

Critical Discourse Analysis of Internet Comments from the Perspective of Attitude System—Taking the "Pink Hair" Incident as an Example

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Abstract. Based on a small corpus of netizen's comments, this study analyzes the discourse of internet comments from the perspective of the attitude system of evaluation theory. According to the analysis, netizens' comments contain traces of mainstream ideology, and the ostensibly objective and unbiased opinions are mingled with the discourse participants' interests, women are always in a subordinate position, and their roles are undervalued. Therefore, it provides a reference for the analysis internet comments discourse.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis; internet comments; evaluation theory; attitude system.

1. Introduction

On July 23, 2022, the incident of "the girl with pink hair" triggered widespread social media's attention [1]. Zheng Linghua was a senior student who was guaranteed admission to East China Normal University for her master degree. After receiving the acceptance letter, she first took it to the hospital to share the good news with her 84-year-old grandfather and took photos to post on the Internet, but was met with malicious comments from netizens. After a long period of netstorming, Zheng Linghua suffered from depression and committed suicide on February 19, 2023. The cyber violence for Zheng Linghua's post began on Tiktok, where individuals swarmed to comment beneath Zheng Linghua's photo. Following collation and analysis, this paper intends to analyse netizen comments from the perspective of critical discourse analysis, employing Appraisal Theory, to investigate how netizen consciousness plays a critical role through evaluation, and will also provide references for media platforms on how to correctly guide public opinion, as well as for the government on how to regulate netizen comments and protect the public's right to reputation.

2. Literature Review

Appraisal Theory is concerned with how speakers/writers' express attitudes and how they negotiate their attitudes with listeners/readers. Appraisal Theory consists of three subsystems: attitude, intervention, and hierarchy. The attitude system is divided into "affect" (affect), "value judgment" (judgment), and "aesthetic appreciation" (appreciation). Emotion is the center of the whole attitudinal resource. Emotion is the center of the whole attitudinal resource, which is the reaction to behavior, text process, or phenomenon. Emotion refers to a certain kind of emotional experience that people have towards things and phenomena, that triggers emotional behavior or emotional evaluation, and according to its attributes, it can be divided into nature emotion, process emotion and comment emotion, and according to its polarity, it can be divided into positive emotion and negative emotion, and according to its content, it can be subdivided into "unpleasant/pleasure, insecurity/security, dissatisfaction/satisfaction" and "have/have no intention to" and other subordinate categories. Value judgment is mainly a value judgment based on moral and legal standards made by the commentator on the social behaviors of individuals/groups. Appreciation, on the other hand, is a judgment based on the aesthetic perspective of the subject, thing and phenomenon being appreciated [2]. The evaluated object is the target or proposition being evaluated [3]. It serves as the foundation for emotion generation and is frequently associated with attitude. The evaluated object in Chinese is

frequently filled by a noun (noun phrase), a verb phrase, or a clause. An affective clause may contain one or more evaluated objects, with a semantic relationship of juxtaposition, subordination, or causation. The semantic relationships between attitudes and evaluated objects, on the other hand, are usually subject-predicate or paratactic [4]. It can be seen that mining emotions and emotional objects is equally significant in emotion research, and Figure 1 shows the details of the relationship between the attitude system and the evaluated object. Relevant attitudes research at home and abroad focus on news discourse [5], Political Report Discourse [6], translation discourse [7], academic Writing discourse [8], literary discourse [9-10], but pay less attention to the online comments. Based on this, this paper selects the comments of network incident, try to investigate the attitudes of netizens and find out the values behind the words.

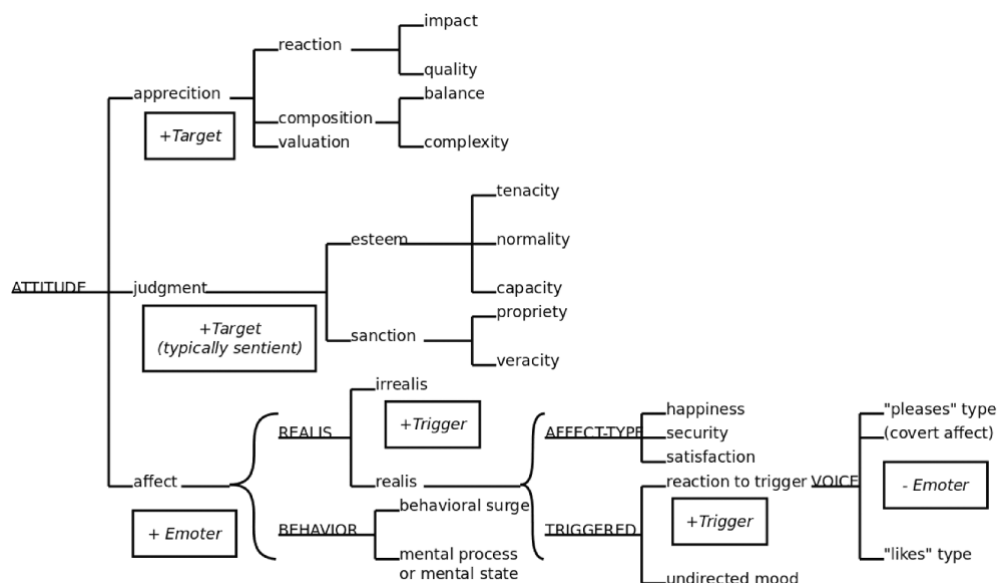


Figure 1. Attitude system [3]

3. Research questions and research method

This study explores the following two questions: (1) What attitudes of netizens are reflected in the comments? (2) What values do the comments reflect netizens' critique of?

The study used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to select 50 comments from the comments under Zheng Linghua's posts. First, using the attitude system, the keywords in each comment were classified into attitude categories, and the percentage of the three types of attitudes was calculated. Second, using the categorization of attitude types in conjunction with the circumstances, determine what type of ideology is represented behind the netizens' comments.

4. Findings and Discussions

Table 1. Distribution of attitudinal resources

Attitude types	affect	judgement	appreciation	total
number	5	41	4	50
percentage	10%	82%	8%	100%

As can be seen from Table 1, judgmental resources were used most in the Internet users' comments, accounting for 82% of the total. Judgmental resources are the main use of attitudinal resources in this comment, appreciation resources were used least in the comments, accounting for 8% of the total, and it only 2% away from affect resources. The distribution of those three is unbalanced. Specifically, the judging resources are the most, indicating that the audience is more willing to judge from the perspective of social values. While evaluating the value concept conveyed by the video, it also

expresses its own value orientation, which also means when people make malicious comments, they tend to use social morality to support their views. In the affect resources, all of them are negative realistic emotional words, which tend to be informal and casual, because the audience expresses their negative emotional tendency towards the video content more straightforwardly. Appreciation attitude is the least, and it is not much different from effect, but it is also negative. In other people's research, such as advertising or movie research, the proportion of appreciation resources may be higher, which also shows that the attitude resources of online comments are different. The judgment system belongs to the ethical category, which evaluates the behavior of language users according to ethical and moral standards. It is further subdivided into social judgment (social esteem) and social sanction. The moral dimension of social esteem is concerned with whether a person acts in line with behavioural norms, if he or she has the ability to act, and whether or not he or she is resilient. The legal dimension of social sanction is whether a person's behaviour is truthful and appropriate. For example, "Those who dye their hair are not good people" describes the poster's behavior on a moral level, believing that those who dye their hair are with bad personalities; "Your hair ruined the acceptance letter" judges the poster's behavior, believing that it is inappropriate for her to dye her hair as a student; "How can a chaperone be a teacher!" , judging the poster's pink hair for being an escort, etc.

5. Analysis of the values behind the types of Internet users' attitudes

Affect is the core concept of attitude. It is used to express the emotional expression of language users to the events. It belongs to the psychological category. Affect means that the speaker uses attitudinal words in the emotional category to express his or her feelings towards people through psychological processes. They are positive or negative expressions of emotions and feelings. Example 1: "I feel disgusted when I look at her." The word "disgusting" refers to the netizen's attitude towards the blogger. The netizen feels very uncomfortable when seeing the blogger's pink hair, which means that the netizen is disgusted with the blogger's dyed hair. This is a negative expression, but emotional evaluations account for very little in netizens' evaluations, which shows that most people do not evaluate others based on their own emotions when commenting on others on the Internet.

The term judgement refers to the assessment of human behaviour made by language users based on specific societal practises or standards. It falls within the category of ethics, which is a quite broad category. It involves social, moral, artistic, and legal evaluations, among other things. Second instance: "A graduate student dyed his hair like a barman!" Netizens critique others' behaviour by invoking ethics, morality, or institutionalised normative systems, and criticise others' behaviour from a moral high ground, believing that highly educated individuals should not colour their hair. Only ladies in bars will colour their hair. However, it is certainly incorrect to pass judgement on the actions of others. Example 3: "Anyone who dyes their hair is not a good person." Using judgment sentences to express that anyone who dyes their hair has bad moral character.

"Appreciation" refers to the evaluation of objects, artifacts, texts, states of affairs, and processes in terms of how they are ascribed social value, that is, in terms of their aesthetic qualities, potential dangers or benefits, and social salience. Appreciation can be divided into "response", which refers to how compelling and satisfying something is; "composition", which refers to balance and complexity; and "value", which refers to creativity, authenticity, timeliness, etc. Example 4: "Black hair is still in line with public aesthetics." The "aesthetic" in it is an appreciation vocabulary. Netizens comment on bloggers from an aesthetic perspective, but the views expressed are negative and they are still critical of the blogger's behavior. of. There are very few comments classified as appreciation, because appreciation is mainly used in commercial advertisements and news discourse, and rarely appears in netizen comments. This also shows that in Internet comments, netizens are more willing to speak with a condescending and negative attitude.

Netizens' judgments of bloggers take on such a textual state and discourse practise form because they are profoundly impacted by deep-rooted male dominance societal values. Men are at the centre of power in the patriarchal social mechanism, participate in the development of social laws, decide

the basic cultural orientation of society, and cope with gender relations using oppositional and hierarchical thought patterns. Women are constantly subordinate in this gender order; their responsibilities are undervalued, their worth is neglected, and they become objects of creation and utilisation by the male-centered system. Patriarchal ideology gained legitimacy after being naturalized by the intellectual machine, and it is now widely utilised in all parts of real society. Discourse is an important tool for the construction and maintenance of gender ideology. The discourse in the commentary text is the basis reflect of patriarchal ideology, women are more likely to be criticized.

6. Conclusion

This research examines comments on Internet events using the critical discourse analysis method to investigate how language with rights, ideology, and other features influences people's thinking and demonstrates how values and ideologies are concealed behind the comments. According to the investigation, netizens' comments contain traces of mainstream ideology, and the supposedly objective and unbiased opinions are combined with the discourse participants' interests. Netizens frequently have cognitive biases towards bloggers' articles due to various values, and some netizens may purposefully insult others. Due to different values, netizens often have cognitive biases towards bloggers' posts, and some netizens will also maliciously slander others. If netizens are allowed to make malicious comments, it will create a bad network environment. Moreover, netizens' comments follow the traditional gender discourse system and the discourse patterns adopted often lack gender awareness, which is closely related to the deeply-rooted patriarchal social mechanism. Therefore, while correctly interpreting the attitudinal discourse construction of online comment discourse, the platform should close relevant malicious comment accounts and improve the governance of the platform; relevant government departments should also protect the interests of citizens through legal means so that citizens can freely friendly comment.

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