

Abstract

Lecture: Positioning and Othering in Social Media Discourse

The lecture is based on my doctoral research that examines how users construct identities and relationships through positioning and othering in social media discourse, with a particular focus on interactions in YouTube comment sections. Drawing on positioning theory, the research analyzes how individuals locate themselves and others with the moral and social frameworks during online discussions. The data consists of selected YouTube videos and, more importantly, the associated comment threads, where interaction between users becomes a key site of meaning-making.

The findings show that commenters frequently position themselves as morally responsible and agents who have both the right and responsibility to evaluate, correct, or challenge others. These self-positionings are often accompanied by the construction of “other” as misinformed, inferior, or problematic. Such dynamics contribute to the reproduction of social boundaries and reinforce forms of othering. At the same time, the study highlights how intergroup contact is discursively constructed.

The lecture will cover four main aspects.

1. In what ways othering takes place in social media.
2. Case study-How women are positioned and othered in YouTube.
3. Case study-How social media users discursively construct intergroup contact around conflict.
4. Can we find tolerance amidst affective discourse.