

I just wanna apologize': The socio-interactional meanings of 'just' in defendants' apologies

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This paper examines the socio-interactional meanings of *just* in defendants' apologies at sentencing. The object of focus is the restrictive meaning that *just* applies to affective stance rather than to propositional content. Three main classes of meaning are identified: 1) *just* restricts a metapragmatic frame of speaking; 2) *just* restricts defendants' desiderata; and 3) *just* restricts a reference to the offense, thereby minimizing the offense. The paper addresses the implications for defendant stance that *just* conveys and proposes that, as a deictic index, *just* functions metapragmatically to draw attention to the speaker as a speaker, perhaps foregrounding individual identity.