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The cultural foundations of denials of hate speech in Hungarian broadcast talk

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Abstract
In Hungarian public talk, 'hate speech' (*gyűlöletbeszéd*) is a term commonly used to morally sanction the talk of others. The article describes two dominant interpretive strategies Hungarian speakers use to identify instances of 'hate speech'. Motivated by an interest in the observable use of the term, the author draws on speech codes theory to investigate how public speakers use the two competing meanings of 'hate speech' to achieve moral challenges and counter-challenges in broadcast talk. The author finds that Hungarian speakers accused of 'hate speech' can effectively accomplish denials in response to actual or anticipated normative challenges by opting for an alternative meaning of 'hate speech'. The article concludes with a discussion of implications for speech codes theory, the discourse analysis of denials, and antiracist action.

Keywords
Alignment, antiracism, cultural norm, culture, denial, discursive force, hate speech, rhetoric, speech code

In recent years, accusations of 'hate speech' (*gyűlöletbeszéd*) have become routine occurrences in Hungarian public discourse. The Hungarian term, a metaphrase of the English term, made its first public appearance in a 1996 interview published in the Hungarian daily newspaper *Népszabadság* (Pogonyi, 1996).[1] In the interview, Hungarian social psychologist György Csepeli characterized the publicly made anti-Semitic remarks of Albert Szabó, the leader of a small neo-Nazi group, as instances of 'hate speech'. Since its first appearance in the Hungarian language, 'hate speech' has been regularly used to

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negatively evaluate the communicative conduct of particular individuals or groups. Such evaluations, or accusations, have also been regularly denied by those whose talk was cast as an example of 'hate speech'.

An ethnographically informed cultural account of Hungarian 'hate speech' must map the term's meanings relevant to Hungarian speakers. Such an account assumes that 1) the meanings of communicative practice itself and the discursive units (e.g., terms) that constitute that practice will vary across cultural contexts, and that 2) the locus of the meaning of particular discursive units is their context-bound use (Carbaugh, 2007; Carbaugh et al., 1997; Philipsen, 1992). Relevant contexts in which communicative practice acquires meanings include the sequentially organized environment of a specific interaction and the shared experience of a cultural group (Fitch, 1998). The present analysis will focus on the use of the term 'hate speech' in the interactional environment of alignment episodes (Hall, 1991; Stokes and Hewitt, 1976) and in the socio-cultural context of Hungarian mass media (radio, television, podcasts).

The cultural analysis of the use of particular terms requires the temporary suspension of known meanings of those terms, and of the desire to define them from the analyst's point of view. The act of defining is, after all, but one type of patterned communicative practice in which terms acquire meaning. Zarefsky (1998) identifies definition as an argumentative act. The analyses presented here depart from the vast majority of scholarly work in that it is not motivated by a desire to fix the meaning of 'hate speech'. During the past two decades, discourse analysts (Downing, 1999; Essed, 1997; Josey, 2010; Kurteš, 2004; Lillian, 2007; Whillock, 1995) have taken it upon themselves to define the term 'hate speech' for the purpose of addressing social injustice (especially racial, sexual, and gender discrimination) and bringing about social change. Only few scholars (e.g. Chiang, 2010; Pál, 2006) dedicated themselves to studying the situated use of 'hate speech' in public discourse, and the social consequentiality of that use.

Why study the situated use of 'hate speech' in a particular community of speakers? Why not pursue the line of scholarship which tends to the urgent need of identifying acts of 'hate speech' using theoretically, morally, and politically informed definitions of the term? The present article offers two responses to these questions. First, 'hate speech', as a deeply evaluative term for communicative conduct, has an important role in participants' attempts to regulate political discourse. Accusations of 'hate speech' can invite negative sanctions and, as a result, public speakers must find ways to design responses to accusations in order to restore their public face (Chiang, 2010). Studies of a related phenomenon, denials of 'racism' (Condor et al., 2006; Rapley, 2001; Seidel, 1988; Van Dijk, 1984, 1992a, 1992b, 1993; Wetherell and Potter, 1992), have shown that accusation–denial sequences provide speakers who wish not to assume responsibility for the expression of racist attitudes and beliefs with powerful rhetorical strategies to thwart accusations *and* to continue to express racist attitudes and beliefs. Because rhetorical strategies and moves are constructed from locally available and meaningful cultural resources (Carbaugh and Wolf, 1999; Tracy, 2002), the study of the cultural foundations of normative challenges and counter-challenges is a useful contribution to the existing discourse analytic literature. Second, as discourse analysts (Every and Augoustinos, 2007; Wetherell and Potter, 1992) have already pointed out, the study of the rhetoric of 'racism' has important consequences for antiracist activism. This article argues that the close analysis of alignment episodes featuring 'hate speech' has similarly important implications.

The contested meanings of Hungarian 'hate speech'

The present study of the use of 'hate speech' in normative challenges builds, in part, on a larger ethnographic project. The author conducted a total of one year of fieldwork in Budapest, Hungary between January 2004 and March 2007, with the aim of mapping various competing meaning of 'hate speech' in Hungarian political discourse, and how those meanings were used by public speakers for strategic ends. Data collected for this study included television and radio broadcasts and internet podcasts featuring discussions of 'hate speech' (93 pages of transcripts), print media (487 newspaper articles), participant observation of public events (antiracist and neo-Nazi rallies and public meetings) yielding 124 pages of fieldnotes, 8 semi-structured ethnographic interviews with Hungarian public figures, and official transcripts of 9 parliamentary committee meetings where 'hate speech'-related legislation was debated.

In the course of fieldwork, the author learned not to expect much consensus about the meaning of 'hate speech' (*gyűlöletbeszéd*) in public interaction, especially in exchanges where one party was accused of having spoken 'hate speech' or anticipated the accusation of 'hate speech'. The only aspect of 'hate speech' public speakers in the Hungarian context seemed to agree on was the term's interpretation as a type of speech that violated the norms of public conduct. During the height of the 'hate speech' controversy in Hungary (2000–6), political actors made frequent use of the charge of 'hate speech' to achieve moral high ground in relation to political adversaries and their political groups (Pál, 2006). The frequency of these charges was such that it began to make sense to speak of political or party-based 'hate speech' as a distinct category of talk in Hungarian public discourse (Gerő, 2002: 68). In the Hungarian context, the referential meaning of 'hate speech' had expanded significantly in the process of use. Besides its meaning as discriminatory talk directed at disadvantaged racial, ethnic, or sexual minorities, Hungarian 'hate speech' became 'a concept for speech intended to degrade a group of people based on their voting preferences, to intimidate a politician, a single person symbolizing a group, or to harshly criticize a party, a church, a medium, or even an idea' (Pál, 2006: 19, fn 38). As a result of the proliferation of referential meanings, and because of the term's high moral charge, the 'real' meaning of 'hate speech' became the subject of 'permanent contention for definition' (p. 19).

The contention typically played out, and continues to play out, between speakers endorsing one of two interpretations of 'hate speech' in Hungarian public talk. The first of these, the *content-oriented interpretation*, is based on the argument that particular types of content (such as discriminatory racist or sexist statements) define public utterances as 'hate speech'. The following definition exemplifies this interpretive orientation: '[hate speech occurs] when someone, in front of a greater or smaller public, makes negative, derogatory statements that incite to hatred and call for discrimination against someone else primarily on the basis of their membership in a particular group'[2] (Újhely, 2003). This interpretation does not consider the speaker's feeling of hatred a defining component of 'hate speech'. In contrast, a *tone-oriented interpretation* does when it posits that 'hate speech' is public talk characterized by a hateful tone that provides a window on a hateful self:

> As an emotion, hatred belongs to humans' core selves. We are humans because we have feelings. [. . .] However, every society and every culture is characterized by the cultural forms that they use when they allow manifestations of the instinctive emotional world. [. . .] how that instinct is expressed in the public sphere is culturally regulated to a great extent. [. . .] Hatred is acceptable, human. Hate speech, in my view, is unacceptable.[3] (Élet és Irodalom Online, 2004)

As an emotion, the interpretation suggests, hatred is only one among a variety of human emotions. However, when expressing hatred in public, a hateful speaker commits a dual norm violation by breaking the communicative rules of the 'public sphere' and by failing to contain his or her 'instinctive emotional world' according to local 'cultural forms'. From this perspective, 'hate speech' is best understood as the breakdown of civility.

In this article, it will be argued that the coexistence of the two interpretations in Hungarian public talk functions as a useful discursive resource for speakers who wish to thwart direct or anticipated charges of 'hate speech'. The following two sections identify the theoretical and methodological foundations of a cultural approach to normative challenge–counter-challenge sequences and the role of the competing meanings of 'hate speech' in those sequences.

Theoretical background

One defining intellectual pursuit of the ethnography of communication is to theorize how culture shapes observable communicative conduct. Speech codes theory (Philipsen, 1992, 1997; Philipsen et al., 2005) proposes, inter alia, that as long as interlocutors make use of a shared speech code or codes – that is, 'system[s] of socially-constructed symbols and meanings, premises, and rules, pertaining to communicative conduct' (Philipsen et al., 2005: 57) – in a particular episode of interaction, interlocutors will be able to predict, explain, and control the *form* of interaction about the intelligibility, prudence, and morality of communicative conduct. Philipsen (1997) names this element of speech codes theory the discursive force proposition. The discursive force of a speech code becomes especially important in episodes of talk where one speaker negatively evaluates another's communicative conduct and the target of the criticism formulates a response. Due to the discursive force of a speech code, interaction addressing such evaluations will assume a predictable range of forms. Hall's (1988/1989, 1991) description of these forms will be discussed below.

The present article focuses on moments of broadcast interaction in which speakers invoke not one but two competing norms[4] to challenge the moral status of a participant's conduct. The author asks: how do participants of alignment episodes featuring accusations of 'hate speech' mobilize competing speech codes guiding the interpretation of the term to formulate normative challenges and counter-challenges? Norms are interpreted here as 1) a subset of speech codes, 2) as culturally variable discursive resource speakers can invoke in evaluating others' socially problematic acts, resources that 3) shape but do not determine speakers' actual conduct (Hall, 1988/1989, 1991; Philipsen, 1990). Hymes (1972) distinguishes two types of cultural norms: norms guiding speakers' production of talk and norms guiding speakers' interpretation of talk. Ethnography of communication research demonstrates that on occasion speakers can sometime choose among competing codes in order to achieve a variety of communicative ends (e.g., Baxter, 1993; Carbaugh, 1996; Coutu, 2000, 2008; Covarrubias, 2000; Huspek and Kendall, 1991).

Data and method of analysis

The analyses and interpretations presented in this article are grounded in a corpus of broadcast talk that the author had collected in the course of the larger ethnographic research project described above. The corpus of data used for the present article consisted of 16 naturally bound episodes of broadcast talk featuring 'hate speech' as a topical focus of conversation. Eleven of these episodes were taken from televised talk shows, three from radio broadcasts, and two from podcasts available on the internet. The length of episodes ranged from 2 to 52 minutes. The combined length of all episodes was 218 minutes. The selection of data was guided by the methodological assumption that cultural norms are best retrieved from situated interaction (Covarrubias, 2008). Transcriptions of Hungarian discourse follow conventions used in the *Handbook of Language and Social Interaction* (Fitch and Sanders, 2005). References to line numbers in the text refer to the Hungarian data, and not the English translation.

The basic unit of analysis was the alignment episode, that is, the type of interactional episode in which the appropriateness of a particular instance of conduct is discussed in the light of a normative challenge (Hall, 1991; Stokes and Hewitt, 1976). Seven alignment episodes were identified within the larger corpus of interaction in which 'hate speech' was used to challenge the appropriateness of a speaker's communicative conduct.

Building on the discursive force proposition in speech codes theory, Hall (1991) distinguishes eight possible response types to normative challenges that invoke consensual norms in alignment episodes. The first group of responses comprises five types of counter-challenge: *negotiation of legitimacy* (questioning the existence of communal consensus about the norm), *negotiation of behavior* (questioning whether the act in question had physically occurred), *negotiation of action* (questioning the challenger's correct interpretation of the act), *negotiation of responsibility* (questioning the responsibility of the person challenged), and *normative priorities* (questioning whether the person challenged was following a higher norm). The second group includes three modes of acquiescence to the challenge: *re-doing* the offensive act, *explicit apology*, or *offering to make good* the problematic consequences. Using Hall's classificatory system as a heuristic framework, the range of discourse options available to Hungarian speakers in the selected alignment episodes are investigated.

'Hate speech' in alignment episodes in Hungarian broadcast talk

The following three excerpts demonstrate three types of counter-challenges that build on the coexistence of two speech codes guiding the interpretation of 'hate speech' in Hungarian broadcast discourse. In the first type of counter-challenge, the accused party posits a contrast between the two interpretations and opts to pursue one and not the other. In the second type, the accuser and the accused co-construct the contrast between the two interpretations and then use one or the other to formulate a challenge and a counter-challenge. The third type of counter-challenge uses one interpretation of 'hate speech' to preempt an anticipated normative challenge based on the other dominant interpretation. The first two types of counter-challenges are directed at co-present accusers; the third type is designed for non-present accusers.

Excerpt 1 demonstrates a speaker's response to a charge of 'hate speech' where the response draws on the contrast between the two interpretations of the focal term outlined above. A guest on the televised talk show 'The Freedom of Speech' (*A szólás szabadsága*) responds to a challenge according to which his essay about an alleged instance of 'hate speech' itself qualifies as 'hate speech'. The evidence supporting the charge is that the essay discriminates against and stigmatizes those who disagree with the guest's interpretation and moral evaluation of 'hate speech'.

Excerpt 1, from 'The Freedom of Speech', 16 November 2003, 21:55

Host:	↑Tamás Gáspár Miklóst azért ↑hadd	But let me ask Miklós Tamás
	kérdezzem meg hogy (0.2) (·h)	Gáspár,
	↑gyűlöletbeszédre egyébként	should one respond to hate
	↑lehet egy (·h) mondjuk (·h)	speech
	gyűlölködésre alkalmas írással	with an essay suitable for
	fe↑lel↓ni.	inciting hatred?
Guest:	↑Milyen írásra gondol?	What essay do you have in mind?
Host:	↑Hát az ↓ön írására. (·h)	Well, your essay.
Guest:	((raised pitch marking resentful	
	tone))[Ezt kikérem magamnak]	This is preposterous.
Host:	[Mer azért az ↑olyan]fajta	Because it
	felhívásokat tartalmazott, amely	contained the type of statements
	felhívások nyomán mondjuk ↑mások	that could lead others
	gondolhatják azt, (·hh) hogy ön	to think that you
	is kirekeszt ↑ön is megbélyegez.	too discriminate, you too
	(0.2)	stigmatize.
Guest:	↑Én (.) ö: ↑bizonyos magatartások	I called for political action
	és politikai (.) vonalak (.)	against particular behaviors and
	ellen (.)↑politikai aktívitásra	political orientations,
	serkentettem (·hh) egy szabad	as a free citizen of a free
	állam szabad polgára. ↑Itt ebben	country. There is no
	nincsen >semmiféle<	hate speech in this whatsoever,
	gyűlöletbeszéd >különben is a<	and besides let's not use the
	gyűlöletbeszéd szót ne használjuk	word hate speech
	ilyen általános ↑értelemben.	in such general sense, it
	(·hh) Ez nem azt jelenti >hogy<	doesn't mean that someone's
	valaki gorombán. beszél?	speech is rude
?	Így van	That's right
Guest:	>hanem azt jelenti hogy< bizonyos	rather it means inciting
	kisebbségek ellen ↑tevőleges	active hatred against
	gyűlöletre uszít (0.2) ezt én	particular minorities. I did no
	↑nem tettem	such thing

The guest begins to respond to the challenge (lines 1–6) with an indignant denial (line 10) and continues with a justification. He implicitly accepts responsibility for the tone of his article in his denunciation of the tone-oriented interpretation of ‘hate speech’ (lines 26–7), but denies that what he had written qualifies as ‘hate speech’ by means of formulating a contrasting content-oriented interpretation (lines 29–32). It is interesting to note that the guest does this in response to what qualifies as a content-oriented interpretation the host uses in his moral challenge (‘[the essay] contained the type of statements that could lead others to think that you too discriminate, you too stigmatize’, lines 11–16). By portraying a necessary choice between what he terms a ‘general’ sense of ‘hate speech’ and his own definition he is able to skirt responding to the host’s challenge without directly engaging its (content-oriented) meaning. Following the guest’s defense, the host reformulates his moral challenge as one directed at the guest’s ‘excessive’ (*túlzott*) and ‘purposely provocative’ (*provokál*, *de szándékosan*) conduct. The charge of ‘hate speech’ is dropped.

From the perspective of cultural analysis, the guest’s move to recast his article as a ‘call for political action against particular behaviors and political orientations’ on the basis of an alternative interpretation of ‘hate speech’ is best understood as a negotiation of action. In a counter-challenge, he casts doubt on the host’s interpretation of the publication of his article as a socially problematic communicative act.

Excerpt 2 features an alignment episode in which a speaker accused of ‘hate speech’ is able to respond to the normative challenge in part because of the co-presence of the two speech codes. In an episode of the call-in political talk show ‘Have Your Say!’ (*Szóljon hozzá!*), the host receives a call from a caller who starts out by vigorously invoking the tone-oriented interpretation of ‘hate speech’: ‘I find hate speech completely shocking, and I find the hate speech of the Socialists shocking. [. . .] Like when that lady, that certain Socialist lady speaks such terrible things, such hateful things in a mad rage, close to foaming at the mouth, almost trembling . . .’[5] In line with the tone-oriented norm of interpretation, the caller points to the expression of hateful feelings as the token of a hateful personality and as the violation of the norm of civility. Using the tone-oriented interpretation gives her the opportunity not only to portray the ‘Socialist’ speaker as a hateful person who cannot keep her emotions in check, but also herself as a rational participant of the public sphere. The caller then contrasts hateful Socialist speech with the speech of a right-wing politician who ‘always talks about love’. In a subsequent response, the host frames the caller’s talk as partisan and builds a normative challenge using a content-oriented interpretation of ‘hate speech’ on that frame.

Excerpt 2, from ‘Have Your Say!’, 24 September 2003, Part 1, 8:53

1	Host:	hadd kérdezzem meg ↓öntől.	But let me ask you
2	Caller:	Igen?	Yes?
3	Host:	↑<u>Tel</u>jesen <u>egy</u>értelmű volt az	It was obvious
4	Caller:	[Igen?]	Yes?
5	Host:	[hogy] egyik politikai csoportot	that you support one political
6		<u>tám</u>ogatja a másik politikai	group and the other political
7		cso↓por↑tot (·h) pedig (0.6) hát	group well
8		↑nem tudom hogy hogya ö ö	I’m not sure how [to say this]
9		gyű↑löli.=	you hate?

10	Caller:	=(·hh)É: hát (.) akik↓ (.) akik	I, well, people who
11		(.) <u>ilyen</u> módon tönkreteszik az	are ruining the
12		or=	country like this
13		[szágot hát [( )]	
14	Host:	[nem én most a ↑<u>szem</u>]élyes	No, no, I want your personal
15		véleményére [↑egy]	opinion
16	Caller:	[én]	I
17	Host:	↑egy szóban szeretném hogyha	I would like you to answer in
18		[válaszolna]	one word
19	Caller:	[↑<u>igen</u> ↑<u>t]er</u>mé↑<u>szete[sen]</u>	Yes, of course I do [hate them]!
20	Host:	[·hh]	
21	Caller:	[hát én]	I mean I have
22	Host:	[nem érz]	Don't you feel
23	Caller:	a ([ ]) min[dig] gyűlölöm	always hated [inaudible]
24	Host:	[mhm]	
25	Caller:	[meg a]	and [I have always hated]…
26	Host:	[nem érz]i	Don't you feel
27	Caller:	[igen]	Yes?
28	Host:	[nem] érzi úgy esetleg hogy ö	Don't you feel maybe that,
29		(0.4) ugye most ezt ö:: nagy	and you are speaking in front of
30		nyilvánosság [ehlőtt mondja el,]	the general public
31	Caller:	[igen, igen igen,]	Yes? Yes yes?
32	Host:	(·hh) nem érzi azt hogy (.)	don't you feel that
33		végülis (.) bizonyos szempontból.	after all, from a certain
34		(·hh) Talán azzal hogy másokat	perspective, perhaps by
35		gyűlölked ö gyűlölködéssel vádol.	charging others with the
36		<u>Ok</u>kal vagy ok nélkül,	expression of hatred, and it's
37		n nyilván ezt nem tisztem	not my job to decide whether or
38		eldönteni (·hh)	not you do this in a reasonable
39		<maga is gyűlöletbeszédet	way, you are also conducting
40		↑folytat.>	hate speech?
41	Caller:	Én <u>nem</u> hiszem én csak té↓nyeket	I don't think so, I have merely
42		állapítottam meg ((continues))	stated facts

In the above episode, the host sets out to accomplish two rhetorical objectives: 1) to undermine the caller's claim to rationality, and 2) to frame her characterization of 'Socialist' talk as 'hate speech' using an alternative (content-oriented) interpretation of the term. He accomplishes the first goal by getting the speaker to say that she hates 'the other political group' (lines 1–25). The second goal is accomplished in three parts. The host makes the case that the caller is speaking out against speakers belonging to a group (lines 6–9), that she charges the group as a whole with conduct she deems abnormal ('charging others with the expression of hatred', lines 35–6), and that she does so 'in front of the general public' (lines 29–30). Although the host uses hedging and a question form to mitigate its face threatening nature, he finally performs the normative challenge on lines 39–40.

Because of the co-presence of two speech codes or norms applying to the same type of conduct (here, the interpretation of the term 'hate speech'), I argue that the caller only needs to opt for the code that calls for the tone-oriented interpretation of 'hate speech' to perform a denial. By arguing that she has 'merely stated facts' (lines 41–2) she affirms her role as a rational speaker critiquing the irrational, hateful behavior of 'Socialists'. Here, we see the contrast between the two competing speech codes as a resource enabling the speaker to perform a rhetorical move Wetherell and Potter (1992) described as factual accounting. The host does not pursue his normative challenge and the call is concluded soon afterwards. As in the previous excerpt, the accused is able to neutralize the normative challenge with a single counter-challenge, the negotiation of action.

Taken from a 2003 episode of the televised talk show 'Press Club' (*Sajtóklub*), Excerpt 3 illustrates how participants work together to construct a counter-challenge to an anticipated accusation. Prior to the below alignment episode, participants were discussing how prominent figures of the 'leftist-liberal [Hungarian] media' (*balliberális médiumok*) tended to accuse anyone who disagreed with their views of 'anti-Semitism', and, at the same time, displayed a tendency to violate journalistic norms by circulating morally suspect news stories in morally suspect language. The first speaker (LTGY), who criticizes the hosts of a particular televised talk show and their guest, a prominent Socialist politician, voices an anticipated moral challenge. The challenge the speaker foreshadows is that he and his co-hosts will be accused of 'Fascism' and 'anti-Semitism' for criticizing the 'leftist-liberal' media. The second speaker (TM), then, builds on a tone-oriented interpretation of 'hate speech' to preempt the content-oriented interpretation implied in the anticipated normative challenge.

Excerpt 3, from 'Press Club', 25 June 2003, Part 2, 7:49

LTGY:	újra le fognak fasisztázni	they will call us Fascists again
	minket, mer (.) most miért	because, in the end, why did I
	olvastam én ↑ezt fel	read this [news story] on the
	tulajdon↑képpen. Nyilván azért	air? Obviously because
	mert antiszemita vagyok.	I am an anti-Semite.
	↑Legfeljebb ↓látens antiszemita.	Or at least a latent anti-Semite.
	((scattered audience laughter))	
TM:	És ami a ↑legszomorúbb, hogy	And the saddest thing is that
	ezek az urak? (.) Szorgalmazzák	it is these gentlemen who lend
	a gyűlöletbeszéd elleni	their support to the law against
	törvényt. (·hh) Akik a a	hate speech. Who
	gyűlölettől fröcsögnek és az	spout hatred and
	emberi aljasságtól. Ők fogják	human debasement. They will
	beterjeszteni a parlamentbe, és	introduce it in the parliament
	el is fogják fogadni, amit majd	and they will pass it and will
	használnak ellenünk, (·hh)	use it against us
	normális emberek (.) ellen, és	normal people and
	ők pedig a médiában ugyanígy	they will continue these games of
	folytatják majd ezeket a	theirs in the media
	játékaikat	

The two speakers build an 'us vs. them' distinction. On lines 1–2, LTGY points to the hosts of the critiqued television show and their guest as the likely source of accusations of 'Fascism' against the hosts of the 'Press Club' and of 'anti-Semitism' against himself. On line 9, TM refers to this group of likely accusers as 'these gentlemen' (*ezek az urak*) and then expands the group to include the entire political left whose 'law against hate speech' 'these gentlemen' support. The political left, TM claims, will 'introduce [the law] in the parliament' and 'they will pass it and will use it against us' (lines 13–16). On line 17, the leftist-liberal 'they' is contrasted with the group of 'normal people' that encompasses the hosts of the 'Press Club'. TM constructs a reversal move (Van Dijk, 1997) using the 'us vs. them' contrast, claiming that it is not the group of 'normal people' who is really guilty of 'hate speech', it is 'them'.

Besides the 'us vs. them' contrast, TM's reversal also makes use of the tone-oriented interpretation of 'hate speech'. TM accomplishes a counter-challenge against the anticipated normative challenge of the liberal left by claiming that 'these gentlemen' who speak for the liberal left and who 'lend their support to the law against hate speech [. . .] spout hatred and human debasement' (lines 9–13). This interpretation of 'hate speech' as a type of talk marked by hatred and a lack of civility stands in contrast with the content-oriented formulation of the norm violation reported in LTGY's prior turn. LTGY anticipates being accused of 'Fascism' and 'anti-Semitism' for having 'read this [news story] on the air' and using the morally objectionable contents of those stories to incriminate members of the leftist-liberal media. TM 'rescues' LTGY from the anticipated moral challenge by supplanting the content-oriented norm of interpretation with a tone-oriented one. This move qualifies as questioning the correctness of the non-present challenger's interpretation of morally objectionable conduct, that is, as a negotiation of action. From the perspective of the tone-oriented interpretation, LTGY's critique of 'leftist-liberal media' does not fall into the categories of 'hate speech', 'Fascism', or 'anti-Semitism'.

The analyses performed so far support three claims. First, participants of Hungarian alignment episodes featuring accusations of 'hate speech' and responses to such accusations appear to rely on two competing speech codes (or norms of interpretation) pertaining to the meaning of 'hate speech'. Second, speakers formulating counter-challenges tend to opt for using the speech code that competes with the one used by the accuser, or is anticipated to be used by a potential accuser. Third, it was shown that the contrast between two speech codes functions as a resource in rhetorical moves such as denials, justifications, reversals, and accounts.

An exception: Parody

Competing norms of interpretation were invoked in all but one alignment episode in the broadcast data. In this unique case, although a speaker charged another co-present speaker with 'hate speech' the charge was not met with the usual denial. In fact, the accused speaker did not offer a response at all. Normally, the lack of response to a moral challenge can be heard as a silent or implicit apology (Hall, 1988/1989) which, in turn, implies a consensus regarding the interpretation of the offense. However, in this case the primary interactional purpose of the moral charge was not to challenge the moral status of the other speaker's communicative conduct, but to parody charges of 'hate speech' in general. In Excerpt 4, a faux alignment episode, ‘hate speech’ is invoked to parody and expose the morally questionable communicative conduct of a generalized non-present opponent. A host of the ‘Press Club’ first charges another host with ‘hate speech’ (lines 5–7) and then deploys a narrative to (seemingly) substantiate his charge.

Excerpt 4, from ‘Press Club’, 2 July 2003, Part 4, 10:24

ZSB:	az ↑előbb (.) még az előző	a minute ago while discussing a
	témánál az én Pista barátom úgy	previous topic my friend Pista
	fogalmazott hogy a BBC az egy	said that the BBC was an
	korrekt közszolgálati adó? (·hh)	objective public service
	neked fogalmad sincs hogy most öö	broadcaster. You have no idea
	(0.4) ↑gyűlöletbeszédet (.)	that you have just used hate
	alkalmaztál, (0.2) mert a BBC-t	speech by praising the BBC.
	megdícsérted. (·hhh)	
	((gossipy voice, to audience))	
	Tudják önök. hogy mi történt	Do you[6] know what happened
	mosta↑ná↓ban. ((end gossipy	recently?!
	voice))	
	A ↑BBC ↑bemutatott ↑kétszer	The BBC ran a documentary twice,
	egymás után egy dokumentumfilmet	back to back,
	amely ↑arról szólt, (0.2) hogy	about
	↑Izraelnek (.) titkos arzenálja	Israel’s secret arsenal
	van, úgy is mint atom és vegyi	of atomic and chemical weapons.
	fegyverei? (·hh) és a filmben	And in the film
	↑azt is megemlítették hogy Izrael	they mentioned that Israel
	a Gáza övezetben a palesztínok	deployed nerve gas against
	ellen ideggázt vetett be, és	Palestinians in the Gaza
	ennek következményeképpen	district, as a result of which
	száznyolcvan palesztínt kellett	one hundred and eighty
	hosszú hosszú hónapokig kórházban	Palestinians were hospitalized
	ápolni. (·hhh) ↑Lement a BBC-n	for many-many months. This
	(0.3) kétszer ez a kis	little documentary ran on the
	dokumentumfilm? ↑most	BBC twice, and listen to this,
	↓figyelje↑nek (0.4) előugrott	out pops
	(0.2) az ↑izraeli kormány (0.2)	the director of the Israeli
	sajtó osztályának vezetője,	government’s press office, or
	>lehet hogy ez a szóvivő nem	maybe their spokesman, I don’t
	tudom egy bizonyos< Daniel (.)	know, a person by the name of
	Seaman, (0.4) aki a ↑következőt	Daniel Seaman, who said the
	nyilatkozta. ((clears throat))	following.
	↑Daniel Seaman a BBC-t (.) a	Daniel Seaman compared the BBC
	↑náci Németország antiszemita	to the anti-Semitic newspaper of
	lapjához a Der ↓Stürmerhez. (0.4)	Nazi Germany, *Der Stürmer.*
	hasonlította? (·hh) közölte hogy	He said that
	a BBC antiszemita? (·h) közölte	the BBC was anti-Semitic, he
	hogy a BBC-t (·hh) csak vízummal	said that BBC reporters will
	engedik be ezentúl a tudósítóit	only be allowed into Israel with
	Izraelbe?= nem segítik őket a	a visa, they will not be given

43		katonai posztoknál, és a	assistance at military
44		hivatalos (·hh) ↑kormányzati	checkpoints, and government
45		tényezők soha többet nem fognak	officials will never be at their
46		a BBC rendelkezésére állni. (·hhh)	disposal again
47		(0.6) ↑Asszem lassan megáll az	The mind boggles.
48		eszem(hh)	
49	?	((laughter))	
50	AB:	Ez egy mélyen demokratikus öö	What an example of deeply
51		reflex volt?	democratic instincts!
52	?	((laughter))	

In lines 1–7, the speaker appears to initiate an alignment episode by calling attention to another speaker's communicative conduct ('a minute ago while discussing a previous topic my friend Pista said that the BBC was an objective public service broadcaster') and then labeling that strip of conduct 'hate speech'. The analysis of the previous data excerpts suggested that when one is publicly accused, or anticipates the public accusation, of 'hate speech' one responds with a denial grounded in a competing interpretation of 'hate speech'. Against the background of this analysis, the lack of denial here seems to indicate two things: acquiescence to the challenge, and interpretive consensus about 'hate speech' between the accuser and the accused about what norm of interpretation applies to 'hate speech'.

In the immediate context of the ongoing interaction the speaker, ZSB, does two things to indicate that what looks like a moral challenge should not to be taken as such. First, instead of claiming that his co-host Pista was guilty of 'hate speech', he suggests that Pista 'ha[d] no idea' (line 5) that he was using 'hate speech'. As an unwitting offender, he cannot be held fully accountable for his offense. This type of mitigation seems odd, almost funny, in a linguistic context where the charge of 'hate speech' tends not to be mitigated and to imply full speaker accountability. Second, on lines 10–11 when the speaker turns to the show's audience and initiates a narrative sequence to 'substantiate' his moral challenge he does not create a conversational slot for the accused to respond to the challenge. (AB wraps up the broadcast after line 52.) The lack of uptake on the part of the accused and other co-hosts can be seen as a marker of consensus about the non-serious nature of the challenge.

But what is the function of the faux challenge? To answer this question we need to look across various episodes of the 'Press Club' and various instances of the use of the term 'hate speech'. During the two most active years of the 'Press Club' (2003–4), the varying cast of co-hosts firmly established their opposition to, and sometimes openly attacked, antiracist public discourse about 'hate speech' as an observable form of public expression (Boromisza-Habashi, 2011). They denied that 'hate speech' was an observable and morally objectionable form of communicative conduct, and claimed that allegations of 'hate speech' masked leftist political aspirations. As a result, the co-hosts and audiences of the 'Press Club' routinely interpreted 'hate speech' as a term indexing leftist propaganda. What follows from this is that on lines 6–7 the speaker was speaking interdiscursively, like a lefty. These lines, therefore, key the frame (Goffman, 1974) of parody that neutralizes the moral challenge. In addition, the parodistic frame cues the correct interpretation of the narrative about the BBC documentary and an Israeli government official's response to it. The narrative is parody itself, as is confirmed by AB on lines 50–1 and by affiliative laughter (Clayman, 1992), a parody of another element of what co-hosts routinely treat as Hungarian leftist propaganda, namely that Israel is to be regarded a bulwark of democracy.

The meaning of the faux normative challenge on lines 5–8 becomes clear only after the narrative. ZSB suggests that 'praise' (*dícséret*) for the BBC is praise honoring a broadcaster that the Israeli government described as anti-Semitic and on a par with the Nazi *Der Stürmer*. Praising the BBC means praising anti-Semites and Nazis, and therefore a form of 'hate speech' directed against Jews. This line of reasoning is placed into a parodistic frame: ZSB cues the audience to make sense of what he says as reasoning 'like a lefty'. Such framing at once undermines the moral charge of 'hate speech' and equates the state of Israel with Jews. This type of equation move is a staple of anti-Semitic discourse (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001).

Discussion

The analysis of the use of the term 'hate speech' in Hungarian alignment episodes has implications for speech codes theory, for the discourse analysis of denials, and for antiracist action. To start with implications for speech codes theory, the analyses presented here suggest that the discursive force of contested and competing norms may be different from the discursive force of norms supported by community-wide consensus. This is not immediately apparent from the Hungarian broadcast data, as alignment episodes marked by consensus regarding the interpretation of 'hate speech' as a morally objectionable form of communicative conduct were not to be found in the corpus. However, we can find some evidence in a study (Chiang, 2010) conducted in another speech community, the United States, for the claim that in broadcast talk the discursive force of norms of interpretation supported by communal consensus is different from the discursive force of norms of interpretation not supported by such consensus. The discursive force proposition states that 'given a norm, one can predict, explain, and control the form of discourse about the moral status of conduct' (Philipsen, 1990: 264). The following excerpt from Chiang's article suggests that alignment episodes are less predictable when the accuser and the accused share an interpretation of 'hate speech'. In Excerpt 5, Janet Murguia, the president of the National Council of La Raza, a Hispanic civil rights group, charges former CNN talk show host Lou Dobbs with condoning and performing 'hate speech' in the context of a conversation about illegal immigration to the United States. From a cultural perspective, the consensus about the interpretation of 'hate speech' as a term for communicative action between Dobbs and Murguia is noteworthy.

Excerpt 5, Lou Dobbs Tonight, CNN, 4 February 2008 (from Chiang, 2010: 287–8)

DOBBS: Let's start with the reality. I have never said a word against a legal immigrant into this country, nor would I ever. I have called for more legal immigration, not less. […]

MURGUIA: You know, the ADL documents code words for hate.

DOBBS:	The ADL – oh, yes, sure.
MURGUIA:	And you've used a few of those code words for hate.
DOBBS:	Name one code word.
MURGUIA:	Well, they talk about dehumanizing. They're demonizing immigrants . . .
DOBBS:	That's their word. That's not my word.
MURGUIA:	Well, I'm telling you, they've had a …
DOBBS:	What's my word?
MURGUIA:	… clear record of documented hate speech.
DOBBS:	They have.
MURGUIA:	Yes, they have. They are a very well respected voice.
DOBBS:	Not by me.
MURGUIA:	The Anti-Defamation League . . .
DOBBS:	They are a joke.
MURGUIA:	They are not a joke. They are an outstanding organization. […]
MURGUIA:	When you refer to them as bringing in massive disease, as we know you have …
DOBBS:	Do you – excuse me …
MURGUIA:	We can document that.
DOBBS:	Eight seconds on the air, referring one time – let me ask you something. Do you think that illegal aliens should be exempt from public health standards that are applied to every legal immigrant in this country, is that what you're saying?
MURGUIA:	This is about code words for hate speech.

It is immediately apparent in this excerpt that both participants interpret 'hate speech' as morally objectionable derogatory talk directed against immigrants. In speech code terms, in this alignment episode participants orient to a single norm of interpretation in how they make sense of 'hate speech'.

Dobbs's response to the normative challenge of 'hate speech' is relatively varied. He utilizes four out of five counter-challenge options identified by Hall (1991). First, 'I have never said a word against . . .' and 'Name one code word' qualify as negotiations of behavior because in these utterances Dobbs is suggesting that the objectionable act in question had not physically taken place. Second, a negotiation of action occurs in 'Eight seconds on the air, referring one time'. Dobbs here indicates that he disagrees with Murguia's interpretation of his own prior conduct as 'hate speech'. Third, 'That's their word. That's not my word', suggests that Dobbs refuses to accept responsibility for objectionable utterances others had made on his show. Thus, these utterances exemplify a negotiation of responsibility. Finally, Dobbs counters Murguia's concern over 'hate speech' with a shift of normative priorities ('. . . let me ask you something. Do you think that illegal aliens should be exempt from public health standards that are applied to every legal immigrant in this country, is that what you're saying?').

By way of contrast, in Hungarian alignment episodes featuring charges of featuring observable or anticipated charges of 'hate speech', only one type of counter-challenge tends to be performed: the negotiation of action. Because its meaning is so widely and deeply contested, speakers designing counter-challenges are able to exploit the lack of speech community-wide consensus about the meaning of 'hate speech' in order to claim that the challenger is misinterpreting the action they deemed morally objectionable. In addition, speakers are able to tap into a wide-scale communal consensus about the morally objectionable nature of 'hate speech' as a form of communicative conduct. It further appears that co-present parties performing the accusation do not pursue their challenge across multiple turns.

This brief cross-cultural comparison suggests that competing speech codes produce relatively more predictable discourse in broadcast alignment episodes than codes supported by consensus. A challenge of 'hate speech' in Hungarian broadcast talk prompts one type of counter-challenge, and the episode is concluded. A possible extension of the discursive force proposition follows from this observation: the greater the predictability of the form of discourse in the wake of the invocation of a norm – or, in our case, contested and competing norms – the greater the discursive force of relevant norms. This theoretical extension, however, requires further testing. Additionally, the link between relative predictability and discursive force needs to be studied with relation to two other elements of discursive force, control and explanation.

Another area of research this article contributes to is discourse analytic research on denials. Hall's (1991) analytic category of the negotiation of action, and the category of denials Van Dijk (1992a) refers to as intention-denials, call the analyst's attention to a particular type of counter-challenge, one in which the accused claims that the accuser got his or her prior action wrong. Such denials are rhetorically powerful, Van Dijk argues, because the accuser can offer no evidence that the intentions of the accused were negative. The speech codes approach suggests another reason for the rhetorical efficacy of such denials. When more than one speech code applies to the interpretation of the term used to identify a norm violation, speakers can simply opt for an alternative interpretation of the term in order to negotiate the meaning of their conduct.

In sum, competing speech codes offer an 'easy out' to speakers publicly accused of 'hate speech'. This observation highlights the importance of examining the conceptual core of antiracist action in a particular speech community. One challenge for antiracist rhetoric is to identify evaluative terms for communicative conduct that can be used to persuasively portray racist or discriminatory talk as a norm violation. The analyses in this article suggest that 'hate speech' in Hungary may not be a good candidate for inclusion in that conceptual core. In the wake of the 2005 Cronulla race riots in Australia, Cox (2006) raised similar doubts about the use of 'racism' in publicly made normative challenges. Charges of 'racism', she argued, were very likely to preempt productive conversations about racism by reinforcing intergroup conflict. Wetherell and Potter (1992) cautioned against the normative use of 'prejudice' in contexts where the Enlightenment ideology of the prejudice–rationality dichotomy was active. If antiracist public discourse is to be not only honest but effective, activists must remain sensitive to the cultural meanings and rhetorical efficacy of their accusations.

Notes

1. Another, less direct, translation of the English term, *gyűlölködő beszéd* ('hateful speech'), appeared two years earlier in a book written by Hungarian constitutional lawyer Gábor Halmai (1994).
2. '. . . *ha valaki nagyobb vagy kisebb nyilvánosság előtt valaki mással szemben elsősorban azért, csak annak az egy tulajdonságnak az alapján, hogy az a másik egy bizonyos csoporthoz tartozik, negatív, leértékelő, gyűlöletre, gyűlöletkeltésre alkalmas, uszító, esetleg diszkriminációra felszólító kijelentéseket tesz* . . .'

3. '*A gyűlölet mint érzet az ember legsajátabb énjéhez tartozik. Attól vagyunk emberek, hogy vannak érzelmeink [. . .] Ami azonban minden társadalmat és minden kultúrát jellemez, hogy az ösztönös érzelmi világot milyen kulturális formákban hagyja kibontakozni. [. . .] kulturálisan rendkívül szabályozott, hogy nyilvános térben mit enged meg kifejezésképpen és mit nem ez az ösztön [. . .] A gyűlölet elfogadható, emberi. A gyűlöletbeszéd az én álláspontom szerint elfogadhatatlan*.'
4. I use the term 'norms' as a shorthand form for normative rules.
5. '*Én teljesen megdöbbentőnek tartom a gyűlöletbeszédet, és megdöbbentőnek tartom a szocialisták gyűlöletbeszédét. [. . .] Azt, amikor tajtékozva, szinte habzó szájjal beszél olyan szörnyűséges dolgokat, olyan gyűlöletes dolgokat az a bizonyos hölgy, szocialista hölgy, hogy szinte remegve . . .*'
6. The plural formal 'you' (*önök*) indicates that the speaker is addressing the audience, not his co-hosts. Co-hosts address one another using the informal 'you' (*te*/*ti*).

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