

Julian Canjura

Language and Social Identity

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Pressing F: Facetious Respect in an Online Community

Press F for Respect (hereby referred to as Press F or f) is an internet meme originating from the 2014 videogame *Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare*. Towards the beginning of the videogame, the player's character attends the funeral of his best friend. While at the funeral and facing the casket, the player is prompted with "Press F to Pay Respects" to his fallen friend. Following the release, the prompt was mocked by several notable online figures and celebrities for being a poor and trivial way of dealing with what is typically very serious and emotional in real life. Since 2014, online users on various social media platforms have pressed f in threads, either by asking other users to press f or by commenting "f." This paper will investigate pressing f by developing a formalized speech act schema for pressing f that also accounts for its connection to the social identity of a given speech community. To do this, we will examine the use of f in the Facebook group Linguistics ['ʃɪt..pʰäö.stɪŋ] (Shitposting, referred to as LS). This paper is in three parts. First, pressing f will be looked at from a theoretical framework using the formalized speech act theories of Austin (1975) and Bach & Harnish (1979), from which a formalized schema for pressing f will be proposed. Second, a survey completed by 124 members of LS regarding their perceptions of pressing f's meaning and use will be presented. Finally, data pulled from LS will be examined, consisting of posts where the original poster (OP) asks commenters to "Press F" and posts where commenters pressed f without a prompt from OP.

This paper predicts that the speech act of pressing f will function as an infelicitous condolence as defined by Austin's and Bach & Harnish's formal models, such that commenters will not press f for serious topics that might generate traditional condolences. What dictates whether something is "too serious" for a felicitous f is set both at a group and individual post level. Survey participants are predicted to report that to press f means to mock something by offering a fake condolence, and that participants will understand the use of f even if they do not know its origin. Pressing f is predicted to be a speech act that indexes a certain social identity (being meme/internet-savvy and familiar with linguistics), is constrained by the domain of the speech act community (linguistics jokes and memes) and reveals the opinions a person who has pressed f has towards the content in question.

Linguistics ['ʃɪt..pʰäö.stɪŋ] is a Facebook group I created on April 18, 2017 for sharing and creating linguistics-themed memes. As the nature of pressing f is contextually based, it is important to understand the make-up of this speech community. At the time of writing, LS has a total of 8,675 members with 7,437 of those members actively contributing in group over the last 30 days (commenting, posting, or reacting to comments). LS has spurned the creation of a loosely-associated domain of Facebook groups called "Lingbook" (Linguistics Facebook), a collection of groups that share general populations and governing ideological guidelines. 48% of the population is living in the US, with the next largest groups being the UK (9%), Canada (5.9%), and Australia (5.6%). The rest of the population is spread around traditionally non-native English-speaking countries. 42.9% are women, 47.1% are men, and 10% are reported by Facebook as "Custom" (anything outside of the default Man/Woman binary Facebook provides). An August 30th 2018 internally conducted census was conducted with a n=750 sample size of the most frequent commenters. While not reflective of the entire group, this sample gives a good indication of the patterns to be found in the most active members who make up the group on a surface level. 64.4% of these participants self-identified as LGBTQ+, all

reported themselves to be left-leaning politically, and 22.1% have some formal linguistics training with 53.4% having completed or are pursuing a university degree (BA, BS, MA, PhD) in linguistics.

PART 1:

To account for the speech act of pressing f, we must first establish a common understanding of a speech act. According to Austin (1975), a speech act can be neither true nor false. Instead, speech acts either occur or fail to occur, and occur either felicitously or infelicitously.

- a. There must exist an acceptable conversational procedure having a certain effect (expressing condolence, bidding respect), uttering of certain words (eg “Sorry for your loss”) by certain persons in certain circumstances that elicit the need of condolence.
- b. The persons and circumstances must be appropriate for the procedure.
The procedure must be done:
 - i. Correctly
 - ii. Completely
- i. The procedure is designed to be used by persons having certain thoughts or feelings (empathy, sympathy, sadness, etc.), so the speaker must in fact have those thoughts or feelings
- ii. Participants must intend to, and actually, conduct themselves in relation to those thoughts or feelings.

Austin says that any violation of rules A or B result in the speech act failing, or “misfiring.” Any violation of rule C results in an infelicitous speech act, but the speech act still occurs.

There are clear parallels between the use of f and the traditional “sorry for your loss” utterance often offered by an interlocutor upon hearing of some sympathy-triggering event. Bach & Harnish formalize the speech act of condolences as the following:

A condolence is:

- In an utterance e, Speaker condoles Hearer for D (misfortune, etc.) if S expresses:
 - i. Sympathy with H having/suffering D, and
 - ii. The intention that H believes that S sympathizes with H having/suffering D,
- OR
- iii. to satisfy the social expectation of i & ii, such that sympathy is not genuinely felt but socially demanded.

Taking Bach & Harnish’s formalization of condolences as the requirements for the speech act of condolences to be performed, the speech act of f can be formalized.

Pressing f:

- a. There exists a conversational feature expressing condolence by uttering “f” or “press f for respect” by a commenter or an OP in certain circumstances that elicit the need of condolence.
 - b. The commenter or OP has the intention that the other will respond appropriately.
The procedure must be done:
 - ii. Correctly, by commenting only “f” or “press f”
 - ii. Completely, if f is solicited, f must be pressed
 - i. Participants must intend to, and actually, conduct themselves in relation to those thoughts or feelings, or lack thereof, reflected by pressing f.
- AND
- ii. Content must not be serious in nature relative to the domain set by the group, OP, commenter, and poster.

AND/OR

- iii. Content must not be sad in nature relative to the domain set by the group, OP, commenter, and poster.

In other words, commenters complete the speech act of pressing f by commenting “f” by commented “f,” but the speech act is only felicitous when the context is either non-serious, not sad, or both. This is effectively an infelicitous condolence, such that a felicitous f is an infelicitous condolence and a felicitous condolence is an infelicitous f. To test this speech act, we will examine the perceptual survey and data examples.

PART 2:

The methodology and breakdown of all survey data is available in the Appendix.

89.6% of recipients responded that it is possible to press f without a prompt from OP. This shows that a felicitous f is not reliant on the prompt and it has moved beyond a call and response procedure. 22.4% of participants did not know where f’s origins, and 33.6% were able to attribute it to a videogame. Only 38.4% of participants were able to correctly attribute pressing f to the *Call of Duty* videogame franchise. Of this 38.4%, only 22.9% identified the correct installment in the franchise (*Advanced Warfare*). The decontextualization of pressing f from a call and response originally found in the videogame and the lack of awareness of f’s origin suggests that press f has moved from a speech act with a direct indexical relationship to Call of Duty and videogames to a general internet convention used by people outside of a videogame-oriented domain.

While “f” was interpreted to mean “to pay respects” by nearly all participants (105/124), participants had varying concepts of what paying respects entails. Of all people, 14% expressed that paying respects required some form of ironic sympathy directly connected to the meme, while the majority (78%) saw it as a serious expression of emotion. This included the expression of empathy, sympathy, or mourning.

Of the total tokens of instances participants said pressing f is appropriate, 45.3% of them were when the content was “not serious” and 10.2% when solicited by the OP regardless of seriousness. Conversely, of all tokens used to describe inappropriate instances, 61.7% were during serious scenarios and 20.3% when the scenario was not sad. This tells us that a felicitous f occurs when the content presented by OP is sad but not too serious in relation to the domain of the conversation. Sadness and seriousness are governed by the collective consensus of group members, and if one participant (either the commenter or the OP) disagreed that the content was “too serious” or “not sad enough.” Some participants gave examples of “not sad” as not only not sad but happy: the death of a war criminal or the imprisonment of a pedophile, for example. Yet others gave examples of such events as deserving of an f as examples of mocking the content—by pressing f and showing facetious “respect,” commenters could make fun of the people and events being presented in the content. Knowing when someone is using f to pay real respects to non-serious content or to mock the content is determined only by one’s knowledge of the social and political identity of the commenter, the OP, and the group the content was posted in. To that end, while 55.5% of tokens for “assumptions about the relationship between the commenter and OP” was “none,” 7.8% of tokens dealt with the commenter mocking OP. 19.5% of tokens suggested that the commenter most likely had some familiarity with or established relationship with OP and 7.8% of tokens suggested that the commenter pressed f only under the assumption that OP would understand the meaning of the f. This tells us that pressing f is a nuanced speech act that has contradictory meanings (support OP or mock OP, support content or mock content) that is decoded solely through the

identity of all participants in relationship to the identity of the group. This is in line with the formalization.

This paper hypothesized that pressing f would index a certain social identity readily salient to other group members. When asked about the assumptions they might draw about someone pressing f, participants gave two different kinds of traits: ones that dealt with the commenter's identity and ones that dealt with the commenter's relationship with the content (which is asked explicitly in Question 8 and will not be discussed again here). 55.8% of tokens describing the commenter dealt directly with their identity as a member, either as a major memer (37.7%, one well-versed in internet culture and meme-savvy) or as a minor memer (18.1%, a standard meme user). 5.1% of tokens described a gamer, 2.9% described a good community member of LS or Lingbook, and 3.6% described a prototypical millennial (young, depressed, detached). It is interesting how little a commenter pressing f is associated with videogames, and it further supports the idea that pressing f has moved far beyond its *Call of Duty* origins into a mainstream internet convention.

PART 3:

The search tools of Facebook groups is limited, especially when searching for something as vague as a letter. However, 22 of examples of pressing f were recovered from the group log, 11 where f is solicited and 11 where f is not. These are individually presented in the Appendix.

Posts in LS can be loosely split into three classifications: memes, metaposts (serious posts dealing directly with members, the group, etc.), and serious posts outside the domain of the group. As a shitposting group, LS members are discouraged from presenting serious posts, both serious in nature regarding linguistics and extra-linguistics material (ie politics, debates, etc.). However, memes can still be interpreted to various levels of seriousness, sadness, or appropriateness/inappropriateness in relation to the group. These make up the Part Three section of the Appendix.

All instances of posts where OP requests a press f received a press f from at least one commenter. In accordance with the formalization, comments that press f contain only the f, though an OP that solicits F may provide more commentary. This suggests that as long as OP requests f all other requirements (non-seriousness, context appropriateness) may be overridden. Experimental data is needed to support this. Overall, every example where f was pressed either by a commenter or by an OP are not serious and are not too sad. None of the posts are not sad (ie happy, celebratory), the largest source of inappropriateness participants submitted after "serious." Particularly interesting are examples 1, 4, and 5 of the second set where OP explicitly solicits f from commenters. In 1, OP presents a serious content, receiving a PhD offer, as a sad thing. This would typically not result in a felicitous f, but because OP has signaled it is okay to press f by directly soliciting f, commenters may press felicitous f's. In example 4, OP discusses losing a friend because the friend thought linguistics was not a real science. Losing a friend is usually a serious event. Pressing f is requested by OP, which may override any over-serious restraints, or it may be apparent to all participants that OP is joking within the linguistics shitposting domain. Similarly, arguing that linguistics is a science is presumably relatable for LSers. All would lessen the seriousness and result in an f that is not interpreted as rude or genuine sadness and therefore felicitous. Finally, in example 5, OP makes a joke based around LGBTQ+ identities, one that they presumably identify with in actuality. LGBTQ+ jokes are outside the realm of linguistics and are usually considered serious. However, because LS has such a salient LGBTQ+ community, LGBTQ+ topics become part of the domain of "non-seriousness" and are able to receive felicitous f's.

Three instances of serious post topics not included in the Appendix are of interest. In September 2018, Brazil's Museu Nacional burned down, resulting in the loss of substantial invaluable linguistic data on indigenous language. Out of 696 people who interacted with three posts about the subject, nobody pressed f. This was most likely viewed as "too serious" for f to be appropriate. On April 2, 2018, famous and influential linguist Morris Halle passed away. In June 2018, Koko the Gorilla, famous for reported sign language skills, passed away. Both posts sharing the news of their deaths in LS included an f: the former in the comments and the latter solicited by OP. Both f's were presumably felicitous yet dealt with real (serious) death. This discrepancy is probably explained by the "serious" metric. The fire was found "too serious" as a momentous loss to the entire field, while the deaths, occurring after long and successful lives, were seen as expected, normal, and, while sad, not sad enough to be "too serious." Users may have found it easier to distance themselves from Halle and Koko than the museum. Users likely empathized with the content, were saddened, and perhaps used f to distance themselves from Halle and Koko. This would follow from the common assumptions about people who press f from Part 2.

CONCLUSION:

The perceptual survey and the collection of posts generally support the formalization of pressing f as a condolence restricted by the seriousness and sadness levels established by the group and the participants. However, pressing f is more complex than the formalization fully captures. The speech act does not account for the mocking use of f, only the genuine condolence of non-serious and/or not sad content. The speech act does not account for the potential use of f as a means of distancing oneself from actually serious content. The formalization needs to be refined to account for this or treated as separate speech acts.

There is a lot of room for future research. It is difficult to gauge how the community responds to infelicitous f's. Due to the nature of communication on the internet, people who have inappropriately pressed f do not necessarily receive negative feedback unless particularly egregious. It is therefore possible that many f's are considered by group members to be infelicitous but not worth the effort to reply to them. Experimental testing of the fidelity requirements is required to circumnavigate this problem.

Further research might also more completely explore how identities are indexed and perceived online through meme engagement. Press f can also be used to explore how memes and meme exchange is similar to African-American signifying, and how memes are used as political and social expression and education. By expressing insincere respect in a similar manner as traditional condolences, pressing f can be seen as a kind of subversion of traditional condolences and respect, and that subversion reveals information both about the identity and ideology of the commenter as well as their relationship with content material and the original poster. This paper has begun to lay the groundwork for these research questions, as understanding how the speech act of pressing f is important for further understanding how people are using it to express their identities.

References

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Appendix

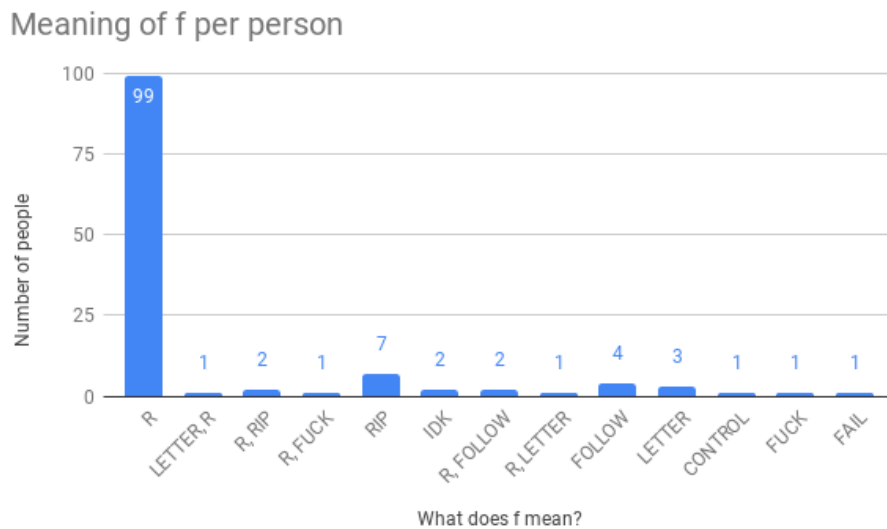
Part Two:

The perceptual study consisted of 9 open ended questions made available to the population of LS for two days to ensure people from multiple time zones could participate. These questions were designed to allow the most freedom for participants.

1. What does f mean?
2. What does it mean to “pay respects” to something or someone?
3. Can you press f when unprompted to by OP?
4. What is the origin of “press f”?
5. When is it appropriate to press f?
6. When is it inappropriate to press f?
7. If you saw someone "press f" on a post in LS, what assumptions might you make about that commenter?
8. If you saw someone "press f" on a post in LS, what assumptions might you make about the relationship between the commenter and the posted content?
9. If you saw someone "press f" on a post in LS, what assumptions might you make about the relationship between the commenter and OP?

To turn the open ended qualitative data into quantitative data, each open ended response was reduced to various categorical assignments based on words or phrases indexed to a category. Responses may be assigned to more than one category if they included words or phrases from more than one category. For example, if a response to “when is it appropriate to press f” included “when the situation is sad or if OP asks for f,” the response was assigned a token for the SAD category and a token for SERIOUS category. Each category is presented in the figures on the following page as they become introduced.

Figure 1. Question 1



R: any variant of “to pay respects” or respect was

RIP: any variant of RIP or “rest in peace”

FUCK: any variant of “fuck” (ie “the f word”)

FOLLOW: any variant of “follow” (ie “following the thread for further information)

CONTROL: any variant of the CTL+F computer command

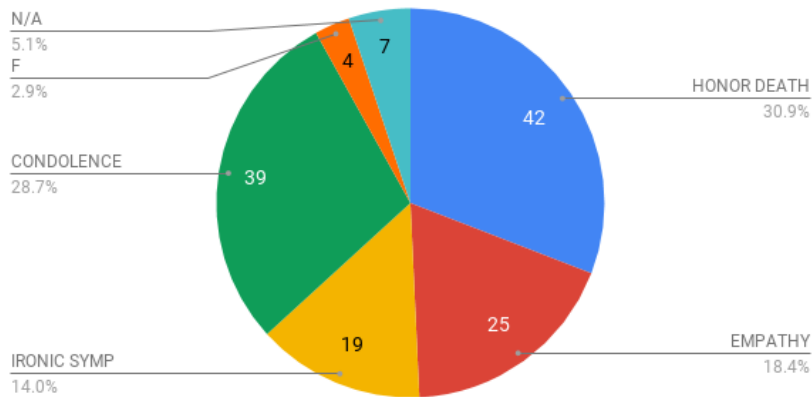
IDK: any variant of “I don’t know”

LETTER: any variant of the orthographic or phonetic “f”

Figure 2. Question 2

Meaning of "pay respects"

Number of tokens



F: Participant responded with “f”

HONOR DEATH: death, funeral, mourn, commemoration, honor

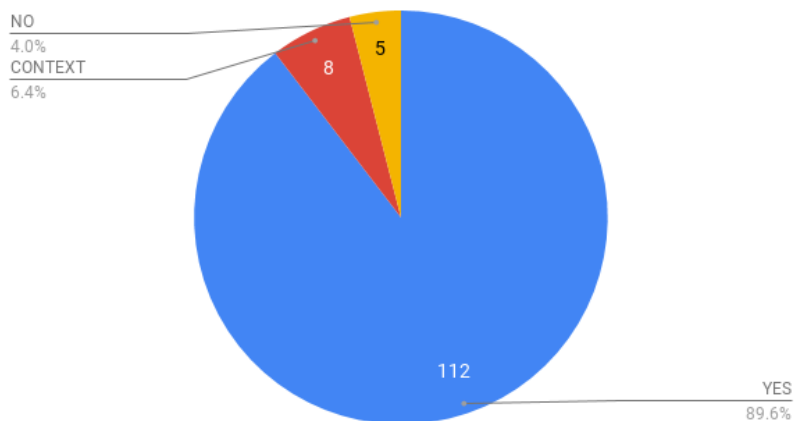
CONDOLENCE: commiserate, solidarity, consolation, condolence, sympathy

IRONIC SYMP: mocking, casual, humorous, joke, ingenuine sympathy

EMPATHY: acknowledgement, recognizing sadness or failure of something or someone

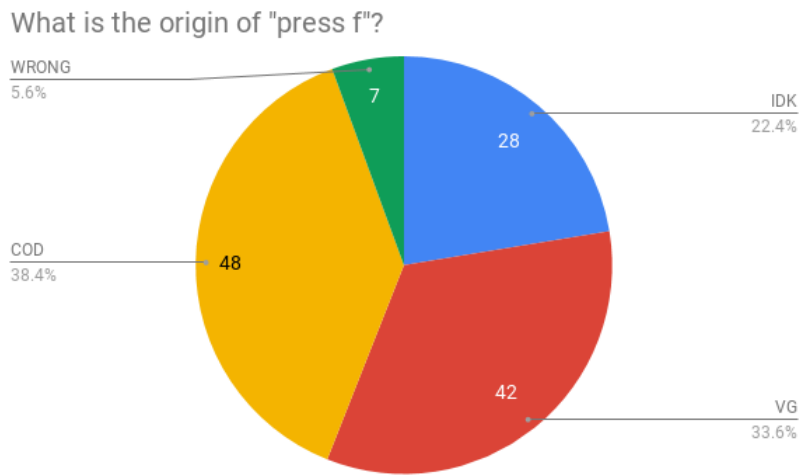
Figure 3. Question 3

Can you "press f" when unprompted to by OP?



Participants were assigned to “CONTEXT” if their answer involved needing further contextual clues to determine the validity of an unprompted f

Figure 4. Question 4.

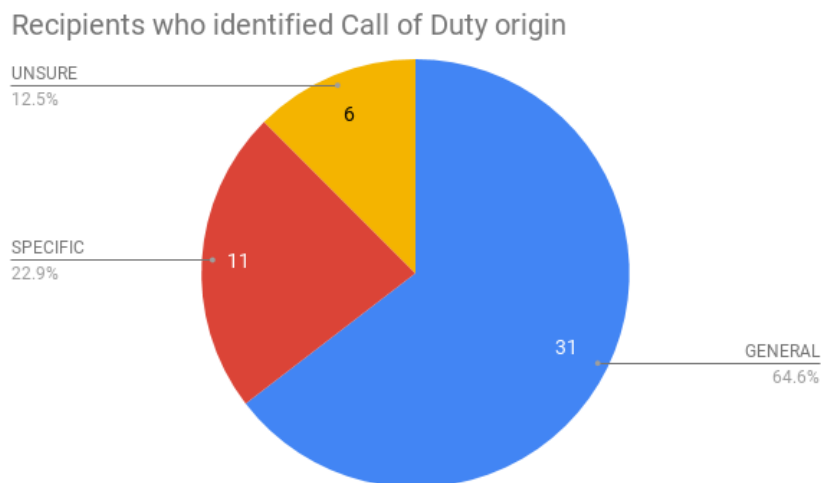


IDK: Participant did not submit an answer or stated they did not know

WRONG: Participant submitted an answer but were incorrect, including naming a videogame outside the *Call of Duty* franchise

VG: Participant identified the origin of the meme to be from a videogame or from videogames in general, but did not specify which

COD: Participant identified the *Call of Duty* franchise, including *Advanced Warfare* or any other name in the franchise, as the origin of the meme

Figure 5. Breakdown of *Call of Duty* responses

UNSURE: Participant indicated uncertainty, either verbally or with a question mark.

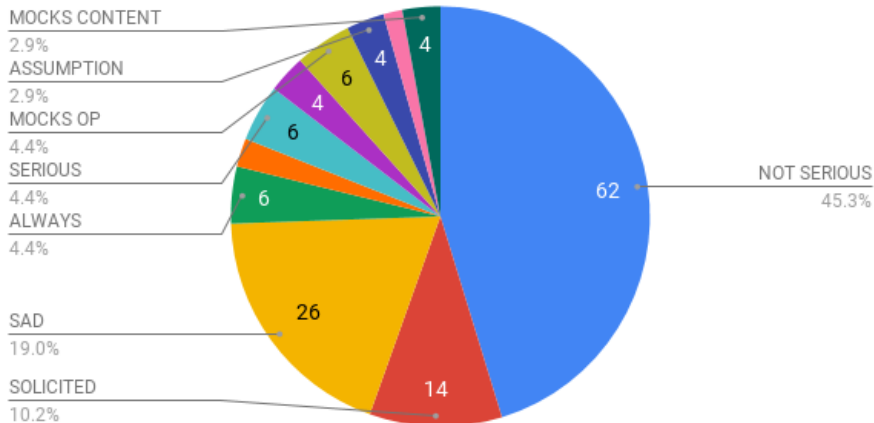
GENERAL: Participant identified the franchise as the origin, but not the specific installment.

SPECIFIC: Participant identified the specific installment of the franchise, optionally providing specific description of the funeral scene.

Figure 6. Question 5

When is it appropriate to press f?

Number of tokens



Orange: NOT SAD n = 3, 2.2%

Pink: N/A n = 2, 1.5%

MOCKS CONTENT:

ASSUMPTION: When there is a commonly shared assumption between OP and commenter that content is not to be taken seriously, OP wants to commiserate, expectation OP will understand f meme, commenter assumes OP will take it well/not disrespectfully, assumes community/OP knows the meme and its uses

MOCKS OP: OP thinks content is serious but commenter doesn't, commenter thinks content is inappropriate for group's serious level

SERIOUS: tragic, real, funeral, real life tragedy, memorial service, actual death, sincere, tragic loss, formal, non-trivial, bereavement, grief, trauma, real oppression, content/OP didn't/doesn't deserve it, serious, upset, warrants thoughtful reply, genuine, awful, mourning

NOT SAD: (crucially, no indication of seriousness) something good happens, ends in triumph, congratulations, something that does not deserve respect, examples of good things in relation to some people (ie war criminal dies, pedophile jailed)

SAD: (crucially, no indication of seriousness) an unfortunate event, needs respect payed, sad, upsetting (mildly or not), needs condolence

ALWAYS: almost always, never inappropriate, whenever

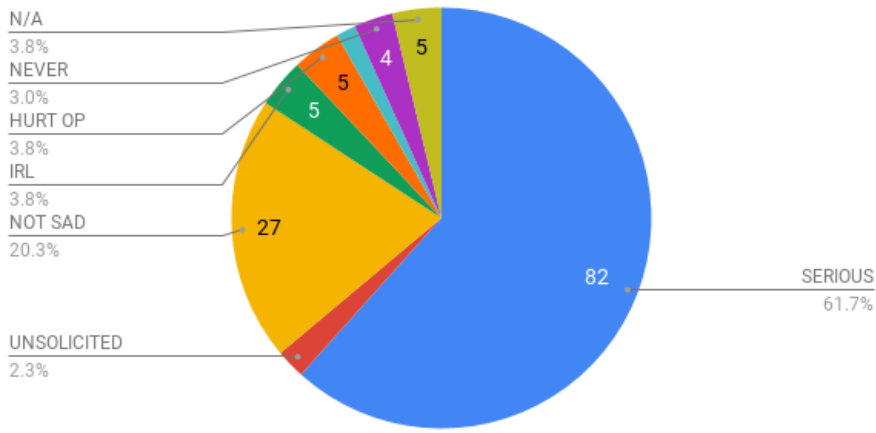
SOLICITED: OP requests f to be pressed, other commenters have already pressed f

NOT SERIOUS: inherently flippant, minor inconvenience, not serious, not sad, moderately tragic, bad but non-severe

Figure 7. Question 6

When is it inappropriate to press f?

Number of tokens



Orange: UNSOLICITED n = 3, 2.3%

NEVER: always appropriate, never, no instance

HURT OP: OP is seriously concerned, OP desires to be taken seriously, f would hurt OP's feelings, OP presents content seriously

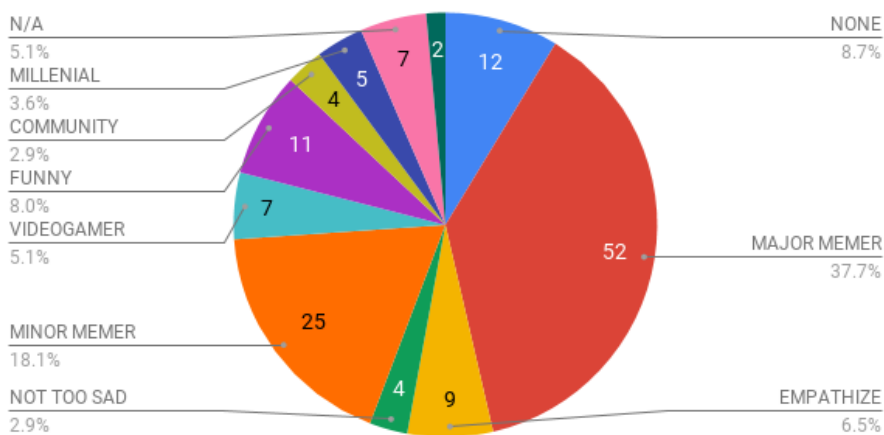
IRL: in real life, off of social media, with non-shitposty friends or relatives on Facebook, personal pages, any community where f is not established

UNSOLICITED: OP did not ask for f, other commenters are not pressing f

Figure 8. Question 7

Assumptions about the commenter

Number of tokens



Dark green: COOL n = 2, 1.4%

MILLENNIAL: young, depressed, detached, ironic, irreverent, jokes about being dead

COMMUNITY: good community member, part of Weird Facebook/Lingbook, average LSer, entrenched member of LS, frequent commenter/poster in LS

FUNNY: commenter views content as a joke, humorous, not serious, meme related, shitpost

VIDEOGAMER: videogame, gamer, videogamer, plays videogames

NOT TOO SAD: post is sad but not serious, slightly sad, not deeply emotionally invested, not deserving of a lot of respect

EMPATHIZE: commenter identifies with or understands the struggle of the content or OP, relates, empathy with situation, connect with context

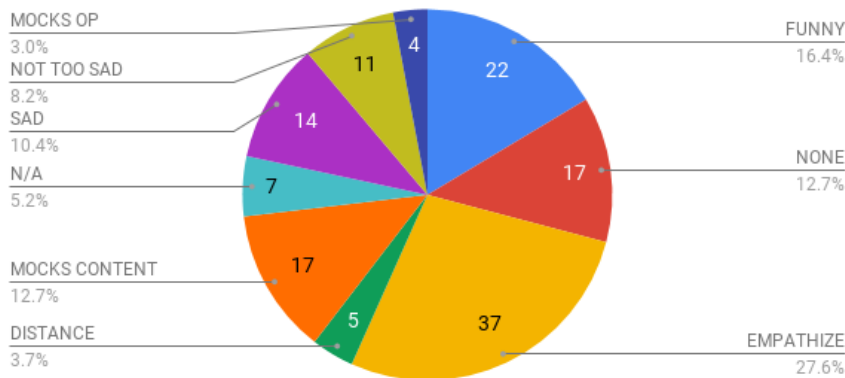
MINOR MEMER: Standard meme user, a little meme-savvy, the average joe, familiarity with memes, basic knowledge of meme culture

MAJOR MEMER: Up to date on current memes, “fairly memetastic,” well-versed in internet culture, meme savvy, memelord, heavy internet user

Figure 9. Question 8

Assumptions about the relationship between the commenter and the posted content

Number of tokens

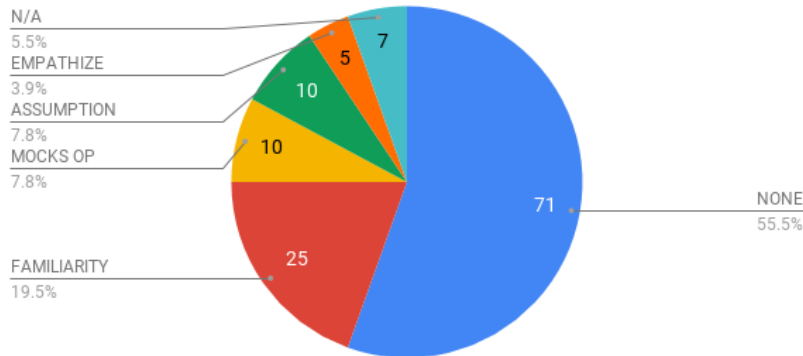


DISTANCE: Commenter trying to distance from post, distance from sadness

Figure 10. Question 9

Assumptions about the relationship between the commenter and OP

Number of tokens



FAMILIARITY: Previously established relationship, amicable, friends, previous relationship, camaraderie, familiar, close, interacted before

Part Three:

The following are examples from the group log where f was pressed in the comments section but was not solicited to by OP. Each example is followed with a brief possible explanation according to the perceptual survey and speech act formalization. All examples unless otherwise noted fall directly into the general domain of linguistics or linguistics-adjacent posts, and require the content presented to not be interpreted as too serious, too sad, or not sad enough in relation to the political and subject-oriented identity built in LS.

1. It's an absolute travesty that none of our revered academic institutions are documenting the modern western vowel shift: Creed > Blink 182 > Panic! At the Disco > ??? smh

F is pressed here to “mourn” the loss due to academic negligence. Here the negligence is not real, as the “vowel shift” is facetious and is describing similarities between bands using linguistics terminology. This is group appropriate due to the linguistics terminology and academic atmosphere of the group despite the group not focused on music. The f is offered as a condolence to those who would value this kind of research, while all parties know such research is not real.

2. There needs to be a word for that deep sense of loss at knowing I've arrived too late to this group to make any Sapir-Whorf jokes that haven't already been worn down to the meta-l

F is pressed to console OP for being unable to make a joke. Jokes about Sapir-Whorf are abundant in the group and OP feels they are too played out for them to participate. F is felicitous as long as all parties know OP is not genuinely distraught about being unable to make such a joke.

3. ¿Can we please have a moment of silence for voiced th and unvoiced t) in continental Germanic languages? This isn't even a shitpost, i'm legit sad :c

Here OP states their sadness, but f is still pressed by a commenter. It is possible that the shitposty (non-serious) nature of the group trumps any attempt of an individually serious post, and/or the orthographic choices of OP (inverted question mark, capitalization choices, emoticon) reveals an underlying non-seriousness. Experimental data would be needed to disambiguate this.

4. [link to the Wikipedia article of the Conquered lorikeet, an extinct bird]

F is pressed to “pay respects” or mourn the extinct bird. Extinct animals are not within the normal domain of LS, and as such serious discussion of extinct animals and sadness about animal extinction are not contained by the discourse parameters set ingroup. As these are not part of the group’s identity, they can be viewed as non-serious, sad but not “too sad,” and can generate a felicitous f.

5. [The Altaic Theory] is unironically spread by some over here lmao

Mocking the Altaic theory is a reoccurring theme in LS. While some members may subscribe to it, the vocal majority do not. As part of the group’s overall “light topics,” Altaic discussions are set by the group as non-serious and therefore permits f to be pressed.

6. Is there a group like [LS] but for jokes

A commenter responded with: “Damn, we as a community have never been roasted hader... F.” The f is “paying respects” or mourning the group, who has “died” from such a poignant and hurtful comment. This directly plays into the group’s identity, as the joke only arises within the group’s identity’s context.

7. One of my students (I teach an intro to web coding course!) just basically turned in what could be an excellent shitpost about language but I cannot ethically share it. I’m D Y I N

Directly connected to the group domain but is not serious or too sad.

8. [picture of chicken nugget shaped like wug]

I regret to inform you that McDonald's are now putting wugs in their chicken nuggets

While dead wugs might be sad for linguists, this is obviously fictional and any real condolences offered would be meaningless as OP does not require actual consoling.

9. Anyone else struggling with the “entry level position”/”2 years prior experience required” merger?

F is pressed to show empathy and sympathy. Job hunting is a common shared experience in the group that can be both serious and sad. However, the use of another meme format (“merger”) lightens the mood and tells the commenter that an f would not be interpreted as mocking OP.

10. [screenshot of an incoming text message: You declared your major in linguistics? That’s cool what language?] Tale as old as time,,,

F is pressed to show sympathy. Being asked what language you are studying as a linguist is a reoccurring theme in LS that gets made fun of often. By pressing f, comments are both

expressing sympathy with the OP having to deal with the “language question” again as well as mocking the content (the person asking the question).

11. [picture of castle building at Indiana University] This used to be the Dept. of Linguistics at Indiana University. Now they're all student dorms.

Commenters might find this sad, having wanted a dorm similar. However, it is not serious or very sad within the domain of the group.

The following are examples where OP solicits an f, either by asking commenters to press f or by including f in their OP. Commenters pressed f in each example.

1. [meme about completing a PhD and becoming a leading expert in a topic nobody cares about]: F I got an unconditional PhD offer last week and then I see this

An unconditional PhD offer is a very serious event within the linguistics domain in LS, it is not sad. If not sad is not a sufficient for f to be pressed, OP has pressed f themselves, which may override any other inhibitor to pressing f.

2. > Linguistics books bound for the recycler.
F
> They're all syntax
¬F

This is an instance of OP giving f to signify sadness, then retract it to eliminate even humorous condolences, indexing an dislike of syntax.

3. Have to redownload my various keyboards ☹️ Press variations of F to pay respects

This is domain-related but not serious or particularly sad, a mild inconvenience.

4. My childhood friend, a geology major, just says linguistics doesn't count as a science press F to pay respects to our former friendship

Losing a friend is usually a serious event. Pressing f is requested by OP, which may override any over-serious restraints, or it may be apparent to all participants that OP is joking within the linguistics shitposting domain. Similarly, arguing that linguistics is a science is presumably relatable for LSers. All would lessen the seriousness and result in an f that is not interpreted as rude or genuine sadness, and therefore infelicitous. To clarify if soliciting f overrides seriousness, experimental data is needed.

5. Bilingual bisexual seems like a very achievable goal, but I'm pansexual and the chances of becoming panlingual seem small. Press F to pay respects

LS has a strong visible and active LGBTQ+ population as reflected in the group census. Therefore, jokes about sexuality are presumably relatable for LSers, and LSers probably make jokes dealing with their own sexuality outside of LS. While sexuality is usually a serious topic, jokes about LGBTQ+ topics by LGBTQ+ members within LS, a space now at least partially included in the LGBTQ+ domain, is not categorized as “too serious” for f to be solicited.

6. Furthing the adventures of comp ling student Rose. I didn’t understand 90% of my last homework. press F to pay respects, I’m moving into my profs hallway so I can ask her questions about NLTK

Not understanding course material is presumably relatable for LSers, and while sad, is not too serious. F is used to display empathy/sympathy and sadness.

7. Is there a linguistics explanation as to why I hate myself so much that I start on a linguistics paper this size one day before the deadline and finish up merely one hour before the deadline? Press (bilabial fricative) for respect

OP presents content as serious, then solicits an f, perhaps as a way to distance themselves from the rest of the post.

8. [picture of tower of babel] Press Voiceless Labiodental Fricative to pay respects

The destruction of the Tower of Babel is linguistics related but is not serious within the domain nor particularly sad insofar as OP is not genuinely seeking condolences for the loss of the Tower of Babel.

9. I just had someone in a non-linguistics setting very seriously believe that “bae” is an acronym, by citing Urban Dictionary, and this TIME article that presents it as a theory and continues to say that “... people often like to make up such origin stories that linguistics later discover were absolute poppycock.” Press F.

10. [A link to an article titled “Most of the English speaking world doesn’t use the Oxford Comma. Here’s why.”] OP: Press F

This is a non-serious post “lamenting” the death of the Oxford Comma. This is indexed to the group’s linguistic identity, but not to any other part (political or otherwise). It is not too sad nor too serious in relation to linguistics in general.

11. Press f to pay respect to the fact I looked up a French grammar point earlier and got my answer from the fuckin Academie Francaise

F here is to offer sympathies for OP having to consult the Academie Francaise, an institution that is often the receiving end of jokes in LS as an embodiment of prescriptivism. This indexes directly to one pillar of LS’s identity: antiprescriptivism. F is only felicitous insofar as all members understand that consulting the Academie is not desirable for a LS member for linguistic affairs.