

DdCharting uncharted territory – Affect and effect

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In this talk, I will discuss the theoretical and methodological choices I faced when working on the different publications that are part of what I refer to as the *Cancel Culture project*. This project includes papers that study stages of public shaming episodes, the moral motivations of digilantes for participating in public shaming, the emergence of social identities strongly tied to public shaming practices, such as *Karen* or (to a lesser extent) *Kevin*, and the concomitant construction of online tyrannical spaces. It also addresses the study of *Cancel Culture* from a discursive pragmatic perspective, which involved a close look at societal ideologies, off/online genre ecologies, microlevel interactions, and the repercussions of cancelation on different individuals, from politicians to celebrities and influencers.

When I started looking at Outrage/Callout/Cancel Culture, in 2018, there were no studies available that tackled these phenomena from a linguistic perspective. More importantly, extant research mostly dealt with them from a macro level, which usually leads to overarching generalizations and glosses over more nuanced interpretations. Unfortunately, I had no models to follow and consequently had to determine how to apply, in creative ways, existing theoretical frameworks, devise robust data collection/selection criteria, and follow analytical procedures which turned out to be quite different for each of the studies involved in the project.

As I reflected on the chosen paths, factors such as continuity and progression came to mind, as the underlying theme in all these varied studies is language aggression (multimodal in those that focused on *Karen*) which has been my main academic interest since the mid 2000s; however, just taking into consideration online aggression would not have sufficed when attempting to provide a holistic interpretation of such complex phenomena. Seeing them as part of the off/online nexus of post-digital societies helped me to analyze *Cancel Culture* in an all-inclusive way. Further, I reflected on how emotion became a strong motivator behind the choice of research topics that resonate with me as an individual. I saw that I tend to balance affect with finding less explored niches where my research can contribute new insights, push me out of my comfort zone, and make me grow as an academic and person.

Publications *Cancel Culture* project:

Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, P. (2021). *Getting into the mob: A netnographic, case-study approach to online public shaming*. In M. Johansson, S. Tanskanen, & J Chovanec (Eds.), *Analysing Digital Discourse: Practices of Convergence and Controversy*, pp. 247-274. Palgrave Macmillan.

Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, P. (2022a). *Karen: Stigmatized social identity and face threat in the on/offline nexus*. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 188, 14-30

Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, P. (2022b). Moral emotions, *good* moral panics, social regulation, and online public shaming. *Language & Communication*, 84, 61–75

Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, P. (under review a). *Cancel Culture* and influencers: The Hilaria Baldwin case. In P. Garcés-Conejos Blitvich & A. Georgakopoulou (Eds.) *Influencers and*

'fans': The pragmatics of affect and hate in the construction of social media celebrities.
John Benjamins.

Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, P. & Fernández-Amaya, L. (under review b). The off/online nexus and public spaces: Morality, civility, and aggression in the attribution and ratification of the *Karen* social identity. In F. Yus & A. Parini (Eds.) *The discursive construction of place in the digital age*. Routledge.

Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, P. (in preparation). *The pragmatics of intergroup communication*. Elements in Pragmatics Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.