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**REPRESENTATIONS OF THE BRAZILIAN CULTURE BY YOUTUBE USERS
USING GLOBAL ENGLISH: *ARE BRAZILIANS HOSPITABLE?***

FORTALEZA

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REPRESENTATIONS OF THE BRAZILIAN CULTURE BY YOUTUBE USERS USING GLOBAL ENGLISH: *ARE BRAZILIANS HOSPITABLE?*

André Luis Souza Edson

Abstract

Global interaction has exponentially increased through the Internet, where communication happens mostly in Global English, the current lingua franca on Internet environments. This way, the Brazilian community also interacts online, shaping and perceiving general sociocultural impressions that foreigners may have upon Brazil and its people. This study aims the analysis of public comments made on the website YouTube, concerning Brazilians' hospitality and the matter of current immigration crises. The research is based on Computer-mediated discourse analysis and on the literature of Netspeak and Global English. The impressions seen on comments portray Brazil as a reasonably welcoming country, though other comments contrasted with this image, showing off specific anti-immigration positions defended by many Brazilians and non-Brazilians' YouTube users. From these results, the traditional idea that retracted Brazil as a hospitable country is questioned. Further, the Internet public discussion environments and the possibility of anonymity by their users seem to reveal a polarized architecture of discussion, which occasionally tends to bigotry manifestations and hate speech.

Keywords: Computer-mediated Communication, Global English, Internet

Resumo

A interação global aumentou exponencialmente através da Internet, onde a comunicação ocorre majoritariamente em Inglês Global, a língua franca atual nos meios virtuais. Deste modo, a comunidade brasileira interage na rede, criando e percebendo impressões socioculturais gerais que estrangeiros possam ter acerca do Brasil e seu povo. Este estudo visa a análise de comentários públicos feitos no website YouTube envolvendo a hospitalidade dos brasileiros e a questão das atuais crises migratórias. A pesquisa baseia-se na análise de discurso mediado por computador e na literatura do *Netspeak* e Inglês Global. As impressões percebidas nos comentários retratam o Brasil como um país razoavelmente acolhedor, todavia, outros comentários contrastam esta imagem, mostrando uma postura anti-imigração que é defendida por muitos usuários brasileiros e não-brasileiros. Em suma, a ideia tradicional que retrata o Brasil como um país hospitaleiro é questionada. Além disso, os ambientes de discussão pública na Internet e a possibilidade do anonimato por parte de seus usuários parecem revelar uma arquitetura polarizada de discussão, que ocasionalmente tende a manifestações de intolerância e discurso de ódio.

Palavras-chave: Comunicação Mediada por Computador, Inglês Global, Internet

1. Introduction

Participation in global community is possible as ever in online social websites where Internet users get engaged in conversations about various topics. Speakers of different languages can be seen interacting by the use of lingua franca, which is being best described as Global English, as the first most spoken lingua franca in the world, seconded by Spanish, although a great number of the population speak Chinese, but it is

not yet considered as lingua franca as English is, because Chinese is spoken as first language, not the case of English which is spoken as first and mostly as second language.

With this interest, I started to observe speakers of several languages interacting in English in a specific website called YouTube, where they may debate about videos and other current topics. In view of YouTube's interactive interface and its popular range, it is possible to watch and to join online discussions about most thinkable topics. This is when I came about two videos depicting Brazilians and at the same time problematizing an important global concern, which is immigration and refugees. Both videos were showing Brazilians in two different situations as refugees' host: in a situation where hosting a Syrian family and in a situation where expelling Venezuelan families.

This caught my interest twice: one for the use of English as a global language and another for what people around the world were saying about Brazilians. Therefore, this study aims to understand the representations of the Brazilian culture by YouTube users who use the English language on YouTube's comments sections, regardless their nationality. The main cultural aspect analyzed here is the Brazilians' hospitality – What are the Brazilians and non-Brazilians impressions about it, how do they express their opinions and ideas through their written comments, and if these general impressions might vary according to the contents of the videos.

To reach this objective, I propose a main research question: How are Brazilian culture representations shaped in the online written communication in English as a global language? Other specific research questions are: (i) Which CMC resources do YouTube users employ in their online interaction in English as a global language? (ii) What do these resources may express in the CMC? (iii) What sort of specific emotions and meanings are they expressing towards the Brazilian culture? I believe that by answering the specific questions I may answer the most general research question and, with this, may bring contributions to the area of Computer Mediated Communication Analysis, English as a Global Language in Sociolinguistics, and Critical Discourse Analysis by investigating Internet users' representations.

In the following section, I bring a discussion on the theoretical basis for this study and a review of literature in Netspeaking and Global English. I also discuss Computer-Mediated Communication and describe YouTube as a support for generic interaction.

2. Netspeaking and Global English

It might be quite fascinating to contemplate the Internet and all its revolutionary aspects – the positive and negative ones, as well as its clearest and most uncertain consequences since its consolidation throughout the last few decades. Through a linguistic perspective, the Internet medium seems to amaze, but also worry, different scholars, regarding their admiration onto the communicative power and social importance that such technology has reached in our lives (CRYSTAL, 2001). Most of the concerns come from the fluidity, reach, and ‘looseness’, characteristics of virtual environments, which might threaten the solid status credited to most modern languages.

Rajagopalan (2013) dynamically analyzes such controversy when he states that similar debates occur in History whenever an innovation seems to threaten a consolidated/privileged class, just like occurred directly to the copyists’ class when Gutenberg’s printing press showed up in the 15th century. The author proceeds his line of thought comparing grammarians and language scholars who face the Internet medium with distrust, to the luddites – the group of textile workers in the 19th century who destroyed textile machinery in order to avoid the unemployment within their class. Therefore, it seems fruitless to oppose to such movement, and more suitable to lean forward in order to best comprehend it.

The fact is that technological innovation affects the way people communicate (RAJAGOPALAN, 2013): As it happened concerning the telegraph and its telegraphic lingo (shortened words and expressions due to practical reasons), nowadays, the Internet and its much broader situations are the birthplace of what Crystal (2001) names Netspeak. Still, according to this author, within the virtual world of the Internet, one does not simply find a homogenous linguistic medium, but an aggregation of trends and specific language usages.

The language variety within Netspeak, and as whole, might flourish from seven distinct features (CRYSTAL, 2001): (i) **Graphic features** – presentation and organization of the language (typography, page design, spacing, use of illustrations and color, etc.); (ii) **Orthographic features** – writing system of a language (distinctive use of the alphabet, capital letters, spelling, punctuation, etc.); (iii) **Grammatical features** – possibilities of syntax and morphology (sentence structure, word order, and word inflections); (iv) **Lexical features** – vocabulary of a language; (v) **Discourse features** – structural organization of a text (coherence, relevance, paragraph structure, and the

logical progression of ideas); (vi) **Phonetic features** – general auditory characteristics of spoken language (voice quality, vocal register, and voice modality; (vii) **Phonological features** – sound system of an individual language - distinctive use of vowels, consonants, intonation, stress, and pause).

It is worth pointing out that the Internet medium still relies mostly on the written features of languages because of its text-based predominance, though the spoken language presence increases as technology advances. Different Internet genres are present in several different types of pages and sites, such as a website like YouTube, which blends vlog (videoblog) and chat group, for instance. Further, on the mobile phone app WhatsApp, a simultaneous conversation might happen between two or more people, like in chat groups, synchronously or asynchronously, written and/or spoken, plus it may make use of pictures, videos, emojis and GIFs.

Taking into account that the core feature of the Internet is its potential interactivity (CRYSTAL, 2001), Netspeak arises out of its medium, displaying features that are unique to both, the medium and the language. Thus, people are conscious of Netspeak's existence, and even if its own definition is still under development, the way other varieties of language are being affected by Netspeak proves the awareness of its existence. Rajagopalan (2013) emphasizes that besides Netspeak is being currently "under construction" by its millions of users (mostly of the English language), most changes take place bottom to top – and this should not be ignored. The author proceeds highlighting that these facts place Netspeak close to the other natural languages although its recent appearance.

Having all this in mind, I believe that Netspeak also comes up as a democratic and spontaneous novelty that shall influence all written forms (contrived forms) of languages in general, since written Netspeak is a result of the direct influence of their spoken forms (natural form). In other words, Netspeak would bring naturalization to the evolution of languages in their written forms, in contrast to traditional contrived language reforms performed by scholars and authorities of the field.

3. Computer-Mediated Communication

As soon as the Internet started to spread out and become popular by the end of the last century, its consequences also started to influence on the many spheres of human life. One of these spheres that were directly affected was the communicative behavior of people, since all the new technologies, combined to the Internet, reshaped the

traditional textual genres into mixed genres and even into new ones. Araujo (2005) summarizes the sphere of communication as the proper space for the practices of human communication. These practices, under different sets of needs, bring forth the discourse genres, and these latter organize communication in general, resembling their sphere, which adds stability to them. Due to the simultaneous incorporations of multiple semiosis, text, sound and image (MARCUSCHI, 2005), which interfered on the nature of the linguistic resources used, the Computer-Mediated Communication (henceforth, CMC) have changed the way people communicate and it seems they will never stop.

The focus on writing would be one of the main noticeable aspects of the digital literacies as Marcuschi (2005) stated, and thanks to technology the traditional asynchronous characteristic of written communication could now turn to synchronous - as observed on online chats, for example, where interactants can communicate through text-based messages from distance but at the same time. The asynchrony is also present on many virtual environments and its textual genres, such as the e-mail and discussion forums, being the YouTube comments section possibly close to the latter. Nowadays, both characteristics, synchrony and asynchrony, may happen in tandem, on popular mobile phone instant messaging apps, for example. Thus, these genres usually tend to the informality of speech, lower monitoring, fluidity and quickness.

Crystal (2001) and Marcuschi (2005) emphasize three aspects of the role of language on the Internet and the effect of the Internet on language:

I – From the point of view of language use: the presence of minimalistic punctuation, bizarre orthography, plenty of acronyms, unconventional abbreviations, unorthodox phrasal structures, and a semi-alphabetic writing;

II – From the point of view of the enunciative nature of the language: the increase on the semiosis integration, due to the nature of the environment – more participative and less personal, therefore the hyperpersonal aspect;

III – From the point of view of the performed genres: Internet transmutes existing genres in a very complex way; it also develops new genres, and merges many others.

That said, the Internet textual genres have the hybridism between speech and writing as one of its main characteristics, especially in the interpersonal interaction, yet the writing remains as the “essence” within the text-sound-image integration, which is present in the hypertext. The hyperlinks, also known as links, and their non-linear enchainment (textual knots) are other common marks of hypertextuality, as stated by

Araujo (2005). In this sense, Halliday (1966 *apud* MARCUSCHI, 2005) states that the distance between speech and writing will be progressively eliminated due to the dissemination of technologies such as the word processors.

Still, according to Crystal (2001), the impact of the Internet is smaller as a technological revolution than it is as a revolution on the social ways of linguistic and language interaction. Moreover, the electronic environment allows people to interact rapidly within its peculiar ways, such as the possibility of being anonymous while interacting, for instance, and with distinct aspects other than regular face-to-face relations and body language. Such aspects, added to the higher spontaneity of speech, due to less emotional filters involved, seem to favor the creation of online “networks of interests”, as stated by Marcuschi (2005). These Virtual Communities aggregate diverse people according to their common interests, and help them share ideas and subjects, building up online social circles with their corresponding language stylistics and appropriate genres.

Nowadays it is quite common to conjugate the visual elements of emoticons and emojis into online chat environments like mobile phone instant messengers, virtual forums, or even into e-mails. Both are probably an alternative way to express body language, intonation, and other nuance modifiers that are natural to speech. Such semiotic resources function to enhance or diminish politeness markers, for example (MARCUSCHI, 2005), and are part of the Internet etiquette. So their use and purpose might vary according to the correspondent community social circle. Among the flamboyant chaos of the Internet social environments, language reshapes and evolves, thus surpassing its once supposedly known boundaries.

4. YouTube as a democratic interactive media-sharing platform

According to YouTube’s own description¹, the main mission of this very popular website is to reveal the world through its plural perspectives, which are shared from all parts of the globe. The platform, which exists since 2005, is strongly based on values such as freedom of speech, right to information and opportunity, and freedom to belong – the company allows people and other companies to upload and share their ideas and views through audio and video content, and to interact freely with other users. According to the user’s online behavior, the platform may suggest related channels and videos, aggregating different contents that possibly might be of one’s interest.

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/intl/pt-BR/yt/about/>. Access on 4th September 2018.

Besides YouTube's media characteristics, the platform usually brings real-time interaction on its comments section located right below the video box. All users may share their comments and "like/dislike" any videos they watch, thus provoking discussion and interaction, likewise most online forums do. The more "likes" a video, or a comment gets, the more favored they will get, assuming the status of main comments, for example, and appearing on the top of the web page. This is a type of "shared curation". Thanks to these possibilities, the YouTube users' community may add content to the videos they watch and share, thus modifying, in such manner, the original media content through their constant interaction. That might be one of the main democratic aspects of YouTube - due to its amplified interface, which shares the aspects of web 2.0³, the platform presents as an evolution of traditional media broadcasting, now admitting the importance of the user, who is able to create and modify content, besides just receiving it (ARAUJO & COSTA, 2011).

Due to YouTube's popularity and wide international range (3rd most visited website, after Google and Facebook), the platform keeps high communication flows of people from most known nationalities on its comment sections. The subjects of these forums usually may concern the current accessed videos, although it is common when these discussions branch into wider topics – directly related or not to the videos. There are different factors that may influence the audience spread of a YouTube video, and one of the major factors, besides the subject of the video, is the language of its content. The language of the audio or subtitles (or even keywords) on a video will directly target who and where possibly are the people that may get interested on it.

The English language is considered the online lingua franca, since 53.1% of websites' contents use it, according to W3Techs²; moreover, most Internet users communicate in English (25.4%) as estimated by InternetWorldStats³ (2018). Therefore, it is most probable that whenever someone watches an English language targeted video online, most of its audience's comments will occur in the same language, regardless what the video's main topic is.

5. Methodology

In order to reach the research goals, two videos were selected, and both had to comply with three criteria: The videos should be in English; the YouTube channels

² https://w3techs.com/technologies/overview/content_language/all. Access on 4th September 2018.

³ <https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats7.htm>. Access on 4th September 2018.

should be official global web news pages; and the topic should be about migration and Brazil.

Following these criteria, one of the selected videos was “Brazil Leads The U.S. And Latin America In Accepting Syrian Refugees⁴”, published on 9th September 2015 by AJ+, an online channel administered by Al Jazeera Media Network. Lasting approximately one minute, the short newscast has an optimistic point of view when portraying the forms that Brazilians welcomed the Syrians. By September 2018, when the data was collected, it had 11,311 views (313 likes and 18 dislikes) and about 150 comments (most of them in English). From these, four threads totalizing 20 comments were selected to be subdued to scrutiny of analysis.

The second selected video was “Venezuela crisis: Brazil deploys troops after migrant attacks - BBC News⁵”, published on 20th August 2018 by BBC News. As the self-describing title suggests, the newscast tries to report the chaotic situation of many Venezuelan refugees who were forced by locals to leave the border city of Pacaraima, Brazil, and head back to Venezuela, despite being hungry and helpless. The video also summarizes the current Venezuela crisis, and tells that other South American countries like Ecuador and Peru are toughening their borders upon Venezuelan migrant/refugees. The two-minute newscast has a tense tone, since it shows the foreign refugees being expelled under hostile acts; by September 2018, it had 94,067 views (814 likes and 91 dislikes) and about 1,300 comments (most of them in English). From those, four threads totalizing 112 comments were selected for analysis.

The criteria used for the selection of comments as data were the higher rate of “likes”; the number of the replies to them, which classified them as “top comments” in each YouTube page; the topic on the comments, which should be still somehow related to Brazil. These conversational threads were then analyzed to verify if the online discussions over the videos depicted the general impressions YouTube users stand upon Brazil’s (and Brazilians’) hospitality.

These data were analyzed according to Computer-Mediated Communication methods, or Computer-Mediated Discourse Analysis (Herring et al., 2013), which are drawn from the Conversation Analysis tradition.

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ka4OVN9BbD8>. Access on 28th September 2018.

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woa3AUFafCw>. Access on 28th September 2018.

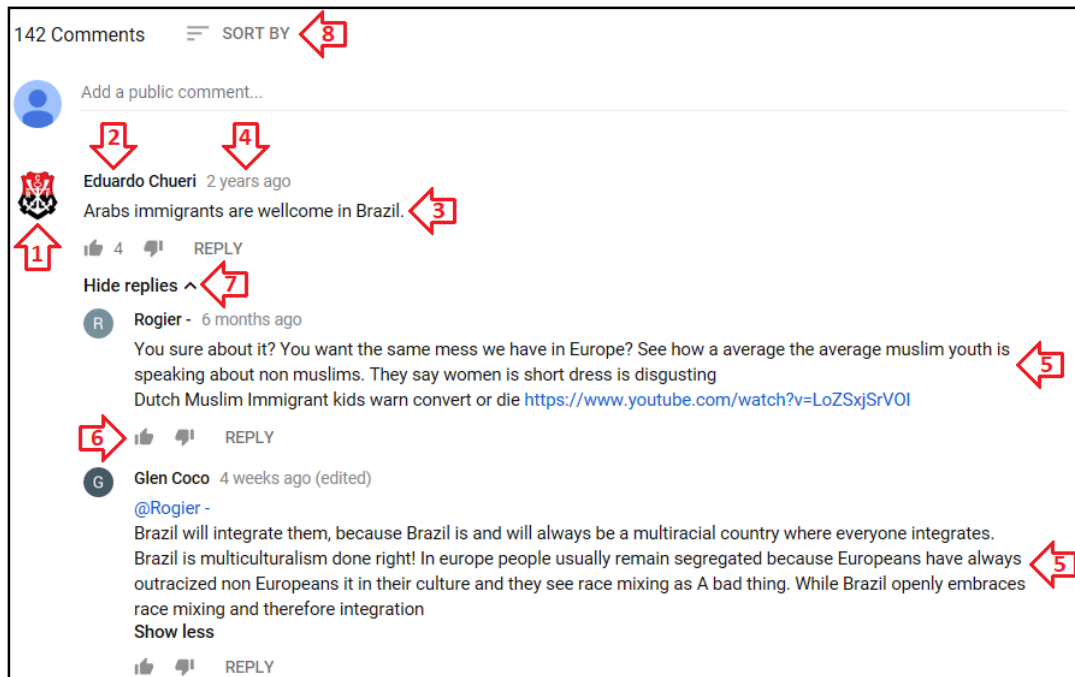
6. Research Findings

I organize the research findings according to the language features described earlier in the literature review section: (i) Graphic features (ii) Orthographic features (iii) Grammatical features (iv) Lexical features (v) Discourse features (vi) Phonetic (vii) Phonological features (CRYSTAL, 2001). Although, some adaptations were made due to the multimodal aspect of the CMC analyzed which demanded some grouping of categories. Therefore, orthographic features, phonetic and phonological features were all grouped under the label: multimodal features, as the reader will see that orthography, punctuation, emojis, creative use of the keyboard in general were mostly used to express phonetic and phonological features as well as body language.

6.1. Graphic features

The conversational threads display the avatar (representative icon or picture; #1), the name/nickname of the user (#2), his/her comment (#3), and the timestamp of the comment publication (#4), which may be followed by other users' replies (#5). Right below each comment, YouTube users may find the "like" and "dislike buttons (#6), although only the current number of "likes" is shown. The replies to the comments may be expanded or retracted (#7) in order to facilitate the navigation and the reading of the comment section. On the top of all comments, the YouTube user visualizes the total number of comments on the page, and chooses to sort the order of visualization (#8) between "Top comments" – most "liked"/replied ones, and "Newest first" – most recent ones. In the figure 1, which follows, the comments are expanded for the reader visualization.

Figure 1: Conversational threads



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ka4OVN9BbD8>

YouTube users directly demonstrate their impressions and opinions through comments and replies. However, the platform also provides graphic elements that may add content to what is being said on a comment section. The “likes” counter on comments shows how other users support, approve, or simply like what another user said on the same page. This way, it is possible to have an approximate idea of what sort of behaviors are manifesting there. Furthermore, the customization allowed by the avatars may add subtle information about the set of ideas and behaviors of users. Even when someone ignores or chooses no images as an avatar, this choice may be interpreted as the preference for anonymity on YouTube pages.

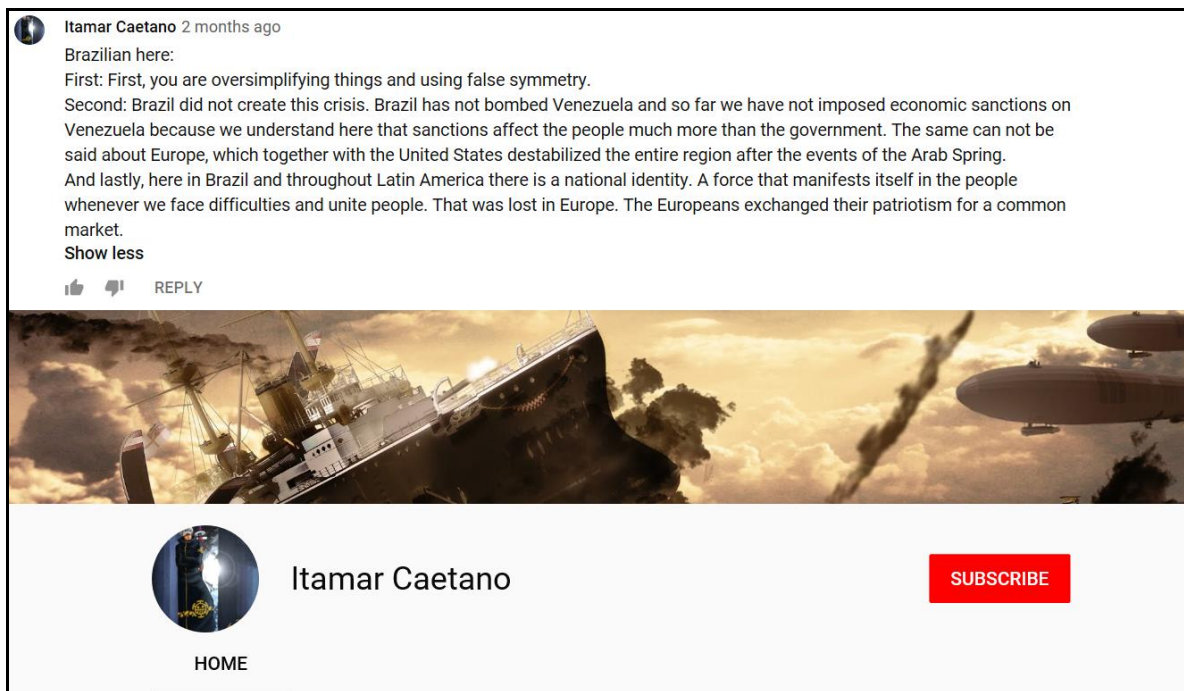
Among the research’s selected threads, the “likes” counters seem to rise regardless what the bias of the comments towards Brazil and Brazilians are. Instead, these counters seem to work much as “sides gatherers”, which allow us to identify and quantify which “sides” are present in the threads – the ones who agree (like) with someone’s view, and the ones who disagree (dislike) with it. Probably, if there were “dislikes” counters as well, polarity would be more explicit.

Concerning the avatars on the selected threads, nearly 50% of the users (fifty out of one hundred and one) adopted blank avatars. The other half (fifty-one users) adopted human pictures (ten users), or pictures of fiction characters, celebrities, animals,

flags, among other random subjects (forty-one users). Thus, it is possible to state that probably more than 90% of these users browse as anonymous on YouTube. Among the probable Brazilian users discussing in the threads, most of them had pictures on their avatars, but the minority consisted of actual photographs. This way, it is difficult to state if these graphic inputs might tend to result on specific impressions since both supporters and objectors of Brazil's position on receiving immigrants seemed to receive "likes" and replies indistinctively.

Although, other users' avatars seemed to form a trend, specifically concerning anti-immigration comments: The military theme was observed on the avatars of different users who expressed anti-immigrant impressions on their comments, such as the figure of a paladin, a knight holding up an axe, the face of a hunter aiming with a gun, the drawing of a warrior with roman aspects, a soldier smoking, a medieval metal armor, two soldiers apparently protecting civilians, and the insignia of the NRA (National Rifle Association). Those constituted the repertoire of images that could be successfully distinguished. On the other hand, a user with the avatar of a samurai character defended Brazil's reception of immigrants, criticizing those who are against it. This user was the only exception found among those following this avatar military trend, as the figure shows below:

Figure 2: User's comment and profile page (edited).



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woa3AUFafCw>

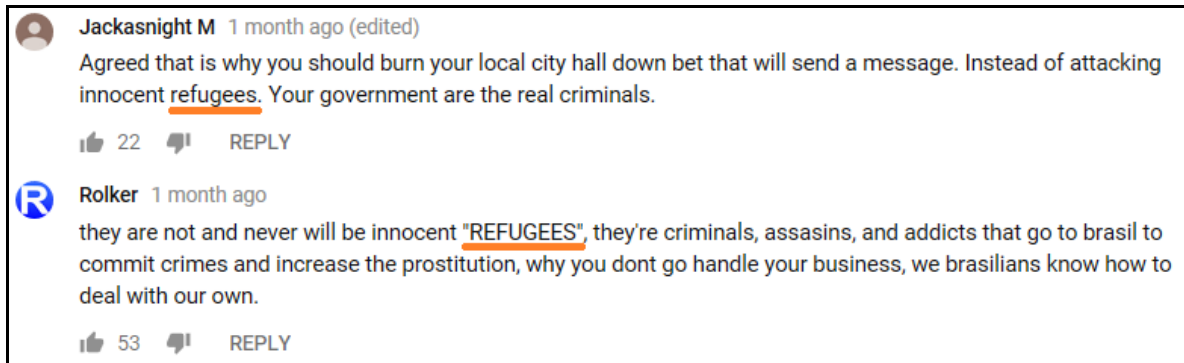
6.2. Multimodal features

- a) Inverted commas: [“Muslim ways”]; [“Jews”]; [“diversity”]; [“ANTI-WHITE”]; [“REFUGEES”]; [‘peaceful’]; [“your street”]; [“Islamophobia!!”]; [“oppressed”]; [“drug baron’s”]; [“drug’s cartels”]; [“baby mama”];
- b) Punctuation, repeated characters and symbols: [...]; [??]; [!!!!!!!!!!!!]; [=]; [???
- c) Oral markers: [Yeah,]; [Hmm]; [oops]; [waaaaaaay]; [eh]; [You know, (...)] [(...) just saying];
- d) Capital letters: [EUROPE]; [BUT REMEMBER]; [BECAUSE EUROPEAN BELIEVED IN FREEDOM]; [“ANTI-WHITE”]; [“REFUGEES”]; [EXACTLY]; [MUST]; [SEX]; [SAME]; [YOUR AL ARE];
- e) Emoticons: [xD];
- f) Emojis: 😊; 😞; 😭; 🙏; ❤️; 💪; 🍑;
- g) Acronyms: [lol]; [lmao]; [OMFG]; [LMAO]; [EU]; [USA]; [US]; [MSM] (mainstream media); [BBC]; [SJWs] (social justice warriors); [FARC]; [BACRIM] (*Bandas Criminales*);
- h) Bold, italics and underline: [**When you live in the US and dont give a fuck about migrant shit lol**]

The restraints of written language derived of keyboard use for communicative purposes triggered on the creative subversion of regular orthography and punctuation rules, into attempts to enhance and naturalize the discourse in the medium of the Internet. Thus, the multimodal features of Netspeak are also naturally present on YouTube comment sections.

Many users made use of the inverted commas (quotation marks) in order to subvert the meaning of words, usually questioning their value into the context of comments and replies (They can work as irony/sarcasm markers, as well). In case of some replies, for example, the user repeated a same word present on the first comment (made by another user), now in inverted commas, and showed general disagreement towards this comment he/she replied.

Figure 3: Reply with inverted commas



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woa3AUFafCw>

The group of words in inverted commas tends to refer to minorities or frequently marginalized groups – [“Muslim ways”], [“Jews”], [“REFUGEES”], [“Islamophobia!!”], [“oppressed”], were among some of them. Brazil and Brazilians were not mentioned or targeted through this specific feature.

Most comments lacked proper punctuation (commas and periods), as expected of spontaneous and relaxed writing, and some had excessive punctuation or characters – an emphaziser device: [???],[!!!!!!!!!!!!]. Words like: [Hmm], [oops], [waaaaaaay], and [eh] were noticed as markers of orality on written speech.

Another common stylistic resource present on the selected comments were uppercase words (use of capital letters). Their use here may be interpreted as a “louder tone of voice”, and the “shouting” aspect peculiar to this artifice usually calls attention on the conversational threads. The highlighted words and lines were present on replies, regardless of their position – agreeing or disagreeing with the previous comment. Similarly, the use of bolds, italics, and underline also grants greater visual appeal to the comment, though they rarely were used on the conversational threads. As an example, the modal verb *must* was used here to highlight the authoritarian tone of a reply:

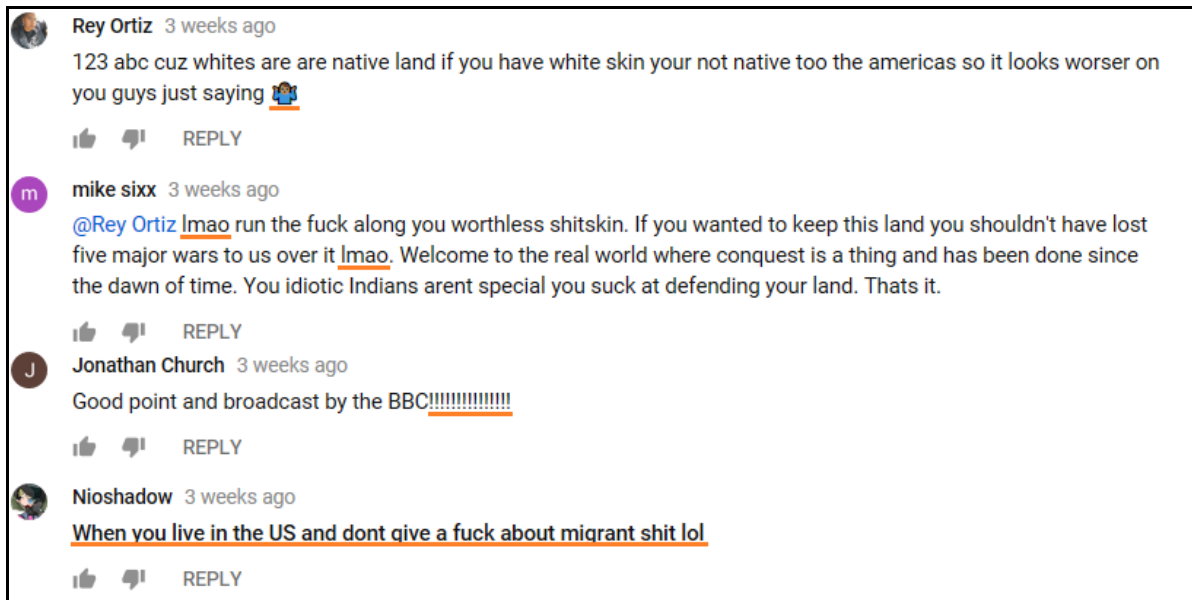
Figure 4: Reply with uppercase word



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woa3AUFafCw>

Regarding the use of emoticons, acronyms and emojis, their use on the comments usually tended to soften the conversation tone, working as an empathy marker. However, more than once, their use also functioned on attempts to disqualify or question what another user said previously.

Figure 5: Emojis, acronyms and other creative keyboard uses.



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woa3AUFafCw>

The excerpt above brings some of the multimodal features described before, and it focus on the interaction between the users *Rey Ortiz* and *mike sixx*, who made use of emoji and acronym respectively. Based on their replies towards a top comment made on the BBC video, it is possible to realize that their discussion topic directs to the immigration matters of the United States. Actually, many users on both comment sections discussed about immigration as a whole, besides the focus on Brazil, mainly concerning Europe and the United States. This fact also might tell much about the origins of these users.

In conclusion, the multimodal features of Netspeak might reveal emotions and many behavior aspects of each person, and throughout the selected conversational threads, not much was said about Brazil and Brazilians specifically regarding multimodal features.

6.3. Grammatical features

- a) Typos: [De] (We); [YOUR AL ARE] (you all are); [cars] (cares); [too] (to); [polititions] (politicians); [governament] (government); [forggeting] (forgetting);
- b) Orality influence: [Cause] (because); [cuz] (because); [youre] (your); [Your] (You're); [ya] (you); [whites] (white people); [gotta] (have to); [Gonna] (going to); their (they are); [u] (you);
- c) Lack of punctuation: [cant] (can't); [dont] (don't); [withour] (with our); [misleadstheir] (misleads their);
- d) Abbreviations: [gov] (government); [Euros] (Europeans);
- e) Grammar inaccuracies: [worsen] (worst); [you must died] (die); [can not] (can't/cannot); [brasil] (Brazil); [brasilians] (Brazilians); [Woman] (Women); [There's many] (There are many); [bringed] (brought); [literalng] (literally); [You sure about it? You want (...)?] (Are you sure about it? Do you want(...)?); [wellcome] (welcome); [outracized] (ostracized);

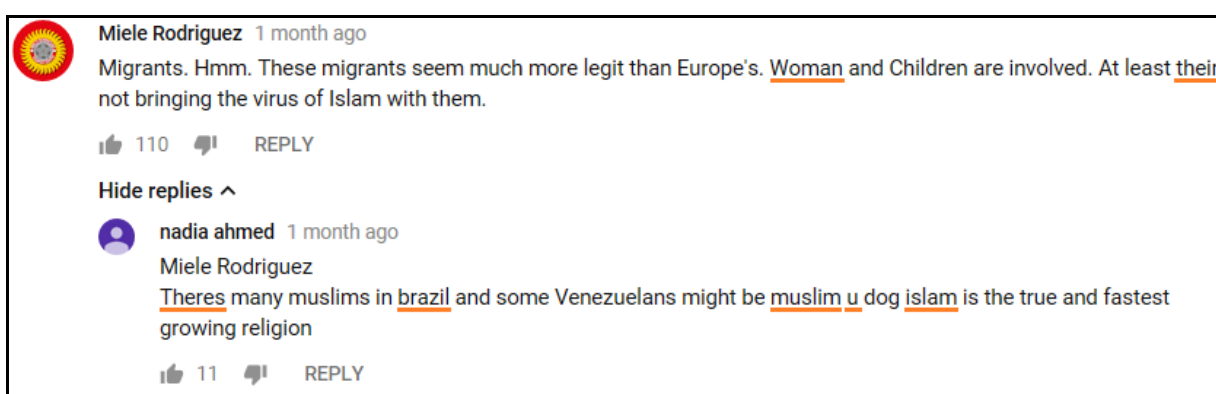
Most of the comments made by YouTube users bring traces of informal speech, which are also present on synchronous chat groups and other types of virtual environments. The grammatical features peculiar to Global English in the Internet are directly influenced by spoken English, the aspects and limitations of the keyboard input, and other users' native languages (L1) grammatical characteristics.

The first noticed aspect were the typos, which characterize the rushed and unworried typing on the keyboard, not caring for general mistakes on words and phrases. Those mistakes alone usually do not confuse the comprehensive meaning of the comment. Further, the influence of orality was observed on words and expressions, being most of them present in comic books, song lyrics, and poetry, before the popularization of the Internet. Some common examples: *Cause* and *cuz* for *because*, *youre* for *your*, *Your* for *You're*, *ya* and *u* for *you*; *gotta* for *have to*, *Gonna* for *going to*, *their* for *they are*. Then the lack of apostrophes and other punctuation (*cant*), and the lack of space between words (*withour* and *misleadstheir*) were also noticed. Among the research corpus, two comments made use of abbreviations – *gov* for *government*, and *Euros* for *Europeans*. Such use of abbreviations may denote practicality and rush on speech.

Lastly, the grammar inaccuracies made by users, and what they tell about Global English – the influence of other languages on it. Word forms like *brasil* (Brazil), *brasilians* (Brazilians), *literalng* (literally), may indicate the native language of the users,

since the influence of their L1 grammar and orthography seems to be present on their writing in English. Other inaccurate word forms found such as *worser* (worst) and *bringed* (brought) possibly shows how the users freely apply grammar rules by analogy to other same class words, thus making their speech intelligible. The last sort of inaccuracy consisted on the interrogative forms of two questions made by a same user: *You sure about it? You want the same mess we have in Europe? (Are you sure about it? Do you want(...)?)* The omission of the auxiliaries *be* and *do* in these cases seem to indicate the traces of orality or maybe the influence of his/her native language on speech.

Figure 6: Highlighted grammatical features



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woa3AUFafCw>

It is possible to notice in the conversational thread above how both users put aside many grammar rules of English: Plural forms, formal capital letters, and spelling and conjugation. Yet, none of these seems to damage the understanding of their sentences.

6.4. Lexical features

- a) Referring to Brazil/Brazilians: [Christian country]; [killing herself]; [average Brazilian]; [family planning]; [teen pregnancy]; [poverty]; [smarter than that]; [Brazil will integrate]; [multiracial country]; [multiculturalism done right]; [openly embraces race mixing]; [developing country]; [3rd world]; [immigrants are *wellcome*]; [relative poor and uneducated]; [welcoming country]; [part guilty of this]; [unhappy hosts]; [rich country]; [national identity]; [xenophobic]; [*cuck*]; [political correctness (neo *Bolshevik*) agenda];

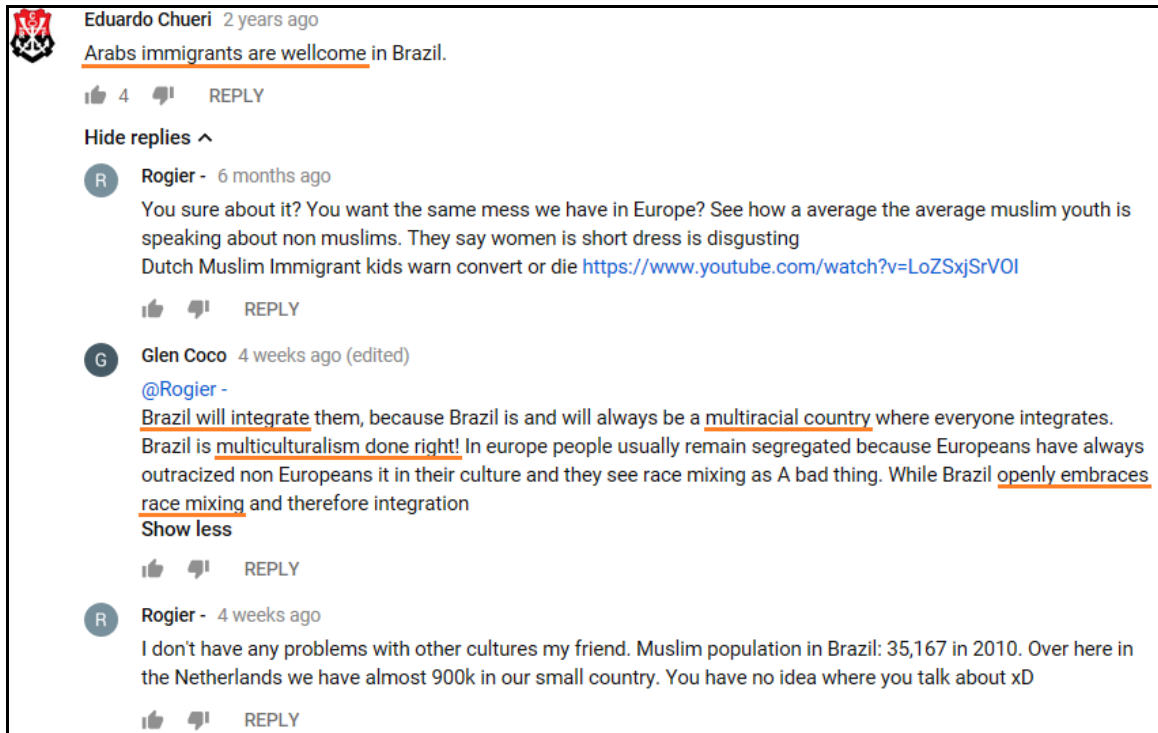
The analysis of the vocabulary practiced in the comments, Brazil and Brazilians are pictured as a hospitable nation most of the times, though some users also replied with arguments opposing to this general idea or even attacking this position. The image of a multicultural country that welcomes immigrants raised “likes” on comments and seemed to motivate many contrary replies from users. Such polarization occurred on both pages, and the immigration topic expanded into global perspective several times, having the users chatting and arguing about the current immigration crisis in Europe and in the United States. Such fact was clearly noted on the comment sections of both videos.

Regarding AJ+’s video about the Syrian refugees, some users highlighted the religious aspects of the Brazilian people, stating them predominantly as Christians, and evidencing that Brazil has high religious tolerance, practically with no major incidents directly linked to religion. On the other hand, some users mentioned that religious difference could become an issue just as it currently happens in Europe, according to themselves.

The BBC’s video about the crisis of Venezuelan refugees also brought polarized representations towards Brazil in its comments. However, the circumstances of the newscast (this time showing immigrants being expelled by Brazilians), contrast with Brazil’s welcoming position in the previous video. With this in mind, users with a more supportive profile upon immigration manifested their opposition onto what these Brazilians showed off in the newscast, whereas users with a more contrary profile upon immigration manifested support on Brazilians.

More than once, supposedly Brazilian users replied to anti-immigration comments arguing that the Venezuelan immigration crisis has a very different context of those ones observed in Europe and in the United States. In these cases, most anti-immigration arguments were founded on analogies and comparisons to those different immigrant crises, and had strong politically biased tone. This way, many anti-immigration users had their comments questioned due to their attempts to decontextualize the Venezuelan immigration crisis while reaffirming their position upon European and American immigration crises.

Figure 7: Lexical features regarding Brazil/Brazilians.



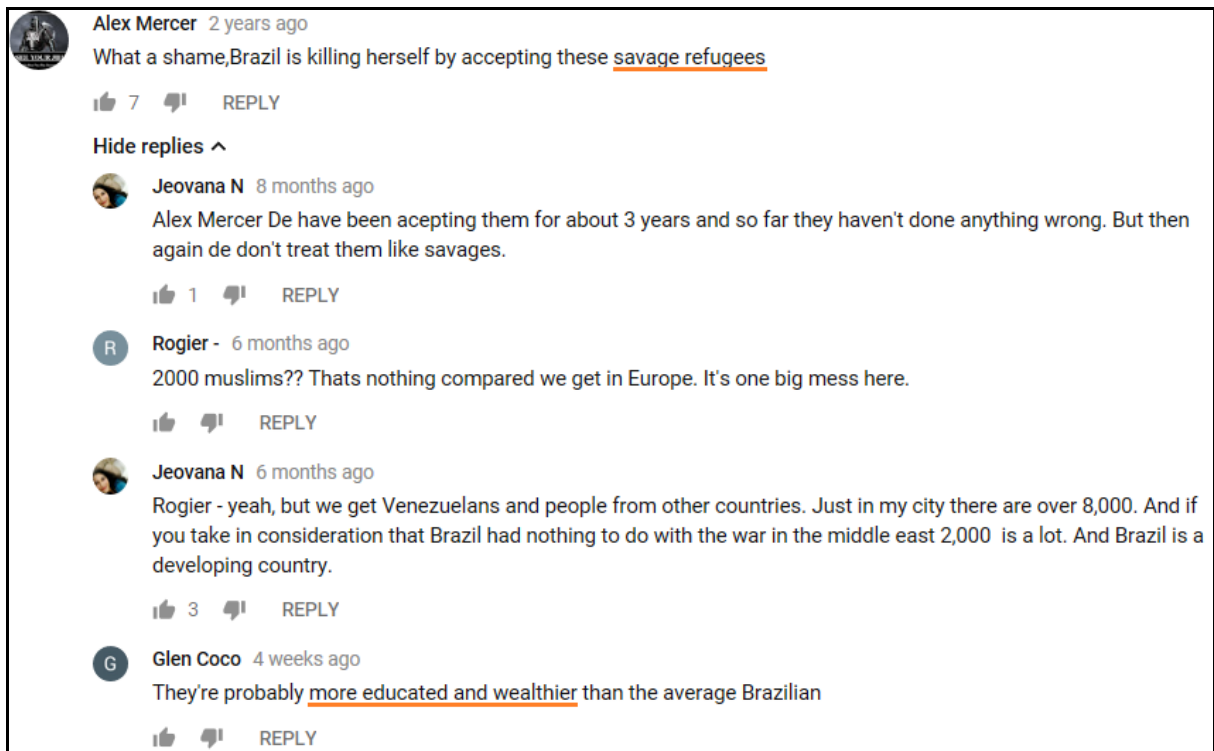
Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ka4OVN9BbD8>

In this selected excerpt, two users qualified positively Brazil and Brazilians (highlighted parts). It is also possible to notice how the user *Rogier* argued based on comparisons with different backgrounds.

- b) Referring to Syrians: [get along well]; [Muslim ways]; [Arabs]; [Arabs immigrants]; [savage refugees]; [more educated and wealthier]; [virus of Islam];

The words and expressions on the comments referring to Syrians had mostly a negative connotation, though positive and neutral connotation occurred as well. Since the comments from the AJ+ newscast were fewer in number, not much of the vocabulary referring directly to Syrians occurred in the conversational threads. It is worth mentioning that the term “refugee” rarely occurred as reference to the Syrians and the Venezuelans, in comparison to the term “immigrants”. Below, in figure 8, it is possible to see one of the rare occurrences of the term, but qualified by the adjective “savage”, thus, with negative reference.

Figure 8: Conversational threads



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ka4OVN9BbD8>

In this selected excerpt, two users qualified Syrian refugees (highlighted parts). The user *Alex Mercer* disqualified them, and seemed to victimize Brazil or to blame it for a supposedly wrong choice, while the user *Glen Coco* replied apparently disagreeing with that comment.

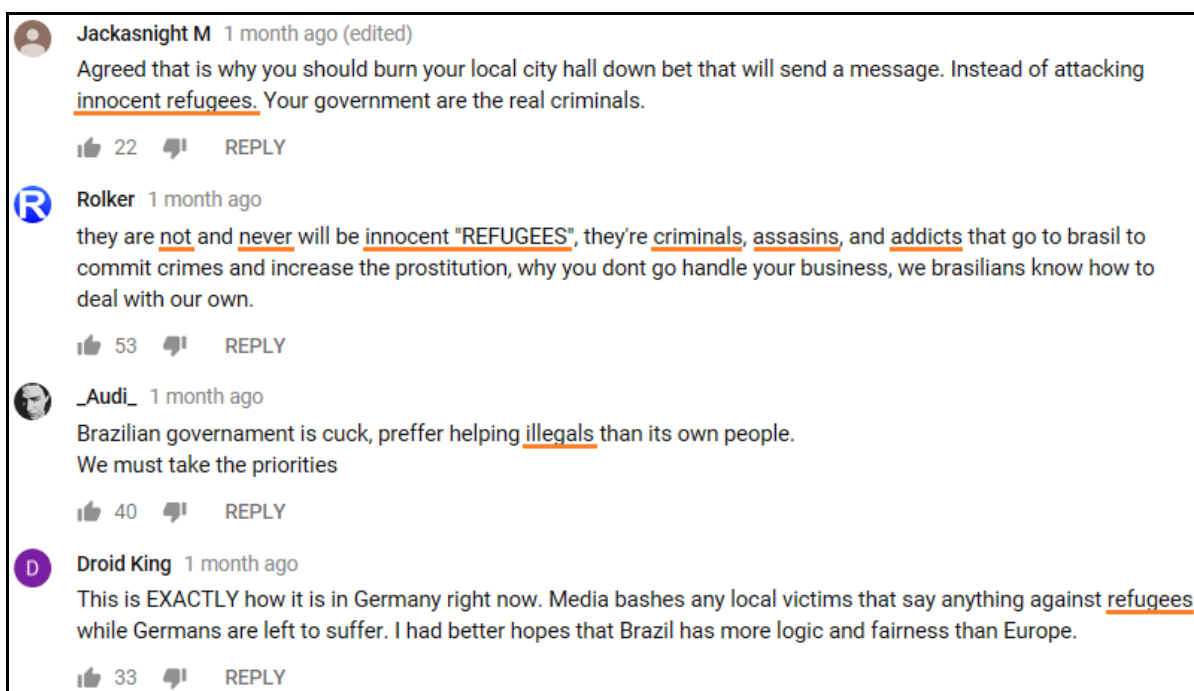
- c) Referring to Venezuelans: [*literal*ing starve]; [*brutaly* idiot economic ideas]; [Migrants]; [random immigrants]; [migrant shit]; [incompetence]; [poor people]; [national identity]; [innocent refugees]; [innocent “REFUGEES”]; [criminals]; [*assasins*]; [addicts]; [illegals]; [same culture and *christian* values]; [hard working people and educated]; [guilty]; [more legit (migrants)]; [*Commies*]; [sick *socialism* agenda]; [socialist paradise]; [unemployed asses]; [mess]; [cowards];

Concerning the BBC’s newscast and the Venezuelans, plenty of vocabulary was gathered and analyzed on the conversational threads, regarding their context. Users referred to Venezuelans with the use of positive, neutral and negative terms and expressions. For once, Venezuelans were compared to Brazilians, and described as sharing similar culture and Christian values. The sociopolitical aspects are quite present

in this lexical analysis, since many users mentioned the political context of Venezuela, being this a constant subject in comments. Some of these expressions and terms were: [*brutaly* idiot economic ideas], [incompetence], [*Commies*], [*sick socialism* agenda], and [socialist paradise].

As mentioned before, the polarization on pro-immigration and anti-immigration comments sometimes escalated from a Latin-American perspective to a wider and global one. The Venezuelan refugees were described in some comments as victims, and in other comments as accomplices of their own situation, such was the level of polarization on the conversational threads. It was also possible to note Brazilian users commenting on both sides of the discussion.

Figure 9: Conversational threads



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woa3AUFafCw>

Several attacks towards Venezuelan refugees are made in the comments above, one of the users (*Rolker*), who self-claimed Brazilian, replied contrary to a previous pro-immigrant comment. In this case, the pro-immigration comment received a total of 22 “likes”, while the anti-immigration comment received a total of 53 “likes”. Another user (*Droid King*) tries to legitimize the expelling of foreign refugees by mentioning the European immigration crisis, and discrediting the media, which (in his/her view) positions in favor of refugees.

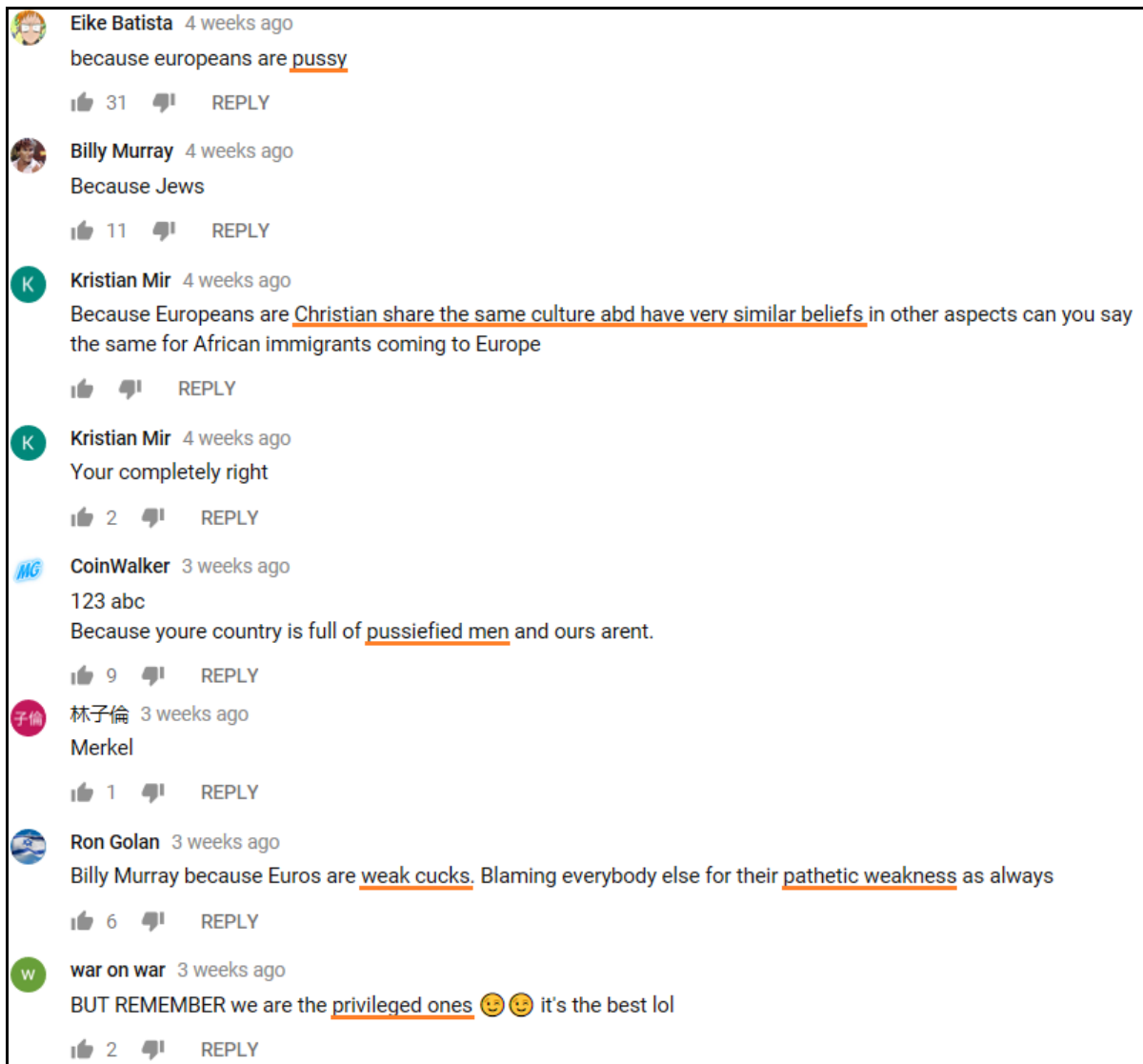
d) Referring to Europeans/Americans/others: [secular countries]; [world economic and military power]; [one big mess]; [segregated]; [race mixing as a bad thing]; [RETARDED AND COWARDS]; [MICE]; [pussy]; [Europeans are Christian share the same culture and have very similar beliefs]; [“ANTI-WHITE”]; [*pussiefied* men]; [weak *cucks*]; [pathetic weakness]; [privileged ones]; [tolerant]; [invaded and looted the world]; [unhappy hosts]; [exchanged their patriotism for a common market]; [are left to suffer]; [political correctness (neo *Bolshevik*) agenda]; [xenophobic]; [European Blind Empathy]; [“white people”];

Lastly, the lexical items referring to Europeans and Americans was taken into consideration, since the topics on both comment sections involved the current international immigrant crises, which also occur in Europe and in the United States. As mentioned before, many users made comments comparing the European and American contexts to the Brazilian context.

Some users referred to Europe and its people negatively, blaming them for a past of colonization and exploitation, which consequently caused harm to other peoples back then. Others referred to Europeans as xenophobic and segregating. On the other hand, users with anti-immigration profiles also accused the Europeans of being weak when having a pro-immigration posture.

The United States were similarly criticized, and the matter of military intervention upon other nations and its consequences was mentioned as one of the main causes of large scale immigration in Africa and in the Middle East.

Figure 10: Conversational threads



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=woa3AUFafCw>

In this conversational thread, different users replied to a same comment, which questioned why Europeans could not send migrants back to their native countries. Three users replied simply cursing. Another (*Kristian Mir*) justified highlighting European culture and values (common to most European nations), then he/she asks back if the same could be said about African immigrants, this way showing some disbelief towards multiculturalism. The user *war on war* seemed to mock the situation, perhaps using of irony in his/her reply as may be seen in the figure above.

7. Conclusions

This research paper had as main objective to investigate how the representations about the Brazilian culture were shaped in the online written communication in English as a global language. To answer this main question, the paper proposed to identify the Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) resources, which YouTube users employed in their online interaction in English as a global language. I found out that several CMC features were used to enhance prosodic aspects of the speech and compensate the reduced mode of written conversation online, such as emoticons, bold types, capital letters, exaggerated punctuation to express emotions such as irony and anger, mostly towards the Syrians and also, but less, towards the Venezuelans, Brazilians, Europeans and North-Americans.

In relation to the Brazilians, I could see that the sort of specific emotions and meanings expressed constructed representations of the hospitality by Brazilians, mostly with reference to the Christian religious background, pointed as religious tolerant as well, in comparison to other religions such as Muslims and Islamic referred as not tolerant. Some users represented Brazilians as suffering the impacts of immigrants and showed sympathy for it; others represented Brazilians as naive when welcoming the Syrians, specially, and others even supported the Brazilians reaction to the Venezuelans when attacking them in the frontier area. Contrary to my expectations, that would be disapproval on Brazilians attacking Venezuelans.

As conclusion, I could see that the events depicted in the videos provoked a global conversation most of the times devoted to the immigration crises in Europe and in America, than that being portrayed in the videos. We could see that Brazilians were mostly referred as a comparison token to talk about Europeans or Americans as similar or different people to them. This reflects the polarization represented in the conversations between the immigrants/refugees (them) and the host countries (us).

Polarization was, thus, something that called my attention in the discussions online. It seemed that people always embody their speech acts in “our place”, or “their place” and it seems that there is no middle area between “us” and “them”, “us” as good, “them” as bad, although Brazilians (us) and Venezuelans (them) were sometimes represented as same people, as Latin Americans.

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