Criticism Strategies Found In The Youtube Video "Trevor Noah Unpacks The Racist Response To The Little Mermaid" By The Daily Show

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Abstract

Criticism is one type of oppositional behavior in language. This research aimed to identify the types of criticism strategies and to examine the external pragmatic modifiers used by Trevor Noah in the video *Trevor Noah Unpacks the Racist Response to The Little Mermaid.* The researcher used a qualitative descriptive method. The data in this research are speech acts of criticism uttered by the speaker (Trevor Noah) whose data source was taken from YouTube video. This research used documentation to collect the data and was analyzed using a qualitative approach with Nguyen's (2005) theory of criticism strategies. The results of this research showed that there were 18 data which contained criticism speech acts found in Trevor Noah's utterances. The data were classified into two types of criticizing strategies including 9 direct criticizing strategies, such as 1 negative evaluation, 2 disapprovals, 2 expressions of disagreement, 3 identifications of problems, and 1 consequence, and 9 indirect criticizing strategies, such as 1 correction, 2 indicating standards, 1 demand for change, 2 requests for change, while expressions of uncertainty, asking/presupposing, and other hints (sarcasm), each found one utterance. The researcher also found 4 classifications of external pragmatic modifiers used to mitigate criticism, such as steers, sweeteners, disarmers, and grounders contained in Trevor Noah's utterances.

Keywords: Criticism strategies, speech acts, external modifiers, YouTube

Introduction

People sometimes use critical statements if they disagree with an opinion and show opposition to the person they are talking to. Criticism is one type of oppositional behavior in language. The speaker uses criticism to convey negative feedback to the hearer in order to improve the addressee's actions, behavior, words, attitudes, works, and so on (Al-Kayed & Al-Ghoweri, 2019). Criticism can be defined as feedback, comments, evaluations, or views that are expressed, given, or requested in this situation.

Austin (1962) claimed that there are three levels of speech acts: locutionary acts, illocutionary acts, and perlocutionary actions. According to Searle (1986) there are five categories of illocutionary speech acts: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. Those are the five most fundamental kinds of actions that one can perform while speaking or uttering, and they can be further separated based on their intended purpose.

Criticizing is an expressive speech act in which the speaker describes or expresses a form of speech that disagrees with the actions the interlocutor is uttering. Hyland (2000) also defines criticism as 'expressions of dissatisfaction or negative comments'.

For instance, when someone says, 'stop being ridiculous,' s/he is showing an expression of criticizing or commenting on racist statements made by certain online trolls that are not based on the facts and might indirectly drag a person's mentality down. This act is performed with the intention of influencing future actions or giving improvement by providing feedback, opinions, and both good and bad considerations. Criticism can be expressed with direct or indirect strategies. In a speech act of criticism, aspects of the accuracy of using critical strategies are needed with the context, using the appropriate critique semantic formula, and using suitable criticism politeness tools.

Society can perceive that the phenomenon of social interaction such as criticizing occurs in daily conversations. Therefore, criticism in various societies must be expressed with prudence rather than carelessness. Criticism lives as a reflection of natural human existence, the phenomenon of speech acts occurs in both real life and social media like YouTube. The Daily Show (TDS), a late-night talk and satirical news television program in US, has a YouTube channel that often shares videos about today's top headlines and covers the viral news that always attracts the attention of YouTube users, one of which is the racist phenomenon against the movie that has just been shown in theaters, namely The Little Mermaid.

In terms of the use of criticism, previous research has examined this speech act in 4 fields of study. The first is the use of criticism in foreign language learning (Al-Kayed & Al-Ghoweri; 2019, Sulaiman; 2022, Indrawati; 2019, and El-Dakhs et al; 2019). The second, in the field of cross-cultural pragmatics, strategic criticism is used to compare native speakers with non-native speakers while making critical utterances (Hosseinizadeh & Moqadam; 2019, Safari; 2020, Ali; 2020, and Al-Zubaidi; 2020). The third field is the use of strategic criticism in social media (Handayani; 2022, Manurung; 2020, and Alshakhanbeh & Alghazo; 2022). The fourth is the use of criticism in the field of movies (Kurji & Al Shamiri; 2020, Megawati; 2020, Septiana & Haristiani; 2022, and Ridho'i; 2021).

The present research will examine criticism acts found in one of the videos on YouTube, which are different from the research above in terms of data sources and research questions. The researcher is interested in examining the use of criticism strategies in the YouTube video entitled "Trevor Noah Unpacks the Racist Response to The Little Mermaid" in light of the above explanation. In the video, Trevor Noah or the speaker will give a response containing critical remarks to people who have made negative and racist comments against the character in the film "The Little Mermaid".

As stated by Nguyen (2005), there are two types of criticism strategies: direct strategies and indirect strategies. Direct strategy criticism refers to explicitly embodied strategy criticism and immediately pointing out the problem criticized. This category includes the following strategies: negative evaluation, disapproval, expression of disagreement, identification of problem, statement of difficulty, and consequences. Indirect strategy criticism refers to telling by implying a problem, only to raise awareness of imprecision. This category includes the following strategies: correction, indicating standard, demand for change, request for change, advice about change, suggestion for change, expression of uncertainty, asking/presupposing, and other hints (sarcasm). There are different types of critics used by The Daily Show's host, Trevor Noah. Based on the description above, the researcher will examine more deeply criticism strategies with research entitled "Criticism Strategies found in the YouTube Video Trevor Noah Unpacks the Racist Response to the Little Mermaid by The Daily Show."

Method

The type of this research is a qualitative approach to analyze the criticism act that occurred in the YouTube video. The object of this research taken from The Daily Show's Host, namely Trevor Noah. Data for this research came in the form of utterances that contain criticism by Trevor Noah. Data source of this research was the YouTube video entitled Trevor Noah Unpacks the Racist Response to The Little Mermaid, accessed at the link https://youtu.be/g2pca_YYe-k, was broadcast on May 26, 2023. The data were collected using documentation technique. Documentation technique used to find material, such as notes, transcripts, newspapers, books, journals, and so on (Ary et al., 2010). The data analyzed using criticism strategies theory by Nguyen (2005).

Results

The video "Trevor Noah Unpacks the Racist Response to The Little Mermaid" showed Trevor Noah's response to racist comments addressed to Halle Bailey, who played *Ariel* in the film The Little Mermaid. The comments made by internet trolls were criticism of the character *Ariel* in the live-action film The Little Mermaid, which was played by a black person, not a white person, with red hair as in the cartoon that was released in 1989. Trevor Noah also responded to racists who had attacked one of the people, even though he thought Halle Bailey's acting was great and appropriate for the role of Ariel in that film.

The researcher found 18 data of criticism utterances. Using Nguyen's (2005) theory, the researcher discovered criticism strategies used by Trevor Noah in the video "Trevor Noah Exposes Racist Responses to The Little Mermaid" when analyzing the data. Criticism strategies can be classified into two forms, such as direct strategies and indirect strategies. The result of data analysis presents in the table below.

Table 1. Criticism Strategies in the Video

No	Criticism Strategies	Frequency
1.	Direct Criticism:	
	a. Negative evaluation	1
	b. Disapproval	2
	c. Expression of disagreement	2
	d. Identification of problem	3
	e. Statement of difficulty	0
	f. Consequences	1
2.	Indirect Criticism:	
	a. Correction	1
	b. Indicating standard	2
	c. Demand for change	1
	d. Request for change	2
	e. Advice about change	0
	f. Suggestion for change	0
	g. Expression of uncertainty	1
	h. Asking/presupposing	1

i. Other hints (sarcasm)

Total Direct and Indirect Strategies	18

Based on the analysis, the researcher mostly found the direct criticism strategies (identification of problem) in the Trevor's utterances in the video. The following are the examples:

1) *She looks nothing like they're nothing like they both have the tail, they both have the red. She looks nothing like her.* **How do I even know that she's a mermaid?** *(YT/01/DS)*
2) *A bunch of internet racists are upset that* **a fictional character is being played by a black person.** *(YT/02/DS)*
3) *People are just* **using these moments to disguise a discriminatory ideal** *and like and like you know a racism that they hold. (YT/09/DS)*

While the indirect criticism strategies are indicating standard and request for change, which were 2 occurrence. The following are the examples:

1) Indicating standards
   a. **First of all of course the little mermaid is black** *all right everyone whose name starts with little is black Lil Wayne, Lil Nas, Little Kim. (YT/05/IS)*
   b. *You have the princess and brave she has red-hair remember right, you have Anna from Frozen right you have um little kid from UP. (YT/15/IS)*
2) Request for change
   a. *So look***, stop being ridiculous.***(YT/06/IS)*
   b. **I would** *get it if people had good-faith arguments. (YT/08/IS)*

This research also analyzed the external pragmatic modifiers contained in the criticism strategy. External modifiers are expressions that occur outside of the head act of criticism. To analyze the data external modifiers of criticism the researcher used the theory by Nguyen (2005). There were 4 kinds of external modifiers, such as steers, sweeteners, disarmers, and grounders. The table below displays the results of the analysis of the external modifiers.

Table 2. External Modifiers

No	External Modifiers	Frequency
1.	Steers	2
2.	Sweeteners	1
3.	Disarmers	1
4.	Grounders	4
	Total Data	8

From **Table 2**, the researcher found a total of eight external modifiers contained in the criticism utterances that have been uttered by the speaker in the video *"Trevor Noah Unpacks the Racist Response to The Little Mermaid."* From each external modifier,

grounders were dominantly used to mitigate criticism with four occurrences. The following are the examples:

1) *"**She looks nothing like they're nothing like they both have the tail, they both have the red. She looks nothing like her.** How do I even know that she's a mermaid?"*
2) *"**Calm down I can say that because my dad left and he's white** so who's racist now?*
3) *"It's ironic **that they try and use representation as the argument the other way around.**"*
4) *"First of all of course the little mermaid is black **all right everyone whose name starts with little is black Lil Wayne, Lil Nas, Little Kim**.*"

Conclusion

The research found 18 criticism utterances used by Trevor Noah. 1 negative evaluation, 2 disapprovals, 2 expressions of disagreement, 3 identifications of problems, and 1 consequence were types of direct criticism strategies. Meanwhile, the indirect criticism strategies consisted of 1 correction, 2 indicating standards, 1 demand for change, and 2 requests for change. As well as expressions of uncertainty, asking/presupposing, and other hints (sarcasm), each found one utterance. The direct criticism strategy (statement of difficulty) and the indirect criticism strategy (advice about change and suggestion for change) were not found in *"Trevor Noah Unpacks the Racist Response to The Little Mermaid."* The researcher also found 8 external modifiers, such as 2 steers, 1 sweetener, 1 disarmer, and 4 grounders that was occurred in the criticism strategies. Based on the criticism utterances in the video, the direct criticism strategy 'identification of problems' is widely used by Trevor Noah with external modifier grounders to mitigate the criticism.

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