:	It's one o five West Adams on the seventh floor ...
GRANT:	At what time ?
ROSE:	Nine.
ROSE:	**I'm sorry** it's nine to ten+thirty .
GRANT:	Okay I have a clue that she gave me but I'll make arrangements on it.

(SBCSAE, SBC026 Hundred Million Dollars)

The example in (10) is part of a city meeting in which officials and the public discuss certain grants they are applying for. While “I’m sorry” functions as an apology meant to mend the fact that Rose provided incomplete information, it does not function just as an IFID. It is also an integral part of a discourse pattern that involves a self-repair,

as it follows immediately after the incomplete information and it is followed by the correct information. Such instances of apologies were categorized as “Repair apologies.”

The category of repair apologies also poses the same theoretical question in regard to how they can be fit in the Construction Grammar framework. The arguments are similar to those for co-constructed apologies, in that discourse patterns can be considered discourse constructions. Thus, a specific genre or type of discourse has a highly conventionalized and expected framework (see 2.2.1.2). This argument can also be applied to the apology in (10). Self-repairs are expected in the pattern “Incorrect/Incomplete Information” – “Explicit Expression of Apology” – “Corrected Information.” For the example in (10), such a pattern can be illustrated by the construction [UTTERANCE *I’m sorry* UTTERANCE]. Utterance is used instead of clause or sentence due to the spoken nature of the discourse.

4.1.4. IFID vs. Interruption Apologies

Similar to repair apologies, there is one more new category of apologies that functions at the discourse level, to which Östman’s (2005) extension of Construction Grammar theory can be applied. These are “Interruption apologies.” While these apologies do indeed mostly stand alone in the construction, they also introduce an interruption, which adds to the meaning of the apology. An example of such an apology is given in (11).

(11) SEN-JOSEPH-LIEBERMAN: Well, I do want to make clear - and I believe this is what Sen. Warner intends here - which is that the Secretary of Defense made it very clear as he said there's not been one iota of thinking about putting American forces on the ground in Kosovo in a hostile situation. What's being contemplated now clearly is the

use of air power in various targets throughout the region and the aim there –
JIM-LEHRER: **Excuse me.** Throughout the region meaning maybe in Serbia, itself –
SEN-JOSEPH-LIEBERM: Maybe.
(COCA, PBS_Newshour, Stopping Fighting; Hedge Funds; Starr's Tactics)

In this example, Jim Lehrer apologizes for interrupting Senator Joseph Lieberman. The interruption is marked in the transcript by the dash at the end of the first turn in the example. It is only at this discourse level that the pragmatic offense, namely the interruption, is made explicit. First, there is an uncompleted utterance of one speaker that signals the fact that the utterance of the second speaker represents an interruption. Similar to repair apologies, the preceding and following utterances are also part of the construction, so the apology is represented as [$^{\text{SPEAKER1}}$[UNCOMPLETED-UTTERANCE] $^{\text{SPEAKER2}}$[*Excuse me* UTTERANCE]]. However, the function of introducing an interruption is only evident in the specific context in which it appears, so besides the form of the construction and the semantic properties of the lexical items it contains, the context also contributes to the meaning of the construction. Thus, the apology mitigates what might or might not be perceived as an offense. As this type of apology can only exist in this context, it functions as more than just an IFID.

4.1.5. IFID vs. other Existing Categories

While the examples discussed so far presented cases in which new categories had to be created for apologies that previous studies categorized as IFIDs, there were cases where apologies were categorized in other existing categories. These were also cases where the IFID occurred by itself in the sentence, but when examining it in discourse,

elaborations were found in another sentence or utterance. Take for example the apology in (12).

(12) DAVID BRINKLEY: There used to be bleachers out there behind the left field.
BRIT HUME: It was- yeah, there was, and it was- it was the kind of thing he always did here, and all of us who lived here and rooted for the Senators hated that guy and yet feel bad about him now.
DAVID BRINKLEY: Okay, our time is up. **I 'm sorry**. Thank you all very much.We'll be back with a few words that might have come out of an Italian opera, but did not, in a moment.
(COCA, ABC_Brinkley, ABC_Brinkley / 19950813)

In (12), the television show moderator David Brinkley uses an apology to end the show. Even though "I'm sorry" does appear by itself in the utterance, it does not function only as an IFID in the discourse. An explanation for ending the show is provided in the utterance occurring immediately before "I'm sorry," which is also part of the apology. Such an apology is therefore a construction of the [UTTERANCE *I'm sorry*] type, classified as an explanation, as the apology does contain an explanation besides indicating the illocutionary force of the speech act.

Finally, the last type of cases involved combinations of IFIDs with other existing categories. Traditional speech act theories consider an IFID as standing on its own, in the same way as categories such as acknowledging responsibility or blaming someone else (Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983). Such a classification is, however, problematic from a construction grammar perspective. Take for example the apology in (13).

(13) ZAHN: Thanks, Scott. We're going to break in now back to Mike Scanlon who joined us earlier. He works for Representative Tom DeLay, the majority whip. He happened to be standing about 15 feet away from where the shootings happened. Mike, we did not give you a

chance to describe to us what the scene looked like after these shots were fired.

Mr-SCANLON: Well, I am -- **I'm sorry I didn't bring it up.**

(COCA, CBS_Special, LIVE COVERAGE OF SHOOTING AT THE CAPITOL)

In this example, the speakers take part in a live coverage of a shooting at the Capitol. Mr. Scanlon apologizes for not bringing up the scene of the shooting by saying "I'm sorry I didn't bring it up." Traditional apology studies would consider this as a combination of two apology categories, namely "I'm sorry," categorized as an IFID, and "I didn't bring it up," categorized as acknowledging the offense. However, if we look at this apology from a construction grammar perspective, there should be only one category, as the meaning of the apology is given by the entire construction [*I'm sorry* CLAUSE]. If we take the two separately, they do not have the same meaning. "I'm sorry" taken alone is an apology, but it does not contain the acknowledgement expressed by the rest of the construction. In the same way, "I didn't bring it up" does acknowledge an offense, but taken alone is not an explicit apology, nor is it clearly an implicit apology. As the full meaning of the apology is given by the entire sentence, and as constructions are a syntactic form expressing specific pragmatic and semantic meanings, *I'm sorry* and the following clause make up the construction expressing the apology. The category such a construction belongs to is acknowledging responsibility, as this is the meaning of the entire construction.

4.1.6. IFID vs. Standalone Apologies

Nonetheless, there were some instances in the corpus where the apologies were standalone IFIDs as defined by traditional speech act theory. However, the term "Standalone apology" is used instead in this study in order to avoid confusion with the

categories of apologies discussed above that speech act theory also considers IFIDs. An example of a standalone apology is given in (14).

(14)
FRANK:	&=tsk Did dad watch Perot?
BRETT:	So do...
FRANK:	last night?
BRETT:	Unh.
BRETT:	&=BELCH.
RON:	don't think so.
FRANK:	and
	recorded the game .
FRANK:	I figured he'd be interested in hearing him at least.
BRETT:	**Excuse me.**
JAN:	Well his mind's made up .
BRETT:	&=THROAT .
FRANK:	Well I know that.
FRANK:	but it might just be fun
	to listen to him .

(SBCSAE, SBC019 Doesn't Work in this Household)

In this example, Brett belches during a family conversation and apologizes for it using the standalone apology "Excuse me." As can be seen from the following utterances, the other participants continue their discussion uninterruptedly, which would suggest that Brett's apology was considered sufficient in this context. The pragmatic offense that required the apology was a minor one. As will be shown later in this study, such standalone apologies are used mostly in contexts such as this, to mend behavior offenses, which do not require further elaboration such as providing an explanation or acknowledging responsibility.

4.1.7. Acknowledging Responsibility, Explanation, and Denying Responsibility

While the IFID category proved problematic, other categories, such as "Acknowledging responsibility," "Explanation," and "Denying responsibility" accurately described the functions of numerous instances of apology constructions in all the English

corpora investigated. Even though the names of these categories were used, the categories themselves did not contain apologies that belonged to them in an absolute and clear-cut way as previous studies on apologies claimed. The two examples given next illustrate this fact.

(15) LIMBAUGH: Thank you very much. Nice to have you back. Thank you very much. You're watching the beloved Rush Limbaugh on the beloved Rush Limbaugh television show. By the way, I -- I committed a grievous error, ladies and gentlemen. It's Brooklyn College from here in Brooklyn, not Brooklyn University. **I apologize for the mistake**. All right. Another round of applause. Go ahead. That's -- yeah.
(COCA, DEMOCRAT JIM TRAFICANT GIVING FEMALE HORMONES TO A PRISON INMATE; LIBERAL CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON WHERE THEY ARE TAKING ON A CONSERVATIVE HUE; LIBERALS FEAR THE WORD GOD')

(16) SPEAKER: The investigation of this particular incident is still open by the National Transportation and Safety Board. I don't have all the information at this point, but we take swift action to try to identify wherever there's a problem, and then take corrective action to ensure that it doesn't occur again
FLATOW: Mm-hmm. I just -- Jim McKenna, help me out here
MCKENNA: Well, **I apologize if I've misled you or anyone else** to imply that the near-collision itself was not a serious problem. It was extremely serious.
(COCA, NPR_Science, Air Traffic Safety)

While the apologies in both (15) and (16) can be categorized as "Acknowledging responsibility," it is clear that there are differences in the degree to which the speaker acknowledges that responsibility. Thus, in "I apologize for the mistake" the moderator of a television show clearly takes responsibility for mistaking Brooklyn College with Brooklyn University, the responsibility is not that clearly taken on by the speaker in "I apologize if I've misled you or anyone else." In the second example, it seems that the speaker does not believe that he has misled the moderator of the radio show, but is

willing to accept responsibility if the moderator thinks such a misleading has occurred. Examples (15) and (16) show that there is actually a continuum in terms of how responsibility is acknowledged, with clearly acknowledging responsibility on the one end, and denying responsibility on the other end. We will refer to this continuum in this study as the responsibility continuum. The choice of construction, [*I apologize for* NP] in the first example and [*I apologize if* CLAUSE] in the second one, contributes to the placement of the apology on the continuum. An example of an apology more towards the denying responsibility end is given in (17).

(17) What about those pesky regulations? Connecticut lawmakers demanded that Murray divest a Fleet subsidiary in their state. At the time the Japanese were buying aggressively. Murray reached into his bag of tricks. He phoned a lobbyist in Hartford, Conn.: Get me four Asians in suits. He drove to the city the next day and toured the capital with them.

"They're interested in our bank here," he replied to curious politicians. "**I'm sorry I can't disclose more**."

Murray got to keep his bank under a new law that passed a few days later.
(COCA, Forbes, The Craftiest Buyer in Banking)

In this example, the speaker quoted in an article apologizes for not being able to disclose more information on the interest in his bank. While giving that information does not seem out of the control of the speaker, it is the circumstances that do not allow him to give such information as there was nothing clearly agreed on with the interested Japanese party. Therefore, by using this specific construction what the speaker suggests is that it is not his responsibility that he cannot disclose more information, but it is rather due to the circumstances which are not necessarily in his control. This example is more complex, as it contains an added layer of interpretation. There is intent to mislead and the real reason the speaker does not want to disclose more is not because he cannot, but rather because if

he were to do so, he would have to lie. Such differences in classification will be dealt with in more detail later in this study in the sections devoted to the different categories.

4.1.8. Summary

Both the written and spoken English corpora were analyzed using the revised classification of apologies in order to establish how frequent each category was across the entire data set. Thus, out of the 737 instances containing the lexemes *sorry*, *excuse*, *apologize*, *apologizing*, and *forgive*, 248 functioned as part of an apology. These were categorized into the eight different categories described above. Table 14 shows the number of apologies in the spoken and written corpora in each category.

Table 14

Frequency of Apology Categories in the English Analysis Corpora

	Occurrences	
Category	Spoken	Written
Acknowledging responsibility	55 26.44%	2 5.00%
Repair apologies	40 19.23%	4 10.00%
Standalone apologies	39 18.75%	8 20.00%
Interruption apologies	39 18.75%	—
Providing an explanation	25 12.02%	15 37.50%
Fictive apologies	—	9 22.50%
Denying responsibility	6 2.88%	2 5.00%
Co-constructed apologies	4 1.92%	—
Total	208 100.00%	40 100.00%

All the categories of apologies presented in Table 14 contain an explicit expression of apology. However, such expressions do not seem to occur as standalone apologies without further elaboration as often as IFIDs have been reported to occur by previous studies on apologies on both English (Deutschmann, 2003; Holmes, 1993; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Owen, 1983; Trosborg, 1995) and other languages (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Trosborg, 1987). This difference is due to the revised categorization discussed above. The most frequent category in spoken discourse was "Acknowledging responsibility," with 55 occurrences (26.44%), followed by "Repair apologies," with 40 (19.23%). These were followed by "Standalone apologies" and "Interruption apologies" with 39 occurrences each (18.75%), and "Providing an explanation" with 25 (12.02%). Finally, the last two categories were "Denying responsibility," with 6 occurrences (2.88%) and "Co-constructed apologies," with 4 (1.92%).

Unlike in spoken discourse, the most frequent apology category in written discourse was "Providing an explanation" with 15 occurrences (37.50%). This category was followed by "Fictive apologies" with 9 occurrences (22.50%), "Standalone apologies" with 8 (20.00%), and "Repair apologies" with 4 (10.00%). The last two categories, "Acknowledging responsibility" and "Denying responsibility," had 2 occurrences each (5.00%).

Insofar as the similarities and differences between spoken and written discourse are concerned, most categories showed up in both types of discourse. The unequal number of words in the spoken and written corpus do not allow for a comparison of raw frequencies between spoken and written discourse. The frequencies presented in Table 14

are meant only for a comparison of the frequencies of the different categories within spoken and written discourse respectively. It is not surprising, however, that "Interruption apologies" and "Co-constructed apologies" were not present in written discourse. As written discourse is not interactive, there are no interruptions that would require an apology, nor is there a conversation that would allow for co-constructing discourse. The few instances of the category "Repair apologies" occurred in quoted interaction, and are therefore not naturally inherent to written discourse. Also, "Fictive apologies" only occurred in the written corpus, and not in the spoken corpus, though fictive apologies could possibly occur in spoken discourse, as well. Even though standalone apologies occurred with a higher frequency in written discourse as opposed to spoken discourse, they functioned differently in the written one. While in the spoken corpus standalone apologies were mostly used to mend minor behavior offenses, in the written one they are used to mend minor and intended discourse offenses. A more detailed discussion of the differences between written and spoken discourse will be carried out in the section dealing with written discourse.

As not all categories were found in both spoken and written corpora, but also because differences were found in the use of apologies in the two types of discourse, results for spoken and written discourse were examined separately. Results also show that the different meanings of apologies can be expressed by different constructions. Consequently, the discussion of the results will be organized around the categories presented above, different constructions used to construe the apologies being analyzed for each specific category.

4.2. Apologies in Spoken Discourse

The analysis of the spoken corpus data yielded 208 instances in which the explicit apology lexemes were used as part of an apology; another 361 instances were not part of an apology. The analyzed lexemes were part of 61 different constructions used to construe these apologies. The constructions used for each of the categories of apologies given in Table 14 will be discussed next.

4.2.1. The Responsibility Continuum

As can be seen in Table 14, the category of apologies that was most frequent in the combined spoken and written English analysis corpora was "Acknowledging responsibility." However, as discussed in section 4.1.7, this category needs to be analyzed in the context of two other categories, namely "Providing an explanation" and "Denying responsibility," as the three form what we have called the responsibility continuum (see section 4.1.7). It is also our claim that the placement of the apology on this continuum is determined by the choice of the construction used. This continuum can be represented graphically as in Figure 3.

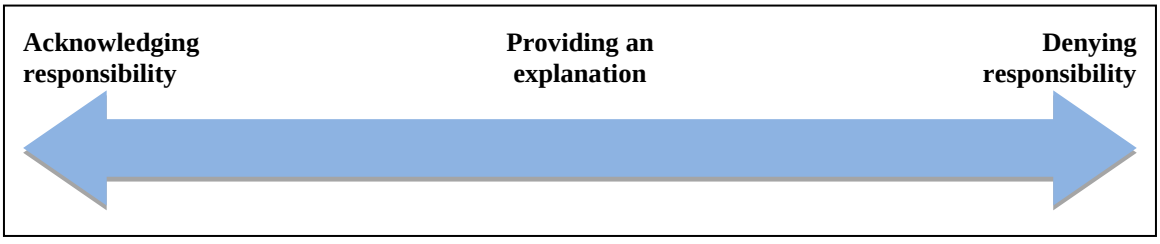

Figure 3. The responsibility continuum

As can be seen in Figure 3, "Acknowledging responsibility" is the category at one of the extremes of this continuum, while "Denying responsibility" is at the other end. The

category “Providing an explanation” is somewhere in the middle, as apologies from this category neither acknowledge nor deny responsibility. Instead, the speaker attempts to give an account of circumstances that led to the offense requiring the apology. While these three categories are represented as points on the continuum, they are nevertheless not absolutes, and no apologies can be placed on the exact point representing these categories. Rather, they can be placed on the continuum, with some acknowledgments, for example, being closer to the end, and others more towards to the “Providing an explanation” point. Such placements will be discussed while analyzing the specific apologies in each of the category.

4.2.1.1. Acknowledging Responsibility

As mentioned above, the category at one of the extreme ends of the continuum is “Acknowledging responsibility.” The examination of the spoken analysis corpus resulted in 24 different constructions used to acknowledge responsibility. As discussed in the method section, constructions that had only one instance in the extended corpus were not taken into consideration, as one example does not constitute enough evidence for them to be considered constructions. The constructions that had at least two instances in the analysis or extended corpus are given in Table 15.

Table 15

Constructions Used to Acknowledge Responsibility in the Spoken English Analysis Corpus

Construction	Occurrences
[*I'm sorry I* VP]	8
[*I apologize for that*]	6
[UTTERANCE:ACKNOWLEDGMENT *forgive me*]	4
[*forgive me for* GERUND-CLAUSE]	3
[*forgive me for* GERUND-CLAUSE *but* CLAUSE]	3
[*I apologize for* NP]	3
[*we apologize for that*]	3
[*sorry for* NP]	3
[UTTERANCE:ACKNOWLEDGMENT *we apologize*]	2
[UTTERANCE:ACKNOWLEDGMENT *I'm sorry*]	2
[*I apologize if* CLAUSE]	2
[*forgive my* NP]	1
[*forgive the* NP]	1
[*we apologize for* NP]	1
[*I'm sorry about that*]	1
[*I apologize for* GERUND-CLAUSE]	1
[*I apologize for it*]	1
[*forgive me this but* CLAUSE]	1
[*we apologize* CLAUSE]	1
[*I'm sorry for* GERUND-CLAUSE]	1

As mentioned in the method section, a second search, this time for the specific constructions, was carried out on the extended spoken corpus in order to establish their relative frequency per million words. However, such a search was not performed for

some schematic constructions containing clauses or utterances due to limitations of the online search interface. The results are given in Table 16.

Table 16

Constructions Used to Acknowledge Responsibility in the Spoken English Extended Corpus

Construction	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (per million words)
[*I'm sorry I* VP]	134	1.58
[*I apologize for that*]	45	0.53
[*forgive me for* GERUND-CLAUSE]	41	0.48
[*forgive me for* GERUND-CLAUSE *but* CLAUSE]	29	0.34
[*I apologize for* NP]	38	0.45
[*we apologize for that*]	13	0.15
[*sorry for* NP]	9	0.11
[*forgive my* NP]	7	0.08
[*forgive the* NP]	23	0.27
[UTTERANCE:ACKNOWLEDGMENT *we apologize*]	2	0.02
[*I apologize if* CLAUSE]	16	0.19
[*we apologize for* NP]	11	0.13
[*I'm sorry about that*]	40	0.47
[*I apologize for* GERUND-CLAUSE]	18	0.21
[*I apologize for it*]	3	0.04
[*forgive me this but* CLAUSE]	3	0.04
[*we apologize* CLAUSE]	6	0.07
[*I'm sorry for* GERUND-CLAUSE]	18	0.21

As can be seen in Table 15 and Table 16, both purely substantive (such as [*I apologize for that*], for example) and partly schematic constructions (such as [*I'm sorry I*

VP]) are used to construe apologies that acknowledge responsibility. Some of the constructions seem to be quite frequent, while others had only a few instances in the corpus. The more frequent ones will be discussed next. The most frequent construction was by far [*I'm sorry I* VP]. This construction is also the only one in the "Acknowledging responsibility" category that has a relative frequency per million words higher than 1.00, namely 1.58. Also, substantive constructions representing highly conventionalized expressions of apology such as [*I apologize for that*], [*I apologize for it*], and [*I'm sorry about that*] were also frequent in the extended corpus. Finally, some of the less frequent constructions, with only barely enough occurrences to justify their existence as a construction were [*forgive me this but* CLAUSE] and [UTTERANCE:ACKNOWLEDGMENT *we apologize*].

The most often used construction in both the analysis and the extended corpora was therefore [*I'm sorry I* VP]. The clause identified as [*I* VP] contains the acknowledgement for the offense that required the apology, as can be seen in Example (18).

(18) MR-MacNeil: Congressman Atkins, **I 'm sorry I mispronounced your name a moment ago**, what do you think of U.S. conditions for normalizing relations?
REP-CHESTER-ATKINS: Well, the conditions of course have changed. They changed last, in the summer of' 88, and the conditions used to be the Vietnamese withdraw from Cambodia.
(COCA, PBS_Newshour, Newshour 900430)

In this example, the moderator of "PBS NewsHour" apologizes to Congressman Atkins by acknowledging responsibility for having mispronounced his name. The acknowledgment is performed by stating the pragmatic offense that required the apology in the clause that follows the explicit apology phrase "I'm sorry." This is the case for

most of the apologies that use this construction. Even though the participants in the interaction above are aware of the offense, this is nevertheless explicitly stated. Moreover, the use of the personal pronoun *I* as subject for both "I'm sorry" and the clause introducing the offense suggests that the speaker is taking ownership of the action. Due to this double use of the pronoun, this construction is the one that expresses the strongest acknowledgement of responsibility of all the constructions in the "Acknowledging responsibility" category.

However, the apology is not always for an offense that occurred during the conversation as in (18). This construction is also used in contexts in which the offense occurred prior to the conversation, and therefore mentioning it brings it to the attention of the participants. This is exemplified in (19).

(19) O'REILLY: In the "Impact Segment" tonight, both the House and Senate Intelligence Committees are supposed to be up to speed on threats against America. But are they? Joining us now from our New York studios is California Congresswoman Jane Harman, a Democrat, and ranking member of the House Intelligence Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security. And congresswoman, first of all, **I 'm sorry I called you guys pinheads**.

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JANE HARMAN (D-CA), SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE: Yes.

O'REILLY: But I did it in an affectionate way.

HARMAN: I'm sure you did, Bill.

(COCA, Fox_OReilly, Impact: Interview with Jane Harman)

The example is taken from an interview Bill O'Reilly had with US Representative Jane Harman. After introducing her on the show, the moderator apologizes to her by acknowledging the offense, namely that he called the members of the House Intelligence Subcommittee on Terrorism and Homeland Security pinheads. Thus, the offense had taken place outside the interview, in the past. The strength of the acknowledgement is

therefore stronger in this case, since the offense was not topical to the interview, and the person apologizing brought it into focus.

As it was the case in (17) discussed in a previous section, this example also contains an extra layer of interpretation. The host uses the apology and the expectations associated with it to create a humorous effect. While the form is that of an apology, it is more of a formality, and it is intended to bring the so-called offense into the discussion. Such uses of apologies to express something else were not previously reported in studies on apologies using the traditional speech act theory approach. Moreover, such uses cannot be elicited using traditional speech act instruments, and can only be found by analyzing language in use.

Another construction with a relatively high frequency (0.48 per million words) was [*forgive me for* GERUND-CLAUSE]. This construction uses yet another explicit apology lexeme, namely *forgive*, which is followed by a gerundial construction introduced by *for*. In the same way as the [*I'm sorry I* VP] construction, the acknowledgment of responsibility is explicitly stated in the construction. While in this construction the personal pronoun *I* is not present in the clause expressing the acknowledgment of responsibility as was the case with the [*I'm sorry I* VP] construction, the use of a gerund clause, whose grammatical subject is first person, also indicates a strong acknowledgment of responsibility. As this subject is not explicitly stated though, the degree of acknowledgment is different from that expressed by the [*I'm sorry I* VP] construction. Thus, it seems that there is a continuum not only insofar as the categories "Acknowledgement of responsibility," "Providing an explanation," and "Denying

responsibility" are concerned, but also inside the category "Acknowledgment of responsibility" itself. An example of this construction is given in (20).

(20) PAMELA DUNN: Bree started first grade.
Rep. JENNIFER DUNN: How does she like it?
PAMELA DUNN: Oh, she's doing OK. You know kids and school and summer's over and,' Well, I'm not so sure I really want to-'
DANIEL ZWERDLING: Excuse me, Jennifer Dunn and Pamela Dunn, **forgive me for eavesdropping on your conversation**. This is pretty amazing. You guys sound like you're actually friends, sort of.
Rep. JENNIFER DUNN: Well, I think we are. We also have the last name that's the same. Isn't that ironic?
(COCA, NPR_ATC, New Program Pairs Welfare Moms With Politicians)

The speaker in this fragment uses this construction to acknowledge the fact that he was eavesdropping on the conversation between Pamela Dunn and Jennifer Dunn. The acknowledgement of responsibility is explicitly stated in the apology and is part of the construction. The use of this apology here seems somewhat unexpected, as one would not normally consider listening to the conversation of two participants to a radio program as eavesdropping. However, the context in which this interaction takes place clarifies this aspect. Thus, the NPR radio show from which the excerpt is taken pairs a legislator with welfare mothers in an attempt to make them friends. In the show, the two participants Pamela Dunn and Jennifer Dunn are connected by telephone, and they got carried away in a conversation about their life. This is how Daniel Zwerdling became an "outsider" to the conversation, so he felt that the social norms regarding not listening to other people's conversation applied in this case, too. Moreover, the apology is also an indirect way of interrupting the conversation of the two that was getting away from the purpose of the show, and an attempt to bring the participants back on topic. This example highlights, once again, the importance that context plays in establishing the meaning of apologies.

Finally, the fact that eavesdropping is an offense that is frowned upon by social norms may also be the reason why the explicit apology *forgive me* is used in this context, the speaker also asking for forgiveness once he acknowledged the offense.

The next construction to be discussed, [*forgive me for* GERUND-CLAUSE *but* CLAUSE], is only slightly different than the previous one. Traditional approaches to the study of apologies would probably not even allow for differentiating between the two. However, as the following example shows, even though both constructions can be categorized as acknowledging responsibility, they are used quite differently and have different meanings.

(21) TED KOPPEL: And we are back with Billie Jean King, Gerard Smith, and Richard Williams. Mr. Williams, **forgive me for asking a personal question, but are you a wealthy man**?
RICHARD WILLIAMS: No, not at all, not even close to it.
(COCA, ABC_Nightline, Nightline 19940601)

The context in which the interaction in (21) takes place does not contain any prior offense for which the speaker needs to apologize. What actually happens here is that Ted Koppel is apologizing in advance and acknowledges responsibility for an offense that he is going to commit. In this case, the offense is asking a personal question. The offense is therefore not a usual one involving a certain behavior on the part of the speaker. Rather, it is a discourse offense, in that it violates the expectations of the frame in which the interaction takes place, in which usually personal questions are not asked. It is this expectation that is being violated, and hence the need of an apology. Furthermore, by apologizing in advance, the speaker also "prepares" the listener for the question. The clause that is the actual violation is introduced in the construction by the conjunction *but*, which is highly conventionalized.

Besides the existence of the clause introduced by *but* in this construction there is another characteristic that distinguishes this construction from the [*forgive me for* GERUND-CLAUSE]. The verb phrases that can be used in the gerundial phrase of the construction are limited to a set of highly conventionalized phrases that suggest the fact that the violation to follow is a discourse violation. Some of the verb phrases used in the corpus in this construction are *asking this (question), saying this, stating the obvious, putting it this way, suggesting X, putting it bluntly/that way,* and *sounding cruel*. Consequently, while this construction is a schematic one, its schematicity is more limited than that of the [*forgive me for* GERUND-CLAUSE], where the gerundial construction can contain a larger variety of verbs.

However, the most important finding regarding the use of the [*forgive me for* GERUND-CLAUSE *but* CLAUSE] construction is its use for discourse offenses. Neither this type offense nor the types of apologies used to mend them have been reported by previous studies on apologies. This is not surprising, as the methodologies and data collection instruments used in those studies and discussed in the literature review of the present study do not allow for their use. They can only be found by analyzing language in use and by looking at the full discourse context in which such language occurs. Moreover, the fact that this construction, though partly schematic, seems nevertheless highly conventionalized suggests the fact that its use is quite common, at least in the context of mass media interaction.

The explicit apology lexeme *forgive* was not the only one collocating with gerund clauses. The lexemes *apologize* and *sorry* were also found in such constructions, though they were used in different contexts and in a very different socio-pragmatic frame than

forgive. The constructions were [*I apologize for* GERUND-CLAUSE] and [*I'm sorry for* GERUND-CLAUSE], both with a relative frequency of 0.21 per million words. Examples of these constructions are given in (22) and (23).

(22) ALICE: Well when you said that though
my my new boss
she came.
ALICE: She told Mike yesterday
she's I wanna be there at seven o'clock to go to community
meeting.
ALICE: And so Mike is there at seven fifteen
he says
I wonder where she is .
ALICE: You know
and he says I get up
I wasn't planning on coming in until eight
and here I am early .
ALICE: (.) And so she comes in
she says **I apologize for for being late and everything**
(SBCSAE, SBC043 Try a Couple Spoonfuls)

(23) Mr-GARY-RIDGWAY-1: I'm sorry for killing all those young ladies. I'm very sorry for the ladies that were not found. May they rest in peace. **I'm sorry for killing these ladies.** They had their whole lives ahead of them. **I'm sorry for causing so much pain to so many families.**
KAUFMAN: And then Judge Richard Jones told Ridgway to turn around and look at the families.
(COCA, NPR_Morning, Analysis: Green River Killer Gary Ridgway reacts to victims' families' testimonies before his sentencing)

As can be seen in these two examples, these two constructions are different in use from the [*forgive me for* GERUND-CLAUSE] construction. The choice of the more formal lexeme *apologize* in (22) seems to be due to the social relationship between the speakers. Though the example contains a reported apology, we can distinguish that the participants in the apology are Mike and her unnamed boss, with the boss apologizing for being late. Thus, the interaction is between boss and employee, and even though it is the boss who is

apologizing, the more formal lexeme is chosen in tone with the formal relationship between the two.

In (23), the third lexeme used, *sorry*, was part of a testimony given by a person being condemned for killing several people. There are actually two instances of the [*I'm sorry for* GERUND-CLAUSE] construction in the example, namely *I'm sorry for killing these ladies* and *I'm sorry for causing so much pain to so many families*. In these two utterances, the speaker acknowledges responsibility for the killings, and the choice of *sorry* in the construction could also be due to the fact that it expresses regret in a clearer and more explicit way than *apologize* does.

Up to this point, the constructions used to acknowledge responsibility used a verb phrase or a clause to express the acknowledgment. However, there was a set of constructions that contained noun phrases instead of clauses. These constructions are [*I apologize for* NP] (0.45 per million words), [*forgive the* NP] (0.27 per million words), [*we apologize for* NP] (0.13 per million words), [*sorry for* NP] (0.11 per million words), and [*forgive my* NP] (0.08 per million words). According to Langacker (1991), describing the same event in a nominalization is semantically and conceptually different than describing it in a verb. By using a noun phrase, reification is implied and an entity is being profiled as opposed to a process expressed by the verb. In the constructions containing a clause, the focus was on the performance of the pragmatic offense, whereas in those containing a noun phrase, the focus is on the result of the offense. Also, while in the [*I'm sorry I* VP] construction the personal pronoun *I* was explicitly present in the acknowledgment clause and in the constructions containing a gerund the doer was implicitly present in the gerund form, except for [*forgive my* NP], these constructions

containing noun phrases, the ownership of the offense is no longer expressed explicitly in the construction. This ownership may or may not be inferable from the context. The [*forgive my* NP] is therefore further away on the responsibility continuum from the acknowledgment extreme, and the other constructions containing noun phrases are even further away as there is less acknowledgment than in the case of the constructions with an explicitly expressed ownership. This difference in the way ownership is expressed in [*forgive my* NP] and [*forgive the* NP] also makes these two different constructions, as even though their form is similar (determiner followed by a noun phrase), their meaning is different.

Both [*I apologize for* NP] and [*we apologize for* NP] appear in contexts in which the speakers acknowledge a mistake. Moreover, *mistake* is the most frequently used noun phrase in this construction, though not the only one. The two constructions function slightly differently, though. The use of [*I apologize for* NP] is exemplified in (24).

(24) KURTZ (voice-over): John Stossel, ABC's controversial consumer reporter, has landed himself in hot water, so hot in fact that he's been forced to apologize.
JOHN STOSSEL, ABC NEWS CORRESPONDENT: But it was wrong. **I apologize for the mistake**. I'm deeply sorry I misled you. We never want to do that.
(COCA, CNN_Reliable, Democrats Hit Hollywood)

The second construction, [*we apologize for* NP], appeared only in the COCA corpus, and the context in which it is used is a very specific one, namely the moderator of a television or radio program apologizing for an offense in the name of the entire show, rather than in his or her personal name, as can be seen in Example (25).

(25) GORANI: All right, Aneesh Raman there reporting for us from Damascus, Syria. **We apologize for those technical problems**. There was a bit of a delaying our signal with Aneesh. Fionnuala, back to you in Haifa.

SWEENEY: Thanks indeed, Hala. Well, let's move to Iraq now. And during a U.S. Senate hearing, top U.S. generals talked about a possibility that Iraq is moving towards civil war.
(COCA, CNN_YourWorld, Deadly Rocket Attack in Northern Israel; IDF: Troops taking up Positions Near 11 Towns in Lebanon; New and Renewed Attacks in Iraq)

In (25), Gorani apologizes to the viewers for the technical problems in the transmission of Aneesh Raman, who was reporting from Damascus, Syria. The use of the plural personal pronoun *we* signals the fact that the responsibility is assumed by the speaker in the name of the entire crew working for the program, while the NP in the construction states the offense for which the speaker apologized.

The other three constructions, [*forgive my* NP], [*forgive the* NP], and [*sorry for* NP], are mostly used in contexts involving a discourse offense. In these contexts, the NP in the construction is expressed by nouns such as *the phraseology, the jargon, such a vague question, the expression,* and the like. The next example is an instance of the [*sorry for* NP] construction used as an apology for a discourse offense.

(26) BERTHA COOMBS, co-anchor: There's a whole lot of fighting going on at the movies right now, and it was quite a brawl for the top spot at the box office this weekend with no knock-out winner. Here to hit the highlights -- **sorry for the pun** -- is our movie reviewing title holder, People magazine's Leah Rozen.
Ms-LEAH-ROZEN-1WN: Good morning.
(COCA, ABC_NewsNow, WEEKEND BOX OFFICE; "THE STORY OF US" COMPARED TO MOVIES OF THE PAST)

As can be seen in (24), (25), and (26), the constructions containing the lexemes *apologize* and *sorry* express apologies for an offense that occurred before the apology, that Aijmer (1996) referred to as retrospective apologies. Since we are using a discourse analysis approach, we will refer to such apologies as anaphoric apologies, which we believe would be a better label. The two constructions containing *forgive*, on the other

hand, express what Aijmer (1996) called anticipatory apologies, as the discourse offense occurs after the apology. We will use the term cataphoric apologies for this type of apologies. An example of the [*forgive the* NP] construction is given in (27), where the speaker apologizes for using the word Martians in the conversation.

(27) SCOTT SIMON: What you're suggesting is that there's a possibility that we could be - **forgive the expression** - Martians, that the building blocks for life on Earth could have come from Mars.
CAROLE STOKER: Well, I wouldn't say the building blocks.
(COCA, NPR_Weekend, Scientists Probing California Lake for Links to Mars)

As discussed before, the ownership for the expression, though clear from the context, is not explicitly expressed in (27), as is in the case of the [*forgive my* NP] construction. The latter is exemplified in (28).

(28) METZNER: ... the muezzin. He's in the minaret. You can hear the adjacent muezzin in his minaret calling from Suleymaniye, the next mosque over, and in Istanbul, they do something a little different than I've heard in many other Middle Eastern countries. It's basically a call and response between some of the adjacent mosques. This man, who has an incredible set of pipes, as you can hear...
SIMON: Yeah.
METZNER: ... does his moment, and then he waits for the other guy to sort of do his thing, and then he comes back. And if you listen, you can hear that exchange. (Soundbite-of-mosqu)
SIMON: I hear what you mean. Now **forgive my naivete on this score**. I mean, from the Middle Eastern countries I've been in, the time for the call to prayer is the time for the call to prayer. Do they make any effort to synchronize it or is this just the proximity of the mosques lend this sound?
METZNER: Well, no, you're right.
(COCA, NPR_Weekend, SOME OF JIM METZNER'S FAVORITE SOUNDS THAT HE'S RECORDED)

In Example (28), the speaker apologizes and acknowledges that he is naïve insofar as the calls for prayers are concerned. This is a slightly stronger acknowledgment

than in the case of "forgive the expression," as in the latter one can conceive of the expression as made up by someone else, and merely used by the speaker.

In our discussion of the acknowledgment continuum so far we have been moving further and further away from the acknowledgment extreme end by discussing different strengths of the acknowledgment expressed by the different ways of stating the offense. Acknowledgements of responsibility can also be construed without making the offense explicit in the construction at all. This is the case with another group of constructions: [*I apologize for that*], [*I apologize for it*], [*we apologize for that*], [*I'm sorry about that*], and [*forgive me this but* CLAUSE]. What is common to all these constructions is the use of a pro-form, *this*, *that*, or *it* in the construction. Except for the last construction, which is a cataphoric apology, all the other constructions express anaphoric apologies. Also, except the last construction, which is slightly schematic, the other constructions are purely substantive ones. In spite of these differences, we are grouping [*forgive me this but* CLAUSE] with the other four constructions due to the use of the reference pro-form *this*. Each of these constructions will be discussed next.

The first construction to be discussed, [*I apologize for that*], was the second most often used construction in both the analysis corpus and the extended one, with a relative frequency of 0.53 per million words. While the offense is not made explicit in the construction itself, the demonstrative pronoun is a reference to the offense, which is in most cases made explicit in the earlier context of the interaction. An example of this construction is given in (29).

(29) REP-RODNEY-ALEXAND: Again, my job was to do what I could to protect the young man and his parents' interest. And I failed, and **I apologize for that**. The parents have had a horrible week. The young man is beginning to get some

threats. The media has been aggressively seeking his conversations at school, his home, and that's the most disturbing thing. (END-VIDEO-CLIP)

CALLEBS: Alexander calls this a sad situation. And he goes on to say he has talked with the family on a number of occasions as late as last night

(COCA, CNN_AM, Shooter Kills Young girls at Amish Schoolhouse; 'Washington Times' Calls for Dennis Hastert's Resignation; Spinach Back on Shelves)

Thus, in this example, the speaker acknowledges that he had failed to protect a young man and his parents following a shooting at a school. This is the offense that the demonstrative pronoun *that* is a reference to in the apology *I apologize for that*. Unlike in the construction [*I'm sorry I* VP], which construes an apology containing the acknowledgment of responsibility, with the [*I apologize for that*] construction the acknowledgment is foregrounded. As can be seen in (29), the offense was clearly more serious than the ones in which [*I'm sorry I* VP] was used, as shown in (18) and (19). The seriousness of the offense may be the reason for fronting the acknowledgment of responsibility and also for the use of the explicit apology lexeme *apologize* instead of *sorry*. Moreover, the context is also more formal in (29) compared to those in (18) and (19), which warrant the use of the more formal *I apologize*.

The [*I apologize for it*] construction seems to be less frequent than [*I apologize for that*], as the first one only appeared 3 times in the extended corpus, while the latter occurred 45 times. Also, the context in which it appeared was restricted in this particular corpus to apologizing and acknowledging errors in speech, rather than behavior, such as in Example (30).

(30) Schorr: Well, when I was informed of the suit, I was kind of surprised because I hadn't been aware of the problem before. But on looking into it, yes, I made a dumb mistake. What I did was that I confused two attempted assassinations -- two attempts to assassinate President Ford, both happened in September 1975. Both

happened in California. And the result of my getting mixed up about which one I was talking about was that I identified a man who had saved the president's life as a homosexual. The mistake was that I named Larry Beundorf, who is now suing us. Larry Beundorf did indeed -- was instrumental in saving the president's life. But I was thinking of the other episode. It was another man, a man by the name of Oliver Sippel in San Francisco and another assassination attempt. And he was later identified as being homosexual. My point at the time was to say that he should have had his privacy. And I rather made a botch of that whole thing. I regret the error quite deeply. **I apologize for it**

(COCA, CNN_AM, Shooter Kills Young girls at Amish Schoolhouse; 'Washington Times' Calls for Dennis Hastert's Resignation; Spinach Back on Shelves)

In this example, *it* was a reference to a specific noun phrase, namely "the error," unlike in the case of the [*I apologize for that*] construction, where *that* was a reference to an entire clause, namely "I failed." Similar to the example in (29), the acknowledgment is foregrounded, and the more formal *I apologize* is used to construe the apology.

The [*we apologize for that*] construction functions almost the same way as [*I apologize for that*], the only exception being the use of the plural personal pronoun. Similar to the [*we apologize for* NP] construction, this construction appeared in contexts in which the speaker apologized in the name of a group. Example (31) illustrates this construction.

(31) KING: All right, let me start including some phone calls. You can talk to Nancy Pelosi or Steve Hurst or Congressman Dreier, and we start with Munich, Germany. Hello.

1st CALLER: Munich, Germany Market buying- unintelligible

KING: I didn't understand anything you said. We had a bad connection from Munich. **We apologize for that.** Copenhagen, Denmark, hello.

(COCA, CNN_King, An Overview of the Future of the USSR)

Just as in the examples of the [*I apologize for that*] construction, the acknowledgment of responsibility in (31) is foregrounded and comes as a statement of

the offense. The plural pronoun is used in this utterance, as well: “We had a bad connection from Munich.” The moderator of the show “CNN King” apologizes in the name of the entire program for the fact that the connection was bad and that they could not hear the caller. As can be seen in Table 16, this construction does not have such a high frequency as the [*I apologize for that*] construction, as it only occurred in the extended corpus 0.15 times per million words.

A much more frequent construction similar to the last two discussed (0.47 instances per million words in the extended corpus, though only one occurrence in the analysis corpus) was [*I’m sorry about that*]. Just as with the previous two constructions, the acknowledgement is foregrounded and it is not part of the construction, the pronoun *that* pointing to the previous utterance, such as in (32).

(32) Vice Pres. GORE: I got some of the details wrong last week in some of the examples that I used, Jim. And **I 'm sorry about that**. And I'm going to try to do better.
LAUER: A couple of public mea culpas. Have we heard the last of those topics?
(COCA, NBC_Today, GOVERNOR GEORGE W. BUSH DISCUSSES LAST NIGHT'S DEBATE; TIM RUSSERT COMMENTS)

Vice President Gore acknowledges that he had some of the details he had talked about wrong. Thus, the speaker first states the offense and then apologizes for it using the [*I’m sorry about that*] construction. Unlike the other two constructions that use a reference pronoun, this particular construction also appeared in contexts in which the statement of the offense and the apology were uttered by different speakers, such as in (33).

(33) CONAN: Christine Ahern, station manager at WJFF, joins us now from the station. Christine, thanks for taking time to be with us today.
Ms-CHRISTINE-AHERN: Sure, but you stole my joke.

CONAN: Oh, **I 'm sorry about that**. There is a dam involved in how the station has gotten off the grid.
(COCA, NPR_TalkNation, Interview: Christine Ahern discusses her New York station which is hydro-powered)

In this interaction, Conan introduces one of the participants to the NPR radio show "Talk of the Nation," Christine Ahern. The latter points out that Conan stole her joke, a statement that is followed by Conan's apology: "I'm sorry about that." As this example shows, the pronoun *that* can also be used as a reference to an offense stated by another speaker. By using this construction, Conan nevertheless acknowledges responsibility for the offense, even though he does not explicitly state the offense himself.

The last construction containing a pro-form was [*forgive me this but* CLAUSE]. In this construction, *this* refers to an offense that will be committed in the clause introduced by *but*. An example of this construction can be seen in (34).

(34) SCOTT SIMON: When Jerry Garcia died in early August - **forgive me this** - but did the thought occur to you that since you were in possession of some of the, you know, the last tracks, that he ever recorded for a CD that this was going to bring more attention than ever before onto your music?
SANJAY MISHRA: Well, I knew it was going to bring more attention when he played […]
(COCA, NPR_Weekend, Guitarist Describes How Jerry Garcia Came to Record)

Before we can decide the place of these constructions on the responsibility continuum relative to each other, we need to discuss discourse differences in the use of *this, that,* and *it*. Thus, according to McCarthy (1994), *it* is used to refer to an entity in the discourse that is in focus. In the case of the [*I apologize for it*] construction, *it* referred to a noun in the previous utterance that was the topic of that utterance. *This* and *that*, on the other hand, are used to highlight in some way the entity to which it refers. *This* brings the

entity into focus, as was the case with the [*forgive me this but* CLAUSE], in which the cataphoric apology highlights the following offense. Consequently, this construction is more towards the acknowledging responsibility end of the continuum than [*I apologize for it*]. Finally, *that* is similar to *this* in that it highlights the referred entity, though the purpose of the highlighting is opposite to the one carried out by *this*, in that it marginalizes it. Thus, by using the [*I apologize for that*], [*we apologize for that*], and [*I'm sorry about that*] constructions, the speakers tend to distance themselves from the offense and marginalize it. Consequently, these constructions can be placed more towards the denying responsibility end of the continuum as compared to those construed with *it*. This distinction in the use of these pro-forms in discourse is important as it demonstrates the fact that [*I apologize for that*] and [*I apologize for it*] are in fact two different constructions that function differently, and not the same construction containing the variations *that* and *it*.

In the last five examples discussed, the construction expressing the apology contained a pronoun referring back to the acknowledgment stated previously in the interaction. This acknowledgment was not part of the construction itself, but the meaning of acknowledging responsibility could only be construed in the context of the larger discourse. However, there are other constructions that accomplish a similar function but without using a reference pronoun. Instead, and unlike the constructions discussed so far that were sentence level constructions, this set of constructions are construed at a higher level than the sentence, namely at discourse level. These constructions are [UTTERANCE:ACKNOWLEDGMENT *forgive me*], [UTTERANCE:ACKNOWLEDGMENT *we apologize*], and [UTTERANCE:ACKNOWLEDGMENT *I'm sorry*]. The term "utterance" is

used in these constructions, and not “sentence” as this is the roughly corresponding term in spoken language to that of “sentence” in written discourse. Examples (35), (36), and (37) are instances of each of these three constructions.

(35) RIVERA: Go to Melissa and Ellen, two of the klan's women. I want to go to Ellen first,' cause Ellen's been at it the longest. Now, Ellen, are you really the seamstress for the klan? You knit those nifty hats and all?
ELLEN-1KKK-Seamst: I don't knit them. And I am one of many seamstresses. And as a matter of fact, J.D. over here is negotiating right now to buy a small factory so that we can...
RIVERA: Is that right?
ELLEN: Yes.
RIVERA: Well, will we find it like in the catalog of Sears or...
ELLEN: No, you will not.
RIVERA: **I'm just kidding. Forgive me**. All right. Now I want to come back to you, Ellen, because I think it is intriguing because there is a big demand for this. […]
(COCA, Ind_Geraldo, KKK KIDS: CHILDREN TOO YOUNG TO HATE)

(36) O'BRIEN: ... guys, guys, guys, guys -- Just as we get it wrapped up, we have to go, unfortunately, as is often the case
GAROFALO: That's it?
O'BRIEN: Unfortunately, that's it
GAROFALO: Oh, my goodness.
O'BRIEN: Janeane, **we had you get up early just for that. We apologize**. I think you made some good points. Janeane Garofalo, Ben Ferguson, thank you both for being with us
(COCA, CNN_SatMorn, Janeane Graofalo Speaks on Hollywood's Antiwar Campaign)

(37) Mr. ALDA: Although you can drive yourself crazy with that, too, I have this wonderful capacity to do that. I got to this point where I - I mean, when I put on my shoes, do I put the sock on both feet and then the shoes on the both feet, or do I put the sock on one foot and then the shoe on that foot, will I save more time that way? Will I have more time to pay attention to the rest of my life? And I started to count the seconds on what I was doing. I took

a watch out and I actually saved 10 seconds by putting the sock on one foot and then the shoe on before I went to the other foot. And having saved those 10 seconds, I realized I could get War and Peace in if I save 10 seconds a day. I decided that that would be unnecessarily crazy. And I now put my shoes on the old way. (Soundbite of laughter)

Mr. ALDA: You maybe have heard more than you wanted to hear. (Soundbite of laughter)

MONTAGNE: No. But I think this is a good time to thank you and say goodbye.

Mr. ALDA: I know. **I usually reduce people to that. I'm sorry.** (Soundbite of laughter)

MONTAGNE: Alan Alda, thanks very much.

Mr. ALDA: Thank you very much.

(COCA, NPR_Morning, The Meaning of Life)

These examples clearly show that the utterance preceding the explicit apology expressions *forgive me*, *we apologize*, and *I'm sorry* contribute to the meaning of the apology, and therefore they are part of the construction. Without the preceding utterance, the meaning of the apology would not contain an acknowledgment of responsibility. Similarly, the preceding utterance by itself while an acknowledgment would not be an explicit apology by itself. Unlike the constructions containing the reference pronoun discussed earlier, where the pronoun made the link to the acknowledgment, and therefore there was no need for the actual acknowledgment to be part of the construction, with these three constructions the link is missing, and therefore the utterance is part of the construction. Unfortunately, it was not possible to establish the relative frequency per million words of these constructions, except for [UTTERANCE:ACKNOWLEDGMENT *we apologize*]. While the online search function of the extended corpus allows for searching parts of speech, it does not allow for searching utterances as a unit. Consequently, searching for *we apologize* only yielded too many results for their analysis to be feasible. This [UTTERANCE:ACKNOWLEDGMENT *we apologize*] construction had a relative

frequency in the extended corpus of 0.02, which leads to the conclusion that it is not frequently used.

The last construction to be discussed for the "Acknowledging responsibility" category is also the one that is the furthest away from the acknowledgment end of the continuum. The construction [*I apologize if* CLAUSE], though it only appeared two times in the spoken English analysis corpus, had a frequency of 0.19 per million words in the extended corpus. An example of an apology using this construction is given in (38).

(38) KOPPEL: The more serious herpes, the herpes simplex II-
MAN: I'm sorry, herpes simplex II is not the more serious, sir
KOPPEL: So again, my question, why do we use the same word?
MAN: Well, because they are not- we don't
KOPPEL: **I apologize if we have done an inadequate or certainly an incomplete job**. I thank all of you for joining us this evening
(COCA, ABC_Special, The Best of Nightline with Ted Koppel 1980-1990)

As already discussed in 4.1.7 when we introduced the notion of a responsibility continuum, this construction suggests a less certain acknowledgment of responsibility. In (38), the moderator of a television talk show apologizes at the end of a somewhat confusing interaction with a guest in the studio. Though he acknowledges the responsibility for the confusion, the if-clause construction can be interpreted to indicate that he does not believe they have done an incomplete job, but if the viewers think so, then he apologizes and takes responsibility for it.

The only explicit apology lexeme of the ones under investigation that appeared in this construction in the spoken English analysis corpus was *apologize*. However, since it seemed highly unlikely that *sorry, forgive*, and *excuse* would not combine with an if-clause in the same way, we carried out a search for these constructions on the spoken English extended corpus. As expected, there were several occurrences of all three

lexemes in such constructions. Thus, [*I'm sorry if* CLAUSE] appeared 44 times (0.51 per million words), [*forgive me if* CLAUSE] 26 times (0.30 per million words), and [*excuse me if* CLAUSE] 6 times (0.07 per million words). As can be seen from these numbers, the most frequent construction of this type was [*I'm sorry if* CLAUSE], for which we provide an example in (39).

(39) Mr-MAHONEY: (As Martin Crane) Right. Gay.
Unidentified Actress: (As Helen) I thought you might be. How many straight men remember Renata Tebaldi?
Mr-MAHONEY: (As Martin Crane) Not many.
Unidentified Actress: (As Helen) Well, **I 'm sorry if I was too forward**. It's just that sometimes it's so hard to meet nice men.
(COCA, NPR_FreshAir, Executive producer Christopher Lloyd discusses "Frasier")

In Example (39), a video clip from the show *Frasier*, the less formal *I'm sorry* is used as compared to *I apologize* used in the construction presented in (38). The difference is apparent in the context, as the [*I apologize if* CLAUSE] was used by the moderator of a television show, who has to be more formal with the guests and audience, while the [*I'm sorry if* CLAUSE] construction was used by the actress playing the role of Helen, who can be less formal.

To summarize the discussion of the "Acknowledging responsibility" category, the examples presented have shown that besides being on a continuum of responsibility, the category itself contains apologies on a continuum, some constructions expressing a more firm acknowledgment, while others a less firm one. This acknowledgment can be expressed by a direct statement of the offense that led to the apology or by referring to a previous statement of this offense performed either by the offender or by another participant in the conversation. Finally, some of the constructions were used for discourse offenses, a type of offense that was not previously reported in studies on apologies.

We hypothesized that the choice of construction places the apologies on the responsibility continuum. The examples discussed so far seem to prove this hypothesis. Therefore, we can now place the constructions on the continuum. The position of the constructions is shown in Figure 4.

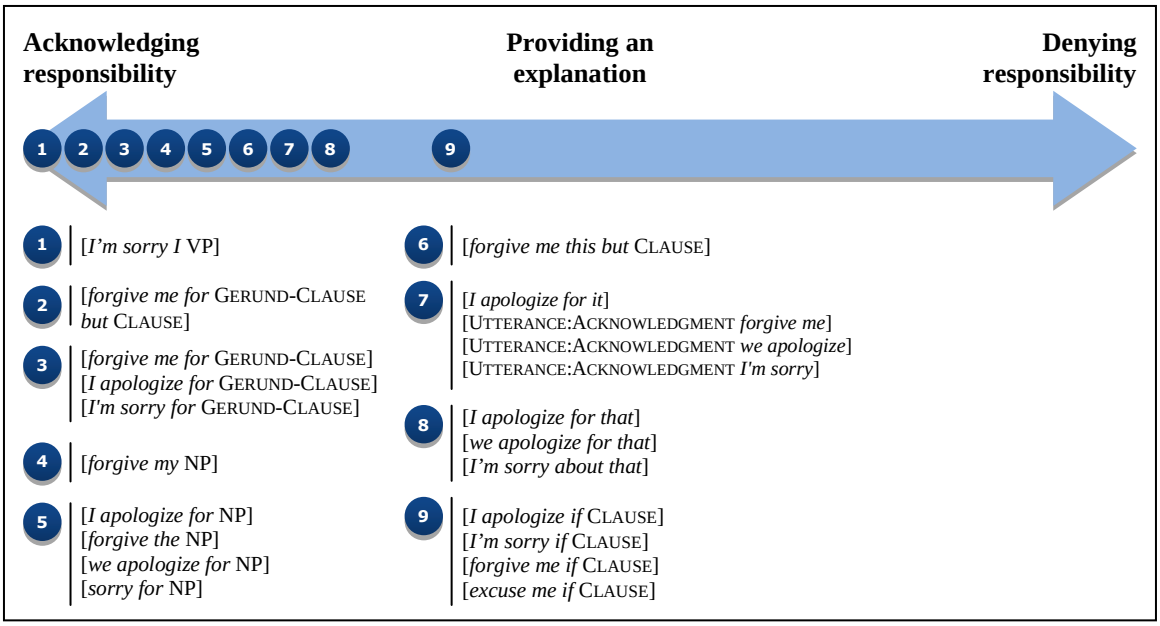

Figure 4. The placement of the constructions in the category "Acknowledging responsibility" on the responsibility continuum

4.2.1.2. Denying Responsibility

While the category "Acknowledgement of responsibility" lies at one of the ends of the responsibility continuum, "Denying responsibility" is at the opposite end. This category was the least frequent among the ones included in the responsibility continuum. Only three constructions were used to express an apology in this category. Only the two constructions that occurred more than once in the corpus will be discussed. These are given in Table 17.

Table 17

Constructions Used to Deny Responsibility in the Spoken English Analysis Corpus

Construction	Occurrences
[*I'm sorry* SUBJ *have to/can't/could not* VERB-INF OBJ]	3
[*I'm sorry* | UTTERANCE:DENIAL]	2

Note: | indicates an intonation break denoted in the examples by a period, comma, or dash.

Unfortunately, due to the limitations of the online search feature of the corpus used, it was not possible to search the extended corpus for the [*I'm sorry* | UTTERANCE:DENIAL] construction in order to establish a relative frequency. Even in the case of the [*I'm sorry* SUBJ *have to/can't/could not* VERB-INF OBJ], the frequency given in Table 18 may not be totally accurate, as due to the complexity of the construction some instances may have been missed in the search. Table 18 shows the frequencies for this construction in the spoken extended corpus.

Table 18

Construction Used to Deny Responsibility in the Spoken English Extended Corpus

Construction	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (per million words)
[*I'm sorry* SUBJ *have to/can't/could not* VERB-INF OBJ]	66	0.78

The construction that expressed the most definite denial of responsibility, and the one we can therefore place at the extreme end of the responsibility continuum, was [*I'm sorry* | UTTERANCE:DENIAL]. In this construction, the utterance following the explicit

expression of apology “I’m sorry” contained the denial of responsibility, and therefore the semantic content of the utterance is marked DENIAL. An example of this construction is given in (40).

(40) (BEGIN-VIDEO-CLIP) OBAMA: Her comments were ridiculous. I think they were wrong headed. I think they're not borne out by our history or by the facts.
GERALDINE-FERRARO: Every time they have an option to do that, they do it. They did it against Bill Clinton, and it worked, and it shut him up. They did it against Ed Rendell. It didn't work. Now they're doing it against me. **I 'm sorry. I said nothing negative.** (END-VIDEO-CLIP)
HUME: well, what Geraldine Ferraro, the former Vice Presidential candidate in 1984 and now a Fox News contributor, did say was, basically, that Barack Obama is where he is in this race because he is black.
(COCA, FOX_Hume, FOX SPECIAL REPORT WITH BRIT HUME 6:40 PM EST)

The fragment in (40) is not an actual face to face interaction. Instead, it contains a video clip in which the then Senator Obama gives a statement about Geraldine Ferrarro’s comments that he considered ridiculous. This clip is followed by another one, in which Geraldine Ferraro, though she apologizes, also denies responsibility by stating “I said nothing negative.” As can be seen in the example, there is an intonation break after “I’m sorry” denoted in the transcription by a period, and marked in the construction by |. It is this intonation break that distinguishes this construction from the [*I’m sorry I* VP] construction used to acknowledge responsibility (see the discussion in 4.2.1.1). In the [*I’m sorry I* VP] construction, the VP is fully integrated in the rest of the construction, whereas in the [*I’m sorry* | UTTERANCE:DENIAL] the intonation break fragments the construction, which suggests a less tight and less firm apology.

The second construction used to express an apology in this category was [*I'm sorry* SUBJ *have to/can’t/could not* VERB-INF OBJ]. As can be seen in Table 18, this

construction had a somewhat high relative frequency. While this construction is a highly schematic one, there are some restrictions on the type of modal auxiliary that can participate in the construction. Only modals expressing negative ability (*cannot, could not*) and the one expressing external necessity or obligation (*have to*) can be used in this construction, as these suggest the fact that the pragmatic offense that required an apology was outside the offender's control. Finally, the conjunction *but* seems to be optional in this construction, as there does not seem to be any difference in meaning or function when it is present in the construction as opposed to when it is not. Example (41) illustrates the use of this construction.

(41) SCHIEFFER: All right. !
KERRY: We have people losing work, we have health care, education. We need to keep those issues on the table at the same time. !
SCHIEFFER: Senator, thank you so much. **I'm sorry, we have to end it there**. Back with a final word in just a minute.
(COCA, CBS_FaceNation, FACE THE NATION)

In (41), the moderator of a television show apologizes for ending the show. The use of the modal expression *have to* in the apology suggests that this is somewhat out of control, and not necessarily something for which he is personally responsible. However, this denial of responsibility is not as strong as the one in (40), where the personal pronoun *I* was used followed by a negative statement. In (41) one can conceive that the moderator is nevertheless part of the decision when to end the show, at least insofar as he participated in planning the duration of the show. Therefore, this construction would be placed somewhat further away from the extreme end of the responsibility continuum.

This particular instantiation of the [*I'm sorry* SUBJ *have to/can't/could not* VERB-INF OBJ] construction seems to be rather productive, and could be considered a conventionalized expression in the context of media interactions. Thus, "I'm sorry we

have to end it here" appeared 22 times in the extended corpus out of the total 66 occurrences of this construction, which accounts for one third of the frequency. Other similar instantiations of the construction were "I'm sorry I/we have to leave it there," "I'm sorry, we have to leave it at that point," and "I'm sorry, I have to take a quick break." One reason for the frequency of this construction may be the specific genre of the corpus.

However, the use of this construction is not restricted to the context of ending a show or taking a commercial break, nor is it, as already mentioned, restricted to the use of the modal expression *have to*. In (42), an interviewee apologizes using this construction, this time with the negative form of the modal verb *can*.

(42) KING: Huntsville, Alabama for Fred Goldman. Hello.
CALLER-ALABAMA: Yes. I wanted to ask Mr. Goldman if he plans to have his lawyers have Simpson try on a pair of the gloves that he wears in front of the jury without latex gloves on, and then with latex gloves on?
GOLDMAN: The answer is, **I'm sorry, I can't discuss anything regarding the civil or criminal trial**.
(COCA, CNN_King, Larry King Talks with Christopher Darden And Fred Goldman)

In this example, Fred Goldman, the father of one of the victims in the O.J. Simpson case refuses to answer the question of a caller from Alabama during the television show Larry King Live. He denies responsibility for not answering the question by stating "I can't discuss anything regarding the civil or criminal trial." Thus, this construction suggests that because the trial was still ongoing, he was not allowed to discuss it, and he expresses this with the help of the modal verb *can't* in the above construction.

In summary, though there were only two constructions used to deny responsibility, these constructions had different meanings, and can be placed in different places on the responsibility continuum. This placement is illustrated in Figure 5.

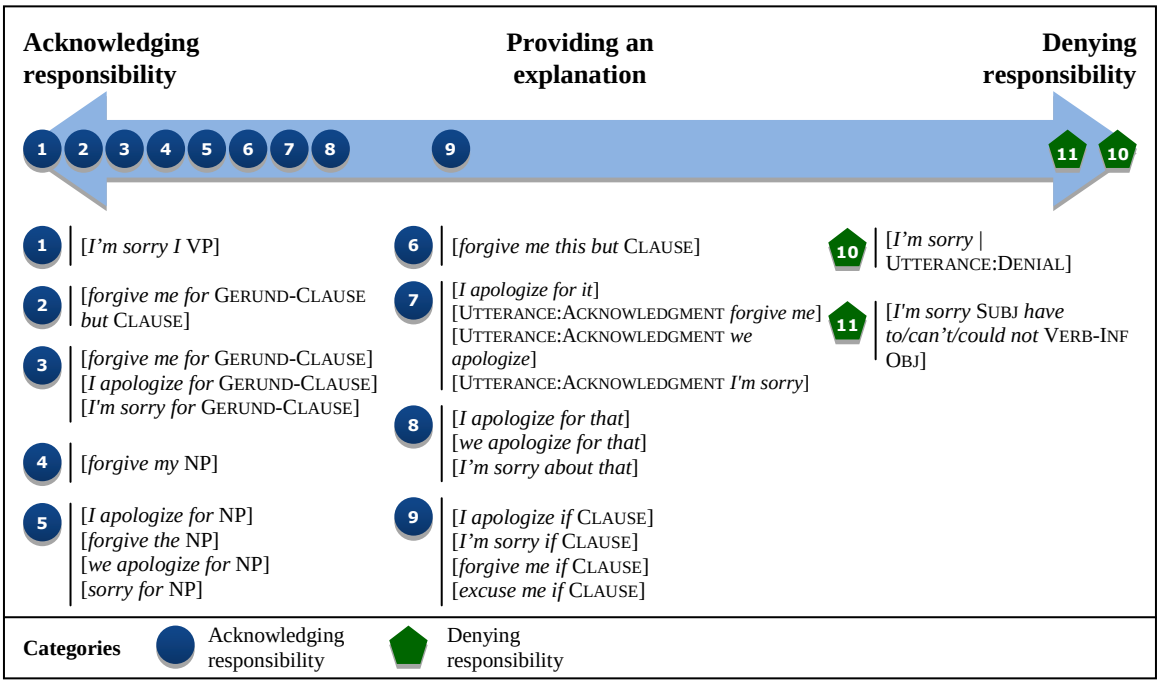

Figure 5. The placement of the constructions in the category "Denying responsibility" on the responsibility continuum

4.2.1.3. Providing an Explanation

The final category of the responsibility continuum is "Providing an explanation," which could be considered the mid-point of the continuum. This category was the fifth most often used category in the spoken analysis corpus. The analysis of the data yielded 14 potential constructions. However, some of them either had only one occurrence in the extended corpus, or one occurrence in the analysis corpus but it was not possible to search for the construction in the extended corpus. Consequently, as one single instance does not provide sufficient evidence for the existence of a construction and the main aim

of the present study was to find relatively frequent constructions, those constructions were not analyzed. Thus, we ended up with 8 constructions used in an apology to provide an explanation, which are given in Table 19.

Table 19

Constructions Used to Provide an Explanation in the Spoken English Analysis Corpus

Construction	Occurrences
[*I'm sorry* | UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION]	7
[*forgive me* | *but* CLAUSE]	2
[*I apologize* | UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION]	2
[*forgive me* | UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION]	2
[*excuse me* | *but* CLAUSE]	2
[*I apologize* | *but* CLAUSE]	2
[UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION | *so I apologize*]	1
[*I apologize to you* | UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION]	1

As can be seen in Table 19, all but four of the constructions go beyond the level of the utterance and are more complex discourse constructions. Consequently, it was not possible to establish the relative frequency in the extended corpus for all the constructions in Table 19. The frequencies for the constructions for which this was possible are given in Table 20.

Table 20

Constructions Used to Provide an Explanation in the Spoken English Extended Corpus

Construction	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (per million words)
[*forgive me* | *but* CLAUSE]	11	0.13
[*excuse me* | *but* CLAUSE]	6	0.07
[UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION | *so I apologize*]	4	0.05
[*I apologize* | *but* CLAUSE]	4	0.05
[*I apologize to you* | UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION]	2	0.02

Similar to the constructions in the previous two categories discussed, those in the "Providing an explanation" category can also be placed on the responsibility continuum based on whether the explanation is more towards an acknowledgment or more towards a denial of responsibility. Thus, one group of constructions consists of the constructions containing the conjunction *but*. Compared to the other constructions in this category, the ones with *but* are closer to the denying responsibility end of the continuum, as the conjunction suggests a contradiction to the apology, as if the speaker were trying to deny his or her responsibility by providing this explanation. This can be seen in (43), an example of the [*excuse me* | *but* CLAUSE] construction.

(43) Rep. DAVID BONIOR: […] Now, we want to know where is that- all those cuts are going to come from. Are they going to cut from veterans' benefits? Are they going to be cut from student loans? Are they going to be cut from Medicare? The Speaker just the other day said he thinks maybe we ought to get rid of Medicare. Mr. Armey has been never very enthused about Social Security and he's said so on several occasions.

SAM DONALDSON: Mr. Bonior, **excuse me, but I don't think he said that**. I missed it. I think he said that it needed systemic changes. He's right about that, isn't he?
(COCA, ABC_Brinkley, ABC_Brinkley / 19950108)

In example (42), Rep. David Bonior makes a statement about what the Speaker of the House said about Medicare. Sam Donaldson contradicts Rep. David Bonior in the next turn, and he apologizes for this by providing the explanation in the clause introduced by *but*: "but I don't think he said that." The explicit expression of apology is followed by an intonation break, which again fragments the construction by separating the explanation, thus making the apology less definite. The interpretation here is that the explanation seems so obvious to the speaker that it justifies his contradicting Rep. David Bonior. This construction seems to be used to provide explanations for discourse offenses, as can be seen in Example (43). Also, this construction expresses a cataphoric apology, as the actual contradiction follows the apology, by saying "I think he said that it needed systemic changes."

The most frequent of the constructions containing *but*, [*forgive me* | *but* CLAUSE], is also a cataphoric apology. However, unlike the [*excuse me* | *but* CLAUSE], this construction seems to be used in contexts that are somewhat more face threatening to the speaker. This is illustrated in Example (44).

(44) Mr. GUY DUTSON (BirdLife): That's a very good question. My Fijian team have spent so much time in the bush that they know pretty much every song, every call and every bird, and although this song is quite distinct, it's most similar to another species of warbler. So when they heard this novel song sounding like a warbler, then they assumed that this must, indeed, be the long-legged warbler which we have been looking very hard for over this last year. But to make absolutely sure, we caught one of these birds, took photographs and then let it go again. And now we have the photographs. Everybody

can see that this is, indeed, the long-lost, long-legged warbler.

INSKEEP: **Forgive me, but I've never been bird-watching**. Do you just take a walk down the road, through paths in the forest or is there a technique to this?

(COCA, NPR_ATCW, Interview: BirdLife's Guy Dutson discusses the long-legged warbler)

In Example (44), Guy Dutson from "Birdlife" is talking about bird watching on an NPR show. Inskeep seems not to know much about the topic, so therefore he apologizes for what he might consider his ignorance and provides an explanation for this in the clause "but I've never been bird-watching." An intonation break appears in this construction, as well, and it is denoted by the comma following "forgive me." Thus, the speaker's ignorance seems to be more face threatening than the contradiction in (43), which may account for the use of "forgive me" in the apology as opposed to "excuse me." Also, in (44), the face threat is to the speaker, as opposed to the hearer in (43).

Finally, the even more formal "I apologize" is also used in such a construction, namely in [*I apologize* | *but* CLAUSE], the one with the lowest relative frequency of the three. However, unlike the other constructions with *but*, which expressed cataphoric apologies, this construction expresses an anaphoric one, in that the offense precedes the apology, and the clause following *but* represents the explanation for the offense. This is illustrated in (45).

(45) JENNINGS: Archbishop McGrath, I've just one last question, and it's rumor - **I apologize - but there's been so much rumor and speculation**. We'd heard on a number of occasions that the Papal Nuncios might have told Noriega that he was going to leave him in the embassy alone for U.S. forces to invade. Did you ever hear anything about that? Archbishop

McGRATH: via telephone I heard about it, but I don't think it was true.

(COCA, ABC_Nightline, Noriega Turns Himself In, Is Flown to U.S.)

As can be seen in (45), the construction [*I apologize* | *but* CLAUSE] is used in a more formal context than the previous two discussed above, as the host addresses an archbishop. This may be the reason for the choice of "I apologize" in the construction. The speaker apologizes for the fact that he is asking a question based on rumor and provides an explanation for doing so stating "but there's been so much rumor and speculation." The presence of the intonation break denoted by the dash in the example, and by | in the construction, confirms once again that the explanations are less integrated in the constructions expressing apologies in the "Providing an explanation" category discussed so far as opposed to the acknowledgements that were integrated in the constructions in the "Acknowledging responsibility" category.

Unlike most of the constructions containing *but*, however, the other constructions in this category used to provide an explanation expressed anaphoric apologies, as the apologies were following the offense rather than preceding them. The most frequent construction from the second group was [*I'm sorry* | UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION], which is exemplified in (46).

(46) (Voiceover): We got our money back. The pots and dishes went back to the store. But it's not that easy for most victims.
(Footage-of-Woman-# Woman 1: (crying): **I'm sorry, it's just bringing up bad memories**. It was a very trying time in my life. And I don't know. The person just lo -- what they did was they robbed me mentally. They robbed me for money.
(COCA, CBS_48Hours, PART V-RIPOFF: OUTRAGEOUS FORTUNE; FORTUNE TELLERS INTIMIDATE VICTIMS INTO HANDING OVER LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY)

The context of this example is an incident involving a robbery. One of the victims is crying in the video footage, and she is apologizing for crying. She also provides an explanation for why she is crying in the utterance immediately following the explicit

expression of apology “I’m sorry,” namely “it's just bringing up bad memories.” As the utterance in the construction always contained an explanation, we marked the semantic content of the utterance in the construction as EXPLANATION. This explanation is therefore also part of the apology, as it contributes to its meaning. Finally, we can see that the [*I'm sorry* | UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION] construction also contains an intonation break, denoted in the example by the comma after the explicit expression of apology “I’m sorry.”

Similar to the constructions with *but*, the choice of the explicit apology lexeme seems to be determined by the seriousness of the offense. Thus, the more formal *apologize* is used in two constructions, namely [*I apologize* | UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION] and [*I apologize to you* | UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION] in contexts involving a more serious offense. The example in (47) is an instance of the [*I apologize* | UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION], in which the speaker apologizes for picking some tomatoes, and provides an explanation for doing so.

(47) TONY-PERKINS-ABC-# (Off-Camera): I have a confession to make, 'cause your garden looked terrible. When you and Mike were in Maine, Rhonda and I happened to be up at Martha's Vineyard and we happened to stop by your garden...
DIANE-SAWYER-# (Off-Camera): You picked my tomatoes?
TONY-PERKINS-# (Off-Camera): We picked your tomatoes.
DIANE-SAWYER-# (Off-Camera): That's where my tomatoes went.
TONY-PERKINS-# (Off-Camera): They're actually very, very good. So I, **I apologize. We didn't know that would be all of them**.
DIANE-SAWYER-# (Off-Camera): That's right. Two tomatoes. One massacred fig. That's it.
(COCA, ABC_GMA, SUMMER VACATION DIANE SAWYER SHARES HER VACATION STORY)

Though the offense here seems more serious than the one in (46), where the [*I'm sorry* | UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION] was used, the apology in (47) has an added layer of

interpretation. The use of “I apologize” is meant to be humorous, in that it makes the offense look more serious than it actually is, as the speaker picked only two tomatoes. The explanation that is provided in the apology is that the speaker did not know that those two tomatoes were actually all of them. Finally, we can see that an intonation is present in this construction, as well, just as it was in all the other constructions in this category. In (47), the intonation break is denoted in the transcript by a period.

The second construction in which the lexeme *apologize* is used is interesting since it is the only one that contains the explanation first and then the apology. However, the [UTTERANCE | *so I apologize*] construction does not seem to be a frequent construction, as it had a relative frequency of only 0.05 per million words. One example of this construction is given in (48).

(48) PHILLIPS: And then we also have...
O'BRIEN: We have Dale Cardwell
PHILLIPS: That's right, David Cardwell, (UNINTELLIGIBLE)...
O'BRIEN: David Cardwell
PHILLIPS: David.
O'BRIEN: And I don't know where he is. You in Tallahassee?
PHILLIPS: I think he's in Orlando.
O'BRIEN: Orlando, OK
PHILLIPS: David, are you in Orlando?
DAVID CARDWELL, CNN CORRESPONDENT: I'm in Orlando, midway...
PHILLIPS: There we go
CARDWELL: ... between Bill and John.
O'BRIEN: **I was enmeshed in Microsoft Word, so I apologize**.
(COCA, CNN_SunMorn, What Does Public Think About Presidential Recount?)

In this example, the moderator of the CNN show “Sunday Morning” introduces one of the correspondents in the show, but he does not know where the correspondent is reporting from. Therefore, he apologizes by first giving an explanation for why he is not aware of the location of the correspondent, namely “I was enmeshed in Microsoft Word,” followed by the explicit expression of apology “so I apologize.” By foregrounding the

explanation, the speaker is closer to acknowledging responsibility than those in the other constructions in this category. Thus, the construction [UTTERANCE | *so I apologize*] can be placed closer to the acknowledging responsibility end of the continuum.

Having discussed the constructions expressing apologies in the "Providing an explanation" category, we can now provide a full picture of where all the constructions in the three categories discussed so far can be placed on the responsibility continuum. This is illustrated in Figure 6.

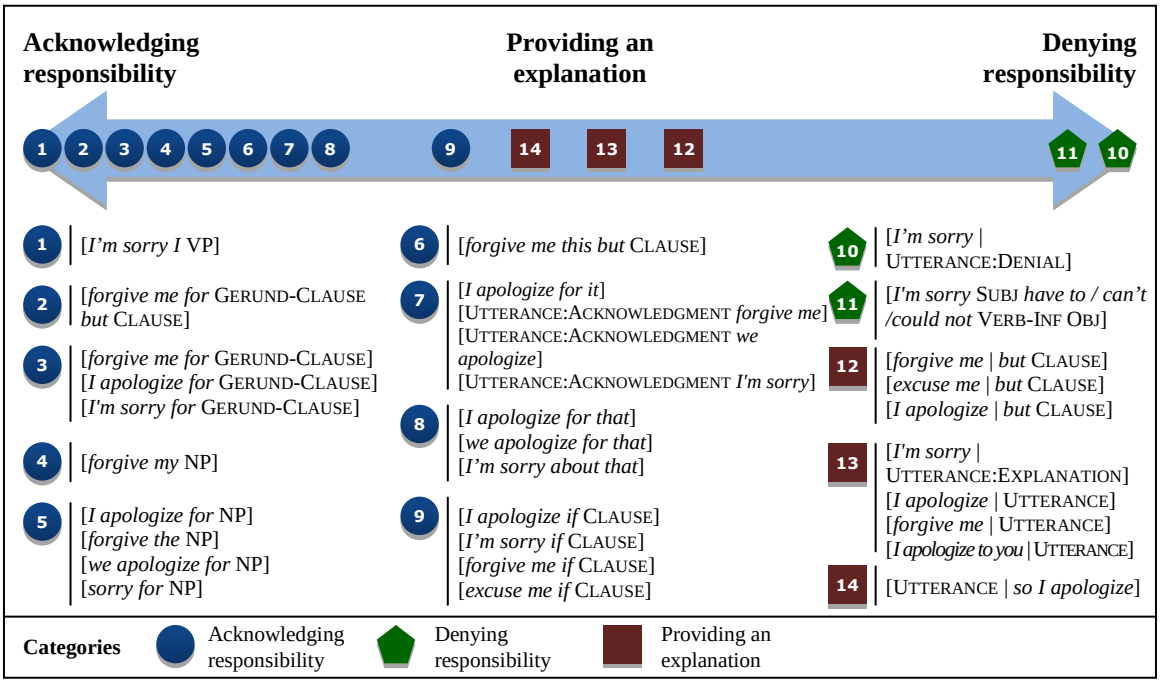

Figure 6. The placement of the constructions in the category "Providing an explanation" on the responsibility continuum

The discussion of the constructions in the three categories grouped together under this section, namely "Acknowledging responsibility," "Denying responsibility," and "Providing an explanation" has shown that there is indeed a continuum of responsibility

on which these categories are placed. As can be seen in Figure 6, different constructions inside each of the three categories themselves have different places on this continuum. Besides the fact that different constructions are used to express the different degrees of responsibility, different types of constructions are used closer to the acknowledging responsibility end of the continuum as opposed to those used closer to the denying responsibility end. All the constructions used to acknowledge responsibility include the acknowledgment in a noun phrase, verb phrase, or clause that is fully integrated in the construction, as can be seen in constructions 1-9 in Figure 6. From the perspective of information management in discourse, such integration suggests that the information provided in the noun phrase, verb phrase, or clause is given or presupposed information. The acknowledgment is tightly integrated with the apology which implies that the speaker accepts the offense as given. On the other hand, the constructions used to provide an explanation or deny responsibility are more fragmented, as the explanation or denial is given in a clause or utterance that is delimited in the construction by the existence of an intonation break. This is the case with constructions 10-14 in Figure 6. Such fragmentation suggests that the information in the clause or utterance is not necessarily assumed to be given, as in the case of acknowledging responsibility. Instead, in the case of the constructions in 12 containing *but*, an explicit contradiction is coded in the apology, whereas with the constructions in 10, 11, 13, and 14 a separate relationship between the utterance and the explicit expression of apology must be inferred. Due to this fragmentation, the apology is less integrated, and the speaker does not accept the offense as given. This distinction between integrated versus fragmented apologies supports the

claim that the choice of construction contributes to the placement of the apology on this responsibility continuum.

4.2.2. Standalone Apologies

The category with the second highest frequency of use in the overall spoken and written analysis corpora was that of "Standalone apologies." Following the reevaluation of the IFID category (see the discussion under 4.1), only those apologies that were exclusively explicit expressions of apology standing by themselves in the discourse were included in this category. Based on the analysis of the contexts in which they appeared, such apologies were used in situations that required the mending of a less severe pragmatic offense, mostly involving behavior offenses. In this case, the speaker felt that a simple apology, namely a prototypical explicit expression of apology was enough. Nonetheless, results show that there was some variation in terms of the constructions used to express these apologies. These constructions are given in Table 21.

Table 21

Constructions Used to Construe Standalone Apologies in the Spoken English Analysis Corpus

Construction	Occurrences
[*excuse me*]	16
[*I'm sorry*]	13
[*sorry*]	5
[*forgive me*]	3
[*I apologize*]	2

As can be seen in Table 21, all the constructions in this category were purely substantive ones, that is consisting only of lexical items, and no schematic elements. Unfortunately, it was not feasible to carry out a search of these constructions on the extended corpus as they produced a very high number of results. However, we suspect that these constructions have a high frequency due to the highly conventionalized form of the constructions.

Since all the constructions were substantive ones, the question arises whether these expressions of apology are indeed different constructions or just variants of one more schematic and abstract construction. As discussed in the literature review section, a construction was defined as a pairing or form and meaning – both semantic and pragmatic. It is our claim that these expressions of apology are actually different constructions, as they are used in different contexts, and therefore have a different pragmatic meaning. Moreover, the choice of the construction depends on the type of offense that the apology is meant to mend. This will be demonstrated in the discussion of each construction next.

The most frequent construction expressing a standalone apology was [*excuse me*]. The construction was used mostly in situations involving behavior offenses, such as coughing, sneezing, hiccupping, and the like. Example (49) is a sample apology used in this context.

(49)
WENDY:	Kevin's_A been sleeping a lot too though.
WENDY:	So ...
MARCI:	&=in.
KENDR:	I'd be on pregnancy vitamins...
WENDY:	I think we just have...
KENDR:	I wouldn't be...
KEVIN:	&=HICCUP .

KENDR: sick
if I were...
KEVIN: **excuse me**.
KENDR: pregnant.
MARCI: Says who.
WENDY: &=tsk Who's pregnant again.
KENDR: Says me.
(SBCSAE, SBC013 Appease the Monster)

Example (49) contains an interaction between family members during a birthday party. At one point in the conversation, Kevin hiccups, and apologizes for it by using the explicit expression of apology “excuse me.” Since the offense was not a severe one, the speaker considered that a standalone apology was sufficient in this situation. And the other participants in the conversation seem to have agreed, since they did not even acknowledge the apology, and continued their discussion uninterrupted.

The use of this construction was not restricted to the context of everyday conversation found in the SBCSAE corpus. The construction was also present in the context of media interactions in the COCA corpus, as can be seen in (50).

(50) SCHORR: I think it's quite painful. The attorney general strikes me as someone who's suffering from you might call Waco syndrome.'
SIMON: Mm-hmm.
SCHORR: That is to say -- **excuse me**...
SIMON: Gesundheit.
SCHORR: ... that she's afraid of confrontation because of the fear of violence. Furthermore, it's her beloved Miami.
(COCA, NPR_Saturday, Analysis: Looking back at some of the week's top stories)

Though it is not marked explicitly in the transcript, the apology in this fragment is triggered by Schorr’s sneezing, which can be deduced from Simon’s turn in which he says “Gesundheit.” This example also shows the fact that it is sometimes difficult to establish the offense that results in the use of standalone apologies. One has to analyze the context of the apology carefully to deduce the offense in case the actual audio or

video recording is not available. This is one of the limitations of corpus linguistics, as some such behaviors that result in standalone apologies are only evident in the audio or video recording. In conclusion, the [*excuse me*] construction is used with behavior offenses that are outside the speaker's control.

The second most often used construction in the standalone category was [*I'm sorry*]. This construction was also used in situations involving offenses that were not severe. However, the types of offenses were different from those for which [*excuse me*] was used. While [*excuse me*] was mostly used for behavioral offenses that were out of the control of the speaker (as one may not be able to control sneezing, for example), [*I'm sorry*] was mostly used for hearing offenses. This difference in use supports the existence of [*excuse* me] and [*I'm sorry*] as separate constructions rather than both being just instances of a more abstract construction such as [IFID] or [EXPLICIT EXPRESSION OF APOLOGY]. As the different expressions function differently, they are indeed separate constructions. One example of the use of the [*I'm sorry*] construction is given in (51).

(51) BILL HEMMER: OK. In our audience today, we have a number of daughters here, who have attended CNN work day with their fathers. And Natasha has a comment. Go ahead, Natasha.
15th AUDIENCE MEMBER: I don't think it's fair that boys don't get to come to work with their parents, because boys should just get to come same as girls.
BILL HEMMER: Come where? **I'm sorry**.
15th AUDIENCE MEMBER: Come to work with their parents.
BILL HEMMER: Oh, I see, OK.
(COCA, CNN_TalkBack, CNN_TalkBack / 19960425)

In this example, the moderator apologizes for not having understood what the 15th Audience Member said. The offense is not a severe one, and therefore the standalone apology "I'm sorry" is considered appropriate and enough.

Another type of offense for which this construction was used was for discourse offenses, such as the one in (52).

(52) Mr. UHLBERG: […] But it was founded as a strictly oral school. And in most cases, in these deaf residential schools, signing - the use of hands, the use of the body - was strictly forbidden. The teacher would smack a child's hand, literally, with a ruler if they were caught signing. But that was their natural language. So –
CONAN: Myron?
Mr. UHLBERG: Yeah.
CONAN: I just want to give some listeners a chance to get in on the conversation.
Mr. UHLBERG: **I 'm sorry**.
CONAN: They want to talk to you. Let's see if we can go now to Sarah(ph). Sarah with us from Wichita in Kansas.
(COCA, NPR_TalkNat, A Life With Deaf Parents)

In this example, Mr. Uhlberg engages in a very lengthy monologue and he is interrupted by the moderator of the radio show by stating "I just want to give some listeners a chance to get in on the conversation." This statement indirectly signals the fact that the moderator considered that Mr Uhlberg was taking up too much time with his talk. Mr. Uhlberg recognizes this as a discourse offense, and apologizes using the [*I'm sorry*] construction.

Finally, in the context of everyday conversations, this construction was used to mend minor offenses that Deutschmann (2003) called breach of expectations. In (53), Kathy and her boyfriend Nathan are preparing for a math test, and Kathy is explaining something to Nathan, and the expectation is that she will make the issue clear to him.

(53) KATHY: Since you have the square root of two on the bottom to make that a square
you have to multiply by the square root of two .
KATHY: And then you get two:
and you multiply the top by the square root of two and you get
square root of two .
NATHA: &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh

KATHY: &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh
What.
NATHA: I wanna rewind it and hear that back again.
KATHY: &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh &=in &=laugh &=laugh
NATHA: Cause I sure didn't catch it the first [% laugh] time [% laugh]
&=laugh &=laugh &=laugh
NATHA: &=in &=ex &=ex
You got the two
and you take the square root of two ...
KATHY: &=laugh &=laugh .
NATHA: and you get the negative two...
KATHY: &=laugh.
NATHA: which you take 3 the square...
KATHY: &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh &=in.
NATHA: and it comes to two...
KATHY: &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh &=in
I'm sorry
&=in.
NATHA: &=ex So .
NATHA: let's talk about this slowly:
as I write this down
as you're saying it .
(SBCSAE, SBC009 Zero Equals Zero)

However, by laughing, as well as by stating “rewind it and hear that back again” and then later “let's talk about this slowly as I write this down as you're saying it,” Nathan is making it clear to Kathy that he did not understand, that her explanation was not the simple one he expected. Consequently, Kathy apologizes for breaching his expectations, that is not explaining things clearly, by using the standalone apology “I’m sorry.” The fact that both participants in the interaction are laughing suggests that neither of them considered this as a serious offense, hence a standalone apology was appropriate and sufficient.

Consequently, based on the examples discussed above, it seems that [*I’m sorry*] is used for a wider range of offenses than the more specialized construction [*excuse me*]. The lexeme *sorry* was, however, part of another construction, namely [*sorry*]. This

construction was significantly less frequent in the spoken analysis corpus than the previous two constructions. The examples in the data suggest that [*sorry*] is used for different kinds of offenses. In (54), the construction is used to mend a mistake made by the speaker.

(54) KING: Let's talk about Jim Carrey. He's had a remarkable year.
Mr-CONNELLY: Well, he was the guy who really sort of broke through in movies this year in a major way. You're talking three successful pictures out of a guy who nobody had heard of from a TV standpoint years ago. And it's an amazing thing. In Hollywood, you -- you think of people who -- you think of Hollywood as being the kind of place that has to get on somebody early, you know, that always is looking to find new talent, that has to sign somebody at 9:00 at night because they -- you know, they -- they're brand new and they've got to go right now. Here's a guy who was sitting around on a TV show for years and years and nobody would make a movie with him. Hollywood had written him off after that vampire picture he did with Lauren Hutton or something back in the Jimmy Carter administration. So he...
KING: I thought that was Sting.
Mr-CONNELLY: He p -- well, he -- that was a Jennifer Beals picture -- so hard to remember.
KING: OK . **Sorry**.
(COCA, CBS_Morning, JESS CAGLE, ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY, AND CHRIS CONNELLY, PREMIERE MAGAZINE, DISCUSS VARIOUS OCCURANCES THAT HAPPENED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR THAT ARE BEING LOOKED AT AS ENTERTAINMENT)

In this example, the moderator of the “CBS Morning” show confuses Jim Carey with Sting, and then apologizes for this mistake by using “Sorry.” Since the offense is just a case of mistaken identification of a minor reference in the conversation, it is not a severe one, and therefore only a standalone apology is used. A mistaken identification could be a more severe offense in other contexts, in which the reference is more important in the discourse. A more severe offense might require a more elaborate apology.

Besides minor mistakes, the construction was also used in situations where the offense was an accident, as can be seen in Example (55). In this case, friends are having a conversation while preparing dinner. In the process, they have to clean a table outside, and while doing so Maril believes that she touched Pete with the cloth while cleaning the table. She uses the construction [*sorry*] to apologize for the accident:

(55) ROY: I have to clean.
ROY: the table outside.
MARIL: Mhm.
MARIL: It's dirty.
ROY: A little outside cleaning.
MARIL: So
wash it with that cloth or something ?
ROY: Wash it
wipe it down .
MARIL: Oops
sorry.
MARIL: Did I get you?
PETE: Nope.
(SBCSAE, SBC003 Conceptual Pesticides)

The last two constructions in the "Standalone apologies" category were [*forgive me*] and [*I apologize*]. An example of the [*forgive me*] apology is provided in (56).

(56) HAGERTY: So police are now searching all of these hotels. What's different in yesterday's case is that there were several witnesses. And at least one of them believe that she saw two people driving away in a white minivan. That's actually consistent with what criminal profilers say. They note that last Thursday there were four shootings in two hours, and it's unlikely that only one person would try to pull this off.
SIMON: Now there was little what we would consider, at least so far as we know, physical evidence in the case, like shell casings, **forgive me**, tire tracks, something like that.
HAGERTY: Right. Here's what they've got.
(COCA, NPR_Saturday, Analysis: Latest news in the sniper attacks)

Initially, by merely looking at the transcript from which (56) is taken from, it was not possible to identify a pragmatic offense that required the apology. Fortunately, the

audio recording of the radio show was available on the NPR website. After listening to the recording it became clear that the noun “casings” preceding the apology was stuttered by the moderator. It was this stuttering, a minor speaking offense, that triggered the use of the standalone apology “forgive me.” Besides such speaking offenses, the same construction was also used to mend discourse offenses, as can be seen in Example (57).

(57) PELLEY: There is a lot of discussion about precisely what the word "torture" means. You’ve been at the top of defense military intelligence. Based on what you’ve seen and heard, is all of this torture?!

LANG: I think that a lot of this behavior which has been allowed is so far outside the pale that I think that it would have to be considered to be something not allowed in international law or U.S. military law.!

PELLEY: You’re dancing around this a little bit, colonel. **Forgive me**. I mean, is it torture? What do you think?

(COCA, CBS_Sixty, 60 Minutes)

This time, Pelley apologizes for having told the colonel that he was dancing around the idea, and was not answering the question directly. Thus, the offense here was a discourse one, in that Pelley probably considered his statement too direct, and considered that an apology was necessary. Such a use may be specific to the genre of interviews, where the interviewer is expected to force the interviewee to answer. Because of these genre expectations, even though the offense is more serious than the one in (56), a standalone apology was deemed appropriate by the speaker.

Finally, the least frequent standalone apology in the spoken analysis corpus, namely [*I apologize*], was also used to mend discourse offenses. However, unlike in (57), which was also an example of a discourse offense, the offense in which [*I apologize*] was used was pointed out to the speaker by a participant to the conversation, as can be seen in Example (58).

(58) CHENEY: […] And I think that Republicans and all Americans, frankly -- it's not just Republicans -- who are very concerned about the way this administration is handling...
WILLIAMS: Well, but, Liz...
CHENEY: ... these issues. And it was not...
WILLIAMS: Let me ask you one question.
CHENEY: ... Republicans who said...
WALLACE: Wait, wait, wait. I get...
CHENEY: ... the opponents...
WALLACE :... lots of e-mails, people complaining...
CHENEY: ... are helping Al Qaida.
WALLACE: ... that two people talk at once.
WILLIAMS: **I apologize**.
WALLACE: Liz, go.
(COCA, Fox_Sunday, 2010 (100214))

In (58), Williams and Cheney are talking at the same time after Williams starts an overlapping turn with "Well, but, Liz…" The moderator of the show points out to the guests that people had been complaining about the fact that people were talking at once, in an attempt to stop the two guests from doing so. Williams, who interrupted, apologizes for it by using saying "I apologize." The use of this construction containing the more formal expression "I apologize" as opposed to the other situations that contained a discourse offense seems to be due to the nature of the offense. The offense in (58) was a deliberate interruption in the context of an attempt at giving a contradictory position. The offense is not severe, as the format licenses and encourages some debate, but it was perhaps contrary to the moderator's desire. Nonetheless, this offense was more serious than the one in (57), which was an inadvertent production error.

In conclusion, while some of the constructions used to express standalone apologies only had two to five occurrences and therefore do not allow for generalizations, overall the constructions in this category were used for minor offenses in the spoken analysis corpus. In these situations, a standalone apology was deemed appropriate by the

speakers. Also, we have demonstrated that, at least based on the analysis corpus, the different expressions used to apologize are actually different apology constructions, as they were used in different situations to mend different types of offenses. A summary of the constructions and the offenses for which they are used is given in Figure 7.

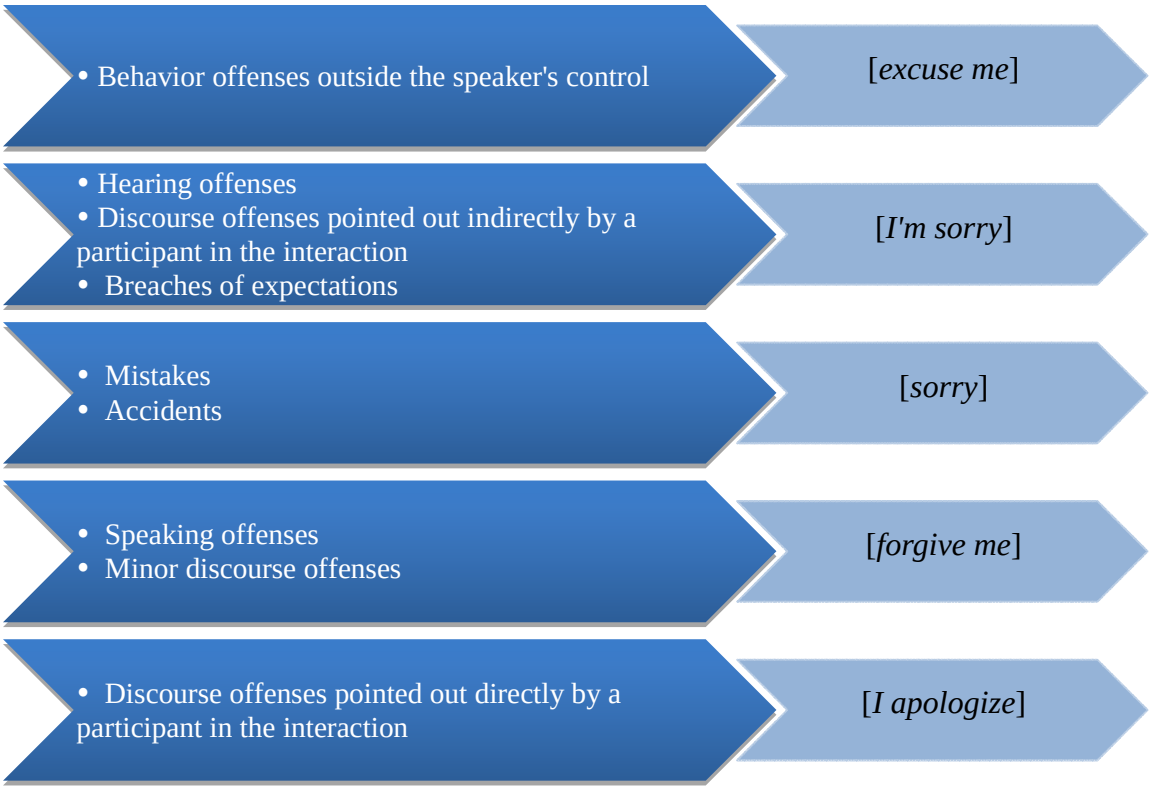

Figure 7. The relationship between the type of offense and the construction used for standalone apologies

To summarize, separating the standalone apologies has revealed more about their form and function. As can be seen in Figure 7, standalone apologies are used in specific contexts to mend the same types of offenses. These are mostly minor and less severe offenses when compared to offenses that apologies in the other categories were used to mend. Such a revised categorization allows, therefore, for a more precise understanding of how standalone apologies are used as opposed to the category of IFID present in

previous studies on apologies. The fact that standalone apologies are used in specific contexts supports the need to consider them a separate category.

The apology categories discussed so far have also been reported by studies on apologies using the speech act theory approach to this speech act. However, the analysis of actual language in use has shown that these categories are not clear-cut ones, but rather a continuum with different constructions existing on different points on the continuum. Moreover, the analysis of the data has yielded three categories that have not been previously reported by studies on apologies. These categories will be discussed next.

4.2.3. Apologies Functioning at the Discourse Level

Two of the three new categories found by analyzing the spoken corpus are similar in their function, and therefore can be grouped and discussed together. Analyzing these apologies in the broader discourse context in which they appear has shown that they are an integral part of a discourse pattern. These two categories are “Repair apologies” and “Interruption apologies.” Since these apologies also have a discourse function, we have grouped them under the term discourse level apologies. So far in this study we have only discussed discourse offenses, that is violations on the part of a speaker of norms or expectations regarding discourse. The apologies provided for those offenses belonged to the categories already discussed. While the discourse offenses discussed so far referred to violating frame expectations, the discourse offenses that trigger the apologies discussed in this section refer to the mechanics of discourse, more precisely to turn taking. Moreover, besides being triggered by a discourse offense, the apologies themselves function at the level of discourse.

4.2.3.1. Repair Apologies

The first of the two categories to discuss is “Repair apologies.” The spoken analysis corpus contained 40 apologies in this category construed by 15 potential constructions. However, 6 of these constructions only had one instance in the corpus, which was not enough to justify the existence of a specific construction. Moreover, since these constructions were complex ones, it was not possible to search for them in the extended corpus. Only the remaining constructions that had enough instances to justify their existence are given in Table 22.

Table 22

Constructions Used to Construe Repair Apologies in the Spoken English Analysis Corpus

Construction	Occurrences
[UTTERANCE:INCORRECTINFO | *excuse me* | UTTERANCE:CORRECTEDINFO]	7
[NP | *excuse me* | NP]	6
[SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE:INCORRECTINFO] SPEAKER2[UTTERANCE:CORRECTEDINFO] SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE:CORRECTEDINFO | *excuse me*]]	4
[UTTERANCE:INCORRECTINFO | *I'm sorry* | UTTERANCE:CORRECTEDINFO]	4
[NP | NP | *excuse me*]	4
[NP | *I'm sorry* | NP]	3
[NP | NP | *I'm sorry*]	2
[SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE:INCORRECTINFO] SPEAKER2[UTTERANCE:CORRECTEDINFO] SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE:CORRECTEDINFO | *I'm sorry*]]	2
[NP | *or forgive me* | NP]	2

The constructions shown in Table 22 can be divided into two groups based on whether the discourse function of repair was initiated by the speaker who provided the

incorrect information, in which case it is self-repair, or by another participant in the interaction. In the first case, the correct information was provided by the speaker apologizing, while in the second case it was provided by another speaker, and then repeated by the speaker apologizing.

According to the data in the spoken analysis corpus, self-repair apologies were more frequent than apologies for repairs initiated by another speaker. There were two different patterns that apology constructions in this group followed. The first pattern is illustrated in (59), which is an instance of the [UTTERANCE:INCORRECTINFO | *excuse me* | UTTERANCE:CORRECTEDINFO] construction, the most frequent in the self-repair apology category.

(59) KING: What about the flight New York?
GLENDENING: We have 10,000 contributions, minimum. There were two errors out of ten thousand. Of course, we immediately said we would not take this. But, when you want to talk about contributions, this is the interesting part. She is taking money in a big way from the people who have made major pollution. For example, one person who was just fined a million dollars, lives in Virginia, covered a hundred acres of wetlands. **She took 100 -- excuse me, she took $25,000** just recently from him. Same thing in terms of the polluters of the Bay.
(COCA, CNN_King, GOP Aims Last-Minute Attack at Democrats)

The pattern used in Example (59), was "Incorrect/Incomplete Information" – "Explicit Expression of Apology" – "Corrected Information." The three segments of the construction are separated by intonation breaks, the first one denoted in the transcript by a dash, and the second one by a comma. These intonation breaks are noted by | in the construction. The speaker started out the utterance with "She took 100," which is incorrect information, representing the UTTERANCE:INCORRECTINFO segment of the construction. The speaker realized that he had given incorrect information, and

interrupted the utterance, which is signaled in the transcript by the use of the dash. The speaker continued with the explicit expression of apology “excuse me” followed by another intonation break and the utterance containing the corrected information, which represents the UTTERANCE:CORRECTEDINFO segment of the construction.

As already mentioned above, the self-repair did not always involve rephrasing an entire utterance. In some cases only the noun phrase representing the incorrect or incomplete information was repaired. Thus, “excuse me” was also used in the construction [NP | *excuse me* | NP], the second most frequent construction in the category. An example of this construction is given in (60).

(60) COOPER: Ouch! Miranda in the show "Sex and the City," hearing the very words that countless dating women fear, the real reason he doesn't want to come up, the real reason he doesn't return e-mails, the real reason he doesn't call, he's just not that into you. That wake-up call for women comes from "Sex and the City" consultant Greg Behrendt and executive story editor Liz **Dechula, -- excuse me, Tuccillo**.

(COCA, CNN_Cooper, Vulcano Warning For Mt. St. Helens; Bush, Kerry Set To Debate Tomorrow Night, Mark Geragos Finishes Crossexamination of Lead Detective In Peterson Trial)

The noun phrase in the construction was in many of the instances a name, as is the case with the example in (60). The speaker said the wrong last name of the story editor, “Dechula,” and immediately corrected it by using “excuse me” followed by the correct last name. The three parts of the construction are delimited by intonation breaks in this construction, as well. However, names were not the only noun phrases that occurred in this construction, as can be seen in Example (61).

(61) MILES O'BRIEN: Now you got to check out this display system here, which is sold separately, I'm told. If you look there, you can see the screen is going up, and behind there, what do you have, Dave?

DAVID SOLOMAN: This is **a standard direct view- or excuse me, a rear-projection-monitor system** by Mitsubishi.
(COCA, CNN_News, TV High-Fi and Video Discs Make Home Theater Possible)

Compared to the [UTTERANCE | *excuse me* | UTTERANCE], the [NP | *excuse me* | NP] construction seems to highlight the information that is being corrected more prominently, as only the corrected information is provided, instead of embedding it into an entire utterance. However, the choice of construction also depends on whether the incorrect or incomplete information was in the form of a noun phrase or of an utterance in the first place.

Insofar as highlighting the corrected information is concerned, this was also carried out by placing the corrected information before the explicit expression of apology. The pattern used for such apology constructions was "Incorrect/Incomplete Information" – "Corrected Information" – "Explicit Expression of Apology." However, it seems that this pattern only occurred with constructions in which the corrected information was given in the form of a noun phrase, and not of an utterance. Thus, "excuse me" was also used in the construction [NP | NP | *excuse me*], where the first noun phrase contained the incomplete or incorrect information, and the second one the correct one. The three segments of the construction are, once again, delimited by intonation breaks, as can be seen in (62).

(62) CARRIE LEE, CNN FINANCIAL NEWS CORRESPONDENT: […] Basically, a Delaware court judge said that directors of her company had no legal obligation to monitor her personal activities. So we'll be watching that stock today. **Holly -- Heidi, excuse me**, back to you
COLLINS: All right. Thanks so much.
(COCA, CNN_LiveDaybreak, Game Day: Cox Comes Out Slugging Against ESPN, FOX)

Besides *excuse me*, *sorry* is also used in all the three types of constructions discussed so far, though with a lower frequency. Self-repair apologies were also construed by the constructions [UTTERANCE *I'm sorry* UTTERANCE], [NP *I'm sorry* NP], and [NP NP *I'm sorry*]. While the constructions using *excuse me* were more frequent in the context of media interaction of the COCA corpus, those using *sorry* were more frequent in the context of everyday conversations of the SBCSAE corpus. As with the constructions containing *excuse me*, the choice of the construction with *sorry* also depended on how highlighted or foregrounded the corrected information was. The following three examples illustrate the use of [UTTERANCE | *I'm sorry* | UTTERANCE] in (63), [NP | *I'm sorry* | NP] in (64), and [NP | NP | *I'm sorry*] in (65) respectively.

(63) PHIL: The air is heating up
okay?
PHIL: And so the molecules are going faster and faster
and they're getting further and further apart
they're taking up less space
inside.
PHIL: **I'm sorry**
taking up more and more space
inside these balloons.
PHIL: And you might want to protect your eardrums.
(SBCSAE, SBC027 Atoms Hanging Out)

In (63), which is part of a lecture at the science museum, the error involved in the self-repair is factual error. This is a serious offense, considering that the information given during a lecture needs to be accurate. This might be the reason why the self-repair is performed in a more elaborate utterance. On the other hand, the self-repair is carried out in a noun phrase in (64), which is a case of identification error.

(64) VAN-PRAAGH: Right, and you have to remember that the spirits don't always know how to communicate. They don't always know how to send the thought to me. So it's new to them, just like it's new to the people doing this. And

they're strangers, and they're using my mind, which is new to them, as well.

KING: Sun City, Arizona -- hello **California -- I 'm sorry -- Sun City**.

CALLER: Yes, I want to know about my mother, Vera (ph), and my brother, Farrell (ph), if they're together.

(COCA, CNN_King, James Van Praagh Speaks to the Dead and Discusses His New Book, "Reaching to Heaven")

Finally, (65) is an example of a name correction, though the name is part of key information.

(65) FRANK: Civic Culture
Almond and Verba
nineteen seventy two or so
is one book that you can look at
um
there's a book by Raymond Wolfinger
Steven **Ronsteen Ronstone I'm sorry**
Who Votes
that's another book
X Okay X
the literature goes on and on .

(SBCSAE, SBC012 American Democracy is Dying)

The offense in this example is a more severe offense than the one in (62), which was also a name correction, but not part of key information. This difference may account for the choice of the explicit expression of apology "I'm sorry" in (65) as opposed to "excuse me" in (62).

The last lexeme that was used in a construction in the self-repair apologies category was *forgive*. However, the use of this lexeme was restricted in the corpus to only one of the three types of constructions in which *excuse me*, and *sorry* were used, namely [NP | *or forgive me* | NP]. Moreover, this construction contains the conjunction *or* before the explicit expression of apology, something that none of the other constructions in this category had. Finally, this construction was only found in media interactions. One of the instances is given in (66).

(66) SIMON: Yeah, and I'm not sure it's far off from a possibility. At a meeting **today, or forgive me, this week** in Europe, the Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev surprised a lot of people.
(COCA, NPR_Weekend, News Analysts Review Top News Stories of the Week)

As can be seen in Example (66), the error that is being corrected is less critical than the ones in examples where constructions containing *excuse me* and *sorry* were used, which may account for the choice of the explicit expression of apology *forgive me*.

The constructions discussed so far in this section on "Repair apologies" involved self-repairs, namely situations in which the speaker uttering the incorrect or incomplete information corrected it himself or herself. However, as already mentioned, there was another group of constructions in which a speaker different from the one uttering the incorrect or incomplete information gave the correct information. The constructions in this second group followed the pattern "Incorrect/Incomplete Information"– "Corrected information given by another speaker" – "Corrected information repeated by the speaker apologizing" – "Explicit expression of apology." Unlike the first group of constructions, in which the corrected information was given either in the form of a noun phrase or in that of an utterance, the second group contained constructions in which the corrected information is only in the form of an utterance. The constructions in this second group contained only the explicit expressions of apology *excuse me* and *sorry* and were only found in the COCA corpus containing media interactions. The two constructions in this second group were [$^{\text{SPEAKER1}}$[UTTERANCE:INCORRECTINFO] $^{\text{SPEAKER2}}$[UTTERANCE:CORRECTEDINFO] $^{\text{SPEAKER1}}$[UTTERANCE:CORRECTEDINFO *excuse me*]] and [$^{\text{SPEAKER1}}$[UTTERANCE:INCORRECTINFO] $^{\text{SPEAKER2}}$[UTTERANCE:CORRECTEDINFO] $^{\text{SPEAKER1}}$[UTTERANCE:CORRECTEDINFO *I'm sorry*]]. An example of the first construction is given in (67).

(67) RODNEY: My question is, did you see the "Meet the Press" interview this past weekend with Congressman Ford?
CONAN: **It's Harold Ford, who's the head of the Democratic Leadership Coalition.**
RUDIN: **Council. Right.**
CONAN: **Council, excuse me.**
(COCA, NPR_TalkNation, Rove's Announced Resignation)

In this example, Conan states that Harold Ford is the head of the Democratic Leadership Coalition. However, the information provided was incorrect, but it was a minor error. The guest in the radio show provides the correct information in the next turn. This is followed by Conan repeating the correct information, "Council," followed by the explicit expression of apology "excuse me."

The second construction used to express a repair apology when the repair is given by a speaker other than the one apologizing was [$^{\text{SPEAKER1}}$[UTTERANCE:INCORRECTINFO] $^{\text{SPEAKER2}}$[UTTERANCE:CORRECTEDINFO] $^{\text{SPEAKER1}}$[UTTERANCE:CORRECTEDINFO *I'm sorry*]]. The only difference between this construction and the one previously discussed is the choice of the explicit expression of apology, which in this construction is "I'm sorry." An example of this construction is given in (68).

(68) MORALES: Let's take a look at some of the women that we picked out of our crowd here. **And first is Katie, who's a beauty already from Washington state. She's a working mom with two kids, and -- oh, wait, no, Katie...**
Ms-MERCIER: **This is Maria.**
MORALES: **Maria, I'm sorry.** Maria's from California.
(COCA, NBC_Today, Today's iVillage Makeover; Three women from plaza crowd get makeovers from Laura Mercier)

In this example, Morales uses the wrong name for one of the persons in the audience. Ms. Mercier intervenes, and provides the correct name, saying "This is Maria." Even though Morales had already noticed a mistake, and says "oh, wait, no, Katie," it is still Ms. Mercier who gives the correct information. Morales then repeats the correct

name, “Maria,” and adds “I’m sorry.” Unlike the construction with “excuse me,” which was used to repair information that was not of a personal nature, both instances of this construction in the corpus repair the names of persons present during the interaction, which is therefore a more serious face threatening error.

In summary, there were two different types of repairs, namely self-repairs carried out entirely by the speaker apologizing and repairs initiated by a speaker different from the one apologizing. The constructions used to apologize in this category themselves were divided into different types based on who was doing the repair. In the case of self-repair apologies, some constructions highlighted the correct information by providing it before the explicit expression of apology. The severity of the error that needed to be repaired was important, as it determined the choice of explicit lexical expression in the construction. “Excuse me” was used for minor identification errors or errors that were not part of key information in the discourse, whereas “I’m sorry” was used for more face threatening errors and factual errors.

4.2.3.2. Interruption Apologies

The second category of apologies that has a discourse function was “Interruption apologies.” This category was only slightly less frequent than “Repair apologies,” with 39 instances. These apologies were construed using 7 different constructions. Two other possible constructions did not have enough instances in the analysis corpus to prove their existence and it was not possible to search for them in the extended corpus. The seven constructions are given in Table 23.

Table 23

Constructions Used to Construe Interruption Apologies in the Spoken English Analysis Corpus

Construction	Occurrences
[SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*Excuse me* UTTERANCE]]	11
[SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*I'm sorry* UTTERANCE]]	6
[SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*Forgive me for* GERUND-CLAUSE]]	5
[SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[UTTERANCE *I'm sorry*]]	5
[SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*Excuse me* NAME]]	3
[SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*Forgive me* UTTERANCE]]	3
[SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[UTTERANCE *excuse me*]]	3
[SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*Excuse me for* GERUND-CLAUSE]]	1

A search in the extended corpus was only possible for two of the constructions in Table 23, namely the ones including a gerund clause. Their relative frequency is given in Table 24.

Table 24

Constructions Used to Construe Interruption Apologies in the Spoken English Extended Corpus

Construction	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (per million words)
[SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*Forgive me for* GERUND-CLAUSE]]	37	0.44
[SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*Excuse me for* GERUND-CLAUSE]]	22	0.26

Since the two constructions given in Table 24 seem highly conventionalized and quite frequent, we will start our discussion of interruption apologies with these constructions. First of all, like all the constructions in this category, these two also follow an uncompleted turn uttered by another speaker. The fact that this previous turn is clearly uncompleted is one of the cues prompting the fact that an interruption occurred. The speaker who is apologizing starts out the turn with the explicit expression of apology, "Forgive me" and "Excuse me" in the case of these two constructions, followed by *for* and a gerund clause. However, the gerund clause in these constructions is restricted to a limited number of verbs that semantically express the idea of interruption, such as *interrupting* (the most frequently used one), *interrupting you*, *cutting in*, *cutting you off*, *jumping in*, and *stopping you*. By using this gerund clause the speaker apologizing not only makes the interruption explicit, but also acknowledges the fact that he or she is violating the turn taking conventions and is interrupting. An example of the [SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*Forgive me for* GERUND-CLAUSE]] construction is given in (69).

(69) Dr. ABU JABER: Why not? So that the Arabs will respect the United Nations' resolutions, and we have been trying very hard to respect that, here, we in Jordan, the Egyptians, even the Iraqis. You know 242, 338 vis-a-vis the West Bank and the Golan Heights. Why have they not been respected by Israel and by the very United States that sponsored them? Why is it-

KOPPEL: **Forgive me for interrupting you**, but the question that I'm asking you is, is not the goal right now, and should not the goal be to get two armies that are facing one another, apart, as quickly and as peacefully as possible, and other things to be resolved later on?

(COCA, ABC_Nightline, From Cairo, Egypt: Arab Leaders' Summit)

In this example, the moderator of ABC's "Nightline" interrupts Dr. Abu Jaber in the middle of his sentence, which is signaled in the transcript by the use of the dash in

"Why is it-." He is aware that he is interrupting, and doing so on purpose, and therefore apologizes first and acknowledges the interruption in the gerund clause. However, not all instances of this construction were apologies for the speaker interrupting in the middle of another speaker's sentence as in (69). Interruptions also occurred at the end of a sentence, at the end of what might even be a transition relevant place in the previous turn, as defined by Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson (1974) (see the discussion in section 2.2.5 in the literature review). In these cases the apology is for taking the floor away from the previous speaker. An example of this use is given in (70).

(70) FITZWILLIAMS: […] But a country like Monaco, for example, I mean there have been unfortunate accounts there of the private lives of Princesses Caroline and Stephanie, and in those cases, they've been fodder for the tabloids, most particularly that of Princess Stephanie, and I think that has made it a great deal more difficult for the monarchy to have a certain amount of dignity

MANN: **Forgive me for interrupting you**. Let me ask you about another specific case, and that's Prince Johan of the Netherlands, because there again, the prince's private life, his choice of a spouse, caused real difficulties

(COCA, CNN_Insight, Prince Marries Commoner)

The second construction containing a gerund clause, [$^{\text{SPEAKER1}}$[UTTERANCE] $^{\text{SPEAKER2}}$[*Excuse me for* GERUND-CLAUSE]] was less frequent in both the analysis and the extended corpus. Example (71) is an instance of this construction.

(71) DAVID-JACKSON: Nothing really substantive has been released from those meetings, but what we do know is that this was the beginning of what's been described as the defendant's concerns about his representation. And that really is sort of legal language for he doesn't like the trial strategy that these lawyers are preparing for him.

ELIZABETH-FARNSWOR: **Excuse me for interrupting**. Has he asked to defend himself?

(COCA, PBS_Newshour, Unabomber Trial; Quick Deportation; Moi's Kenya; Sky High; Holy Spirit)

Unlike in (70), where the person being apologized to was a guest in the show, the apology in (71) is addressed to a fellow commentator on the show. This difference in the status of the interlocutor may account for the choice of the more formal "forgive me" in (70) versus "excuse me" in (71).

While in these two constructions containing gerund clauses the speaker explicitly acknowledges the interruption, this is not the case with the other constructions used to express an apology in this category. The remaining constructions can be divided into two groups. One group contains the constructions in which the speaker apologizing starts his or her turn with the explicit expression of apology, namely [SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*Excuse me* UTTERANCE]], [SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*I'm sorry* UTTERANCE]], [SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*Excuse me* NAME]], and [SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*Forgive me* UTTERANCE]]. In this case, one can still claim that the speaker apologizing is intentionally interrupting and is therefore still aware of the interruption even though he or she does not make this explicit as was the case with the previously two constructions discussed.

The most frequent construction in the analysis corpus used in the case of interruptions was [SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*Excuse me* UTTERANCE]]. An example of this construction is given in (72).

(72) STAHL: OK-Now you invited me, a couple of weeks ago, to look into all of this, and so we've been calling around...
Mr-PEROT: **Excuse me, I did not invite you to look into all of this.** Absolutely not. You called me.
(COCA, CBS-Sixty, PART II-ANNIVERSARY SHOW HIGHLIGHTS SPECIAL AND SURPRISING MOMENTS FILMED DURING THE 25 YEARS OF 60 MINUTES)

In this example, Mr. Perot interrupts Stahl by starting out with the explicit expression of apology, “excuse me,” followed by an utterance in which he contradicts what Stahl started to say.

The explicit expression of apology “excuse me” was also part of constructions used in more formal contexts, namely [SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*Excuse me* NAME]]. This time, the explicit expression of apology was followed by a formal term of address, as can be seen in (73).

(73) PETER NEUFELD, Simpson Attorney: The reason that these field reports are filled out in pencil is so that if there are errors or omission or mistakes, it can be-
Judge LANCE ITO: **Excuse me, Mr. Neufeld**. Deputies there are people in the back row who are conversing next to the photographers, would you eject them from the courtroom, please? Two individuals next to the photographers.
(COCA, CNN_News, Simpson Trial - Commentary - Day 58 - Part 5)

In Example (73) taken from the Simpson trial, the defense attorney is interrupted by the judge who gives some instructions to the deputies. This interruption was, therefore, occasioned by an even outside the interaction. The judge starts the interruption with the explicit expression of apology “Excuse me” followed by the formal address “Mr. Neufeld.” Though the judge has authority in the court room, due to the very formal context in which the interruption occurs, a formal apology is chosen.

The second most frequent construction in this category was [Speaker1[UTTERANCE] Speaker2[*I’m sorry* UTTERANCE]]. This time the interruption starts with the explicit expression of apology “I’m sorry” followed by an utterance, as in (74).

(74) CALLER: A couple of things -- first, little criticism. I don't hear anybody on your panel who is an actual user of the oceans, like somebody from the fishing industry; somebody from the deep seabed mining industry;

somebody from the other industries that use the ocean. It seems to me that's a little bit of an oversight
FLATOW: Carl -- Carl fishes. Go ahead, Carl
SAFINA: I -- I fish. I've sold a lot of fish. And as I said earlier, I eat more seafood than anybody I know. So I think I...
CALLER: **I'm sorry. And you're with what organization?**
SAFINA: National Audubon Society
(COCA, NPR_Science, Earth Day: Oceans)

The fragment in (74) is taken from a radio show in which guests and callers discuss about the fishing industry. One of the caller asks a question, and when the person to whom the question was addressed to, Safina, gives an answer, the caller interrupts to ask a question. The interruption starts out with "I'm sorry" followed by the utterance "And you're with what organization?" While the interruption in (72) was part of a debate, and an interruption in a contradictory conversation is expected in that frame, in (74) such an interruption is not expected as the person being interrupted was already answering the question asked by the caller. The apology here is triggered by a more face threatening offense, which may account for the choice of "I'm sorry" as opposed to "excuse me" in (72).

The last construction in this first group was [^{Speaker1}[UTTERANCE] ^{Speaker2}[*Forgive me* UTTERANCE]], which contained yet another explicit expression of apology, namely "forgive me." Example (75) is an instance of this construction.

(75) Sec CHENEY: Once you walk in the door of the Pentagon as the Secretary of Defense, you are immediately aware of the possibility that you may well have to send young Americans in harm's way. We've done it previously in this administration. Virtually every president in the last 50 years at one time or another has had to make that kind of a decision
DONALDSON: **Forgive me. You're talking about it so dispassionately.**
(COCA, ABC_Primetime, He Tells the Generals; In This Together?; Sergeant Hall; Thou Shalt Not...; No Illusion of War)

The context in which this apology occurred is an interview with Secretary Cheney on ABC Primetime. The moderator interrupts Secretary Cheney starting with the explicit expression of apology "forgive me" followed by the utterance "You're talking about it so dispassionately." The context in (75) is even more formal than that in (74), and therefore an even more formal expression of apology is used.

Unlike the first group of constructions, in which the explicit expression of apology is uttered first in the turn, the constructions in the second group, [$^{\text{Speaker1}}$[UTTERANCE] $^{\text{Speaker2}}$[UTTERANCE *I'm sorry*]] and [$^{\text{Speaker1}}$[UTTERANCE] $^{\text{Speaker2}}$[UTTERANCE *excuse me*]], contain an utterance first followed by the explicit expression of apology. The two constructions in this group function differently, though. Thus, [$^{\text{Speaker1}}$[UTTERANCE] $^{\text{Speaker2}}$[UTTERANCE *I'm sorry*]] functions similarly to the constructions containing a gerund clause, since the utterance in the apology is actually an acknowledgment of the interruption. This can be seen in Example (76).

(76) Mr. WILL: Someone who can't read- someone who can't read the word S, T, O, P shouldn't have a driver's license.
Mr. BRINKLEY: **I've got to interrupt, I'm sorry**, because I have a question here. What was Sam Donaldson doing yesterday?
(COCA, ABC_Brinkley, ABC_Brinkley / 19930516)

In (76), the moderator in a television talk show starts his turn by saying "I've got to interrupt" followed by the explicit apology "I'm sorry." Thus, the interruption is explicitly acknowledged by the speaker apologizing. However, unlike the constructions containing a gerund clause, which implies a first person agent for the action of the verb, the explanation in this utterance suggests an external constraint on the speaker insofar as the reason for the interruption is concerned.

Unlike this construction, the second one in this group, [^{Speaker1}[UTTERANCE] ^{Speaker2}[UTTERANCE *excuse me*]], was used in situations when the speaker did not have the intention to interrupt. This is illustrated in (77).

(77) Dr-WALKER: We have to be very careful that we don't pass on erroneous information about what we know and what we don't know about domestic violence. If we do, then we'll have no credibility amongst the millions of women who look to us for answers and for assistance to help them get out of horrible relationships...
RIVERA: **Dr. Walker, do you h...**
Dr-WALKER:... as this one is.
RIVERA: **Do you have any doubt, Dr. Walker, in your mind -- excuse me** -- that...
Dr-WALKER: Yes.
RIVERA: ... Nicole was terrorized by Simpson?
(COCA, Ind_Geraldo, THE JUICE IS LOOSE - WHERE DOES HE GO FROM HERE? PANELISTS DISCUSS O.J. SIMPSON'S LIFE FOLLOWING THE VERDICT AND THEIR VIEWS ABOUT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE)

The context in which the interaction in (77) takes place is of a conversation between the moderator of a television show and a guest, Dr. Walker. The guest is talking, when the moderator starts an interruption overlapping Dr. Walker. He then realizes that he has interrupted, and breaks his line of thought and apologizes by saying “excuse me.”

To sum up this section on interruption apologies, different constructions were used to acknowledge to different degrees the interruption. Thus, some constructions contained explicit acknowledgments, while other constructions did not, but still started with the apology. Finally, other constructions contained the explicit expression of apology later in the utterance, which in some cases suggested an unintentional interruption. Insofar as the choice of explicit expression of apology is concerned, it seems that this choice depends on the formality of the context and the relationship between the participants in the interaction.

4.2.4. Co-constructed Apologies

One of the most important findings of the present study is the use of co-constructed apologies. This category contains apologies that are construed by more than one speaker. Though this category was the least frequent one, its existence is very revealing from a sociopragmatic point of view considering the highly interactive nature of spoken discourse. Unfortunately, each instance of this category was expressed differently, and therefore there is not enough evidence to justify the existence of the constructions used. Consequently, we will only suggest possible constructions that could be used in each of the examples. As there were only four instances of this category, we are reiterating example (8) already introduced in the discussion of categorization issues (see 4.1.1) in (78).

(78)

KENDR:	A cookie baking set.
MARCI:	Al right.
MARCI:	Al right.
KENDR:	Mm.
KEVIN:	Rubber Maid.
MARCI:	Oh.
MARCI:	Let me see it.
KEN:	&=laugh &=laugh &=laugh.
KEVIN:	You can't squash it.
KENDR:	Mm.
MARCI:	Oh...
KENDR:	Rubber Maid.
MARCI:	neat.
KEVIN:	Twelve pieces.
KENDR:	Yay.
KEVIN:	&=GASP.
KEN:	That's XX...
MARCI:	Oh that's X.
KENDR:	Wow.
KEVIN:	Oh that includes all the teaspoons though.
MARCI:	In blue.
KENDR:	In blue that's not my color.
WENDY:	It's not green.

I'm sorry.
KENDR: &=tsk.
MARCI: **They don't come in green.**
KEVIN: **We bought it before you had an apartment.**
KENDR: No my plates are blue
that's okay.
(SBCSAE, SBC013 Appease the Monster)

The context in which the fragment in (78) takes place is a birthday party, with all the participants being family members. The person who is being celebrated, Kendra, receives a cookie baking set as present with blue teaspoons. However, as Kendra points out, blue it not her color. This utterance is the one that triggers an apology from Wendy, who is aware of the fact that Kendra's favorite color is green. Wendy apologizes for the fact that the color of the teaspoons is not green, that is it does not meet Kendra's expectations, by using the apology "I'm sorry." Traditional speech act theory would categorize this apology as simply an IFID. However, the interaction did not stop here. What follows is a negotiation of the severity of the offense. As in the next turn Kendra has a non-linguistic verbal response, transcribed as "&=tsk," Marci believes that Wendy's apology was not enough, and therefore steps in to elaborate on the apology by stating "They don't come in green." Thus, Marci contributes to the construction of the apology because the present was a collective one, and therefore she feels responsible, as well. Moreover, Kevin also contributes to the apology by providing an explanation in the turn immediately following Marci's, "We bought it before you had an apartment." The negotiation then stops when Kendra states that "No my plates are blue / that's okay" which signals the fact that now the apology co-constructed by Wendy, Marci, and Kevin is an appropriate one. It is therefore clear from this example that the apology consists of an elaborate construction that spans across several turns of several speakers.

Insofar as the possible construction used to express the apology in (78) is concerned, it is a discourse level construction as it spans several turns. Thus, Wendy's turn containing the explicit expression of apology was labeled as $^{\text{A.SPEAKER1}}$[*I'm sorry*]. In the construction, A.SPEAKER stands for apologizing speaker. Marci's turn, "They don't come in green," which is an explanation, was labeled in the construction as a turn with the sematic constraint of explanation: $^{\text{A.SPEAKER2}}$[TURN:EXPLANATION]. Finally, Kevin's turn was labeled in the same manner as Marci's: $^{\text{A.PEAKER3}}$[TURN:EXPLANATION]. Thus, the complete construction used to apologize in this example was [$^{\text{A.SPEAKER1}}$[*I'm sorry*] $^{\text{A.SPEAKER2}}$[TURN:EXPLANATION] $^{\text{A.SPEAKER2}}$[TURN:EXPLANATION]].

There was only one instance of this specific construction in the analysis corpus. Moreover, due to the complexity of the construction it was not possible to perform further searches for it in the extended corpus. In fact, each of the apologies in this category was expressed by a different potential construction. One reason for this is that there is a negotiation of both the offense and the apology that takes place during the co-construction. This negotiation makes the constructions highly dynamic, with several speakers taking one or more turns. Besides this negotiation, the co-construction is also responsive to local constraints, such as the number of speakers participating in the interaction and how they perceive the offense. Therefore, the specific constructions depend on how serious the offense was, how much responsibility the offender or offenders acknowledge, and therefore how much elaboration is needed in the apology. Consequently, rather than establishing a precise construction, what is important in the case of this category is the fact that the construction is created at the discourse level, and that it contains a sequence of turns contributing to the apology. The specific constructions

used in these four instances present in the analysis corpus are therefore just possible instantiations of this sequence. Table 25 shows the potential constructions used to express the four co-constructed apologies in the analysis corpus.

Table 25

Potential constructions Used to Express Co-constructed Apologies in the Spoken English Analysis Corpus

Construction	Occurrences
[A.SPEAKER1[*I'm sorry*] A.SPEAKER2[TURN:EXPLANATION] A.SPEAKER3[TURN:EXPLANATION]]	1
[A.SPEAKER1[*I'm sorry* TURN(S)] O.SPEAKER2[TURN(S):OFFENSEREITTERATION] A.SPEAKER3[TURN:EXPLANATION]]	1
[A.SPEAKER1[TURN(S):EXPLANATION] O.SPEAKER2[TURN(S):RESPONSIBILITYRELIEF] A.SPEAKER3[*really sorry*]]	1
[A.SPEAKER1[*Excuse us*] A.SPEAKER2[*Excuse us* TURN] A.SPEAKER1[TURN:EXPLANATION]]	1

Note: A.SPEAKER = Apologizing Speaker; O.SPEAKER = Offended Speaker

As can be seen in Table 25, only two explicit apology lexemes were used to express co-constructed apologies, namely *sorry* and *excuse*, with the first one being more frequent. Unlike most of the previously discussed constructions, the possible constructions in Table 25 have more flexibility in that some of the segments of the construction can be expressed in one or several turns. While the first possible construction in Table 25 discussed in (78) contained only one turn for each speaker, the second possible construction, [A.SPEAKER1[*I'm sorry* TURN(S)] O.SPEAKER2[TURN(S):OFFENSEREITTERATION] A.SPEAKER3[TURN:EXPLANATION]] contains segments that span over more than just one turn. In the possible constructions discussed

in this category, A.SPEAKER stands for apologizing speaker, whereas O.SPEAKER stands for offended speaker. An example of this possible construction is given in (79).

(79)

BABY:	&=THUMP .
LISA:	&=GASP.
KEVIN:	&=GASP &=GASP .
LISA:	Oo.
KEVIN:	Oo
MARIE:	Don't do that you guys.
BABY:	&=CRYING
LISA:	But that hurt.
KEVIN:	Po:bre:ci:to.
MARIE:	I know
	but don't do that
	cause you scare him more.
LISA:	**I'm sorry**.
KEVIN:	&=laugh &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh &=laugh
	&=laugh &=laugh.
LISA:	**That just**
MARIE:	**He gets scared more.**
LISA:	**I'm sorry jito.**
MARIE:	**Cause he didn't** ...
BABY:	&=GASP &=CRYING.
KEVIN:	**He didn't know it hurt**
	until we reacted.

(SBCSAE, SBC036 Judgmental on People)

This time we are dealing with a conversation among friends and relatives. The participants are two siblings – Lisa and Kevin, Lisa's friend Marie, and Marie's baby. In this example the baby falls and Lisa and Kevin gasp and make noises that scare the baby even more. The apology is triggered by the mother stating the offense in "Don't do that you guys," and repeated in "but don't do that cause you scare him more." Lisa apologizes for scaring the baby by saying "I'm sorry." This turn represents the [$^{\text{A.SPEAKER1}}$[*I'm sorry* TURN(S)] segment of the construction. Just as in (78), the person for whom the apology was intended takes the next turn, which triggers the negotiation of the apology and the co-construction. This time, the turn is verbal, and it consists of a reiteration of the offense, as Marie continues her explanation of why Lisa and Kevin should not do what

they did. She states that “He gets scared more.” This was labeled in the construction as O.SPEAKER2[TURN(S):OFFENSEREITTERATION]. Lisa then reiterates her apology and Kevin also comes in by acknowledging that they should not have done that by saying “He didn’t know it hurt until we reacted,” labeled as A.SPEAKER3[TURN:EXPLANATION].

The next instance to be discussed contained even more elaborated interactions, with the apology spanning over even more turns and other non-apology turns overlapping or interceding in the construction. In the [A.SPEAKER1[TURN(S):EXPLANATION] O.SPEAKER2[TURN(S):RESPONSIBILITYRELIEF] A.SPEAKER3[*really sorry*]] possible construction, instead of reiterating the offense, the person being apologized to relieves the responsibility of the person apologizing. This potential construction is exemplified in (80).

(80)
BABY: &=COUGHING .
KEVIN: Oh...
MARIE: Don't freak out.
LISA: Are you okay?
KEVIN: **Cause I tickled his feet** .
KEVIN: **It's all my fault**.
LISA: Give him a drink .
MARIE: **It's he drinks too fast.**
MARIE**:** **It just went down the wrong pipe .**
BABY: &=COUGHING .
KEVIN: You need to burp?
BABY: &=CRY &=CRY.
KEVIN: It wasn't that bad.
LISA: Oh:
really sorry.
(SBCSAE, SBC036 Judgmental on People)

The example is taken from the same interaction as (79). This time, Kevin tickles the baby’s feet while he is drinking, and the baby starts coughing. Kevin apologizes by acknowledging responsibility for the baby’s coughing by stating “Cause I tickled his feet. It's all my fault,” which represents the first turn of the [A.SPEAKER1[TURN(S):EXPLANATION]

segment of the construction. However, the baby's mother doesn't think that it was Kevin's fault, and she states that "It's he drinks too fast. It just went down the wrong pipe." This turn was labeled as $^{O.SPEAKER2}$[TURN(S):RESPONSIBILITYRELIEF]. Nonetheless, in the end of the interaction, because the baby starts crying, Lisa apologizes as well, stating "really sorry," which is the last segment of the construction, namely $^{A.SPEAKER3}$[*really sorry*].

Finally, the last instance of a co-constructed apology was expressed by the potential construction [$^{A.SPEAKER1}$[*Excuse us*] $^{A.SPEAKER2}$[*Excuse us* TURN] $^{A.SPEAKER1}$[TURN]]. In this construction the fact that both speakers apologizing share the offense was made clear by the choice of the explicit apology expression "excuse us," as can be seen in (81).

(81) COURIC: Wow. Is this actual cashmere or just a blend?
Ms-GORDON: No, this is pure cashmere. And these start at about $ 98 and up.
COURIC: Which, for cashmere, is pretty good.
Ms-GORDON: Yes. And it's excellent, excellent quality.
COURIC: OK.
Ms-GORDON: And the other thing that we're seeing are the wool accents in the shoes and the handbags, and we're seeing sleeker totes.
COURIC: **Excuse us.**
Ms-GORDON: **Excuse us, ladies.**
COURIC: **We're purse-snatching here.**
(COCA, NBC_Today, JUDY GORDON, BEFORE & AFTER, DISCUSSES FALL FASHIONS)

In Example (81), the host of "NBC Today," and a guest are talking about fall fashion, more specifically about some handbags that are being presented on the show. They both apologize for taking the purses from the ladies who are holding them on the set. Thus, this time the apology is co-constructed by Ms. Couric and Ms. Gordon. However, unlike in the previous examples of co-constructed apologies, the persons being apologized to do not participate in the interaction, and therefore there is no negotiation.

The reason for this is, however, specific to the context in which the apology occurs, as the persons being apologized to do not have microphones, as they are only helping out on the set. Moreover, the situation in which the apology occurs is staged, and the apology is intentional for a marketing purpose and is meant to be humorous. Therefore, there seems to be a difference between the two spoken corpora insofar as the use of co-constructed apologies are concerned. These types of apologies occur more naturally in the SBCSAE corpus, as it contains conversations among friends and relatives, than in the COCA corpus, which contains transcripts of media discourse.

To summarize, as we have seen in the examples above, a category of apologies not reported by previous studies on apologies exists. More than one participant in an interaction can contribute to the apology, in which case the apology is co-constructed. The turns of all the participants contribute to the meaning of the apology, which justifies the extension of the constructions used to construe these apologies to the discourse level. Though there were not enough examples to justify the existence of the constructions used in the "Co-constructed apologies" category, we have suggested possible constructions. However, the interactions themselves reveal important factors related to how different forms and functions of apologies are used. Negotiation seems to be an important factor in deciding both the specific form used to apologize and the function of the apology. Furthermore, the forms used to express such apologies are highly dynamic, as they need to conform to the local constraints of the interaction.

4.2.5. Summary

We have so far discussed the different constructions used to construe apologies in spoken discourse in English. Some of the categories of apologies presented could be

placed on a continuum, as they represented different degrees of acknowledging or denying responsibility. Moreover, a continuum seems to exist inside each of the three categories of "Acknowledging responsibility," "Denying responsibility," and "Providing an explanation." We have shown that it was the choice of construction that decided the place of the apology on the responsibility continuum. Furthermore, the category of "Standalone apologies" was mostly used in the data to express apologies for behavior-related offenses, and the circumstances in which these offenses occurred did not require any elaboration on the part of the person apologizing. Two other categories, "Repair apologies" and "Interruption apologies" formed the group of apologies functioning at the discourse level, in constructions that seem to be highly conventionalized for this specific purpose. These two categories and that of "Co-constructed apologies" represent types of apologies that had not been reported by previous studies on apologies. Nevertheless, by analyzing the examples in these categories, it seems clear that the existence of these apologies is expected if we consider the highly interactive nature of spoken discourse.

Some of the categories described in this section on apologies in spoken discourse were specific to spoken discourse, whereas other categories were also found in written discourse. The following section will discuss the categories found in the written corpus. The findings in that corpus will also be compared to those of the spoken corpora.

4.3. Apologies in Written Discourse

As mentioned in the review of literature, studies on apologies have focused on the use of this speech act in spoken discourse. One of the aims of the present study was to investigate the use of apologies in written discourse and compare them to their use in spoken language.

The analysis of the written corpus data yielded 40 instances in which the explicit apology lexemes were used as part of an apology; the other 106 instances were not part of an apology. As already mentioned before, one of the reasons apologies in spoken discourse and those in written discourse are discussed separately in the present study is that the forms and functions of the apologies used in the two types of discourse are different.

As we have seen in our discussion of apologies in the literature review section (see 2.1), apologies occur in situations when a person's behavior offends another person. This definition implies some sort of an interaction between the person apologizing and the one offended. Such an interaction was present in all the examples of apologies occurring in spoken discourse that we have discussed (see 4.2). The question when discussing apologies in written discourse is whether there is interaction in this type of discourse, as well. The analysis of the apologies in the written corpus yielded an interesting finding in this respect. Not only is there interaction in written discourse, but there are different types of interactions. Most of the apologies in the corpus were quotations of spoken language reported in writing. The quoted apologies were uttered by somebody else, not by the author of the written piece, and originally occurred in interactions. Since these apologies were quoted in writing, we have called the type of interaction in which such apologies occurred quoted interaction. An example of such an apology is given in (82).

(82) I'M A REALTOR IN BOULDER, AND A COUPLE of years ago I had a buyer in from out of town. We did the usual thing--drove around, looked at 10 or 12 homes--and made plans to see more the following day. Well, he called the next morning and told me that he had borrowed a cruiser bike from his hotel, ridden through a nearby neighborhood and met a guy who was interested in selling his house.

"**Sorry, Matt**," he said. "I bought a home last night." I'm a triathlete, and I like to preview houses for sale by bike.
(COCA, Fortune, Bike Sale)

In this particular example, the author of the editorial is recounting one of his experiences as a realtor. The apology that is being quoted here was produced by one of his possible buyers, who apologized for having bought a house from somebody else. The apology is a quote reproduced from a telephone conversation.

Besides these cases of quoted interaction, in 5 cases the author was addressing the reader of the piece directly, that is the audience, which is characteristic of written discourse. We have called these cases written interactions. An example of an apology for a self-repair addressed directly to the reader is given in (83).

(83) The Live the Spirit hoopla. The Up Interviewing and the Happiness Barometer group and the High Teas. The fact that Rosenbluth would send crayons to his **employees** -- **sorry, associates** -- and ask them to draw a picture of the company.
(COCA, Inc., Many happy returns)

In Example (83), the author is addressing the readers and apologizes for a self-repair in which he provided an incorrect term on purpose in order to highlight the fact that Rosenbluth considers the people that work for him associates, and not employees. The purpose of this apology is to highlight the author's opinion on the topic about which he is writing.

Finally, the remaining 9 cases contained a fictive interaction with a third party, different from the reader, as in (84).

(84) In 1995 Emmerson bought Fibreboard's timberland and sawmills for $240 million. # Until this year Ray and Red had something else in common: They managed to stay off the radar screens of The Forbes Four Hundred reporters. "We got together about two years ago and joked that you'd missed us," laughs Red. **Sorry, Mr. Emmerson**. There 's no place to hide
(COCA, Forbes, What the spotted owl did for Red Emmerson)

This example is a fictive interaction, similar to Example (9) about the U2 singer Bono discussed in section 4.1.2 on the distinction between IFIDs and fictive apologies. Thus, the interaction between the author and Mr. Emmerson in (84) is fictive. It does not happen in reality, as Red's (Emmerson) quoted statement occurred in the past, before the article in (84) was written. The interaction can only occur in a blended space, which has the following input spaces: the one in which Red Emmerson states that "We got together about two years ago and joked that you'd missed us" and the one of the author writing the editorial. The apology is an emerging structure in the blended space, and is a fictive apology made to emphasize the point made by the author.

Therefore, apologies in written discourse can occur in three different types of interaction: written, fictive, and quoted. Table 26 summarizes the characteristics of each type as they related to apologies.

Table 26

Characteristics of Different Types of Interaction in Written Discourse

	Type of Interaction		
	Written	Fictive	Quoted
Is the interaction real?	Yes	No	Yes
Is the offense real?	Yes	No	Yes
Is the apology real?	Yes	No	Yes
Who is apologizing?	The author	The author or a third party	A third party
Who receives the apology?	The reader	A third party	A third party

The main differences between fictive interaction and the other two types is that in fictive interaction the interaction itself, the offense, and the apology are not real, they all occur in the blended space that is created by the author. While in both written and fictive interaction the person apologizing can be the author of the written piece, the person to whom the apology is addressed is different in the two types: the reader in written interaction and a third party different from the reader in fictive interaction. Finally, in quoted interaction both the person apologizing and the person who receives the apology are third parties, different from both the author and the reader.

Not all categories of apologies present in the written corpus were present in all three types of interaction. The distribution of the categories across the three types of interaction is given in Table 27.

Table 27

Distribution of Apology Categories in Written, Fictive, and Quoted Interaction in the Written English Corpus

	Occurrences							
Category	Written Interaction		Fictive Interaction		Quoted Interaction		Total	
Providing an explanation	—		—		15	57.69%	15	37.50%
Fictive apologies	—		9	100.00%	—		9	22.50%
Standalone apologies	—		—		8	30.77%	8	20.00%
Repair apologies	4	80.00%	—		—		4	10.00%
Denying responsibility	—		—		2	7.69%	2	5.00%
Acknowledging responsibility	1	20.00%	—		1	3.85%	2	5.00%
Total	5	100.00%	9	100.00%	26	100.00%	40	100.00%

As can be seen in Table 27, only apologies from two categories were used in written interaction, namely “Acknowledging responsibility” accounting for 20.00%, and “Repair apologies,” accounting for 80.00%. All instances of apologies in fictive interaction situations were from the same category, “Fictive apologies.” Insofar as apology categories used in quoted interaction are concerned, all but two categories used in the overall written corpus were present. The categories that were absent from quoted interaction were “Fictive apologies” and “Repair apologies.” The most often used category in quoted interaction was by far “Providing an explanation,” which accounted for 57.69% of the apologies. “Standalone apologies” was the second most frequent category, with 30.77%, followed by “Denying responsibility,” and “Acknowledging responsibility,” both with 5.00%. Considering these differences in the categories used, apologies occurring in the three types of interaction will be discussed separately next.

4.3.1. Apologies in Written Interaction

As already mentioned, only 5 of the 40 instances of apologies in the written corpus were used in written interaction. These instances belonged to only two categories of apologies. We will discuss each category next.

4.3.1.1. Repair Apologies

Table 27 shows that the most often used apology category in written interaction was “Repair apologies.” The use of such apologies may seem surprising, as repairs and self-repairs are inherent to spoken, interactive discourse when errors can occur due to the fact that utterances are produced online (see our discussion of repair and self-repair in spoken discourse in section 4.2.3.1). Unlike spoken discourse, written discourse allows

the opportunity for the author to revise and edit the information, which would preclude the need for self-repairs. Moreover, due to the fact that written discourse is not interactive in the same way as spoken discourse is, there is no other participant to perform repairs originated by somebody other than the author. We have already seen that some instances of apologies in the written corpus mirror characteristics of spoken discourse, and that written discourse allows the author to simulate interactions with the reader or a third party. However, this would only partially explain the existence of repairs, as the possibility to revise would still preclude the need. The only possible explanation would then be the fact that the author intended to provide incorrect information and then correct it to prove a point or for a certain stylistic effect. This can be seen in Example (85).

(85) The implicit message: There are no traps and no surprises. The first two regularly scheduled maintenances of your car are free. While you're waiting for the work to be done, you can use an office with a desk and a phone. Or you can stand in the customer viewing room and watch the **mechanic -- sorry, the service technician** -- attend to your car in a brightly lit garage that seems devoid of grease. If you need to be someplace, the dealer will lend you a car or give you a ride. (COCA, Fortune, Service is everybody's business)

In (85), the author of an editorial in "Fortune" discusses how regularly scheduled maintenance takes place, and how garages that service cars have changed lately. In his discussion, the author uses the term "mechanic" and then apologizes for its use, and performs a self-repair by providing the preferred term, "the service technician." Thus, the self-repair is performed on purpose, in order to give an added effect to the editorial, the author being ironic towards the use of the new term "service technician."

All four instances of self-repair apologies function this way, by expressing irony towards the use of a certain term. All four instances represent self-repairs; no repair initiated by a participant other than the author is present in the written corpus, which

makes sense due to the lack of interaction in written discourse. Repair apologies in the written corpus also function at the discourse level, just as they did in spoken discourse. However, unlike in spoken discourse, where repairs were involuntary and due to the online nature of the interaction, repairs in written discourse were intentional. Finally, repair apologies appeared only in written interaction, and not in fictive or quoted interaction.

Insofar as the constructions used to express repair apologies in written interaction are concerned, only one construction occurred enough times in the corpus to justify its existence. This construction is given in Table 28. One other possible construction had only one occurrence.

Table 28

Construction Used to Construe Repair Apologies in Written Interaction in the Written English Corpus

Construction	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (per million words)
[NP *sorry* NP]	3	0.56

The construction in Table 28 was not used to express apologies in the spoken corpora, and therefore it seems to be specific to the written one. The closest construction used in spoken discourse was [NP *I'm sorry* NP], which seems slightly more formal (see Table 22 for the constructions used to express repair in the spoken corpora). The use of only *sorry*, and the lack of what we have seen in spoken discourse as more formal uses of the lexemes *excuse*, *apologize*, *forgive* seems to be due to the ironic nature of the construction in the situations in the written discourse.

We have seen in our analysis of repair apologies in spoken discourse that the correct information can occur either before or after the explicit lexeme of apology. The two patterns of use were "Incorrect/Incomplete Information"– "Explicit expression of apology" – "Corrected information" and "Incorrect/Incomplete Information"– "Corrected information" – "Explicit expression of apology" (see 4.2.3.1). However, the apologies used in the written corpus only followed the first pattern, in which the corrected information is given after the explicit expression of apology. This supports the claim that the use of repair apologies is intentional, as the focus here is not on the correct term, but rather on the contrast between the two terms. This use is also supported by the fact that the contrast between incorrect and correct information is expressed in the construction by the use of noun phrases only, and not of more elaborate utterances as was the case in the spoken corpus. The irony towards what is considered the new versus the old term is therefore being made clearer than if full sentences were used.

As can be seen in Table 28, the preferred construction for repair apologies in written interaction seems to be [NP *sorry* NP]. This is the construction that was used in the example discussed in (85). Another example is given in (86).

(86) Ice therapy may seem a little subtle, but we're trying to accomplish a pain-relieving situation, " he said, adding that one session wouldn't keep the pain away for long. There were more **masseurs -- sorry, massage therapists** -- to submit to. Next up was Peter Coulianos and Trigger Point, a form of neuro-muscular therapy.
(COCA, Fortune, Stressbusters)

The intended effect in (86) is the same as that in (85), namely to ironically contrast the use of a new term versus an old one. Thus, in the construction [NP *sorry* NP], the first NP is "masseurs" and the second one "message therapists."

The use of the "Repair apologies" category in written discourse differs from that in the spoken discourse. First, the error is unintentional in spoken discourse and intentional in the written one. This difference in use is also mirrored in the use of different constructions, which also supports the construction grammar theory that a construction is a pairing of form and meaning.

4.3.1.2. Acknowledging Responsibility

In our analysis of spoken discourse we have found that there is a continuum in terms of the responsibility assumed by the person apologizing, having the category "Acknowledging responsibility" at the one extreme end, "Denying responsibility" at the other end, and "Providing an explanation" somewhere in between the two. In the written interaction situations in the written corpus, only one of the three categories was present, namely "Acknowledging responsibility," with only one occurrence. It is not possible to determine whether a responsibility continuum exists in written interaction. Consequently, we will treat this one occurrence only as an instance of the "Acknowledging responsibility" category. Unfortunately, the single apology in this category does not justify the existence of a construction, either. However, if there were enough instances, the construction used could potentially be [*so excuse me for* GERUND-CLAUSE]. An example is given in (87).

(87) Having been to Tokyo, Singapore, and Paris in the space of 48 hours, I am a bit behind. Also, my book due date of 9/1 is coming fast, and the book seems to require total rewriting in places. I thought it was going to be a cut-and-paste job of Wired stories, but it is a very different affair. **So excuse me for being late and brief**. # Let me see if I can explain. No research is determined by the researchers' ability to raise funds.
(COCA, Inc., E-mail with...)

In Example (87), the author of the column is answering emails received from the readers. The construction [*so excuse me for* GERUND-CLAUSE] is used to apologize for being late and brief in answering the messages. The gerund clause that follows the explicit expression of apology "excuse me" represents the acknowledgement of responsibility: "being late and brief."

Constructions containing gerund clauses were also found to express apologies acknowledging responsibility in the spoken corpora. However, the explicit expression of apology "excuse me" was not used in those constructions (see Table 16 in section 4.2.1.1 for the constructions used to express apologies in this category in the spoken corpora). However, if the [*so excuse me for* GERUND-CLAUSE] construction did exist, it would appear to function similarly to the constructions containing gerund clauses found in the spoken corpora. This function makes the use of apologies in the "Acknowledging responsibility" category in written interaction similar to apologies in the same category in spoken discourse.

4.3.1.3. Summary

We have so far discussed the use of apologies in written interaction. Only two apology categories were present, namely "Repair apologies" and "Acknowledging responsibility." As the examples have shown, some constructions used to express apologies in written interaction, namely those in the "Repair apologies" category, were different than the ones used in spoken discourse. However, the possible construction used in the "Acknowledge responsibility" category was similar to constructions used to express apologies in this category in spoken discourse. The following section will discuss the use of apologies in the second type of interaction, namely fictive interaction.

4.3.2. Apologies in Fictive Interaction

The second type of interaction in which apologies occurred in the written corpus was fictive interaction. As discussed before, in this type of interaction both the offense and the apology are fictive, and they occur in a blended space (see our discussion of blending in section 2.2.4). Since such apologies have not been reported in previous research on apologies, we have created a new category, “Fictive apologies.” All the apologies occurring in fictive interaction belonged to the “Fictive apologies” category.

Insofar as the constructions used to express fictive apologies, there were two constructions occurring at least twice in the corpus. These are given in Table 29.

Table 29

Constructions Used to Construe Fictive Apologies in the Written English Corpus

Construction	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (per million words)
[*sorry* NAME]	5	0.93
[(*I'm*) *sorry we* VP]	2	0.37

Two other apologies were expressed by two other possible constructions, namely [*forgive us* NAME] and [*forgive us for* GERUND-CLAUSE]. Due to the fact that they each had only one occurrence in the corpus, they were not considered for analysis. An example of the use of the [*sorry* NAME] construction is given in (88).

(88) After they've seen Apple, how do they feel looking at a drugstore or the jeans section in a department store? " Other companies are asking themselves the same question. Saturn's car showrooms, general manager Jill Lajkziak told the Detroit News last spring, would have a "more contemporary, more interactive look and feel -- like an Apple Store." And several doors down from the Apple Store in the Palisades

> Center mall in West Nyack, N.Y., is a COMING SOON sign with another familiar name. It's one of two stores Dell is experimenting with. **Sorry**, **Michael**: Here's Why Dell Stores... oh, never mind. (COCA, Fortune, Simply Irresistible)

In Example (88), the author discusses how Apple has become a model for other businesses. The author mentions that after Apple opened a store in Palisades Center mall in West Nyack, N.Y., Dell was aiming at opening a Dell Store close by. However, the author does not believe that the Dell Store will have the same success as the Apple store, and only hints at this by stating "Here's why Dell Stores… oh, never mind." Before, however, he apologizes to Michael Dell, the founder of Dell, for implying that the stores will not work. The construction used is formed by the explicit apology lexeme *sorry* followed by a name. This is another example of fictive interaction which occurs in a blended space. One of the input spaces contains the Dell corporation opening stores in New York, and the other one contains the author of the editorial claiming that the new stores will not be effective. The apology emerges in this blended space. The fragment in (88) is a good example of how different roles in the input spaces are mapped in the blended space. Not all the roles associated with Dell the company are brought into the blended space, but only that of Michael Dell, the founder of the company. The links of the roles from the blended space to the originating input space are needed in order to understand the interaction in the blend. Had we not known that Michael Dell is the founder of Dell, the blended space in which the apology occurs would not make sense, nor would we be able to understand the apology as fictive interaction. This link is why the proper name following *sorry* is part of the [*sorry* NAME] construction, as it specifies to whom the apology is directed.

The [*sorry* NAME] construction seems specific to fictive interactions, as it was not present in spoken discourse. The use of a construction specialized to fictive interaction supports the idea that, even though the apology occurred in some kind of interaction, and in a context that is meant to reflect spoken discourse, fictive apologies nevertheless function differently from apologies used in spoken discourse.

The second most frequent construction in this category, [(*I'm*) *sorry we* VP], is very similar to the most frequent construction used to acknowledge responsibility in the spoken corpus, namely [*I'm sorry I* VP] (see 4.2.1.1). The differences are that in the written corpus "I'm" is an optional element, and the subject of the VP is "we" instead of "I." Also, "I'm" was present in some instances, and not in other ones, but this does not seem to change the meaning of the construction, either. Consequently, we believe that these are variations of the same construction, as they all have the same meaning. An example of this construction is given in (89).

(89) Despite the victory, Kay remains angry. Seated in the $75,000 "cracker box" townhouse where she lives alone now, she said, "I had to prove we were not guilty in court before anyone would listen to me. Who else besides the IRS can say you're guilty, and that's it? What gives them all the rights, and I have none? Somebody should be held accountable. At the least, IRS Commissioner Fred Goldberg should have apologized to me: '**I'm sorry. We made a mistake**.'"
(COCA, Money, Horribly out of control)

In Example (89), "I'm sorry. We made a mistake" is a fictive apology that the IRS should have made to Kay. However, since neither the apology, nor the interaction in which the IRS would apologize happened, this is another case of fictive interaction taking place in a blended hypothetical space in which the IRS is accountable.

In summary, our discussion of fictive apologies has shown that this type of apology functions differently than apologies in spoken discourse do. One of the

characteristics of this use was the collocation with a proper name, which clearly distinguished the apologies from those used in written interaction, as they were addressed to a third party rather than to the reader. The last type of interaction in written discourse, namely quoted interaction, will be discussed next.

4.3.3. Apologies in Quoted Interaction

The remaining 26 apologies in the written corpus were categorized as occurring in quoted interaction. As was the case with the other two types of interaction, not all categories were present in quoted interaction either. As shown in Table 27, only four of the seven categories found in spoken language were present, namely "Providing an explanation," "Standalone apologies," "Acknowledging responsibility," and "Denying responsibility." The last three in the list were also present in written interaction, whereas the only category present in written interaction and not present in quoted interaction was "Repair apologies." Each of these categories will be discussed separately next.

4.3.3.1. The Responsibility Continuum

Unlike in the case of written interaction, all three categories of the responsibility continuum are present in quoted interaction situations. The most frequent one was "Providing an explanation," followed by "Denying responsibility" and "Acknowledging responsibility." We will start our discussion with one of the extreme ends of the continuum, namely "Acknowledging responsibility." Since there was only one instance of this category, we cannot justify the existence of a construction. However, had there been enough occurrences, the construction might be [*forgive our* NP *but* CLAUSE]. The apology is given in (90).

(90) ROSENBLUTH: Frankly, we don't believe our customers can come first unless our associates come first. If we have happy people here, then they're free to concentrate only on our clients.
INC.: The magic word again. **Forgive our skepticism, but no one is happy all the time**, least of all in a company with 2,350 people. How do you know when something's beginning to go away?
ROSENBLUTH: Six months ago I sent white construction paper and a pack of crayons to 100 associates and asked them to draw a picture of what the company meant to them. I got back 54. About 5 of them weren't too pleasing -- one in particular.
(COCA, Inc., Many happy returns)

The fragment in (90) is taken from an interview in "Inc." magazine with a travel agency CEO. Though this appeared in written form in the magazine, it is a transcript of an oral interaction, and therefore we considered it to occur in quoted interaction. The author apologizes for being skeptical in the question she is going to ask by using the explicit apology "forgive," and acknowledges her skepticism in the noun phrase following the explicit expression of apology, that is "our skepticism." The use of the plural possessive "our" suggests that she is apologizing in the name of the publication, rather than in her personal name. The construction also contains a clause introduced by *but*, which is an explanation for the offense: "but no one is happy all the time." Thus, we are dealing with a cataphoric apology. This construction is very similar to one used in spoken discourse, namely [*forgive me this but* CLAUSE] (see 4.2.1.1), in which the acknowledgment was expressed in the pro-from *this* and was followed by the offense in a clause introduce by *but*. This similarity is not unexpected, considering that the fragment is from an interview.

The category at the other end of the responsibility continuum, “Denying responsibility,” was also present in quoted interaction. There was only one construction used in the written corpus. Its absolute and relative frequencies are given in Table 30.

Table 30

Construction Used to Deny Responsibility in Quoted Interaction in the Written English Corpus

Construction	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (per million words)
[*I’m sorry I can’t* VERB-INF (OBJ)]	2	0.37

The construction in Table 30 is also very similar to one used to deny responsibility in the spoken corpora, namely [*I'm sorry* SUBJ *have to/can’t/could not* VERB-INF OBJ]. The differences are that in the written corpus none of the instances contained *but*, and the object at the end of the construction was optional. However, just as with the [(*I'm*) *sorry we* VP] discussed in the case of the category “Acknowledging responsibility,” we believe that these are actually variations of the same construction. An example of the [*I’m sorry I can’t* VERB-INF (OBJ)] construction is given in (91).

(91) If there was a sour note in last month's Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit in Casablanca, Morocco it was the absence from this unprecedented mingling of Arab and Israeli business people of Hasib Sabbagh. “I said, **I'm sorry I can't go**," he says between sips of cardamom-flavored Turkish coffee. I'll attend when peace treaties have been signed with all Arab countries.'
(COCA, Forbes, "I'm friendly with all")

This example is similar to the one already discussed in (17). The speaker in Example (91) is quoted in the magazine “Forbes” as apologizing, and denying responsibility for not being able to attend. The use of the sentence “I can’t go” suggests

that circumstances that are out of his control prevent him from going. These circumstances are given by the speaker in a later sentence, namely “I'll attend when peace treaties have been signed with all Arab countries.” Thus, the speaker denies responsibility for not going to the Middle East/North Africa Economic Summit in Casablanca, and blames this on the fact that peace treaties had not been signed with all Arab countries.

Finally, the last category of apologies belonging to the responsibility continuum is “Providing an explanation.” This was the most frequently used category in quoted interaction in the written corpus. It was also the category with the most variety in terms of the constructions used to express apologies. These constructions are shown in Table 31.

Table 31

Constructions Used to Provide an Explanation in Quoted Interaction in the Written English Corpus

Construction	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (per million words)
[(*I’m*) *sorry* UTTERANCE]	7	1.3
[(*I’m*) *sorry but* CLAUSE]	5	0.93

Besides the two constructions in Table 31, three other apologies were expressed by three potential constructions that did not have enough instances in the corpus to justify their existence as constructions. Compared to constructions providing an explanation in the spoken corpora, [(*I'm*) *sorry* UTTERANCE] was also used in spoken discourse, whereas [(*I’m*) *sorry but* CLAUSE] was only used in written discourse. Also, insofar as the explicit apology lexemes are concerned, only *sorry* was used to construe apologies providing an

explanation in the written section, whereas *forgive* and *excuse* were also used in spoken discourse.

The most frequent construction in Table 31 was [(*I'm*) *sorry* UTTERANCE]. An example is given in (92).

(92) "The inheritor of money usually has serious doubts about this business of replenishing the source," explains Nelson W. Aldrich Jr., author of numerous books on the upper classes. He tells the story of a Boston woman, who went to tea at the home of one of the old Brahmins. The house was filled with fabulous objects, although, curiously, there were no rugs on the floor. When the guest asked her hostess why, the lady replied, "**I'm sorry, we have no rugs; I never inherited any**."
(COCA, Forbes, The Titans of Tightwad. (cover story))

In Example (92), the quoted apology is uttered by a hostess, who is apologizing to her guest for not having rugs on the floor. She uses the explicit apology "I'm sorry" followed by an explanation, namely "I'm sorry, we have no rugs; I never inherited any." As can be seen in the example, the quoted apology is from a spoken interaction, which can account for the reason the same construction is used both in written and spoken discourse.

While in (92), the construction expressed an anaphoric apology, the second construction in this category, [(*I'm*) *sorry but* CLAUSE], expressed a cataphoric one. This use is consistent not only with the similar constructions used in spoken discourse (see the discussion in section 4.2.1.3), but with all the constructions containing the conjunction *but.* An example of this construction is given in (93).

(93) Ironically, government now thumps out so much obfuscatory paperwork that presidential libraries both hide and entomb memory more protectively than the pyramids did. I remember the day I discovered this, shortly after the Ronald Reagan Library opened its doors under the aegis of the National Archives. The first slip I filed was for the President's personal papers. " **I'm sorry, but those items are not available to researchers**," said the archivist on duty
(COCA, Forbes, WHEN'S YOUR BOOK COMING OUT?)

In (93), the author recounts a conversation he had at the Ronald Reagan Library. The archivist apologizes for denying the author access to the President's personal papers, and provides an explanation in the clause following *but*: "but those items are not available to researchers." The apology is a cataphoric one as there is no explicit denial of access, rather the explanation for the denial stands for an implicit denial. And this denial comes after the explicit expression of apology.

In summary, the choice of construction for the apologies in the three categories "Acknowledging responsibility," "Providing an explanation," and "Denying responsibility" contributed to placing the apology on the responsibility continuum as it was the case in spoken discourse and written interaction in written discourse. Some constructions that occurred in quoted situations in the written corpus were also present in the spoken corpora, whereas other constructions were specific to written discourse. The complete picture of the position on the responsibility continuum of all the constructions in this category used in both spoken and written discourse is given in Figure 8. Only those constructions occurring at least twice in the corpus are included in the graphical representation.

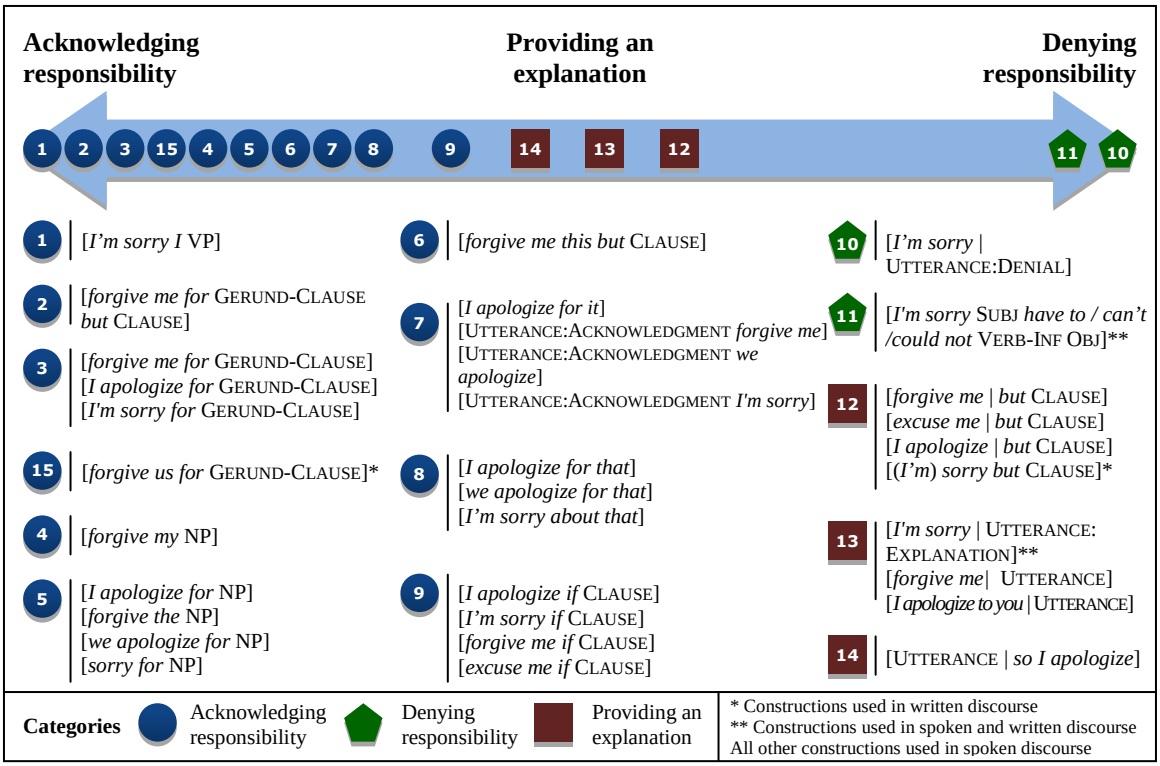

Figure 8. The placement of constructions on the responsibility continuum in spoken and written English discourse

4.3.3.2. Standalone Apologies

The last category of apologies that was used in quoted interaction in the written corpus was "Standalone apologies." The only explicit apology lexeme that was used in this category in quoted interaction was *sorry*. The lexeme was present in two constructions, which are given in Table 32.

Table 32

Constructions Used to Construe Standalone Apologies in Quoted Interaction in the Written English Corpus

Construction	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (per million words)
[*sorry*]	5	0.93
[*I'm sorry*]	3	0.56

The more frequent of the two constructions was [*sorry*]. This construction was also used in written interaction (see Table 29). As we have discussed in 4.3.1.1, this construction functioned differently in written interaction in the written corpus than in the spoken corpus, in that it was intended to mend speaking offenses in the first case, and mostly mistakes and accidents in the latter. In quoted interaction, the construction functioned similarly to those in the written interaction situations, as can be seen in Example (94).

(94) P.J.." It's the most popular wine in America. " # C.B.: " No. " # P.j.: " Says so right on the box. " # C.B.: " I'm having trouble with this nose. " # P.J.: " Mine's been broken three... # C.B.: " You said that. " # P.J.: " **Sorry**. " # C.B.: " Aggressively unpleasant. "
(COCA, Forbes, Blind (Drunk) Wine Tasting)

The fragment in (94) is the reconstruction of a conversation at a wine tasting. One of the participants, P.J. says "Mine's been broken three…," and C.B. points it out that he had already said that. Consequently, P.J. apologizes for the repetition of the joke by using the standalone apology "sorry."

In our discussion of apologies in spoken discourse, we have seen that the constructions [*sorry*] and [*I'm sorry*] had different functions. These two constructions also have different functions in quoted interaction, as well, which once again justifies the

fact that they are two distinct constructions. Thus, [*I'm sorry*] also functions differently than it did in the spoken corpus. Whereas in spoken discourse it was used to mend hearing offenses, discourse offenses pointed out indirectly by a participant in the interaction, and breaches of expectations, in quoted interaction in the written discourse it is used to mend behavior offenses, as can be seen in (95).

(95) Sexuality's been tied into fashion since Paris in the 1600s-I'm writing a position paper about this now. There were drawings of women in corsets hundreds of years before the telephone. But now there's this sex phobia. It's a waste of time -- just a second, **I'm sorry**. " # Holding again. # " People are the cash registers
(COCA, Inc., Dov Charney, Like it or Not)

The fragment is taken from an interview with a CEO. During the interview, the CEO was constantly distracted and had to do something else that interrupted the interview. This is the case in (95), where the CEO is quoted to apologize using the standalone apology "I'm sorry" for interrupting the interview. The use of the [*I'm sorry*] construction is similar to that in spoken discourse (see section 4.2.2), which once again suggests that apologies in quoted interaction are used similarly to those in spoken discourse.

To summarize this section on apologies in quoted interaction, some of the constructions used were similar to those in spoken discourse, whereas other constructions were specific to this type of situation. The similarity with spoken discourse may stem from the fact that the apologies were quoted from mostly spoken interactions.

4.3.4. Summary

This section on apologies in written discourse has shown that apologies do exist in this medium, as well. We have proposed a three-fold distinction between written,

fictive, and quoted interaction, as apologies in each of these types functioned differently. Insofar as the comparison between written and spoken apologies is concerned, some categories of apologies were present in both types of discourse, whereas others were only found in one or the other. This could be seen in Table 14, which we reiterate in Table 33.

Table 33

Frequency of Apology Categories in the English Analysis Corpora

	Occurrences			
Category	Spoken		Written	
Acknowledging responsibility	55	26.44%	2	5.00%
Repair apologies	40	19.23%	4	10.00%
Standalone apologies	39	18.75%	8	20.00%
Interruption apologies	39	18.75%	—	
Providing an explanation	25	12.02%	15	37.50%
Fictive apologies	—		9	22.50%
Denying responsibility	6	2.88%	2	5.00%
Co-constructed apologies	4	1.92%	—	
Total	208	100.00%	40	100.00%

As can be seen in Table 33, there were two categories of apologies present in the spoken corpus that were not present in the written one. These were “Interruption apologies” and “Co-constructed apologies.” However, this absence makes perfect sense considering that these two categories require an interactive medium of communication, which is not present in written discourse. What is surprising at first sight is the use of repair apologies in the written corpus, which is also a category that is inherent to spoken

discourse. However, the instances of this category in the written corpus were in quoted interaction, which justifies their presence. On the other hand, “Fictive apologies” occurred only in the written corpus, as this category was specific to the type of fictive interaction in which they occurred in the written discourse. Also, whereas in the spoken corpus the use of the apologies was rather varied, the apologies being relatively homogeneously divided across five of the seven categories, in the written corpus the use of apologies was mostly clustered around only three categories.

4.4. Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to answer the first research question of the present study, that is what constructions are used to express explicit apologies in English. The first issue that arose when analyzing the data was that taxonomies of apologies established in previous studies were not accurate enough to describe the data in the corpora. The most problematic category was that of the Illocutionary Force Indicating Device (IFID). Because of the corpus methodology used, all the apologies in the present study contained an explicit expression of apology (labeled as IFID by previous studies). However, a closer analysis in the context of the larger discourse in which apologies in the traditional IFID category occurred resulted in the recategorization of most these apologies, as additional information was provided in the discourse allowing for a more precise categorization in one of the other categories. Consequently, only those lexical items standing alone in the apology were considered in the renamed category “Standalone apologies.”

One of the most important findings, however, is the existence of four categories of apologies that had not been reported previously, namely “Co-constructed apologies,”

"Fictive apologies," "Repair apologies," and "Interruption apologies." These apologies can only be found by investigating language in interaction, and at the larger discourse level, something that was not possible in studies on apologies that used elicited data.

Moreover, the conceptualization of the existing categories also suffered modification. Thus, the analysis of the corpora has shown that the categories "Acknowledging responsibility," "Providing an explanation," and "Denying responsibility" were not actually the clearly delimited categories that previous studies on apologies had claimed. Rather, they seemed to be part of a continuum of responsibility, with the category "Acknowledging responsibility" at the one extreme end, "Denying responsibility" at the other extreme end, and "Providing an explanation" situated somewhere in between the two. Our analysis of both spoken and written corpora has shown that the choice of the construction contributes to the placement of the apology on the responsibility continuum (see Figure 8 in section 4.3.3.1).

Once the new categorization was established, the use of the apologies in spoken and written discourse was analyzed separately, and the different constructions used to express those apologies were discussed with examples. Some constructions were common to both spoken and written discourse, whereas other constructions were specific to one or the other. In both cases, however, the analysis of the examples has shown that a construction grammar approach allows for a more specific delimitation of apology categories, their use, and their meaning.

Insofar as apologies in spoken discourse are concerned, we have seen that their use depended on several factors, such as the type of offense the apology was mending, but also local constraints that made some constructions more dynamic, as was the case

with co-constructed apologies. Besides the existing types of offenses described in the literature, a new type of offense was identified, namely discourse offenses, that is when a speaker violated the expected rules of discourse.

The analysis of written apologies has also yielded interesting results. We have seen that in fact only a limited number of apologies were produced by the authors of the written discourse themselves. Some of these apologies occurred in the interaction between the writer and the reader, which we have called written interaction. Other apologies occurred in what we have called fictive interaction, the author addressing a third party not actually present in the interaction. Most apologies, however, were actually quoted utterances of speakers apologizing in spoken discourse. Consequently, both the categories of apologies used and the constructions that expressed them had some characteristics common to those in spoken discourse, while other characteristics were specific to written discourse. For example, the constructions occurring in quoted interaction were used similarly to spoken discourse, which is mostly due to the fact that the apologies in this type of interaction were reproduced from actual spoken interaction. On the other hand, constructions in written and fictive interaction were not used in spoken discourse.

The aim of this chapter was to analyze the use of apologies in American English. The following chapter will discuss how apologies in Romanian can be categorized, as well as the constructions used to express those apologies.

5. Apologies in Romanian

The second research question of the present study aimed at finding the constructions used to express explicit apologies in Romanian. Unfortunately, the Romanian corpora, especially the spoken one, were small, and yielded only a small number of apologies. As discussed in the literature review (see section 2.2.1.1), constructions are mostly schematic generalizations, and in order to provide evidence for a generalization, the construction needs to have more than one instance in the corpus. Due to the mentioned small size of the corpus, many categories of apologies displayed only one instance in the corpus, and there was not enough evidence to consider them as constructions. Nonetheless, in most cases, our native speaker intuitions and knowledge of the Romanian language made us believe that they might be part of a construction and that if a larger sample were available, we could analyze their composition. Because little information is available on apologies in Romanian, we believe it is useful to discuss the relationship between their form and meaning, and then speculate about the constructions.

We have also seen in the literature review chapter (see section 2.2.1.3) that Croft (2005) has claimed that there are no universal constructions, each language having its own constructions. We have also seen that contrastive studies on constructions in different languages have claimed that in addition to language specific constructions there are also some characteristics of constructions that exist across languages (Boas, 2010; Gurevich, 2010; Timyam & Bergen, 2010). In line with such claims and findings, we will

investigate the types of constructions that express apologies in Romanian without attempting to give equivalents of these constructions in English. Following the discussion of the Romanian findings, we will compare the use of constructions in the two languages, to see whether there are any cross-linguistic similarities or differences in their use.

Insofar as the apology categories are concerned, we have also seen in the literature review that there are apology categories that are common across languages but also categories that are language specific (see section 2.1.2 on categorizing apologies). Accordingly, we have analyzed the apologies in the Romanian corpora without any assumptions of universality in terms of apology categories. Nonetheless, following the analysis, it became clear that the apologies in Romanian could be classified in the same revised categories of apologies as the ones used for our analysis of the apologies in English. Consequently, we have used the same categories in Romanian, as well.

The analysis of the data resulted in 110 apologies, out of which 11 occurred in the spoken corpus and 99 in the written one. Insofar as the categories of apologies are concerned, Table 34 shows the number of apologies in the spoken and written corpora.

Table 34

Frequency of Apology Categories in the Romanian Corpora

Category	Occurrences	
	Spoken	Written
Acknowledging responsibility	1 9.09%	81 81.82%
Providing an explanation	3 27.27%	12 12.12%
Interruption apologies	4 36.36%	—
Standalone apologies	2 18.18%	1 1.01%
Fictive apologies	—	3 3.03%
Denying responsibility	—	2 2.02%
Repair apologies	1 9.09%	—
Total	11 100.00%	99 100.00%

The small number of apologies in the spoken Romanian corpus prevents us from making a pertinent discussion of the proportions the different categories of apologies had. Insofar as the written corpus is concerned, the most frequent apology category was "Acknowledging responsibility" with 81 occurrences. This category was significantly more frequent than the other categories, accounting for 81.82% of all apologies in the Romanian corpora. The second most frequent category of apologies in the Romanian corpora was "Providing an explanation" with 12 occurrences (12.12%), followed by "Fictive apologies" with 3 (3.03%) and "Denying responsibility" with 2 (2.02%). The last category, "Standalone apologies" had only one occurrence, accounting for 1.01% of the apologies. We will discuss the apologies in spoken and written discourse separately next.

5.1. Apologies in Spoken Discourse

The analysis of the spoken corpus yielded 11 instances in which the explicit apology lexemes were used as part of an apology; another 23 instances were not part of an apology. We will discuss each of the categories of apologies next.

5.1.1. The Responsibility Continuum

As we have seen in our discussion of apology categories (see section 2.1.2), three of the categories, namely "Acknowledging responsibility," "Denying responsibility," and "Providing an explanation," can be part of what we have called the responsibility continuum. The analysis of the Romanian data showed that this continuum can also be applied to Romanian. Insofar as the spoken corpus is concerned, only two of the three categories were present, namely "Acknowledging responsibility" and "Providing an explanation."

We start our discussion of the responsibility continuum with the "Acknowledging responsibility" end. Only one instance of this category was present in the spoken corpus, and it is given in (96). As mentioned in the method section, we are providing both a gloss and a translation for the apology construction, and only the translation for the rest of the context. The abbreviations used in the glosses are listed in Appendix A.

(96) C: doamna mea nu știu cine e domnu băsescu ăsta dă care vorbiți dumneavoastră. Dacă vă referiți la primarul general
'Lady I don't know who this Mr. Băsescu you are talking about is. If you mean the mayor'

E: da da da
'Yes yes yes'

C: e primarul general nu e Ionescu sau Popescu.
'He's the mayor not Ionescu or Popescu'

E: **da da doamnă vă rog să**
yes yes lady you.PL.ACC ask.1ST.SG SUBJPART

mă ier- scuzați.
I.ACC forgive.FRAGM excuse.IMP.2ND.PL.

'Yes, yes, ma'am, please excuse me'
(IONESCU, 59)

Example (96) is a fragment from a radio show. One of the participants, E, mentions the name "Băsescu," who was at the time the mayor of Bucharest. Another participant in the conversation points it out to her that she is talking about the mayor, and therefore she should use the proper title when referring to him, not just his name, as he is not just any other person. This is done in the line "e primarul general nu e Ionescu sau Popescu." ("He's the mayor not Ionescu or Popescu"). Ionescu and Popescu are Romanian last names, and by saying that the mayor is not a mere Ionescu or a Popescu, the speaker means that the mayor is not just any person. This explicit statement of the offense by a participant in the interaction is what prompts the apology. Such a prompt is not discoverable using a DCT. E apologizes by acknowledging responsibility for her speaking offense in the utterance "da da doamnă" ("yes yes ma'am") followed by the explicit expression of apology "vă rog să mă ier- scuzați" ("please for- excuse me").

If the apology in this example, "da da doamnă vă rog să mă ier–scuzați" ("Yes, yes, ma'am, please excuse me") were a construction, we hypothesize that the construction might be [UTTERANCE:ACKNOWLEDGMENT *vă rog să mă scuzați*] ([UTTERANCE:ACKNOWLEDGMENT *you*.PL.ACC *ask*.1ST.SG SUBJPART *I*.ACC *excuse*.IMP.2ND.PL.]). The UTTERANCE segment of the construction contains the actual acknowledgment of responsibility, followed by the explicit expression of apology. The expression of apology itself contains "vă rog" ("please") and "să mă scuzați" ("excuse

me"). In this construction, the acknowledgment is highlighted by the fact that it appears in initial position in the construction. Also, the presence of "vă rog" ("please") makes this construction a formal apology. Finally, Romanian is a highly inflectional language; therefore, verbs have different morpheme endings for person and number. When addressing a person informally, the second person singular form of the verb is used, such as "mă scuzi" (I.acc excuse.IMP.2ND.SG, "excuse me"). In informal situations, the second person plural form of the verb is used, as in (96), which is more polite: "mă scuzați" (I.acc excuse.IMP.2ND.PL, "excuse me"). Thus, in Romanian different levels of formality and politeness are encoded in the form of the construction morphologically, the choice of singular or plural morpheme in the verb determining the level of formality for the entire construction. Such formality is to be expected due to the genre of the corpus in which it appeared, namely transcripts of press briefings. The singular form, on the other hand, is used in informal contexts, among speakers who know each other.

The most frequently used category in the responsibility continuum was "Providing an explanation." Though this category had three instances in the corpus, each apology was expressed using a different form. The first apology to be discussed is given in (97).

(97) B: **a fost o ambuscadă pe şosea şi am întîrziat şefu la şedință mă scuzați.**
have.AUX.3RD.SG be.PASTPART one ambush on road and have.AUX.1ST.SG be-late.PASTPART boss at meeting I.ACC excuse.IMP.2ND.PL

'There was an ambush on the road and I'm late for the meeting boss, excuse me.'

(IONESCU, 58)

In (97), the speaker is late for a meeting and apologizes by first providing an explanation in “a fost o ambuscadă pe şosea” (“There was an ambush on the road”). We have seen in (96) that the statement of the offense by a participant in the interaction other than the person apologizing triggered the apology. This is not the case in (97), as the context is less interactive, and therefore the speaker apologizing needs to state the offense and acknowledge responsibility for being late in “şi am întîrziat şefu la şedință” (“and I’m late for the meeting boss”) and ending with the explicit expression of apology “mă scuzați” (“excuse me”). The use of the plural form for the imperative in the explicit expression of apology makes this construction a formal one.

The apology in (97) if described as a construction could be [UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION *mă scuzați*] ([UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION *I*.ACC *excuse*.IMP.2ND.PL]). The same explicit expression of apology (mă scuzați) is used as in the construction used to express an acknowledgment of responsibility, but without “vă rog” (“please”). This construction also starts with the explanation followed by the expression of apology. In this construction, the explanation is highlighted, which would place it closer to the “Acknowledging responsibility” end of the continuum.

The second apology used to provide an explanation in the spoken Romanian corpus contained the nominal form of the verb “mă scuzați” (I.acc excuse.IMP.2ND.PL, ‘excuse me’), namely “scuze,” for which the best literal gloss would be “pardons.” English most commonly uses two different words for the verb (excuse) and the noun (pardon) in apologies. Though both “excuse” and “pardon” can be used both as nouns or as verbs, they do not have the same usage patterns or connotations. Romanian, however, uses different forms of the same word. The apology is given in (98).

(98) A: sărut mîna Cosmin Burlacu la telefon
'Hello, this is Cosmin Burlacu speaking'

îmi cer mii de scuze dar la
I.DAT ask.1ST.SG thousands of pardons but at

ora la care vă sun adică
hour.DEFART at which you.PL.ACC call.1ST.SG ie

cinci şi jumătate sunt aşteptat la o lucrare
five and half am wait.PASTPART at one job

'I apologize but when I'm calling, ie. five thirty, I am expected at a job.'

(IONESCU, 79)

The example in (98) is the transcript of a recording made on an answering machine. The speaker apologizes for not being able to make it for a job he has to do at the house of the person he is calling. The speaker starts with an explicit expression of apology, "îmi cer mii de scuze." The literal gloss of this expression would be "I ask for thousands of pardons," an expression that does not have a close equivalent in English. It can be, nonetheless, considered an intensified expression of apology, due to the quantifier "mii de" ("thousands of") preceding the apology lexeme "scuze" ("pardons"). The expression is then followed by the conjunction "dar" ("but"), which introduces a clause that contains the explanation for the offense: "la ora la care vă sun adică cinci şi jumătate sunt aşteptat la o lucrare" ("at the time of this call, ie. five thirty, I am expected for a job"). While the "îmi cer mii de scuze" ("I ask for thousands of pardons") expression is formulaic in Romanian, it is not always followed by a clause introduced by "dar" ("but").

The possible construction this apology could be described by might be [*îmi cer mii de scuze dar* CLAUSE] ([*I*.DAT *ask*.1ST.SG *thousands of pardons but* CLAUSE]), with "îmi cer mii de scuze" ("I ask for thousands of pardons") being the explicit expression of

apology, followed by “dar” (“but”) and the clause in the construction being “la ora la care vă sun adică cinci şi jumătate sunt aşteptat la o lucrare” (“at the time of this call, ie. five thirty, I am expected for a job”) in the example in (98). Even though this construction contains an intensified expression of apology, the clause introduced by “dar” (“but”) places the apology closer to the “Denying responsibility” end of the continuum than the [UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION *mă scuzați*] ([UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION *I*.ACC *excuse*.IMP.2ND.PL]) construction, which had the explanation highlighted.

While the apologies in spoken Romanian discussed so far contained either a nominal or a verbal form of the lexeme “scuze” (“pardons/excuse”), the last apology in the “Providing an explanation” category contained another apology expression, namely “iertați-mă” (“forgive me”). Once again, this explicit expression of apology was in the plural form, suggesting a polite and formal apology. The apology is given in (99).

(99) AR: deci acest examen este stabileşte dacă un angajat al preşedinţiei ă este de încredere sau nu.
‘So this exam establishes whether an employee of the presidency is trustworthy or not.

MC: nu nu. asta preşedintele stabileşte.
‘No no. The president establishes this.’

AR: şi încrederea
‘and the trust--’

iertați-	**mă**	**n-**	**am**
forgive.IMP.2ND.PL	I.ACC	no.WEAK	have.AUX.1ST.SG

citit	**textul**	**legii**.
read.PASTPART	text.DEFART	law.POSS

‘forgive me, I haven’t read the law’

aş vrea să-mi spuneți dacă
‘I would like you to tell me if’

MC: citiți-l
'Read it'
(IONESCU, 43)

In this fragment from a presidential press briefing, one of the reporters is asking questions about a law, and misinterprets one of its statements. The president's aide points out the error, which constitutes the offense in "nu nu. asta preşedintele stabileşte" ("No no. The president establishes this"). This statement of the offense triggers the reporter's apology, who uses the formal explicit expression of apology "iertați-mă" ("forgive me"), followed by an utterance that is the explanation, namely that he had not read the law. The possible construction that expresses the apology in (99) might be [*iertați-mă* UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION] ([*forgive*.IMP.2ND.PL *I*.ACC UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION]). The UTTERANCE:EXPLANATION segment in Example (99) is represented by "n-am citit textul legii" ("I haven't read the law").

To summarize this section on the responsibility continuum in spoken Romanian discourse, we have seen that all the apologies were formal, which was marked morphologically in the explicit expressions of apology by the use of the second person plural form of the verb. We have also seen that in some instances another speaker in the interaction states the offense, which prompts the apology. Two of the four apologies in this section contained such a statement, which suggests that the dialogic situation in which the apologies occur is co-constructed, even if the apology itself is not. The two instances when such a statement of the offense was not made were more monologic in nature, especially in the example containing a recorder voicemail. In these two cases the person apologizing incorporated a statement of the offense followed by an acknowledgment or an explanation.

5.1.2. Interruption Apologies

Besides the categories containing the responsibility continuum, there were two apology categories in the spoken Romanian corpus functioning at a discourse level, namely "Interruption apologies" and "Repair apologies." The first was the more frequent of the two, with four occurrences, while the latter had only one instance in the corpus. The first apology in this category to be discussed is given in (100).

(100) A: Taman este vezi că este în Crimeea era litoralu dinspre Sevastopol şi după un gît al mării ăştia era un gît dă patru chilometri lungime lărgime şi dincolo pă malu ălălalt rusesc dincolo dă mare era un teritoriu numit Taman acolo era tabăra rusească-
'Taman is, well it is in Crimeea there was the seaside from Sevastopol and then after a neck of this sea there was a neck four kilometers long wide and across on the other Russian side across the sea there was a territory called Taman. That's where the Russian camp was.'

B: mhî-
'Uhm'

A: ei de-acolo
'Well from there'

B: **mhî iartă- mă te-**
uhm forgive.IMP.2ND.SG I.ACC you.2ND.SG.ACC

am interrupt şi
have.AUX.1ST.SG interrupt.PASTPART and

'Uhm forgive me I interrupted you. And'

(IONESCU, 6)

In this example, speaker A starts to talk about the location of Taman. Speaker B, who is A's son, tries to take the floor in his first turn in (100), by uttering "mhî" ("uhm"), which overlaps with A's second turn in the example. B apologizes for interrupting his father by using the explicit apology "iartă-mă" ("forgive me"), preceded by "mhî" ("uhm") and followed by the utterance "te-am interrupt" ("I interrupted you") and ending

with “şi” (“and”), which is an invitation for speaker A to continue. As this apology occurs in a less formal context, and the participants in the interaction are relatives, a less formal apology is used. The informal nature of the apology is marked morphologically, just as it was with the formal apologies discussed earlier in this section. This time, the singular form of the imperative is used in the explicit expression of apology, namely “iartă-mă” (forgive.IMP.2ND.SG I.ACC, ‘forgive me’), is used, as well as the singular form of the second person pronoun in “te-am întrerupt” (you.2ND.SG.ACC have.AUX.1ST.SG interrupt.PASTPART, ‘I interrupted you’), which is also informal. This apology could be represented by the construction [SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*mhî iartă-mă* UTTERANCE]] ([SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*uhm forgive*.IMP.2ND.SG *I*.ACC UTTERANCE]]). The utterance in this construction is an acknowledgment of the fact that the speaker interrupted: “te-am întrerupt” (“I interrupted you”).

The discourse marker “mhî” (“uhm”) is not the only one used at the beginning of an apology in the spoken Romanian corpus. “Deci” (“so”) is also used, as can be seen in (101).

(101) AR: ă domnule consilier dacă-mi permiteți ă aş vrea cîteva lămuriri pentru că deşi n-ați făcut investigații se vede că ştiți şi că nu sunt înregistrați la tribunal
‘Counselor, if I may, I would like some clarification because though you haven’t investigated, it is clear that you know they are not registered with the court.’

MC: n-am făcut investigații, da’, în momentul în care
‘We haven’t investigated, but the moment’

AR: **deci iertați- mă dacă îmi permiteți**
so forgive.IMP.2ND.PL I.ACC if I.DAT permit.2ND.PL

aş vrea să vă întreb:
have.AUX.1ST.SG want SUBJPART you.PL.ACC ask

le **recunoaşteţi** **statutul** **de**
they.DAT.WEAK recognize.2ND.PL status.DEFART of

functionary publici?
clerks public.PL.MASC

‘So forgive me, if I may, I would like to ask you: do you recognize their status as public servants?’

(IONESCU, 43)

The fragment in (101) is from a presidential press briefing, and therefore the context is more formal than the one in (100). In (101), AR, a journalist, asks one of the president’s counselors a question. The counselor starts answering the question, however the journalist interrupts him by using the discourse marker “deci” (“so”), followed by the explicit expression of apology “iertaţi-mă” (forgive.IMP.2ND.PL I.ACC , ‘forgive me’). The use of the second person plural form of the explicit expression of apology makes this apology a formal one, which is consistent with the more formal context of press briefings. The explicit expression of apology is followed by an utterance containing another question. The possible construction in this example would be [SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*deci iertaţi-mă* UTTERANCE]] ([SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE] SPEAKER2[*so forgive*.IMP.2ND.PL *I*.ACC UTTERANCE]]).

What makes this hypothetical construction different from the one discussed previously is the form of the explicit expression of apology used. Thus, the construction exemplified in (101) contains the explicit apology “iertaţi-mă” (forgive.IMP.2ND.PL , “forgive me”), whereas the one in (100) contains “iartă-mă” (forgive.IMP.2ND.SG , “forgive me”). We have already seen this distinction between the second person singular form of a verb used for informal situations and the second person plural form used in more formal ones in other constructions, namely “mă scuzi” (I.acc excuse.IMP.2ND.SG, ‘excuse me’) and “mă scuzaţi” (I.acc excuse.IMP.2ND.PL, ‘excuse me’). Whereas in (100) the speaker

was interrupting a relative, and therefore used the singular form of the verb, in (101) the speaker is a journalist asking an official a question, and therefore the plural form of the verb is used. Also, in (101), the author uses the expression "dacă îmi permiteți" (if I.DAT permit.2ND.PL, "if you permit me"), which makes the apology even more formal and polite.

Finally, the last example in the "Interruption apologies" category was different from the ones discussed so far, in that the explicit expression of apology was not before the utterance representing the interruption (i.e. cataphoric apology), but rather after the utterance (i.e. anaphoric apology). Nonetheless, the speaker did start the interruption with a discourse marker, as in the previous examples of interruption apologies discussed. This time, the discourse marker was "da'," a short form of "dar" ("but"), as can be seen in the Example (102), taken from the same press briefing as the example in (101).

(102) MC: stați puțin că prea mergeți pe cascade din astea. mai întîi nici nu știu dacă este un sindicat. ă: legea românească nu știu la: în anglia cum e da' legea românească zice că un sindicat tre' să aibă cel puțin cinşpe oameni ca să poți să te înregistrezi sindicat. bun. ei sunt unşpe. tot legea românească spune că
'Wait a minute, you keep cascading these statements. First of all, I don't know whether there is even a union. Romanian law – I don't know how it is in England – but Romanian law states that a union needs to have at least fifteen members in order to be registered in court as a union. OK. They are eleven. And Romanian law also says that-'

AR: **da' cine sunt aceşti unsprezece iertați- mă că**
but who are these eleven forgive.2ND.PL me that
'But who are these eleven, forgive me for-'

MC: cei care au semnat
'Those who have signed'

(IONESCU, 43)

The apology used by the journalist to apologize starts with the utterance that is performing the interruption, namely the question “da’ cine sunt aceşti unsprezece” (“but who are these eleven?”). The speaker then realizes that he interrupted the counselor, and utters the explicit expression of apology “iertați-mă” (“forgive me”). Once again, the second person plural form of the verb is used in the explicit expression of apology. This is followed by the complementizer “că” (“that”), which suggests that the speaker probably wanted to continue saying “that I interrupt.” However, the counselor answers the question with an interruption, saying “cei care au semnat” (“the ones who signed”). The possible construction would therefore be [$^{\text{SPEAKER1}}$[UTTERANCE] $^{\text{SPEAKER2}}$[UTTERANCE *iertați-mă*]] ([$^{\text{SPEAKER1}}$[UTTERANCE] $^{\text{SPEAKER2}}$[UTTERANCE *forgive*.IMP.2$^{\text{ND}}$.PL *I*.ACC]]).

In conclusion, all the apologies in the “Interruption apologies” contained the same explicit apology lexeme, but in two different forms. Thus, the singular form “iartă-mă” (forgive.IMP.2$^{\text{ND}}$.SG , “forgive me”) was used in informal contexts, to express less formal apologies, while the plural form, iertați-mă” (forgive.IMP.2$^{\text{ND}}$.PL , “forgive me”) was used in formal contexts to express more formal apologies. The degree of formality of the apology was therefore marked morphologically by the choice of number in the explicit expression of apology.

5.1.3. Repair Apologies

The second category belonging to what we have called apologies functioning at the discourse level was “Repair apologies.” Only one instance of this apology was present in the spoken Romanian corpus, and is given in (103).

(103) IC: vă mulțumesc şi o întrebare pentru doamna Corina Crețu. care este poziția președinției față de faptul că domnul Nicolae Văcăroiu este atît președintele

senatului dar face parte şi din conducerea băncii de inve
investiții și dezvoltare?
'Thank you. And a question for Mrs. Corina Crețu. What is the position of the presidency on the fact that Mr. Nicolae Văcăroiu is the President of the Senate but also part of the leadership of the Bank of Inve-Investments?'

MC: păi da
'Well yes.'

CC: poziția preşedinției preşedinția nu mai există
'The position of the presidency. The presidency no longer exists.'

IC: **poziția preşedintelui României mă**
position.DEFART president.POSS Romania.POSS I.ACC

scuzați!
excuse.IMP.2ND.PL

'The position of Romania's President, excuse me.'
(IONESCU, 43)

Example (103) is from the same press briefing as the previous two examples discussed. The context in which this interaction takes place is during a time when Romania's president was suspended, and therefore the president of the senate was the highest power in the country. In the first turn of the example, IC, a reporter, asks a question about the position of the presidency on the dual role of the President of the Senate. CC, the person that IC asked points out that "poziția preşedinției preşedinția nu mai există" ("The position of the presidency. The presidency no longer exists."). The error is pointed out by another speaker who is participating in the interaction. Finally, IC provides the corrected information in the following turn, "poziția preşedintelui României" ("the position of Romania's president") followed by the explicit expression of apology "mă scuzați" (*I*.ACC *excuse*.IMP.2ND.PL, "excuse me"). The possible construction used in this example is [SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE:INCORRECTINFO]

SPEAKER2[UTTERANCE:ERRORIDENTIFICATION] SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE:CORRECTEDINFO *mă scuzați*]] ([SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE:INCORRECTINFO] SPEAKER2[UTTERANCE:ERRORIDENTIFICATION] SPEAKER1[UTTERANCE:CORRECTEDINFO *I.*ACC *excuse*.IMP.2ND.PL]]).

While repair apologies seem to exist in Romanian, unfortunately the fact that there was only one instance in the spoken corpus did not allow for further generalizations of their use. The type of repair performed in the example discussed was a repair done by a participant in the interaction other than the person apologizing. There was no instance of self-repair as defined in the literature review (see section 2.2.5).

5.1.4. Standalone Apologies

The last category present in the spoken Romanian corpus was that of "Standalone apologies." Though there were only two instances of apologies in this category, both use a form of the apology expression that was not present in the apologies in the Romanian corpus discussed so far. The form is "îmi pare rău" (I.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad), which could be translated as "I'm sorry," and a variant of this form in the plural, "ne pare rău" (we.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad). The literal translation of this expression of apology would be "to me it seems bad." However, a more suitable translation would be "we're sorry."

The first standalone apology in the spoken Romanian corpus, the one using the singular form, is given in (104).

(104) D: Haideți să învățăm românește mai întîi.
'Let's learn to speak Romanian first'

îmi pare rău.
I.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad

'I'm sorry.'

(IONESCU, 41)

In this example taken from a political party meeting, D is complaining about the fact that some people were not using correct Romanian by saying "Haideți să învățăm româneşte mai întîi" ("Let's learn to speak Romanian first"). The speaker considers this as a speaking offense, and apologizes using the standalone apology "îmi pare rău" (I.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad, "I'm sorry"). Furthermore, the apology is uttered in a humorous context, which may be the reason the speaker considers that a standalone apology is both enough and appropriate. The possible construction in this case is a purely substantive one, as it only contains the explicit expression of apology [*îmi pare rău*] ([*I*.DAT *seem*.3RD.SG *bad*]).

The second instance of a standalone apology used the plural form, as can be seen in Example (105).

(105) A: da' nu-i ştiți aşa cum arată trebuie să-i fi văzut unde- a Del Piero
'But you don't know what they look like. You must have seen them somewhere. Del Piero.'

B: **ne** **pare** **rău**
we.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad

'We're sorry'

(IONESCU, 72)

The interaction in (105) is taken from a television show with two female pop stars as guests. The theme of the show is soccer players. A, the host of the show asks the guests whether they know any of the Italian soccer players, and gives the name of one such player, "Del Piero." Neither of the two guests knows him, so B apologizes in both their names by using the standalone apology "ne pare rău" (we.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad, "we are sorry"). The pragmatic offense in this situation is a breach of expectations, as the host

expected the guests to know these soccer players, but they did not. Since the only difference in the apology expressions in (104) and (105) is the form of the first person pronoun, namely the singular "îmi" (I.DAT) and the plural "ne" (we.DAT), we believe that the two instances may be examples of the same construction [*îmi/ne pare rău*] ([*I*.DAT/*we*.DAT *seem*.3RD.SG *bad*]). Though the offenses being apologized for are different in the two examples, they are nevertheless both minor offenses and part of similar types of offenses as defined by Deutschmann (2003), discussed in the literature review (see section 2.1.3).

5.1.5. Summary

To summarize this section on apologies in spoken Romanian, the constructions discussed are only possible constructions used to express apologies, as due to the small size of the corpus, there were not enough instances to justify them as constructions as opposed to isolated collocations of lexical items.

Insofar as forms used to express apologies are concerned, we have seen that Romanian used different grammatical forms of the same item to distinguish between formal and informal apologies. Thus, the singular form of the verb, "scuză-mă" ("excuse (sg.) me") was used in informal situations and the plural, more polite form "scuzați-mă" ("excuse (pl.) me") was used in formal situations. The functions of these apologies could be categorized using the revised categories discussed in section 4.1. We have also seen that only one expression of apology was used in a specific category, with the singular versus plural variation distinguishing between formal and informal apologies. Thus, the nominal and verbal forms of "scuze" ("pardons/excuse") was used in apologies in the "Acknowledging responsibility" category, while "iertați-mă" ("forgive (pl.) me") was

used in the "Providing an explanation" category. "Iartă-mă" ("forgive (sg.) me") was used in the interruption apology and "mă scuzați" ("excuse (pl.) me") in the repair apology. Finally, yet another explicit expression of apology, in both its singular "îmi pare rău" (I.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad, 'I'm sorry') and plural form "ne pare rău" (we.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad, 'we're sorry') was used in standalone apologies.

Whereas the spoken Romanian corpus was a small one, the written one was more extensive. The following section of the study will discuss the use of apologies in written Romanian discourse.

5.2. Apologies in Written Discourse

The analysis of the written Romanian corpus data yielded 99 instances in which the explicit apology lexemes were used as part of an apology; the other 95 instances were not part of an apology. Unlike with apologies in spoken Romanian, with written Romanian we were able to provide constructions used to apologize, as most of the constructions contained several instances that justify their existence. There were also constructions that only had one occurrence. In those cases, we treated those constructions as possible constructions, as we did in our discussion of spoken Romanian. The analyzed lexemes were part of 15 different constructions used to construe these apologies. Not all apology categories that were present in the spoken Romanian corpus were also present in the written one. This could be seen in Table 34, reiterated in Table 35.

Table 35

Frequency of Apology Categories in the Romanian Corpora

Category	Occurrences	
	Spoken	Written
Acknowledging responsibility	1 9.09%	81 81.82%
Providing an explanation	3 27.27%	12 12.12%
Interruption apologies	4 36.36%	—
Standalone apologies	2 18.18%	1 1.01%
Fictive apologies	—	3 3.03%
Denying responsibility	—	2 2.02%
Repair apologies	1 9.09%	—
Total	11 100.00%	99 100.00%

Only five of the seven categories of apologies were present in the written corpus. Three of them, “Acknowledging responsibility,” “Providing an explanation,” and “Denying responsibility” were part of the responsibility continuum. Unlike in the spoken Romanian corpus where only the first two categories were present, all three were present in the written corpus. The fourth category present in the written corpus was “Standalone apologies.” Finally, there was also one category, “Fictive apologies,” that was only present in written discourse, and not in the spoken one.

Our analysis of the apologies in the written Romanian corpus has shown that there were different types of interactions in which apologies occurred. One type, which we have called written interaction, contained cases in which the author of the written text was the person producing the apology. The second one, called quoted interaction, contained cases in which the apology was presented as part of a discourse uttered by

somebody other than the author of the text and was being quoted. Finally, there were also cases in which an interaction was only simulated, and not actually happening, which we have called fictive interaction. We have already seen that this three-fold distinction also existed in written English discourse (see section 4.3).

Insofar as the apology categories are concerned, not all categories of apologies were present in all three types of interactions. Table 36 shows the distribution of the categories across the three types of interaction.

Table 36

Distribution of Apology Categories in Written, Fictive, and Quoted Interaction in the Written Romanian Corpus

	Occurrences							
Category	Written Interaction		Fictive Interaction		Quoted Interaction		Total	
Acknowledging responsibility	75	98.68%	—		6	30.00%	81	81.82%
Providing an explanation	—		—		12	60.00%	12	12.12%
Fictive apologies	—		3	100.00%	—		3	3.03%
Denying responsibility	1	1.32%	—		1	5.00	2	2.02%
Standalone apologies	—		—		1	5.00%	1	1.01%
Total	76	100.00%	3	100.00%	20	100.00%	99	100.00%

Since the different types of interaction contained different categories of apologies, we will discuss each type of interaction separately next.

5.2.1. Apologies in Written Interaction

Table 36 shows that 76 of the 99 instances of apologies in the written Romanian corpus were used in written interaction situations, those where the author of the written piece was addressing the reader. These instances belonged to two categories of apologies. We will discuss each category next.

5.2.1.1. The Responsibility Continuum

The most frequent category in written interaction situations in the written Romanian corpus was by far "Acknowledging responsibility," with 75 instances accounting for 98.68% of the apologies used in written interaction. As with spoken Romanian, the responsibility continuum was also used to analyze apologies in written Romanian.

The apologies in the "Acknowledging responsibility" category were expressed by 18 different constructions. This represents a great variety of constructions. However, only 8 of these constructions had more than one occurrence in the corpus which would justify their existence as constructions. Based on our methodology, we will only discuss these 8 constructions given in Table 37. This procedure was different only in the case of apologies in spoken Romanian, as there were not enough examples to justify the existence of constructions. We have seen in our discussion of apologies in spoken Romanian that several forms of the same apology lexeme were used. This is also the case with written Romanian. We have therefore grouped the different forms used in the constructions in Table 37 by the lexeme used in the explicit expression of apology.

Table 37

Constructions Used to Acknowledge Responsibility in Written Interaction in the Written Romanian Corpus

Construction	Gloss	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (per million words)
scuze			
[(*ne*) *cerem scuze* (*cititorilor/cititorilor noştri/cititorilor revistei noastre*) *pentru* NP]	[(*we*.DAT) *ask*.1ST.PL *pardons* (*readers*.DAT/*readers*.DAT *our*.PL.MASC/*readers*.DAT *magazine*.POSS *our*.SG.FEM) *for* NP]	32	1.5
[SENTENCE (*ne*) *cerem scuze*]	[SENTENCE (*we*.DAT) *ask*.1ST.PL *pardons*]	11	0.51
[*cerând scuze cititorilor pentru* NP]	[*ask*.GER *pardons readers*.DAT *for* NP]	3	0.14
[NP *pentru care ne cerem scuze*]	[NP *for which* we.DAT *ask*.1ST.PL *pardons*]	3	0.14
[*scuze pentru* NP]	[*pardons for* NP]	3	0.14
a scuza			
[*scuzaţi* NP]	[*excuse*.IMP.2ND.PL NP]	5	0.23
ne pare rău			
[*ne pare rău pentru/de* NP]	[*we*.DAT *seem*.3RD.SG *bad for/of* NP]	6	0.28
[*ne pare rău să* SUBJUNCTIVE.CLAUSE]	[*we*.dat *seem*.3rd.sg *bad* SUBJPART SUBJUNCTIVE.CLAUSE]	2	0.09

As can be seen in Table 37, the constructions used to acknowledge responsibility used 3 different explicit apology lexemes: *scuze* (pardons), *a scuza* (to excuse), and *ne pare rău* (I.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad). A fourth explicit apology expression, *iertaţi-mi* (forgive.IMP.2ND.PL I.DAT.WEAK) was also present. However, as it had only one instance

in the corpus, we have not included it in our discussion. The first two are forms of the same word, the first one being a noun while the second one is a verb. As we have already discussed in the section on spoken apologies, while in Romanian these two lexemes have the same root, in English, the gloss of the noun and the verb result in different lexical items, namely "pardons" for the noun "scuze" and "to excuse" for the verb "a scuza." The literal translation of the apology expression containing the noun such as "îmi cer scuze" would be "I ask pardons," but the more idiomatic translation into English is "I apologize." The translation for the apologies containing the verb would be "excuse us" for "scuzați-ne." The noun "scuze" ("pardons") was present in 12 constructions, accounting for 59 of the 75 apologies in the "Acknowledging responsibility" category. The verb "a scuza" was present in 3 constructions, accounting for 7 apologies. Finally, "ne pare rău" was present in 2 constructions accounting for 8 apologies, and "iertați-mi" in one construction with a single occurrence. It seems, therefore, that the noun "scuze" and the verb "a scuza" are preferred in Romanian constructions used to express acknowledgment of responsibility. We will discuss each of the constructions in Table 37 next.

One of the constructions used to express apologies in the "Acknowledging responsibility" category had a much higher frequency than the other constructions. This construction was [(*ne*) *cerem scuze* (*cititorilor/cititorilor noştri/cititorilor revistei noastre*) *pentru* NP] ([(*we*.DAT) *ask*.1ST.PL *pardons* (*readers*.DAT/*readers*.DAT *our*.PL.MASC/*readers*.DAT *magazine*.POSS *our*.SG.FEM) *for* NP]). The apology is addressed to the readers, which was sometimes marked in the construction as recipient. The recipient seemed to be optional in the construction. When it was present, it was expressed

by one of three variations, namely “cititorilor” (readers.DAT, ‘to the readers’), “cititorilor noştri” (readers.DAT our.PL.MASC, ‘to our readers’) and “cititorilor revistei noastre” (readers.DAT magazine.POSS our.SG.FEM, ‘to the readers of our magazine’). There were 11 apologies containing the recipient and 21 without it. An example without the recipient is given in (106).

(106) **Ne cerem scuze pentru eroarea comisă**
we.DAT ask.1ST.PL pardons for error.DEFART committed.FEM
‘We apologize for the error.’
(CRBS, ecorom-s157177)

Examples such as the one in (106) appeared in instances in which a magazine was apologizing to readers for errors and mistakes in the magazine. The construction contains the plural form of the explicit expression of apology, “ne cerem scuze” (we.DAT ask.1ST.PL pardons, ‘we apologize’). This is followed by the preposition “pentru” (“for”), and the noun phrase “eroarea comisă” (“the error”). By acknowledging the error and apologizing, the writer acknowledges responsibility for this error in the name of the entire magazine. The second noun phrase in the construction was a restricted one. The most common instantiations were “eroarea comisă” (error.DEFART committed.FEM, ‘the error’), “această greşeală” (this.FEM mistake, ‘this mistake’), and “eventualele inconveniențe” (possible.PL.FEM.DEFART inconveniences, ‘possible inconveniences’) among others. The fragment in (107) is an example of this construction with the recipient present.

(107) **Cerem scuze cititorilor pentru eroarea comisă**
ask.1ST.PL pardons readers.DAT for error.DEFART committed.FEM
‘We apologize to our readers for the error.’
(CRBS, ecoromB-s 775539)

Similar to the construction in (106), Example (107) starts with the explicit expression of apology. However, a recipient, “cititorilor” (readers.DAT, ‘to our readers’)

is present, followed by the same preposition "pentru" ("for") and the same second noun phrase "eroarea comisă" (error.DEFART committed.FEM, 'the error').

Another construction expressing the acknowledgment in a noun phrase was [*ne pare rău pentru/de* NP] ([*we*.DAT *seem*.3RD.SG *bad for/of* NP]). This apology functioned similarly to the first one discussed, and was mostly used to apologize to readers for troubles caused by the magazine. An example is given in (108).

(108) Sebastian Cristi Moanță, Craiova:
'Sebastian Cristi Moanță, Craiova'

Ne pare rău pentru necazurile pe care
we.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad for troubles.DEFART on which

le- avut în legătură cu primirea
DEFART.WEAK have.PASTPART in connexion with receiving.DEFART

revistei noastre.
magazine.POSS our.FEM

'We are sorry for the troubles you had with receiving our magazine.'
(CRBS, ecoromB-s235978)

The fragment in (108) is from a segment in a magazine in which the writer answers questions received from readers. Here, the writer apologizes for the fact that there were problems with delivering the magazine subscription to the reader. The construction begins with the explicit expression of apology, "ne pare rău" (we.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad, 'we are sorry'), followed by the preposition "pentru" ("for") and a noun phrase that identifies the offense and also acknowledges responsibility: "pentru necazurile pe care le - avut în legătură cu primirea revistei noastre" ("for the troubles you had with receiving our magazine"). The explicit expression of apology is used in the plural form, "ne pare rău" ("we are sorry"), as the writer apologizes on behalf of the entire magazine, not only his or her own. The choice of the lexical item "ne pare rău"

(we.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad, “we are sorry”) as opposed to “ne cerem scuze” (we.DAT ask.1ST.PL pardons, “we apologize”) used in the constructions in examples (106) and (107) makes this apology more personal, as it is addressed to a specific person, ‘Sebastian Cristi Moanță, Craiova.’ The apology in (106) and (107) were addressed to readers in general. Also the offense is more specific in (108), namely not sending out the magazines, as opposed to just general errors in (106) and (107).

The next two constructions to be discussed contain shorter forms of the explicit expressions of apology “ne scuzați” (“excuse us”) and “ne cerem scuze” (“we apologize”). Thus, [*scuzați* NP] ([*excuse*.IMP.2ND.PL NP]) contains the lexeme “scuzați” (“excuse”) as opposed to the full “ne scuzați” (“excuse us”), and [*scuze pentru* NP] ([*pardons for* NP]) contains only “scuze” (“pardons”). These two constructions are used to mend speaking offenses, which are less severe than the offenses discussed so far, which could account for the presence of the short forms of the lexical expressions. An example of the first construction, [*scuzați* NP] ([*excuse* NP]), is given in (109).

(109) Cei de la Antena 1 au mutat filmele indiene vineri seara, ca sa-i “caroteze” ratingul
‘The people at Antena 1 have moved the Indian films to Friday night so that they cheat’

(**scuzati** **expresia**!)
excuse.IMP.2ND.PL expression.DEFART
‘excuse the expression!’

vedetei Pro TV.
‘Pro TV star’s rating.’
(CRBS, ecorom-s69620)

In this example, the author apologizes for the use of the verb “să caroteze” (“to cheat”) by using the construction [*scuzați* NP] ([*excuse*.IMP.2ND.PL NP]). The verb for whose use the author apologized is a loan word from French and can be considered slang.

However, the author used such an expression on purpose, and therefore the apology itself is a staged one, meant to highlight the action expressed by the loan word. While "scuzați expresia" ("excuse the expression") is a formulaic expression, "expresia" ("the expression") was not the only instantiation of the noun phrase in the construction. Nonetheless, the noun phrase was restricted in the construction to noun phrases semantically linked to the concept of a speaking offense, such as "tonul agresiv" ("aggressive tone"), "fraza" ("the phrase"), and "cuvântul" ("the word").

The [*scuze pentru* NP] ([*pardons for* NP]) construction was also used in such situations, though less frequently, as it appeared 3 times in the corpus, as opposed to the 5 occurrences of the [*scuzați* NP] ([*excuse*.IMP.2ND.PL NP]) construction. An example of the [*scuze pentru* NP] ([*pardons for* NP]) construction can be seen in (110).

(110) Antena 1 a spart audiența
'Antena 1 has blown away the ratings'

(scuze pentru sintagma uzată)
pardons for phrase.DEFART worn-out.FEM
'sorry for the overused phrase'

cu Titanic.
'with Titanic.'
(CRBS, ecorom-s4254)

Similar to the [*scuzați* NP] ([*excuse*.IMP.2ND.PL NP]) construction, the noun phrase in the [*scuze pentru* NP] ([*pardons for* NP]) construction was also semantically constrained to speaking offenses. The other examples of noun phrases used in the corpus were "această absurditate" ("this absurdity") and "termenul vulgar" ("the vulgar phrase"). However, in the [*scuze pentru* NP] ([*pardons for* NP]) construction, the noun phrases specify more clearly the offense as the speaking offense is less inferable. Also, the noun phrases are less formulaic in this construction as opposed to the [*scuzați* NP]

([*excuse*.IMP.2ND.PL NP]). This difference in the noun phrases use may account for the different apology lexeme used, and justify the fact that [*scuzați* NP] ([*excuse*.IMP.2ND.PL NP]) and [*scuze pentru* NP] ([*pardons for* NP]) are separate constructions.

The next construction, [*cerând scuze cititorilor pentru* NP] ([*ask*.GER *pardons readers*.DAT *for* NP]), is interesting in that a gerund form of the explicit expression of apology is used, which was not used in the spoken Romanian corpus. This construction is used in conjunction with a phrase in which the author states that the magazine is fixing the offense for which the apology and the acknowledgment expressed by the construction were intended. This can be seen in (111).

(111) Facem cuvenitele rectificări,
'We are making the required corrections'

cerând	**scuze**	**cititorilor**	**pentru**	**eventualele**	**neplăceri**
ask.GER	pardons	readers.DAT	for	possible.DEFART	troubles

cauzate.
caused.FEM.PL

'apologizing to our readers for possible troubles we have caused'
(CRBS, ecoromB-s374434)

Thus, the author starts out in (111) with the statement that the magazine is making the required corrections, which is an offer of reparation, followed by the apology expressed by the [*cerând scuze cititorilor pentru* NP] ([*ask*.GER *pardons readers*.DAT *for* NP]) construction. The entity to whom the apology is addressed is expressed in the construction by the recipient "cititorilor" ("to the readers"), similar to the construction [(*ne*) *cerem scuze* (*cititorilor/cititorilor noştri/cititorilor revistei noastre*) *pentru* NP] ([(*we*.DAT) *ask*.1ST.PL *pardons* (*readers*.DAT/*readers*.DAT *our*.PL.MASC/*readers*.DAT *magazine*.POSS *our*.SG.FEM) *for* NP]) discussed previously in this section. The first noun phrase is followed by the preposition "pentru" ("for") and the second noun phrase which

identifies the offense, in this case “eventualele neplăceri cauzate” (“possible troubles we have caused”).

All the constructions in the “Acknowledging responsibility” category discussed so far started with the explicit expression of apology and continued with a noun phrase containing the acknowledgment of the offense. However, there was one construction that highlighted the offense by placing it before the explicit expression of apology. This construction was [NP *pentru care ne cerem scuze*] ([NP *for which* we.DAT *ask*.1ST.PL *pardons*]), and it occurred 3 times in the corpus. This is exemplified in (112).

(112) **Eroarea, pentru care ne cerem scuze**,
error.DEFART for which we.DAT ask.1ST.PL pardons
‘The error, for which we apologize,’

a fost cauzată de publicarea cu întârziere a răspunsului care a fost redactat înainte de apariția în Monitorul Official
‘was caused by the delayed publication of the reply which had been prepared before the law appeared in Monitorul Oficial.’
(CRBS, ecoromB-s747251)

“Erorarea” (“the error”) is being highlighted in this construction, as the author starts the sentence with this noun phrase. The noun phrase is used as given information, and it refers back to an explanation of the error given in the context. This noun phrase identifies and acknowledges the offense. It is followed by “pentru care ne cerem scuze” (NP for which we.DAT ask.1ST.PL pardons, ‘for which we apologize’). This segment of the construction contains a pronominal reference to the offense by the use of the reference “pentru care” (“for which”) followed by the explicit expression of apology “ne cerem scuze” (we.DAT ask.1ST.PL pardons, ‘we apologize’). The other two noun phrases that occurred in this construction were “greșeala” (“mistake”) and “ciudățenie” (“weirdness”). Due to the fact that the offense and acknowledgment are highlighted, this construction

can be placed closer to the acknowledging responsibility end of the responsibility continuum than all the other constructions discussed for this category.

Such highlighting of the offense was not expressed only in a noun phrase. The second most frequent apology in the "Acknowledging responsibility" category expressed the offense in a sentence completely separate from the sentence containing the explicit expression of apology. The construction was [SENTENCE (*ne*) *cerem scuze*] ([SENTENCE (*we*.DAT) *ask*.1ST.PL *pardons*]). Unlike the [NP *pentru care ne cerem scuze*] ([NP *for which* we.DAT *ask*.1ST.PL *pardons*]) construction in which the offense was expressed in a noun phrase, this construction expresses the offense in a full sentence. We have already discussed the difference between profiling entities through reification by nominalization versus processes as described by Langacker (1991) (see section 4.2.1.1). The focus in the [NP *pentru care ne cerem scuze*] ([NP *for which* we.DAT *ask*.1ST.PL *pardons*]) construction was on the result of the offense, whereas in the [SENTENCE (*ne*) *cerem scuze*] ([SENTENCE (*we*.DAT) *ask*.1ST.PL *pardons*]) construction the focus is on the actual performance of the offense. An example is given in (113).

(113) Precizare: într-o versiune anterioară a articolului, numele lui Gabriel Hilote era asociat în mod eronat cu Compania de Consultanță și Audit, 'Note: in a previous version of this article, Gabriel Hilote's name was wrongly associated with the Company of Consulting and Audit'

facem cuvenita recificare şi ne cerem scuze.
make.1ST.PL proper.DEFART correction and we.DAT ask.1ST.PL pardons
'we are making the required correction and we apologize.'
(CRBS, ecoromB-s747251)

In Example (113), the author starts out with a sentence in which the error is identified, namely that somebody's name was wrongly associated with a company. This was followed by a statement that a correction is being made, followed by the explicit expression of apology "ne cerem scuze" (we.DAT ask.1ST.PL pardons, 'we apologize').

Finally, the last construction that had at least two instances in the corpus was also different than the ones previously discussed. Thus, the [*ne pare rău să* SUBJUNCTIVE.CLAUSE] ([*we*.DAT *seem*.3RD.SG *bad* SUBJPART SUBJUNCTIVE.CLAUSE]) construction does not contain the acknowledgment in a noun phrase, but in a subjunctive clause. This type of clause is specific to Romanian, and romance languages in general. In Romanian, the subjunctive is formed by the subjunctive particle *să* followed by the verb in the subjunctive mood (Guțu Romalo, 2005). The subjunctive mostly occurs in subordinate subjunctive clauses (Guțu Romalo, 2008). This construction was used to express apologies that meant to mend breaches in expectations. An example of this construction is given in (114).

(114) Cât priveşte celelalte aspecte sesizate ,
'Insofar as the other aspects pointed out are concerned,'

ne	**pare**	**rău**	**să**	**vă**
we.DAT	seem.3RD.SG	bad	SUBJPART	you.2ND.PL.ACC

dezamăgim		**din**	**nou,**
disappoint.SUBJ.1ST.PL		of	new

'we are sorry we disappoint you again'

dar nu aveți dreptate
'but you are mistaken.'
(CRBS, ecoromB-s747817)

The use of the subjunctive in the clause containing the acknowledgment of responsibility makes the acknowledgment less factive, due to the irrealis coding of the subjunctive form of the verb. Consequently, this construction can be placed the furthest away from the acknowledging responsibility end of the responsibility continuum.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the analysis of the apologies in the "Acknowledging responsibility" category is that these apologies had a highly specialized

use, namely to acknowledge responsibility for errors and mistakes made in previous editions of the magazine. However, we have seen that this function was carried out using a variety of constructions.

The other category from the responsibility continuum, "Denying responsibility," had only one apology. Though we mostly discussed only those constructions containing at least two instances in the corpus so far, we will nevertheless discuss this instance as it is the only one example in a category of apologies. Since there is not enough evidence to justify the existence of a construction, we are only proposing what may be a possible construction. The apology expressing a denial of responsibility is given in (115).

(115) Petrescu Lucia Mădălina, Târgovişte:
'Petrescu Lucia Mădălina, Târgovişte:'

Ne pare rău, dar nu putem publica astfel de
we.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad but no can.1ST.PL publish such of

anunțuri în Capital
announcements in Capital

'We are sorry, but we cannot publish such announcements in Capital.'
(CRBS, ecoromB-s880053)

In Example (115), the author is answering letters from readers. He apologizes for not being able to fulfill her request to publish an announcement in the magazine. The construction starts with the plural form of the explicit expression of apology, "ne pare rău" (we.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad, 'we are sorry') followed by a clause introduced by "dar" ("but") and containing the modal "nu putem" ("we cannot") which suggests that the reasons for not publishing are outside his abilities. The possible construction used in this example would be [*ne pare rău dar nu putem* VERB-INF OBJ] ([*we*.DAT *seem*.3RD.SG *bad but no can*.1ST.PL VERB-INF OBJ]).

5.2.1.2. Summary

Now that we have discussed the constructions used to express apologies in the two categories belonging to the responsibility continuum in written interaction, we can place these constructions on the continuum. Only those constructions that had at least two occurrences in the corpus were included. The position of the constructions is given in Figure 9.

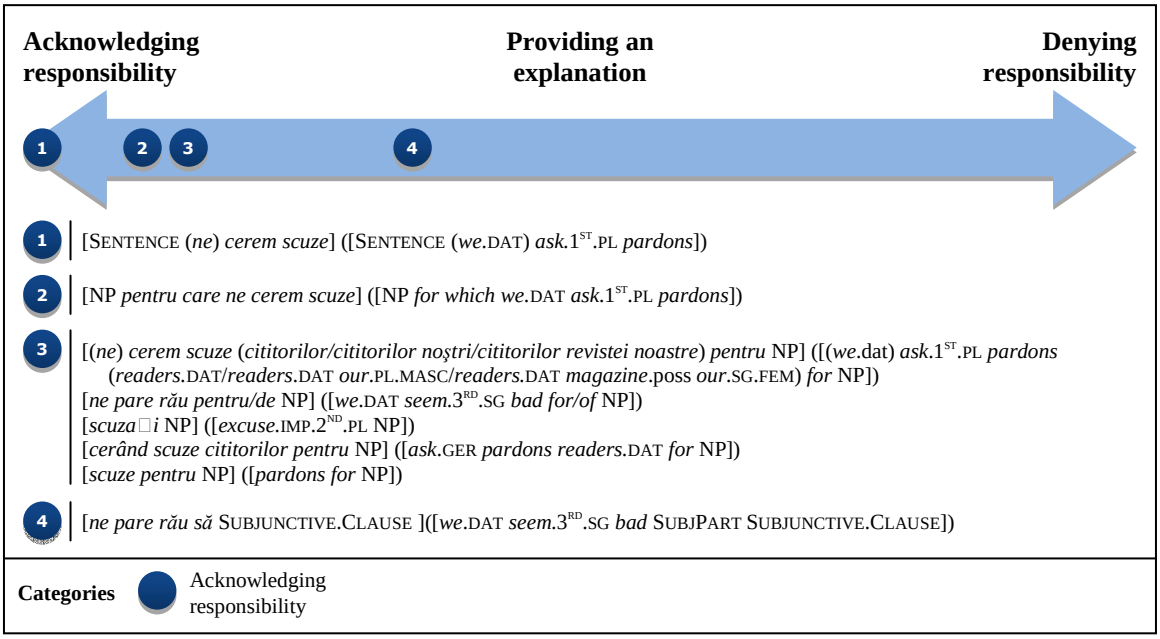

Figure 9. The placement of the constructions in written interaction situations in written discourse on the responsibility continuum

We have so far discussed the use of apologies in written interaction situations in the written corpus. Only two apology categories were present, namely "Acknowledging responsibility" and "Denying responsibility." Though there was no instance of the "Providing an explanation" category, we have shown that a responsibility continuum can also be used for written Romanian. Also, "Acknowledging responsibility" proved to be a

very frequent category, with a large variety of constructions used to express the apologies. Finally, this category was used in very specialized situations, namely apologizing for errors and mistakes in the magazine. Figure 9 suggests that in these contexts there is greater acknowledgment of responsibility. These findings are different from those in our previous study on apologies in Romanian which investigated the use of apologies in the context of interactions among friends using data collected by means of a Discourse Completion Test (Demeter, 2006). In that study we found that the apology category "Denying responsibility" was more frequent than any other category. This difference in the findings suggests that the context in which apologies occur may be important. Also, the difference may also be due to the different methodologies used in the two studies, namely analyzing elicited apologies in the first study and analyzing naturally occurring language in the present study.

5.2.2. Apologies in Fictive Interaction

Three apologies in the written corpus were used in situations that were simulating an interaction. We have called this type of interaction fictive interaction. As the apologies themselves were not real, but rather fictive, the apologies occurring in this type of interaction were part of one category, namely fictive apologies. Only one construction was used to express such apologies, and it is given in Table 38.

Table 38

Construction Used to Construe Fictive Apologies in the Written Romanian Corpus

Construction	English Equivalent	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (per million words)
[*îmi*/*ne pare rău dar* CLAUSE]	[*I*.DAT/*we*.DAT *seem*.3RD.SG *bad but* CLAUSE]	3	0.14

The construction in Table 38 used both the singular form of the explicit expression of apology, "îmi pare rău," (I.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad, 'I'm sorry') and the second uses the plural form, "ne pare rău," (we.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad, 'we're sorry'). This difference, however, does not denote different levels of formality, as the distinction is at the level of the speaker, namely one person apologizing (singular) versus more than one person apologizing (plural), and not at the level of the addressee as we have seen in other examples. An example of the [*îmi*/*ne pare rău dar* CLAUSE] ([*I*.DAT/*we*.DAT *seem*.3RD.SG *bad but* CLAUSE]) construction is given in (116).

(116) Răspunsurile care se primesc în astfel de situații sună cam așa: Când ? Sâmbăta asta?
'The answers one gets in such situations sound something like this: When? This Saturday?'

Îmi pare rău, dar sunt arvunit
I.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad but am handseled
'I'm sorry, but I'm already committed'
(CRBS, ecoromB-s246386)

In this example, the author of the written piece suggests possible answers that one can give. Unfortunately, we did not have access to a larger context in order to establish the exact situation for which such answers can be given. The author creates a hypothetical space containing a hypothetical situation. Both the question and the answer are also hypothetical. Consequently, the apology is a fictive one. The apology only occurs

in the blended space that is created by the author. The construction starts out with the explicit expression of apology, "îmi pare rău," (I.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad, 'I'm sorry') followed by "dar" ("but") and a clause that provides a reason for the apology: "sunt arvunit" ("I'm committed").

While in (116) there was only one person apologizing, and therefore the singular form of the pronoun was used in the explicit expression of apology, "îmi pare rău," ("I'm sorry"), in (117) the apology is in the name of an auto club, not in one's personal name, and therefore the plural pronoun is used, "ne pare rău," ("we're sorry").

(117) Dacă sunați la clubul automobilistic partener din Germania, de exemplu, și le spuneți că ați rămas în pană, primul lucru pe care îl întreabă este dacă aveți scrisori de credit. Dacă le spuneți că nu, răspunsul va fi invariabil:
'If you call the partner auto club in Germany, for example, and tell them your car broke down, the first thing they ask is whether you have credit letters. If you say no, the answer will invariably be:'

Ne pare rău, dar nu venim
we.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad but no come.1ST.PL
'We're sorry, but we're not coming.'
(CRBS, ecoromB-s748372)

In (117), we can see that an entire fictive interaction is being simulated in a hypothetical space. In this space, there are two participants, namely the driver of a broken down car and an auto club in Germany. The situation focuses on what the answer may be if the driver asked for assistance. One of the two input spaces is represented by the situation in which a driver is interacting with an auto club. The second input space is that of the author writing the editorial in which the apology is created. However, most of the characteristics of the blended space are taken from the first input space; the only characteristic taken from the input space in which the author is writing is the topic the editorial is about, namely auto assistance abroad. The apology given for the fictive

offense of not assisting the driver starts out with the explicit expression of apology “ne pare rău,” (we.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad, ‘we’re sorry’) followed by “dar,” (“but”) and the clause “nu venim” (“we’re not coming”). The use of the plural form of the explicit expression of apology suggests that the apology is made in the name of the entire auto club, and not in the personal name of the person on the phone.

Through there were only three instances of fictive apologies, they nevertheless show that apologies can also occur in fictive interaction, in a blended space created by the author of the written piece.

5.2.3. Apologies in Quoted Interaction

Only 20 out of the 99 apologies in the written corpus occurred in quoted interaction. Four categories of apologies present in the written corpus were present in quoted interaction. The most frequent category was “Providing an explanation,” accounting for 60.00% of all apologies used in this type of interaction. This category was not present at all in written interaction. Each of the categories will be discussed next.

5.2.3.1. The Responsibility Continuum

As we have seen in the discussion of the responsibility continuum in written interaction, only the categories “Acknowledging responsibility” and “Denying responsibility” were present. However, in quoted interaction, all three categories forming the responsibility continuum were present. We will start, as we have in previous sections, with the “Acknowledging responsibility” end of the continuum. The apologies in this category were expressed by 5 different constructions. However, only one had two

occurrences, and therefore met the minimum requirement we set forth in the method section. The construction is given in Table 39.

Table 39

Construction Used to Acknowledge Responsibility in Quoted Interaction in the Written Romanian Corpus

Construction	English Equivalent	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (per million words)
[*îmi cer scuze că* CLAUSE *dar* CLAUSE]	[*I*.DAT *ask*.1ST.SG *pardons that* CLAUSE *but* CLAUSE]	2	0.09

An example of the [*îmi cer scuze că* CLAUSE *dar* CLAUSE] ([*I*.DAT *ask*.1ST.SG *pardons that* CLAUSE *but* CLAUSE]) is provided in (118).

(118) **„Îmi cer scuze că vă reţin mai**
I.DAT ask.1ST.SG pardons that you.2ND.PL.ACC keep.1ST.SG more

mult, dar bilanţul este necesar”
much but balance-sheet.DEFART is necessary

‘I apologize that I am keeping you longer, but the balance sheet is necessary.’
(CRBS, ecorom-s117681)

In this example, the writer is quoting a fragment from a dialogue with an accountant in which the accountant apologizes for keeping the author longer by using the explicit expression of apology “îmi cer scuze” (I.DAT ask.1ST.SG pardons, ‘I apologize’) followed by the acknowledgment in a clause, “că vă reţin mai mult” (“that I am keeping you longer”). Finally, the last part of the construction is introduced by the conjunction “dar” (“but”), which provides an explanation for the just acknowledged offense: “dar bilanţul este necesar” (“I apologize that I am keeping you longer, but the balance sheet is necessary”).

The presence of a clause with the verb conjugated in the first person would place this construction close to the "Acknowledging responsibility" end of the continuum. Though there is no pronoun present in the Romanian construction [*îmi cer scuze că* CLAUSE *dar* CLAUSE] ([*I*.DAT *ask*.1ST.SG *pardons that* CLAUSE *but* CLAUSE]), the first person reference is present in the verb, as verbs in Romanian have person and number suffixes, as the language is highly inflectional. Due to these morphological markings on the verb, the presence of an actual subject noun or pronoun is optional in Romanian. However, the construction also contains a clause introduced by "dar" ("but"). Since semantically the conjunction "dar" ("but") suggests a contradiction, the clause it introduces provides an explanation for the offense being acknowledged in the first clause. Due to the presence of this explanation, this construction is further away from the extreme end of the "Acknowledging responsibility" end of the continuum than other constructions containing only an acknowledgment of responsibility and no explanation.

The other end of the continuum is "Denying responsibility," which will be discussed next. The analysis of the data resulted in only one apology belonging to this category in quoted interaction. The possible construction used to express this apology was [*îmi pare rău dar* CLAUSE *şi nu pot* VERB-INF OBJ] ([*I*.DAT *seem*.3RD.SG *bad but* CLAUSE *and no can*.1ST.SG VERB-INF OBJ]). This construction is similar to another possible construction used in this category in fictive interaction in the written Romanian corpus, namely [*ne pare rău dar nu putem* VERB-INF OBJ] ([*we*.DAT *seem*.3RD.SG *bad but no can*.1ST.PL VERB-INF OBJ]). What is different about the [*îmi pare rău dar* CLAUSE *şi nu pot* VERB-INF OBJ] ([*I*.DAT *seem*.3RD.SG *bad but* CLAUSE *and no can*.1ST.SG VERB-INF OBJ]) is the existence of a clause introduced by "dar" ("but") between the explicit

expression of apology, “îmi pare rău” (I.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad, “I’m sorry”) and the modal verb “nu pot” (“cannot”) that expresses the denial. This can be seen in (119).

(119) Prima zi de lucru la Coca-Cola a debutat cu un telefon la companie, pentru a le spune
‘The first work day at Coca-Cola started with a phone call to the company to tell them’

“Îmi pare rău, dar soția mea
I.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad but wife.DEFART I.POSS.FEM

naşte şi nu pot să vin”
give-birth.3RD.SG and no can.1ST.SG SUBJPART come.SUBJ.1ST.SG

‘I’m sorry, but my wife is giving birth and I cannot come.’
(CRBS, ecoromB-s348407)

In this example, the explicit expression of apology “îmi pare rău” (I.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad, ‘I’m sorry’) is followed by both a clause “dar soția mea naşte” (“but my wife is giving birth”) and the modal verb “nu pot” (“I cannot”). Thus, the speaker first lays the responsibility on the fact that his wife is giving birth, and then explicitly denies responsibility for not showing up for work in the negative modal expression “nu pot să vin” (“I cannot come”).

Finally, the “Providing an explanation” category is somewhere in between “Acknowledging responsibility” and “Denying responsibility” on the responsibility continuum. This category was the most frequent one in quoted interaction, with 65.22% of the apologies. Also, this category had the greatest variety of possible constructions used to express these apologies. Unfortunately, there were enough instances to justify the existence of only one construction. The construction is given in Table 40.

Table 40

Construction Used to Provide an Explanation in Quoted Interaction in the Written Romanian Corpus

Construction	English Equivalent	Absolute Frequency	Relative Frequency (per million words)
[*ne pare rău dar* CLAUSE]	[*we*.DAT *seem*.3RD.SG *bad but* CLAUSE]	6	0.28

The construction [*ne pare rău dar* CLAUSE] ([*we*.DAT *seem*.3RD.SG *bad but* CLAUSE]) contains an explicit expression of apology followed by a clause introduced by "dar" ("but"), which is similar to constructions in spoken Romanian used to express apologies in the "Providing an explanation" category. An example of this construction is given in (120).

(120) **Ne pare rău, dar domnul preşedinte**
we.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad but mister.DEFART president

va fi toată ziua în întâlniri
want.AUX.3RD.SG be all.FEM day.DEFART in meetings

'We're sorry, but the president will be in meetings all day.'
(CRBS, ecoromB-s694324)

In this example, the president's press officer is apologizing in the name of his office that the president is not available using the explicit expression of apology "ne pare rău" (we.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad, "we're sorry") and provides the explanation "dar domnul preşedinte va fi toată ziua în întâlniri" ("but the president will be in meetings all day").

Now that we have discussed the different constructions used to express apologies in the "Acknowledging responsibility," "Providing an explanation," and "Denying responsibility" categories, we can place them on the responsibility continuum. Only

constructions occurring at least twice in the corpus are shown. Their position is represented graphically in Figure 10.

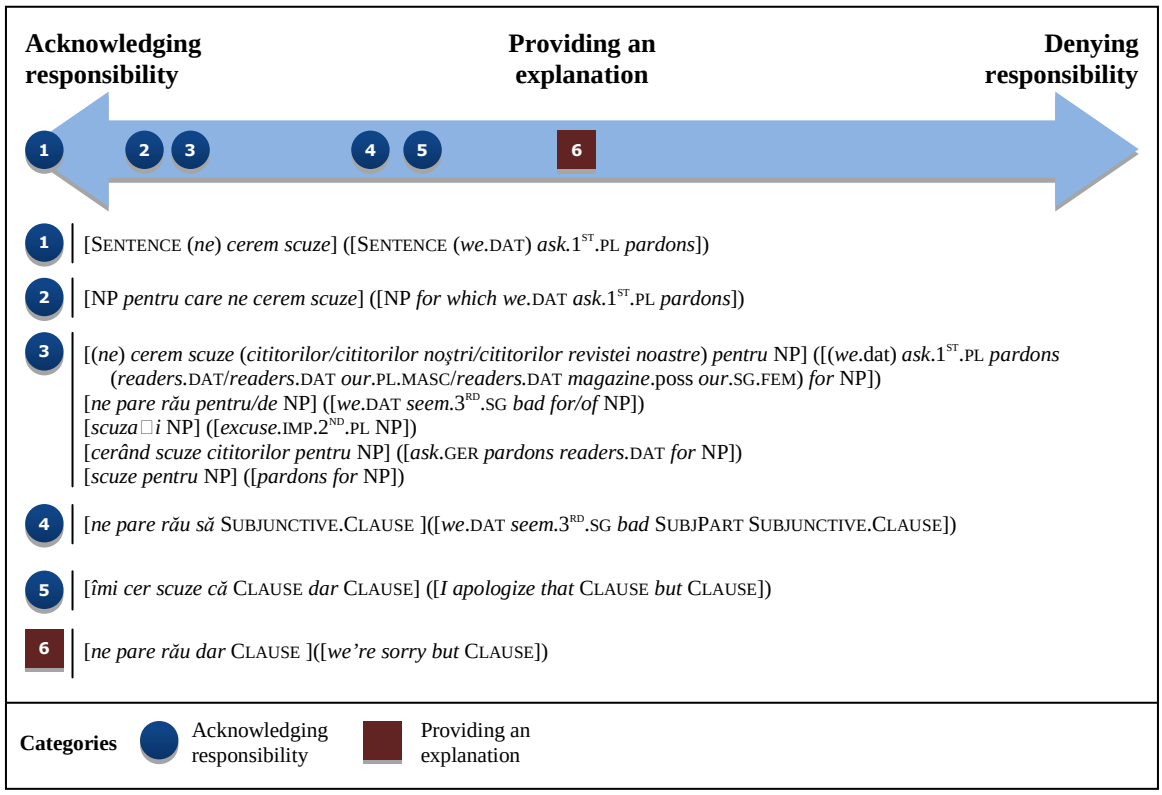

Figure 10. The placement of constructions on the responsibility continuum in written Romanian discourse

The two constructions that were introduced in Figure 10 after our discussion of apologies in quoted interaction are constructions 5 and 6. These two constructions are further away from the acknowledging responsibility end of the continuum. Also, the category "Providing an explanation" was only present in quoted interaction in the written corpus and in spoken discourse.

5.2.3.2. Standalone Apologies

The last category present in quoted interaction in the written Romanian corpus was that of "Standalone apologies." There was only one instance of this apology in the corpus, and therefore the construction used to express this apology is only a hypothetical one: [*iertați-mă*] ([*forgive*.IMP.2ND.PL *I*.ACC]). This construction was not used as a standalone apology in the spoken Romanian corpus. The apology using this construction is given in (121).

(121) Vrem să intrăm în patru labe şi cu
want.3RD.PL SUBJPART enter.3RD.PL in four legs and with

fundul gol, **iertați- mă**, în UE
bottom.DEFART naked forgive.2ND.PL I.ACC in EU

'We want to enter the EU on all fours and with a naked bottom, ***forgive me***.'
(CRBS, ecorom-s411721)

The apology "iertați-mă" (forgive.2ND.PL I.ACC, 'forgive me') in Example (121) is used to mend a speaking offense, namely that the speaker has used coarse language.

5.3. Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to answer the second question of the present study, that is what constructions are used to express explicit apologies in Romanian. In this section, we will summarize our main findings on apologies in Romanian and make a cross-linguistic comparison of the forms and functions of apologies in Romanian and English.

The revised taxonomy that was used for analyzing apologies in English proved useful for the analysis of apologies in Romanian, as well. Also, the categories of apologies found in English were also present in Romanian, except for "Co-constructed

apologies." However, the lack of this category does not necessarily mean that there are no co-constructed apologies in Romanian. Rather, this is due to the fact that the spoken Romanian corpus was a small one, and that it contained mostly media related discourse, and less spontaneous informal conversation found in the SBCSAE with spoken English. The presence of the other three categories that have not been previously reported in studies on apologies, namely "Repair apologies," "Interruption apologies," and "Fictive apologies" in both English and Romanian suggest that these categories are valid and can be used across languages.

Due to the fact that the Romanian and English corpora were of different sizes, it was not possible to compare raw frequencies of apology categories across the two languages. However, it was possible to compare the proportions of the different categories in the two languages. Thus, while "Acknowledging responsibility" was the most frequent category in both English and Romanian, the proportion of this was much larger in Romanian (74.55% of all apologies in Romanian) than in English (only 22.98%). "Providing an explanation" contained 13.64% of the apologies in Romanian, and 18.95% of those in English, whereas "Denying responsibility" contained 1.82% of the apologies in Romanian and 3.23% in English. In terms of the responsibility continuum, we can say that in Romanian apologies clustered more on the acknowledging responsibility end, whereas in English they spread somewhat more equally across the continuum.

Insofar as the use of the other categories is concerned, "Standalone apologies" had a much lower proportion in Romanian (2.73%) than in English (18.95%). This low percentage suggests that Romanian speakers prefer more elaborate apologies, which

seems to be confirmed by the large percentage of the "Acknowledging responsibility" category. The "Interruption apologies" category was only present in spoken discourse in both Romanian and English. This is not surprising, as even though we have shown that there is interaction in written discourse, interruptions only occur in face-to-face interaction, which is not possible in writing. "Repair apologies" were only present in the spoken Romanian corpus, but they were present in both spoken and written corpora in English. However, repair apologies were used differently in the written English corpus than in both Romanian and English spoken corpora, in that their use was intentional, meant to highlight the author's point or opinion in an editorial. This use was not found in the Romanian written corpus. Finally, apologies in the "Fictive apologies" category functioned in different contexts in the two languages. Thus, in English a specified individual was in a fictive interaction with the author of the written piece, whereas in Romanian the interaction was a hypothetical, generic one between speakers other than the author. The conclusion we can draw is that apologies in the two languages displayed both similarities and differences regarding the use of the different apology categories.

Insofar as the forms used to express apologies in Romanian are concerned, there was a great variety of constructions used in the different apology categories. In the case of spoken discourse, we discussed the different forms and only proposed hypothetical constructions due to the lack of enough examples that would justify the existence of the constructions. In the case of the written corpus, we have described actual constructions used to express apologies, as the larger corpus provided sufficient examples.

Looking at the specific constructions used in the two languages, we found that the constructions used in both spoken and written Romanian seem to be language specific.

Overall, the main difference between the way constructions are used in Romanian versus English was that Romanian uses different morphological forms of one and the same lexical item to express different degrees of formality, whereas English uses different lexical items to achieve such distinctions. For example, in Romanian, the verb in the explicit expression of apology was used in the second person singular form ("iartă-mă," forgive.IMP.2ND.SG I.ACC, 'forgive (sg) me') to express an informal apology, and in the second person plural form ("iertați-mă," forgive.IMP.2ND.PL I.ACC, 'forgive (pl) me') to express a formal apology. Instead, formality in English was achieved by using the explicit expression of apology "I'm sorry" in less formal situations versus "I apologize" in formal situations, for example. This difference has also resulted in greater variety of forms used in different constructions in Romanian as opposed to English. Overall, formal apologies were overwhelmingly more frequent in the Romanian corpora, whereas the proportion of formal versus informal apologies was more equal in the English corpora. Furthermore, the presence of an indirect object pronoun in the explicit expressions of apology is optional in Romanian, both "îmi cer scuze" (I.DAT ask.1ST.SG pardons, 'I apologize') and "cer scuze" (ask.1ST.SG pardons, 'I apologize') being used, which also contributed to the variety of constructions. These findings confirm claims of the language specificity of constructions made by studies comparing Russian to English (Gurevich, 2010) as well as Thai to English (Timyam & Bergen, 2010).

Differences between the two languages could also be found in the way forms were used within specific functions. One notable difference was that unlike the apologies belonging to the "Standalone apologies" category in both spoken and written English, which used a variety of lexical items (see Table 21 in section 4.2.2), the standalone

apologies were construed using only one lexical item in spoken Romanian and another one in written Romanian. In spoken Romanian, the expression used was "îmi pare rău" (I.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad, 'I'm sorry'), with the variation "ne pare rău" (we.DAT seem.3RD.SG bad, 'we're sorry') when the apology was uttered on behalf of more than one person. In written Romanian, "iertați-mă" (forgive.2ND.PL I.ACC, 'forgive (pl) me') was used.

There were also differences in the types of constructions used to acknowledge responsibility in the written corpora. Thus, unlike in English, where the acknowledgement was given in the form of a gerund clause, most of the constructions in the written Romanian corpus expressed the acknowledgment in the form of a noun phrase. However, according to Langacker (1991) both gerund clauses and noun phrases are nominalizations, and therefore function similarly as opposed to verbs, which describe processes. Besides these types of constructions, there was also one construction in which the acknowledgment was expressed in a subjunctive clause, [*ne pare rău să* SUBJUNCTIVE.CLAUSE] ([*we*.DAT *seem*.3RD.SG *bad* SUBJPART SUBJUNCTIVE.CLAUSE]), a type of clause specific to Romanian and romance languages in general.

There were, nonetheless, some characteristics of constructions used to apologize in Romanian that were similar to constructions in English. For example, the pattern of the constructions used to express interruption apologies was the same in the two languages, in that there was first an utterance produced by one speaker followed by a second utterance produced by a different speaker that interrupted the first one. Also, both cataphoric apologies (the interruption starting with the explicit expression of apology) and anaphoric apologies (the expression of apology being uttered after the interruption)

were used in both Romanian and English. What was different in the way interruption apologies were expressed in Romanian as opposed to English was that in Romanian there was a discourse marker at the start of the turn of the speaker who is interrupting. In some instances this was “mhî,” (“uhm”), in other instances it was “deci” (“so”). Another similarity between the two languages was the use of the conjunction “dar” (“but”) in Romanian and “but” in English to introduce clauses that provide an explanation for the offense that lead to the apology.

The written Romanian corpus also contained three types of interaction, namely written, fictive, and quoted interaction, as did the written English corpus. In both languages, the writer addressed apologies directly to the reader in what we called written interaction. Fauconnier and Turner’s (1996, 1998) theory of conceptual integration and blending helped us explain fictive apologies occurring in hypothetical blended spaces in both Romanian and English in what we called fictive interaction. Finally, apologies occurring in quoted interaction were similar to those occurring in spoken discourse in both languages. However, there were also differences in the use of apologies in written discourse in the two languages. Unlike in English, where some constructions were found in both written and spoken discourse, there were no constructions in Romanian that were used in both types of discourse. Another difference between the two languages was that while most written apologies occurred in quoted interaction in English, most apologies occurred in written interaction in Romanian. The most frequent context in which apologies in written interaction occurred in Romanian was that of the author or the magazine apologizing and acknowledging responsibility for errors in the publication or

for issues readers had with the magazine subscription. This use was not present in English written discourse.

In conclusion, when compared to English, Romanian displayed both similarities and differences in the way apologies are expressed. However, further studies are needed on a larger corpus in order to confirm the existence of some of the proposed constructions in Romanian.

6. Conclusions

The aim of the present study was to investigate the construal of explicit apologies in American English and Romanian from a Construction Grammar perspective. A discourse analysis methodology using corpora was used to establish the constructions expressing apologies in the two languages. It was our claim that such an approach would allow for a more effective way of distinguishing the different meanings that apologies can have in different contexts. Also, we investigated both spoken and written discourse, as the latter was neglected in previous studies on apologies that focused mostly on spoken language. This chapter will summarize the main findings of the study and highlight their implications for the study of apologies and other related fields. Finally, we will discuss the limitations of the present study and provide suggestions for possible future research.

6.1. Summary of Main Findings

The first research question of the present paper aimed at establishing the constructions used to express explicit apologies in English in both spoken and written discourse. One of the first findings of the present study relates to the way apologies have typically been categorized. We saw in the early stages of the data analysis that using the taxonomies established by previous studies on apologies (Bergman & Kasper, 1993; Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Trosborg, 1987) did not allow us to properly distinguish between the different meanings apologies can have in natural contexts of use. The most

problematic apology strategy used in prior studies turned out to be the Illocutionary Force Indicating Device, which in the corpora of actual usage examined in this study contained apologies that could not be justified as all belonging to a single category. The Construction Grammar approach combined with the analysis of apologies in the larger discourse in which they appeared allowed us to better differentiate the meaning of such apologies and discover four categories of apologies that had not been reported by previous studies on apologies.

Thus, we found that apologies are not always uttered by a single person, and that they can actually be co-constructed in the discourse by several participants in the interaction, and they possibly often are. We have called these apologies "Co-constructed apologies." We also found that some apologies seemingly belonging to the IFID category also functioned at the discourse level as part of repairs or interruptions. We have called these apologies "Repair apologies" and "Interruption apologies," respectively. Finally, some apologies occurred in fictive interactions to mend fictive offenses and therefore functioned differently than real apologies. We have called these apologies "Fictive apologies," as they were not real and only occurred in a hypothetical blended space created by the speaker in a type of interaction that Pascual (2006) called fictive interaction. Such fictive apologies can best be explained in the context of a cognitive linguistics approach to apologies, mental spaces and blending (Fauconnier & Turner, 1996, 1998) being theories that proved very useful in the analysis of such apologies. These new categories can only be found by analyzing actual language in use and by taking into consideration the interactional context in which they occur. Such apologies cannot be elicited by means of traditional data collection instruments such as Discourse

Completion Tests or role-plays, as, for example, there is no need for repair nor are there interruptions in a DCT or any written instruments for that matter.

We also saw that categories such as "Acknowledging responsibility," "Providing an explanation," and "Denying responsibility" are not the discrete clear-cut categories that previous studies have assumed. Theoretical frameworks such as prototype theory (Geeraerts, 1988; Rosch, 1973, 1978), conceptual categorization (Barsalou, 1983, 1985), and radial network of cognitive typologies (Brugman & Lakoff, 1988) allowed us to consider gradual membership of apologies in these categories. We found evidence for a responsibility continuum ranging from acknowledgment of responsibility to its denial, with the category of "Providing an explanation" being somewhere in the middle. We found that the choice of the construction used to express an apology contributes to the placement of the apology in a specific place on the continuum.

Based on analyzing actual language in use, our findings contradict studies on apologies using DCTs and role-plays as data collection methods, which claimed that the isolated IFID was the most often used category in both English (Olshtain & Cohen, 1983; Owen, 1983; Trosborg, 1995) and other languages (Barnlund & Yoshioka, 1990; Blum-Kulka & Olshtain, 1984; Trosborg, 1987). It is true that all the apologies we discussed contained an explicit expression of apology (which previous studies labeled as IFID). However, we found that such expressions of apology were most of the time part of a more elaborate apology construction, and there were only a few instances when such expressions occurred by themselves as standalone apologies. We found that the apology expressions are only part of the meaning expressed by the entire construction. Based on a

revised categorization of apologies, the category “Acknowledging responsibility” seemed to be the most frequently used in both spoken and written English.

Besides these findings related to the categorization of apologies, we also found a new type of offense requiring an apology besides the existing types of offenses described in the literature. This type consisted of discourse offenses, which occurred in the corpora we analyzed when a speaker violated the expected rules of discourse. Such offenses were different from speaking offenses, as it was not something speakers said, but rather when or how they said it that was contradictory to the expectations of discourse.

Insofar as apologies in written discourse are concerned, we found that the context in which they appear is interactive, in spite of the fact that they occurred in written discourse. In fact, we distinguished three different types of interaction in written discourse, namely written, fictive, and quoted. Written interaction referred to those situations in which the author of the written piece addressed the reader directly. Fictive interaction occurred when the author was simulating a conversation with a third party different from the reader. The apologies in this situation were not real, but fictive. Finally, quoted interaction referred to those situations in which the author was quoting an interaction that had occurred in spoken discourse.

Comparing constructions used in the different types of interactions in written discourse to those used in spoken discourse, we found that most apology constructions were used distinctively in spoken or in written discourse. This suggests the fact that apologies are used differently in the two types of discourse. However, two constructions, namely [*I'm sorry* SUBJ *have to / can’t /could not* VERB-INF OBJ] and [*I'm sorry* | UTTERANCE: EXPLANATION], were the only constructions found in both spoken discourse

and quoted interaction in the written discourse. Such similarities between quoted interaction and spoken discourse are mostly due to the fact that the apologies in written interaction were mostly representations of spoken interaction.

Apologies in written and fictive interaction were used differently than those in spoken discourse, and the constructions expressing them seemed to be specific to the type of interaction in which they occurred, which were not found in spoken discourse. Thus, the constructions expressing apologies in fictive interaction were the only ones collocating with proper names, which distinguished them from constructions used in spoken language. These names were needed to identify the addressee of the apology, as they were not addressed to the reader, as was the case with apologies in written interaction, nor to somebody present in the interaction as with apologies in spoken discourse.

Finally, apologies in fictive and quoted interaction are more similar to the apologies that previous studies using Discourse Completion Tests (DCTs) and interviews reported. The similarity seems to stem from the fact that apologies in fictive interaction represent what somebody might say if they were in a specific situation, which is what DCTs required respondents to do. This similarity also makes sense considering that DCTs are written instruments, and fictive interaction also occurred in written discourse. Also, some apologies in quoted interaction reproduced interactions from spoken discourse from memory, and some types of data collection instruments such as role-plays and interviews require respondents to report on apologies they remember having used or heard. However, our analysis has shown that apologies in spoken interaction are different from those occurring in fictive and quoted interaction. Such findings suggest that

apologies collected through data elicitation methodologies reflect only partially the way apologies are actually used in natural spoken language.

While the first research question aimed at investigating the constructions used to express explicit apologies in English, the second research question examined the constructions used to apologize in Romanian. While the categories used to analyze apologies in English were found to be useful to categorize the ones in Romanian, as well, the specific constructions used to express apologies were specific to Romanian. This confirms claims and previous findings that constructions are language specific (Boas, 2010; Croft & Cruse, 2004; Gurevich, 2010; Timyam & Bergen, 2010). Thus, while English used different lexical items in constructions to distinguish levels of formality, Romanian used different forms of the same lexical item to accomplish this. This is possible due to the highly inflectional nature of Romanian. For example, in Romanian, the verb in the explicit expression of apology was used in the second person singular form ("iartă-mă," forgive.IMP.2ND.SG I.ACC, 'forgive (sg) me') to express an informal apology, and in the second person plural form ("iertați-mă," forgive.IMP.2ND.PL I.ACC, 'forgive (pl) me') to express a formal apology. Such an analysis of morphology is standard for inflectional languages, and the morphology of the explicit expression of responsibility is a recognized cue that indicates status and formality.

Not all categories of apologies found in English were present in Romanian. Most notably, "Co-constructed apologies" were not found in Romanian. This does not mean, however, that there are no such apologies in Romanian. Their lack is most likely due to the small size of the Romanian corpus and the fact that the spontaneous interaction in which this type of apology occurred in English was not frequent in the Romanian corpus.

The responsibility continuum was an effective tool of analysis in Romanian, as well, for both spoken and written discourse. Similar to English, the most frequent category of apologies in the Romanian corpus was also "Acknowledging responsibility." This contradicts our previous findings on apologies in Romanian using a Discourse Completion Test (DCT) to collect data, where we reported that categories denying responsibility were favored over those acknowledging it (Demeter, 2006).

Finally, insofar as apologies in written Romanian discourse are concerned, the three-fold distinction between written, fictive, and quoted interaction was also observed in Romanian. Unlike in English, where most written apologies occurred in quoted interaction, they mostly occurred in written interaction in Romanian. Furthermore, most of the written interaction apologies had a specialized use specific to the genre of editorials, namely the author apologizing for errors occurring in previous issues. Insofar as fictive apologies are concerned, they functioned differently in the two languages. In English, a specified individual was in a fictive interaction with the author of the written piece, whereas in Romanian the interaction was a hypothetical, generic one between speakers other than the author.

These findings have multiple implications for the study of apologies and also for the theoretical framework used in our analysis. These implications will be discussed next.

6.2. Implications of the Study

The present study contributes to the knowledge in the study of apologies and in the field of pragmatics in general. Thus, we found new categories of apologies that have not been previously reported, which shows that analyzing language in use can yield forms and functions that contribute to creating a picture of how this speech act is used in both

English and Romanian. Our findings also show that discourse analysis using corpora is an effective way of analyzing apologies in real language, creating a picture of this speech act that can be different than the one reported by studies using elicited data. We have seen that apologies occurring in fictive and written interaction were more similar to those collected through DCTs by previous studies on apologies, and different than those occurring in spoken discourse. These findings suggest that collecting spoken discourse by means of a written instrument influences the types of apologies provided by participants.

Our findings also have implications for developing and furthering the Construction Grammar theory. Most Construction Grammar theoreticians have looked at how constructions function at the level of the sentence (Croft, 2002; Croft & Cruse, 2004; Goldberg, 1995, 2006). Only recently studies have investigated how constructions can be used at the discourse level (Östman, 2005) and in interactive discourse (Fried & Östman, 2005). However, those studies have only investigated how the meaning of some constructions, mostly particles, can only be understood by analyzing the larger discourse in which they occur. Those studies did not explicitly address constructions existing at the discourse level, but suggested that grammatical patterns can be established at a level above that of the sentence. The findings of the present study provide evidence for the existence of discourse level constructions in the case of co-constructed, repair, and interruption apologies. Such findings contribute to making Construction Grammar a theory applicable to a wider range of grammatical contexts that span beyond that of the sentence level.

6.3. Limitations and Future Research

The present study also has some limitations. Unfortunately, the spoken Romanian corpus was a small one, as there is a lack of an extensive spoken Romanian corpus. The size of the corpus did not allow for a comprehensive analysis of how apologies are construed in Romanian. Consequently, the constructions discussed in the case of spoken Romanian discourse are only possible, hypothetical constructions, as there was not enough evidence to justify their existence. Further studies on spoken Romanian are needed in order to confirm the existence of these constructions.

Furthermore, the corpora used were focused on spontaneous interaction and media interactions. Some of the findings of these studies were shown to be genre specific. A corpus with a different content may display different results. Consequently, future research is also needed in order to cover as wide a range of types of interaction as possible.

Finally, the present study only investigated explicit apologies, which means that all apologies in our analysis contained an explicit expression of apology, such as “I’m sorry” or “excuse me.” There are, nonetheless, numerous apologies that do not contain an explicit expression of apologies. However, one of the limitations of a corpus analysis is that the searches performed cannot cover all possible types of apologies, which is why we have only focused on explicit apologies, which are possible to search for. Future research may try to find apologies that are not explicit by using knowledge accumulated by studies using elicited data if a means to search for such apologies is discovered. This might be possible in the case of extensively tagged corpora. Also, a search for other formulaic expressions besides the ones used in this study (the choice of which was limited due to

the small size of the Romanian corpus) may contribute to creating a more elaborate picture of how apologies are used. Finally, further analysis of social and contextual variables of the apologies could also constitute an area for future research.

The limitations of this study notwithstanding, we believe that the present study brings a substantial contribution to the study of apologies and to pragmatics in general. Our use of theories such as Construction Grammar, mental spaces, and blending in relation to pragmatics shows that new emerging theories can be very valuable in the study of pragmatics.

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APPPENDICES

Appendix A. List of Abbreviations used in the Glosses

1ST	First person
2ND	Second person
3RD	Third person
ACC	Accusative case
AUX	Auxiliary verb
DAT	Dative case
DEFART	Definite article
DEGR	Degree
FEM	Feminine
FRAGM	Fragment
GER	Gerund
IMP	Imperative
IMPERF	Imperfect
MASC	Masculine
ACC	Accusative case
PASTPART	Past participle
PL	Plural
POSS	Possessive case

SG	Singular
SUBJPART	Subjunctive
SUBJPART	Subjunctive particle
VOC	Vocative case
WEAK	Weak form

Appendix B. List of Corpus Abbreviations Used in Citing Examples

CORV	"Corpus de română vorbită" – CORV (Corpus of Spoken Romanian) (Dascălu Jinga, 2002)
IONESCU	Ionescu-Ruxăndoiu (2002)
CRBS	Corpuseye Romanian Business Corpus (Greavu, 2007)
SBCSAE	Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (Du Bois, et al., 2000; Du Bois, et al., 2003; Du Bois & Englebretson, 2004, 2005)
COCA	Corpus of Contemporary American English (Davies, 2008)

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Scope and Method of Study: The aim of the present study is to investigate the construal of explicit apologies in American English and Romanian from a Construction Grammar perspective. A discourse analysis methodology using spoken and written corpora was used to establish the constructions expressing apologies in the two languages.

Findings and Conclusions: Findings show that a Construction Grammar approach and the analysis of apologies in natural contexts of use at the discourse level allow for distinguishing uses of apologies that have not been previously reported by studies using elicited data. These uses include co-constructed apologies, repair apologies, interruption apologies, and fictive apologies, which were used in both English and Romanian. We have also found that other categories of apologies reported in prior studies, such as acknowledging responsibility, providing an explanation, and denying responsibility form a responsibility continuum, with the choice of construction used to apologize contributing to the position of the apology on the continuum. Apologies were also found to occur in written discourse in contexts that evoke interaction. We categorized these contexts into written, fictive, and quoted interaction. Finally, different constructions were used in spoken and written discourse in both languages.

Although the functional categories used to analyze apologies in English were found to be useful to categorize the ones in Romanian, as well, the specific constructions used to express apologies were specific to Romanian. This confirms claims and previous findings that constructions are language specific. While English used different lexical items in constructions to distinguish levels of formality, Romanian used different morphological forms of the same lexical item. This is possible due to the highly inflectional nature of Romanian.

The results of the study indicate that discourse analysis using corpora is an effective way of analyzing apologies in real language, creating a picture of this speech act that can be different than the one reported by studies using elicited data.

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