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## Participation framework underlying YouTube interaction

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Abstract

Drawing on the literature on interaction in new media and on participation models underlying (non)fictional multi-party media talk, this paper contributes to the burgeoning literature on computer-mediated communication. Specifically, this article advocates a new participatory framework holding for multi-party interaction on YouTube, which is compared to that underlying films and televised programmes. YouTube users' participation is more complex than television viewers', who are involved primarily as ratified hearers dubbed ''recipients''. YouTubers, on the other hand, engage in asynchronous computer-mediated interaction, changing their participatory statuses at the production and reception ends. The extended participatory framework proposed here for YouTube resides in three levels of communication: the level of the speaker and hearers in video interaction, the level of the sender and the recipient of a YouTube video, and the level of YouTube speakers and hearers who post and read comments, respectively. These communicative levels are realised by: interactants in videos and the (collective) sender, i.e. the production crew (both typical also of televised films and broadcasts), together with YouTube users, who may be video interactants and/or senders, as well as take other participatory roles.

## 1. Introduction

The various forms of communication in the media and new media are not amenable to classical models of interaction involving the standard *speaker-hearer dyad* (e.g. de Saussure, 1974 [1916]; Jakobson, 1960). Such frameworks are commonly viewed as covering the various channels and modes of communication, which may rely on visual perception (rather than, or next to, aural perception), while ''speaker'' and ''hearer/listener'' are used as technical terms in reference to the production end and the reception end, respectively. Nonetheless, these dyadic models are deemed insufficient and obsolete in the context of multi-party interaction in everyday settings (see Dynel, 2010 for an overview), as well as in traditional media, epitomised by televised programmes and films (e.g. Scannell, 1991; O'Keeffe, 2006; Lorenzo-Dus, 2009; Dynel, 2011a,b). The same is relevant to computer-mediated communication[1] (CMC) transcending two participants' dyadic exchanges via e-mail or instant communicators. YouTube is no different in this respect (cf. Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2011; Bou-Franch et al., 2012), for it inherently involves more than two participants.

Communication on YouTube is characterised by speakers' and hearers' spatial and temporal separation and infinite numbers of potential participants at the reception end, who are typically unfamiliar with one another. Because of these characteristics, it could be dubbed ''mediated quasi-interaction'' (Chovanec, 2010, 2011; cf. Thompson, 1995; Talbot, 2007). However, the indeterminate hearership, physical distance, and asynchronicity should not be treated as reasons for

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[1] This prevalent term may soon be ousted by ''technology-mediated communication'', given the various devices (e.g. smart phones) which facilitate access to the Internet (Chovanec and Dynel, submitted for publication).

rendering the notion of interaction inapplicable in computer-mediated contexts. CMC may not be prototypical interactionally, whilst face-to-face conversation is, but it does display the intrinsic features of interaction: the speaker's production and the hearer's reception of a turn, which is a minimal contribution to an interaction, whether written or spoken (cf. e.g. Goffman, 1981; Goodwin, 1981). In the case of YouTube, turns may be verbal and/or nonverbal as well as spoken or written and may be embedded in any of the communicative levels proposed here.

Communication via the Internet subscribes to the characteristics of both interpersonal face-to-face and mass media communication, continually challenging existing theory (Poole and Jackson, 1993). Also, the Internet partly conforms to and partly modifies the source--message--receiver pattern underlying the traditional mass communication models (Morris and Ogan, 1996). Most importantly here, interaction in synchronous or asynchronous CMC settings manifests various participatory configurations (Morris and Ogan, 1996; Baron, 1998, 2010; Herring, 1996, 2007; Yates, 2000; Bou-Franch et al., 2012). For example, based on the criteria of (a)synchronicity and the number of individuals involved, Morris and Ogan (1996) distinguish four categories of what they call producers and audiences on the Internet (which are actually, participatory relationships between them): one-to-one asynchronous communication, such as e-mail; many-to-many asynchronous communication, such as electronic bulletin boards; synchronous communication that can be one-to-one, one-to-few, or one-to-many, such as chat rooms; and asynchronous communication involving many-to-one, one-to-one, or one-to-many source--receiver relationships, epitomised by the browsing of websites. The problem of (a)synchronicity aside, the categories of one-to-one, one-to-few, or one-to-many, many-to-one and many-to-many as forms of communication may give rise to several misgivings regarding a linguistic participatory framework. First of all, the distinction between ''many'' and ''few'' appears to be elusive, with no determining factor being specified by the authors. Secondly, and more importantly, the types do not appear to be premised on the notion of turn-taking, which is why sometimes ''many'' at the production end may mean one contributor at a time or it may denote a number of individuals communicating a joint message, with one individual actually publicising it.

On the other hand, according to Bou-Franch et al. (2012), CMC can be divided into three types: one-to-one communication (realised by a dyad), one-to-many interaction, and intergroup discussions (cf. Baron, 1998, 2010; Herring, 1996, 2007; Yates, 2000). Bou-Franch et al. (2012) observe that YouTube participation structure encompasses instances of both one-to-many interaction and intergroup discussion. These concepts appear to indicate a distinction between a single communicator vs. multiple speakers, and the latter one also signals the nature of the communicative activity at hand. It will be shown here, however, that these two notions can be conflated under an umbrella term ''multi-party interaction'', which may involve many producers of turns, one (or more in the case of choral production) taking the floor one at a time, and many individuals at the reception end, who can be classified as various hearers/listeners to an interactional turn.

Insofar as it transcends the prototypical speaker-hearer dyad, YouTube communication can be classified as *multi-party interaction*. Recently, the label ''polylogue'' has been used in regard to conversational exchanges, including on-line ones, held by more than two individuals (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 2004; Marcoccia, 2004; Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2010; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2011; Bou-Franch et al., 2012). While the phenomenon of multi-party interactions (vis-à-vis dyadic ones) deserves scholarly attention, the term ''polylogue'' as such may be considered otiose. This is because, it was originally proposed as the antonym of ''dialogue'', understood as a dyadic interaction (Kerbrat-Orecchioni, 2004). However, as the etymology of the term ''dialogue'' indicates, it does cover both dyadic interactions and those which involve more than two individuals in interaction (see Chovanec, 2011). While ''dialogue'' and ''polylogue'' may be used technically, their etymology regardless, both terms will be avoided here, unless quoted. Additionally, the term ''conversation'' covers only part of the communication on YouTube, which is why ''interaction'' will be applied here as a blanket term encompassing a number of communicative forms on three communicative levels, necessitating the formulation of a new participatory model. This paper aims to tease out such a framework against the backdrop of the relevant literature on interaction and participation beyond the dyad in both media and new media discourse.

This theory-oriented paper is illustrated with YouTube examples based on a ''Gordon Ramsay'' search (conducted on 25th--27th September 2013). Gordon Ramsay is a Scottish chef, restaurateur and television personality. He is widely recognised for his television programmes about cuisine and competitive cookery, such as the series: *Hell's Kitchen*, *The F Word*, *Ramsay's Best Restaurant*, *Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares*, *Gordon's Great Escape*, *Gordon Behind Bars*, *Gordon Ramsay: Cookalong Live*, and *Gordon Ramsay's Ultimate Cookery Course*. Episodes of, and extracts from, many (if not all) of these series can also be found on YouTube, uploaded on Gordon Ramsay's channel and/or posted by ordinary YouTubers, serving as the springboard for discussions. The exemplification data were chosen from the first ten hits, as well as the first three videos recommended next to them, for the sake of greater variety of video types. Relevant instances were duly picked to illustrate the postulates.

## 2. Forms of interaction and levels of communication on YouTube

The Internet offers fertile ground for new forms of mass media, and YouTube presents a distinct type of computer mass-mediated communication. One of its main advantages is that an audience member may also be a message

producer (Morris and Ogan, 1996), thereby contributing to mass-media discourse. A statement may be ventured that one of the underlying reasons for YouTube's success is its immanently ''dialogic character'' (Jones and Schieffelin, 2009). YouTube is known primarily as a video-sharing website, dubbed a form of ''post-television'' (Lister et al., 2009; Tolson, 2010). It affords virtual space for the whole gamut of user-generated videos, here understood as a technical term for YouTube releases, irrespective of their genres or objectives. YouTube videos include: extracts of cinema or televised films (as well as series and serials), extracts of televised programmes, such as shows or news broadcasts; commercials; music videos; as well as amateur videos, such as original short films and vlogging (Burgess and Green, 2008; Moor et al., 2010; Tolson, 2010; Bou-Franch et al., 2012), which may be conceived as the video version of text-based weblogs (Moor et al., 2010). The majority of YouTube's content is submitted by individual Internet users, who sometimes edit and modify the original artefacts made by others as they see fit to do, whereby they become the videos' co-authors. On the other hand, corporations and public figures own YouTube channels as part of partnership programmes and they release official videos there, whether or not publicised otherwise, for instance on television. This is the case, for example, with politicians' videos, thanks to which YouTube is regarded as the town hall of the 21st century (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2010, 2012).

The website in question allows assessing videos (one of the indicators being their popularity shown by the number of views), replying to videos by dint of ''video response'', commenting on videos, as well as replying to earlier posts (Jones and Schieffelin, 2009; Moor et al., 2010; Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2011; Bou-Franch et al., 2012). In terms of topics, the posts may concern the videos, or their authors, as well as independent issues brought into focus by other comments. Those may be duly read by other YouTube users and further commented on, sometimes developing into topical strands. Jones and Schieffelin (2009) suggest that YouTubers typically read the most recent comments. This is understandable, as YouTubers may not be as intrigued as to read comments other than those directly below the video (on the first page), perhaps with the exception of video posters/authors and their friends, who may wish to keep track of the thoughts and discussions their videos or posts inspire.

Incidentally, registered users may choose to receive prompts concerning comments on their videos or replies to their posts. Having logged in, these YouTubers thus see notifications of new comments. This is why such individuals may stand a stronger chance of reading more comments. Moreover, organised chronologically by default, commentaries can be managed according to two criteria, which also affects their readability. The poster of the video can move what he/she considers the best commentaries to the top of the first page. Above those, commentaries to which the video poster has responded can sometimes be found.

YouTube users tend to be dichotomised into *active* ones and *passive*[2] ones, depending on whether or not they make use of the communicative tools the website affords (Moor et al., 2010; Bou-Franch et al., 2012:503) and they publicise videos and comments. To be able to do this, YouTubers need to have registered and logged in. However, such an active vs. passive user distinction, if taken as a unequivocal division of YouTubers, may be misleading in that it does not explicitly recognise interactants' changing participatory roles, central to a linguistic pragmatic perspective. This is because, in the literature, the roles do not seem to be explicitly allocated with reference to turn-taking, even though the active participation of otherwise passive participants who contribute commentaries is indeed acknowledged (Bou-Franch et al., 2012:505). As in other forms of communication, which typically (but not always) involve turn-taking, YouTube participants may change their participatory statuses as an interaction develops over time. Thus, an individual at the reception end may duly ''take the floor'' by contributing a comment or a video. However, CMC interaction naturally allows purely ''passive'' participants, known as ''lurkers'', who do not post any comments (or add any videos), and thus who do not actively contribute any turns to interactions, even though they are entitled to do so. Therefore, their participation, whilst presupposed, can hardly be detected. As Bou-Franch et al. (2012:505) rightly observe, ''Participant identification in YouTube text based interaction (…) is limited to its active (message-sending) users and the amount of comments that they contribute''.

Participation is here treated as any activity at the production end and the reception end (cf. Herring, 2007), which correspond to speakers and hearers, respectively. Following the parlance used in language communication studies and in the pragmatics of interaction, viewers and readers are here technically dubbed ''hearers/listeners'', irrespective of the faculties involved in their cognitive processes. By the same token, the ''speaker'' conflates the producers of utterances, whether spoken or written, and the posters of comments. These technical labels are used deliberately to place YouTube interaction (which takes verbal and nonverbal forms and spoken or written forms, and involves a range of different processes at the production and reception ends) in a linguistic framework of communication, to which these labels are central. The various models of participation rest on speaker and hearer roles, the modes and channels of communication

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[2] It may be argued that he active vs. passive dichotomy unjustly denies the status of active participants to hearers (i.e. viewers of videos and readers of comments), who are, however, actively involved in the inferential process. Whilst the dichotomy places emphasis on production, it must be stressed that inferencing is also an activity, a purposeful, cognitively engaging task.

regardless. Also in participatory models holding for mass-mediated discourse, the viewer is conceived of as a listener to media talk (see Section 2.2).

Resorting to different terminologies, several authors (e.g. Burger, 1984, 1991; Bell, 1991; Scannell, 1991; O'Keeffe, 2006; Fetzer, 2006; see Dynel, 2011a,b, for a critical overview) argue that media talk, such as interviews or television shows, necessarily rests on what is here called *levels of communication* or *communicative levels*. The two levels involve different hearers dichotomised into listeners shown on the screen and viewers, for whose benefit televised interactions take place. The first level of communication entails interactants in front of the camera who communicate with each other and have the viewer in mind or even, speaking directly to the camera, seem to address the viewer. The latter, the hearer on the second level of communication, duly makes inferences and interprets the discourse produced by participants interacting on the screen (Dynel, 2011a,c). A similar framework is postulated for fictional discourse of films and plays (e.g. Short, 1981, 1994; Bubel, 2008; Dynel, 2011b,d). In this case, the first level of communication is realised by ''unknowing'' characters oblivious to the viewer. Fictional participants' interactions are typically reminiscent of their everyday counterparts in terms of the distribution of participatory roles. On the second level of communication, all interactions are followed by the viewer, whose inferential processes are guided by the production crew (Dynel, 2011b,d).

Both participatory frameworks, anchored in the two levels of communication, are considered applicable to some YouTube videos. Which of the frameworks is in operation depends on whether a YouTube video constitutes (an extract of) a programme or a feature film. The first level and the second level of communication display characteristics inherent in post-television, which will be duly discussed in reference to the particular participatory roles YouTube users perform. Also, another level of communication will be proposed to encompass YouTube users' comments.

## 2.1. The first level of communication on YouTube: the speaker and hearers in videos

The first level of communication on YouTube concerns video interaction, which may show numerous subtypes, yet it is invariably realised for the sake of the viewer, a computer or a mobile phone user. Video interactants may be fictional characters, politicians and other public figures, celebrities or ordinary people. Significantly, YouTubers themselves may feature in their videos either as themselves or performing fictional roles, thanks to which they may duly gain wide popularity, even beyond the Internet.

The general participatory framework underlying video interaction encompasses the speaker and several hearer categories, typical also of everyday interaction (for the discussion of the full model, see Dynel, 2010, 2011e; cf. Goffman, 1981; Clark and Carlson, 1982; Bell, 1984, 1991; Schober and Clark, 1989; Clark and Schaefer, 1987, 1992; Levinson, 1988). Firstly, *ratified participants*, also called *interlocutors*, are the individuals taking part in an exchange and are divided into the *speaker* and *ratified hearers*. The speaker is a participant whose turn is in progress (Goodwin, 1981), in other words the one (or ones in the case of a *collective speaker* role) producing an utterance via any communicative channel or mode. At the reception end, two types of ratified hearers can be distinguished: the *addressee* and the *third party*. The addressee is a hearer to whom the speaker directs a given utterance, usually (but not always) as indicated by verbal cues (e.g. second person pronouns) and non-verbal cues (e.g. direct gaze) (e.g. Goodwin, 1981). The third party is a ratified listener to whom an utterance is not addressed but who is fully entitled to listen to it and make inferences, according to the speaker's communicative intention. Secondly, *unratified hearers* or *overhearers* are those to whom the speaker does not wish to communicate any meanings, whilst they do listen and make inferences. Overhearers are divided into the *bystander* and the *eavesdropper*. The speaker, and usually also ratified hearers, are cognisant of the bystander's listening in on their interaction, while they are oblivious to the eavesdropper's overhearing. The eavesdropper may sometimes be engaged in a stealthy activity, but this is by no means a defining feature of this category.

Depending on the specific origin and purpose of each YouTube video and the nature of each interaction therein, different hearer roles may be involved. Generally, whilst extracts of feature films, series or serials will exhibit a full spectrum of ratified and unratified hearer roles, fragments of televised broadcast (e.g. debates or interview shows) and shows typically feature only ratified participants. Here is a transcribed extract from a video entitled ''One of chef Ramsay's funny moments during Masterchef competition'':

Example 1: An interaction involving ratified hearers from a television show
[In a studio, Gordon and two other judges are sitting in three chairs vis-à-vis the contestant, who is standing at a cooking station and preparing a dish.]

1    Contestant: How are you guys doing?
2    Gordon Ramsay: How are you?
3    Contestant: Good.

4    Gordon Ramsay: First name is?
5    Contestant: My name's Dustin.
6    Gordon Ramsay: Good. What are you cooking?
7    Contestant: So I'm doing a traditional English-style sausage roll with an Italian twist on it.
8    Gordon Ramsay: Well. . . Hold on a minute. Sausage roll?
9    Contestant: Yeah, sausage roll
10   Gordon Ramsay: Here?
11   Contestant: Yeah, well, I figure. I have [points with his hand] English! Italian! Try to, you know, kill two birds with one stone.
12   Gordon Ramsay: I'm f***ing Scottish.
13   Contestant [looking down]: Ahhhh
     [laughter]
(http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ds63tsJscK0)

This interaction opens with the contestant's addressing the three judges (1), one of whom duly takes the floor and addresses him (2). Starting from this turn, Ramsay and the contestant continue an exchange (3--13), playing the roles of the speaker and the addressee alternately, while the other two judges perform the role the third party.

It may be claimed that although Gordon may control the discourse by asking the questions and initiating the repair sequences, in his replies, the contestant still addresses all of the judges since the information he conveys is just as relevant to them. Also, the significant non-verbal cue (eye gaze) is of little help in determining whether this is the case, since the contestant has started preparing the meal, and he does not seem to be looking at Gordon Ramsey during the entire exchange. Indeed, the division between the addressee and the third party is sometimes not an unequivocal one and may actually be communicatively insignificant. The choice of Ramsey as the addressee, in a technical sense, is motivated by the fact that, in each of his turns, the contestant responds to Ramsey's preceding utterance, and (very likely) expects him to be the next speaker (cf. Goffman, 1981). In addition, even when the contestant points to and shifts his eye gaze towards the presumably Italian judge while providing his rationale (11), he still seems to orientate his answer to Ramsey, the author of the preceding turn.

A salient case is that of no hearer being present in a YouTube video, which may take many forms, such as a stand-up performance or a musical performance. Such is also the case with videos which show dishes being made. Preparing a meal, Ramsay is talking to the viewer, whether he is speaking off-screen, or whether he is looking into the camera eye or focusing on cooking, as the short extract below from ''Gordon Ramsay's Ultimate Cookery Course S01E01'' exemplifies.

Example 2: A monologue from a televised cookery course
[A shot of a modern house from the garden. As the camera moves closer to the house, Ramsay can be seen through the window, making twisting movements with his hands] Ramsay: In this series, I'm gonna surprise you and [Ramsay is seasoning meat with a wooden pepper or salt mill, but his face cannot be seen] strip away all the complexity [Ramsay is sitting on a table, looking into the camera eye] and hard graft, and teach you [camera shows a dish] how to cook amazing food, [roast meat is being cut, only his hands can be seen] standing on your head. That's amazing. [Ramsay is shown looking down, most likely at the meat he has just cut] Incredibly tender. (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xxeMJfpHqo)

Regardless of what can be seen on the screen, Ramsay's utterances are directed to the viewer. This is a mass-mediated version of what is commonly known as *monologue*, i.e. a speech or a presentation (e.g. a stand-up comedy performance, a political address, or vlogging) made by one speaker in front of the hearer(s), whether or not physically present. Contrary to what the folk understanding of the term may be, monologue is here regarded as a type of interaction. This is because one speaker's discourse is necessarily meant to be heard by hearers/a hearer (as opposed to self-talk). In the case of a mass-mediated monologue, when the speaker is talking directly to the camera eye, he/she seems to be addressing the viewer, here a YouTuber in front of the screen, the sole type of ratified hearer in this type of mass-mediated interaction. Nevertheless, listening to the speaker's monologue, a viewer cannot be conceived as the addressee but a distinct type of hearer, inasmuch as he/she does not enjoy the addressee's interactional privileges. The addressee, as technically defined, is an interlocutor in an interaction whose ratification the speaker frequently signals by verbal and nonverbal cues (e.g. eye contact and second person pronouns) and who has the right to reply to the preceding turn (Goffman, 1981; see Dynel, 2010 and references therein). Even though the speaker's address cues may be present, the viewer cannot directly contribute to the already recorded discourse (whether or not legitimately in terms of social norms) and thereby affect it, being a hearer on a distinct communicative level. Nonetheless, a YouTube viewer may assume another participatory role and enjoy interactional privileges on a different communicative level, being able to contribute videos and/or text

responses, as long as allowed by the page/channel owner (see Section 2.3). This is, though, a stage of interaction distinct from video recipiency as such.

## 2.2. *The second level of communication on YouTube: senders and recipients*

The second level of communication concerns YouTube viewers and their interpretation of YouTube video discourse. Regarding the hearer-related status of the viewer, the claim prevailing in the literature on media talk, which might potentially be applied to new media talk as well, is that media audiences are overhearers or overhearing audience (see Dynel, 2011a for references). This is not merely a matter of labels. Bubel (2008) validates the postulate that viewers are overhearers by referring to a concept of ''intended'' or ''targeted'' overhearers in everyday interaction (e.g. Goffman, 1981; Levinson, 1988; Clark and Schaefer, 1992; Bell, 1984, 1991) and a proposal that speakers sometimes purpose to disclose meanings to overhearers (Clark and Schaefer, 1992). However, as argued earlier (Dynel, 2010, 2011b,e), this view seems to be rooted in folk understandings of social standards and roles, which should have no bearing on linguistic definitions and formal parlance. Disclosure is necessarily contingent on the speaker's intention to convey a meaning to a hearer. Hence, intending an individual to listen and understand his/her turn, the speaker must ratify the hearer, irrespective of social contexts (e.g. strangers in an elevator) or spatial circumstances (e.g. people in different rooms). Therefore, also the well-entrenched viewer-overhearer conceptualisation appears to be ill-advised. The viewer is a type of ratified hearer on the second communicative level, which entails participating in the on-screen (first level) interaction from the outside.

Whilst employing the label ''overhearer'', a number of authors do concede explicitly that televised discourse is devised for the audience's understanding (e.g. Bell, 1984; Heritage, 1985; Scannell, 1991; Livingstone and Lunt, 1994; Fetzer, 1999, 2000, 2006; O'Keeffe, 2006; Hutchby, 1991, 2006). Some also rightly observe that the label ''overhearer'' used in reference to media audience is inaccurate, if not misleading (Scannell, 1991; Hutchby, 2006; O'Keeffe, 2006; Lorenzo-Dus, 2009). Viewers are then regarded as ratified hearers and, following Goffman's (1981) ''imagined recipients'' and Hutchby's (2006) ''distributed recipients'', they may be technically dubbed *recipients*, which is pertinent to the viewers of both television broadcast and films, series and serials (Dynel, 2011a,b,c,d; cf. e.g. Goffman, 1981; Bell, 1984; Heritage, 1985; Scannell, 1991; Livingstone and Lunt, 1994; Fetzer, 1999, 2000, 2006; O'Keeffe, 2006; Hutchby, 2006; Lorenzo-Dus, 2009).

Viewers of YouTube videos resemble traditional media viewers in many ways, as Bou-Franch et al. (2012) also acknowledge. Therefore, engaged in an act of watching YouTube videos, their nature regardless, YouTube viewers can also be classified as ratified hearers external to each interaction and each interactional turn shown in a video, and thus participating in it on the second communicative level, external to video interactants' level. In this vein, Lorenzo-Dus et al. (2011) are averse to the conceptualisation of (YouTube) viewers as overhearers, insofar as the discourse is produced precisely to be broadcast to them.

It must be stressed that in the context of YouTube videos, illegitimate viewing is hardly possible, and hence bystanders or eavesdroppers (as defined here) among YouTube users are practically inconceivable. Posting videos on YouTube, Internauts expect them to be watched by unspecified/anonymous mass audiences (cf. Bou-Franch et al., 2012) with hardly any restrictions. Theoretically speaking, one might perceive as ''eavesdroppers'' those who are not eligible to have access to certain programmes (Bell, 1991). Nonetheless, strictly speaking, such viewers do not share the features of overhearers, whether eavesdroppers or bystanders, commonly defined as unratified hearers, since (post-)television talk is directed to the general public. Indeed, some videos may be restricted on legal or social grounds, at least to some prospective audience members (e.g. a child should not watch a video rife with expletives). However, such viewing cannot be classified as an act of eavesdropping, from the perspective of linguistics or communication theory. As Bell (1984, 1991) also observes, in mass communication, it is impossible to determine all members of the target audience (in his words, the ''addressees''). As in the case of television broadcasts or releases, the prospective YouTube target audience of a given video may be envisaged only to an extent (e.g. people interested in cuisine), while any actual viewer assumes the role of the recipient, a ratified hearer on a communicative level distinct from that of the interaction on the computer (or mobile phone) screen.

Also, given the number of personal revelations a video may contain or the degree of a video's intelligibility to the general audience, from the perspective of social theory, YouTube videos may be dubbed ''publically private'' or ''privately public'' (Lange, 2008). However, having decided to widely publicise their videos, YouTubers need to conceive of any potential audience member as a ratified hearer, a hearer who has every right to access the video, notwithstanding any personal, social or legal restrictions. Even if a video poster should wish chosen individuals or even social groups not to watch it, they cannot be considered unratified hearers from the perspective of communication theory. In addition, while YouTubers may form networks, affiliating with others as YouTube friends or subscribers, and may tag their videos in a way that makes them more difficult to find by unaffiliated individuals (see Lange, 2008), it would be unsubstantiated to claim that because of this, affiliated YouTube users are ratified, whilst others are not.

The video viewer (at the reception end) can be juxtaposed with the video author and/or the individual who releases it on YouTube (at the production end), a distinct participant category typical of this CMC format. A YouTuber who contributes a video may coincide with the video author and is termed the ''sender''. The (collective) sender's role is prototypically performed by professional crew members (Dynel, 2011a,b,c,d), whose work can underpin non-authorial YouTube videos,

i.e. videos merely posted by individual YouTubers but created by professionals and frequently mass-mediated also elsewhere. The label ''sender'' seems preferable to ''speaker'', given the multi-modal nature of a video, and the fact that the poster of a video need not be directly responsible for any utterances contributed on the first level of communication (i.e. in the video).

Based on Bell's (1991) postulate of embedding, which holds for news stories, production layers and sublayers are here distinguished for YouTube videos. Such (sub)layers represent discursive and cinematic techniques (scriptwriting, acting, directing, camerawork, editing, etc.), which may be the result of the production crew's work or just one individual's work. Once uploaded, a video may go down well only to further proliferate, being posted by other YouTube users, who thereby also assume the role of senders. If a YouTuber publicises a (modified) version of an otherwise released artefact (e.g. an extract of a feature film or a televised programme), he/she may still be considered its YouTube sender, on the top layer. Essentially, both a YouTuber who uploads a video and the production crew in the inner production layer, whether or not professional, are here conceptualised as constituting the collective sender, whose ultimate product is comprised of several production sublayers. Overall, depending on the production format and layering, three paramount categories of YouTube videos can be discerned.

Some YouTube videos do not differ from televised programmes, the sole distinction being their division into parts, for technical reasons. Latterly, however, even one-hour videos can be uploaded. These videos may be released officially on YouTube channels, such as the official Gordon Ramsay channel (http://www.youtube.com/user/gordonramsay), or they may be publicised by individual YouTubers.

On the other hand, YouTubers may post their authorial videos, epitomised by vlogging. Vlogging videos are shot with the use of a camera or a mobile phone, their authors being individuals or production teams who then release videos, using their YouTube accounts. In addition, typically, the owner of a YouTube account on which a video is posted is (or is seen as) its author, or at least one of its authors. Such is the case with cuisine vlogging (e.g. ''Five Rules For a Perfect Steak'' available at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jDEfyXtEyQ).

Sandwiched between the two is the third category of video: programmes and films released earlier but purposefully modified by YouTube users, who hence become their ''top layer'' authors. YouTube users' involvement in the co- production may boil down to editing (deleting or merging scenes) or may be more profound, as a result of which the meaning of the original programme or film is changed or even distorted. In the case of a programme which has originally been popularised outside YouTube, the underlying layer is rendered as several sublayers in the process of pre- production (e.g. script writing), production (e.g. shooting) and post-production (e.g. sound editing), all geared towards facilitating the recipient's understanding. The second layer involves a YouTube user's input, which may entail serious modifications in a chosen video extract, or it may reside only in editing or merely publicising a video in an unchanged form. For example, topical compilations of selected extracts can be found, such as ''Hell's Kitchen-Top Ten Ramsay One-Liners'' (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLXRxXIkjB0). Its sender, Katie G, presents a selection of numbered scenes from the series, originally produced by Gordon Ramsay and the entire crew, the collective sender responsible for the underlying layer.

A distinct query concerns the nature of the communication between the sender, here a YouTube user who contributes a video, and the recipient with regard to his/her focus on the sender's output or the first level of communication, i.e. the level of the speaker and hearer(s) in a video. While the (collective) sender will purpose to communicate meanings to prospective recipients, the latter's conscious interaction with the former appears to depend on the character and objectives of a video.

Given that full feature films can hardly be posted on YouTube (due to copyright infringement), the recipient's appreciation of the fictional level of communication of feature films may not come into play frequently. Typically, viewers cannot fully engage in the plot as they would, watching a feature film on television or in cinema (Dynel, 2011b). On the other hand, full episodes of television series can sometimes be found, in which case YouTube recipients may show the involvement in the storyline as recipients of televised episodes do.

Also, an act of watching YouTube videos on a computer or mobile screen extracted from television broadcast will, in all likelihood, be the same as in the case programmes aired on television. Viewers may be focused on the content of the video, rather than consciously pondering the YouTube sender's goals or reason for posting it, as evidenced by recipient's commentaries, forming a distinct level of communication (cf. Section 2.3). For instance, one of the controversial episodes of Kitchen Nightmares invites comments on a couple of vociferous restaurateurs this episode features (''Kitchen Nightmares – Amy's Baking Company, Full Version'').

Example 3: Comments on a video, earlier a televised episode of a  show



OMY, I LOVE KATY and the other server seems super sweet, BUT I would bet $1,000 that Amy and would also add Sammi as full blown drug addicts, that behavior is typical of severe drug addicts, if I were to guess on the drug usage, it's possible to be a snowball mix of meth and herion smoked, or I would say over a 100 mg of Oxy or Percocet everyday from Amy and takes daily Xanax and must have other powerful psycho drugs

Reply  ·

**CodyAkA Koozer**   34 minutes ago
meeting you for the first time, you are both nuts....hahahha i know...holy shit

Reply  ·

**KillerBunny084**   1 hour ago
They both need so much counseling. It's unreal.

Reply  ·

**Kenisha Jamison**   1 hour ago
Are u serious? That explains why Chef Ramsey said they were so good lol

Reply  ·   in reply to chillywilly541 (Show the comment)

**clockworkladyJaz**   3 hours ago
I feel bad for their cats but oh my god, thank goodness they don't have human children.
x.x

Reply  ·

**samme79**   3 hours ago
Fuck me.. That lady is the absolute definition of a fucking retard

Reply  ·

**mollebjornen**   3 hours ago
Lol, really? And then she acts like she cooked them... The court system must be mad not to have locked her up yet.

Reply  ·   in reply to chillywilly541 (Show the comment)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XjgHEctcy0

In the light of the commentaries, it seems evident that the YouTubers can be engaged in the content of a YouTube video, originally a programme aired on television. Focused on the video interaction, they may not even recognise the YouTube sender or credit him/her for publicising the video. The YouTube sender seems to be ''invisible'', while the focus is on the video interaction, similarly to televised programmes.

However, viewers of videos, besides following the first-level interaction, may also focus on the sender and evaluate a video according to relevant criteria, such as its formal structure, humorousness or usefulness, as in the case of cooking videos. Essentially, recipients may sometimes concentrate more on the sender than on the video's content and/on the interaction within. This does not change the interactional status of the speaker in the video or the hearer, viz. the recipient, who duly takes the floor in online interaction. This will be the most common case with authorial videos on personal channels, as the example below testifies. It comes from a discussion (the level of comments, cf. Section 2.3, which bears out what recipients may pay attention to) following a video entitled ''Five Rules For a Perfect Steak'':

Example 4: Comments to the sender of a vlogging  video



**gblaw5**   1 day ago
Nice job Dave. I would also remind people that the when you remove the steak from the pan, the temperature will actually continue to rise for about another five minutes (depending on the thickness of the meat). So, remove it BEFORE it gets to your desired temp. Also, a cast iron skillet works great for a steak. Don't use a non stick pan if you want a good sear and good color. Use cast iron or stianless steel. Cheers
Reply  ·  👍 👎

**Dave Beaulieu**   17 hours ago
Thanks for the tips!
Reply  ·  👍 👎  in reply to gblaw5

**Daniel Starks**   3 days ago
I LOVE your channel!!! You are so great at communicating while you are cooking, thank you and keep up the great videos!
Reply  ·  👍 👎

**Dave Beaulieu**   1 day ago
Will do...and spread the word!
Reply  ·  👍 👎

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jDEfyXtEyQ

Insofar as viewers know that the sender (who is simultaneously the speaker in the video) is an ordinary YouTuber, they take the liberty of addressing him while evaluating his contributions, rather than commenting on them without signalling the addressee. This vlogging video on cooking seems to serve the same purpose as a professionally made television programme, namely to offer a recipe, but its reception may be different, with recipients being mindful of the  sender's authorial output. Here, the sender coincides with the video speaker, thanks to which the viewer will  find  themselves entitled to reply to him. Such interaction with the sender is also possible in partly authorial videos (such as ''Hell's Kitchen- Top Ten Ramsay One-Liners''), where some input on the YouTube sender's part can be observed. Essentially, YouTube facilitates interactions with the sender, not necessarily in reference to the video. This brings the present discussion to the third communicative level in the framework: YouTubers' comments and their verbal exchanges.

*2.3. The level of comments: YouTube speakers and  hearers*

Traditional media communication is known to be primarily one-way communication (Morris and Ogan, 1996; Jucker, 2003),  with audience's participation being restricted to active recipiency, i.e. gleaning meanings communicated by participants on the first communicative level shown on the screen. Even though television recipients may take the floor and exchange their views in private, conversing with one another about the programmes or films they are watching/have  watched, they are very rarely actively involved in the synchronous co-construction of mass-mediated discourse. However, viewers' active involvement, i.e. contributing to interactions, in televised programmes is nowadays possible thanks  to phone calls, as well as texting and e-mails which are duly shown on the screen (Fetzer, 2000, 2006). Also, televised programmes  and films  now  use  Facebook  and  other  means  of  interaction,  whereby  viewers  can  asynchronously  communicate  with the authors and one another. Viewers' active involvement is central to mass CMC (Morris and Ogan, 1996), for instance in the form of live active commentaries on what they see (Chovanec, 2010, 2011). The notion of ''media dialogue'' is also pertinent to YouTube (Jones and Schieffelin, 2009), where viewers can interact publicly, even if they cannot modify already publicised videos, just as television viewers cannot change the storyline of a feature  film.

While YouTube is essentially a video-sharing site, it may be employed conversationally by users, as Herring (2011) notes in passing, calling it CMCMC (convergent media computer-mediated communication). She thus suggests that text- based CMC on YouTube occurs on convergent media platforms, in which it is typically secondary, by design, to other activities, such as media viewing. Whether or not originally of lesser significance than video-sharing, exchanges of posts are now  inherent in YouTube interaction, which may be recognised as YouTube videos' advantage over televised programmes and films. The character of videos notwithstanding, YouTube viewers are entitled to contribute their comments and air their views so that they are available to mass audiences, thereby interacting with other,  frequently anonymous, participants hidden under nicknames (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2011; Bou-Franch et al., 2012). YouTubers can

share their opinions about videos through many channels, for instance in personal face-to-face communication. Most importantly, however, YouTubers may communicate their views to the wide audience comprised of other YouTubers. Also, they may hold interactions on topics unrelated to videos as such (see Example 5 below). It must be stressed that the topics of comments, whether they concern the interaction in the video, its author or earlier commentaries, have no bearing on the participatory framework. Essentially, YouTubers' posts make for a distinct level of interaction.

According to the participatory framework championed here in the light of turn-taking, whether synchronous or asynchronous, posting their comments, YouTubers take the floor, whereby they assume the speaking role, whilst reading posted comments, YouTubers perform ratified hearers' roles. Rather than producing utterances orally, speakers (in a technical sense) post their turns in a written form to be further read by individuals who take the role of hearers. This type of communication exhibits intrinsic characteristics, such as asynchronicity, which allows participants more time to compose and revise their messages (Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2010), which does not have a bearing on the participatory framework. Also, since participants may alternatingly enter and leave the interactional space (Bou-Franch et al., 2012), they may contribute single messages or take the floor a number of times (Marcoccia, 2004), adding several comments under one video, typically in reply to other comments or the video, which are supposed to be read and interpreted by other YouTubers, a potential mass audience.

Forming a mass audience, readers of YouTube comments are sometimes conceived as distributed recipients, just as YouTube viewers (Lorenzo-Dus et al., 2011). Drawing on Scannell's (1991) notion of double articulation proposed for broadcast discourse designed to be heard by the audience, Bou-Franch et al. (2012) suggest that YouTube commentators engage in one-to-one interactions or intergroup discussions available to wider audiences. In all likelihood, it is because of their wide availability that YouTubers' posts are discussed in the context of distributed recipiency (Hutchby, 2006), and the readers of comments are likened to the recipients of broadcast talk. However, a doubt arises as to whether this is a well-founded approach, and whether readers of YouTube comments can be placed on the same footing as viewers of YouTube videos.

Indeed, the speaker (the author of a post) directs his/her turn to an infinite number of potential hearers, an imagined mass of Internet users (Burgess and Green, 2008), optionally picking one or more individuals, notably the sender of a video or the author of an earlier turn (another post), as the addressee. Nevertheless, one-to-many written turns can be conceived as a special type of everyday interaction facilitated by computer technology, just as letters and mobile phones would enable one-to-one interactions and one-to-many interactions (cf. promotional letters and texts addressed to many individuals). Such one-to many turns are special only in that they can be directed to many, sometimes millions of, hearers. The latter are usually anonymous and access the turns at different times, hence leading to the asynchronicity central to YouTubers' communication. While recipients of films and programmes in (new) mass media cannot typically affect the shape of a released video (but may publish another one based on the former version) and cannot participate on an equal footing with each of the interactants shown on the television or computer screen, interpreters of YouTube comments can reply or contribute to an interaction with new comments. However, unlike in face-to-face interaction, the reception of a written turn will naturally be delayed in time (whether by a few seconds if a hearer is on-line when a post appears, or much longer than that), and the speaker has little certainty about who exactly the hearer(s) will be, that is who will take the hearer's role by reading his/her comment.

Also relevant in this context is Marcoccia's (2004) discussion of ''polylogues'' in newsgroups, which are similar to YouTube posts in terms of their interactional format. He distinguishes between two main types of participants: senders (divided into three levels of production format, Goffman, 1981), and readers,[3] who show a three-party configuration of reception roles: the simple ''reader/eavesdropper'', the ''favoured recipient'' (the main addressee) and the ''addressed recipient''. This conceptualisation shows a few methodological problems. First of all, it is difficult to tell the difference between the second and the third category of readers, who are not defined. Secondly, assuming that newsgroups rely on asynchronous communication and messages can be read by any Internaut, he indicates that eavesdroppers are simultaneously ratified participants. Marcoccia explicitly recognises this paradox: ''A knows that B is listening to him/her (B is a ratified participant) but cannot see B and does not know who he/she is (B is an eavesdropper)'' (2004:140). This paradox stems from the fact that Marcoccia (2004) regards an eavesdropper as an individual whose identity the speaker does not know. This seems to be a tenuous claim in the light of how this hearer type is typically defined in interactional studies, namely: a hearer of whose presence the speaker is oblivious (Dynel, 2010, 2011e; and references therein). On the whole, to circumvent the ratified eavesdropper's problem, one may take as a departure point an assumption that, in the case of any public/media discourse, there is hardly any possibility of unratified hearers being present. Publicising a turn, a speaker must be mindful of the fact that it will be widely available and may potentially reach even those to whom the speaker does not wish to communicate a given message, that is whom the speaker does not wish to ratify but actually does by making his/her message public, and hence widely available.

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[3] Apart from this, he distinguishes three (fluid) kinds of participant roles: ''simple readers'', ''casual senders'', and ''hosts''. These three categories are irrelevant here, for they appear to be focused on the degree of individuals' engagement in newsgroups, rather than differentiate between production and reception roles.

In essence, YouTube offers virtual online space for comments (whilst senders have a possibility of blocking or deleting comments), which forms a distinct level of communication between on-line interlocutors: speakers, i.e. producers of turns, and ratified hearers, i.e. individuals who do read them, thereby taking the role speakers assign to them. To be classified as hearers, YouTubers need to assume the role assigned to them and need to read a given commentary. If they do not, they are no longer participants in an asynchronous interaction and they are not hearers, the speaker's intention notwithstanding. This squares with the widely recognised tenet that participatory roles are negotiated by interactants (Goodwin, 1981).

The ratified hearers bifurcate into the addressee and the third party (cf. Section 2.1). The addressee of a comment is determined in the light of a number of criteria, most importantly: the content of the message, i.e. its relevance to the video sender or a speaker who has produced an earlier comment, terms of address, mainly the use of nicknames or second person pronouns, and the position of the message in the structure of an exchange, with a turn being sometimes addressed to the author of the preceding one. Posting a comment, one may choose an option ''reply'' under a chosen post, whereby the previous speaker is addressed and one topical strand can develop with two or more participants contributing to it. YouTube comments may then amount to exchanges forming conversations showing turn-by-turn patterns reminiscent of everyday conversation, yet being available to other ratified participants, the third parties, as well. This can be appreciated, based on the following example, a discussion following ''Hell's Kitchen- Top Ten Ramsay One-Liners'':

Example 5: Commentaries forming coherent speaker-addressee-third parties interaction



SashaR  2 weeks ago
This comment has received too many negative votes  show

Katie G  2 weeks ago
Because he has the strength of 10 Chuck Norris's and the skills of 25 Ninjas.
Reply · 70 👍 👎  in reply to SashaR

Kenny McCormick  1 week ago
No he doesn't .. he just has a Big Mouth
Reply · 👍 👎  in reply to Katie G

Katie G  1 week ago
He has to have a big mouth to match his big heart and big muscles.
Reply · 3 👍 👎  in reply to Kenny McCormick

Kenny McCormick  1 week ago
alrite ill talk to you later then .. when you are done sucking his cock.
Reply · 👍 👎  in reply to Katie G (Show the comment)

Katie G  1 week ago
You're just jealous because Gordon Ramsay rules the world and you're stuck at home streaming South Park episodes and stroking your tiny dick.
Reply · 10 👍 👎  in reply to Kenny McCormick (Show the comment)

Kanira Shah  1 week ago
"Gordon Ramsay rules the world" hhahahhahahahahahhaa... Katie why do you care who insults Ramsay .. he doesn't even know you exist, you need to get a life. Stop wasting your time picking arguments .. Lol..
Reply · 👍 👎  in reply to Katie G (Show the comment)

Katie G  1 week ago
Doesn't know I exist? That's hilarious. Gordon knows who I am and even owns 2 of my drawings. Don't believe me? Just ask one of my 70+ HK Friends including 2 legendary runner-ups who are expecting me next month at their restaurants!

You're the one who needs to get a life, Troll.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLXRxXIkjB0

This written interaction involves Katie G, the sender of the video promoting this conversation, and a few other YouTubers, who exchange jibes, rather than discuss the video. In response to SashaR's comment, most likely in the form of a question (no longer available), Katie G provides a reply addressed to him/her. Irrespective of whether this turn has reached SashaR, it is another interactant, Kenny McCormick, that contributes a turn addressing Katie G. The two then address a few turns to each other until Kanira Shah self-selects as the next speaker, addressing Katie G, who ultimately addresses to the former the last turn presented above. Each of the speakers engaged in this coherent exchange addresses the previous speaker and simultaneously ratifies all other YouTubers. Each individual who reads any of the turns becomes a third party, thus participating in a given turn as a ratified non-addressed hearer.

However, some comments may show little coherence or cohesion (cf. Bou-Franch et al., 2012), being isolated free- floating turns, with any reader being a ratified hearer, yet not the addressee (who may not be specified at all), as exemplified by the comments inspired by ''GORDON RAMSAY Great British Nightmare UK THE DOVECOTE and THE RUNAWAY GIRL''. While in dyadic face-to-face interactions, the sole hearer typically coincides with the addressee (save self-talk), in YouTube commentaries, unless the addressee is signalled by dint of verbal cues (the use of a second person pronoun or nickname) or non-verbal cues (the ''reply to'' option), ratified hearers typically coincide with the third party.

Example 6: Free-floating commentaries forming speaker-third parties interaction

**Des Biondi**  9 hours ago
I really want this show to be adapted into game, with microphone support and swearing to the chefs all the hell i want to get the point!
Reply

**Anjem Choudary**  11 hours ago
American kitchen Nightmares: *BLEEP* *BLEEP* *BLEEP*

British Kitchen Nightmares: FUCK! TWAT! BASTARD! SHIT! WAAAANKER!!!!
Reply

**iamtheyi**  16 hours ago
good god I love the UK version
Reply

**Jillyciousification**  1 day ago
Ramsay kinda makes me scared :D he's so aggressive I wouldn't wanna meet him in person :D
Reply

**SonyNafi**  1 day ago
GORDON RAMSAY Great British Nightmare UK THE DOVECOTE and THE RUNAWAY GIRL Part 2 on A other YOUTUBE CHANNEL /watch?v=VgLICF94sA8
Reply

**starrocket666**  1 day ago
I like the uk version much better.More serious less for show and ratings,in turn makes it look and feel more real.
Reply

**drakemanification**  1 day ago
fucking hell, the toss pot with glasses blamed gordon in the revisit xD too expensive apparently, if you are earning thousands then why the fuck would you complain? So ungrateful
Reply

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rioUNTotSA8

As the selection of turns quoted above indicates, YouTube speakers' comments may show lack of coherence and cohesion, although not necessarily being dissociated topically. In the extract above, three speakers (Anjem Choudary, iamtheyi and starrocket666) point to the advantage of the British series over its American counterpart. However, none of speakers appears to indicate any of the previous speakers or other individuals as the addressee, tacitly allowing all YouTubers who read the comment to assume the role of ratified hearers. Even though no address cues are present (which is also possible in face-to-face interaction), such a hearer may still be conceptualised as the addressee, the central hearer on the same communicative level entitled to reply.

## 2.4. Vlogging and the three levels of communication

All that said, a question may arise as to the difference in the statuses of YouTube videos, especially vlogging ones, and YouTube commentaries, and thus as to the need to differentiate between the three communicative levels, and YouTubers' hearership statuses: recipients or addressees/third parties, respectively.[4] Specifically, a vlogging video might sometimes be considered to be the first turn of an online interaction (cf. the video inspiring the discussion in Example 4) or a reply to an earlier video, which in turn may be regarded as rendering the distinction between the three levels less clear. The pending query is whether a vlogger communicates with other YouTubers at the first, second, or third level, and hence what the viewer's role is.

In a vlogging monologue, the speaker appears to be addressing each YouTube viewer, who does not qualify as the addressee, however, because he/she is unable to affect the first-level interaction captured in the video, even if he/she may contribute to the interaction unfolding from the video by taking the speaking role. Interestingly, a video and a commentary do show some affinities, both being YouTube speakers' turns. A video may be followed by a video response (or even a few such responses), whilst submitting a post or a video reply, an individual performs the role of a speaker, which is the essence of turn-taking underlying the proposed participatory framework. Although both a video and a comment cannot change previous videos and comments (which is also the case of turns in face-to-face interaction), they can affect the nature of online interaction, inviting new videos or comments, which are markedly different ''turns'', though.

Comments are written computer-mediated utterances posted by individual speakers, who direct them to multiple unidentified but ratified hearers, similarly to turns in oral interactions where speakers talk to hearers (whether known or unfamiliar to him/her, and regardless of their number, cf. a speech in front of an audience). By contrast, videos are multi- layered artefacts and must be discussed as such, even if, taken holistically, they might be perceived as multi-modal turns on YouTube. They may open a new strand or reply to an earlier video, thereby forming a meta-interaction, on the third level of YouTube communication. However, vlogging is reminiscent of television broadcast, in which the speaker is talking to the camera eye (level one), as if addressing the recipient to whom the video is transmitted by the sender (level 2). Thanks to the affordances of ''post-television'', a vlogging YouTuber asynchronously performs two distinct roles: the speaker in the video (the first level), the sender (the second level), and may also be thought of as a YouTube interactant (the third level), which merge in the ultimate video received by YouTubers. Nevertheless, technically, videos publicised on post- television enjoy the status of broadcast and boast a few inherent formal characteristics of mass-mediated multi-modal and multi-layered messages, which is why they cannot be equated with commentaries, whilst vloggers cannot be reduced merely to speakers on the third level of communication (excluding cases when they take the floor by contributing commentaries as the interaction develops). Viewers, on the other hand, are recipients of videos, not addressees/third parties on the third level, even though they may address the sender, thanks to the communicative advantages YouTube affords. The proposed participatory framework, therefore, holds also for vlogging videos.

## 3. Conclusion and final comments

This paper contributed to the theory on computer-mediated communication and advocated a new participatory framework holding for multi-party interaction on YouTube against the backdrop of the scholarship on multi-party interaction in new media and on participation models beyond the speaker-hearer dyad underlying (non)fictional televised discourse. It was argued that YouTube users' participation is more complex than that of television viewers, who are involved primarily as recipients of media discourse and are still relatively rarely actively involved in its co-construction, even though there are more and more programmes which do invite viewers' direct participation, as well as indirect participation (e.g. via Facebook). Generally, YouTubers engage in asynchronous computer-mediated interaction, changing their participatory statuses at the production and reception ends. In terms of the latter, YouTubers are conceptualised as: (1) (un)ratified hearers/listeners in videos, (2) recipients who watch videos, and (3) addressees and

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[4] I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out to me.

Level of sender-recipient interaction

SENDER 2 → RECIPIENT

(COLLECTIVE) SENDER 1

Level of video interaction

SPEAKER → THIRD PARTY

ADDRESSEE

OVERHEARER
(bystander/eavesdropper)

Level of YouTube comments
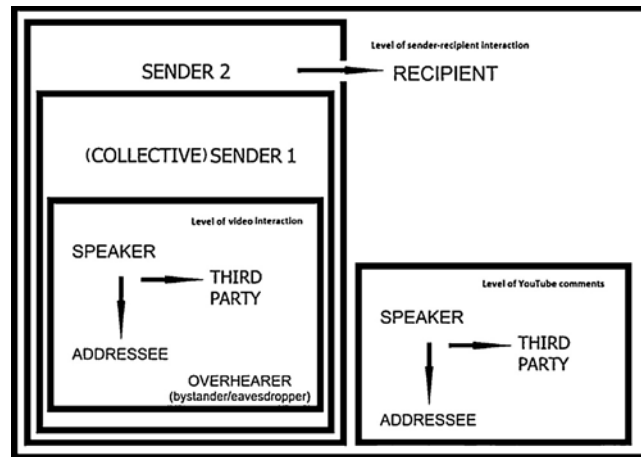
SPEAKER → THIRD PARTY

ADDRESSEE

Fig. 1. Participation framework in YouTube interaction.

non-addressed ratified hearers (third parties) who read one another's commentaries. On the other hand, YouTubers are active at the production end by: (1) taking the floor as speakers in videos, (2) authoring and posting videos as senders, and
(3) YouTube speakers commenting on videos or replying to earlier posts.

The extended participatory framework developed to cover YouTube interaction resides in three levels of communication: the level of the speaker and hearers/listeners in video interaction, the level of the sender (together with the embedded collective sender) and the recipient of a video, as well as the level of the YouTube speaker who produces a comment and YouTube hearers who read it. These communicative levels are constituted by: interactants in videos and (collective) sender, i.e. the production crew (both typical of televised films and broadcasts), together with YouTube users, who may perform both of these roles.

The schematic representation of the participation model proposed here (Fig. 1) takes into account all possible roles for each turn inspired by one video, not all of which always come into play, however. This figure does not indicate the time relations between the turns materialising at the three levels or the actual number of individuals performing each role. In practice, one individual may perform various roles, yet typically one at a time. For instance, a recipient may duly assume the role of the speaker by submitting a comment, and then the addressee, should another YouTuber reply to it. The roles which the recipient may consider as being simultaneously performed, such as an interactant in a video who is also its sender (as in vlogging), are actually asynchronously performed and markedly distinct.

On the level of video interaction, a turn is produced by the speaker and is prototypically directed to the ratified hearers on the first level (the addressee and the third party), and may be optionally overheard by unratified hearers (the bystander or the eavesdropper). None of the hearers on this level of communication is obligatory, whilst the only hearer involved may be the recipient, to whom the speaker appears to address his monologue (as in vlogging). The recipient is the ratified hearer on the second level of communication (not the addressee of a monologue, an overhearer or any other unratified participant), for whose benefit the (collective) sender produces a video and releases it on YouTube.

The illustrative graph above allows two layers of senders, the lower one standing for the production crew and the upper one denoting the YouTuber who posts a video and who may coincide with the lower-layer sender, the author of the video, in which case the two layers may be merged into one. The reception end involves the recipient, a ratified hearer coinciding with a YouTube user who watches a video, following the interaction (or, technically, each of its turns) performed on the first level of communication. Also, depending on the nature of a YouTube video, the watching recipient may also consciously interact with its sender, for instance evaluating the latter's ideas or video production skills. The fact that the recipient may consciously interact with the YouTube sender is visually indicated by the break in the sender 2 box.

Finally, YouTubers may interact as speakers and ratified hearers on the level of comments, which involves the speaker and ratified hearers. A comment may, but does not have to, be addressed to a chosen individual or chosen individuals, who may then take the addressee's role while reading it. On the other hand, other readers of the comment should be conceptualised as third parties, who are also the prototypical hearers if no cues signalling address are present.

This framework of interaction appears to capture the communicative activities and participatory roles YouTube affords nowadays. Nonetheless, given that new media never cease developing, novel interactive possibilities may arise in the future, thus necessitating further modifications in the model.

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