

37. 0
 a. "I'm all thumbs when it comes to this" N
 b. (laugh) R
 Female, about 40, professor, to male student 37, in class, about some equipment.

'Other Person' was found to have 4 subsets:

1) ability of other person:

6. X
 a. "It was cute but wrong" N
 b. 0
 Female, about 40, comment to class about part of an analysis included in an article, high to low.

2) opinions and ideas of others:

35. X
 a. "They weigh and measure and rank but they really don't get to the bottom of what class is..." N
 b. "mmm" (class) R
 Female, professor, about 40, to class, part of continuing lecture.

3) other's possessions, and

4) other's state:

19. X
 a. "It was awful, she was a nervous wreck" N
 b. "Yeah" R
 Female, about 35, single, talking to mother about a family member.
 Finally, the Other Object category contains two types of Negative Judgments:

1) workplace:

17. 0
 a. "When this thing works, it's a dream" N
 b. "Yeah, when" R
 Male, 37, to female about 33, commenting on the photocopier which has been causing a lot of trouble recently.

2) the weather:

12. 0
 a. "Oh, it's so warm" N
 b. (few sounds of agreement from class,) R
 Female, about 40, comment to class as a whole, as class was leaving.

Intuitively, it does not seem 'dangerous', i.e., there is no chance of losing solidarity between interlocutors, if an addressee misunderstands a Compliment (as opposed to a Negative Judgement). If the overt good will and solidarity of a Compliment were misinterpreted, it seems there would be more chance of it having positive consequences than the misunderstanding of a Negative Judgement because the latter has an overtly negative meaning. Superficially, the Negative Judgement is just that, i.e., negative, and hence the possibility of greater danger of losing solidarity. Because of this, the possibility of a stronger formulaic nature of the Negative Judgments seems logical, more than that of a Compliment, but this is work for further research.

Conclusion

Men and women may view Negative judgments differently. Men use them as enhancers of solidarity among non-intimates to possibly advance in the workplace. Women use them seemingly as enhancers of family solidarity. On a more general and inferential level, negative judgments are used by both sexes as a way to display vulnerability, to request sympathy, thereby increasing the solidarity between interlocutors.

Negative Judgments also function as Conversation Openers and Continuers with the purpose of creating or reaffirming solidarity with the speaker. In situations where more solidarity is needed, e.g., more insecure situations, as in the hospital waiting room, more Negative Judgments were used per unit time than in any location in the study.

Negative Judgments are certainly a complex sociolinguistic phenomenon, as are other speech acts, and this very basic initial study only hints at their complicated structure and function in society.

¹ More recent research on direct and indirect complaints has been and is being done by D. Boxer of the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania.

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Appendix A
Key to tables 1 to 6:

'N' = The number of speech acts

'ACT' = Speech act number as listed in appendix

'H > L' = Negative judgement was passed to low status addressee

'=' = Negative judgement was passed between equals

'L > H' = Negative judgement was passed to high status addressee

'X N R', 'X N O', 'O N R' = Discoursal structures of speech act. 'X' = conversation, 'N' = negative judgement, 'R' = response, 'O' = silence.

'I/N' = 'I' = intimate, 'N' = non-intimate, non-stranger

'TOP' = Topic of the negative judgement

'O' = other person

'S' = self

'PL' = place

'OB' = other object

'OB' = Object of negative judgement

'S' = Self

Table 1
Female to female

N	ACT	H>L =	L>H	XNR	XNO	ONR	I/N	TOP	OB
1	19		*	*			I	O	S
2	20	*			*		I	S	S
3	21		*			*	I	O	S
4	22		*			*	I	O	S
5	25		*			*	I	PL	S
6	26		*			*	I	OB	S
7	29		*			*	I	S	S
8	30	*				*	I	PL	S
9	31		*			*	I	O	S
10	32		*			*	I	O	S

Table 2
Male to male

N	ACT	H>L =	L>H	XNR	XNO	ONR	I/N	TOP	OB
1	3	*	*			*	N	O	S
2	4	*				*	N	PE	S
3	18	*	*			*	N	PE	S
4	34	*	*			*	N	PE	S

Table 3
Male to female

N	ACT	H>L =	L>H	XNR	XNO	ONR	I/N	TOP	OB
1	11		*	*			N	O	S
2	17	*				*	N	OBJ	S

Table 4
Female to male

N	ACT	H>L =	L>H	XNR	XNO	ONR	I/N	TOP	OB
1	1	*				*	I	W	S
2	7	*		*			I	W	S
3	8		*			*	I	S	S
4	9		*			*	I	S	S
5	10	*				*	I	W	S
6	14	*				*	I	W	S
7	15	*				*	I	W	S
8	16		*	*			I	W	S
9	23	*				*	I	O	S
10	24		*			*	N	OBJ	S
11	27		*			*	I	OBJ	S
12	28		*			*	I	S	S
13	37	*		*			N	N	N

Table 5
Male to group

N	ACT	H>L	=	L>H	XNR	XNO	ONR	I/N	TOP	OB
1	2		*				*	N	W	S

Table 6
Female to group

N	ACT	H>L	=	L>H	XNR	XNO	ONR	I/N	TOP	OB
1	5	*					*	N	W	S
2	6	*				*		N	O	S
3	12	*					*	N	W	S
4	13		*				*	N	OBJ	S
5	33	*				*		N	O	S
6	35	*				*		N	O	S
7	36	*				*		N	S	O
8	37	*				*		N	S	O

Appendix B
Index of negative judgements

1.
a. **"Isn't it hot, Bruce? It's murder."**
b. "Yeah, it is."

Female, 64, to male, 37, hot weather, change of topic after period of silence.

2.
a. **"Phew, it's cold."**
b. (agreeing responses)

Male, about 40, 7:45 a.m., before beginning to teach at 8 a.m., to all teachers present.

3.
a. **"You know what I find really repulsive? My Japanese students ordered hot dogs for breakfast. 'One hot dogs please.'"**
b. "You're just being ethnocentric."

Male, 37, 1:30 p.m., classmate, change of topic after period of silence.

4.
a. "Maybe you'll hear next week about the language exam."
b. **"Well, the way things work around here, you know."**
c. "Yeah."

Male, about 35, afternoon, A-17 Grad. Ed., response to greeting.

5.
a. **"It's hot in here, isn't it?"**
b. (agreement from class)

Female, about 40, entering and greeting to class.

6. a. **"It was cute but wrong."**
b.

Female, about 40, comment to class about part of an analysis included in an article.

7. a. **"Miserable today, weather."**
b. "No, not really."
a. "For me it was."

Female, 55, to male, 27, phone conversation, continue conversation, h > I, intimates.

8.
a. **"Oh, don't you think it's terrible?"**

- b. "What?"
- a. "The Life."

Female, 38, to husband, 37, after period of silence, continue conversation.

9. ○
- a. "Tired."
 - b. ○

Female, 38, to husband, 37, after silence, in car, comment about self, no response.

10. ○
- a. "Pretty nasty out there."
 - b. "Where?"
 - a. "Don't you hear it?"

Female, 54, to male, 27, rainy night, change of topic after period of silence, h > l, intimates.

11. ○
- a. "Something as poor as this"
 - b. "I don't think it's poor."
 - a. "Well, ok"

Male, 30, in afternoon class, commenting on ESL text to female professor, professor interrupts, and student continues and drops his original idea.

12. ○
- a. "Oh, it's so warm."
 - b. (few sounds of agreement from class)

Female, about 40, comment to class as class was leaving room, or to no-one in particular.

13. ○
- a. "This goddamn thing."
 - b. "Why don't they get a new one?"
 - a. "They'll probably get the cheapest one."
 - b. (and others) "Yeah."

Female, 35, in Bennet, comment to other teachers waiting to use copier.

14. ○
- a. "It was hot last night. I had the floor fan on."
 - b. "Really?"
 - a. "Yeah"

Female, 64, to male, 37, unusually hot weather, change of topic after period of silence, high to low.

15. a. "You didn't see it when it got real black?"
 b. "Yeah."
 a. **"Phew, it was awful."**

Female, 46, to male, 28, unusually hot weather, continuation of topic, 11-16 day of tornadoes in Philadelphia.

16. a. "Hi."
 b. **"My roof was almost blown off."**
 a. "Really?"
 b. "Yeah, I live near trees."

Female, 30, office, after Philadelphia tornado, first thing said in morning in response to greeting, = to me. This seems to be a complaint rather than a negative judgement. It was intonational with terms being negative only in context rather than explicit.

17. a. **"When this thing works, it's a dream."**
 b. "Yeah, when."

Male, 37, to female, 33, office, commenting on the photocopier which has been giving a lot of trouble recently.

18. a. "How did you make out with PARIS?"
 b. **"Terrible. It's awful, I had to make 5 calls."**
 a. "Really. I called 2 times then I called you for help."
 b. **"It's awful. It's not worth it."**
 a. "What does PAC mean on the explanation sheet?"

Male, 40, phone conversation, discussing the new registration system, male, male, equals.

19. (continuing conversation)
 a. **"It was awful. She was a nervous wreck."**
 b. "Yeah."

Female, 25, single, talking to mother about a family member, in hospital.

20. ○
 a. "Daddy went to turn me and the needle was in me bent and I was screaming and daddy was crying."
 b. **"It was an awful spot."**

Female, about 60, response to daughter, in hospital waiting room.

21. ○
 a. **"Christ, they're not even gonna come. It's 3 o'clock. What time is it?"**
 b. "3:30."
 c. **"I guess we're eating dinner here tonight."**

- a. Female, about 35, to mother, waiting for someone.
- c. Female, about 40, to mother and sister, negative judgement is intonational.

22.
- a. **"I really thought they should do this earlier."**
 - b. "Yeah."

Female, 15, to mother, 40, waiting.

23.
- a. **"They're never home. Sundays, holidays, they could give a call."**
 - b.

Female, 60, to son, break in conversation, about relatives.

24.
- a. **"This is a paper cutter that can't cut butter."**
 - b. (laugh)

Female, 35, 8 a.m., office, to colleague, equals, non-intimates.

25.
- a. **"It's all crummy. The kitchen floor is crummy. All of it."**
 - b. "Wildwood."
 - a. **"All those old blankets, I don't want them."**
 - b. "I should throw them out."

Female, about 35, to mother after break in conversation.

26.
- a. **"Aunt X's cat is so fat."**
 - b. "The xxx one, right?"
 - a. "No, the tan one, it's like"

Female, about 35, to mother after break in conversation.

27.
- a. **"I don't like these chairs. Where'd they come up with an idea like this?"**
 - b. "I agree."

Female, about 30, to husband, after she had an operation, equals.

28.
- a. **"Goddam, I don't like my stomach feeling like this. It hurts."**
 - b.

Female, about 30, to husband, after she had an operation.

29. O
a. **"I'm getting a migraine."**
b. "You too?"

Female, 35, to mother, in hospital waiting room.

30. O
a. **"We can't even have a cup of coffee."**
b. "Hmmm."

Female, 60-70, to daughter, 30-35, in waiting room, waiting for father to have blood clot removed.

31. a. **"All them interns used to talk to us. Here only doctors."**
b. "Yeah, that's a learning hospital."

Female, 60-70, to daughter, 30-35, in waiting room, waiting for father to have blood clot removed.

32. O
a. **"I remember when I got operated on. I was starvin', wasn't I, Mom?"**
b. "Yeah."

Female, about 30, to mother, in hospital waiting room.

33. a. **"It was a giant step backwards in semantic analysis."**
b. O

Female, about 40, to class, part of continuing lecture.

34. O
a. **"I'm getting tired of this class."**
b. "Really."
a. **"Yes, I've had enough."**

Male, 37, to male, 37, at end of a class, equals, non-intimates.

35. a. **"They weigh and measure and rank but they really don't get to the bottom of what class is"**

Female, about 40, to class, part of continuing lecture.

36. a. **"He knows a lot about what's going on in South Asia, but it just doesn't show up in the work."**

Female, about 40, to class, part of continuing lecture.

- 37. a. "I'm all thumbs when it comes to this."
- b. (laugh)

Female, about 40, to male, 37, in class, about some equipment, intimates.