

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

Stance, Same-Sex Marriage and Space:
An Analysis of Self-Referencing on YouTube

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics
at Massey University, Albany, New Zealand.

Victoria Jane Kerry

2019

Abstract

By mid-2018, YouTube engagement reached 1.8 billion users per month, making it almost as big a platform as Facebook. Despite its popularity, little is understood about the user-generated comments written below the videos as a form of engagement on the site, with most linguistic research focusing on language found in the videos themselves. This study is a Mediated Discourse Analysis which explores what YouTubers say about themselves in textual responses posted under videos showing the passing of the same-sex marriage law in New Zealand. Using Du Bois' (2007) Stance Triangle as its fork, it analyses the function of self-referencing stances and the sharing of personal information to a potentially large and unknown audience.

In order to understand YouTube as a context for self-referencing, I propose a new framework called *Participatory Spaces*. The Participatory Spaces framework identifies three salient areas of YouTube interaction: the shared interest that brings a diverse group of participants together (the Membership Layer), the different members of the audience that are addressed (the Audience Layer), and the technical affordances and constraints of the Space (the Spatio-Temporal Layer). The three Layers of a Participatory Space outline the interactional practices within and provide key perspectives on the mechanics of stance. The Membership Layer focuses particularly on the centrality, weighting and interpretability of the discourses, Discourses and particular locations shared by a geographically dispersed, diverse, audience. Self-referencing is used to increase credibility of an argument, to warrant participation and to express the right to belong. The Audience Layer reveals how commenters design their contribution for specific audiences. Here, examples of self-referencing can function as a means of (dis)aligning with other members on YouTube, and creating the Space itself. Finally, the Spatio-Temporal Layer uncovers the influences of time and space on participatory norms, including how participants' histories and imagined futures are embedded in the Discourses they

present. The participants' self-referencing creates context and meaning for both their own, and the other participants', interpretation of their comments.

The Participatory Spaces framework also highlights the need for revisions to Du Bois' Stance Triangle. Specifically, I argue that adapting the Triangle to include multiple objects of stance, segmenting the audience, and including participants' histories, provides a tool for understanding YouTube interaction and the role self-referencing plays in these practices.

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher named above is responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher, please contact Professor John O'Neill, Director (Research Ethics), telephone 06 350 5249, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Massey University School of Humanities, and particularly the Head of School, Associate Professor Kerry Taylor, for providing me with the funding and resources for completing my PhD. The support I was given made a world of difference to my ability to achieve it. I am especially grateful for the opportunity that lecturing has provided for enriching my knowledge and understanding of linguistics. My thesis is all the better for what I have learnt while teaching.

To my three supervisors: thank you for the many years of support, encouragement, knowledge, feedback and mentoring. I have been so grateful for the amount of time you have given me, and especially your willingness and unhesitating availability. You have all helped me in such very different ways, and I am so grateful to have been supported by such a fantastic team of talented linguists.

To Dr David Ishii, thank you for your administrative organisation and especially for your collegial and moral support, and the kindness you showed me. You gave me confidence to get to where I am now as a lecturer.

To Dr Tony Fisher, thank you for the laughs during our discussions, your professional mentoring, and for your keen eye when reading my work. I will forever hear “show me the evidence!” as a mantra to making my work more robust and credible. My written work has benefited immensely from your knowledge and rigour.

To Dr Martin Paviour-Smith, thank you for inspiring me since undergrad, and sharing your love of linguistics with me, even from France. Learning Discourse Analysis from you changed the way I understand my world around me. Your thesis mentoring gave me the skills and confidence to work out new ideas for myself. Under your guidance, I have grown not only as a linguist, but also as a person.

To my supporters: my A+graphia writing group, my fellow PhD student friends and colleagues, Mum - Diana Wood, and Dad - John Faris, Jennifer Hunt, Iggy Wood, and, of course, David and Sebastian Kerry. I am very lucky to have you all. Thank you for your love, support and encouragement.

Finally, thank you to my participants – visible and invisible – who made up the Participatory Spaces I studied. Especially thank you to those who made this part of the Internet a positive place, and to those who celebrated a small, but significant, moment in time.

Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Figures and Tables	ix
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
Chapter 2. Literature Review on Computer-Mediated Communication, self-referencing, stance and same-sex marriage	9
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Computer-Mediated Communication.....	10
2.3 YouTube	14
2.4 Self-disclosure and self-referencing.....	17
2.5 Stancetaking.....	22
2.6 Participatory Culture	26
2.7 Affinity Spaces	30
2.8 Same-sex marriage.....	35
2.9 Chapter summary.....	40

Chapter 3.	Investigating YouTube stratification and the formation of <i>Participatory Spaces</i>	43
3.1	Introduction	43
3.2	The Membership Layer	44
3.3	The Audience Layer	55
3.4	The Spatio-Temporal Layer	65
3.5	Chapter summary.....	76
Chapter 4.	Research outline	79
4.1	Introduction	79
4.2	Stance as a framework.....	80
4.3	Research questions	84
4.4	Methodology.....	86
4.5	Ethics	102
4.6	Notes on conventions	105
4.7	Chapter summary.....	108
Chapter 5.	The Membership Layer, scales and positioning	111
5.1	Introduction	111
5.2	Scales.....	113
5.3	Local and global scales	115
5.4	Polycentricity and Scales.....	121
5.5	Polycentricity, shared interest and the focus of stance.....	124

5.6	Scales and scale shifts/jumping	128
5.7	Scales beyond the local versus global	129
5.8	Warranting participation	136
5.9	Second order self-referencing	138
5.10	Warranting stances as credible.....	144
5.11	Chapter summary.....	147
Chapter 6.	Audience alignment, collaboration and the dynamic nature of the Space	149
6.1	Introduction	149
6.2	Audience collaboration and alignment between participants	151
6.3	Understanding the different roles of audience members	161
6.4	Adapting the Stance Triangle	170
6.5	Stylistic stance and audience alignment	176
6.6	Shared understanding of the Space	182
6.7	Chapter summary.....	186
Chapter 7.	The Spatio-Temporal Layer, chronotopes and Heterochronicity	189
7.1	Introduction	189
7.2	The chronotope.....	191
7.3	Time-Space.....	192
7.4	Time	201
7.5	Heterochronicity	206

7.6	Heterochronicity with historical stances	211
7.7	Heterochronicity with future-looking stances	218
7.8	Stance and meaning-making over time and space	226
7.9	Chapter summary.....	228
Chapter 8.	Conclusion.....	231
8.1	Introduction	231
8.2	The Participatory Space Layers	231
8.3	Self-referencing.....	237
8.4	The Stance Triangle.....	241
8.5	Stancetaking in a Participatory Space.....	246
8.6	Limitations, mitigations and future directions.....	250
8.7	Concluding remarks	254
References	257
Appendices	281

List of Figures and Tables

Table 1: Playlist of YouTube videos for analysis	88
Table 2: Extracting self-referencing from the data	98
Table 3: Central and peripheral sexual categories from inthehouse [uploader] (2013)	134
Figure 1: The Membership Layer	44
Figure 2: The Audience Layer	55
Figure 3: The Spatio-Temporal Layer	66
Figure 4: The Participatory Space Layers	77
Figure 5: Du Bois' (2007, p. 163) Stance Triangle	81
Figure 6: Evaluation and positioning on Du Bois' (2007, p.163) Stance Triangle	111
Figure 7: The Membership Layer	112
Figure 8: Du Bois' (2007, p.163) Stance Triangle with Raz D / superkiwistar's interaction	126
Figure 9: The Stance Triangle with multiple stance foci	127
Figure 10: Alignment on Du Bois' (2007, p.163) Stance Triangle	149
Figure 11: The Audience Layer	150
Figure 12: "Persons and roles in the speech situation" (Bell, 1984, p.159)	164
Figure 13: Adrian C* and kiwimarck – when Adrian C* responds	169
Figure 14: The Stance Triangle for a polylogal audience	171
Figure 15: The Stance Triangle for a polylogal audience with Grant L*	173
Figure 16: The Spatio-Temporal Layer	189
Figure 17: The object of stance (or stance focus) on Du Bois' (2007, p.163) Stance Triangle	190
Figure 18: The Stance Triangle with chronotopes	227
Figure 19: The Participatory Space Layers	232
Figure 20: Du Bois' (2007, p.163) Stance Triangle with Raz D / superkiwistar's interaction	242

Figure 21: The Stance Triangle in a Participatory Space 245

Figure 22: Stancetaking in a Participatory Space 247