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Face-Threatening Acts in Google Maps Restaurant Reviews: A Pragmatic Analysis of Online Customer Complaints

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ABSTRACT

Online restaurant reviews are public complaints with two audiences at once: the business being criticised and prospective customers who read the review later. This dual-addressee structure changes how face is threatened, yet complaint topics, face-threatening act (FTA) targets and the linguistic modulation of complaints have rarely been examined together in a single platform corpus. Drawing on Brown and Levinson's politeness theory and research on digital complaints, this study examines how Google Maps users construct complaints about restaurant services. A corpus of 600 English-language one- to three-star reviews of 20 restaurants in two anonymised cities was coded with a multi-level scheme that separates what is complained about (topic), how it is complained about (strategy), whose face is threatened (FTA target), and how the act is softened or strengthened (mitigation and intensification). Inter-coder agreement on a double-coded subset was high. Food quality and staff attitude were the most common sources of complaint, and negative evaluation was the domiNot estimatedt strategy. Every review threatened the restaurant's positive face, while threats to individual employees and demands that impose on the restaurant were less frequent. Complaint topic was associated with both FTA target and complaint strategy, but star rating was unrelated to intensification. Mitigation and intensification often co-occurred: reviewers typically combined factual narration and self-positioning with evaluation and warnings to other consumers, rather than relying on abuse. The findings suggest that public online complaints function as evidence-based acts of accountability addressed to multiple audiences. The study extends face theory to public review platforms and offers a replicable coding framework for complaint analysis and service response planning.

1. Introduction

Google Maps provides a relatively open platform for consumers to share their service experiences, although the accuracy of these accounts is not necessarily verified against the actual service encounters. Reviews are publicly accessible texts associated with business profiles and can

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be read by individuals who were not directly involved in the reported experiences. Consequently, reviewers address two distinct audiences simultaneously: the restaurant, which is held accountable for the perceived service failure, and prospective customers, whose perceptions and purchasing decisions may be influenced by the review. This dual communicative orientation makes Google Maps reviews a valuable source for examining how face-threatening acts (FTAs) are constructed and expressed in public digital interactions.

A written complaint conveys more information than a numerical rating alone. While a one-star rating without accompanying text provides limited insight into the underlying dissatisfaction, a written complaint typically identifies the perceived problem, its severity, the party considered responsible, and, in some cases, the remedy expected by the customer. These elements are communicated not only to the service provider but also to a wider audience of potential consumers. Although multiple elements may occur within a single review, they represent analytically distinct dimensions of complaint discourse. Distinguishing among these dimensions prevents the assumption that all negative reviews perform identical communicative functions and facilitates the identification of complaints that explicitly seek redress for specific service failures.

Online restaurant reviews constitute publicly accessible accounts of service experiences in which customers evaluate various aspects of restaurant operations, including food quality, staff behaviour, waiting times, pricing, hygiene, reservations, and delivery services. As both expressions of dissatisfaction and forms of public evaluation, these reviews are directed towards restaurant operators while simultaneously influencing prospective customers. From a pragmatic perspective, complaints may threaten the recipient's positive face by challenging their reputation, competence, or desire for social approval. They may also threaten negative face when reviewers impose demands for corrective action, compensation, or other forms of redress [1, 13]. Furthermore, digital complaints frequently involve multiple audiences and may acquire a collective dimension as individual grievances become visible to wider online communities [12].

Previous studies have investigated various dimensions of online complaint discourse, including linguistic directness and indirectness, aggressive complaining, service recovery strategies, review helpfulness, and organisational responses to negative customer feedback [2, 4, 5, 11, 17]. Research on cross-cultural complaint practices and online hotel reviews has further demonstrated that complaint formulation is influenced by cultural expectations, face-management strategies, and the characteristics of specific service encounters [3, 10, 18]. Despite these contributions, the simultaneous examination of complaint topics, FTA targets, mitigation strategies, and intensification devices within a single corpus of Google Maps restaurant reviews remains comparatively underexplored. The present study addresses this research gap by conducting a systematic descriptive analysis of a balanced corpus of restaurant reviews.

Existing literature offers complementary but often separately developed perspectives on online complaints. Pragmatic investigations have examined linguistic indirectness, aggressive complaint behaviour, and variations in complaint severity [2, 6, 17], whereas studies of online consumer reviews have primarily explored informational influence, perceived helpfulness, service failures, and managerial responses [4, 8, 11, 14]. Research grounded in politeness theory has also demonstrated how linguistic strategies can mitigate or intensify threats to interpersonal face [1, 7, 15, 16]. Nevertheless, these approaches do not consistently distinguish among the underlying service problem, the communicative strategy employed by the reviewer, and the specific aspect of face being threatened within a unified analytical framework.

Accordingly, the contribution of the present study is primarily methodological and analytical rather than theoretical. It integrates established pragmatic concepts and complaint-analysis categories into a systematic and transparent coding framework specifically designed for publicly

accessible restaurant reviews. This approach enables the identification of relationships between particular service problems and FTA targets, the examination of how reviewers formulate their complaints, and the analysis of whether mitigating and intensifying linguistic resources occur independently or simultaneously within individual reviews. By incorporating these dimensions into a single analytical framework, the study provides a more comprehensive account of how dissatisfaction is linguistically constructed and communicated in online restaurant-review discourse.

The research questions are descriptive and correlational rather than predictive. Specifically, the study seeks to determine (a) which types of face-threatening acts occur in public restaurant complaints, (b) how complaint topics are associated with FTA targets and complaint strategies, and (c) how mitigation and intensification strategies are employed and combined within individual reviews. Rather than proposing a new theory of politeness, the study develops an integrated coding framework that applies established pragmatic categories to the communicative characteristics of a public online review platform. The framework provides explicit coding criteria and analytical procedures that can be replicated or adapted in future investigations of complaint discourse across different digital service platforms.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Research Design and Data Source

The unit of analysis is the individual review, with restaurant and city treated as higher-level attributes. City labels describe the data source and are not used as cultural variables. No city-level cultural claims are made, because the design includes no pre-registered cross-cultural comparison, no matched restaurants across cities and no independent measure of local language use.

The sample was balanced at the restaurant level. Each of the 20 restaurants contributed 30 reviews, and each of the two anonymised cities contributed 10 restaurants and 300 reviews. This allocation limits the influence of any single restaurant on corpus-level frequencies. The corpus is not, however, a representative sample of all restaurant reviews.

A fixed set of 600 English-language reviews was collected between 2023 and 2025. Only one-, two- and three-star reviews were included, and the star rating of each review was recorded. The retained corpus was defined by the following eligibility criteria: the item had to be a restaurant review written in English, contain review text, fall within the study period, and have an identifiable posting date and star rating. Records without text, duplicate records, or records for which the date or rating could not be established were excluded. A balanced criterion-based procedure retained 30 eligible reviews from each restaurant; the resulting corpus is therefore balanced for restaurant representation but is not a probability sample of all Google Maps reviews.

Restaurant and city identifiers were replaced with neutral labels, and no personal identifiers or review URLs are reported. The sample is intended for corpus-level pragmatic analysis and does not cover all restaurant reviews on Google Maps.

2.2 Sampling and Data Structure

For each review, the dataset records the review, restaurant and city identifiers, posting date, star rating, review text, whether the restaurant responded, word count, complaint topics, complaint strategies, FTA targets, mitigation, intensification and discourse pattern. Complaint topics and pragmatic strategies are multi-label variables, so a single review can carry more than one code. All analyses were run directly on the fixed analysis files.

The sampling and coding files were kept separate from the manuscript tables. The analysis file contains one row per review and the coded variables used in the reported frequencies and association tests. This arrangement allows the descriptive results to be traced to the review-level records while preserving the multi-label structure of the pragmatic categories.

2.3 Coding Framework

The coding framework separates what a complaint is about from how it is expressed. Complaint topic identifies the service area at issue, such as food quality or staff behaviour. Complaint strategy identifies the communicative act performed, such as expressing dissatisfaction, assigning blame, demanding repair or warning other consumers. FTA target identifies whose face is threatened, and mitigation and intensification capture how the force of the act is adjusted. Keeping these levels separate prevents a complaint about staff attitude, for example, from being automatically coded as a threat to an individual employee.

FTA categories were applied to observable textual features. A negative evaluation of food quality threatens the restaurant's positive face by questioning its quality or value for money. A request for a refund or an explanation threatens the restaurant's negative face by imposing an obligation to act. Criticism of an identifiable employee's behaviour or competence threatens that employee's face and, indirectly, the organisation's reputation. Expressions of the reviewer's own regret were treated as self-positioning and were not counted among the FTA targets.

Mitigation and intensification are not mutually exclusive and were coded independently, because both can occur in the same review. The coding records each strategy present, together with the discourse-pattern label of the review. Irony was treated with caution, because written reviews lack the prosodic and facial cues that support its identification in spoken interaction.

Complaint topics comprised food quality, staff behaviour, long waits or slow service, price and billing, hygiene or safety, reservations and seating, ambience, and delivery or order problems. Complaint strategies comprised negative evaluation, disappointment, blame, non-return, consumer warning, repair demand and report threat. FTA targets comprised the restaurant's positive face, the restaurant's negative face and employee face. Mitigation included factual narration, self-positioning and polite forms, and intensification included insults, strong warnings, repetition or capitalisation, and direct threats.

2.4 Reliability and Statistical Analysis

Inter-coder reliability was assessed on a double-coded subset of 120 reviews (60 per city). Cohen's kappa was computed for each of the five coding modules, and the overall kappa with a bootstrap 95% confidence interval is reported in Table 1. The coders independently completed the double-coding stage, discussed disagreements afterward, and used the agreed labels to prepare the final codebook and analysis files.

Frequencies and percentages with Wilson 95% confidence intervals were computed for each category. Cross-tabulations were used to examine whether complaint topics differed by FTA target and by complaint strategy, and whether star rating was associated with intensification. Chi-square tests were applied, with Cramér's V as the effect size. Because topics, strategies and FTA targets are multi-label variables, the topic-based cross-tabulations were built on label pairs, so one review can contribute more than one observation and the independence assumption of the chi-square test is not fully met. These tests are therefore read as descriptive indices of association, with emphasis on

Cramér's V rather than on p-values. Reviews are also nested within restaurants; the balanced allocation of 30 reviews per restaurant limits, but does not remove, this dependence.

Analyses were conducted in Python 3.14.3 with NumPy, pandas, SciPy, Matplotlib, scikit-learn and statsmodels.



Fig. 1. Corpus construction and pragmatic coding workflow

3. Results

3.1 Corpus Profile and Coding Reliability

The corpus contains 600 reviews of 20 restaurants: 275 one-star, 196 two-star and 129 three-star reviews. Reviews were short, with a mean length of 21.1 words and a median of 21 words. Restaurants had responded to 200 reviews (33.3%). Overall inter-coder agreement was high (κ = 0.930, bootstrap 95% CI [0.870, 0.977]). The corpus profile is shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Corpus profile and coding reliability

Indicator	Overall	City A	City B
Valid reviews	600	300	300
Restaurants	20	10	10
One-star reviews	275	138	137
Two-star reviews	196	93	103
Three-star reviews	129	69	60
Mean length (words)	21.1	21.5	20.8
Median length (words)	21	21	21
Restaurant responses (%)	33.3	28.7	38.0
Double-coded reviews	120	60	60
Overall kappa [95% CI]	0.930 [0.870, 0.977]	–	–

Note. City-level kappa values were not estimated because the reported reliability statistic was calculated for the full double-coded subset; the dash indicates that no city-specific estimate was reported.

3.2 Complaint Topics and Complaint Strategies

The distribution of topics shows which service areas the complaints concern. Food quality, staff attitude, delivery or order problems, and price or billing issues are not interchangeable forms of dissatisfaction: they differ in the kind of event described, the party held responsible and the remedy expected. The distribution of strategies adds a second level, showing whether reviewers mainly evaluate, assign blame, warn other consumers, demand rectification or announce that they will not return.

Strategies also differed in frequency and force. Negative evaluation was frequent and relatively mild, whereas report threats were rare but carried direct practical consequences. Consumer warnings and refund requests also differed in orientation: the former address future customers, while the latter place an obligation on the restaurant.

Because topics and strategies were multi-label codes, percentages do not sum to 100%. Raw counts are reported alongside percentages, and low-frequency categories are interpreted with caution.

Food quality was mentioned in 272 reviews (45.33%), staff attitude in 212 (35.33%), delivery or order problems in 168 (28.00%), and price or billing in 167 (27.83%). Negative evaluation appeared in 348 reviews (58.00%), consumer warnings in 166 (27.67%), disappointment in 151 (25.17%), blame in 130 (21.67%) and report threats in 20 (3.33%). The multi-label distributions are shown in Figure 2.

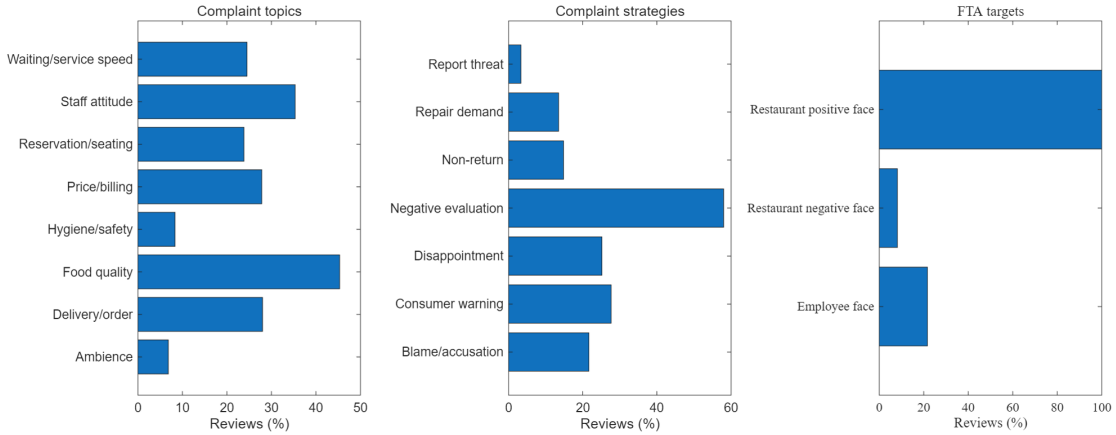


Fig. 2. Distributions of complaint topics, complaint strategies and FTA targets

3.3 FTA Targets and Pragmatic Realizations

The FTA analysis asks whose social image or freedom of action is threatened. Threats to the restaurant's positive face are claims that its food, service, professionalism or value are poor. Threats to the restaurant's negative face are requests for refunds, explanations, corrections or management intervention. Threats to employee face target the behaviour or shortcomings of particular staff members. A single review may involve several targets, and a service incident involving one employee may be generalised to the restaurant as a whole.

Only observed cross-tabulations are reported, and the frequencies are not used to draw causal conclusions.

FTA target was coded separately from negative evaluation. A review may criticise a restaurant without naming any staff member, whereas directly naming an employee threatens that person's face as well as the restaurant's reputation. Coding the two levels separately prevents overlap between categories.

Threats to the restaurant's positive face occurred in all 600 reviews. Because the corpus was restricted to one- to three-star reviews containing negative evaluations, this finding should be interpreted as a baseline property of the present corpus rather than as a general claim about all online complaints. Threats to employee face occurred in 130 reviews (21.67%), and threats to the restaurant's negative face in 49 (8.17%). Complaint topic was associated with FTA target, $\chi^2(14) = 227.79$, $p < .001$, Cramér's $V = .271$, and with complaint strategy, $\chi^2(49) = 373.48$, $p < .001$, Cramér's $V = .164$. The results are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2
Associations among complaint topics, FTA targets, complaint strategies and intensification

Association	χ^2	df	p	Cramér's V	n
Topic × FTA target	227.79	14	< .001	.271	1,551
Topic × strategy	373.48	49	< .001	.164	1,975
Star rating × intensification	0.14	2	.932	.015	600

Note. For the multi-label variables, n refers to label pairs, so a review can contribute more than one observation.

3.4 Mitigation, Intensification, and Discourse Patterns

Mitigation and intensification are better understood as combinable resources than as opposite ends of a single politeness scale. Factual narration makes a complaint more credible to readers, and self-positioning can present the reviewer as a reluctant or reasonable complaiNot estimatedt. Polite forms and concessions soften the social force of criticism. Absolute expressions, strong warnings, insults, repetition and direct threats, by contrast, increase the reputational damage of the complaint.

The co-occurrence of mitigation and intensification is theoretically important, because it means that an online complaint cannot simply be classified as polite or impolite. A reviewer can protect their own credibility and strengthen the reputational effect of the complaint at the same time. Since written reviews provide no tone of voice or other interactional cues, the analysis of irony and humour remains limited.

Factual narration occurred in 451 reviews (75.17%), self-positioning in 389 (64.83%) and polite forms in 69 (11.50%). Insults appeared in 80 reviews (13.33%), strong warnings in 75 (12.50%), repetition or capitalisation in 25 (4.17%) and direct threats in 20 (3.33%). Star rating was not associated with intensification, $\chi^2(2) = 0.14$, $p = .932$, Cramér's V = .015. Mitigation and intensification by complaint topic are shown in Figure 3.

The coded discourse patterns were fact-attribution-evaluation (396 reviews, 66.00%), experience-warning (101, 16.83%), self-positioning-criticism (80, 13.33%), intensified non-return (15, 2.50%) and event-repair-demand (8, 1.33%).

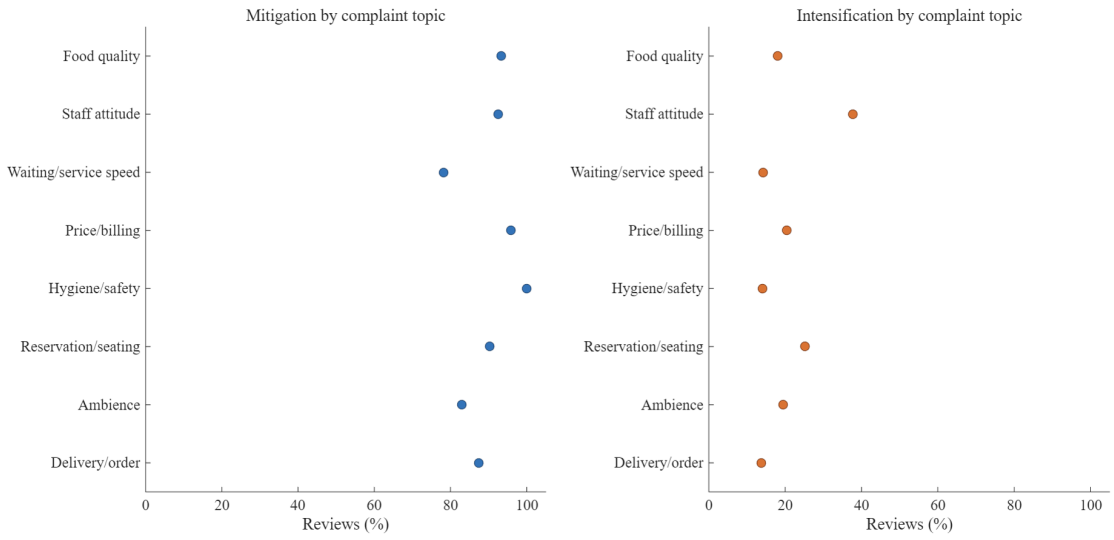


Fig. 3. Mitigation and intensification by complaint topic

4. Discussion

4.1 Public Visibility and Multiple Addressees

Most complaints posted on Google Maps function as public evaluations of service experiences rather than private expressions of dissatisfaction. Although the restaurant is the primary party held accountable for the perceived service failure, these complaints also address a broader audience of prospective customers who were not directly involved in the incident. Statements expressing an intention not to return to the establishment signal the withdrawal of future patronage, while explicit warnings directed at other consumers demonstrate the multi-addressee nature of online complaint discourse.

The public visibility of these reviews also increases the importance of factual credibility and the perceived authenticity of the reported experiences. Specific details concerning waiting times, prices, orders, and interactions with restaurant staff provide contextual information that enables readers to assess the plausibility and seriousness of the complaint. Conversely, complaints containing insufficient, inconsistent, or inaccurate information may be perceived as less credible. Accordingly, the present study treats factual narration as a linguistic resource through which reviewers establish the credibility of their grievances, without assuming that the reported events can be independently verified.

Nevertheless, the public nature of Google Maps reviews does not necessarily imply that all reviewers deliberately seek to influence consumer behaviour or the restaurant's market reputation. The present analysis focuses on textual addressivity and the communicative functions expressed within the reviews rather than attempting to infer reviewers' underlying intentions or motivations. Consequently, the interpretation of complaint strategies is restricted to the linguistic evidence available in the corpus.

Overall, the findings suggest that Google Maps complaints function as publicly accessible service evaluations rather than private communications between customers and businesses. Negative evaluations, expressions of dissatisfaction, and consumer warnings may simultaneously address restaurant operators and prospective customers, reflecting the multi-audience characteristics of digital complaint discourse. The frequent occurrence of factual narration further indicates that reviewers commonly construct their complaints as evidence-based accounts of perceived service failures, potentially enhancing their credibility and persuasive force. This interpretation is consistent with previous research highlighting the roles of informational and normative influence in online reviews and the collective dimensions of digital complaint practices [11, 12].

4.2 Complaint Topics and FTA Targets

Complaint topics reveal distinct patterns in the attribution of responsibility and the construction of face-threatening acts (FTAs) within online restaurant reviews. Complaints concerning food quality primarily threaten the restaurant's positive face by questioning its ability to provide satisfactory products, maintain acceptable standards, or deliver value for money. Complaints involving staff attitudes may direct criticism towards individual employees or the restaurant's workforce collectively, thereby challenging perceptions of professionalism, courtesy, and service competence. In contrast, complaints about prolonged waiting times frequently highlight service inefficiencies and may involve explicit or implicit expectations of corrective action. Price- and billing-related complaints typically concern transactional discrepancies or perceived unfairness and may be accompanied by requests for clarification, adjustments, or refunds. These distinctions demonstrate how different

service problems can shape the attribution of accountability and the communicative strategies employed by dissatisfied customers.

Nevertheless, these interpretations must be considered within the specific characteristics and limitations of the present corpus. Variations in complaint-topic frequencies may be influenced by several factors, including sample composition, restaurant characteristics, platform-specific reviewing practices, and differences in how customers perceive and describe service encounters. Accordingly, the study does not assume that hygiene-related complaints are inherently more severe than other complaint categories or that complaints concerning staff behaviour necessarily target individual employees. Instead, it examines whether such associations emerge within the dataset and evaluates their relative frequency and strength. This approach ensures that the findings remain grounded in observable linguistic patterns rather than predetermined assumptions about the nature or severity of particular service failures.

Furthermore, the observed patterns cannot be attributed to a single explanatory factor, as complaint formulation may reflect the interaction of service context, perceived responsibility, communicative purpose, and platform characteristics. Consequently, the findings should not be generalised automatically to other online review environments. Future research could extend the analysis through cross-platform comparisons to determine whether similar service problems generate comparable FTA targets and complaint strategies across different digital communication settings. Such comparisons would provide a broader understanding of the extent to which complaint construction is shaped by platform-specific conventions and contextual factors.

The findings indicate that food quality constituted the most frequently reported complaint topic, while complaints concerning staff attitudes were associated with employee-directed face threats and expressions of blame. These relationships represent corpus-level associations rather than evidence of direct causal relationships between complaint topics and linguistic strategies. Nevertheless, the observed patterns are consistent with previous pragmatic research demonstrating that complaint formulation varies according to service context, cultural expectations, and face-management considerations [3, 10, 18]. Overall, the findings suggest that the nature of the reported service problem is an important contextual dimension in understanding how reviewers attribute responsibility, construct criticism, and negotiate interpersonal face within publicly accessible restaurant reviews.

4.3 Co-occurrence of Mitigation and Intensification

The co-occurrence results support a layered model of online complaint construction. Reviewers first supply enough detail to ground the complaint and then build an evaluation or warning on that basis. Mitigation does not always serve de-escalation; it can also protect the reviewer's image as a reasonable consumer and so make the complaint more persuasive.

Insults are therefore not the only route to a stronger complaint. Even a mildly worded account can damage a restaurant's reputation once it is public, particularly when it ends with a decision not to return. Conversely, a highly emotional review may contain little information about the service incident. For this reason, the aggregate coding results were interpreted together with the discourse-pattern frequencies.

Because reviews are written asynchronously and without face-to-face contact, the interpretation of irony needs more contextual support than the text provides. It is often unclear from the text alone whether a remark is meant as humorous, playful or insolent.

The findings reveal that mitigation and intensification strategies frequently co-occurred within individual online restaurant complaints, demonstrating the complex interplay between linguistic

moderation and the expression of dissatisfaction. Mitigating strategies, particularly factual narration and self-positioning, enabled reviewers to present their grievances as reasonable, credible, and justified accounts of perceived service failures. In contrast, intensification strategies, including explicit consumer warnings, strongly negative evaluations, and insulting expressions, served to reinforce the seriousness of the complaints and heighten their potential reputational implications for the restaurants concerned. However, direct threats occurred relatively infrequently, suggesting that the complaints examined were not predominantly characterised by overtly aggressive or abusive language. Instead, reviewers commonly combined factual descriptions, evaluative statements, and recommendations or warnings directed towards prospective customers to communicate dissatisfaction while establishing the perceived legitimacy of their experiences. This pattern is consistent with previous research examining complaint severity, aggressive complaining, and complaint de-escalation strategies in digital communication environments [4, 6, 17]. Overall, the findings suggest that online restaurant complaints should not be understood simply as expressions of hostility but rather as multifaceted communicative acts in which reviewers strategically combine evidence, criticism, and audience-oriented advice to convey dissatisfaction and potentially influence public perceptions of service quality.

4.4 Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, the study extends face theory from interpersonal interaction to public review systems. The original categories remain applicable, but the set of addressees differs: a review can involve the business, its employees, potential customers and other platform users at the same time. Addressee orientation and public visibility should therefore be treated as features of the pragmatic context in which face-threatening acts occur.

Practically, the coding framework can help restaurants classify incoming complaints. A factual account of a specific incident calls for investigation and correction, a complaint that specifies a repair demand calls for a targeted remedy, and a strong public warning poses a greater reputational risk. These are suggestions for response planning, not experimentally verified claims about which responses improve future ratings.

4.5 Limitations and Future Research

Despite its contributions, the present study has several methodological and contextual limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the corpus-based analytical approach enables the identification of recurring linguistic patterns, the distribution of complaint strategies, and associations among coded variables; however, it does not establish causal relationships or determine the extent to which online complaints influence restaurant performance, customer retention, or business reputation. Furthermore, the findings are context-specific and should not be generalised to restaurant-review practices across different languages, countries, or cultural environments without additional empirical investigation.

Second, the study is restricted to English-language Google Maps reviews collected from restaurants in two cities, using a fixed sample and a cross-sectional research design. These characteristics may limit the representativeness of the corpus and its ability to capture temporal changes in complaint behaviour, evolving customer expectations, or variations in platform-specific communication practices. Although the multi-label coding approach allows individual reviews to be classified across multiple complaint topics, face-threatening act (FTA) targets, and linguistic strategies, the interpretation of these categories may involve subjective judgements, particularly

when reviewers employ implicit criticism, sarcasm, or overlapping pragmatic functions. Consequently, the reliability and consistency of the coding procedures are important considerations when interpreting the findings.

Third, the cross-sectional design does not permit an examination of how managerial responses influence subsequent customer evaluations, complaint escalation, or changes in review sentiment over time. Previous research on conversational response strategies, service failures, regulatory framing, politeness and negotiation, managerial responses to negative reviews, language accuracy in service recovery, and organisational legitimacy provides a useful foundation for extending the present investigation [5, 7–9, 14–16]. Future studies could therefore adopt longitudinal or comparative research designs to examine interactions between customer complaints and organisational responses, including the extent to which different response strategies are associated with subsequent changes in customer sentiment and complaint behaviour. Expanding the analysis to multilingual datasets, additional geographical locations, and different online review platforms would also help establish the broader applicability and contextual sensitivity of the proposed coding framework.

5. Conclusion

This study offers a pragmatic analysis of restaurant complaints posted in English on Google Maps. Online complaints are treated as structured public acts that report an incident, assign responsibility, damage reputation, demand remedy and inform other consumers. Separating complaint topic, complaint strategy, FTA target, mitigation and intensification avoids reducing negative reviews to a single sentiment score.

Across 600 reviews, food quality was the most frequent source of complaint. Every review threatened the restaurant's positive face, while threats to employee face and to the restaurant's negative face were less common. Factual narration and self-positioning were the main mitigating resources. The complaint topic was associated with FTA target and complaint strategy, whereas star rating was unrelated to intensification. Google Maps complaints thus combine event reporting, attribution of responsibility, advice to other consumers and face management.

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