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THE PRAGMATICS OF OTHERING
A Critical Discourse Analysis of Cyberhate

Dr. Jyotsna Vaid, Psychological and Brain Sciences, Texas A&M University; Dr. Brian N. Larson, School of Law, Texas A&M University; Dr. Zohreh Eslami, Educational Psychology, Texas A&M University

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Perceiving and Responding to Attempts at Othering

Dr. Jyotsna Vaid, Professor of Psychology, Texas A&M University

To represent someone as "Other" is to render them distant, deviant, or unworthy, to cast them as a perpetual outsider.

Whether directed at refugees, immigrants, gender nonconforming individuals, or any vulnerable group, Othering as a social discursive process uses language to homogenize, simplify, or dehumanize a person or group, to position them as inferior.

Othering discourse has reached a dangerous level online, taking various forms ranging from outright bullying and trolling to more subtle put downs and silencing attempts.

The emotional and psychological damage of cyberhate is well documented. Yet little is known about how intended targets and/or bystanders of various kinds are cognitively impacted by hate speech, both as it is initially encountered, and as it reverberates in repostings. How is hate speech recognized by online users, and how is it responded to?

Whereas automated detection systems are important in monitoring online media for hate speech, they may not be as effective in flagging speech that offends through innuendo or irony.

A psycholinguistic approach offers a way to study how actual language users perceive and react to Othering discourse. Participants from different social identity groups will be presented vignettes of simulated online interactions varying systematically in textual properties. They will be asked to judge the discourse on various dimensions and generate potential responses or select between different forms of response. In this way we will establish an empirical baseline for the perceived impact of specific forms of othering discourse and the various – often creative - forms in which resistance to othering can be fostered.

Using argumentation theory to impose social costs on hate speech

Brian N. Larson, Associate Professor of Law, Texas A&M University

GOAL: Provide a means for members of social networks to hold other members responsible for hate speech, particularly harmful stereotypes and "dog whistles."

CHALLENGES:
Hate speakers deny the implications of their speech. E.g., "That's not what I said!"

Political groups constituting powerful portions of the U.S. party oligopoly claim government and corporate regulation of speech disfavors legitimate political viewpoints. E.g., "You are silencing conservative voices!"

PROPOSED SOLUTION
Require accused hate speakers to do one of the following:
1. Adopt the hate-speech implication (risking censure from the social network and broader community).
2. Adopt the contradiction of the hate-speech implication (countering its effect).
3. Lose "credit" on the social-media platform, which eventually leads to loss of services or access.

EXAMPLE
Notorious racist and former politician and KKK leader David Duke makes a post on Twitter.

An automated online dispute resolution tool allows them to risk their own "credits" and challenge Duke. It assists complainants in formulating the hate-speech interpretation ("America's Jews are less loyal to America on average than members of other groups") and offers Duke the option to accept it or its contradiction

Twitter users have objected to this post on grounds it is racist. They are engaging in a discussion with the member posting regarding the matter.

Other Twitter users object.

The post shows contested status.

Duke must choose.

Adopt the hate-speech implication. **1**
Duke is excluded from Twitter.

Adopt the contradiction of the hate-speech implication (countering its effect). **2**
After objections from other Twitter users, David Duke (@OrDavidDuke) clarified: "America's Jews are no more or less loyal to America than members of any other group."
Post is amended to show contradiction

Lose "credit" on Twitter. **3**
Twitter users have objected to this post on grounds it is racist. The member posting it has failed to respond according to Twitter's standards.
Repeated instances result in exclusion of Duke from Twitter.
Post is amended to show Duke's failure to respond.

Key sources: Brown, *What is Hate Speech?*, 36 Law & Phil. 419 (2017); DeLuca, *Unruly Arguments*, 36 Arg. & Advocacy 9 (1999); Dove, *On Images as Evidence and Arguments*, in van Eemeren & Garssen eds., 2012; Harmer & Lumsden, Online

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Interventions to Counter Hate-Speech and Extremism

Dr. Zohreh Eslami, Professor of Education Psychology, Texas A&M University Qatar

Cyberhate: Raising awareness and Prevention using a multifaceted approach
- What is meant by radicalism and cyberhate? Whose definition is used? Neoliberal agentive discourse. What is the role of language?
- What are the causes of radicalism and cyberhate?
- How can education contribute to preventing radicalism and cyberhate?

Multifaceted Approach
There is an urgent need to understand extremism across multiple locations, multiple triggers, and multiple channels of radicalization so as to create spaces in which broad-based and socially informed solutions to radicalization and extremism could be found.

Intervention Programs Against Cyber-hate speech
- Law
- Technology
- Education (e.g., counter-speech)

Law: Preventing and deterring cyberhate: a legal perspective
- Challenges:
- Balancing prevention or protection and respect for fundamental freedoms and rights such as the freedom of expression and international law as well as different national regulations (Perry & Olsson, 2009).
- Multiple justice systems and the necessary multilateral efforts to counter it that does not get the adhesion of some countries
- Hate online is a multifactorial issues that cannot be prevented or tackled unilaterally and locally.
- Attempts to prevent and counter cyberhate need to set the legal frame to draw the line between freedom of expression and hateful online contents

Technology: Combatting Cyberhate: Technological Approach
- Control and regulate the contents published on online platforms through blocking, filtering, addressing any aggressive and hateful contents.
- Challenges:
  - Word sequences or syntactic or semantic content which might lead to confusion and misclassification because it does not take different contexts into account.
  - Contents spread quicker than reports, filters can be tricked, and Internet users might not be aware of what cyberhate is.
- Importance of context: need for qualitative interpretation

Education as a Prevention Tool
- Media Literacy Education: Promoting skills for critical reading of online contents and ability to identify disturbing, hateful contents and misinformation.
- Developing skills to construct counter-speech
- Teacher Education Programs: Teachers may not have skills to deal with hate online and thus teacher education programs need to include it in their curriculum.

Effectiveness of Intervention Studies
- The evaluation of effectiveness of intervention strategies needs to be included in future research.
- There is a need to plan rigorous evaluation processes of intervention studies in order to inform intervention and public policies.

Transformative Pedagogy for Intervention
- Transformative and Inclusive Pedagogical interventions and conversations are needed
- Need to have authentic counter-hegemonic, counter extremism critical public pedagogy
- Counter-extremism pedagogy needs to center transdisciplinarity, where multiple foci guide the learners to connect different variables (global finance, political, ecological, social discourses)
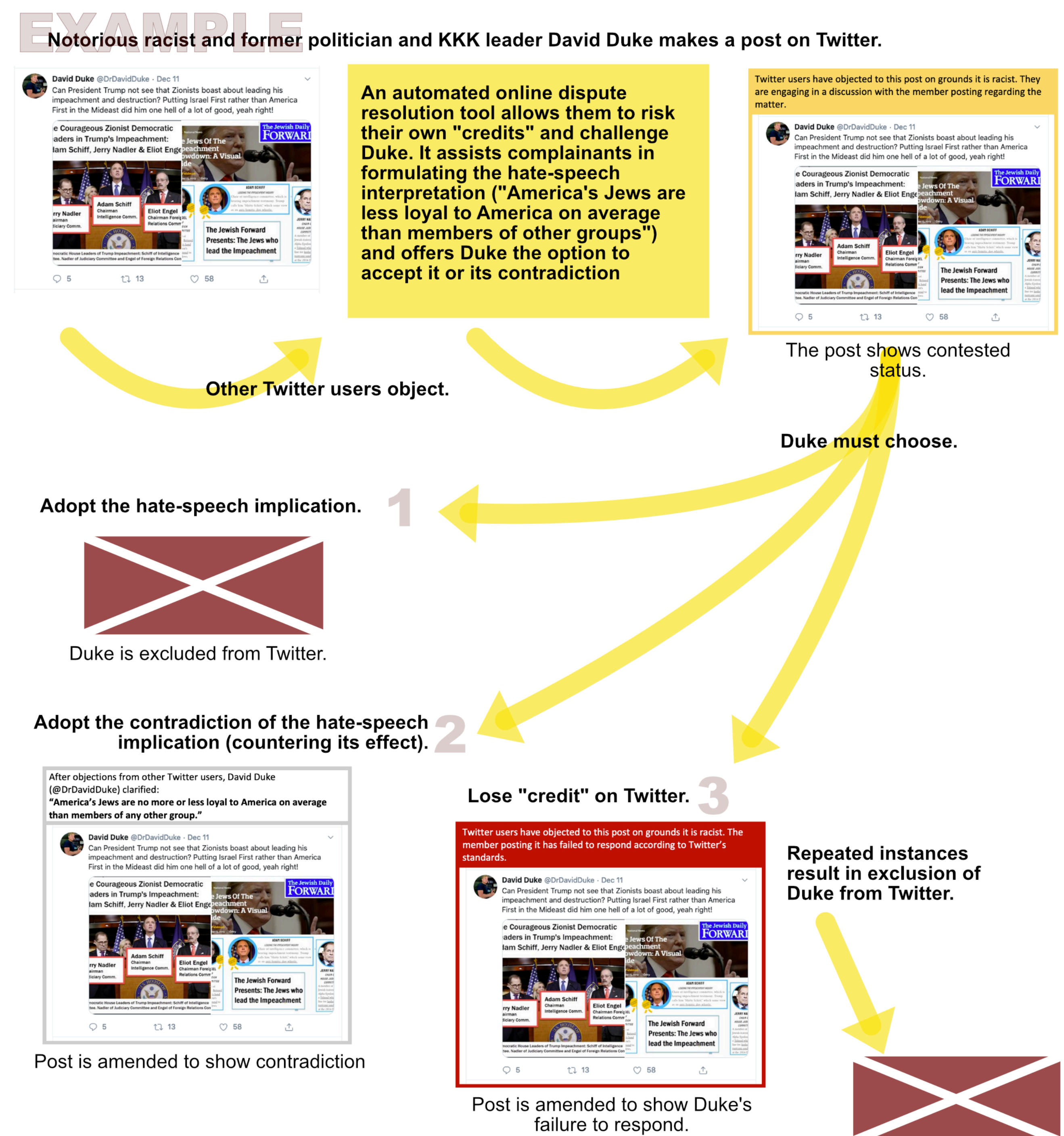

Weaving Disciplinary Strands Together

- Previous legal perspectives allow us to identify what counts as hate speech but underspecify its scope.
- Natural-language processing has focused intensive attention on automated detection of hate speech.
- Our T3 project allows us to jointly direct empirical study—which has previously been lacking—to identify:
  - Psycholinguistic mechanisms involved in processing - and countering – hate speech.
  - Effective educational interventions including counter-narratives.
  - Argumentation-theoretic ways of imposing social costs on hate speech.