Rationale

For my written task in part 1 of the IB, I chose to write a blog post about the use of language on YouTube and the way this language is shaped by the users. In doing this I tackled the following learning outcome: Demonstrate an awareness of how language and meaning are shaped by culture and context.

I decided to write a blogpost since this enabled me to talk about certain subjects while still giving an opinion. The written blogpost is supposed to be featured on a personal online blog about language. This results in the audience being people who have a particular interest in language. Moreover, the post is aimed at those interested in online language. This blogpost is also quite reminiscent of YouTube videos, except for the fact that they're written down. So the audience of this text should also be somewhat familiar with YouTube.
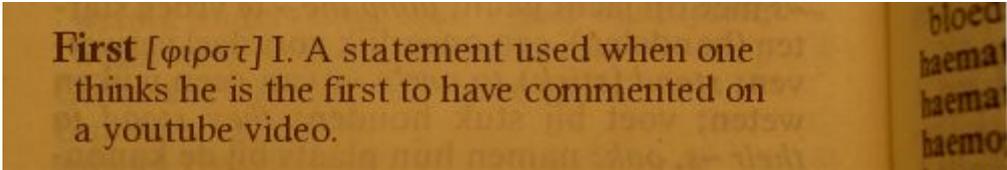
The text video I used as my primary source was featured in an article I found when I was looking for information about the use of language online. The video and my idea for a written task fit perfectly since the video was structured the way I wanted to structured my written task but didn't feature any information about language on YouTube. In addition to describing language the blogpost also tries to give advice on which language not to use. Something which is only done a few times in the video.

I tackled my learning outcome by giving examples of certain language constructions used specifically and almost exclusively on YouTube and showing in which context they were used. The purpose of certain words, phrases and constructions is also mentioned. In addition to this their significance to conversations held on the website is explored.
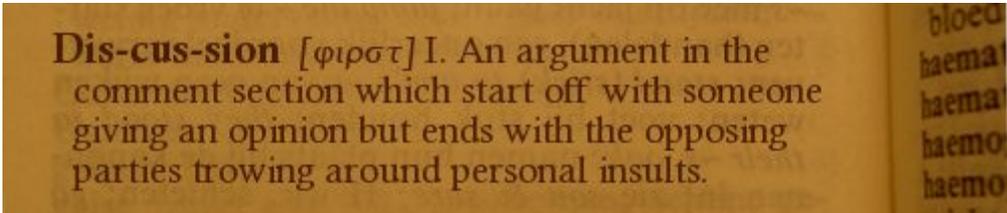
YOUTUBE LINGO EXPOSED (GONE WRONG)?!
By Robin Wacanno

The topic of this week's post will be a little bit different than usual. While still covering language and its usage it will be covering language usage on the internet. Recently a video was posted on the *PBS Idea Channel* on YouTube. In this video the host discusses a number of 'dialects' used among different internet communities. The weird thing is, especially since the video was posted on YouTube, he didn't discuss the 'dialect' used on YouTube. This is what I'll be trying to do in this blog post. In addition to that, as a result of my continued annoyance with the language used on YouTube, I will advice you, the reader, on what language to avoid at all cost.

First [φιρστ] I. A statement used when one thinks he is the first to have commented on a youtube video. [1]

I found it fitting to start this 'lesson' off with the word "First". This is a statement used in the YouTube comment section. In most cases "First" is short for: "Hey there! I was so quick with clicking on this recently released video. I was able leave the first comment." Leaving such a comment became quite a hype a few years ago when viewers wanted to show their dedication to certain popular youtubers (people who create video's on YouTube). Nowadays, the practice is usually frowned upon so I would not encourage you to use it. From "First" a few spin-offs were created over the years. Examples of these are the obsolete "Under 301 club" and the more recent "Notification squad". The first (no pun intended) one of these examples was used when the view-counter of a YouTube video would display the number 301 for a while after it had reached this amount of views. The second example has been gaining popularity since viewers have been able to receive notifications on their phone when certain YouTube channels post a new video. Both however, serve the same purpose as "First"

Dis-cus-sion [φιρστ] I. An argument in the comment section which start off with someone giving an opinion but ends with the opposing parties trowing around personal insults. [2]

The YouTube comment section is also used to have discussions, as opposed to the earlier mentioned abuse. Although you might think these discussions are about the contents of the video in question, this is often not the case. There are a few things

[1] http://www.hetemeel.com/dictionaryform.php
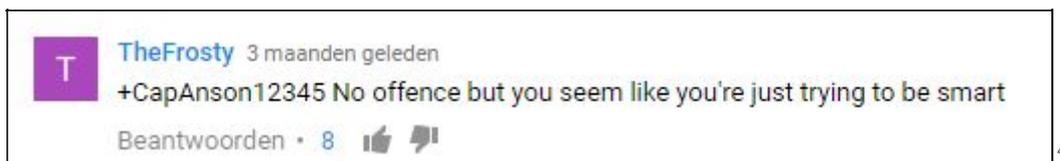[2] http://www.hetemeel.com/dictionaryform.php

you should know about the typical discussion on YouTube. First of all they should only loosely be based on the contents of the video. Arguments used during the argument should not be from reputable sources; in fact they should be based on the person's feelings. Finally, instead of coming up with to much supporting arguments, the opposing parties will start insulting each other personally.
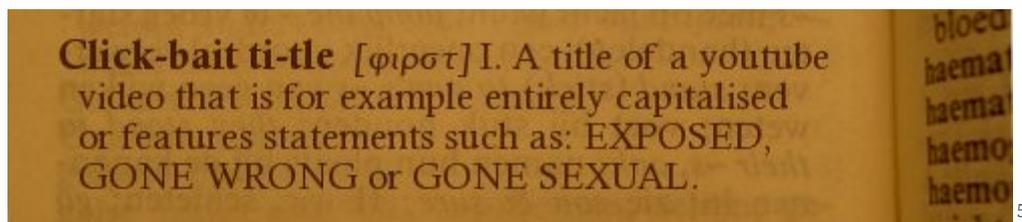
A good example of the first aspect mentioned can be found in the following comment:

³

This comment was left below a video published by the *British Pathé* channel. The video itself was about Dutch royalty, but apparently this viewer found it appropriate to comment on the fact that there are too many mosques in The Netherlands. In the video the word mosque was not mentioned nor was there a mosque visible. Since then the comment has been deleted indicating the person who posted it came to the conclusion his comment was completely irrelevant and inappropriate. Luckily I took a screenshot of the comment before it was deleted.

An example of the personal aspect of discussions can be seen in the following comment.

⁴

This comment was left under a video about the tax plans of Trump and Clinton and I think it speaks for itself.

⁵

An important aspect of every YouTube video is the title. It is, together with the thumbnail, the metaphorical cover of a YouTube video. That's why it's important to give your video an interesting and catchy title so more people want to watch your video. A few youtubers seem to be a bit too enthusiastic when coming up with titles for their video's. They use some less subtle techniques to make their video's look interesting. One of the most prominent techniques used in video titles in the full capitalization. Here is a title I've picked randomly from the trending page on YouTube which show the use of this technique nicely.

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³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygsLQW94-UM
⁴ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgicDQHbV3M
⁵ http://www.hetemeel.com/dictionaryform.php

A DOG'S PURPOSE' TERRIFIED GERMAN SHEPHERD FORCED INTO TURBULENT WATER	TMZ

The full capitalization of words you want to emphasize can be a very effective tool but by capitalizing every word in the title it loses all of its meaning. When reading these kinds of titles it's just as if someone is continually screaming in your ear trying to get your attention. Judging from the view counts of these video's the technique still has, somewhat surprisingly, the desired effect.

Another frequently used technique is the inclusion of certain buzz words or phrases in your title. Words and phrases such as EXPOSED of GONE WRONG seem to be some of the more popular variety.

EXPOSED usually implies the video will reveal some negative information about something or someone. Youtubers usually make these video's about fellow and/or competing youtubers. When this results in a fight between two youtubers and their respective fanbases, it's commonly called *YouTube drama.* While *Youtube drama* might seem unfavourable it's the complete opposite, since the attention channels get due to *drama* usually yields quite a number of views for both parties.

GONE WRONG is included in a video title when the creator wants to stress that the video shows something which did not go as planned. In recent years, the site has been oversaturated with video's using this phrase in their title, which has resulted in the phrase having lost its effectiveness.

Nowadays, most popular youtubers use the above mentioned techniques for comedic effect only since earnestly using them will make frequent YouTube viewers not take your video's serious.

In the end, this post wasn't merely an attempt at describing the way the users of YouTube have shaped the language used on the site. This post should also be considered my personal advice on language usage on YouTube. I encourage you, the reader, to leave a reaction giving your opinion on this language and maybe examples I haven't covered.

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[6] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=csLiYr5OGbg

Sources

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