

**Face and facework in online interactions:
a case study on the use of mitigation and intensification strategies in Spanish**

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Online interactions are nowadays part of the daily communications of many people. Graham and Hardaker (2017) highlighted that their situational features have an influence on the interaction, leading, among others, to specific participatory frameworks. In this respect, as stressed by Hernández Flores (2013), facework is affected by the social effect of the communication and the social continuum between interlocutors' face. This author then argues that every communicative conduct affects the participants' face somehow (positively, negatively or in a neutral way), which supports Arundale's conception of face as a relational and interactional concept (2006).

In this context, this contribution aims to analyse how facework is realised in Spanish online controversies through the use of mitigation and intensification strategies. From a rhetorical-pragmatic perspective, mitigation is used for reducing or compensating for threatening acts that challenge the speaker's or interlocutor's face whereas intensification is used argumentatively for strengthening the propositional content or the speaker's intention (Albelda & Briz 2020). To this end, this research analyses online interactions in Spanish that include the expression of opinion on news topics (comments on digital press forums and Twitter) about two Spanish traditions (the Moors and Christians festival and the Cobijada, a traditional black garment that only shows one eye of the woman who wears it) contested for their treatment of human societal groups (respectively the Muslim community and women).

The analysis is based on the methodology developed by Albelda et al (2014) for the pragmatic analysis of mitigation and aims at answering the following questions. To whom are the acts of facework most often directed, the speaker or other interlocutor(s) involved in the polylogue that often develops in press comments or on Twitter? Which mitigation and intensification strategies are used? Do they occur to express agreement or disagreement, and concerning which topics? Preliminary results suggest that facework would be more frequently directed to the speaker's face, predominantly by means of intensification strategies. Moreover, mitigation strategies would be used rather to protect the identified interlocutor's face in a context of disagreement, whereas intensification strategies would be used as face-enhancing in a context of strong agreement.

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