

Auditor Design and Digital Surveillance

Rodney H. Jones

University of Reading

The increased use of digital technologies have dramatically altered the way people conceptualize participation in social interaction, including what it means to be a ‘speaker’, an ‘addressee’, an ‘overhearer’, and an ‘eavesdropper’. This talk explores the degree to which traditional conceptual tools from sociolinguistics, specifically, ‘audience design’ (Bell, 1984), ‘participation frameworks’ (Goffman, 1981), and ‘interactive frames’ (Goffman, 1974) can be used to analyze interaction in digitally augmented spaces in which non-present participants (both human and non-human) may play a role in the way people design their utterances and strategize their interactions with others. Three examples of such environments are presented: cell-phone videos of citizens’ encounters with police officers, the behavior of people who share results of Internet ‘quizzes’ on social media sites, and the new social meanings ascribed to the term ‘stalking’ by adolescent and young adult users of dating apps such as *Tindr*. The analysis reveals how digital media introduce into situations new challenges and possibilities for audience/auditor design and for the ongoing negotiation of context, and argues that, in more and more domains of daily life, individuals design their interactions with overhearers and eavesdroppers in mind. It ends by introducing the notion of an ‘algorithmic pragmatics’ (Jones, 2016), which focuses on the way information flows and inferential processes in social interactions are affected when they are mediated through digital technologies.

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