
Attitude and its situatedness in linguistic politeness

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This presentation focuses on intersections of linguistic politeness with social factors beyond gender, as Mills (2003) advocates. Stereotypically, politeness has been associated within the purview of Whiteness, the “West,” and especially “stereotypical womanhood” (i.e., middle-class White women's behavior). For the present purposes, the racialized group of African Americans forms another intersection of analysis. This paper centers on theory development and aspects of *social-linguistic* politeness operative within the African American speech community (AASC), as practiced by U. S. Black women. The aims are two-fold: (1) present a theoretical model of politeness that enables and privileges the AASC; (2) discuss one marker of linguistic politeness as indexed by Black women's speech practices: ‘talking with an attitude.’ Essentially, the presenter argues for more complexity in theorizing and applications of linguistic politeness based upon context and social factors. As well, the presenter responds to the call by Collins (1991) of presenting self-defined images of Black women.