RudeTube? Linguistic and (Im)Politeness Theoretical Aspects of YouTube Comments

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Theoretical Background

- Goffman's notion of *face* (1967: 5)

- Brown/Levinson's (1987) Politeness Theory

  - Positive – negative face

  - Positive – negative politeness strategies

  - Face-threatening acts

- Locher/Watts (2005) *Relational Work*

  - Continuum from impolite, to politic, to polite behavior

Theoretical Background

- Participation Framework Dynel (2014)
  - Account for multi-party interactions

- Bottom-up analysis of the norms of the Community of Practice Eckert/McConnell-Ginet (1992)

- Embedded in *relational networks* Kádár/Haugh (2013:47)

Corpus: The Brain Scoop

- Popular science YouTube show for the Field Museum in Chicago

- Host: Emily Graslie

- Analysis of 5 videos and comments

  - Where My Ladies at? – 27 November 2013

  - Ask Emily #1 – 17 January 2013

  - Emily Gets a Valentine – 14 February 2013

  - Welcome to the Field Museum - 21 August 2013

  - Bloopers, Deleted Scenes, and Other Oddities, Part 7 – 5 February 2014

Methodology

- Step 1: Ethnographic Data Collection

- Step 2: Transcription of videos

- Step 3: Comments Collection
  - The Brain Scoop's comments
  - Comments by multiple commenters → users with strong ties to the channel

- Step 4: Qualitative analysis

- Step 5: Quantitative analysis of face attributions using TextStat to find collocations for the term *Emily*

Starting point: Complaining about rude comments

Where My Ladies at?

- Metapgragmatic rant about rude comments

- Sexism within STEM-fields (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) due to lack of women

- Pressure from the audience to assume a certain role

- Practice of *shipping:* bringing Emily and her co-host into an imaginative relationship

- Face-claims: ratify professional role rather than role as a woman

Comments from Valentine's Video

Hadrian Augustus 1 year ago
"Every heart sings a song, incomplete, until another heart whispers back. Those who wish to sing always find a song. At the touch of a lover, everyone becomes a poet."~Plato
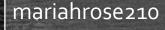Plato never forgot to be awesome. BTW, heart is delicious.

thebrainscoop 1 year ago   in reply to Hadrian Augustus
Hadrian, be my Valentine?

Hadrian Augustus 1 year ago   in reply to thebrainscoop
Much, gratitude. But no, I am taken by the young Antinous, he and i have been together forever. You can have my heart, though i really don't need it.

And the true fans?

mariahrose210	Emily Gets a Valentine	
	I ship it. Emily and Michael, not Emily and a bison heart.	
	Welcome to the Field Museum	
	Ohmygosh I'm so excited for all the new things I get to learn about!	
	Where My Ladies at?	(edited)
	I want to apologize, because once I said that I shipped you and Michael. It was a stupid comment, and I didn't realize that it would make your work awkward. I'm sorry. Lesson learned.	

Conclusion

- Need for multiple perspectives

- Inclusion of contextual factors for im_politeness

- No clear boundaries of face

- Constant negotiation of norms in interactions

- Need for bottom-up approaches to identify norms

- Consideration of all modes of communication: verbal, written, gestures, images, music etc.

General Problems

- Diverse theoretical field
  - Somehow they're all right, aren't they?

- Narrowing down topic

- Selecting empirical data

General Tips

- Take a topic related to an earlier seminar

- Go to supervisor

- Be specific

- You can't do all the things

- Take a daily routine

- Take enough time to edit – because editing is fundamental

References

Brown, Penelope and Stephen C. Levinson (1987). *Politeness. Some Universals in Language Usage.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Eckert, Penelope and Sally McConnell-Ginet (1992). „Think Practically and Look Locally: Language and Gender as Community-Based Practice." *Annual Review of Anthropology 21.* 461-490.

Goffman, Erving (1967). *Interaction Ritual. Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior.* New York: Pantheon Books.

Kádár, Dániel Z. and Michael Haugh (2013). *Understanding Politeness.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP.

Locher, Miriam A. and Richard J. Watts (2005). „Politeness Theory and Relational Work." *Journal of Politeness Research 1:* 9-33.