

Contradictory Statement as a Basis for Conflict Resolution Strategies

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Abstract. The issue of contradictory nature of the Reddit social network discussion has been raised. The section of “Unpopular Opinion” as a source of users’ comments with the most conflicting matter has been chosen. It is declared that contradictory statement coincides with the title of the ‘Unpopular section’ rubric in case its implicit nature is manipulative. Initial statement refers to the very first comment of the contradictory statement and triggers next and further comments (NC and FC). The comments to the conflict statement using linguistic markers and manipulative contexts have been analyzed. Phrases and sentences marked with manipulative, implicit or explicit nature of utterance have been found and grouped. Conflict resolution strategies as a key to comprehend the insight of opposed comments and their frequency have been regarded. The algorithm of sequence of step analysis concerning the Reddit social network comment system has been considered. Other contradictory statements have been selected for future analysis and thorough research.

Keywords: contradictory statement, initial statement, next comment (NC), further comment (FC), conflict resolution strategies

1 Introduction

The human nature is contradictory itself. If it comes to interaction in society, one has always bear in mind: conflict situation is inevitable. To manage conflict in an effective way a communicator has to find common areas of agreement, agree on solutions to satisfy each other’s demands and always be ready to make a right decision if the conflict remains unresolved. It is worth noting that a capacity to respond to other people’s viewpoints is considered healthy and true way of communication. If there is a dead end, the best choice – to disengage and leave your interlocutor emotionally balanced.

2 Studies referring to the issue

Currently, while communicating people face endless meaningless discussion which may lead to a conflict situation. Phenomenon of conflict is discovered in communication research, namely contact linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics as well.

Preliminary, conflict situations occur due to language peculiarities in terms of regional and political characteristics. A particular branch dealing with language conflicts is called contact linguistics [1, 2]. Here, conflict is considered in terms of language or personal contact. The reasons of language conflict can be the following: opposing levels of evaluation, moral values, opinion patterns. It has an impact on self-contemplation, child training, education and group instincts. Sociologists refer to the term conflict as disagreements which involve fearful conditions (implicit and explicit), preferences and moral principles, the aim of which should strongly differ from those of another representative group in order to balance the opposition or to stick to your area of interest [3].

3 Analysis of the conflict discussion sections

There are certain types of language conflicts (e.g. between people of minorities and majorities, one or more language communities) when it comes to territoriality principles, linguistic discrimination, etc. In this paper, we do not intend to define language conflicts, but they relate to conflict situations people suffer from, as being predominated by language preferences. Here, we consider conflict situations in social network Reddit. We refer to the section “Unpopular opinion” as there are the most contradictory statements of all other sections which may trigger crucial conflict resolution strategies

(https://www.reddit.com/r/unpopularopinion/comments/dbtzpg/giving_scholarships_based_on_minority_status/). In order to deal with any of the following contradictory situations, let us provide the definitions of the crucial conflict resolution strategies:

1. Avoiding – ignoring the contradictory situation, taking out of confusing conversation, leaving it unexpectedly without solving it.
2. Competing – assertive intentions to prove your rightness and end up a dialogue with your own statement.
3. Accommodating – taking position “in the middle” trying to cooperate and not to let “the rebellion” spread.
4. Collaborating – offering a shared solution to overcome the issue.
5. Compromising – finding the neutral solution to the issue, which does not have to please anyone but will be fair enough in the particular situation.

It must be noted that those five strategies are common in oral communication, but there is an attempt to apply these techniques in verbal communication.

There are lively discussion statements and comments from different users in social network Reddit. We allocate those statements using linguistic markers of manipulation, implicit and explicit influences, contradiction, arguments, approval, disapproval,

etc. [4 - 13]. Each statement is marked by rubric, e.g. Social, Politics. The first Figure is a statement to be discussed, followed by next figures with user's comments. We analyze the comments referring closely to the statement and those having any features of crucial conflict resolution strategies (Fig. 1, Fig. 2).



Fig. 1. Contradictory Statement

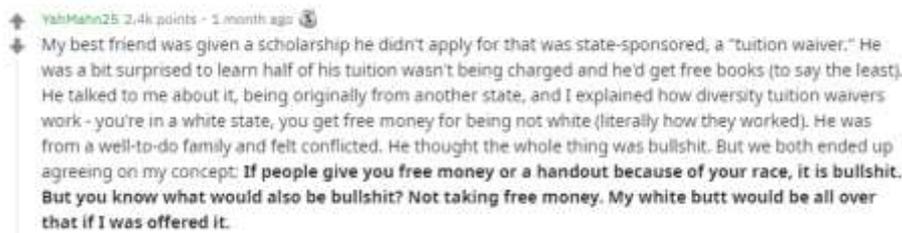


Fig. 2. Initial comment

After initial comment we define such linguistic markers in next comments (NC) (Fig. 3) and further comments (FC) (Fig. 4). The NC are defined when there are linguistic markers which indicate any of the above-mentioned conflict strategies. The first NC and its FC to the initial comment are as follows:

- NC: Some people feel that way, others don't (accommodating),
- FC: Fun fact, and I'm not even sure how this affects the conversation, but (collaborating), That would imo actually solve the problem (collaborating), Something to consider though is that (accommodating), The only way to help bridge the gap is (compromising), It's not very relevant given the fact that (avoiding), Nobody cares what they think (competing), Not gonna lie (avoiding), believe it or not (avoiding), Well that's a huge assumption that (avoiding), I thought the same thing too, just wrote that in case it was (accommodating), This was certainly a fact! (collaborating), Guys, I think we all think this is interesting (collaborating), My teacher in highschool did the same thing (collaborating), I see your point. But, honestly (collaborating), Even if that were true, the gap still will continue (competing), Otherwise if you think life is fair in any sense, you couldn't be any more wrong (accommodating), You've got to be rich to even think that way (competing)

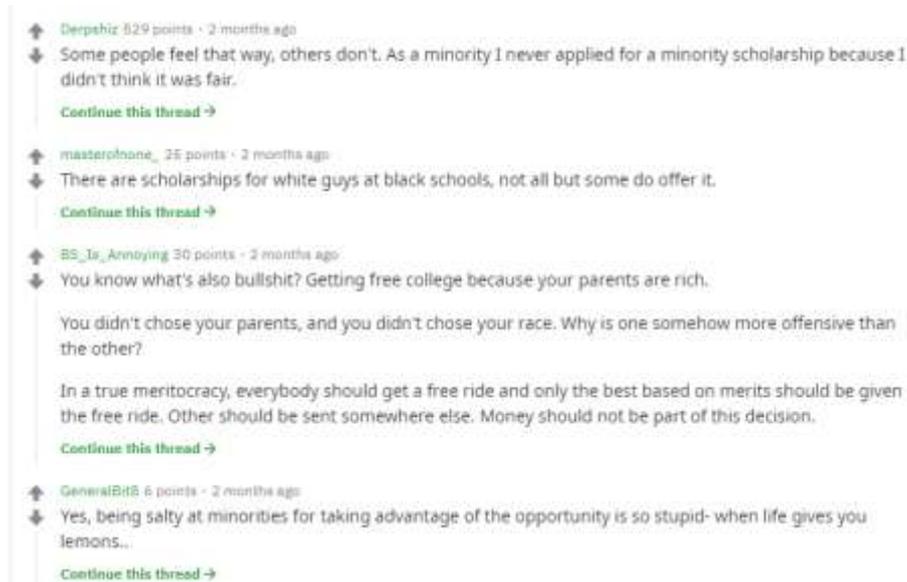


Fig. 3. Next comments (followed by the initial ones)

Each 'next comment' has its own comment which starts with "Continue this thread"→ (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Further comments to the 'next comment'

The second NC and its FC to the initial comment are the following:

- NC: There are scholarships for white guys at black schools, not all but some do offer it (compromising)
- FC: - (Fig. 5)



Fig. 5. Comments with 'dead end'

In Fig. 5 the next comment could have been extended, but the answer 'yes' ended up the dialogue.

The third NC and its FC to the initial comment are as follows:

- NC: You know what's also bullshit? Why is one somehow more offensive than the other? (competing),
- FC: Wait people are getting free college because they're rich? (competing), More importantly how (competing), As far as Im aware (accommodating), that really didn't answer my question (avoiding)

The fourth NC and its FC to the initial comment are as follows:

- NC: The sad thing is that.. (avoiding)
- FC: That was part of my friends' dilemma (collaborating) (Fig. 6)



Fig. 6. Comments with 'no-answer'

In Fig. 6 the conversation failed, so none of the technique mentioned resulted in dead speech end.

The fifth NC and its FC to the initial comment are as follows:

- NC: I completely agree with you (accommodating)
- FC: Your comment is indicative of the fact that (collaborating), thanks for the interesting perspective (collaborating)

One conflict situation generated one statement implying contradictory insight followed by five next comments and their further comments, which were considered as a basis for identifying conflict strategies being applied.

In Fig. 7 there is an algorithm covering the general structure of the Reddit social network comment system.

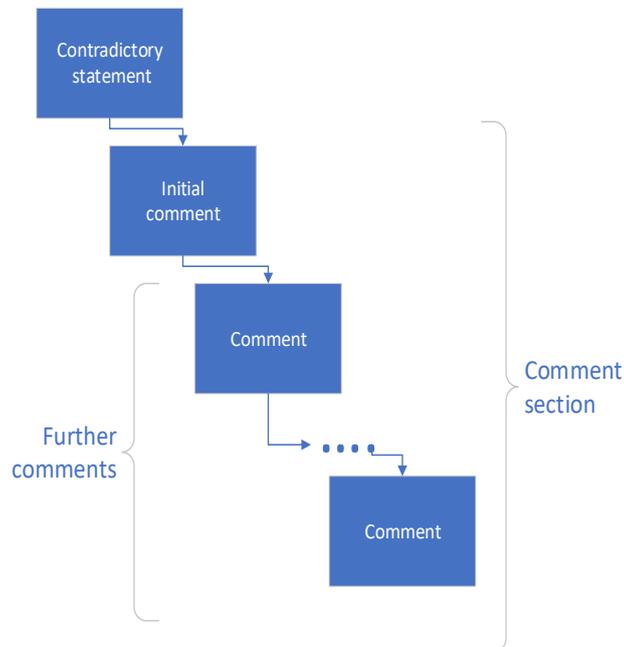


Fig.7 Algorithm of sequence of step analysis concerning the Reddit social network comment system

In Fig. 8 there is an algorithm covering the special cases of the previous Figures 1-6, namely, those comments where dialogues ended up in an unexpected way or failed due to rhetorical questions or users' lack of interest.

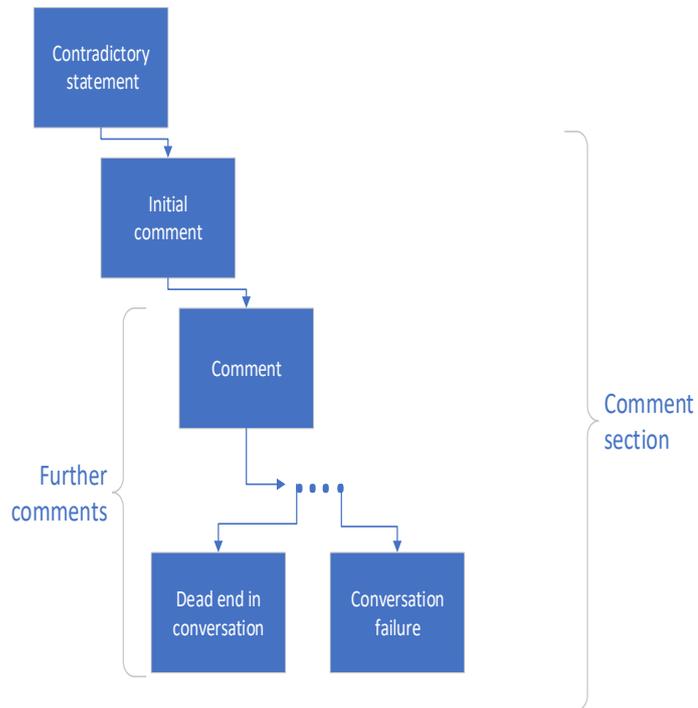
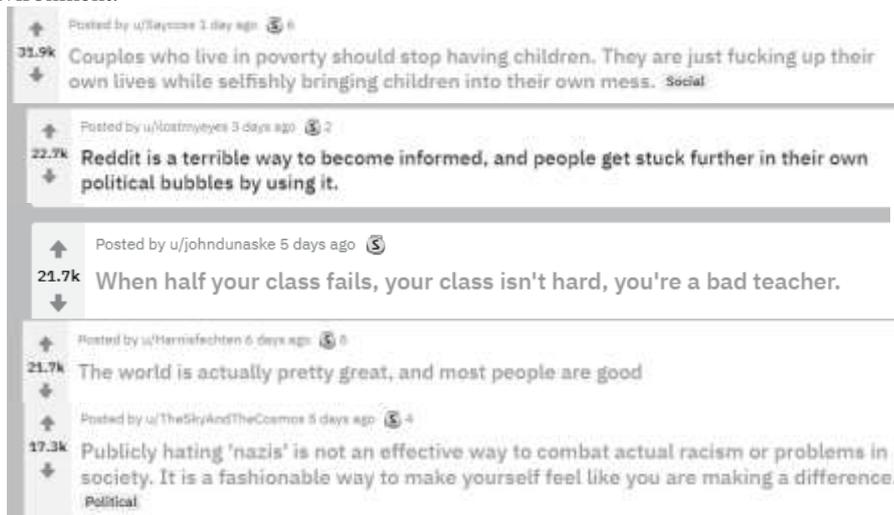
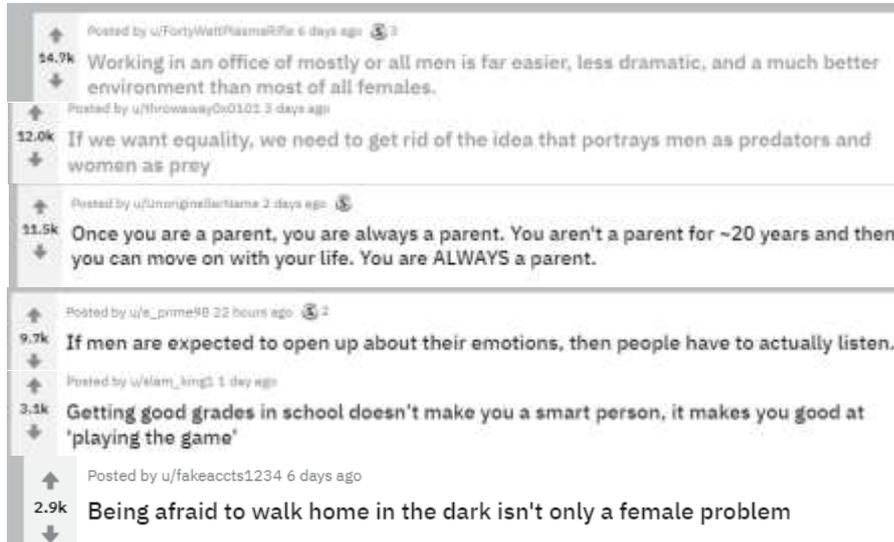


Fig.8 Algorithm of sequence of the previous Figures 1-6 of the Reddit social network comment system

The following Reddit statements will be beneficially analyzed and compared between each other to fully detect the capacity of conflict situations in a social network environment.





4 Conclusions

The unexpected ending for any of the communicators may result in a conflict situation in communication. In this paper a model of conflict situation and its possible strategic solving principles were considered. The study was conducted using the Reddit social network, mainly its discussion section with statement and its comments. The analysis of linguistic markers of discussion was performed. To define the ways of dealing with a conflict statement, the strategic resolution principles were applied to the comments. As a result, five different comment sections were allocated. The frequency of resolution of these conversations was calculated (see Table 1).

Table 1. Table of frequency of conflict resolution strategies of conversations.

Comment section	Accommodating	Collaborating	Avoiding	Compromising	Competing
1	3	6	4	1	3
2	0	0	0	1	0
3	0	0	1	0	3

Comment section	Accommodating	Collaborating	Avoiding	Compromising	Competing
4	0	1	1	0	0
5	1	2	0	0	0

In general, avoiding and competing techniques dominated in these comments. They show that the discussion was active and users equally craved for prompt result of conversation. Compromising was hard to obtain. Accommodating was characterized with delicate polite answers. The most frequent resolution technique was collaborating, as people lively demonstrated their awareness of the statement.

One dialogue came to a dead end referring to either not being appealing, informative enough, or users ceased their speculation on that point. Another dialogue remained open, the answer was not given as the user considered the questions rhetorical or ironical.

The contradictory statement was not rather solved but bombarded with various opinions, facts, evidences, life stories and user's own experience.

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