

Feasts of Spectacle: Analyzing Discourses of Food Overconsumption and Entertainment Online

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The digital sphere offers an abundance of food-related content: from restaurant reviews to inform dining choices, social media updates from friends, food writing and recipes on blogs to food forums answering every culinary question. Food has also become a source of entertainment, no longer confined to dedicated channels like the Food Network but extending into stand-alone streaming series such as Netflix's *Is It Cake?* and *Culinary Class Wars*. Food entertainment draws on aesthetics (e.g., food photography), informational value (e.g., cooking shows), or the appeal of competitive formats (e.g., cooking competitions). However, a notable subset of this genre is centered on excess and overconsumption – what can be termed *feasts of spectacle*.

This talk introduces the audience to the world of English-language online videos showcasing food excess, including eating shows (mukbangs), cheat day vlogs, excessive cooking shows, food challenge videos, and competitive eating content. While previous research on food and language has often focused on moderation, restriction, sustainability, and health, these 'carnavalesque food videos' – celebrations of overindulgence – remain underexplored in linguistics. The project *The Discursive Construction of Eating as Entertainment: Carnavalesque Consumption in the Digital Sphere* examines these mediated food discourses using corpus-based discourse analysis and digital linguistic ethnography.

In this presentation, I share preliminary findings from the study's eating show (mukbang) and excessive cooking show components, with a particular emphasis on identity construction and community building. Finally, I reflect on how these insights deepen our understanding of food performances in computer-mediated interaction and digitally mediated publics.

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