

## **Viva el Rey! – Insults and verbal aggression in YouTube comments**

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During the 2007 Ibero-American Summit, things came to a head between Spanish King Juan Carlos I., Spanish Prime Minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, and Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez. Chávez constantly interrupted Zapatero, until the king intervened and spoke the legendary phrase: “¿Porqué no te callas?” – “Why don’t you shut up?” A video was uploaded to YouTube and watched millions of times. Currently, there have been posted over 4,600 comments to just one version of the video ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-GemVG\\_6Ec](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-GemVG_6Ec)).

In our contribution, we analyze 100 comments posted short after the incident. Many users take sides, express delight or indignation. From the perspective of politeness research, two aspects are specifically interesting:

- 1) How do YouTube users evaluate the linguistic behavior of the participants in the scene? (folk-linguistic aspects)
- 2) Why does verbal aggression emerge so quickly? (aspects of face work)

Statements like “Viva España”, at first glance only expressions of amusement, are especially explosive in the discussion, since they receive a wider interpretation: firstly, as an act of selfface-enhancement, secondly, as a face threatening to all users committed to the other party. Even though “Viva España” does not show typical features of an insult, it activates cultural and historical implications and thus often triggers emotional and aggressive reactions.

### **Select bibliography**

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