Formas de tratamiento y evaluación en español como recursos de toma de posturas en la co-construcción de reseñas de productos en YouTube

Address and evaluation as stance-taking resources in the co-construction of *YouTube* product reviews in Spanish

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Resumen: Los entornos de participación en línea se han convertido en espacios privilegiados por las oportunidades que ofrecen para desplegar diferentes puntos de vista e ideologías. YouTube, como sitio popular para ver videos y trabajar en red, constituye un nuevo espacio medial que invita tanto a la toma de posición individual como colaborativa de participantes que se reúnen virtualmente, para tratar un tópico particular, un asunto o suceso descripto visualmente y discutido textualmente mediante comentarios en español que se postean en el sitio. Esta dinámica interaccional da pie a una secuencia dialógica de comentarios o posteos a través de los cuales se formulan posicionamientos que adhieren o se contraponen a otros formulados anteriormente. A partir de estos planteos, este artículo aborda un estudio exploratorio de los posicionamientos individuales y colaborativos en los comentarios en español que hacen los participantes a reseñas de productos en línea. Específicamente, se hace foco en las fórmulas de tratamiento y en las manifestaciones de evaluación, como recursos lingüísticos que los participantes utilizan para adoptar y negociar posicionamientos en ambos niveles, interdiscursivo e intradiscursivo.

Abstract: Online participatory environments have become saturated spaces in terms of the opportunities that they offer for the display of different viewpoints and ideologies. YouTube, as a popular video-sharing and networking site, constitutes a new media space that invites both individual and collaborative stance-taking by participants who gather, virtually, to address a particular topic, issue or event depicted visually and discussed textually through the comments that are posted on the site. This interactional dynamics triggers a dialogic sequence of comments or posts through which stances are formulated following up on previous stances or counterstances. Against this background, this paper presents an exploratory study of the individual and collaborative stances adopted by participants in their comments written in Spanish on online product reviews. Specifically, it focuses on forms of address and the manifestation of evaluation as linguistic resources that are exploited by the participants to adopt and negotiate stance at both interdiscursive and intradiscursive levels.
Keywords: Stance, evaluation, forms of address, online reviews, textual comments, *YouTube*.

INTRODUCTION

Online participatory environments have become saturated spaces in terms of the opportunities that they offer for the display of different viewpoints and ideologies that are manifested through the negotiation of meaning in non-physicalised and increasingly multimodal types of interactions. Among the diverse communication platforms offered by Web 2.0, *YouTube* is considered one of the fastest growing web services that is characterised as a social networking site that allows for the sharing of user-generated multimedia content.

YouTube constitutes a new media space that invites both individual and collaborative acts of evaluation and stance-taking by participants who gather, virtually, to address a particular topic, issue or event depicted visually and discussed textually through the comments that are posted on the site (Chun and Walters 2011; Androutsopoulos 2011; Vásquez 2014). One of the most popular communicative activities carried out on *YouTube* is that of product reviewing. *YouTube*'s content creators generate the most trust with product reviews according to a

number of recent surveys conducted by BuzzMyVideos and OnePoll. *YouTube* reviews constitute a form of electronic word of mouth or eWOM that encourages the sharing of user-generated material with mediated publics (Warner 2002) in an online virtual place where social meaning is negotiated on the basis of different interactivity formats - one to one, one to many, etc.-.

Against this background, this work examines how participants co-construct *YouTube* reviews by adopting and negotiating evaluative stances (Du Bois 2007) through the comments they post as a response to two online technology product reviews uploaded on two different sites.

From a linguistic perspective, the genre of *YouTube* reviews still remains mostly unexplored since most studies of online reviews have focused on less interactional forms of online reviewing such as the ones found on sites like *Amazon* (Pinch and Kesler 2011), *Yelp* (Kuehn 2011), *TripAdvisor* (Vásquez 2012), among others. Therefore, this paper seeks to provide some insight into how the process of reviewing accommodates to the participatory dynamics of *YouTube*. More specifically, our exploratory study focuses on the forms of address and the manifestations of evaluation as linguistic resources that are exploited by the participants in their reviewing of the products through the adoption and negotiation of stance at two levels: 1) interdiscursive, that is, in relation to the products reviewed in audiovisual form; and 2) intradiscursive, in relation to the comments posted in textual form and uploaded either synchronically or asynchronically by fellow participants.

Our investigation then addresses the following research questions:

1) How is *YouTube* characterised as an interactional context for the co-construction of product reviews?

2) How do participants position themselves vis-à-vis different objects of evaluation?

3) What are the forms of address used as stance-taking resources by the participants in this interactional context?

4) How are these forms of address manifested in relation to the directionality of the comments posted on the reviewing sites?

The paper is organised as follows. First, relevant work on evaluation and stance followed by aspects of address are reviewed. Second, the communicative situation or context of our investigation is described. Third, the methodological design of our empirical study is explained in detail while results and discussions are dealt with next. Finally, the conclusions underline the ways in which this study contributes to furthering our knowledge of how the negotiation of social relations through the text-commenting facility contributes to the co-construction of *YouTube* product reviews.

1.   THE INTERACTIONAL CONTEXT OF *YOUTUBE* REVIEWS

Recently, the focus of attention in the study of the so-called social technologies has shifted from being technology-oriented, i.e. centred on the inherent properties of new technologies, to being user-oriented, i.e. centred on how individuals make use of these technologies, and on the social spaces they help create in order to communicate with others, socialise by building and maintaining social networks, and construct and project both individual and group identities. This is in keeping with the notion of the social construction of technology (Bijker 1987) as opposed to technological determinism that places the emphasis on how technology determines human action and does not consider technology as being social and therefore shaped by human intervention or agency.

Research on computer-mediated communication has shown that the social meanings and discursive practices that are enacted in the online environment differ across sites, individuals and cultures (Pullen, Gitsaki & Baguley 2010; Jone, Chik & Hafner 2015; Giammatteo, Giubitosi & Parini 2018). *YouTube*, in particular, facilitates socialisation among users, who exploit the technical and the social affordances of this site in order to construct different kinds of social relationships through the sharing of videos and texts with an array of mediated publics (Warner, 2002). This act of sharing can also contribute to the projection of identities that affiliate with particular social groups.

The sharing of user-generated, user-engaging material on *YouTube* establishes the basis for the negotiation of meaning through both the video and the textual facilities that the site offers. In this sense, *YouTube* constitutes an arena where participants or *YouTubers*, as they are usually called, are able to share, negotiate, agree and challenge opinions with seemingly different social agendas in mind. Since its creation in 2005,

under the slogan "Broadcast Yourself", the popularity of *YouTube* has been increasing, and so has its influence across a wide range of social domains.

Online product reviewing constitutes one of the most popular acts of sharing on *YouTube* through which users seek to exchange their personal experiences with a particular product by engaging in both harmonious and conflictual exchanges that position self and others. Online reviews are often described as asynchronous, one-to-many computer-mediated communications whose primary purpose is for consumers to evaluate a product or service. *YouTube* reviews are constructed, or rather co-constructed, around the interactions that emerge on the site among existing users and users-to-be of a particular product. These interactions are triggered by a video produced by the master reviewer or primary reviewer, who is also a user of the product, and who uploads the video on the site with a view to sharing his or her evaluation of the product with an unrelated public with whom he or she has no offline connections.

Reviewing as a genre is prototypically constructed through the evaluation of a product or service in question. Online reviews are defined by Mudambi & Schuff (2010, p. 186) as "peer-generated product evaluations posted on company or third party websites". These evaluations are explicit given the fact that, as Vásquez (2013, p. 67) explains, "the main purpose of online consumer reviews is for individuals to rate, to evaluate, to describe, and, on that basis, to provide recommendations to others for or against a particular product or service". What makes *YouTube* reviews different from other online reviews is the fact they are partly co-constructed on the basis of the evaluations expressed and negotiated by all the participants involved in a polylogal interactional context. As such, *YouTube* reviews are collaboratively and multimedially constructed unlike other online reviews that do not allow interaction among participants or reviewers, and do not include audiovisual material.

The interactional context of *YouTube* product reviews can be broadly defined along the following dimensions:

(1) the combination of audiovisual, pictorial and textual forms of communication that make up the review as a macro text and that serve as prompts that cause participants to react by posting their comments or by clicking on icons or links;

(2) an interconnected two-tier reviewing system comprising a more factual, more transactional depiction of the product presented in an

audiovisual demonstration, and a more emotion-laden, more interactional and highly-opinionated form of assessment, expressed by text-based comments, of not just the product but of all of the parties involved in the communicative situation;

(3) the structure of the information flow, which makes possible different types of addresser-addressee combinations, i.e. one to one, one to many, many to many;

(4) the level of synchronicity, which allows for a comment to be posted either immediately after the triggering comment is produced or the reviewing video is uploaded -synchronous- or some time after the triggering comment is produced or the reviewing video is uploaded –asynchronous-;

(5) the degree of anonymity through which participation is materialised on the site;

(6) the highly interactive and interactional background against which the process of reviewing is realised.

The structure of a *YouTube* review, as shown in Figure 1 below, can be seen as comprising a master or primary review uploaded on the site in audiovisual format by the master reviewer, and an indefinite number of secondary reviews in the form of textual comments posted by participants who become secondary reviewers themselves.
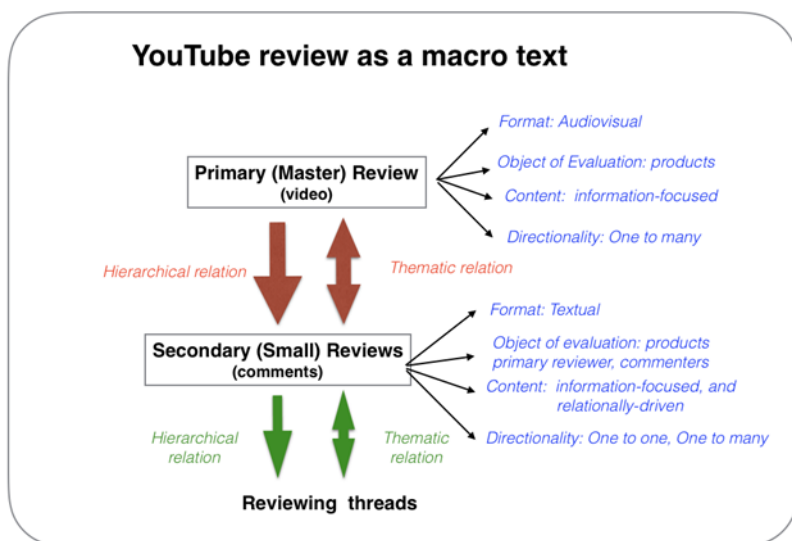
Figure 1. The *YouTube* review as a macro text
(Parini and Granato 2016).

The master review is addressed to an audience of unrelated commenters, that is a one-to-many direction, whereas the secondary reviews or comments can be directed either at one specific participant in the polylogue, i.e. a one-to-one direction, or at all the participants engaged in the communicative activity, i.e. a one-to-many direction. Moreover, the primary and secondary reviews, which make up the review as a macro text, are thematically related, in the sense that both make reference, directly or indirectly, to the products being reviewed, and hierarchically related as the master review frames the communicative event and triggers the chain of comments or secondary reviews that can only materialise on the site because there is a master review to which they can be linked. In this sense, the secondary reviews are then dependent on the master review as a *YouTube* site may contain a video with no contributions or comments but comments on their own cannot constitute a *YouTube* site. Parini & Fetzer (*in press*) label these comments small reviews, and define them as "textual comments shorter than the primary review but thematically and hierarchically related to it that are not only information-focused but also relationally-driven, and that contribute to the reviewing participatory spectacle of the *YouTube* site by including intentional or unintentional, direct or indirect acts of evaluation and/or (dis)affiliation constructed and negotiated by means of opinion, narration and description in a polylogal interactional context".

The interactional context of *YouTube* reviews thus helps characterise the genre as being not just information-focused but also relationally-driven as it constitutes a space which participants exploit not only for the exchange of information but also for the enactment of social relations. This is particularly important in the context of our investigation as the sites selected for analysis present the reviews in Spanish of two technology products - Apple Iphone 6 and Samsung Galaxy S6 - that have become fetishes and the epitome of a status symbol that gives their users symbolic power. So these reviews constitute fertile ground for the construction and reinforcement of affinity groups, famous (or notorious perhaps?) for their hatred of each other, as can be seen in the countless heated debates, both online and offline, between the so-called Fanboys and Fandroids.

So reviewing these two products involves more than just assessing or evaluating their technical specifications as well as their aesthetic and functional features. It involves constructing and maintaining loyalty to one brand or the other, or even one group of the other, by engaging in the contestation of ideas and opinions by means of the production of stance-taking acts in the form evaluative user-generated comments or posts directed at different objects of evaluation. These stance-taking acts can be addressed either intradiscursively to other participants in the polylogue, or interdiscursively, to the video or to the person who uploads the video file on the site.

Although the primary function of evaluation is to express a speaker or writer's opinion, evaluative devices can also help construct and maintain relations between speakers and hearers, and between writers and readers (Hunston and Thompson, 1999). In our study, this connection between evaluation and relationship building becomes apparent, as the interpersonal function of evaluation is foregrounded and manifested in the discourse. This can be seen in the use of the strategies and the linguistic resources that participants exploit to review the products through the construction of fandom by aligning and disaligning with other fellow participants in the polylogue.

Against this background, this exploratory study, which is not intended to generalise the results given the size of the corpus, focuses on the co-construction of technology product reviews on two YouTube sites through the social relations that are enacted by means of the comments that are posted on the sites by participants who become reviewers themselves (secondary reviewers). Although there are studies that have looked at the dynamics of commenting on *YouTube* (, Lange, 2007; Thelwall, Sud & Vis 2012, Androutsopoulos 2013; among others), none of these have approached commenting on *YouTube* in relation to the genre of reviewing. So, for the purpose of this study we will centre our attention on the textual contributions that appear on the review pages selected for our analysis and that, together with the uploaded videos and other semiotic modes (like star ratings, likes and other clickable icons and links), contribute to the organisation of the reviews as media-convergent macro texts.

2.   EVALUATION AND INTERPERSONAL MEANING

The evaluative function of language has always been a major part of the study of human communication as both groups and individuals have always constructed their world around intricate systems of values. Although, traditionally, values are seen as verbal externalisations carried out by individuals as a form of self-expression, a more recent perspective sees evaluation in terms of its interpersonal function by means of which values are negotiated in a given context of interaction.

Because the expression of values is an all-pervading feature of language, the study of evaluation has been given full attention by linguists working within different fields of linguistics (Hunston & Thompson, 1999; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Martin & White, 2005; Englebretson, 2007, among others). Due to length constraints, we cannot do justice to the vast amount of research that has been carried out in this field. Therefore, we can only attempt to sketch out some of the seminal perspectives from which the study of evaluation has been approached.

Conceptually, and across the different fields of linguistics, evaluation has been noted to be comparative, subjective and value-laden. These aspects of evaluation have originally been explored by Labov & Waletsky (1967) and Labov (1972) in the study of the construction of narrative from a sociolinguistic perspective. Hunston & Thompson (1999) provide a general grouping of the linguistic features that can be identified as signalling these three aspects of evaluation in English, which, we believe, can also be applied to Spanish. Consequently, the comparative aspect of evaluation may be manifested through the use of comparative adjectives and adverbs, adverbs of degree or focalising adverbs -such as *just*, *only*, *at least*, in English and *precisamente*, *solamente*, *por lo menos*, in Spanish-; and by expressions of negativity, that can be morphological - such as English -*un*- and Spanish *des*- or *in*-, syntactical -such as *not*, *hardly*, *never*, in English and *no*, *apenas*, *nunca*, in Spanish- and lexical -such as *fail*, *lack*, in English and *dejar*, *faltar*, in Spanish. The subjective aspect is realised in both languages by markers including modals and other indexes of (un)certainty, such as adverbs, nouns and verbs, sentence adverbs and conjunctions, report and attribution structures; marked clause structures, including patterns beginning with *it* and *there*, in English (equivalent to impersonal constructions in Spanish), and clauses such as clefts and pseudo-clefts. Finally, the markers of value may be divided into two groups: 1) lexical

items typically used in evaluative environments; and 2) indications of the existence of goals and their (non-)achievement (what is good may be glossed as what achieves our goals and what is bad, as what impedes the achievement of our goals).

These three aspects of evaluation are present in the context of our investigation as the reviews under analysis are constructed around the comparison between the devices being reviewed, and on the basis of the subjective reactions on the part of the participants that are manifested in their value-laden comments that are posted on the *YouTube* sites. These comments can be said to be externalisations of the participants' emotions, which are intimately bound up with the expression of evaluation. However, as Bednarek (2009, p. 6) explains, the linguistic manifestation of emotions does not necessarily depict the speaker's real emotions as he may be responding simultaneously to socially-oriented principles of politeness as well as to the expression of his true feelings.

This socially-oriented manifestation of emotions is in keeping with the interpersonal function of evaluation in the construction of interpersonal meaning. Within the Systemic Functional Linguistics approach to the study of evaluation, systemicists centre their attention on the pivotal role of the interpersonal metafunction of language in the development of Appraisal Theory (Eggins & Slade, 1997; Martin & Rose, 2003; Martin & White, 2005). This interpersonal dimension of language, for Martin & White, "is concerned with the subjective presence of writers/speakers in texts as they adopt stances towards both the material they present and those with whom we communicate" (2005, p. 1). This dimension is realised through the use of interpersonal lexis, or lexis that enacts relationships (Tucker, 1998) and that enables participants to construct self and others' identities by aligning and disaligning with one another through the production of texts that reveal their feelings and values in a given interactional context.

The interpersonal dimension of evaluation is also foregrounded in its recognition as a salient form of stance-taking. In this sense, Goodwin looks at evaluation in terms of the stances taken up by individuals in interaction placing the emphasis on how they "make visible their current alignment with regard to others who are present or talked about" (2006, p. 191). Also, for Hunston & Thompson evaluation is "the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about" (1999, p. 12). Along the same lines, Du Bois

(2007) approaches stance as a form of social action encompassing three concomitant acts: evaluation, positioning and (des)aligning, what he terms the stance triangle. He argues that in the act of stance-taking, the individual or stancetaker evaluates an object, positions a subject (usually the self), and aligns with other subjects. So evaluation is set at the core of the process of stance-taking as it constitutes a primary facet of stance.

The notion of evaluation in the co-construction of social meaning in online interactions has been explored in a number of studies (Baym, 1996; Bolander, 2012, 2013; Granato & Parini, 2015, among others) that have focused the attention on the negotiation of stance through (dis)alignment expressed by means of both positive and negative evaluations in different online environments. These manifestations of evaluations are seen as evaluative reactions that constitute discourse moves defined not only by the in/compatible opinions expressed about a particular topic or issue but also, and perhaps more importantly, by the overt expressions of alignment or disalignment that they convey as they are directed at an addressee.

Given that evaluation constitutes the *raison de etre* of reviews as a genre, and that *YouTube* reviews, in particular, are co-constructed around a kind of multi-layered discussion framework, it is important to explore how participants orient socially to one another through their evaluative acts by means of which they take up a stance and perform impression management in a mostly anonymous interactional context. To this effect, our study investigates how these socially-oriented acts of evaluation that make up the reviews are enacted through the different linguistic resources that participants exploit to address one another.

3.   FORMS OF ADDRESS AS RESOURCES FOR STANCE-TAKING

Terms of address are words or linguistic expressions that speakers use to address their interlocutors. Languages, including Spanish, use an array of linguistic forms to designate the person referred to. These forms include noun designators, names, nicknames, terms of endearment, etc. and most of them, including second person pronoun *you* in English or *usted* (formal address)[1], *tú* or *vos* (more informal address) in Spanish,

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[1] The alternation between *tú* and *vos* is basically conditioned by dialectal reasons: *tú* being the most extended form in Peninsular Spanish, whereas in Latin American Spanish, *vos* has survived and is used differently according to the regions. It is

apart from being used in addressing, have other functions as well since they may be employed to talk about other persons rather than to talk to them. Thus, a distinction is usually made in the literature (Leech 1999; Daniel & Spencer, 2009; among others) between "forms of address" as a term used to speak of the choice of expression employed to refer to a person, and the term "vocative" employed to refer to the forms used specifically to address a person directly. Fasold defines vocative, as a form of address, as "the words speakers use to designate the person they are talking to while they are talking to them" (1990, p. 1).

In this work we look at address as a broad notion that encompasses both the expressions used by the *YouTube* commenters to refer to their fellow participants and those functioning as vocatives. Therefore, we use "forms of address" as a general term to include both types of expressions, and when a distinction needs to be made, we use the term "non-vocative" to refer to those expressions used to talk about participants, and the term "vocative" to deal with those expressions that commenters employ to address their interlocutors directly within the participation framework of the *YouTube* polylogues.

In terms of form, these expressions, including those functioning as vocatives, typically consist of lexical forms, mostly nouns but also adjectives. In positional terms, non-vocative address terms generally form part of the structure of the utterance. Vocatives, however, are not syntactically integrated into the utterance structure, behaving, as Biber et al. (1999) explains, like inserts such as interjections, hesitators and discourse markers. In our corpus, for example, vocatives can take different sentential positions: they can occur initially (e.g. **estimado** no soy un niñato ni nada a mis 27 años ya eh probado las 2 plataformas… *my **friend** I am not a novice or anything at 27 I have already tried the 2 platforms* [Review 2]), medially, (e.g. Hola **José** muy buena comparativa y excelentes conclusiones… *Hi, **José** good comparative review and excellent conclusions* [Review 2], finally (e.g Muy buen video **compa**… *Very good video, **buddy*** [Review 1]) or as standalone terms (e.g. **enfermo mental**...*nutter* [Review 2]).

Although vocatives tend to occur more frequently in final position in spontaneous spoken English (Leech, 1990; MacCarthy & O'Keeffe,

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considered standard in the River Plate variety, but it is a rural or nonstandard variant in other Latin American varieties of the language.

2003), in our Spanish corpus of *YouTube* comments, although we find vocatives taking different positions, they appear more frequently at the beginning. This may be due to the contextual features of the polylogal interactional structure of *YouTube* comments, i.e. commenters want to be clear about who they are directing their comments or posts to, as paralinguistic features, typical of face to face interaction, are absent in these types of non-physicalised, anonymous exchanges. These vocatives take the form of nicknames by means of which participants are known in this online environment (e. g. **lepra87** tu viste el video bien…. ***lepra87 you got the video right*** [Review 2]).

Also, in her study of conflictual verbal exchanges, Guerra Bernal (2008) examines the use of nominal and pronominal forms of address in a Spanish corpus and in an English corpus gathered from the conversations held between participants on the Big Brother TV shows aired in Spain and Britain between 2000 and 2003. Focusing on the use of vocatives in this type of mediated discourse, the author looks specifically at how the position in which vocatives occur in the utterances can be linked to different pragmalinguistic functions, and how the relation between position and function varies between the Spanish and the English corpora. Other authors (Arias 2012; Cautín-Epifani 2015; Vela Delfa 2018) have also made a contribution to the topic of addressivity by looking at the forms and functions of vocatives in different digital contexts of communication in Spanish.

In terms of social function, forms of address, in general, are strategic components in defining and shaping interpersonal relationships. Wardhaugh argues that through the use of forms of address we can reveal "our feelings toward others -solidarity, power, distance, respect, intimacy, and so on - and our awareness of social customs" (1986, p. 275). Looking at their communicative functions, Leech (1999) distinguishes between three chief functions of vocatives: a) attracting someone's attention; b) identifying someone as an addressee; and c) establishing, maintaining and reinforcing social relationships, such as affiliation or disaffiliation between the participants involved in an interchange.

We could argue that non-vocative forms of address share with vocative forms the function of constructing and maintaining social relationships. So the way we talk about or refer to an addressee reveals how we want to relate to them. Forms of address, both vocative and non-vocative, then enable speakers to express a certain attitude vis-à-vis their

addressees. Further, by addressing others we can also evaluate them, and in so doing we can take stances towards our addressees either explicitly by directly assessing aspects of their social personae or implicitly by assessing their beliefs, (dis)likes, social practices, etc. as depicted in their discourse.

In the context of *YouTube* product reviews, evaluation, as a core component, is negotiated through the text-commenting facility that helps shape the interpersonal space between the participants. These acts of evaluation are partly manifested through the language choices that the participants make both to refer to other participants with whom they co-construct the reviews, and to address them directly when negotiating and managing the exchanges. So in this study our attention is centred on the evaluative function of forms of address as stance-taking resources through which participants (dis)align with one another in their roles of secondary reviewers.

Given the fact that forms of address are highly contextual, we argue that in the context of our investigation, the non-vocative and vocative expressions that participants use to refer to other participants or to address them directly can be related to the harmonious and conflictual stances that are adopted and negotiated in the process of reviewing, and to the multiple levels of addressivity as a contextual constraint of the polylogal structure of the medium.

4.   NEGOTIATING STANCE IN *YOUTUBE* PRODUCT REVIEWS

With the advent of Web 2.0, product reviewing has become increasingly interactive over the years with monologic accounts and narratives displaced by dialogic forms of mostly collaborative productions of evaluative multimedia texts. This development, which imports interpersonal encounters and ¨conversational¨ modes of discourse into non-physicalised interactional contexts, has led to a change in the way users of reviews are conceptualised today, from being mere passive consumers to being active prosumers who create content to be shared with millions of others online.

The technological affordances of sites like *YouTube* offer a scenario of communication possibilities that empower users, who become reviewers themselves and whose purchase decisions are no longer exclusively dependent upon the evaluations that companies make of their

own products or services. So, reviews have become less institutionalised and more user-generated.

This section deals with the qualitative analysis of the forms of address used by the participants in the comments that they post on the *YouTube* sites and that are intended to contribute to the process of reviewing by carrying out evaluations through which they position themselves in the discourse and achieve intersubjective stance by converging or diverging.

4. 1. Data and methods

The data for our study come from two *YouTube* sites:

1) Samsung Galaxy S6 vs iPhone 6
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ATvr8YdCjaY, and
2) Comparativa Galaxy S6 VS iPhone 6, Cual es mejor?
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhP2PCd6kPo.

These two sites were selected for displaying the greatest number of comments, which made them the two most popular sites in Spanish reviewing the iPhone 6 and the Samsung Galaxy 6 at the time of collecting the data. The corpus comprises two videos of approximately 20 minutes in length each, and a total of 200 comments (100 comments from each site) posted in Spanish by the participants on the sites from March to August 2015. The comments were selected on the basis of their popularity in terms of the number of "likes" they were given. Comments that did not evaluate the products, either directly or indirectly, were not included as they could not be considered reviews.

The analysis is intended to explore the *YouTube* reviews as macro texts by zeroing in on the textual content that visitors to the websites encounter without having to click on icons or words. Therefore, it centres the attention on the small reviews, that is, the comments that participants post on the sites, and not on the interactional threads that some comments may generate, and which can only be accessed and displayed by clicking on the word *reply* below the comment. Notwithstanding, there are evaluative comments that participants post as reactions or replies to what other commenters have contributed, and that are not part of a thread that has to be manually displayed. These comments were also included in the analysis. Other clickable icons such

as the *like button* or the *dislike button* were neither included in the analysis as these are pictorial representations that generally tend to evaluate the videos and not the products.

Using observation and interpretation techniques, our analysis focuses on the 200 textual comments as reviewing contributions that make up a corpus of 10,800 words, and does not include the videos uploaded on the sites by the primary or master reviewers[2]. However, reference to the videos or to the master reviewers is made, when necessary, as these function as the main triggers for the evaluative posts that participants, as secondary reviewers, upload on the sites.

A note on research ethics is in order here. The data in our observational investigation is made up of archived messages collected unobtrusively with the intention of analysing the process of reviewing from a linguistic perspective. According to the A*merican Code of Federal Regulations* Title 45, Part 46, *Protection of Human Subjects* (2009), an observational form of investigation, as opposed to one of an ethnographic or netnographic nature, that uses documents or records that are publicly available, qualifies for a human subject exemption, and so no infringement of privacy can be argued for. Therefore, as the comments in our corpus were intended to be public by their authors we felt that consent was not needed to use them as material for analysis in this type of research. Although the public/private dichotomy is always fuzzy when dealing with internet research ethics (see Bassett & O'Riordan, 2002; Kozinet, 2010; Landert & Jucker, 2011), in our conceptualisation of public we refer to not just unrestricted access, ultimately a type of technological affordance offered by many different modes of CMC, but also, and perhaps more importantly in the context of our study, to the deliberate intention by the participants to air and share their views and opinions of the products being reviewed. Consequently, we believed that in terms of content we were not dealing with confidential or intimate issues - nor were we dealing with a type of online community that might be reluctant to their remarks being read by outsiders -so we felt that making the information known or available beyond the confines of the online sites would not be detrimental to the interests or reputation of any of the participants involved.

Nonetheless, and bearing in mind that the participants' consent has not been asked for, in order to safeguard their personal details from being

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[2] The master reviewers are *Marciano*, in the first video and *Víctor,* in the second one.

disclosed, and so to comply with ethical research protocols, privacy has been achieved through anonymisation of header information in each of the postings analysed. Therefore, the participants' names or their nicknames have been excluded when labelling the data to protect their identities. However, we should note that the participants' names and nicknames as well as all the texts that make up the data are in the public domain and can be easily retrieved from the Internet sites.

4. 2. Analysis of the corpus

The 200 user-generated comments that make up our corpus are online written texts that function as secondary reviews. For ease of reference, we present the comments as belonging to Review 1 (i.e. *YouTube* site 1) and Review 2 (i.e. *YouTube* site 2).

We specifically look at the negotiation of interpersonal meaning through the use of terms of address -including both pronominal and nominal forms such as camaraderie forms, first naming, nicknames, terms of insult, among other appellative forms- as linguistic resources employed by the participants in order to support their evaluative comments, positioning and (dis)aligning with one another and thus take stances towards fellow participants and their comments.

We argue that address is a major component in the co-construction of the reviews as these are partly organised on the basis of the evaluations that the products themselves attract from the users, and partly on the basis of the social relationships that are established among all the participants involved in the polylogal exchanges. We also argue that the deployment and choice of terms of address in the evaluative posts can be related to the multilayered-addressivity participation framework that is a constitutive contextual feature of the interactional dynamics of *YouTube*.

In the analysis of the corpus we take into account different criteria that make it possible to explain the complex/multilayered phenomenon of addressing and evaluating in *YouTube* reviews. So, within the general framework outlined, we first look at stance and evaluation, and then at the directionality of the comments.

4. 2.1. Results: Stance-taking and evaluation

The analysis of linguistic devices utilised in acts of stance-taking has focused on patterned co-occurrences of references to the objects under

evaluation, that is Android and Apple phones. As for references to the objects, participants used the following expressions: iPhone (134 tokens), samsung (96 tokens), apple (69 tokens), android (63 tokens), galaxy (48 tokens), edge (31 tokens), as is systematised in Figure 2:

Figure 2. Most frequent mentions

As mentioned above, our analysis of the corpus takes into account the forms of address and the linguistic resources as manifestations of evaluation exploited by the participants in order to negotiate stance at two levels:

a) *interdiscursive*, in relation to the products reviewed in the videos or to the person who uploads the video file on the site;

b) *intradiscursive*, in relation to a specifically designated commenter or to commenters in general as participants in the polylogue.

Figure 3 below shows the number of comments that make reference to the most frequent objects of evaluation in the stance-taking process both at the intradiscursive and at the intradiscursive levels.
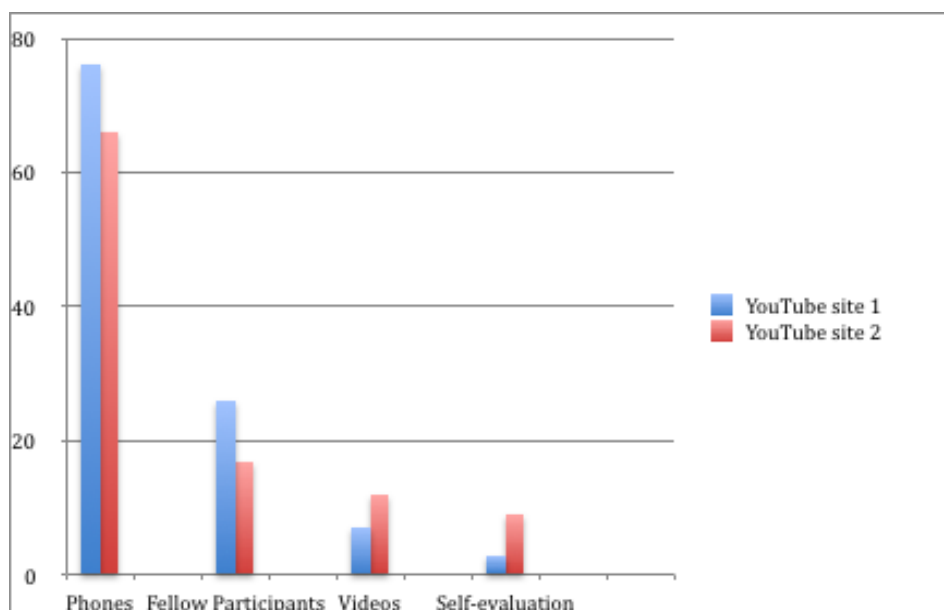
Figure 3. Number of comments showing different objects of stance

As can be seen in Figure 3, in both reviews most of the comments are manifestations of stances taken towards the telephones being reviewed (76 comments for iPhone and 62 for Samsung) by means of overt evaluations that take into account technical features and specifications, and the operating systems on which they run. This is followed by comments where stances are taken towards fellow commenters (26 comments for iPhone and 17 for Samsung that invoke a covert evaluation of the products – that is, by evaluating other commenters, and their contributions, participants indirectly evaluate the products, and finally comments that express stances taken towards the videos (7 comments for iPhone and 12 for Samsung) as artistic pieces of advertising, and towards the skills of the primary reviewers who made the videos.

Finally, there are a few cases of self-evaluation whereby commenters assess themselves as users of the products by describing their personal experience with the phones. In these cases, self-evaluation seems to be employed to indirectly adopt a stance towards the products.

A) Interdiscursive level

Here we have considered the object-oriented and the master reviewer-oriented comments posted by the participants.

A.1. Object-oriented evaluation
In our corpus, the evaluation of the products can be i) overt, manifested by means of a description of the object; and ii) covert, conveyed through the agreement or disagreement with the comments posted by fellow participants.

i) *Overt evaluations*: as this type of evaluations centres the attention on the description of the products, the use of forms of address is scarce. They range from those that show an objective evaluation by mentioning the technical specifications of the products, as can be seen in comments (1) y (2), to those that convey a more subjective positioning on the part of the commenter as shown in comments below.

(1)Soy usuario de Apple y reconozco que Samsung a **nivel de hardware**, invierte más y va un paso adelante. Pero he probado los dos sistemas, y lamentablemente hay que decir que **a nivel de software,** Apple es superior para mi[3] . **Las aplicaciones** juegan mucho mejor en la calidad, **sobre todo en la música** y en **la edición de imágenes**…
*I am an Apple user and I know that **in terms of hardware** Samsung invests more and is a step ahead. But I have experienced both systems, and unfortunately I have to say that at **the level of software**, Apple is better for me. **Apps** are much better in terms of quality, especially as regards **music** and **image editing**... [Review 1]*

(2)[…] los iphones no se laggean es porque **las aplicaciones** que usa no son pesadas en cambio con el Galaxy abres 8 apps y páginas y sigue funcionando como un PC.
*[…] iphones don´t lag and that´s because **the apps** they use are not heavy whereas on the Galaxy you can launch 8 apps and web pages and it works like a PC [Review 2].*

(3)[…] digo claramente que yo **prefiero** el S6 y que me **parece mejor**.
*[…] I clearly say **I prefer** the S6 and **I think it is better** [Review 1]*

[3] All the examples are reproduced showing the spelling and writing characteristics of the original texts as they appeared on the sites.

(4)**Samsung le rompe el culo** a todos los demás teléfonos.
*Samsung kicks all other phones **arse***. [Review 1]

It is worth noting that in some cases the commenter shifts between an objective tone and a more subjective one in the same post. In Comment 5, for example, we can see that the participant constructs his evaluative argument by means of different non-vocative expressions that are used to refer to the products in terms of their technical specifications or capabilities. We can also observe that, although the participant mentions some of the product specifications, thus signalling an objective tone, as seen in the phrases "la capacidad del iphone" *(the capacity of the iphone)*, "1GB de ram" (*1GB ram*), when taking a more subjective stance, he uses a more emphatic tone as in "no tiene comparación" (*it cannot be compared*), and even an aggressive, impolite tone as in "son puras chorradas, el s6 tiene la polla más grande" (*that´s nonsense, the S6 has the biggest swinging dick),* which reveals how he positions himself vis-á-vis one of the two telephone brands).

(5)Segun esas especificaciones el s6 tiene practicamente el triple de la capacidad del iphone 6, **no tiene comparación**! eso de que el iphone 6 está mejor optimizado son **puras chorradas**, no se puede decir que 1GB de ram es tan capaz como 3GB, obviamente el **s6 tiene la polla mas grande**.
*According to those specs the S6 has three times the capacity of the iphone 6, **there is no comparison**! What is said about the iphone being better optimised is **just nonsense**, you can´t say that 1GB ram hat the iphone is as capable as 3GB, obviously the S6 has the **biggest swinging dick**. [Review 1]*

ii) *Covert evaluation*: as we explained above, this type of evaluation is manifested through acts of (dis)alignments between participants in relation to what they express in their comments or reviews. As a consequence, commenters can explicitly express their disagreement, as in (6). Here the participant uses a balanced comparison "El Galaxy no es mejor que el iPhone, ni el iPhone es mejor que Galaxy*" (The Galaxy is no better than the iPhone, nor is the iPhone better than the Galaxy*) as a starting point is his argument, but immediately after that he reveals his subjective positioning by introducing his personal and emotional opinion

signalled by the phrase "solo siento" (*I just feel*). His subjective stance is also constructed by means of two resources: i) rhetorical questions that show his alignment with the iPhone and its users, and his disalignment with the users of the Samsung Galaxy to whom he refers first by using the general non-vocative phrase "la gente" (*people*), and then by using the third person possessive pronoun "sus" (*their*) as in "sus Galaxy's" (*their Galaxys*); and ii) the personalisation of his favourite device used as a non-vocative discursive strategy to refer to the phone as in "No lo pueden dejar en paz?" (*Can´t you just leave it alone!*).

(6)El Galaxy **no** es mejor que el iPhone, **ni** el iPhone es mejor que Galaxy. **Sólo siento** que **la gente** le busca siempre el punto contrario al iPhone. ¿No lo pueden dejar en paz? ¿No pueden quedarse con **sus Galaxy's** y dejar todo ya así?¡NO!
*The Galaxy is **no** better than the iPhone, **nor** is the iPhone better than the Galaxy. **I just feel** that **people** are always trying to find faults in the iPhone. Can´t you just leave it alone? Can´t you just take **your Galaxy´s** and leave everything as it is? NO! [Review 2]*

Participants can also negotiate positive evaluation and therefore stance, as in (7) and (8) or negative evaluation and stance, as seen in (9) y (10). In negotiating positive stance, we can observe that the commenters employ a friendly tone to show acceptance of and agreement with the views expressed by other participants to whom they are directing their comments. In Comment 7, the commenter addresses a designated participant directly by using the nickname in initial position as a vocative form to identify his interlocutor followed by the use of phrases such as "has dado en el clavo" *(you are dead right),* "estás con Apple" *(you are with Apple),* "estás adaptado" *(you are adapted)* from which the informal second person pronominal forms "tu" or "vos" (*you*) have been removed, as it is usually the case in Spanish. Comment 8 is also introduced by the nickname as a vocative form to identify the addressee and is followed by the affective vocative "compadre" (*buddy*) that establishes affiliation between the participants. Later in the same comment the participant employs a more neutral tone by resorting to the use of the impersonal verb form "hay que ser imparciales" *(one has to be impartial)* in order to address his interlocutor.

(7)	(**Nickname**). **Estoy de acuerdo** y **has dado en el clavo**, estas con Apple porque **estas adaptado** a el así como yo estoy con Android por la misma razón.

*(Nickname). **I agree and you are dead right**, you are with Apple because **you are adapted** to it as much as I am with Android for the same reason. [Review 1]*

(8)	(**Nickname**). **Te doy la razón compadre, hay que ser imparciales, iOS es un gran sistema operativo**, también, que como **los otros tiene pros y contras**.

*(Nickname). **You are right buddy, you have to be impartial, IOS is a great operating system** too, which like the others **has pros and cons**. [Review 2]*

As regards the negotiation of negative stance through negative evaluations, as seen in (9) and (10), these are constructed by means of the use of mocking, aggression and fanatism, which reveals very subjective positionings on the part of the participants. Apart from the use of the nickname, which is present in all the posts or comments that are directed to a designated addressee, in Comment 9, the use of the first person pronoun "yo" (*I*), considered a marked form in Spanish, is used by the participant as an emphatic form to introduce and highlight his view, and at the same time to distance himself from the opinion of his interlocutor to whom he addresses by means of the aggressive and insulting vocative phrase "pedazo de mierda" (*you piece of shit*). In Comment 10, the participant employs the English affective vocative word "homie" with a sarcastic overtone, and also distances himself from his interlocutor by the explicitation of personal pronoun "tu*" (you*), in both subject and possessive adjective forms, used to imply contrast of opinions with a mocking overtone as in the phrases "como dices tú" (*as you say*),"tu Dios Steve Jobs" (*your God Steve Jobs*). In this comment we can also observe the use of evaluative non-vocative forms to refer to Apple as a company. One the one hand, there is the use of the Spanish translation "la manzana" for Apple, which is unusual in Spanish as Apple is a proper name and of course a trade mark, and on the other the use of the nonce form "iglesia iphoniana" *(iphonian church)* which, together with the word "culto" *(cult)* used in the same post, emphasises the sarcastic overtone and at the same time signals disalignment with the addressee.

(9)   (**Nickname**) Yo digo el iphone 6s el proximo iphone jajajajajaja si no sabes leer claramente debe de ser porque usas android **pedazo de mierda**

*(**Nickname**). I say that the iphone 6s is the next iphone hahahaha if you cannot read clearly must be because you use android, **you piece of shit** [Review 1]*

(10)   (**Nickname**) todo está dicho homie, así como dices tú que **mi Dios** es Samsung, tu alabas a **tu Dios Steve Jobs** y haces **culto** a la manzana en **la iglesia iPhoniana**. Saluu!

*(**Nickname**). All is said homie, you say that **my God** is Samsung, but you worship **your God Steve Jobs** and make a **cult** of the manzana (apple) in **the Iphonian church**. [Review 2]*

A.2. Master reviewer-oriented evaluation
The overall tone of the comments that participants as secondary reviewers post on the sites seems to shift considerably when the posts are addressed directly to the master reviewer. In these cases, participants address the master reviewer using eulogistic language that describes him in highly favourable terms as seen in Comments 11 and 12.

(11)   (**Nickname) Marciano mi mayor respeto para usted**... Saludos

*(**Nickname). Marciano my greatest respect to you**…Greetings [Review 1]*

(12)   (**Nickname) Me quito el sombrero ante ti marciano**, esto solo habla de tu profesionalismo, excelente trabajo

*(**Nickname). I take my hat off to you marciano**, this clearly shows your professionalism, excellent job [Review 1]*

It is interesting to mention here that in both comments the participants use the name of the reviewer despite the fact that they also use the nickname which, in this case, includes the name of the reviewer as part of it. This is not just to designate the addressee, something that can be achieved by the use of the nickname alone, but rather, and arguably, to construct interpersonal meaning through affiliation with the interlocutor who, being the master reviewer, seems to play the role of expert.

This affiliation is also constructed by the use of polite expressions such as "me quito el sombrero" (*I take my hat off to you*) in (11) and "mi mayor respeto para usted" (*my greatest respect to you*) in (12) where the use of "usted" as a formal pronominal variant contributes to the manifestation of deference and respect. Finally, Comment 13, which is directed at the master reviewer of the second video, an action that is signalled by the nickname and the reviewer's name, Victor, makes use of the formal Spanish address term "señor" (*Mr*) which, together with the name, in this case functions as a vocative. In all these three comments, then, the employment of different address devices seems to contribute to the construction of interpersonal relations through the use of respectful and praiseful discourse.

(13)   (**Nickname**) **Señor Víctor**, quiero hacerle una pregunta.
*(**Nickname**) Mr **Victor**, I want to ask you a question [Review 2]*

B) Intradiscursive level

Within this level of analysis we have considered the posts where the commenter addresses other participants in order to evaluate them as users of the technology products (this is different from the cases of covert evaluation, explained above, in which participants make use of the comments posted by others as a strategy to indirectly evaluate the products). Thus, comments can be directed at a designated participant, as in Comments 14 and 17, at the group engaged in the polylogal exchange, as in Comment 18, or even at the fans or supporters of the competing brand regarded as a rivalling camp, as shown in Comment 19 below.

In terms of directionality and interactivity, Comments 14 to 17 show a one-to-one communication flow. As regards evaluative forms of address, we can see the use of aggressive and discrediting vocatives such as "estúpido" (*stupid*), "payaso" (*clown*) and "enfermo mental" (*nutter*) as shown in Comments 14, 15 and 16. Also worth noting is the use of the non-vocative phrase "en tu pensamiento de pobre" (*your thinking like a poor person*), in Comment 17, which figuratively and patronisingly refers to people who may think like the addressee.

(14)   No te enteras de nada, que estúpido eres la verdad
You know nothing, how stupid you are, really [Review 1]

(15)   Comprate un cerebro , payaso...!
Get a a brain, you clown…! [Review 2)

(16)   enfermo mental
nutter [Review 2]

(17)   Mejor te dejo en tu pensamiento de pobre.
I´d better leave you with your thinking like a poor person [Review 2]

In the posts or comments addressed to the group of participants as general audience, i.e. a one-to-many type of communication flow, the commenter seems to either distance himself by referring to the rest of the participants using third person plural forms, as in Comment 18, or include himself in the group of addressees by using the inclusive pronominal form "nosotros" (*we*), as can be seen in Comment 19. Moreover, Comment 18 reveals an interesting combination of different forms of address ranging from those that refer to the whole group of participants as in "todos se tiran caca" (*everybody throws shit at each other*), to those that by means of the pronominal form "todos" (*everybody*), used with a quasi-distributive value, make reference to the group as each and every member taken as a whole, as in "todos copian a todos" (*everybody copies everybody*), to which the commenter previously refers by means of the coordinating indefinite quantifiers "unos… otros" (*some…others*). The comment finishes by making reference to the individual rather than the group when it comes to making the final decision as to which product or device to choose, as seen in the phrase "cada uno escoge el que le guste" (*choose the one each of you likes best*).

On the other hand, in Comment 19, the commenter uses the inclusive first person plural "nosotros" (*we*) implicit in the verbal form "todos sabemos" (*we all know*) and in the use of the objective pronoun "nos" (in this case also *we* in English) as in "nos gusta" (*we like*). In this context the indefinite pronominal forms "todos, muchos" (*everybody*, *many*) refer to the first person plural, which in this case includes the commenter as one of the members of the group interacting in the polylogue.

(18)   Porque **todos se tiran** caca, **unos** quieren ser populares **y otros** quieren un celular super potente, **todos** copian a **todos**, **cada uno escoje el que le guste**, ya dejen sus mierdas

*Because **everybody throws** shit at each other, **some** want to be popular **and others** want a super powerful mobile phone, everybody copies **everybody**, **choose the one each of you likes best**, and cut the crap. [Review 1]*

(19)   Creo el decir que uno copio a otro. **Todos sabemos** la historia de computacion y **sabemos** que tanto microsoft como apple se robaron tecnologia. …. Que claro **a muchos nos gusta** un sistema u otro por ciertos aspectos...

*I believe that one copies the other. **We all know** the history of computing and **we know** that both Microsoft and apple poach technology from each other...Of course **many of us like** one system or another because of certain aspects... [Review 1]*

Comments 20 and 21 show a one-to-many type of communication flow, in this case the addressees being the members of the opposite camp. In (20), the commenter refers to them by means of the use of discrediting terms that help him highlight their antagonistic attitudes as in "los envidiosos de apple" (*those who envy Apple*). The commenter also employs a generic, depersonalising, non-vocative form "la gente" (*people*), followed by a defining relative clause which he also uses to discredit his addressees by implying that they do not risk or take action, as can be observed in the clause "que no se arriesga se limita" ([people]*that do not risk, that limit themselves*). In (21), the commenter adopts a more ironic tone conveyed by the use of the creative non-vocative term "manzaneros" (*Apple fans*), which he uses to address his interlocutors.

(20)   Para **los envidiosos de apple** solo os puedo decir una cosa siempre samsung sera mejor Apple solo sirve para **gente que no se arriesga se limita**…

*To those who **envy Apple** I can only say one thing samsung will be better Apple is only for **people that don´t risk, that limit themselves**… [Review 2]*

(21)   Recuerdo cuando los **manzaneros** decían es el tamaño…

*I remember when the **manzaneros** (Apple fans) used to say it was the size... [Review 2]*

Finally, Comment 22 is particularly interesting in terms of the wide range of address resources employed by the commenter. This is a one-to-many type of post and one in which there is a clear shift in the way forms of address are used by the commenter. Here the commenter begins his contribution with an emphatic evaluation of the reviewing process as a whole being carried out on the site and, particularly, of the rivalry that this process seems to encourage, as seen in the use of the opening vocative phrase "Ni Fanboys ni ostias" (*Neither fanboys or whatever*). In the first part of the comment, which conveys a more conciliatory tone, the commenter uses mostly verbal forms with a generalising exhortative value as in "dejar de criticar" (*stop criticising*), "elegir" (*choose*); the inclusive first person plural, also with a generalising value as in "cada persona tenemos y valoramos" (*every one of us has and values*), "no nos damos cuenta" (*we do not realise*); the second person plural to refer to the whole group "estéis a gusto con vuestro Smartphone" (*be pleased with your smartphone*); and even impersonal forms such as "siempre es bueno" (*it is always best*), "nos beneficia a los clientes" (*it benefits customers*), which use a first person pronoun that again allows for the inclusion of the commenter in the text, and "hay que pensárselo muy bien" (*you have to think carefully*). This part finishes with the phrase "Dicho esto" (*having said that*), which marks a shift in tone as this becomes more personal, and even aggressive towards the end. Here the commenter first positions himself in the discourse by using the fisrt person singular, as in "me sigo decantando" (*I prefer*), "me gusta" (*I like*), "estoy adaptado" (*I am adapted*), "mi enhorabuena" (*my congratulations to*); and then he positions himself vis-á-vis his opponents to whom he refers again as Fanboys. He shows disalignment with them by means of the use of the second person plural as seen in the phrases "a ver si os enteráis" (*don´t you see*), "no os van a pagar" (*you are not going to get paid*), "a ver si abrís la mente" (*why don´t you open your mind*), "vuestras opiniones" (*your opinions*). The aggressive tone begins to build up in the discourse here when the commenter refers to his addressees and their preferences with the use of foul language as can be observed in the expressions "de una jodida vez" (*for fuck´s sake*), "vuestra puta marca" (*your fucking brand*), and "vuestras opiniones nos las pasamos por el forro de los huevos" (*we don´t give a shit about your opinions*). Finally, after this string of expressions the commenter reintroduces the use of the first person plural that includes himself but excludes his interlocutors

whom he identifies as his opponents and from whom he distances himself completely.

(22)   **Ni Fanboy ni ostias**..**dejar de criticar** a ambas marcas... **Cada persona tenemos** unos gustos y **valoramos** aspecto exterior, calidad, precio, rendimiento segun nuestras necesidades y criterio. Asi que **elegir** la que mas os guste **a cada uno**.. ni por ello deja de ser una marca peor o mejor. Lo importante es **que esteis a gusto con vuestro smartphone** ... Siempre es bueno que haya competencia, **nos beneficia a los clientes** con buenas mejoras. Hoy en dia **hay que pensarselo** muy bien debido a la inversion que supone un smarhphone de gama alta y lo que no nos damos cuenta... la manera considerable que estan subiendo de precio. **Dicho esto. Me sigo decantando** por apple porque **me gusta** mas su diseño y su sistema operativo y **estoy adaptado** a el. **Mi enhorabuena** para samsung por estos 2 terminales que van a dar mucho que hablar. **Fansboys** de ambas marcas, a ver si os enterais de una jodida vez... **No os van a pagar por defender a muerte vuestra puta marca**... a ver **si abris la mente**... que **vuestras opiniones nos las pasamos por el forro de los huevos** ;) [Review 1]

***Neither fanboys or whatever**... **stop criticising** both brands... **Each one of us** has different likes and **values** the external appearance, quality, price, performance according to our needs and criteria. So **choose the one each of you likes best**... it is not a better or a worse brand. The important is for you to **be pleased with your smartphone**...Comptetition **is always good, it benefits customers** as this offers improvements. Nowadays **you have to think carefully** as a high-end smarttphone is quite an investment and we don´t realise how expensive they are becoming. **Having said that, I still prefer** apple because **I like** its design and operating system best and **I am adapted** to it. **My congratulations** to samsung on these two phones that everyone will be talking about soon. **Fanboys** of both brands...**wake up for fuck´s sake**... **you are not going to get** paid for defending your fucking brand...**why don´t you open your mind…we don´t give shit about your opinions**. [Review 1]*

CONCLUSION

Given the multimodal interactive structure of *YouTube* product reviews, we have seen that these are co-constructed on the basis of an

interactive communication framework comprising acts of evaluations that are directed at different objects (and persons) involved in the review as a macrotext and through which both master and secondary reviewers engage in interaction with different levels of participation.

These acts constitute evaluative reactions used in the lines of argumentation constructed by the commenters through which they take stances that connect the physical context with the online context. This connection, we argue, is achieved, for example, by the inclusion of the recounts of personal experiences that the participants, as users of the different phones and mobile platforms, bring into their ongoing online discourse. So by combining their experiences with the information triggered by the master reviews and by the contributions posted by fellow commenters, they engage in the contestation of ideas and opinions by aligning or disaligning with one another, thus contributing to the presentation of the review as a collaborative process.

In this collaborative process participants seem to put a premium on the construction of interpersonal meaning through acts of evaluation that are mostly manifested by means of the address resources that participants use to refer to the different actors involved in the reviewing process.

These address resources, with vocative and non-vocative functions, vary from those that contribute to the construction of harmonious relations to those that potentiate or even trigger conflict among the commenters. Being *YouTube* an online interactional space, nicknames as vocatives are used as organisational address forms that designate participants in the exchanges thus contributing to the overall coherence of the polylogue.

Our findings show that the vocatives used to address the master reviewers are polite forms that commenters employ as a way of showing respect and perhaps admiration for the professional qualities exhibited by the master reviewers in their videos, which clearly positions them as experts. The vocative and non-vocative forms used by commenters in the polylogue, however, are more diverse in function as they constitute mostly reactions – positive and negative – towards what others express in their reviewing comments. So unlike the language forms used to address the master reviewers, the address forms used to refer to the commenters in the polylogue, either directly or indirectly, are more dynamically exploited in the give and take of the interactions. This is so as the interactive format of the written communication between the commenters as secondary reviewers and the master reviewers is one way, with

commenters directing their written comments at the master reviewers but not the other way around, whereas communication among commenters can be both bidirectional and multidirectional.

Finally, by co-constructing reviews in the digital environment through the acts of evaluating, and stance-taking, participants engage in social practices that potentiate their capacity for relating, albeit fleetingly, to a multitude of publics. Thus the co-construction of *YouTube* reviews can be said to operate on the basis of the interpersonal relationships that the different types of reviewers negotiate in part through the way they address one another in interaction. A thorough analysis of a larger corpus that looks at the intricate ways in which interpersonal relations impinge on the act of reviewing as a collaborative process should prove a fruitful avenue for future research.

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