

What teasing sequences reveal about *doing gender* in Russian conversations

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Outline

- humor as „one of the last vestiges of gender bias“ (Bubel/Spitz 2006, 71)
 - *doing gender* and humor
- teasing as playful violation of social norms (e.g. gender norms)
 - polite / politic behavior
- topics of teases and reactions to teases
 - What counts as socially appropriate gendered behavior in the given speech community?
- Data: Casual conversations of Russian interlocutors conducted in the variety of Colloquial Russian (Zemskaja et al. 1983, 1995)
 - ORD, NKRuJaz and recordings by the author

Gender & Humor

- specific joking style in order to perform a situated gender identity (e.g. Kotthoff (ed.) 1996, Hay 2000)
 - implicit *doing gender* through humor (Kotthoff 2006)
- explicit displays of gender identities in humor (e.g. Bing 2007, Crawford 2005, Raskin 1981, Draitser 1999, Thielemann 2011)
 - *doing gender* as membership categorization (Schegloff 1992, 1997)
 - focus on situated categorization practices

Conversational humor – play with norms

- norms and normality assumption guiding interlocutors production and perception of what is going on in interaction
- playful deviation from (diverse) norms conceived of as knowledge
 - linguistic norms and conventions
 - discursive and textual regularities
 - sequential and preference organization, default participation framework
 - genre norms
 - social norms
 - including knowledge about polite and politic behavior
 - world knowledge

playful violation of
social norms - teasing

can achieve humorous effects (Thielemann 2015, under revision; Kotthoff 1998)

- shift between a cognitively privileged interpretation and a cognitively less accessible interpretation (*incongruity / bisociation*) (cf. Forabosco 1992, Giora 2003)
- deviation is (mostly) marked by *contextualization cues* pointing to a non-serious framing

Social norms – polite / politic behavior

- behavioral standards within a given group, i.e. normality assumptions with regard to conversational conduct
 - „the set of cultural values which instructs interactants to consider each other by satisfying shared expectations“ (Sifianou 1992, 86) – politeness_{Sifianou}
 - „linguistic behaviour which is perceived to be appropriate to the social constraints of the ongoing interaction“ (Watts 2003, 19) – politic behavior
 - „what is appropriate relative to a certain situation“ (Terkourafi 2005, 253) – politeness_{Terkourafi}acquired through socialization informing the *habitus* (Bourdieu) (Terkourafi 2005, Watts/Locher 2008)
- theoretically modelled in terms of
 - frames representing the group-specific and situational *habitus* (e.g. Terkourafi 2005, Locher/Watts 2008)
 - metapragmatic strategies oder principles (e.g. Brown/Levinson 1987, Leech 1983, Lakoff 1973)
 - intercultural or inter-group differences (e.g. Ogiermann 2009, Brehmer 2009, Thielemann 2010)

Teasing - mock impoliteness – aggressive joking

- playful deviation from the habitualized conversational behavior
 - mock impoliteness - parasitic on impoliteness accompanied by cues framing the ‚aggression‘ as playful (e.g. Culpeper 1996, Bousfield 2007, Haugh 2010)
 - [mock politeness – parasitic on politeness (e.g. sarcasm)]
- social functions
 - aggression in the service of solidarity (Radcliff-Brown 1952) – „from bonding to biting“ (Boxer/Cortes-Conde 1997)
 - constitutive of specific genres and typical of specific speech communities e.g. sounding/playing the dozen (Labov 1972), flirting (Straehle 1993), TV hosts controlling their guests (Furman 2011, 2013)
 - covert form of moralizing implicitly pointing to in-group values and norms (e.g. Günthner 1986, Drew 1987) - here: gendered norms of conduct
 - BUT: Russian „Einmischungskultur“ (Rathmayr 1996, 115f)

Genre pattern of teasing (cf. Günthner 1996)

- in reaction to some deviant behavior, action or position which is addressed in a grossly exaggerated fashion
 - FTA for the teased speaker's positive face
- participation framework
 - co-present victim of the tease who may
 - react ,po-faced' (Drew 1987)
 - laugh along
 - join in
 - teaser
 - audience that may
 - join in
 - laugh along
 - withhold active involvement
- contextualization cues for non-serious framing of the attack
 - exaggeration (content, lexical choices etc.)
 - prosodic cues (laughter, drawling articulation, staging of utterances/mimicking etc.)

If interlocutors join in, the tease can evolve into a fictional scenario (Holt 2007, Winschatz/Kozin 2008, Thielemann 2012) – safe topic / norm deviation to be joked about

,po-faced reaction' (Drew 1987) – topic / failure or norm deviation too sensitive to be ridiculed

different emic conceptualizations/
negotiation of
social norms

FTA-topic	inappropriate drinking habits (in all-female talk), CCs: exaggeration, bisociative contrasts
Audience	joining in/laughing along
Reaction _{victim}	laughing along & joining in

7 (.) VSE buTYLki vseгда otkryvaet.>
8 (-)
9 F2: <<pp>vo:..>
10 (.)
11 I18: da:..
12 (-)
13 F2: <<p>STArjyj alkogolik.>
14 I18: <<laughing>da.>=
15 =hehe[he
16 F2: [<<clears throat>>
17 (---)
18 F2: so STAžem.
19 (.)
20 I18: <<smile voice>DA:=DA=DA:..>
21 (---)
22 F2: <<pp>o:j.>=
23 I18: =<<smile voice>vot KAK ty tak delaeš';>
24 (.)
25 F1: : <<p, smile voice>treniroVAT'sja nado.
26 (---) so studenčeskoj skam'i.
27 (1.25)

7 (.) she always opens all bottles>
8 (-)
9 F2: <<pp>wow>
10 (.)
11 I18: yes
12 (-)
13 F2: <<p>old alcoholic>
14 I18: <<laughing>yes>
15 hehe[he
16 F2: [<<clears throat>>
17 (---)
18 F2: with professional experience
19 (.)
20 I18: <<smile voice>YES:=YES=YES:..>
21 (---)
22 F2: <<pp>oh.>=
23 I18: =<<smile voice>and HOW you do it>
24 (.)
25 F1: : <<p, smile voice>you have to train
26 (---) from student time on
27 (1.25)

(2) RuBoBerlin2009 (00:49:49), Vasilisa (Va), Oksana (Ok), Afrosinja (Af)

1 Va: i my poechali v moskvu-
2 s afrosinej;
3 a tam- to est' druž'ja i tak da(h)=mhem;
4 <<laughing>tam mne odno slovo tak ponravilos';

1 Va: and we went to Moscow-
2 with afrosinja;
3 and there- that is friend
4 <<laughing>and there I liked one word so much;

zadrot_{slang}

- geek, nerd
- masturbator (pejoratively)
- male homosexual (pejoratively)

FTA-topic

missing socially established gender norms (in all-female talk)

offending Af's brother

CCs: prosodic exaggeration, laughter particles

Audience

laughing along

Reaction_{victim}

laughing along; BUT: provoding accounts (justifying herself)

12 Ok: =.hhh
13 Va: <<drawling>ty voobšče isPORčenaja>;
14 Ok: hehehe[he
15 Va: [<<drawling>DE:vka>.
16 Ok: hehe he[he
17 Af: [<<laughing>u menja staršij brat byl prosto>;=
18 FF: =hahahaha[hahahahahahahahahahaha
19 F?: [<<laughing>zadrot>;
20 Af: ne:t;=
21 Ok: =hahahaha[ha .hhh ((coughs))
22 Af: [on takie slova govoRIL ();
23 ? : <<p>mhemhemhem>
24 Va: net.=[nu-
25 Ok: [ni figa sebe;
26 Va: ne; nu prosto-

12 Ok: =.hhh
13 Va: <<drawling>you are in general a spOiled>;
14 Ok: hehehe[he
15 Va: [<<drawling>CHICK>.
16 Ok: hehe he[he
17 Af: [<<laughing>I just had an older brother>;=
18 FF: =hahahaha[hahahahahahahahahahaha
19 F?: [<<laughing>zadrot>;
20 Af: no:;=
21 Ok: =hahahaha[ha .hhh ((coughs))
22 Af: [he USed such words ();
23 ? : <<p>mhemhemhem>
24 Va: no.=[well-
25 Ok: [no kidding;
26 Va: no; well simply-

FTA-topic	desire for a specific tea sexual allusions (prostitution)	CCs: exaggeration (prosody & content), laughter particles bisociative contrast (< paronymy leger/neglige) mimicry & staging of a fictional scenario
Audience	laughing along	
Reaction _{victim}	laughing along; BUT: providing accounts (repair/correction)	

7 Va: [v negližè.=
8 ? : =mhehe[hehehehehehhehehehe[hehe
9 ? : [<<laughing>v negližè,>
10 Ok: [ležè.=
11 Va: =<<drawling>ja odaLAS' dva ra[za za ètot čaj>;
12 FF: [hahahahahahahahahahaha
13 [hahahahahahaha
14 Ok: [<<smile voice>knajpa>;
15 vo frajburge;
16 rjedom s uni kafè;
17 ležè.
18 nazyva[etsja;
19 Va: [<<drawling>so=m so mnoj rasPLAčivalis' [ètim čaem>.
20 FF: [mhehehehe
21 hehehehehe
22 Ok: ja tuda chodila-

7 Va: [in a negligee.=
8 ? : =mhehe[hehehehehehhehehehe[hehe
9 ? : [<<laughing> in a negligee,>
10 Ok: [LegER.=
11 Va: =<<drawling>i gave myself awAY two [times for this tea>;
12 FF: [hahahahahahahahahahaha
13 [hahahahahahaha
14 Ok: [<<smile voice>pub>;
15 in freiburg;
16 next to the uni cafe;
17 legER.
18 it is call[ed;
19 Va: [<<drawling>I was paid for with [this tea>.
20 FF: [mhehehehe
21 hehehehehe
22 Ok: I went there-

(4) RuKaMoskau2009 (00:04:19), Saša (S), Dima (D)

11 D : odna tam kleilas';
 12 S : k tebe?
 13 nu a ty č=o,
 ((...))
 14 D : n: net;=
 15 =ona uže togda kleilas' (často);
 16 (a) sejčas ona čut čut čut èto samoe (.) vypila;
 17 S : <<smile voice>i po aktivnee stala>.
 18 skol'ko ej let?
 19 (2.0)
 20 **no to est' u tebjá byl šans stat' mužčinoj nakonec-to na:**
 21 **ètoj svad'be,=**
 22 D : ==<<p>mhemhemhemhe [mhem>
 23 S : [da?
 24 (0.5)
 25 S : [no ty im opjat' ne vospol'zoval'sja,
 26 D : [.hhh
 27 ? : ((sips))
 28 D : ty ne boiš'sja čto ot takich slov možet (.)
 29 jazyk zatupit'sja;=ne?
 30 nakonec-to;

11 D : one stuck to me;
 12 S : to you?
 13 well and what about you?
 ((...))
 14 D : no
 15 she already then stuck to me (often)
 16 (but) now she ways a little little little this (.) tipsy
 17 S : <<smile voice>and she got a little bit more active>
 18 how old is she?
 19 (2.0)
 20 **but this means you finally had the chance to become a man**
 21 **on that wedding**
 22 D : <<p>mhemhemhemhe [mhem>
 23 S : [yes?
 24 (0.5)
 25 S : [but again you didn't take the chance
 26 D : [.hhh
 27 ? : ((sips))
 28 D : aren't you afraid that from such words (.)
 29 your tongue can turn numb are you?
 30 finally somehow

FTA-topic
 Reaction_{victim}

lack of success with women (in all-male talk (!)), CCs: exaggeration
 laughing along, then po-faced reaction

(5) NKruJaz – Coworkers Aleksej Borisovič (AB, male, 54) and Anna Ivanovna (AI, female, 69)

1 AB: Chotja / tri časa v élektričke...
 2 Zadnica derevjannoj stanovitsja.
 3 AI: Da vot iz-za ètogo / Aleksej
 4 Borsiovič / i ()...
 5 AB: Ochreneeš' prosto.
 6 AI: **U vas-to tolstaja zadnica /**
 7 **Aleksej Borisovič / a ja-to...**
 8 AB: **Da ladno...**
 9 AI: **Vse kosti. ((laughter)) Aleksej**
 10 **Borisovič / i smečh ...**
 11 AB: **I smečh i grech / čto**
 12 **nazyvaetsja / da.**
 13 AI: kak est' ... kak est' / tak i est' /
 14 pravil'no ved' / po-drugomu
 15 ničego ne sdelaesh'? Nu čto... Vot.

1 AB: Although/ ...
 2 your butt g...
 3 AI: Well that's
 4 Borsiovič / ...
 5 AB: It's simply baffling.
 6 AI: **Your butt is somehow big /**
 7 **Aleksej Borisovič / but mine...**
 8 AB: **You don't say!**
 9 AI: **All bones. ((laughter)) Aleksej**
 10 **Borisovič / it's laughter ...**
 11 AB: **It's laughter and it's sin /**
 12 **that's how they say / yes.**
 13 AI: it is as it is/ this is it /
 14 isn't it so? / can't help it.

I smečh i grech (Russian saying)
 'You don't know whether to laugh
 or cry' (It's enough to make a
 cat/horse laugh)
 → idiomatic phrase secures
 closure of 'problematic' sequence
 (Drew/Holt 1998)

FTA-topic
 Reaction_{victim}

physique, CCs: -, then laughter
 po-faced, then laughing along

Summary & outlook

- interlocutors' reactions as displays of emic understandings of (im)politeness
 - teases based on (overly) sensitive topics
 - failing to meet group-/culture-/ gender-specific expectations with regard to
 - ➔ negotiating social norms of the group
 - strategies to cope with such teases (i.e. their fta-potential) – varieties of po-facedness
 - laughing along & offering an account
 - displaying one's being offended
 - ...
 - What about delayed reactions to the tease?

Спасибо! Thank you!

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