

SPREMI

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Bonding through judging: Twitter's “Am I The Asshole” community

This talk concerns the affinity space created around the popular Twitter account @AITA_reddit. This profile reposts AITA (‘Am I the Asshole’) posts from the Reddit community of the same name, where users share tricky or questionable situations in which they have found themselves, and ask other users whether they are at fault. The Twitter followers’ comments are a mix of serious judgements on the original posts and many different forms of online creative conversational humour (Dynel & Poppi, 2020), which includes meme usage, in-jokes and intertextuality. In this affinity space, certain users emerge as key figures due to the specific roles they play in the community, which are reinforced by other community members. Relational work is performed in across the community, by displaying shared likes and beliefs thus demonstrating sameness, and by showing empathy towards both the victims in AITA stories and each other. Additionally, ambient affiliation (Zappavigna, 2011) among users can be expressed through likes, retweets to (mostly) stand-alone comments, and participation in opinion polls.

Elizabeth Marsden is a Postdoctoral Researcher in English Linguistics at Åbo Akademi University. Before coming to Finland, Liz taught Pragmatics and Language of Humour at the University of Huddersfield. Her research interests include pragmatics, affinity spaces and CMC. Liz has published with co-author Xiaoyi Bi in *Journal of Pragmatics* (2020), has a chapter in the edited volume *Politeness in Professional Settings* (2020) and is a member of the Linguistic Politeness Research Group, being the Assistant Managing Editor of their associated journal, the *Journal of Politeness Research*.

Alba Milà-Garcia is an adjunct lecturer at Universitat de Barcelona and Universitat Pompeu Fabra, where she teaches subjects like Pragmatics and Spoken Genres at undergraduate and Masters’ level. She has a PhD in Translation and Language Sciences, which focused on the expression of agreement and disagreement in Catalan in three different genres. Her main research interests include pragmatics (particularly mitigation and speech acts), digital discourse and conversation analysis, but she has also delved into language teaching and learning and neology through different research projects in which she has taken part.