

Social media (e.g. Twitter or YouTube) perform a key entertainment function in contemporary culture and facilitate new forms of *humour* (e.g. memes) and *impoliteness* (e.g. flaming), two topics hitherto studied independently. The primary aim of this interdisciplinary project is to examine the interface between humour (both verbal and non-verbal) and impoliteness in social media communication, testifying that online aggression can serve humorous purposes and that online humour may originate in aggression, whether genuine or feigned. We will show how these complex practices contribute to the contemporary socio-cultural production. This comprehensive project brings together not only two different topics but also various disciplines, combining the methodology and theory of pragmatics and sociolinguistics, as well as three multidisciplinary fields relevant to culture and society: humour studies, studies of multi-modal communication, and studies of social media interaction.

The various qualitative and quantitative analyses will focus on (i) identifying novel communicative practices and recurrent verbal and multimodal strategies showing aggressive-humorous potential, and (ii) understanding the reasons for, and the functions behind, the production and reception of aggressive-humorous messages in various social media. We will systematically explore novel forms and the dynamics of aggressive humour/humorous aggression primarily in English (used as a lingua franca) and also in other languages (Polish, Russian, Lithuanian, German, Italian and Spanish), thus addressing not only intercultural but also intracultural phenomena. The project encompasses three subprojects on online humour and impoliteness: 1) multimodal (seemingly) aggressive humour (including memes and virals) that aim to induce amusement in Internet users; 2) potentially aggressive conversational humour purposefully interwoven into serious verbal interactions on social media; and 3) verbal aggression that may be a source of vicarious pleasure and humour for (non-targeted) Internet users.

Overall, this interdisciplinary project represents studies on culture and cultural production, and it draws on, and feeds into, the fields of pragmatics, sociolinguistics and discourse analysis and other disciplines that study humour as an interactional phenomenon and social media communication. The findings on discursive and multimodal aggressive-humorous practices in social media will be relevant to both linguistics (pragmatics and sociolinguistics) and socio-cultural studies. The examination of the recurrent humorous-aggressive communicative phenomena with socio-pragmatic apparatus (notably, impoliteness theory) will give insights into digital societies and cultures, both international and national. The eclectic studies of social media users' interactions and products will report on cultural changes in the contemporary societies regarding the collective sense of humour and re-negotiation of the limits of humour and (im)politeness.