



**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

This is a self-archived – parallel-published version of an original article. This version may differ from the original in pagination and typographic details. When using please cite the original.

AUTHOR	Sanna Pelttari
TITLE	YouTube: Audience Emotional Reactions and Convergent Alignment
YEAR	2022
DOI	https://doi.org/10.1075/ip.00085.pel
VERSION	Author's accepted manuscript
CITATION	Pelttari, Sanna (2022). YouTube: Audience emotional reactions and convergent alignment. <i>Internet Pragmatics</i> . https://www.jbe-platform.com/content/journals/10.1075/ip.00085.pel

YouTube: Audience Emotional Reactions and Convergent Alignment

Sanna Pelttari

University of Turku

This case study discusses audiences' emotional reactions and convergent alignment in YouTube comment threads observed on four videos of Spanish YouTubers with affective narratives on sensitive topics. The analysis reveals evidence that the mostly single-comment threads are generally positive and that utterances are fairly equally divided in their focus on YouTubers or narratives. The act of taking a stance follow consists of a versatile process in which the convergent alignment or agreement with the YouTubers' stance lead occurs not just by positively evaluating YouTubers or the story, but also by revealing something highly private concerning the stance topic. The four affective narratives evoke not only compliments, but also the convergent alignment the YouTubers presumably seek with their stories.

Keywords: YouTube, affective narratives, comments, stance follow, convergent alignment, agreement

1. Introduction

“Add a public comment” is YouTube’s way of encouraging users to engage in the participatory culture of social networks. However, despite its technical ease, only a minority seems to make use of this affordance (Thelwall, Sud and Vis 2012; Madden, Ruthven and McMenemy 2013; Johansson 2017; Tur-Viñes and Castelló-Martínez 2019). Furthermore, many comments can seem trivial—a unilateral venting of emotions with no specific agenda. However, they may also represent profound instances of intersubjective stance-taking and alignment. *Taking a stance* is among the most important of verbal acts, and expressing emotion is itself an act of stance-taking (Du Bois 2007: 140; Du Bois and Kärkkäinen 2012: 446). In fact, on many social media platforms, commenting on a video enables people from all parts of the world (who may not even know each other) to express, negotiate, and contest stances. It can therefore be argued that by affording self-generated content, social network sites are stance-rich and stimulate public opinion through multimodal means (Barton and Lee 2013: 88, 106).

The act of stance-taking through comments can be seen as part of the larger process of dialogic stance-taking in asynchronous interaction (Du Bois 2007; Du Bois and Kärkkäinen 2012) initiated by opinions that YouTubers express in their own videos. For the present purposes, I explore comments on four videos with affective narratives on sensitive or negative topics. In these stories, YouTubers evaluate and position themselves in relation to a topic (Davies and Harré 1990; Harré and Van Langenhove 1999), taking a *stance lead*, to which commenters respond with a so-called *stance follow*, which may agree (*convergent alignment*) or not agree (*divergent alignment*) with the stance lead (Du Bois 2007). Studies of stance-taking in comment threads have addressed commenters’ epistemic stances on (meta)linguistic assertions made by prior commenters (Tovares 2019) and stances in smartphone reviews (Parini and Fetzer 2019). A number of earlier studies have explored both YouTubers’ and commenters’ positioning and stance-taking (Chun and Walters 2011; Walton and Jaffe 2011; Chun 2013; Koven and Marques 2015). It is worth noting that even if commenters do not refer explicitly to stance-taking, they all inevitably engage in this act by employing linguistic means and resources (Du Bois and Kärkkäinen 2012).

In other research on YouTube comment threads, linguistic, pragmatic, and discursive approaches have been used on issues such as conflict in massive polylogues (Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2014), rants or (in)politeness (Lange 2007, 2014), and (in)coherent relatedness in multimodal interaction (Adami 2014). Other studies have applied computational approaches to large samples of text comments to examine commenting and predictive rating behavior (Siersdorfer et al. 2010); perceptions of flaming behavior (Moor, Heuvelman and Ria

Verleur 2010); commenting patterns (Thelwall, Sud and Vis 2012); language attitudes (Ivković 2013); comment types (Madden, Ruthven and McMenemy 2013); commenting activity and sentiment in interactions (Tur-Viñes and Castelló-Martínez 2019); responses to visual narratives of conflict (Crilley and Chatterje-Doody 2020); and impoliteness as a hallmark of homophily in YouTube comments (Andersson 2021).

In this case study, I posed the following research questions: (1) What kind of communicative acts do comments with expressions of emotion reflect and do they evaluate YouTubers themselves or their affective narratives? (2) How do commenters evaluate YouTubers' main message (stance lead) within their narratives, and how is their potential agreement expressed in comments? I focus on adopting linguistic and discursive perspectives, and emotional comments are explored as communicative acts that might reflect in the context of asynchronous stance-taking of YouTube. The concept of a communicative act is understood here as an utterance or a set of utterances performing some kind of linguistic function (e.g., a compliment), linked with a so-called social act as a goal-directed behavior (Ochs 1996). In relation to stance-taking, my observations are based on fundamental research findings on affective stance (Du Bois 2007; Jaffe 2009; Du Bois and Kärkkäinen 2012; Barton and Lee 2013; Parini and Fetzer 2019). Clearly, the chosen corpus and methodology do not support broader generalization or any evaluation of the sincerity of these emotional reactions. However, the observations may offer some new insights into the expression of emotions and stance-taking within the virtual relationships of a networked audience and the participatory culture of YouTube. In this view, stance is not only a matter of how YouTubers position themselves but also relates to the communicative acts they seek to foster (Barton and Lee 2013: 88) and my aim is to observe how commenters respond to it. The study on stances is important, because they are central meaning components of social acts and social identities, and, in line with this, essential in the constitution of social life (Ochs 1996: 419-420).

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. After briefly reviewing some theoretical aspects of commenting behavior and stance-taking on YouTube (Section 2), I present the research material and pertinent methodological aspects (Section 3). Section 4 reports the most relevant results as the basis for the conclusions in Section 5.

2. Commenting behavior and stance-taking on YouTube

The opportunity to comment on articles, posts, or videos is one of the distinctive features of social media; along with collaboration, this defines the space of YouTube channels as a collective phenomenon characteristic of participatory culture (Tur-Viñes and Castelló-

Martínez 2019: 2-3). In fact, there is evidence that the appeal of participatory culture owes precisely to these social media affordances of interaction and opinion sharing (De Fina 2016: 491-492).¹

Concepts like *networked audience* and *networked communication* perfectly characterize the members of this participatory culture. Marwick and Boyd (2011) define the former as an audience that includes real and potential viewers of digital content within a larger social graph and presumes personal authenticity and connection. Viewers are linked both to the content producer and to each other, creating a communicative network of random individuals. There is also a clear means of communicating with YouTubers through the network, and this interaction is likely to influence how YouTubers respond and what content they create (Marwick and Boyd 2011: 128-130). The enormous population of potential viewers is linked to *context collapse* (Wesch 2009; Marwick and Boyd 2011), where billions of potential viewers come together on social network sites, challenging how individuals “must address anybody, everybody, and maybe nobody all at once” and how YouTubers and viewers express themselves as individuals while managing expectations of authentic self-presentation (Wesch 2009: 22-23; Marwick and Boyd 2011: 122-124). As *networked communication* is automatically archived, it is more permanent and more easily reproduced than spoken conversation (Tagg and Seargeant 2014: 179).

As networked audiences, users of social media sites may display so-called *light practices* (e.g., liking, sharing, retweeting, commenting) typical of *light communities*.² While these practices may not be vital to the individual’s everyday life or core identity, they may also carry thicker functions like establishing and maintaining convivial relationships (Blommaert 2017: 10-13). Or, in line with this, they may signify inclusion (e.g., creating conviviality) or exclusion from a particular light group, dividing the fellow commenters into “insiders” or “outsiders” (Tovares 2019). In this way, light practices seem to have a *thick effect* linked to social cohesion and integration, not only within online groups but also in the offline world (Blommaert 2017). At the same time, it seems obvious that recognition and shareability of meaningful signs—that is, virality within social networks—creates temporary groups that do not necessarily depend on strong or lasting bonds (Varis and Blommaert 2013: 18).

¹ YouTube also provides thumbs-up and thumbs-down buttons for users to rate videos and comments that they like or dislike (Barton and Lee 2013: 88). All of these tools provide useful information by maximizing user participation (e.g., likes, dislikes, comments, shares, uploads) that may not be feasible beyond the realm of social media (Khan 2017: 243). However, since 2021 only creators are able to see their exact dislike counts (see <https://blog.youtube/news-and-events/update-to-youtube>; accessed 30 May 2022).

² Light communities comprise individuals who join voluntarily and actively engage in these new types of social practice (Blommaert 2017: 10).

2.1 Audience participation by posting comments

Commenting is ultimately the richest form of interaction on social networks because it accommodates emotional expression and entails an investment of time and effort motivated by the content viewed (Tur-Viñes and Castelló-Martínez 2019: 12). However, despite the massive user communities and the ease of posting a comment on YouTube, only a minority seem to do so (Thelwall, Sud and Vis 2012; Madden, Ruthven and McMenemy 2013; Johansson 2017; Tur-Viñes and Castelló-Martínez 2019). In fact, on YouTube, media viewing (and producing) is the primary activity, and commenting (and reading of comments), based on viewing the video, is secondary (Johansson 2017: 179). However, although the interactive and commenting potential of YouTube channels remains underused, comments keep channels alive by generating new content and linking different videos over time. Above all, comments bear witness to the fan phenomenon, which is fundamental to YouTube communities (Tur-Viñes and Castelló-Martínez 2019: 12-13).

Commenting behavior has a number of known characteristics. First, the level of interaction between YouTubers and commenters is rather low, and YouTubers rarely reply (Tur-Viñes and Castelló-Martínez 2019: 11-12). Second, relatively few commenters enter into dialogue with each other, and this minimal user-user interaction is not always on topic (De Fina 2016: 492; Tur-Viñes and Castelló-Martínez 2019: 11). In fact, YouTube comments tend to be characterized by a marked heterogeneity of subject matter (Madden et al. 2013). In the case of popular videos that attract a large number of comments, some of YouTube's technical features (e.g., comments displayed in reverse chronological order and breaking over several pages) may encourage several simultaneous lines of discussion. In addition, negative comments seem to elicit more replies and threads, as for instance in the case of highly commented-upon videos (Thelwall, Sud and Vis 2012). Finally, as a video's topic tends to be a key driver of discussion, triggering or polarizing topics (e.g., politics, religion, economic crisis) are likely to generate more opinions than more neutral topics such as, for example, pets. The topic also seems to influence whether comments are negatively or positively rated (e.g., politics versus music) (Siersdorfer et al. 2010; Thelwall, Sud and Vis 2012). Cultural or age/gender differences may further contribute to such disputes or misunderstandings (Thelwall, Sud and Vis 2012: 619).

There is evidence of aggressiveness within online environments (De Fina 2016: 492), shown, for example, in 'flaming' comments (Lange 2007, 2014; Moor, Heuvelman and Verleur 2010; Thelwall, Sud and Vis 2012; Khan and Solomon 2013; Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2014; Khan 2017). Anonymity and the use of virtual identities may contribute to this

“emotional excess” and increase the level of disrespect (Dyrel 2012; Bou-Franch and Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2014; Stroud, Van Duyn and Peacock 2016), but an identifiable profile does not guarantee courteous interaction (Lange 2007). While anonymity makes it safe to vent one’s feelings, either as author or addressee, without fear of being judged negatively (Vermeulen et al. 2018: 216), forcing people to use their real names might discourage comments by putting people at risk (Stroud et al. 2016: 14). However, there are also evidence of overall positivity of the comments, as Thelwall, Sud and Vis (2012) indicate in their analysis of a large sample of comments within computational approaches. Furthermore, as Madden et al. (2013: 712) reported, many categories of YouTube comments can be characterized as highly subjective, reflecting the stance-taking inherent in commenting behavior. Whether comments are positive or negative, their tone or style seems to follow the pattern set by previous comments as if this were a homeostatic and contagious phenomenon (Tur-Viñes and Castelló-Martínez 2019: 12).

Among the motives for commenting, commenters often respond to a direct question or invitation from YouTubers, and this direct appeal can be seen as a strategy to encourage user participation. Users also post comments to express emotions or opinions, to clarify information, to praise YouTubers, or to comment on the most interesting aspects of a video (Stroud, Van Duyn and Peacock 2016: 9; Tur-Viñes and Castelló-Martínez 2019: 11). The information-giving motive seems to predict all participatory acts on YouTube via liking, commenting, sharing, and uploading, that is, not only through sharing of video content, but also through user interactivity (Khan 2017: 243). In the case of Facebook updates, Georgakopoulou (2017) claimed that the more extraordinary the reported event and the more difficulties it caused in the teller’s life, the more audience feedback it received regarding how to deal with it. On the other hand, more routine events attracted relatively less sustained verbal feedback (Georgakopoulou 2017: 42). Taken together, these findings suggest that the type of content and how it is narrated impact participation and interactivity in comment threads (Tur-Viñes and Castelló-Martínez 2019).

2.2 Stance-taking on YouTube

As mentioned above, any expression of affect can be seen as an act of stance-taking; in other words, a display of affect is always *about* something, and that something is the object of an affective stance (Du Bois and Kärkkäinen 2012: 439, 446). Affective stance refers to the stance-taker’s expressions of personal feelings, attitudes or judgements towards a stance object, whereas epistemic stance signals knowledge and beliefs (Barton and Lee 2013: 92-95). Stance-taking is all about positionality—that is, how language users position themselves with respect

to their words, interlocutors, and audiences, and what they simultaneously respond to and construct through language. To that extent, stance-taking is associated both with social position and interpersonal and social relationships (Jaffe 2009: 1-3). The concept of positioning as a social, interactional, and discursive act of making a person's actions intelligible is thoroughly observed within Positioning Theory. According to this theory, conversation consists of a triad position (speech-act-storyline), and such position is created in and through talk (Davies and Harré 1990; Harré and Van Langenhove 1999). A position can be considered a cluster of beliefs concerning the rights and duties of the members of a group to act in certain ways and to express social acts appropriate to the situations recognized by participants (Harré 2012). Positioning refers to the processes of accepting or rejecting positions (Davies and Harré 1990).

According to Du Bois' stance triangle model (2007), a stance-taker first evaluates something or expresses an emotional orientation towards a stance topic; secondly, positions (usually) the self and, finally, aligns with co-participants in the interaction (Du Bois 2007: 162-163). Alignment can be convergent or divergent depending on whether an individual agrees or disagrees with the prior stance (Du Bois and Kärkkäinen 2012: 447). Besides, alignment serves to emphasize similarities and differences in acts of positioning and evaluation; in the context of affect, co-participants assess their own emotions in relation to others' feelings about the shared object in order to evaluate the affective stance differential. This model frames alignment as a dimension of the social construction of intersubjectivity and alludes to commensurability, implying that the pursuit of sameness within a conversation is no longer an issue (Du Bois and Kärkkäinen 2012: 438-441). In this view, stance is never a private opinion but arises in dialogic interaction in the public space directed to and interpreted by an audience (Barton and Lee 2013: 87).

As a video-sharing and networking site, YouTube invites both individual and collaborative stance-taking by users who come together virtually to address a topic enacted (audio)visually and discussed textually in comments posted on the site (Parini and Fetzer 2019: 131). A user may post a comment *synchronously*—immediately after an initial comment appears or a video is uploaded—or *asynchronously*, if this occurs sometime later (Parini and Fetzer 2019: 121). As Parini and Fetzer (2019) emphasize, stance can be negotiated at two levels on YouTube: *interdiscursively* and *intradiscursively*. The former refers to a YouTuber's *stance lead* in an audio-visual form, and the latter refers to comments in textual form. This kind of communicative act of follow-up by commenters involves stance-taking accompanied by argumentation in favor of or against a prior discourse or a reaction by other users (Parini and

Fetzer 2019: 113-114) but within a broader definition, follow-ups are not only verbal but may also involve non-verbal performance (Fetzer and Weizman 2015: xii-xiv).

3. Data and methodology

The data for this case study were gathered from Tubecon, a massive convention of YouTubers and their fans in Madrid in 2017. The choice of Tubecon, a YouTube culture event bringing together both ordinary YouTubers and their followers, as a framework for the collection of the material of my multiple-part study on YouTubers' affective communication (see Pelttari 2020; Pelttari, forthcoming) allows observation of a heterogeneous and ideally representative community of YouTubers. In my estimation, this kind of cross-section of the YouTube community contributes to better understanding the impact of YouTubers on interpersonal relationships in smaller circles, instead of focusing only on the most famous creators on the platform. However, in the original corpus of 194 videos (the last video of each YouTuber that took part in Madrid Tubecon), 46 videos were direct-to-camera vlogs and, among these videos, only four fulfilled the thematic criteria of the narratives. The four YouTubers who are the focus of this paper, authors of the narratives, had 435,393 subscribers, with an average of 108,848 subscribers each. The four narratives generated a sample of 1,502 comments by the date of gathering, averaging 376 comments each. Only one video (on damaging relationships) exceeded both the average and the median (185), recording the highest total of 1027 comments. In order to delimit the original corpus and to balance these numerical differences, only the first 100 comments on each video were included in the analysis, amounting to a corpus of 9,591 words. Comments were collected during October and November 2017.

Other concepts related to stance-taking are of immediate relevance to the present study: *stance lead*—a prior stance taken by YouTubers in their narratives—and *stance follow*, referring to stance-taking by commenters in response. Between these two, there is an intersubjective relationship that is expected to be indexed, and this is also linked to their *alignment*, which may be *convergent* or *divergent* (Du Bois 2007: 162). I understand *stance lead* to refer to a narrative's main message—in other words, what a YouTuber seeks to transmit and perhaps achieve. It is important to observe not just what a story *is* but what it *does*—that is, what reactions it elicits from its audience (Georgakopoulou 2017: 39-42). By leaving a comment, commenters evaluate and position themselves in relation to a stance topic, expressing their own positive or negative (affective) stance. I assess comments as convergent or divergent on the basis of whether users agree or disagree with the stance lead. Rather than 'disalignment' or 'nonalignment', which would be too dichotomizing as *alignment* is a

continuous variable, I use the terms *agreement* (or convergent alignment) and *disagreement* (or divergent alignment) (see Du Bois and Kärkkäinen 2012: 447).

I treat comments as convergent aligned if their linguistic form and/or semantic content overtly agrees with the prior stance lead or its underlying message. Agreement with YouTubers' stance lead in narratives may take several forms—for example, arguing in favor or expressing unanimity, confirming a personal connection, creating new topics, or displaying approval through “extra” reflexivity (Walton and Jaffe 2011). In cases of disagreement, there may also be scope for a new perspective, topic, or stance lead when a comment adopts an opposite or a critical point of view. This would be a whole new research topic to discover.

Rather than scrutinizing emotions as intrapersonal processes, affective states are viewed here as sustaining essential connections through interpersonal relationships, indexed by verbal expressions (Duprez et al. 2015: 757-758). In other words, verbal expressions of emotion are treated as an interpersonal and social discursive phenomenon rather than as a manifestation of personal psychology (Caffi and Janney 1994: 328-329). On that basis, such expressions are analyzed in terms of “what they do” rather than “what they are” (Ahmed 2014: 208-211). I use the terms *affect*, *emotion*, and *feeling* interchangeably and in the broader sense, alluding to an emotional state or feeling that one experiences and that influences what one senses, does, thinks, or communicates.

Using qualitative methods and a linguistic and discursive approach, the study focuses on the interdiscursive and asynchronous negotiation of stance on YouTube (Parini and Fetzer 2019). I performed an utterance-level micro-analysis of the data with a top-down approach to identify comments expressing emotionality, either explicitly or implicitly. To ensure consistency and systematic observation, I then clustered the comments into several communicative acts to identify and analyze representative examples of emotional reactions, aiding understanding of commenters' purposes and the functions of these communicative acts (Madden et al. 2013). While the limited data do not support generalization, the use of relative frequencies revealed some lexical patterns that illuminate commenting behavior within these categories. Representative examples will be presented below.

As the case narratives were in Spanish, all quotes were translated into English. All orthographical or grammatical errors were corrected, reflecting the study's emphasis on semantics or communicative acts of the comments. To protect commenters' privacy, no reference is made here to users' nicknames. Besides, the commenters were not identified by gender, which was not always easily identifiable from user nicknames. After every comment,

the source narrative is indicated in brackets, referring to female Youtubers as [F] and males as [M].

Table 1. Source, story topic, and main purpose of the story

YouTuber	Topic	Main purpose (<i>stance lead</i>): advise or warn
F1	Adversity	Do not get stuck in pessimism. Try to focus on all the good things in your life.
F2	Mental illness	Do not buy (printed) clothes that joke about mental illness. Condemn these products.
F3	Damaging relationships	Be aware of every detail of damaging relationships. Do not enter into relationships of this kind.
M1	Longing for the past	Enjoy every moment of your time as a scout.

As shown in Table 1, the case narratives to which the comment threads refer include sensitive or negative topics like adversities in life [F1], mental illness [F2], damaging relationships [F3], and longing for the past [M1]. It is noteworthy that the internal structure of the stories can be divided into two broad parts: in the first, YouTubers share an emotional story, evaluating and positioning themselves in relation to a stance topic, whereas in the second they advise or warn the viewer. This second part involves what I refer to as a *prior stance lead*, to which commenters might take a stance follow. For example, while F1 advises the audience not to give in to pessimism and to try to remember all the good things one has, F2 explicitly warns her viewers against buying products that she condemns and invites them to join in that condemnation. As Barton and Lee (2013: 88) emphasized, the structure of these stories illustrates that stance taking is not just about marking the stance but indicates what objectives or communicative acts (e.g., support, encouragement, condemnation) the stance taker seeks to promote.

4. Findings

4.1 Commenting on affective narratives

Before proceeding to analyze further excerpts, some statistics provided by YouTube shed more light on commenting behaviors. First, as indicated by my own data and many earlier studies (e.g., Johansson 2017), relatively few of those who have seen or liked a video actually leave a comment (Table 2).³

³ Comparing the number of comments at that time and three years later, there are only slight differences (except in the case of F3's video), indicating that users left their comments shortly after the video was uploaded (see also De Fina 2016: 485). The comments of my data were left during the first two days after the video was uploaded, and only in interactional threads the delay was, in some cases, 4-5 days.

Table 2. Key aspects of commented-upon affective narratives

	Topic	Duration	Views (2019)	Subscribers (2017)	Subscribers (2019)	Comments (2017 / 2020)	Likes (2019)	Dislikes (2019)
F1	Adversity	03:44,0	14,548	74,863	77,635	105 / 114	1,867	12
F2	Mental illness	14:20,0	33,287	55,834	82,482	241 / 417	2,700	155
F3	Damaging relationships	17:16,0	431,261	278,889	316,674	1,027 / 3,400	57,000	364
M1	Longing for the past	03:14,0	8,779	25,807	6,888	129 / 151	1,129	3

A majority of the comments are single-comment threads, with infrequent interaction between participants (2.75%, $n = 11/400$), which seems to confirm users' desire to interact with YouTubers rather than with their commenter peers (Thelwall, Sud and Vis 2012). Most of these interactional threads ($n = 10/11$) relate to F2's narrative about mental illness and are characterized by negative charge, criticism, or blaming involving two or three persons.

Regarding the pragmatic functions of *likes*, it seems probable that these serve to express a positive stance without leaving a written comment, as noted by Barton and Lee in the case of Facebook (2013: 88-89). While it remains unclear whether some likers also comment, it can be assumed that these narratives achieve a positive reaction despite the inevitable emergence of discordant voices (*dislikes*). Unsurprisingly, the story about damaging relationships was the most viewed, liked, and commented, and my data indicate that this YouTuber has the most followers. In terms of affect, a majority of the comments were positive or neutral in tone (91%, $n = 364/400$) (Thelwall, Sud and Vis 2012; Tovares 2019).

When analyzing comment threads, I divided the comments and utterances between those addressed to YouTubers and those related to their narratives or stance lead. Furthermore, I classified them according to communicative acts they apparently reflected (Table 3). The final analysis considered only emotional comments directed to YouTubers and narratives or stance lead (in bold). When analyzing comments with simultaneously overlapping acts, I use superscript letters (e.g., compliment^a, support^b, gratitude^c, agreement^d, telling personal experience^e) even when all acts are not always in play. In some contexts, bold face and underlining are used to emphasize certain communicative acts.

Table 3. Audience's communicative acts of emotional reaction and stance follow

Target	Communicative act	n	Stance follow
YouTubers	Compliment ^a	149	Positive affective stance (Indirect convergent alignment?)
	Support ^b	71	
	Gratitude ^c	67	
	Greetings	32	
Narratives or stance lead	Agreement ^d	157	Convergent alignment
	Telling personal experience ^e	74	
Users	Criticism	31	Negative affective stance (Divergent alignment?)
	Support	19	Positive affective stance (Convergent alignment?)
Other	Nonsense talk	27	?

Among the comments addressed to YouTubers, highlighted acts include compliment, support, and gratitude while agreement and personal experience are emphasized in comments explicitly linked to narrative or stance lead. In the latter, I also included users' expressions of emotion or emotional state in relation to stories or stance lead. Concerning comments targeting YouTubers, the analysis also includes those related to videos. Unless the word 'video' was explicitly mentioned (n = 49), the border between comments addressed to YouTubers or videos was blurred. In line with this, the boundaries between communicative acts are less clear-cut than they may look and are sometimes difficult to discern. For example, in the case of praising YouTubers' *persona* or their video, supporting or encouraging them verbally in a difficult moment or situation, or expressing gratitude for their story, it is not always easy to decide whether these seemingly 'light' communicative acts are simple compliments, signs of conviviality dedicated solely to YouTubers, or if they bear thicker meanings signifying indirect agreement with the narrative's main purpose or stance lead (Varis and Blommaert 2013; Blommaert 2017; Tovares 2019). In contrast, users' agreement is more palpable in comments that relate to narrative and stance lead. Despite this difficulty in drawing an exact line between personal opinions related solely to YouTubers and those related to narrative or stance lead, I observed them separately for closer analysis of the comments' internal structure. It is worth mentioning that comments, especially the longer ones, belong to various overlapping communicative acts and those assigned to one act were rare (Example 1).

- (1) *Madre mía, no sé qué sentir, a mitad del vídeo me sentí tan identificada^d, que creo que estuve pasando por lo mismo, pero no me había dado cuenta de la gran violencia que hay, pues a nuestros ojos es romántico y la relación soñada, pero en realidad no^e... Sé que suena tonto, pero siento como si me hubieras quitado una venda muy grande de los ojos. Me identifiqué al 100^d, pero en serio GRACIAS*

por esto^c, *al leer “esto no es amor, es violencia” el corazón me comenzó a palpar muchísimo*^e, *que fuerte eres* [F3]^a, *te admiro mucho*. ♡:’)^a

My God, I don't know what to feel, **in the middle of the video I felt so identified^d that I think I was going through the same thing**, but I had not realized the great violence that there is, because in our eyes it is romantic and the dream relationship, but not really^e... **I know it sounds silly, but I feel like you've removed a very large blindfold. I identified myself 100 percent^d**, but seriously, THANK YOU for this^c, when I read “this is not love, it is violence” my heart began to beat so much^e, how strong you are [F3]^a, I admire you a lot. ♡:’)^a

In Example (1), along with the focus on convergent alignment or agreement^d (in bold), there are several overlapping acts (underlined), including telling personal experience^e, gratitude^c, and compliment^a. Among signs of agreement, the user's utterances expressing his or her own identification with the story and the strong emotional outburst with heart palpitations reflect, in my view, alignment with the cause. This strong emotionality is also reflected in the emphasis on adverbs or expressions like *madre mía* (my god), *tan* (so), *al 100* (100 percent), *en serio* (seriously), *muchísimo* (so much), and *mucho* (a lot).

In the course of identifying emotional comments, other types of comments (greyed out) were naturally also considered (Table 3), including greetings (n = 32), inter-user criticism (rants, blaming) (n = 31), nonsense comments with no apparent logical content (n = 27), YouTubers' own replies (n = 26), and supportive comments among users (n = 19). As these were not the main focus of the study (and incidence was low), they were omitted from the final analysis.

Table 4. Distribution of emotional comments in the final analysis

Target	Communicative act	n	Σ	Stance follow
YouTubers	Compliment	149	287	Positive affective stance
	Support	71		
	Gratitude	67		
Narratives or stance lead	Agreement	157	231	Convergent alignment
	Telling personal experience	74		

As shown in Table 4, slightly more utterances explicitly addressed the YouTuber's *persona* (n = 287) than the narrative or stance lead (n = 231). Additionally, most comments are in agreement with the stance lead (n = 157) and compliment the YouTuber (n = 149), followed by those related to personal experience (n = 74), support (n = 71), and gratitude (n = 67).

Table 5. Distribution of emotional comments in the main communicative acts (per narrative)

	YouTubers			Narratives and stance-lead	
	Compliment	Support	Gratitude	Agreement	Personal experience
F1	50	3	42	33	5
F2	8	3	6	27	10
F3	72	23	16	53	17
M1	19	42	3	44	42
Total	149	71	67	157	74

The distribution of comments in terms of target and communicative acts also reveals the kinds of emotional reaction that the stories aroused (Table 5). While F1's encouraging boosting story attracts compliments (n = 50) and thanksgiving (n = 42), F2's powerful video criticizing t-shirts that joke about mental illness mainly attracted agreeing comments (n = 27). F3's story about damaging relationships mainly attracted compliments (n = 72), as well as agreement (n = 53). Finally, M1's nostalgic story generated agreement (n = 44), support (n = 42), and personal experience comments (n = 42).

In summary, these data indicate that the four affective narratives and their stance lead seem to evoke the desired convergent alignment and not only positive words without much meaning (see Jeffries 2011 within beauty discourse on YouTube) or signs of conviviality (Varis and Blommaert 2013; Blommaert 2017). This suggests that the YouTubers' stories probably achieve at least partly the desired objectives, as many users' comments explicitly reflected agreement with the stance lead, which may have been one of the YouTubers' principal goals (see Peltari, forthcoming).

4.2 Compliment, support, and gratitude toward YouTubers

According to this analysis, more than half of the emotional reactions (55.4%, n = 287/518) included an evaluation of YouTuber *persona* or performance, with an overwhelmingly positive evaluative stance towards the individual or the video expressed in terms of a compliment (n = 149), support (n = 71), or gratitude (n = 67). The corpus does not indicate any prevalent words or expressions in this regard, at least in numerical terms, and the length of praising comments varies considerably. Only 22.8% (n = 34/149) of praising comments contained fewer than four words, and the majority were more versatile reflections on YouTuber *persona* or prior stance lead.

In terms of repeated lexical items, many of these compliments employed the verb *ser* (be) as in *eres* (you are) (57 tokens), usually accompanied by evaluative adjectives such as *fuerte* (strong) (13), *grande* (great, grand) (14), *increíble* (incredible), *precioso* (precious), *inspirar*,

inspiración, inspirador(a) (inspire, inspiration, inspiring) (6), sometimes intensified with adverb(s) like *muy* (very). Other repeated verbs include *encantar* (delight, enchant) (11) and *admirar, adorar* (adore) (11), expressing admiration for a YouTuber's persona and/or their video, or both, in the same comment.

- (2) *Sos una guerrera. Con este video estas salvando vidas. Es muy valiente de tu parte contar tu historia.... sos muy fuerte^a. Fuerza [F3]^b. Gracias x hacer este video.^c*
You're a fighter. With this video you're saving lives. It's very brave on your part to tell your story...you're very strong^a. Strength [F3]^b. Thanks for making this video^c. [F3]
- (3) *Siempre me rozas el corazoncito con tus palabras y nunca me canso de decirlo^a, aunque no lo diga cada domingo, pero siempre estás llenándome el alma^a. Gracias, [F1]^c.*
Always you touch my heart with your words and I'll never get tired of saying it^a and even if I don't say it every Sunday, but **always you restore my soul^a**. Thank you, [F1]^c.

Excerpts 2 and 3 illustrate users' overwhelmingly positive affective stance in showing their admiration^a (in bold), as well as support^b and gratitude^c, for YouTubers, using highly evaluative nouns or adjectives (2) or describing their emotions (3). In (3), although the boundaries between the communicative acts of compliment, praise, and personal experience are blurred, I interpret these utterances as compliments because they focus on the YouTuber's capacity to touch the user through her videos. In six comments, users (probably originally from countries where *voseo* is used) relied on *sos* (you are) instead of *eres* (you are).

- (4) *Es el mejor vídeo que he visto en todo YouTube^a. [...]*
 This is the best video I've seen on YouTube^a. [...] [F3]


As said earlier, in some comments praising the YouTuber, the word "video" was explicitly mentioned (n = 49) (Example 4). In fact, these comments are positioned between those targeting YouTubers and their narratives, thus becoming part of the YouTubers' personal content creation and including the affective story they tell. Sometimes, a stance of heightened affect is indexed through declarations of love (n = 13).

- (5) *Oye [M1], yo te apoyo^b, me hiciste más valer de mí misma porque desde que soy escout he aprendido muchas cosas gracias a ti^a. [M1], te quiero mucho^a [...].*
 Hey [M1], I support you^b, you made me appreciate myself more 'cause since being a scout I've learned lots of things thanks to you^a. [M1], **I love you** a lot^a [...]. [M1]

As well as forming part of longer comments with other compliments^a or support^b, declarations such as *te quiero* (5) were sometimes reinforced by intensifiers like *mucho* (a lot, so much, deeply), reflecting the occasionally very intimate and affectionate virtual bonds

between YouTubers and their followers (see Pelttari 2020). The second most frequently appearing category of comments about YouTubers offered them explicit support^b (n = 71).

- (6) *Fuerza [F3]^b, que eres grande!!^a Desde el principio supe de que trataba, nos inspiras a levantar la voz y apoyar^d. Un abrazo, guapa^a **cuentas con nuestro apoyo^b**.
Strength [F3]^b, you're great!!^a From the beginning I knew what was it all about, you inspire us to raise our voice and to give support^a. Hugs, beauty^a, **you have our support^b. [F3]***
- (7) *Eres maravillosa [F1]^a, tal y como dices en tu video, **sigue nadando** <3^b.
 You are wonderful [F1]^a; as you say in your video, **keep swimming** <3^b. [F1]*

In (6), support seems to be offered on behalf of the community (or possibly regular commenters on the channel), whereas in (7), the user repeats the YouTuber's own expression, highlighting (albeit loosely) stance-taking in dialogic interaction, assuming mutual knowledge of the shared story. In most of the supportive messages, commenters relied on this kind of imperative utterances offering explicit encouragement. In the case of M1, along with the explicit support, 15 commenters used the expression “*una vez scout, siempre scout*” (once a Scout, always a Scout), accompanied sometimes by the Scout Lily symbol (). I interpret this as a supportive message with inclusive value for Scouts across the world.

The final category of comments related to YouTubers is gratitude^c (n = 67), seemingly emphasizing the personal importance to commenters of YouTubers and/or their narratives.

- (8) *Gracias por hablar de estas cosas^c, yo también me siento muy frustrada y enfadada por estas asquerosas camisetas^e, de verdad, **muchas gracias por hacer ver estas cosas^c, estas cosas son indignantes y lo considero una verdadera falta de respeto^d**.
Thank you for talking about these things^c, I'm also frustrated and angry about these ugly t-shirts^e, really, **thanks a lot for making us see these things^c, I'm indignant about these things and view them as lacking respect^d. [F2]***

This excerpt (8) again confirms that, beyond saying thanks, gratitude is typically accompanied by the co-act of agreement^d or personal experience^e, emphasizing the commenter's emotional state and attitude to the stance topic. In addition, the use of intensifiers such as *mucho* (so much, a lot) and *de verdad* (really) underscore this emotional charge.

In summary, my analysis suggests that many of the comments expressing compliment, support, or gratitude are not simply saying something “nice” but they also seem to reflect, in the context of sensitive narratives, genuineness and deeper thoughts about YouTubers beyond undeniable appreciation. These comments (2–8) focus mainly on positive evaluation of YouTubers, positioning commenters as loyal followers, and creating, maintaining, or strengthening conviviality. At the same time, these examples also connote alignment as a social

construction of intersubjectivity. In other words, in evaluating YouTubers' subjective stance-taking, commenters reveal their own subjectivity.

4.3 Agreement and personal experience related to stance lead

My analysis reveals indications of agreement with the stance lead and/or personal experience linked to prior narrative in 44.6% of the comments (n = 231/518). While some of these comments unequivocally emphasize agreement, others convey this indirectly in the form of approving reflexivity (see Walton and Jaffe 2011). Some comments (n = 74) also refer to the user's personal experience.

- (9) *En serio, qué poca empatía con la gente... ¿Cómo puede haber personas que hagan (y luego gente que compre) este tipo de cosas? Es demasiado^d. Comparto muchísimo tu postura [F2]^d y te mando un gran abrazo desde Argentina^b.*
 Seriously, how little empathy with people... How can there be people who make (and people who buy) this kind of thing? It's too much^d. **I very much share your position [F2]^d** and I send you a big hug from Argentina^b. [F2]
- (10) *Te comprendo muchísimo^d, ese tipo de cosas te hacen limitarte en muchos aspectos personales y sociales. Solo queda aprender y tirar para adelante^d. Admiro mucho tu capacidad de transmitirlo en un sitio como este^a, y siento eso mismo^d y nunca se lo he dicho a nadie^e.*
I understand you very well^d, that kind of thing makes you limit yourself in many personal and social respects. It only remains to learn and move forward^d. I really admire your ability to communicate this on a site like this^a; **I feel the same way^d**, but I have never told anyone^e. [F3]

In (9) and (10), commenters explicitly agreed with, understand, or share the YouTuber's position (in bold) and display "extra" reflexivity in that regard, in addition to "expressing emotions or attitude, praise^a, and support^b.

- (11) *Gracias por este empujoncito hoy^c, no sabes cuánto lo necesitaba^d, increíble [F1]!!^a*
 Thanks for this little push today^c, **you don't know how much I needed it^d**, incredible[F1]^a!!
- (12) *Impresionante vídeo^a, me ha impactado y ahora cada momento que esté en los scouts lo voy a disfrutar a muerte^d.*
 Impressive video^a, it has impacted me and **now, every moment that I am in the scouts, I am going to enjoy it to death^d**. [M1]

In (11), the commenter's indirect expression of agreement^d (in bold) is encoded in the verb *necesitar* (need) in the exclamation *cuánto* (how much), intensified by the evaluative adjective *increíble* (incredible). Together, their use demonstrates strong evidence for agreement and that the YouTuber's story seems personally important to the user. As for (12), the commenter has decided to behave according to the YouTuber's prior stance lead,

underlining this agreement^d decision with such emotional expressions as “it has impacted me” and “to death.”

As stated, convergent alignment is indexed by agreeing explicitly with a YouTuber’s stance lead or by expressing it indirectly in utterances that imply acceptance (excerpts 9–12). In fact, many comments that reflected agreement also prompted a personal connection with the stance topic (n = 60). As well as revealing sensitive information about the commenters, their emotions, and their personal life, these were typically among the longest comments.

- (13) *Yo siempre intento memorizar situaciones que me atemorizan o en las que me encuentro mal, para cuando se solucionen, reírme de ellas y creedme que viene superbién^e. Al final te das cuenta de que todo tiene arreglo, que **no hay que montar drama y que hay que vivir la vida más relajadamente**. Espero que a la gente le lleguen este tipo de mensajes, es muy importante tener esa filosofía de vida^d.*
I always try to memorize situations that frighten me or make me feel bad because when they are resolved [I can] laugh at them, and believe me, it is super good^e. In the end, you realize that everything can be fixed, that **you do not have to create drama, and that you have to live a more relaxed life**. I hope people get this message; it is very important to have this philosophy of life^d. [F1]

In (13), the commenter describes ^ehis or her own way of resolving difficulties (underlined) and offers advice to the community (in bold), while ^dagreeing with the YouTuber’s stance lead. Comment threads related to F1’s video exhibited almost no such personal connection (n = 4).

- (14) *Dios qué rabia^d. Lo peor es que vi a alguien de mi clase con una de esas camisetas y realmente me dio mucha rabia. Yo tengo ansiedad y sufro mogollón en algunas ocasiones y me dio mucha rabia ver a uno de mi clase con una de esas camisetas [...]y le pregunté por qué la llevaba y tal y le intenté convencer de que no la llevara puesta y realmente me sorprendió, porque le convencí convencer^e. [...]*
God, what rage^d. The worst part is that I saw someone in my class wearing one of those shirts, and it really made me really angry. I have anxiety and suffer a lot at times, and I was very angry to see one of my classmates wearing one of those shirts [...] I asked him why he was wearing it and so on, and I tried to convince him not to wear it. I was really surprised because I convinced him^e [...] [F2]

In (14), the personal connection^e consists of a very detailed description of one experience related to the YouTuber’s stance topic. Her agreement^d (in bold) is accentuated at the beginning of the comment, expressing her strong disgust and affective connection with the topic. Once again, the boundary between agreement and personal connection is unclear, as “God, what rage” can be interpreted as expressing an emotional state. In conjunction with the element of personal experience sharing, it can be interpreted also as agreement with the YouTuber’s stance lead. This excerpt also highlights how the commenter seems to act as the YouTuber wishes. F2’s criticism of products joking about mental illness also prompted quite a few comments indicating a personal connection (n = 10).

- (15) *Eres muy fuerte^a, a mí me pasó algo muy parecido; poco a poco me iba alejándome de todos, perdí a dos mejores amigas, y esa relación duró 2 años, también fue mi primera vez y fue solo para complacerlo; también tenía 14 años, **fue una relación horrible**, pero en ese momento para mí era super 'linda', pero hace 6 meses que terminé esa relación, y ahora estoy **muy feliz de eso**, aunque todavía me duele haberle dado mi primera vez y todas las otras veces, **me siento tan asqueada de eso**, pero ahora solo sigo adelante^e. You are very strong^a, something very similar happened to me; little by little I was distancing myself from everyone, I lost two best friends, and that relationship lasted two years, it was also my first time and it was just to please him; I was also 14 years old, **it was a horrible relationship**, but at that time for me it was super 'cute.' But six months ago I ended that relationship, and **now I am very happy about that**, although it still hurts me to have given my first time and all the other times. **I feel so disgusted by it**, but now I just keep going^e. [F3]*

F3's topic—damaging relationships—attracted the most comments related to commenters' subjective experiences^e. The personal connection is explicitly present in 17% of the comments about this video. In (15), after a compliment^a directed to the YouTuber (underlined), the commenter reveals her own seemingly painful experience, employing a number of subjectifying expressions (in bold) to underline the emotional impact of the experience. The opening words “you are very strong” also seem to reflect indirect agreement with the YouTuber's strength in addressing a sensitive topic of this kind and trying to help others in the same situation.

- (16) *Que conmovedor lo que me dices^d, yo apenas tengo 5 meses en scouts, pero ya se ha vuelto parte fundamental de mi vida^e y me imagino lo que tú has de sentir, en serio^d, hermosas palabras^a, **sigue firme y te deseo lo mejor**^b.
How moving is everything you say^d. I have been a scout for only five months, but it has become a fundamental part of my life^e, and I can imagine what you're going through, really^d, nice words^a; **stay strong and I wish you all the best**^b. [M1]*

Finally, M1's video about longing for scouting generated the highest number of comments with indications of personal experience (42%). In (16), as well as relating a personal connection, the comment includes indications of praise, indirect agreement^d, and support^b. Expressions such as “how moving” and “seriously” intensify the impact of the YouTuber's story.

Before closing, it is worth noting that the aforementioned overlap of several communicative acts in one comment (in the excerpts expressing agreement) reflects multiple ways of convergent alignment. In fact, about 13 percent of the agreeing comments (n = 21/157) include only features expressing explicit agreement with the stance lead, while the rest represent two (n = 56), three (n = 43), or more acts (n = 37). In comments involving two or three overlapping communicative acts, *compliment* and *personal experience* occur most

frequently with agreement. Curiously, YouTubers' affective narratives lend themselves to different modes of agreement. In F1's encouraging story, the most common co-acts are *compliment* (n = 21/33) and *gratitude* (n = 23); in F2's critical story, however, agreement occurs often without other acts (n = 13/27), and the incidence of co-acts is very low. In F3's story, the most frequent co-acts are *compliment* (n = 40/53), *support* (n = 17) and *personal experience* (n = 15). Finally, comments on M1's nostalgic narrative employ a *personal experience* (n = 33/44) or with *support* (n = 17) to convey agreement. These findings confirm that YouTubers' affective stories or how they are narrated can impact how stance follow is expressed in YouTube comment threads (see Pelttari forthcoming).

5. Discussion and conclusions

I conclude my case study by taking stock of the theoretical considerations and empirical findings. The study addressed two research questions: *What kind of communicative acts do comments with expressions of emotion reflect, and do they evaluate YouTubers themselves or their affective narratives?* (1) and *How do commenters evaluate YouTubers' main message (stance lead) within their narratives, and how is their potential agreement expressed in comments?* (2).

Answering to the first, my analysis demonstrated evidence that the mostly single-comment threads were generally positive and that utterances were fairly equally divided in their focus on YouTubers or narratives. Regarding affectivity, about 90 percent of the evaluative comments were emotionally charged and were either positive or neutral in tone (see Thelwall, Sud and Vis 2012). Precise micro-analysis revealed slightly more semantic features related to YouTubers' *persona* than to narrative or stance lead, but it is important to note that both targets (YouTubers and narratives) and different communication acts co-exist in most of the comments. This was especially the case in comments praising the YouTuber and in those indicating convergent alignment. On that basis, I contend that commenters tend to positively evaluate both YouTubers and their stories, positioning themselves (in principle) as responsive to the prior stance lead within the stories.

In addressing the second question, almost half of the comments provide overall evidence of agreement with the prior stance lead. I discovered that the convergent alignment associated with the act of taking a stance follow was based on a positive evaluation (expressing compliment, support, or gratitude for the YouTuber) and on the disclosure of relevant personal experiences or emotions that were sometimes intensely private. In this interdiscursive and asynchronous negotiation of stance (Parini and Fetzer 2019) as a loosely collaborative act

among co-participants, the intersubjective relationship between prior stance lead and convergent alignment was not always explicitly indexed (Du Bois 2007). While some comments expressed agreement in a literal way, others conveyed it less directly.

Overall, these findings confirm that taking a stance follow usually entails overlapping communicative acts that reinforce agreement with the stance lead. Only a small minority of comments included features that directly conveyed agreement; in most cases, agreement drew on two or three co-acts (or more), the most frequent of which were *compliment* and *personal experience*. Although I tried to separate comments that mainly addressed YouTubers and those exhibiting aspects of agreement, it is noteworthy that practically all of the former type also contained nuances of the latter. To that extent, it is reasonable to characterize the relation between compliment, support, or gratitude and convergent alignment as blurred. Nevertheless, the varying combination of co-existing communicative acts in all four cases seems to confirm that the type of stories and the way they are narrated impact how commenters align with the prior stance lead.

Based on the present analysis, it can be argued that these affective narratives and their stance leads evoked more than empty compliments without much meaning in realizing the alignment sought by these YouTubers. Through positive and seemingly genuine evaluations that showed their undeniable appreciation and perhaps positioned them as loyal followers, commenters created, maintained, and strengthened conviviality (Varis and Blommaert 2013; Blommaert 2017). While stance was asynchronously negotiated, alignment as social construction of intersubjectivity clearly occurred. In other words, YouTubers' subjectivity as expressed in their stories led commenters to display their own subjective stance-taking.

In conclusion, these four YouTubers' main story purposes, their stance leads, can be said to have been evaluated and taken into account (at least partly) in comment threads (Barton and Lee 2013). The comment threads also reveal something fundamental about the digital community of users around a particular YouTuber. Comments indicating convergent alignment, especially those grounded in personal experience, highlight commenters' personal commitment to the cause, the community, or the YouTuber, along with their admirable courage in revealing information that is often extremely personal, throwing themselves on the mercy of the digital community and a potentially infinite audience. It follows that these *light practices* have both intrapersonal and interpersonal consequences, not only for those who comment but on the larger scale of the virtual community and beyond social networks altogether (see Blommaert 2017).

This case study has some limitations. First, the conclusions of this exploratory study are based on a limited sample and need to be reconfirmed with a larger corpus. Second, despite double-checking the data, an inter-coder agreement would have diminished potential subjectivity, especially in cases of implicitly expressed emotional reactions and agreement.

References

- Adami, Elizabetta. 2014. ““Why did dinosaurs evolve from water?”: (In)coherent relatedness in YouTube video interaction.” *Text & Talk* 34(3): 239-259. <https://doi.org/10.1515/text-2014-0001>
- Ahmed, Sara. 2014. *The cultural politics of emotion* (2nd edn.). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Andersson, Marta. 2021. “The climate of climate change: Impoliteness as a hallmark of homophily in YouTube comment threads on Greta Thunberg’s environmental activism.” *Journal of Pragmatics* 178: 93-107. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2021.03.003>
- Barton, David, and Carmen Lee. 2013. “Stance-Taking through language and image.” In *Language Online*, ed. by David Barton, and Carmen Lee, 96-116. Abingdon: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203552308>
- Blommaert, Jan. 2017. “Society through the lens of language: A new look at social groups and integration.” *Tilburg Papers in Cultural Studies* 178: 1-25.
- Bou-Franch, Patricia, and Pilar Garcés-Conejos Blitvich. 2014. “Conflict management in massive polylogues: A case study from YouTube.” *Journal of Pragmatics* 73: 19-36. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2014.05.001>
- Caffi, Claudia, and Richard W. Janney. 1994. “Toward a pragmatics of emotive communication.” *Journal of Pragmatics* 22(3): 325-373. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166\(94\)90115-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/0378-2166(94)90115-5)
- Chun, Elaine W. 2013. “Ironic blackness as masculine cool: Asian American language and authenticity on YouTube.” *Applied Linguistics* 34(5): 592-612. <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/amt023>

- Chun, Elaine, and Keith Walters. 2011. "Orienting to Arab orientalisms: Language, race, and humor in a YouTube video." In *Digital Discourse*, ed. by Crispin Thurlow, and Kristine Mroczek, 251-273. New York: Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199795437.003.0012>
- Crilley, Rhys, and Precious N. Chatterje-Doody. 2020. "Emotions and war on YouTube: Affective investments in RT's visual narratives of the conflict in Syria." *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 33(5): 713-733.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/09557571.2020.1719038>
- Davies, Bronwyn, and Rom Harré. 1990. "Positioning: The discursive production of selves." *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 20(1): 43-63.
- De Fina, Anna. 2016. "Storytelling and audience reactions in social media." *Language in Society* 45(4): 473-498. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404516000051>
- Du Bois, John. 2007. "The stance triangle." In *Stancetaking in Discourse: Subjectivity, Evaluation and Interaction*, ed. by Robert Englebretson, 139-182. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Du Bois, John, and Elise Kärkkäinen. 2012. "Taking a stance on emotion: Affect, sequence, and intersubjectivity in dialogic interaction." *Text & Talk* 32(4): 433-451.
<https://doi.org/10.1515/text-2012-0021>
- Duprez, Christelle, Veronique Christophe, Bernard Rimé, Anna Congard, and Pascal Antoine. 2015. "Motives for the social sharing of an emotional experience." *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 32(6): 757-787. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407514548393>
- Dynel, Marta. 2012. "Setting our house in order: The workings of impoliteness in multi-party film discourse." *Journal of Politeness Research: Language, Behaviour, Culture* 8(2): 161-194. <https://doi.org/10.1515/pr-2012-0010>
- Fetzer, Anita, and Elda Weizman. 2015. "Following up across contexts and discourse domains: Introduction." In *Follow-Ups in Political Discourse: Explorations Across Contexts and Discourse Domains*, ed. by Elda Weizman, and Anita Fetzer, ix-xx. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

- Georgakopoulou, Alexandra. 2017. "Life/narrative of the moment: From telling a story to taking a narrative stance." In *Life and Narrative: The Risks and Responsibilities of Storying Experience*, ed. by Brian Schiff, A. Elisabeth McKim, and Sylvie Patron, 29-54. New York: Oxford University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190256654.003.0003>
- Harré, Rom. 2012. "Positioning theory: Moral dimensions of social-cultural psychology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Culture and Psychology*, ed. by Jaan Valsiner, 191-206. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harré, Rom, and Luk Van Langenhove. 1999. *Positioning Theory*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Ivković, Dejan. 2013. "The Eurovision song contest on YouTube: A corpus-based analysis of language attitudes." *Language@Internet* 10(1): 1-25.
- Jaffe, Alexandra. 2009. *Stance: Sociolinguistic Perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jeffries, Laura. 2011. "The revolution will be soooo cute: YouTube 'hauls' and the voice of young female consumers." *Studies in Popular Culture* 33(2): 59-75.
- Johansson, Marjut. 2017. "YouTube." In *Pragmatics of Social Media*, ed. by Christian Hoffmann, and Wolfram Bublitz, 173-200. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Khan, M Laeeq. 2017. "Social media Engagement: What motivates user participation and consumption on YouTube?" *Computers in Human Behavior* 66: 236-247.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.09.024>
- Khan, M. Laeeq, and Jacob Solomon. 2013. "Advocacy, entertainment and news — an analysis of user participation on YouTube." *Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)*, August 08–11, Washington, D.C., USA, 1-22.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2579596>
- Koven, Michèle, and Isabelle Simões Marques. 2015. "Performing and evaluating (non)modernities of Portuguese migrant figures on YouTube: The case of Antonio de Carglouch." *Language in society* 44(2): 213-242.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404515000056>

- Lange, Patricia G. 2007. "Commenting on comments: Investigating responses to antagonism on YouTube." Paper presented at the Society for Applied Anthropology, Annual Conference, March 31. Tampa, Florida, USA, 1-26.
- Lange, Patricia G. 2014. "Commenting on YouTube rants: Perceptions of inappropriateness or civic engagement?" *Journal of Pragmatics* 73: 53-65.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2014.07.004>
- Madden, Amy, Ian Ruthven, and David McMenemy. 2013. "A classification scheme for content analyses of YouTube video comments." *Journal of Documentation* 69(5): 693-714. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-06-2012-0078>
- Marwick, Alice, and Danah Boyd. 2011. "I tweet honestly, I tweet passionately: Twitter users, context collapse, and the imagined audience." *New Media & Society* 13(1): 114-133.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444810365313>
- Moor, Peter J., Ard Heuvelman, and Ria Verleur. 2010. "Flaming on Youtube." *Computers in Human Behavior* 26(6): 1536-1546. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2010.05.023>
- Ochs, Elinor. 1996. "Linguistic resources for socializing humanity." In *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*, ed. by John J. Gumperz, and Stephen C. Levinson, 407-437. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Parini, Alejandro, and Anita Fetzer. 2019. "Evidentiality and stance in YouTube comments on smartphone news." *Internet Pragmatics* 2(1): 112-135. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ip.00025.par>
- Peltari, Sanna. 2020. "¡Hola, amores! Los saludos, las despedidas y las formas nominales de tratamiento de los youtubers españoles [Hello, my loves! The opening and closing greetings, and the nominal forms of address used by Spanish YouTubers]." *Neuephilologische Mitteilungen* 121(1): 45-77. <https://doi.org/10.51814/nm.99997>
- Peltari, Sanna (Forthcoming). "Spanish YouTubers' affective narratives and stance-taking on YouTube."
- Siersdorfer, Stefan, Sergiu Chelaru, Wolfgang Nejdl, and José San Pedro. 2010. "How useful are your comments? Analyzing and predicting YouTube comments and comment

- ratings.” Paper presented at World Wide Web Conference, April 26–30. Raleigh, North Carolina, USA, 891-900. <https://doi.org/10.1145/1772690.1772781>
- Stroud, Natalie Jomini, Emily Van Duyn, and Cynthia Peacock. 2016. “News commenters and new comment readers.” *Engaging New Projects* 1:1-21.
- Tagg, Caroline, and Philip Seargeant. 2014. “Audience design and language choice in the construction and maintenance of translocal communities on social network sites,” in *The Language of Social Media*, ed. by Philip Seargeant, and Caroline Tagg, 161-183. London: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137029317_8
- Thelwall, Mike, Pardeep Sud, and Farida Vis. 2012. “Commenting on YouTube videos: from Guatemalan rock to El Big Bang.” *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology* 6(3): 616-629. <https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.21679>
- Tovares, Alla V. 2019. “Negotiating ‘thick’ identities through ‘light’ practices: YouTube metalinguistic comments about language in Ukraine.” *Multilingua* 38(4): 459-484. <https://doi.org/10.1515/multi-2018-0038>
- Tur-Viñes, Victoria, and Araceli Castelló-Martínez, A. 2019. “Commenting on top Spanish YouTubers: ‘No comment’.” *Social Sciences (Basel)* 8(10): 266-280. <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci8100266>
- Varis, Piia, and Jan Blommaert. 2013. “Conviviality and collectives on social media: Virality, memes, and new social structures.” *Multilingual Margins* 2(1): 31-45.
- Vermeulen, Anne, Heidi Vandebosch, and Wannes Heirman. 2018. “Smiling, #venting, or both? Adolescents’ social sharing of emotions on social media.” *Computers in Human Behavior* 84: 211-219. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2018.02.022>
- Walton, Shana, and Alexandra Jaffe. 2011. “‘Stuff white people Like’: Stance, class, race, and iInternet commentary.” In *Digital Discourse*, ed. by Crispin Thurlow, and Kristine Mroczek, 1-20. New York: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199795437.003.0010>
- Wesch, Michael. 2009. “YouTube and you: Experiences of self-awareness in the context collapse of the recording webcam.” *Explorations in Media Ecology* 8(2): 19-34.

Address for correspondence

sanpel@utu.fi

Biographical notes

Sanna Pelttari works as University Teacher at the Department of Spanish at the School of Languages and Translation Studies, University of Turku. Pelttari's current research interests include Spanish YouTubers' affective communication and addressing practices and influencer marketing in the YouTube sphere. She has also studied digital literacy, digital learning profiles, and informal (digital) language learning.