

Older people's identities on YouTube: an interactional account

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Abstract

How do older people present and manage their age identities, and other social identities, through their YouTube videos and interactions with their viewers? Older YouTubers are a growing but frequently overlooked part of older people's online presence. This thesis adopts a two phase approach, incorporating a quantitative descriptive analysis of a corpus of 121 YouTube videos by people aged sixty and over, and an ethnomethodological analysis, and specifically a membership categorisation analysis, of two groups within the corpus, older women beauty vloggers and older men gun reviewers, and their commentators. The first study finds that older people make YouTube videos in a wide range of genres with viewers beyond their family and friends. The second study finds that older age categorisations are salient to older YouTubers and their commentators and they present and manage their identities through video production resources as well as through linguistic and embodied resources. Older YouTubers making beauty vlogs and gun review videos invoke their age and length of experience to build common ground with their viewers and to assert their epistemic rights to make assessments, give advice and head off potential challenges to their epistemic authority. Age is not the only or main identity they orient to and older women frequently co-articulate the identities of age and gender. Overall this thesis makes contributions to studies of online identities by examining older people's categori-

sation practices on YouTube and providing insights into YouTube as a setting for social interaction. It also contributes a novel methodological approach to studying YouTube. This thesis presents previously unknown descriptions of older YouTubers, their videos and engagement with their viewers. Methodologically it extends the ethnomethodological analysis of YouTube videos and comments. The findings demonstrate the importance of acknowledging that identities are interactionally presented and negotiated online.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

How do older people manage their identities on YouTube, both in the videos they post and the interactions they have with others through text comments under their videos? A common point of view among the public is that older people only use YouTube to watch videos or, if they do make videos, it is done with difficulty and only shared with a small circle of family and friends (Ferreira et al., 2017; Sayago et al., 2012). While this view of older people's use of digital video has been challenged (Ferreira et al., 2019; Waycott et al., 2013) this thesis goes further and shows that older people, aged sixty and over, are making and sharing videos on YouTube on a wide range of topics with audiences far beyond their immediate family and friends. Further, this thesis demonstrates that older people manage their identities locally and interactionally with others through YouTube.

Older people's use of YouTube is poorly understood and they are almost invisible in existing research on the platform (Ferreira et al., 2017). Earlier studies have prioritised discovering whether or not

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older people use YouTube at all, largely through self-reported measures (for example Dutton et al., 2013; A. Smith & Anderson, 2018), with little differentiation between the distinct activities of watching other people's videos, leaving comments on other people's videos and making their own videos. The content of videos made by older people has rarely been addressed in contrast to videos made by younger people and other specific groups in society (usefully summarised by Soukup, 2014). Importantly, the interactional aspects of older people using YouTube have not been treated as significant.

For older people in a social and cultural context in which they may be constrained by social norms and ageist stereotypes (Bytheway, 2005), YouTube can provide a new platform for articulating social identity. This thesis examines those YouTube videos made by older people that are intentionally produced and involve elements of scripting, staging or editing. These videos are a rich source of complex data which contain fine-grained detail of the topic, talk, and embodied actions of the people visible on screen. This is enhanced by how the video is set up, shot and edited to create a "produced account" (Jayyusi, 1988, p. 271) which is presented to the viewers. It also examines the various means by which YouTube, as a social networking site (Boyd & Ellison, 2007), enables interaction between YouTubers (people who publish videos) and their viewers including, notably, text comments.

This thesis aims to contribute to understanding how older people produce and negotiate age and other identities on YouTube through

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the intentional production and sharing of videos and through interaction with their viewers by presenting a two phase study design. The first phase addresses the lack of knowledge about older people's YouTube videos through a content analysis of a corpus of videos made by people aged sixty and over that was collected for this research. The second phases addresses older people's identity production through an ethnomethodological approach and specifically a membership categorisation analysis (MCA) of older people's identities and how they are negotiated interactionally. This ethnomethodological study addresses two specific contexts: beauty vlogs (video blogs) made by older women and gun review videos made by older men.

1.2 Motivation

This thesis sets out to deepen the understanding of phenomena associated with older people's YouTube videos and interactions with their viewers through text comments and the paratexts, defined by media scholar Simonsen (2014, pp. 216–217) as the additional information around the video on the YouTube platform and including the video title and description, keyword tags, the YouTube category to which the video is uploaded, and the channel name and description. It aims to move the research frame from whether or not older people use YouTube towards disentangling the constituent activities of watching videos, making and posting videos, and writing comments. This requires an in-depth investigation of older people's

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videos on YouTube and how older people make use of the available social, technical and interactional resources to create and share videos and interact with others.

YouTube as a platform

YouTube (youtube.com) is a highly popular and global social website. It has been the second most popular website in the world, after Google, since 2016 and the most widely used social networking site in the USA (A. Smith & Anderson, 2018). Sharing videos through YouTube, and through social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram and Twitter, is growing rapidly across all ages (Auxier & Anderson, 2021; Purcell, 2013) and YouTube hosted an estimated 4 billion videos by the end of 2016 (Bärthel, 2018).

YouTube is designed to make it easy for users to upload videos from a computer, camera or phone (Burgess & Green, 2009b, p. xiii). It is also designed to encourage and facilitate interaction between people who post videos and their viewers (Rotman & Preece, 2010). YouTube allows registered users to communicate with each other through written comments. These comments are public and appear under the video, are sequentially organised and can be read as threads (Housley et al., 2017a). Users can also rate videos with a graphical thumbs up for “like” and thumbs down for “dislike”. Viewers can connect to channels by subscribing so they are notified when a new video is uploaded. The number of subscriptions is understood as a public measure of a YouTuber’s popularity, along with

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the number of video views and comments, and an important feature in YouTube's search and recommendation rankings (Bishop, 2018; Rieder et al., 2018).

Interaction through YouTube is certainly different to spoken face to face conversation in key ways deriving from its asynchronous and non-co-present nature. Firstly, there is a loss of incrementality in building shared understanding. In face to face conversation participants jointly build understanding through back-and-forth turn taking which allows them to acknowledge, repair, clarify and extend what each other says (Gregoromichelaki et al., 2011). This allows social activities to be achieved collaboratively through a stepwise unfolding in time and in sequence and through verbal, vocal, visual and embodied resources (Mondada, 2012, p. 33). On YouTube asynchronicity does not allow for immediate repair and overlap. This may lead to misunderstandings but can also lead to the use of different linguistic resources in text comments such as the use of emojis, punctuation such as "??" or laughter markers such as "hehe" as additional interpretive resources to indicate the speaker's mood or stance (Meredith 2019a).

Secondly, the YouTuber creates the complete video and puts it online before any feedback is received from other participants. The video has a "complex format" (Hutchby & Tanna, 2008) compared to a face to face spoken utterance as it contains any number of identifiable actions. The YouTuber commonly addresses viewers directly through speech and directs gaze and gestures to the cam-

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era but to viewers who are neither temporally nor spatially present. In addition comments are not even quasi-synchronous: they may be left and replied to within minutes or years later. Unlike other asynchronous environments such as text messaging (Hutchby & Tanna, 2008) there is no social convention that a video on YouTube must be replied to. Posting a video on YouTube does not infer that all viewers have an obligation to respond. Indeed usually only a small proportion of a video's viewers do interact with the YouTuber by leaving a comment: a US survey found 13% of people watching video online left comments (Madden, 2007).

Rather than the turn-taking of conversation, the YouTuber has the interactional role of 'going first'. They set the topic and format of the video, for example whether it is a vlog, an instructional video or a music video. The YouTuber holds the "conversational floor" (Simpson, 2005) by setting the topic of the interaction and how it is being talked about. This is part of the "cohesive 'glue'" (Simpson, 2005) that contributes to the participants' sense of coherence and meaning to interactions which start in a video then continue in text comments or - less often - in reply videos.

The asynchronicity of YouTube interactions is not just an restraint on interaction but can be seen as part of the interactional resources for the YouTuber commentators. The participants do interact with each other and social actions are achieved. Rather just comparing interactions on YouTube (unfavourably) with face to face conversation, in this thesis they will be analysed as "social practices in their

own right” (Lamerichs & Te Molder, 2003).

Previous studies of YouTube users have often focused on specific interactional features such as gaze and gesture (for example Frobenius, 2014), pointing (Frobenius, 2013), text comments (Bou-Franch et al., 2012), response videos (for example Benevenuto et al., 2009) and connections between people who post videos on the same topics or in the same genre (for example Sureka et al., 2010, on extremist videos). This approach has the advantages of a constrained focus and a detailed examination of the specific interactional feature. But there are two disadvantages: the YouTube platform is continually changing, with modes of interaction being introduced and removed, such as the removal of option to leave a response video. Secondly, a focus on one mode of interaction misses individuals’ use of multiple interactional features. In this thesis, all available modes of interaction will be analysed.

Vlogs and vlogging

Vlogs are a video form that is inextricably linked to YouTube from its earliest days (Burgess & Green, 2009b, p. 43) and continues to be a highly common and popular genre of video on the platform. As such they are a key genre of videos in this research. The term ‘vlog’ is a portmanteau word from ‘video’ + ‘blog’ and was, at the start, characterised as a video version of an online journal, or blog (Bjørkman Berry, 2018, p. 13). Later in their twenty or so years of existence the term has expanded to include any video of a YouTu-

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ber filming themselves speaking directly to the camera (Bjørkmann Berry, 2018, p. 13; Burgess & Green, 2009b, p. 28).

From the early years of YouTube vlogs have been a popular genre both in the number of videos posted to the platform and the number of views. The first large scale study of the platform by Burgess and Green (2009b) found that nearly half of videos created by individuals (rather than by mainstream, broadcast or established media) were vlogs (2009b, p. 43). They were the most prevalent genre in a study conducted in 2010 (Simonsen, 2011) and also in the content analysis presented in this research (Chapter 4.2 below).

Vlogs predates YouTube. People have been making and sharing diary-style videos since the late 1990s at first by uploading short, highly compressed clips to their own webpages or to the first video sharing site shareyourworld.com (1997-2001) (Woog, 2009, p. 9). The antecedents can be traced even further back into the late 1980s with artists experimenting with the Fisher-Price children's Pixelvision camera (Jenkins, 2009, p. 113). Vlogs as a genre are often dated from 2000 when blogger Adam Kontras posted an eleven second highly compressed video of him trying to smuggle his cat into a hotel (Bjørkmann Berry, 2018, p. 23). From 2004 on video sharing sites such as BlipTV, Google Video, Vimeo, DailyMotion became available, as well as YouTube (Bjørkmann Berry, 2018, pp. 10, 23, 33, 58). These online video sharing sites were, to a greater or lesser extent, social in their intent: they existed for people to post videos that could be viewed, assessed and commented on.

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Vlogs have a distinct set of genre characteristics that have evolved over time (Bjørkmann Berry, 2018, p. 97). Vlogs have been characterised by their relative simplicity of technical and aesthetic style complexity. Burgess and Green describes a vlog as "a talking head, a camera, some editing" (2009b, p. 67) with a range of topics from the mundane details of the vlogger's daily life to personal identity, opinions, and politics. An early vlogger described it to Bjørkmann Berry Bjørkmann Berry as "a document of my life" (2018, p. 131).

The emphasis throughout has been on liveness, immediacy, a conversational style, and direct address to viewers (Burgess & Green, 2009b, p. 54). Bjørkmann Berry found, in one of the few studies that examines how vlogs are made, that early vlogs tend to conform to stylistic and technical norms shaped by the the socio-technical constraints under which they were made (2018, p. 137). Initially production values were lower because equipment was expensive and online video was technically constrained. The videos were made with what vloggers had available: shot on webcams and simple video cameras, often without external microphones, and using available lighting (Bjørkmann Berry, 2018, p. 99). But over time lower cost and higher quality cameras, data storage, editing software, tripods and lighting have become widely available.

The more recent trend is for novice vloggers to start making vlogs with whatever they have to hand, using their phone camera or simple 'point and shoot' cameras like a GoPro, and self-taught editing skills. But as they become more experienced they invest in better

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quality equipment and become more skilled at video production (Sykes & Zimmerman, 2014). Over time some vloggers have become more professionalised with high level cameras, tripods, lighting and even professional production crews. In this research the videos showed a wide variety of production values (Chapters 5 and 6). Some were shot in a single take on a lower quality camera with simple editing. Others had more editing, often apparently to remove 'mistakes' in a longer spoken sequences, and more sophisticated title sequences. A small number evidently had the help of another person filming the video.

The setting for a vlog has conventionally been seen as the vlogger's own bedroom (Hillrichs, 2016, p. 128). Björkmann Berry found that early vloggers mostly recorded their videos, if not in their bedrooms, then in the private domestic space of their own home (2018, p. 128). The vlogger's own furnishings, clothes and personal objects are visible in the camera frame. In later years some genres of vlogs retained the conventions of recording in the vlogger's bedroom, particularly fashion and beauty vlogs (Bishop, 2018; Sykes & Zimmerman, 2014). This setting has recently become more prominent in the Covid-19 pandemic lockdowns with people working from home and making video calls from their bedroom or kitchen, in their domestic space and surrounded by their everyday things (A. Watson et al., 2021).

The final stylistic norm is direct address to the camera. The vlogger conventionally orients to the viewer through the framing of the

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shot, and through posture, linguistic address, gaze and gesture. Shots are commonly framed with the vlogger facing straight on to the camera, framed as a close up or medium shot that shows their face alone or head and shoulders at a distance of about one metre. This places the visual emphasis on their face talking directly to the camera. Initially this was pragmatic: the constrained video frame size that was technically possible in the early days of vlogging, initially 320 by 240 pixels, and the lower quality on-camera microphones necessitated the vlogger being close to the camera (Bjørkmann Berry, 2018, pp. 103–104). Even as large frame sizes became technically possible and microphone quality improved, the close up of the vlogger has remained a common aesthetic style to reference the camera being held at arms length or being placed on top of the computer screen. This suggests a face to face conversational distance (Bjørkmann Berry, 2018, p. 103).

Vloggers conventionally physically orient their face and body towards the camera and address it directly as if speaking to the viewer as an individual. The camera is commonly placed at eye height and they look directly into the camera so their eye gaze can be seen as meeting the viewer's eyes (Frobenius, 2014). The use of second person pronouns and terms of address such as "you" or "you guys" is common (Burgess & Green, 2009b; Frobenius, 2014, p. 97). Vloggers often use formulations that invite a response from their viewers such as requests to subscribe to the vlogger's channel and formulations such as asking a question, making an announcement, and asking viewers to leave queries in the comments under the video

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(Burgess & Green, 2009a; Frobenius, 2014, pp. 94, 97). At times a vlogger may reference previous interactions with viewers such as using the formulation "in a recent video" or acknowledging viewers' previous comments (Frobenius, 2014). They may also use gestures such as pointing to objects or to the camera, and holding objects up so they are in the camera's field of view (Frobenius, 2013, 2014).

All these linguistic and embodied actions are found in the corpus of videos collected for this research. The vlogs frequently include a domestic setting which, if not in the vloggers' bedroom, then in their living room or outside on their porch. The main shots are most often framed in close up or medium close up, with the vlogger facing the camera at eye height and addressing the camera directly. They commonly talk to the camera in a personal and conversational style. And the videos are usually produced in a fairly simple style with some but not many edits.

Who are older people?

Although the terms older people and old age are commonly understood, there is little consensus about how they are conceptualised, or if indeed they are the correct terms to use. Ageing is a continual and inevitable biological process but how it is framed depends on human understandings. There is a well established tradition, since Pythagoras in ancient Greece, of dividing human life into distinct "ages of man" (Sears, 1986; Thane, 2003, p. 10).

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The point at which a person is considered 'older' varies with social, legal, institutional, academic and vernacular perspectives. Markers of this threshold into old age can be chronological age, institutional criteria such as eligibility for a pension or free public transport, functional criteria such as the age at which most people are considered no longer fit for (full-time) work, or cultural criteria such as a person's perceived contribution to society or when they are seen as "old" (Settersten & Mayer, 1997; Thane, 2003; WHO, 2009).

Chronological age as a marker of older age has limitations as it is fairly arbitrary and masks the heterogeneity of older people's experiences, abilities and health. People age in different ways, and for many people old age can encompass at least three decades of life (N. Coupland et al., 1991, p. 7). In addition the social meaning of chronological age varies across cultures, time and social settings (Settersten & Mayer, 1997; WHO, 2009). Nevertheless it has the advantages of being widely understood, relatively precise and easily measured, and is one of the main criterion for ordering ourselves and society (Bytheway, 2005; Nikander, 2009). Often in research the category 'older' is defined as over sixty five years, based on the presumed statutory retirement age and the age at which people were eligible for pensions in Western countries (WHO, 2009). But in many countries this is rising and no longer a stable measure (OECD, 2017).

Given the complexity of the definitions of older age it is unsurprising that there are a variety of terms in use, each with nuanced meet-

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ings, including senior, older, elderly, the aged, retired, grandparent and baby boomer. Some of the terms carry pejorative associations with frailty, illness, vulnerability and dependence (Durick et al., 2013; Mautner, 2007; Palmore, 2000). Survey research has found clear preferences among older people for the terms older and senior citizen and a dislike of the terms elderly and pensioner (Walker & Gemeinschaften, 1993). Discursive research has shown that older people often distance themselves from the terms old and elderly and from their negatives attributes. They rarely use these terms to refer to themselves, and are more likely to use them to describe other people (Degnen, 2007; Heinrichsmeier, 2018; Hurd Clarke, 1999; Mautner, 2007; Paoletti, 1998a; Róin, 2014).

In this thesis the term 'older person' will be employed as it is widely used by people in later life (Walker & Gemeinschaften, 1993) and carries less negative connotations than 'old' or 'elderly' (Mautner, 2007). It has been argued that it is a "fairly neutral" term (Palmore, 2000) and the preferred term in international documents (UN CESCR, 1995), gerontological research (Palmore, 2000) and health care (Falconer & O'Neill, 2007). The term older person is defined here as aged sixty years and over. Sixty years is the definition used by the United Nations and other international bodies (UN CESCR, 1995, p. 107; UN DESA, 2013, p. 3) and by the key prior studies that address older people's use of online video (Ferreira et al., 2017; Harley, 2011; Righi et al., 2012). It therefore allows for cross-geographic and cross-cultural comparison by future researchers.

Ageism, stereotypes and invisibility

Ageism

Ageism is one of the key lenses through which research on older people has been viewed. Ageism, the prejudice by one age group towards other age groups resulting in stereotyping and discrimination (R. N. Butler, 1969; Bytheway, 2005), is commonly experienced by older people as a negative force in societies that value youth. Butler, who first coined the term in 1969, identified three mutually reinforcing aspects of ageism: prejudicial attitudes towards older people and the ageing process; discriminatory practices against older people, such as in employment; and institutional practices and policies which reinforce stereotypes and discrimination (R. N. Butler, 1980). Old age can be seen as a “stigmatised identity”, with those categorised as old seen to possess highly undesirable attributes (Goffman, 1963, pp. 3, 9). Maggie Kuhn, founder of the Grey Panthers movement in the USA, claims the ‘myths’ about old age are that it is a disaster, and that older people are mindless, sexless, useless and powerless (Dychtwald, 2012).

Stereotypes

Stereotypes of older age affect individuals’ behaviour, institutional policies and cultural values. They can come to define what is considered to be age-appropriate in lifestyle, behaviour and appearance (Fairhurst, 1998; Jankowski et al., 2016; Nikander, 2000; Pirhonen et al., 2016; Twigg, 2007). It is widely argued that ageist stereo-

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types of older women are particularly negative because they are more critically judged on their appearance and more heavily devalued with loss of fertility than men (Calasanti et al., 2006; Hurd Clarke & Griffin, 2008; Macdonald & Rich, 1985; Woodward, 1999). As anti-ageism activist Cynthia Rich says “[a]ging has a special stigma for women” (Macdonald & Rich, 1985, p. 78).

Not all stereotypes of old age, however, are apparently so negative. In more recent years more positive paradigms of ageing have emerged which suggest that old age does not necessarily or solely mean being old and frail. The paradigms of active ageing and successful ageing (Rowe & Kahn, 1997; WHO, 2002) have posited more favourable attributes such as activity, good health, social engagement and independence (Ayalon & Tesch-Römer, 2018, p. 5). More recent research on older people and technology has robustly challenged the idea that older people are homogeneously in poor health, socially isolated, unable to use new technologies, and a burden on society (Durick et al., 2013; Light et al., 2015; Rogers & Marsden, 2013; Vines et al., 2015).

Invisibility

It is common in everyday talk that older people say they feel invisible as they age, both individually and collectively. This invisibility can be physical or representational. Recent headlines from newspapers in the UK and the USA include "The ignored elderly: We've become invisible to society say half of over 65s" (Loveys, 2011) and "Seeking 'to be visible,' more Americans 65 and older are getting

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plastic surgery” (Bahrapour, 2018). As the sociologist Kath Woodward said “As an older woman I am familiar with being invisible or unheard” (R. Woodward, 2015, p. 2). This invisibility can be actual and real: the experience of being overlooked as an individual in social or public situations, such as being ignored by shop assistants (Jankowski et al., 2016; Macdonald & Rich, 1985, p. 11).

Invisibility can also be representational: older people not being represented in media, culture and society. This concept of invisibility is part of identity politics which associates visibility with power, progress and control (Brighenti, 2007; Lehtonen, 2008). This kind of invisibility of older people, absent or marginally represented, has been empirically recorded in a wide range of media (Fealy et al., 2012; Kessler et al., 2004; Zhang et al., 2006). Invisibility has been linked to powerlessness, and representation to empowerment: it is claimed that people need to be recognised by society, to be socially included and not marginalised, as a step towards political power (Brighenti, 2007). The consequences of media and social invisibility are not feeling part of society, a lack of positive images and role models, the prioritisation of younger people’s issues, and older people’s concerns disregarded as irrelevant. This invisibility has been noted in research into older people’s use of digital technologies in which older people are often treated as stereotypes or their concerns are sidelined (Durick et al., 2013; Ferreira et al., 2017; Vines et al., 2015). This perceived invisibility can be challenged through creating more diverse media and cultural representations, and older people “finding their voice” in a variety of settings (Lazar

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et al., 2017).

People have said that making YouTube videos makes them 'visible'. In one example, the high profile Indian creator Ajey Nagar (channel name CarryMinato) said "before I started YouTube I was a nobody, I was actually invisible" (Daheley, 2019). Early commentators saw YouTube as a means of ordinary people gaining media visibility by bypassing the gatekeeping role of traditional media broadcasters and providing an alternative distribution model (Burgess & Green, 2009b, p. 10). YouTube's slogan from 2006 to 2012 was "Broadcast Yourself", a reference to it as a site of self-expression and gaining an audience (Burgess & Green, 2009b, p. xvi).

From YouTube's launch the platform has been popular with members of socially marginalised groups who have felt excluded from and invisible in established mainstream media environments (Arthurs et al., 2018; Burgess & Green, 2009b, p. 9), and popular with researchers of minoritised groups such as lesbian, gay and bisexual people (Green et al., 2015; Lovelock, 2017), trans people (Miller, 2019; Raun, 2015), ethnic and racial minorities (Gaunt, 2015; Patterson, 2017; Vergani & Zuev, 2011) and linguistic minorities (Cunliffe & Dyfrig, 2013). The platform is designed to be easy to access: free to use, simple to upload videos, and multiple ways of connecting with other YouTube users. So YouTube, as with other social networking sites, has facilitated public visibility at low cost.

In this research some of the YouTubers stated they started their YouTube channel because they perceived a lack of videos by peo-

1.3. AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

ple their age vlogging about the topics in which they are interested. For example an older women's beauty vlogger Prairie Girl Lifestyle wrote in her channel description "In my search for makeup tutorials for older women, I found there were not many. So I started my channel to talk about anti-aging skin care, eye makeup tutorials for women over 60, makeup application for mature skin, life at 60, future plans after retirement and positive messages to fill up your bucket" (this video is analysed in Chapter 5 below).

1.3 Aim and research questions

This thesis sets out to investigate older people's interactions on YouTube while addressing the gap in prior studies with regard to the site of the study, YouTube, the specific age group, over sixties, and the methodological focus on the fine detail of interaction and identity construction.

The aims of the research are, firstly, to gain a greater understanding of older people's production and sharing of videos on YouTube. Secondly it aims to investigate how older people use social practices to construct age identities and other identities through a systematic description and analysis of the video content and comments they share on YouTube.

This thesis addresses four research questions which examine how and in what way social practices on YouTube enable and circumscribe different possibilities of age and other identities.

Research Questions

The main research question is

- (1) How do older people share videos and interact with others on YouTube?

From this follow these questions:

- (2) What are the typical characteristics of videos made by older people on YouTube?
- (3) How do older people explicitly invoke and negotiate age and other identities for themselves and others through interaction on YouTube?
- (4) How do older people present themselves to others in their YouTube videos through making use of the available social, technical and interactional resources?

1.4 Outline of thesis

Chapter 2

In Chapter 2 a detailed review of the relevant literature is presented in order to situate the work conducted for this thesis. In particular, different theoretical conceptions of age identity are reviewed, including essentialist, social constructionist and ethnomethodological paradigms. Next what is known about older people's use of

1.4. OUTLINE OF THESIS

YouTube is explored. Finally ethnomethodological approaches to video as a social practice are explored.

Chapter 3

In Chapter 3 the methodology for this thesis is set out: its purpose, research design, data collection methods, data analysis undertaken, methodological challenges of carrying out the research, and ethical considerations. This research has a two phase design with an initial quantitative content analysis phase and then an ethnomethodological and specifically a membership categorisation analysis phase. The next three chapters present the analysis and interpretation of the data using this research design.

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 addresses the second research question: what are the typical characteristics of videos made by older people on YouTube? It presents the phase one quantitative content analysis study. A corpus of videos from YouTube made by people aged sixty and over is collected. These are analysed to identify the kinds of videos made by older people on YouTube, their popularity and level of audience engagement. The practical steps taken to assemble a corpus of videos within the complex and idiosyncratic environment of YouTube is also explored.

Chapter 5

Chapter 5 addresses the third research question: how do older people explicitly invoke and negotiate age and other identities for themselves and others through interaction on YouTube? It presents the first part of the findings from the phase two ethnomethodological study of a selection of videos from the corpus collected for the phase one study. These videos are vlogs (first person video blogs) made by older women, predominantly beauty vlogs. Findings are presented on the use of explicit age categorisations both as an exact chronological age, such as "I am 62", and as an age grouping, such as "I am in my sixties" or "I am over sixty". It examines the frequency and distribution of these explicit age categorisations through the subset of videos. The practices around disclosing one's own chronological age are also examined including when it happens and what the categorical identity and interactional consequences are.

Chapter 6

Chapter 6 addresses the fourth research question: how do older people present themselves to others in their YouTube videos through making use of the available social, technical and interactional resources? It examines the video practices of YouTubers to build their epistemic authority through an analysis of gun review videos made by men. This examines the practices of video production, including

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filming and editing, as well as the words and actions of the YouTubers in their videos.

Chapter 7

Chapter 7 concludes the thesis by discussing the findings and presenting the major contributions of the thesis. The limitations of the thesis are considered and suggestions for directions of future work are presented. The chapter ends with some concluding remarks.

1.5 Publications

The membership categorisation analysis of older women's beauty vlogs from Chapter 5 was presented at the 2020 conference *Algorithms for her? Feminist approaches to digital infrastructures, cultures and economies* at King's College London and subsequently published:

Bliss, M. (2020). Under the radar: older women YouTubers and algorithmic influence. *Feminist Media Studies*, 20(5), 745-747.

1.6 Contributions

This thesis makes three main contributions to our understanding of older people's YouTube videos and their interactions with their viewers. These lie in the categorisation practices of older YouTubers

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and their commentators, understandings of YouTube as a site for social interaction, and methodological insights into studying YouTube.

Firstly it contributes to the understanding of the age categorisation practices of older people on YouTube, a frequently overlooked part of older people's online presence. It builds on and expands ethnomethodological approaches to older age categorisation practices, particularly those that use membership categorisation analysis, and extends them to the online setting of YouTube. It demonstrates that older age categorisations are salient to older YouTubers and their commentators and shows how age categorisation is used as a means self-introduction and to claim a commonality with their mostly unknown viewers. It offers a fine-grained analysis of how older YouTubers construct positive older age identities for themselves through presenting knowledge and expertise in the topic of the video they had chosen to make, and receive recognition from their commentators.

Secondly this thesis contributes to the understanding of YouTube as a site for social interaction. It provides what is, to the best of my knowledge, the first description of the videos older people make and post to YouTube. This study presents previously unknown descriptions of older YouTubers' characteristics, the content of their videos, and their engagement with viewers. In particular it identifies the popularity of vlogs and 'how to' videos and previously overlooked genres such as older musicians making videos of themselves singing and playing music. This refutes the prior view that

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older people only make videos about personal, family, or local topics and only share them with family and friends.

This thesis uncovers interactional strategies including how older YouTubers assert epistemic primacy in setting out the topic and format of the video and the expected common ground with their viewers. It demonstrates how two groups of older YouTubers, women beauty vloggers and men gun reviewers, invoke their age, experience and skills to assert their epistemic authority to speak about, make assessments of, and give advice on make-up and guns, and anticipate challenges to their epistemic authority. It also shows how their intentional video production practices mark them as skilled YouTubers.

Thirdly it makes a methodological contribution by offering a distinctively different approach to identifying and collecting YouTube videos by older people and detailing the limitations, as well as the opportunities, of YouTube as a primary data source. It offers two innovative approaches. The first is a method of building a corpus of videos from YouTubers that share demographic characteristics that resulted in a corpus of 121 videos by older people. The second is the two phase analytical design that is suited to this highly under-researched phenomenon. This combines content analysis with an ethnomethodological approach in order to both map the broad terrain of older YouTubers and their videos, and open the black box of interaction on YouTube to analytic inspection.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Older people's presence on YouTube is very understudied despite being a growing phenomenon (Purcell, 2013). In Section 2.2 different paradigms of age identity are reviewed to understand how studies have approached ageing and age classification, and outlines the argument for taking an ethnomethodological approach. Section 2.3 then reviews previous studies of older people on YouTube and identifies that most studies have taken survey or case studies approaches. The question of how older people interact on YouTube and the content of their videos has been largely ignored. Section 2.4 reviews ethnomethodological approaches to video data. This establishes that while the use of YouTube videos as a site of study is at a nascent stage, ethnomethodology as an approach is continually evolving and prior studies using video recordings of live interactions and people's video practices provide the analytical tools to undertake this study. Section 2.5 presents the conclusions of this literature review and the implications for this thesis.

2.2 Approaches to age identity

What identity is can be difficult to pin down. The psychologist Michael Bamberg (2011) describes it as the answers to the questions “who am I?” and “who are you?”. Age identity has been viewed through different paradigms. Here the essentialist, social constructionist and ethnomethodological paradigm are presented and the resulting consequences for research into older people’s use of technology.

2.2.1 Essentialist paradigm of age identity

The essentialist paradigm of identity has been a dominant popular approach to understanding social identities and is still very influential in everyday understandings of identity. In this view, identity is an intrinsic, permanent and stable property of a person, what Benwell describes as “the real you” (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 3).

Surveys of published literature in the fields of gerontology, gerontechnology and human computer interaction over the last 30 years demonstrate how the essentialist paradigm has shaped research on older people and technology (Durick et al., 2013; Vines et al., 2015). Age is taken as a fixed demographic variable which can be observed and measured. Age can therefore be an explanatory variable to make causal predictions about peoples’ behaviours and attitudes towards technology (Widdicombe, 1998, p. 194). This allows researchers to make generalised claims about an age group’s skills, abilities and attitudes or lack of them and steers research into com-

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parative studies of 'older' and 'younger' people (Lindley et al., 2008; Östlund, 2002).

This model of age gives an incomplete picture of ageing and age identity which does not adequately account for older people's behaviours or attitudes. Experiences of ageing do not happen evenly across chronological age: people of all ages have varying levels of physical and cognitive abilities, health and ill-health, socio-economic situation and so on. Being old has social dimensions that "older people seek to manage, sometimes resisting, sometimes accepting" (Lindley et al., 2008). This leaves open many questions about how people use age, and age related categories in producing and managing their social identities, and how the "diverse and dynamic qualities of ageing" (Vines et al., 2015) can be recognised.

2.2.2 Social constructionist paradigm of age identity

The social constructionist paradigm holds that identity is a social and collective process. Identities are not innate, fixed categorisations that determine people's thoughts and actions. Rather, identities are changeable and flexible, and are derived through everyday social interactions including, most importantly, language. That is to say, identity is socially constructed (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 4; Widdicombe, 1998, p. 197)

The key premise is that age identity is a social, interactional and situational process. It allows for the "malleability of age identities"

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(N. Coupland et al., 1991, p. 73) shaped by social practices and language. Age is defined by everyday practices, especially interaction, and can vary between contexts. The experience of old age, and whether one is considered 'old' or 'not old' is shaped by social factors such as gender or ethnicity and by cultural factors including representations and stereotypes. This approach highlights the experience of older people and allows for a more balanced and positive conception of old age (Nikander, 2002, p. 13).

Research on older people and technology within the social constructionist paradigm focuses on individual's own experiences and how technologies can satisfy psychological and social needs. This takes into account socio-economic factors such as gender, health and lifelong experiences. Common methods include in-depth interviews to understand the phenomenon from the viewpoint of the participant.

For this thesis it would, however, be useful to look in finer detail how people understand age through interaction, a process that Garfinkel called "practical reasoning" (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 1). The focus would be how age identity is used, modified and challenged in everyday communication in specific situations (Nikander, 2002, pp. 13–14). This points to a different paradigm of ageing, the ethnomethodological paradigm.

2.2.3 Ethnomethodological paradigm of age identity

The ethnomethodological paradigm approach to identity was developed by the sociologist Harold Garfinkel in the 1950s (Garfinkel, 1967) and further developed by Harvey Sacks (Sacks, 1995a, 1995b). It sees identity as an interactional achievement that is temporarily and locally occasioned in everyday interaction (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 34). In this paradigm, as in the social constructionist paradigm, phenomena in the social world are seen to be socially constructed. But ethnomethodology's distinctive contribution is seeing how social order is locally produced by people in the course of their interactions. It is concerned with how people do social order rather than how they are steered by it. The ethnomethodological paradigm is the analytical framework used in this thesis.

Age identities, like other identities, are achieved in interaction. They are negotiated and dynamically co-constructed in interaction and establish "who we are to each other" (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 4) and where we are in the "stages of life" (Sacks, 1995a, p. 239) and "natural biographical order" (Baker, 1984). Identities can be claimed, ascribed to others, accepted, rejected or negotiated by participants in specific social interactions. A number of studies have considered how older age identities are co-constructed in interaction and how people orient to common sense associations of ageing, of women and men (for example Calasanti & King, 2018; Llewellyn, 2015; Nikander, 2000, 2002, 2009; Pirhonen et al., 2016; Poullos, 2009, 2016; Róin, 2014; Thell & Jacobsson, 2016; Yläne & Nikander,

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2019) and women only (Charalambidou, 2015; Heinrichsmeier, 2018, 2019, 2020; Paoletti, 1998a). No studies of only older men have been identified. Through these studies it has been demonstrated that age references are used to invoke common sense knowledge and shared cultural norms (Nikander, 2009). References to chronological age are used to locate people in stage of life categories, such as “adolescent” (Baker, 1984) and “retired” (Thell & Jacobsson, 2016), and so invoke expectations associated with the categories (Sacks, 1995a, p. 239).

The key analytic concept in ethnomethodological analyses of identity is Membership Categorisation Analysis (MCA) which was initially developed by Harvey Sacks as membership categorisation devices (MCDs) (Sacks, 1995a, pp. 40–48). Sacks argued that people use language to arrange the world into collections such as gender, ethnicity, religion and, obviously pertinent here, age (Sacks, 1995a, p. 40). Sacks identified typical collections of categories such as sex: male/female (Sacks, 1995a, p. 238) and stage of life: baby, child, adult (Sacks, 1995a, p. 225). In MCA age categories, like all categories, are inference rich: more than merely descriptive, they provide the means by which cultural knowledge is managed that help members make sense of themselves and others (Sacks, 1995a, pp. 40–41). When a category such as ‘old’ is invoked for an individual, other members can draw inferences about the individual’s attributes and have expectations about what is appropriate for a member of that category. Later scholars showed that categories and identities are not inherently stable but are contextually pro-

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duced as the interaction unfolds (Hester & Eglin, 1997; Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015; D. R. Watson, 1978). MCA is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 below.

Prior studies have been able to give insights into the ways in which older age identities can be constructed through language and also through appearance, attributes, knowledge, and competencies. They show how older people make sense of ageing in their everyday lives, how they place themselves and others into age categories such as “old”, and the meanings, attributes and expectations commonly associated with those categories. Age categorisations can be explicit, through using chronological age, through terms like ‘older’ or through expressions such as ‘at my age’. Age categorisations can also be implicit through invoking attributes, positive or negative, associated with older age (Heinrichsmeier, 2018).

These studies have examined different situations and country contexts: older Greek Cypriot women friends (Charalambidou, 2015), older women in an English village hair salon (Heinrichsmeier, 2020), older Italian women in an community centre (Paoletti, 1998a), radio phone-in counselling in Sweden (Thell & Jacobsson, 2016), an art gallery ticket desk in the UK (Llewellyn, 2015), a Greek reality television show (Poulios, 2009), and interviews with older men and women in Finland (Nikander, 2002; Pirhonen et al., 2016) and the Faroe Islands (Róin, 2014). These studies have examined the use of categories such as ‘old’ / ‘not old’, specific chronological ages, life stages such as ‘retired’ or ‘grandparent’, attributes (both pos-

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itive and negative) such as 'ageing well' / 'not ageing well', 'independent' / 'dependent', 'physically active' and 'busy', 'experienced', 'wise' and 'able to give advice', and how participants align with or distance themselves and others from the categories and attributes.

In one example when a woman in her sixties is asked how she experiences getting older she replies "... in my thoughts, I'm younger than my body or, how should I say this, than what the birth certificate says or when I look at myself in the mirror" (Róin, 2014, transcription simplified from the original). While not explicitly saying she is older she is contrasting different measures of her age – her chronological age recorded in her birth certificate, or the ageing face seen in the mirror – with a real or imagined younger self she feels is in her thoughts.

In another example from the data collected for this thesis a beauty vlogger, MaryEllen, in an exchange of comments about how to avoid eye infections that can arise from unhygienic make-up practices writes "Like you, I have seen so many horrible eye infections, It isn't a surprise that most were young woman" (MaryEllen comment 16). She contrasts the young women who get eye infections with herself and her commentators who are more sensible about hygiene and by implication older.

But categories are not merely accepted, they can also be rejected and modified. Studies have found that sometimes people refuse to be categorised as 'old' or 'older', or accept the age categorisation but distance themselves from specific negative attributes stereotypi-

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cally associated with being old (Charalambidou, 2015, p. 120). Conversely people sometimes use older age to justify limitations such as physical ailments (Paoletti, 1998a, p. 18). Accepting or rejecting an older age categorisation can depend on the setting. Older people may distance themselves from the category of 'old' in settings in which it carries negative connotations (Paoletti, 1998a, p. 26) or even during the course of an interaction depending on the topic being discussed (Heinrichsmeier, 2018).

Older age is not the only or main identity that people orient to. They may orient to a wider range of identities including housewife, ill person, working woman, actress or singer (Heinrichsmeier, 2018; Poullos, 2016). And older people frequently co-articulate the identities of age and gender (Charalambidou, 2015; Heinrichsmeier, 2019; Paoletti, 1998a; Poullos, 2016).

Ageing appearance

Appearance - in bodily look, hair and clothing - play an important role in the constitution of age identities. People adjust their own appearance to conform to social expectations. People also make assessments of others' age based on their appearance. Appearance can embody moral values: people assess themselves and others on whether they look age-appropriate (Twigg, 2020).

Critical gerontologists argue that older women in particular are given the moral duty to take action against the appearance of ageing (J. Coupland, 2009) by dyeing their hair, using cosmetics and surgery

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to tauten sagging skin and get rid of lines (Heinrichsmeier, 2019; Hurd Clarke & Griffin, 2008). But there are other, potentially contradictory norms to adapt their appearance as they age so as not to appear inappropriately youthful or take too much interest in their appearance and be categorised as vain (Furman, 1994). It has been argued that older women face a dilemma: they should not appear too old and judged as letting themselves go, but also not appear too youthful, or in the colloquial phrase, appear to be "mutton dressed as lamb" (Fairhurst, 1998).

Clothing for older people are subject to social norms of what is seen appropriate. While the specific styles seen to acceptable shift over time (Twigg, 2014, pp. 16–17) the broad social norms are that they should wear darker and more muted colours, be more covered up, with higher necklines and longer leg length for skirts or shorts, and not try to be too fashionable (Twigg, 2014, p. 14). A woman in her seventies in Twigg's (2014) study said similar "You have to be careful when you get to my age. I always have to have something with long sleeves. [...] I always wear very long skirts. I don't like showing my legs"(p. 15). A woman in her late sixties said in Heinrichsmeier's (2019) study of a hair salon in an English village "when I was back in the sixties I used to wear mini-skirts and things but I wouldn't now". She goes on to say she does not just adjust her own clothing choices but make judgements on other older women: she says she disapproves of other older women in their "fifties or sixties but dressing like a teenager or twenty- year-old".

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Older men not immune to these norms and judgments. Overall clothing seems to have less saliency to older men than women and they seem have more continuity with clothing they wore at younger ages. Despite this most of the older men in Twigg's (2020) study oriented to a clear sense of which styles were too youthful to wear, such as hoodies, trainers and jeans. Some men in her study, however, linked younger styles of clothing to a positive attitude to life: a man in his late sixties said "I've got a very youthful outlook and I'll dress as if I'm younger" (Twigg, 2020).

Hair likewise plays an important role in age identities: changes such as greying, thinning hair and balding are physical markers of ageing. Social norm are that older women, in particular, will dye their hair to mask grey hairs (although the trend for women keeping their natural grey hair seems to have increased during the recent Covid-19 lockdowns (Cecil et al., 2021)). But again there is evidence of older women having to negotiate between taking care of their hair and taking steps to hide the signs of ageing while not appearing too vain or frivolous (Heinrichsmeier, 2018). Ojala (2016) points out the marketing of anti-grey hair products to men but found in her study that most of the older men found greying hair to be relatively unimportant.

Make-up and cosmetics are important in women's age identities (Hurd Clarke & Griffin, 2008). Again women must navigate wearing too little, too much or the wrong type of make-up. In a video in the corpus in the current research one beauty blogger, Prairie

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Girl, openly wonders in her video whether the glittery eye make up she is trying out is age-appropriate. She says to the camera "the first thing I would say about this runway bold collection when I opened it up was, whooo it's a lot of glitter for 60 year old" (lines 32-34, simplified transcript). She then reassesses it: "but when I started putting these on my eye, they weren't near as glittery [. . .] but but we can definitely wear these" (lines 35-38, simplified transcript). Prairie Girl shows concern that the eye shadow is too vibrant for a woman in her sixties but by trying it out on herself she qualifies her assessment. By telling her viewers this she invites them to agree with her judgment that older women can wear glittery eye shadow.

Critiques of the ethnomethodological approach to identity

The main and recurring critique of the ethnomethodological approach to identity is that it does not adequately address wider social structures such as power, gender, class and ethnicity (Hutchby & Tanna, 2008, p. 209). By focusing on participant interactions it precludes analysis of wider social forces that might affect the interaction unless the participant explicitly orients to them (Billig, 1999).

Garfinkel developed ethnomethodology specifically in rejection of Talcott Parson's structuralist view that people internalise social norms and act in accordance with them as "cultural dopes" (1967, p. 191). Schegloff goes on to argue, specifically about conversation analysis but applicable to wider ethnomethodological approaches, that these approaches are not opposed to introducing macro level phenomena

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such as gender, social class or ethnicity (1998). But they should not be introduced a priori and only if there is evidence in the data to support them (Hutchby & Tanna, 2008, p. 210). Schegloff calls this “theoretical imperialism” (1997), imposing on the data issues with which the participants may not be concerned. He says “it is not for us to know what about context is crucial, but to discover it, and to discover new sorts of such things” (1991, p. 66). Ethnomethodologists only make claims about social and contextual factors if they are warranted through empirical observation. They must demonstrate whether and how participants show they are aware of contextual factors and how they orient to the them in the interaction (Hutchby & Tanna, 2008, p. 209).

In summary, the ethnomethodological perspective provides a framework for empirically examining older age identities from the bottom up: from studying the actions of participants in a particular interaction. Prior studies have shown that older age identities are complex, especially as common sense knowledge often associates them with negative decline attributes. Participants do work in interactions to accept and distance themselves and others from both specific categorisations and attributes. Thus it can be seen that the ethnomethodological perspectives permits more complex and nuanced categorisations than just ‘old’ or ‘not old’ (Heinrichsmeier, 2018).

The ethnomethodological paradigm of age identity is particularly suitable for this thesis because it understands age identities as constructed rather than given. This approach uses use observable em-

empirical examples of how age identities are locally and temporally achieved rather than relying on common sense notions of what age is and how older people manage their identities. YouTube is a very specific context with interaction taking place in both intentionally produced videos and in text comments. The ethnomethodological approach takes the perspective of the participants to understand how they achieve understanding in a specific context.

2.3 YouTube and older people

The field of studies of older people on YouTube is notable for its diminutive size and the lack of empirical evidence. There are no large scale surveys of older people posting videos to specific video-sharing sites such as YouTube, Vimeo or DailyMotion or to more general social networking sites (SNSs) such as Facebook. There is some evidence from large scale repeated surveys of media or internet use in the UK and the USA, in particular the UK Office of Communications' (Ofcom) annual Adults' Media Use and Attitudes reports and the Internet Institute's (OII) Oxford Internet Survey, along with the Pew Research Centre in the USA, an independent non-partisan 'fact-tank'. This is supplemented with some smaller scale ethnographic studies (Ferreira et al., 2017; Harley & Fitzpatrick, 2009a; Righi et al., 2012). In addition there are some survey studies about technology or internet use in general which includes some data on online video sharing (Hope et al., 2014; Vroman et al., 2015).

Large scale surveys in the UK and the USA, among others, show

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a consistent picture of growing online engagement by people in later life. Older adults are increasingly using the internet for different functions including SNS and online forums (Ofcom, 2016; Office for National Statistics, 2013; Zickhur & Madden, 2012). The prevalence of 65 year old and over having internet access at home in the UK rose from 56% in 2013 (Ofcom, 2013, p. 6) to 77% in 2021 (Ofcom, 2021, p. 4). Fewer older adults use the internet and social media than younger people: age has been found to one of the most consistent predictors of online activities of all kinds (Blank, 2013). Within the category of “older adult” there are differences: older adults are more likely to be online if they are under 75, are more highly educated, have higher incomes and are women (Hutto & Bell, 2014; A. Smith & Anderson, 2018).

The prevalence of posting videos to YouTube among older people is unclear. It has been estimated that between 4% (Dutton et al., 2013, p. 30) and 11% (Ofcom, 2018b, Table 11 p. 24) of internet users aged 65 and over have ever posted videos they made to video-sharing sites such as YouTube, Vimeo or DailyMotion, or to social media sites such as Facebook. This is likely to be increasing over time in line with older people’s use of social and the internet in general (Anderson & Perrin, 2017; Dutton et al., 2013; Ofcom, 2018a, p. 58; Ofcom, 2018b, Table 11, p. 24-25; Zickhur & Madden, 2012, pp. 4, 10)

These large sample size surveys, while providing a useful overall picture, present a number of theoretical and methodological prob-

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lems. There are inconsistencies in how age is categorised, a conflation of video with other media, and a lack of clarity about the activities associated with online video. This limits their usefulness for comparison. A final problem is that the surveys often do not make a conceptual distinction between the different activities associated with online video, specifically between watching and sharing videos online, or between sharing one's own and other people's videos, and whether the respondent comments on or rates other people's videos.

Quantitative content analysis has been widely used to generate insights into YouTube videos for other age groups (Landry & Guzdial, 2008; Purcell, 2013; Simonsen, 2011; Yarosh et al., 2016; Zhao et al., 2013). It has been used in one study of older people in online settings, in this case an examination of the characteristics of seniors' online forums (Nimrod, 2010). Quantitative content analysis has also been extensively used in the study of older people's representation in the media and specifically in films, television commercials and magazine advertisements (for example Lauzen & Dozier, 2005; Roy & Harwood, 1997; Williams et al., 2010). However it has not, to my knowledge, previously been used as a methodology for studying older people's videos on YouTube.

Several case studies have been made of one particular older YouTuber, Peter Oakley, who gained prominence in the early days of YouTube under the channel name geriatric1927 (Gonzalez & Kurniawan, 2008; Harley & Fitzpatrick, 2009a; Riley, 2015; Sorensen, 2009).

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In fact, one of his videos, titled 'Clever Boys on bikes', is in the corpus of videos analysed in Chapter 4. In 2006 at the age of 79 he posted his first video. As Sorensen (2009) says his was "quite an odd appearance on a site dominated by a youthful audience". He quickly drew a large audience and he soon became the most subscribed channel on YouTube. He featured on its homepage, and was asked to launch YouTube's UK site. In short, he was an early YouTube sensation. He posted two types of videos, reflections back on his life, and videos on topical issues, and made over 400 videos until his death in 2014.

Overall the evidence about older people's use of YouTube is limited and largely confined to broad categories of use or non-use, or case studies of a particular YouTuber. There are, to the best of my knowledge, no content analyses of older people's YouTube videos and no discursive studies on older people's interactions on YouTube. This thesis addresses this gap by exploring two aspects of the phenomenon. The first is the creation of a corpus of videos by older people and undertaking a quantitative content analysis to understand what kinds of YouTube videos are made by older people. The second is a finely detailed ethnomethodological study of older people's self-presentation and interaction on YouTube, through the videos they make and post and the comments they and others leave under their videos.

2.4 Ethnomethodological approaches to video

Ethnomethodological studies have used video (and previously film) both as a recording medium and as a site of study for many years (ethnomethodology is considered in more detail in Chapter 3.2.1 below). Ethnomethodological studies using video have settled into two strands: the use of video to record everyday social interactions for later analysis, and analysing video practices in themselves. In the first strand, video has been used to record everyday social interactions since the early days of ethnomethodology. The first use of film to record social interactions was Gregory Bateson and Margaret Mead's ethnographic work in the late 1930s recording Balinese dance tuition (Erickson, 2004). This continued with their interdisciplinary Palo Alto group at Stanford University using film to record, among other settings, psychotherapy interviews. This led to seminal analyses of verbal and non-verbal behaviour in face to face interactions. From these early starting points the tools of analysis have evolved as production equipment has been developed and become cheaper, from silent film in the 1930s through 16mm film, digital video, desktop editing software, miniature cameras such as GoPros, and now moving into newer video environment such as virtual reality (Davidsen, 2016).

The first video recordings in ethnomethodological studies were made by Candy and Charles Goodwin in the early 1970s to study embodied action in interaction (Broth et al., 2014, p. 4). As Erickson (2004) argues, video is used to record everyday social interaction as it un-

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folds to preserve details for later analysis. The purpose is to capture aspects of the interaction that would be impossible to record by other means in order to understand the actions of the participants. In particular it is used to record the interplay and co-ordination of speech and embodied conduct such as posture, head movement, gaze, who the speaker is addressing, gesture and object handling (Erickson, 2004). This ethnomethodological perspective of video recording has been used in a variety of settings including underground train control rooms, operating rooms and TV studios (Broth et al., 2014, p. 2).

The second strand of ethnomethodological work - which is more pertinent to this research – is observing video practices themselves through the use of video. Studies of settings in which video is used have included courtrooms (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1997), medical surgery (Mondada, 2003) and conversation analysis data sessions (Tutt & Hindmarsh, 2011). More directly relevant for this thesis are studies of professional video and television settings (Broth, 2008; Laurier & Brown, 2014; Mondada, 2009). Laurier (2014a) extends this work into the processes of amateur and personal video editing through his study of a man editing cameraphone videos of his pet deerhound.

Many of these studies use video recordings of the video making process to understand what is going on. The analyst can play the videos iteratively for repeated inspection to identify, transcribe and later analyse the interplay of words and action (Broth et al., 2014,

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p. 14). Another method is reconstructing the video production processes from the finished video product (Broth et al., 2014, p. 12). The resources available to the analyst include the setting of the video, the shooting, including camera movements and framing, the editing and the post production including added audio and text. The first major use of this method was Macbeth's (1999) analysis of how an anthropologist made his film by examining the final film. In this instance the anthropologist is following everyday interactions in a village with his camera. He holds the camera in his hands and moves it and himself towards what seems significant in the situation, in this case a fight between two villagers. Examining the final film reveals what the camera operator orients to as significant in the unfolding actions in front of them.

Macbeth's study has informed studies about TV production (Broth, 2004) and film production (Laurier et al., 2008). Moffatt (2011) extends this analysis to a pre-scripted documentary film. This was a 1953 Canadian government-commissioned film about the contribution of immigrants to Canada. Moffatt uses a membership categorisation analysis to show the film constructs the categories of "Canada" and "Canadians" while excluding indigenous people. Bovet (2014) extends this reconstruction method of analysis to video clips of a French talent reality television show. This is partly pragmatic - it is difficult as a researcher to gain access to backstage recordings of television shows. It is also conceptual: they are analysing what is available to ordinary viewers and what is observably the case for those viewers using their perception, experience and understand-

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ing.

Jayyusi's (1988) formulation of "filmic intelligibility" (p. 272) is pivotal in analysing completed videos using a reconstruction method. Her discussion of how people are able to make sense of films highlights the possibilities for ethnomethodological research to analyse how films and videos are made. She demonstrates how film makers work to make their films intelligible to viewers through production techniques such setting, framing editing, and how viewers are able to understand the resulting films through their visual competences. Video makers draw on the "scenic intelligibility" (p.272) of the world to produce a video object which is a coherent visual experience for viewer. Viewers use the same skills, or ethnomethods, to understand a video as they do to understand the everyday social world.

She gives an example of viewers understanding linear sequencing as coherent narrative. In a sequence of different shots in a video the viewer sees a figure in a kitchen chopping up vegetables, then in the next shot the same figure whipping eggs then in the third shot the same figure boiling water (p.284) This sequence of shots is understandable to the viewer as the person cooking a meal rather than the person cooking three separate meals. The viewer sees different activities in a sequence and can understand their continuity and unity by using their common sense understanding of the everyday world.

Jayyusi gives a second example that shows how viewers use their knowledge of the categories and attributes of people, settings, ac-

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tions and objects to make sense of a scene. She describes a scene in which a police officer arrests and handcuffs a man. The viewer is able to understand the actions in the scene as that, through the setting, appearance and clothing of the figures, and their actions, and not as "a man putting circular metal objects round another human being's limbs" (p.274).

YouTube videos are a specific and emerging case of pre-recorded videos being used as a data source in ethnomethodological studies for three distinct purposes. These are as a source of recordings of naturally-occurring interactions, to examine how people actually view YouTube videos, and as a setting for interaction and communication.

Firstly, YouTube videos have been used as a source of recordings of naturally occurring interactions to show how specific social practices actually happen. Brown and Laurier (2017) use YouTube videos filmed by drivers or passengers in self-driving vehicles and vehicles on auto-pilot to explore interactions in these new forms of driving. They discover that the safe driving of the vehicles depends on interactions between drivers, their fully or partially autonomous vehicles, and other road users to make their actions mutually intelligible and reduce confusion and frustration in other drivers. Joyce (2022) (and further elaborated in his (2020) unpublished thesis) uses unedited recordings of disputes taking place in public settings and posted to YouTube to investigate how people who are arguing with each other respond to challenges to their opinions, views and attitudes.

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Xie (2021), in contrast, uses an excerpt from a broadcast television interview posted on YouTube, rather than an unedited video recording of a naturalistic interaction, to analyse an instance of a person giving an account of their experience of a public racist encounter.

The second purpose is to examine how people actually use YouTube videos in their mundane activities. Tuncer et al. (2020; 2021) investigate how people use step-by-step instructional videos to find out how to carry out practical tasks such as replacing a bicycle chain or applying a specific make-up technique. In particular they look at how people move between watching the instructions in the video and then reproducing what is demonstrated. This coordination of watching and doing is repeatedly achieved by pausing the video to do a particular step then resuming playing the video to check they have done it correctly or moving on to the next step.

The third and most common use of videos in ethnomethodological studies has been as a setting for interaction and communication. This has primarily been used to explore identity through membership categorisation analysis. Pihlaja examines religious discussions between Christians and atheists on YouTube in a series of publication from 2011. He investigates (2014) how two self-proclaimed atheists use and modify the category Christian to debate and taunt each other across a number of YouTube videos and the comments under them. He finds the term Christian took on different meanings depending on the evaluation and moral judgements the YouTuber is attempting to achieve.

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Hall et al.'s (2012) investigate the use of the relatively novel identity category metrosexual in the comments under a video of a young man demonstrating makeup techniques. They show how the male commentators balance their self-declared heterosexuality with the non-normative use of makeup through reframing it as for their health, personal hygiene or concealing defects. The commentators preempt potential criticism of their use of makeup by aligning it to more normative masculine activities such good grooming and playing sport.

Halonen (2015) uses a video that has been widely circulated in different social media sites including YouTube since 2005 to explore the controversial Finnish social category pissis girl. A pissis girl is a teenage girl who is loud, acts tough, smokes, and drinks alcohol in contrast to 'ordinary' or 'good' girls. The video appears to show an unstaged encounter between a group of young men and a group of teenage girls in a park in Helsinki. She analyses how the video has been edited and re-edited over time to present and refine the characteristics of the category of pissis girl.

Gibson (2020), in contrast, uses a purely ethnological approach to explore how YouTubers articulate their sensorial experiences when reviewing products. He shows how YouTubers reviewing perfume use speech and gesture to communicate to their viewers what they are smelling. One example is the performative enacting of smelling by holding a paper test strip up to their nose, breathing in audibly, articulating the sensory experience through gestures,

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and giving an evaluation of the perfume. He further develops his analysis of product reviews on YouTube through his (2022) analysis of reviews of guitar pedals in which a variety of YouTubers present guitar pedals as critical to the practice of guitar playing while enhancing their credibility as reviewers.

These ethnomethodological studies point to the possibilities of using intentional video productions on YouTube as a data for analysis. Unlike Brown and Laurier's (2017) videos and Joyce's (2022) videos which are unedited, or barely edited, and likely uploaded direct from the mobile phone on which they were filmed, the data in this thesis are videos deliberately constructed by a YouTuber deciding the topic, such as make-up or guns, the format, such as a tutorial or a product review, the setting, the filming, the editing and the para-texts, the additional information provided when the video is uploaded including the video title and description, keyword tags, the YouTube category to which the video is uploaded, and the channel name and description.

In summary the continually evolving ethnomethodological approach to video provides the tools to undertake an analysis of YouTube videos. In particular, it points to the analysis of completed videos as the viewer sees them to understand how the YouTuber uses methods of production, such as setting, shooting and editing, and the paratexts as actions to produce filmic intelligibility for their viewers.

2.5 Conclusions and implications

This chapter has established that older people's use of YouTube is an understudied phenomenon (Section 2.3). Little is known about what older people are doing on YouTube despite it being the most popular video sharing site and second most popular website in the world. YouTube is, however, more than a repository for videos or a publication platform, it is also a site of interaction through videos, text comments and interactional indicators such as views and likes. Interaction has been central to the YouTube platform since its inception (Section 1.2). This has motivated the main research question:

- (1) How do older people share videos and interact with others on YouTube?

In this section the additional research questions are formulated that support this overarching research question that both map the broad terrain of videos made by older people and examine in depth how people present themselves and interact in visual, verbal, textual and other ways, and the interactional consequences.

2.5.1 Mapping the terrain

Although YouTube has been extensively researched since its inception in 2006 there is a notable lack of evidence about what older people are doing on this platform (Section 2.3). While there is some longitudinal aggregated data on older people posting videos online

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that is little evidence on what video content they are making and posting. There is some data on by videos posted to YouTube by other age groups, such as young people, and by people of all ages (Section 2.3).

This broad empirical problem is addressed by the second research question:

- (2) What are the typical characteristics of videos made by older people on YouTube?

Addressing this question will provide empirical evidence and insights into the kinds of videos older people are posting to YouTube and enable comparisons with those posted by other age groups.

2.5.2 Beyond the videos: the importance of interaction

My initial motivation for this research was catalysed by my earlier professional working with older people, mostly in their seventies and eighties, and digital technologies. Over several years I was involved in publicly-funded projects designed to address the so-called “digital divide” of unequal access to digital technologies including the internet by certain demographic groups (Van Dijk, 2008, p. 288).

The projects involved familiarising the participants with tools such as mobile phones and digital cameras, to take photographs and videos to share online on platforms including YouTube. These projects promoted self-expression as well as confidence with using digital

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tools and the internet. I found my participants eager to use these digital tools and keen to share their work online with audiences beyond their immediate circle of family and friends. The funders were, however, only interested in whether the participants could use computers, mobile phone and the internet and showed little interest in what they were sharing, with whom and how it was received.

At the same time I was attending various policy forums connected to the UK government that brought together policy makers, academics and practitioners who were attempting to address the digital divide. I (and others) became increasingly dissatisfied with the binary framing of specific demographic groups as digital included or excluded and the focus on the informational and transactional delivery of central and local government system such as pensions, healthcare and paying local taxes. This led to an over-simplification of people's experiences and sidelined people's motivations for and experiences of being online including their interactions with others.

The participants in my projects, while to some extent self-selecting, clearly demonstrated a desire to learn new skills and use them to interact with others, both from their existing circle of family and friends but also like-minded strangers. This sparked my interest in how older people presented themselves and were received on YouTube, a platform which in the public mind was linked with younger people, and whether there was something missing from the discussion about older people, online video sharing and interaction.

While more recent research on older people and digital technolo-

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gies has robustly challenged the view of older people as homogeneously uninterested in and unable to use digital technologies (Durick et al., 2013; Light et al., 2015; Rogers & Marsden, 2013), older people's online interactions have been largely ignored with the notable exceptions of Lin et al.'s (2004) and Nimrod's (2011) studies of online forums and touched on by studies of online video by Ferreira et al. (2017), Harley and Fitzpatrick (2009a) and Righi et al. (2012).

YouTube, along with other social networking sites, is more than a place to publish content. Even at the earliest years YouTube was for at least some users "as much about discussion, response and interaction with audiences and friends at it is achieving economies of scale for wide-spread distribution" (Burgess & Green, 2009b, p. 34). Little of the prior research on YouTube, however, examines interaction in detail. Interaction is more than a measure of how many times a video has been watched or liked by another person. Ethnomethodological approaches understand interaction as the means by which people make sense of their and other people's activities and identities (Section 2.2.3). There have to date been a number of ethnomethodological analyses of interaction on YouTube, notably Pihlaja's study of atheists and Christians debating with each other (for example Pihlaja, 2014).

2.5.3 Interaction and identity

Age identities are commonly invoked and salient in naturally occurring talk involving older people (Heinrichsmeier, 2018). Ethnomethodological approaches to age and identity show that people construct identities in interaction (Section 2.2.3). Additionally they show that age identities are complex: they are not simply claimed or assigned but also rejected, modified, negotiated and co-constructed during the particular local interaction.

Ethnomethodological approaches have the potential to uncover aspects of interactions in ways that are not available through other qualitative empirical approaches (Section 2.2.3). Ethnomethodological approaches use observable empirical examples of how age identities are locally achieved rather than drawing on common sense notions of what age is and how people manage their age identities. While social constructionist approaches seek to uncover the constructed nature of identity, and the general models and principles that shape social relationships, ethnomethodological approaches have the unique quality that they focus on how individuals manage their identity in the current interaction in a purely empirical approach. Ethnomethodology has been successfully used in naturally-occurring face to face conversation involving older people to explore the saliency and co-construction of older age identities (for example by Charalambidou, 2015; Heinrichsmeier, 2018; Paolletti, 1998a).

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Ethnomethodological approaches to age identity are not very common in online research but have been used to explore other online identities such as metrosexual (Hall et al., 2012), person with an eating disorder (Stommel & Koole, 2010), op (channel operator) and user in an IRC (Internet relay chat) channel (Vallis, 2002, p. 90), expat 2 (expatriate) in an online blog (Walz & Fitzgerald, 2020), Christian on Twitter (Housley et al., 2017a) and on YouTube (Pihlaja, 2014), and believer in homeopathy (W. J. Gibson, 2018).

Taking an ethnomethodological approach to interaction and age identity leads to the next research question:

- (3) How do older people explicitly invoke and negotiate age and other identities for themselves and others through interaction on YouTube?

2.5.4 Identity and resources

The ethnomethodological approach to interaction and identity highlights the wide range of resources that people can and do use in interaction. In face to face interaction these resources include talk, gesture, appearance, bodily posture and actions. On YouTube some resources, such as synchronicity of actions and reactions, are limited but other resources are available. In the making of a video, practices such as the setting, the shooting of the video including camera framing and movement, and editing and post production create meaning and “intelligibility” (Jayyusi, 1988, p. 272) for the

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viewers which viewers are able to understand through their visual competencies (Section 2.4).

The YouTube platform also provides technical resources for interaction. Viewers can “like” or “dislike” a video. In the written comments under the video a person can start a new comment or reply to a particular commentator in a thread, reference other YouTubers by their user name, and add links to other YouTube videos and external websites.

An exploration of interaction of YouTube must take into account all these resources. This leads to the formulation of the fourth, and final research question:

- (4) How do older people present themselves to others in their YouTube videos through making use of the available social, technical and interactional resources?

2.5.5 Implications

This chapter establishes that while the essentialist paradigm of age identity, that sees age as an intrinsic and stable part of the individual, is common in everyday talk, ethnomethodological approaches offer more in empirically examining how older people’s age and other identities are invoked, negotiated and dynamically co-constructed. In particular ethnomethodology provides a framework to understand how identities are accepted, rejected, and modified depending on the local interactional setting. The studies of older women’s

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age identities in the work of Charalambidou (2012, 2015), Heinrichsmeier (2020), Nikander (2002) and Paoletti (1998a) have provided a strong inspiration to the present work (Section 2.2).

This chapter also shows that older people's activity on YouTube is an under-studied but growing phenomenon. It has largely been examined through the lens of use and non-use. A study of empirical data that takes into account not only whether older people watch videos on YouTube or post their own videos but also the content and interactional consequences has not previously been carried out. Prior studies do not adequately answer questions about what videos older YouTubers make and how they, their viewers and their commentators interactionally present and manage their social identities (Section 2.3).

An ethnomethodological approach to video enables the analysis of what YouTubers are doing in the construction of their videos through the setup, such as decisions about the genre and topic of the video and the setting; the shooting of the video including what is in the camera view, how the shots temporally unfold and the words and actions of the figures in the video; and in the editing in particular how scenes are constructed and delineated, and how shots are juxtaposed in the scenes to make coherent sense to the viewers. Drawing on studies of video making practice by Broth (2004, 2008), Laurier (2014a, 2017), Laurier and Brown (2014), and Mondada (2009), and using an analytic technique of reconstruction from the completed videos on YouTube, as well as the paratexts and written

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comments, this present work aims to provide multi-modal interactional analysis of the presentation and management of social identities on YouTube (Section 2.4).

The present work also draws on Lena Jayussi's (1988) proposal that filmic accounts are analytically interesting both for what they reveal of filmic organisation and of wider social and cultural practices (Section 2.4). In particular it makes use of her idea that category knowledge is central to both common sense understanding of everyday life and in filmic intelligibility. This helps understand aspects of the specific character of YouTube videos as produced accounts and their rootness in the organisation of social activity, in this case the social organisation and management of identity.

This chapter has traced the development of the research questions that frame this research in the light of prior research and provide the framework for the research design described in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provides an overview of approaches to age categorisation and prior research on older people's interactions, research on older people and YouTube, and research on interactions on YouTube. This pinpoints older people's activities on YouTube as a highly understudied phenomenon and establishes ethnomethodological conceptions of both identity and interaction as the focus of inquiry for this thesis. This chapter builds on the previous one by describing the methodological approach: its purpose; research design; data collection methods; data analysis; the methodological challenges of carrying out the research; and the ethical considerations.

In this thesis an empirical approach is taken to understand older people's use of and interactions on YouTube. Section 3.2 provides the rationale for the two phase research design, details the choice of quantitative content analysis and ethnomethodological analysis, considers the opportunities and limitations of YouTube as a data source, and discusses the ethical considerations of this research.

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Section 3.3 describes phase one of the research with the collection of a set of YouTube videos made by people aged 60 years and older and the analysis of this data using quantitative content analysis. Section 3.4 describes phase two of the research with the selection of a subset of the data for an ethnomethodological analysis and, specifically, a membership categorisation analysis (MCA). Finally Section 3.5 summarises the chapter.

3.2 Research design

This section describes the design of the research undertaken to meet the aim of this thesis which is to investigate how older people share videos and interact with others on YouTube. First it outlines the rationale for the two phase design, the choice of data and quantitative content analysis for the first phase, and ethnomethodology, and specifically Membership Categorisation Analysis, for the second phase. Next the opportunities and limitations of YouTube as a data source are considered. Finally the ethical considerations of this research are discussed.

3.2.1 Rationale

The main question that guides this work is, as outlined in Chapter 1.3 above:

How do older people share videos and interact with oth-

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ers on YouTube?

From this follows the questions:

What are the typical characteristics of videos made by older people on YouTube?

How do older people explicitly invoke and negotiate age and other identities for themselves and others through interaction on YouTube?

How do older people present themselves to others in their YouTube videos through making use of the available social, technical and interactional resources?

The purpose of the research is to achieve a fuller understanding of older people's video-making and subsequent interactions with their audience on YouTube. As described in the previous chapter, this has not previously been studied. As a complex and understudied phenomenon a single method cannot answer all the research questions. A two phase research design is required in which each phase can provide separate but complementary insights (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p.77).

The first phase of the research aims to generate insights into older people's videos published on YouTube in order to provide a broad understanding of the phenomenon (van Turnhout et al., 2014). It also aims to produce a dataset that can be used in the second phase. Phase two studies the same phenomenon – older people's videos on YouTube – but at a micro-level of analysis in order to provide

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an understanding of the interactions between older YouTubers and their audience and, in particular, to gain insights about how they negotiate their age and other identities with their audience.

These two phases are described in more detail below, including the choice of method and how the phases work together to produce findings.

Phase one

Phase one aims to address the broad lack of knowledge about older people's making and sharing of videos online and to answer the second research question:

What are the typical characteristics of videos made by older people on YouTube?

This research question can best be answered by a descriptive methodology that systemically describes the current status of older people's YouTube videos. The methodology selected is quantitative content analysis, a systematic, replicable technique for making valid inferences from data to their contexts of use (Krippendorff, 2004, p.18). It is a deductive technique best suited to situations in which the criteria of interest in the data can be defined a priori. In this case, prior studies have developed coding schema for YouTube videos that are applicable to this research (Purcell, 2013; Yarosh et al., 2016).

Quantitative content analysis has three procedural stages: data col-

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lection, coding and analysis. The first step is gathering a dataset from the available data, in this case a sample of videos made by older people on YouTube. The second step is coding the attributes of the video, including the paratexts, comments and the video maker, by recording, deducing or assigning values. The third step is systematically analysing the coded data using quantitative analytical techniques to generate, in this case, descriptive statistics such as counts, percentages, means and ranges (Lazar et al., 2017, p. 74). Finally, inferences are drawn from these measures to identify patterns in the data and relationships between variables.

Quantitative content analysis has a number of potential limitations as a methodology. The first is validity, specifically collecting a large enough or representative enough sample to allow for valid generalisations (Krippendorf, 1989, p. 74). In this research it is mitigated by using as a large a sample as is feasible. The second limitation is replicability through objective coding of the data (Krippendorf, 1989, p. 74). This is mitigated through the use of prior coding schema and closely following these prior studies' procedures for coding. The third limitation is the use of *a priori* codes risks downplaying the "richness and uniqueness of the specific data" (Krippendorf, 1989, p. 74). This is mitigated through close reading of the data and introducing new codes where the data warrants. Ultimately this is still the most effective way to understand the characteristics of YouTube videos made by older people given the current state of the field.

In this first phase quantitative content analysis is selected to sys-

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tematically investigate the typical characteristics of videos made by older people on YouTube. The actual implementation of this phase is described in full detail in Chapter 4. The findings of the first phase are used to inform and develop the specific focus of the second phase (Bryman, 2011, p.94; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011, p.86).

Phase two

Phase two aims to investigate the interactions that older people have on YouTube, both through the videos they make and in the text comments. In particular it aims to address how they use the multiple resources available in this multimodal environment. Phase two aims to answer the third and fourth research questions:

How do older people interact with others on YouTube through making use of the available social, technical and interactional resources?

How do older people invoke and negotiate age and other identities for themselves and others through interaction on YouTube?

These research questions can best be answered by a methodology that systematically investigates the fine detail of communication and interaction through the videos and text comments. The approach selected is ethnomethodology, and in particular membership categorisation analysis.

Ethnomethodology

Ethnomethodology is the systematic empirical study of the practical methods people use in doing the common social activities that make everyday life possible, in short "how they do what they do" (Butt, 2000). It aims to provide explanatory frameworks for the everyday social activity that is being observed without using *a priori* concepts or theories (Butt, 2000). It is a "bottom up" approach that is best suited to situations in which understanding of everyday practices is required along with fine-grained understanding of verbal and non-verbal interaction.

Ethnomethodology has been extensively used to generate insights into people's practices in online environments including text-based chat and forums, collaborative online games, synchronous video calls and social media (see Mlynář et al., 2018; and Paulus et al., 2016, for comprehensive overviews).

Membership categorisation analysis

Membership categorisation analysis is a branch of ethnomethodology which examines how people categorise each other in social interaction to create mutual understanding and meaningful interaction (Housley et al., 2017a). MCA is used to investigate how people include and exclude themselves and others from categories, how categories are associated with qualities such as attributes, activities, rights and obligations, how these categories and their attributes are subject to negotiation, and how this is the foundation of meaningful

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interaction (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015, p.1-3; Lepper, 2000, p.15).

Harvey Sacks (1974, 1995a, 1995b) founded MCA and it was further developed by others after his premature death (for example Hester & Eglin, 1997; Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015; Jayyusi, 2014; Stokoe, 2012b). Full reviews can be found at Antaki and Widdicombe (1998a), Lepper (2000), Schegloff (2007a), Silverman (1998), and Stokoe (2012b).

MCA is best suited to situations in which social identities are salient to the participants, where categories of social structure are used to make sense of social phenomena, and where the situation can be observed in real time and as it unfolds to reveal the rules underpinning the categories' use (Housley et al., 2017a, 2017b). MCA has been extensively used to generate insights into older people's age identities in offline contexts, and into people's practices in online contexts but to my knowledge it has not previously been used to investigate older age identities on YouTube, or indeed in any online context.

The claim that MCA is appropriate for analysing online data is, however, not uncontested. Emanuel Schegloff, a leading scholar of membership categorisation analysis and conversation analysis, went so far as to claim that "computer chats" are not talk at all (Schegloff, 2006, p.90). But while MCA has primarily been used to analyse spoken interaction it has, however, from the start been used to study a variety of real world data. Harvey Sacks himself was interested in many forms of data including overheard conversations, sto-

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ries, newspapers and phone calls (Fitzgerald, 2019). As new forms of communication emerge analysts continue to develop the methodology to deal with the resulting new forms of interactions (R. Smith et al., 2021) and, in Fitzgerald's (2019) resonate phrase, to "stress-test the approaches".

MCA has been successfully applied to online settings (Paulus et al., 2016) to study, firstly, how categories are constructed online, the attributes associated with them and how they are used. One example is Hall et al's (2012) study of how the category 'metrosexual' is invoked in the comments under a YouTube video, and how the commentators associate it with the attributes 'using makeup', 'doing personal grooming', 'being heterosexual'. Secondly, MCA has been used to analyse how categories are used in online communities to describe and enforce group membership. Stommel and Koole's (2010) study of an online eating disorders support group shows how new members of the forum are required to demonstrate certain attributes to be included in the community, specifically to orient to 'eating disorders as an illness' and acknowledge that they are 'ill', or risk exclusion. Membership categorisation analysis has been used to investigate people's practices in a wide variety of online environments including text-based message boards and online forums (for example W. J. Gibson, 2018; Giles, 2016), chatrooms (Vallis, 2002), blogs (Walz & Fitzgerald, 2020), websites (Hughes & King, 2018), Twitter (Housley et al., 2017a, 2017b; Housley et al., 2018) and YouTube (Hall et al., 2012; Halonen, 2015; Pihlaja, 2014).

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It is therefore argued that MCA is appropriate to use in this study of YouTube videos and comments provided that, following Sacks' principles, the starting point is the phenomenon itself and whether the members' methods include categorical actions.

Summary

For the complex and understudied phenomenon of older people's sharing of videos and interactions on YouTube a single approach is not adequate. A two phase research design is required in order to enhance understanding of the phenomenon and to fully address the research questions. This two-phase methodological approach has been developed to both investigate the broad terrain of the kinds of video that older people make and post to YouTube and to open the black box of interactions between older YouTubers and their viewers and commentators through detailed interactional analysis.

The first phase, a quantitative content analysis of a dataset of videos made by older people on YouTube, aims to generate insights that will provide an aggregated understanding of the phenomenon. This phase maps the terrain of older people's YouTube videos and enables identification of patterns in the data at the level of the videos that are analytically interesting in themselves and provide the first step in identifying instances in the data which will be central to the ethnomethodological analysis in the second phase.

The second phase, a fine-grained ethnomethodological and membership categorisation analysis, aims to open up the black box of

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the interactions between older YouTubers and their audience to empirical and critical inspection. It aims to generate insights about how they negotiate age and other identities with the social, technical and interactional resources available to them through making the processes of interaction explicit.

The two methodological approaches of content analysis and ethnomethodology may present as having no common basis. However they are both empirical approaches that identify points of analytic interest and enable comparison across the chosen data to identify patterns. In the content analysis this is at the level of the video, identifying the kind of content made, and at the level of the YouTuber, identifying their age, nationality or country of residence, how long they have been active on YouTube and if they are still posting videos. In the ethnomethodological analysis this is at the level of finest detail of the content of the video, paratexts and comments, examining the categorical and sequential aspects of interaction and how they are co-produced by YouTubers and commentators.

While these two methodological approaches are not commonly used in tandem this is an appropriate approach for this highly under-researched phenomenon. A content analysis alone would provide a broad brushstrokes understanding of older people's videos that would only address the first part of the main research question "how do older people share videos and interact with others on YouTube?" and would offer minimal insights into how older people interact with others. An ethnomethodological analysis alone would be hampered

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by a lack of understanding of what the data to study might be. A YouTube video may vary from a one minute shot of a person working out in a gym with no voiceover to an hour long vlog of a person speaking about personal aspects of their life. With no prior analysis of the videos selected from YouTube there would be no identified common basis between the videos considered for the ethnomethodological analysis. The content analysis allows for the purposively sampling for further analysis in the second phase.

The next section considers the opportunities and limitations of YouTube as a primary data source.

3.2.2 YouTube as a primary data source

YouTube presents both opportunities and difficulties as a primary source of data for research. Systematic inquiry of YouTube can be challenging. First, it is a highly dynamic setting with videos added and removed at a dizzying rate. The database grows rapidly with, according to YouTube's CEO in 2020, 500 hours of video uploaded every minute (Wojcicki, 2020). Videos are also frequently removed: one industry analyst suggests 32% are deleted within 24 hours, mainly by YouTube for copyright infringement, or by users who take them down or make them private (Turek, 2016). Prior studies using YouTube as a data source experienced deletion rates during the course of the study ranging from 2% (Krauss et al., 2015) to 33% (Chowdhury & Makaroff, 2013).

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Second, direct access to the entire YouTube database is neither computationally feasible nor practically possible. It is the world's largest video sharing website hosting an estimated 4 billion videos by the end of 2016 (Bärtl, 2018), up from an estimated 400 million in 2011 (Zhou et al., 2011), and potentially substantially more at the time of this study. Working with the entire YouTube database is clearly beyond the scope and resources of this thesis.

Moreover YouTube, as a commercial company, does not make its entire database available to researchers. Thus it is necessary to work with a sample of videos. Every method of sampling videos has its own limitations. Some prior studies have worked with a probabilistic sample, selecting videos at random from the YouTube database (for example Zhou et al., 2011). However for studies such as the current one which depend on identifying videos with particular characteristics, in this case videos made by people aged 60 years and over, it can be unworkably difficult to find videos with the required characteristics through a probabilistic sample. This has been previously noted in relation to videos in minority languages (Cunliffe & Dyfrig, 2013, p. 131) and by children and teenagers (Yarosh et al., 2016), among others.

A third challenge is YouTube's search algorithm. It might seem evident that relevant videos could be identified through using YouTube's built-in search tool with keywords relating to the videos of interest. YouTube's search function is, however, not a neutral search tool. The results it returns are produced by predictive analytics based

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on a large number of individual and collective characteristics and past watching habits including the user's prior searches, previously watched videos, and personal characteristics such as gender, age, language and geographic location. This returns search results which vary by user to user, from day to day, and by geographic location (Sampson et al., 2013). The exact workings of the ever-evolving algorithm are commercially protected but information has been deduced from Google personnel (for example Beutel et al., 2018; Roose, 2019).

YouTube also presents great opportunities as a site of study with its global reach, billions of users and billions of hours of video watched every day (YouTube, n.d.) and a widely used site of interaction. It allows for new and developing forms of interaction, with particular groups or users or topics, and evolving research approaches to understand them (Paulus et al., 2016). During this study steps are taken to benefit from the opportunities and mitigate the challenges of YouTube as a data source. These are explored in more detail below in Section 3.3 for the phase one quantitative content analysis and Section 3.4 for the phase two membership categorisation analysis.

3.2.3 Ethical considerations

Ethical conduct of research using publicly available, naturally occurring online data is challenging and long-debated (Franzke et al., 2020; Gerrard, 2020; Markham, 2006; Markham et al., 2018; Stom-

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mel & Rijk, 2021; Tiidenberg, 2018). The Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee (QMERC) determined this research did not require ethical approval as the data is publicly available and the study does not constitute human subject research as there is no direct access with any participants (Appendix A). This decision is not uncommon among institutional ethical review bodies for studies using online data (Ravn et al., 2020; Stommel & Rijk, 2021).

The researcher's responsibilities does not, however, end at this point. In contrast to the conventional view that "ethics are instituted first as an administrative ritual anterior to research, and routinely elided as such" (Whelan, 2018), this thesis takes the increasingly common position that ethical thinking should be an ongoing concern through the research cycle: in the design, data collection, data analysis and dissemination stages (Franzke et al., 2020; Gerrard, 2020; Markham, 2006; Markham et al., 2018). As Markham (2006) argues, ethics are fundamentally connected with method and require ongoing attention and judgement from the researcher.

Throughout the cycle of the research reference was made to guidance that is institutionally and professionally relevant to this research. This includes the Queen Mary Ethics of Research Committee (QMERC) (Queen Mary University of London, 2020), the Association of Internet Researchers (Franzke et al., 2020) and the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM, 2018). In addition the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into effect during the course of this research. The core principles of ethical research

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across these guidelines are integrity, respect for individuals and communities, beneficence (minimising harm and maximising benefits) and social responsibility. How these principles are enacted in research practices in online contexts, however, is neither clear-cut nor a subject of general consensus (Tiidenberg, 2018).

The site of the present study, the YouTube platform, allows users predominantly unrestricted access. Searching for and watching videos does not require registration or membership. Uploading a video a YouTube channel or leaving a comment does require registering with a valid email address and being logged in. YouTube channels can be personal spaces but also are commonly used to reach audiences beyond an immediate circle of family and friends: the number of views for the videos selected for this phase of the research range from 3 to 362,215. When a user uploads a video they can set it to be private, with restricted viewing, or to be public, where it can be viewed by anyone. The user can subsequently change the privacy settings or remove the video from YouTube altogether. Only videos with public settings appear in searches of the platform.

In the first phase of the study the quantitative content analysis reports the data at an aggregate level so no individual video or people are identifiable. The second phase, the ethnomethodological study, is more ethically complex as information is potentially identifiable, sensitive or involving vulnerable people. Through an iterative process across all the research stages from design to dissemination a

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set of decisions and practices developed to ensure this research is ethically responsible.

In the data collection stage consent of the video posters (YouTubers) and the commentators was not sought to watch the videos and read the comments. The content is readily available without requiring the researcher to register, become a member or engage with the participants. QMERC does not require informed consent for research using this pre-existing and publicly available data.

In the data analysis and dissemination individual YouTubers are not anonymised but commentators are. YouTubers and commentators are treated differently regarding anonymisation of their names because of the apparent differences in their expectation of audience. YouTubers set up channels with publicly available videos with the expectation of attracting an audience. Commentators display less evidence indicating their comments are for a wide audience, and they are more likely than YouTubers to have a user name that appears to be their real name. Anonymising the commentators minimises the risk of their views being read outside the context in which they were produced (Stommel & Rijk, 2021) and makes the comments less easily identifiable and searchable.

In order to minimise the risk to YouTubers that a video is intended to be private or viewed by only a small audience, videos are only selected for the phase two study if they are from channels in which the YouTuber takes identifiable steps to attract a audience. The steps include promoting the channel or the individual video on so-

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cial media channels such as Twitter or Facebook, encouraging people to subscribe, or linking the YouTube channel to similarly branded social media accounts, websites and other video sharing sites. In the analysis and dissemination stages the YouTubers' channel name, also known as their user name, is used but any personal information revealed, such as first name, surname or location beyond the broad region in which they appeared to be located, is excluded.

Additional steps are taken to mitigate potential harms. Only publicly available videos are selected for analysis. Any video subsequently made private by the uploader or taken down from YouTube during the course of the research is removed from the dataset. Videos are also excluded if they appear to have been made by or feature vulnerable people or minors. Likewise, videos that include sensitive content are excluded. The content of the videos selected are not sensitive in themselves: they are make-up, lifestyle and travel vlogs, gun reviews and a music video. Videos and comments are excluded if they reveal personal or sensitive information such as physical or mental health issues, illegal activities or personally identifying information such as real names, dates of birth and names of family members. In total three videos were removed from corpus: two because they were removed from YouTube during the course of the research and one because it was a duplicate of a video already in the corpus.

At the data analysis and dissemination stages care is taken to present all the participants with respect and not misrepresent them or the

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contents of their videos or comments. In line with the chosen methodology, membership categorisation analysis, the videos and comments are analysed from the point of view of the participants and focus is on what they actually say and do. In order to do this, verbatim quotes and descriptions of actions are used in a non-judgmental manner and are selected to not reveal sensitive information.

3.3 Phase one: content analysis

This section describes the methodological steps taken to answer the research question:

What are the typical characteristics of videos made by older people on YouTube?

This study has two objectives. The first is to establish methods of identifying videos on YouTube made by people aged 60 and above. The second is to examine and describe the categories of content of videos made by older people on YouTube.

In this section first the procedures for collecting the videos for the dataset at the heart of this thesis are presented. Then the steps for coding the data are detailed. Finally the process for analysing this data using quantitative content analysis is described.

3.3.1 Data collection

This study requires a large sample of YouTube videos in order to find typical characteristics. The initial approach was to identify a pre-existing collection, corpus or list of YouTube videos made by older people. Three existing YouTube datasets were identified though none proved suitable for this current investigation. The first is the YouTube-8M dataset ¹ compiled by Google, the corporate owner of YouTube, which consists of more than 6 million videos automatically annotated according to visual features in the videos (Abu-El-Haija et al., 2016; Lee, 2018). This dataset is not appropriate for the current study because the corpus is constrained to videos with at least one thousand views which might exclude too many videos by older people. In addition this dataset only became available in 2016 after the data for this study had been collected.

The second dataset has been compiled by Joan-Isaac Biel for his PhD thesis and used in subsequent papers (for example Biel & Gatica-Perez, 2011). It comprises more than 2,200 vlogs (video blogs, defined in Chapter 1.2 above) and a total of 150 hours of video. Although not publicly available the dataset has been shared with other researchers on request. The dataset is not suitable for this current study as it is constrained to the genre of vlogs; the videos are not selected or annotated by age or other demographic attributes of the video uploader, and the collection was compiled in 2009 which is not recent enough to be analytically useful.

¹<https://research.google.com/youtube8m/>

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The third dataset is the SenTube corpus of comments (Uryupina et al., 2014). This is a corpus of over 35,000 comments in English made in response to videos about automobiles and computer tablets. The comments have been annotated for information content and positivity or negativity of sentiment. This corpus is not suitable for the current study because it contains only text comments and not the videos, and is constrained to these limited topics.

Given the limited sampling of older people’s videos in existing corpora a new dataset was collected. The sampling methods and their limitations are described below.

Sampling

The initial aim was to randomly sample a representative selection of videos by older people on YouTube. Different methods that had been used in previous YouTube studies were considered: random prefix sampling, sampling by recency, sampling by popularity and sampling by content category. Random prefix sampling samples videos by randomly generating the unique eleven character identifier that YouTube allocates to each video (Zhou et al., 2011) and is to date the only truly random sampling method for YouTube (though see also Bärthel, 2018). Sampling by recency selects videos from (the now deprecated) YouTube search categories of videos from “today”, “this week”, “this month” and “all time” (Cheng et al., 2007). Sampling by popularity selects videos from the (now deprecated) popularity lists on YouTube that include “most viewed” and “top rated” (Cheng et al., 2007). Sampling by content category selects videos

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from specific content categories defined by YouTube, for example music videos (J. Y. Park et al., 2014). After initial tests these methods were rejected as they biased the sample towards certain characteristics and manual checking determined they returned a very low (or zero) percentage of videos by older people. It was, to use the colloquial phrase, like looking for a needle in a haystack.

It was then decided to use a sampling method that was more directed towards videos made by older people: keyword search.

YouTube's platform-specific limitations means videos cannot be selected directly by the YouTuber's age as this information is not available. YouTubers' profiles cannot be searched for demographic information and furthermore YouTubers are not obliged to specify their age when registering with YouTube.

Sampling by keyword

The first method selected was sampling by keywords provided by the user or by YouTube. Keywords can be extracted from textual information supplied by the user, such as the video title, video description, and video tags. YouTube also automatically extracts and assigns keywords to the audio and video content of videos (Rieder et al., 2018). Sampling was undertaken in October 2016.

A systematic approach was taken to identify appropriate search terms to generate an adequate dataset. In some prior studies a single keyword or phrase was sufficient (Blythe & Cairns, 2009; Buie & Blythe, 2013; Davis et al., 2015; M. Gibson, 2016; Paay et al.,

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2012). But searching for videos by older people is more complex: how people position and identify themselves with respect to age is not straightforward (Jones, 2006). Initial exploratory searches indicated that no single search term would be sufficient to identify a selection of videos by people aged 60 and over.

A list of keywords was then compiled drawing on prior studies of English words older people use to self-describe. There is, however, sparse research on how older people identify themselves online or on social media. Studies in social gerontology indicate a list of terms which are popular (and unpopular) among older people in the US and the UK (Barbato & Feezel, 1987; Chafetz et al., 1998; Harris & Associates, 1975; Walker & Gemeinschaften, 1993). This process generated 31 search terms that English-speaking older people might use to self-describe. The terms were: "mature man", "mature woman", "older man", "over 70", "over sixty five", "60+", "65+", "golden ager", "grandad", "grandfather", "grandma", "grandmother", "grandpa", "granny", "mature vlogger", "older woman", "over 60", "over 65", "over seventy", "over sixty", "papa" "pensioner", "retired", "retiree", "retirement", "senior citizen", "senior", "seventy plus", "sixty plus", "young at heart" and "young inside".

The searches were undertaken by manually entering the search terms one by one into YouTube's search function. Before searching commenced steps were taken to ensure the search results were not affected by previous searches on YouTube. YouTube search and recommendation tools retain information about a user of the

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site, even if they are not registered or logged in, such as previous searches and videos watched (Covington et al., 2016). The search and recommendation algorithm then returns results that are similar to previously viewed videos. As the study aims to identify as wide a range of videos by older people as possible, the process should minimise as far as possible the effects of previously identified videos on the keyword search.

A new YouTube account was created and the web browser's history, cache and cookies were cleared (Wong et al., 2013). Each search term was searched for in turn in YouTube's search box with no filters and sorted by relevance. The first 200 hundred results returned for each keyword were checked. For the 31 keywords this produced 6,200 videos. Any videos that appeared to be by older people were noted.

The videos were then watched and manually filtered to retain only those that met all the criteria of the study: made by a person aged sixty or over; publicly available on YouTube; in English; and non-commercial. The author's age was determined by manual checking of the video and its metadata including video title and description, the channel title and description and the video content. If no definitive reference to age was made, additional sources were checked: other videos in the same channel; and the author's other online sites such as their website or social media account if links were provided. Commercial videos were excluded such as advertisements, commercial music videos, television shows or excerpts, films or

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film excerpts, and reposts of commercial material. The process of ascertaining whether a video met the criteria required viewing of the videos which was a time-consuming process, as found in other studies (Thelwall et al., 2012).

This method produced a dataset of 68 videos from an initial selection of 6200 videos, an acceptance rate of 1% (Table 3.1). The number of videos found for each keyword were, in decreasing order:

- 22 videos were found with the search phrase “over 60”;
- 6 with “over sixty”;
- 5 with “senior citizen”;
- 4 each with “mature vlogger” and “young at heart”;
- 3 each with “retiree” and “sixty plus”;
- 2 each with “60+”, “older man”, “over 65”, “over 70”, “over sixty five”, “pensioner”, “retired”;
- 1 each with “65+”, “grandad”, “granny”, “over seventy”, “older woman”, “retirement”, “senior” and “seventy plus”.

No qualifying videos were found with the search phrases “golden ager”, “grandfather”, “grandma”, “grandmother”, “grandpa”, “mature man”, “mature woman”, “papa” and “young inside”.

This size of this sample, 68 videos, was deemed too small to al-

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low for meaningful conclusions to be drawn so the sample was extended using a crawl strategy.

Table 3.1

Videos selected for the dataset by strategy

Method	Videos selected	Videos by older people	Acceptance rate
Keyword	6200	68	1.10%
Crawl	3024	53	1.75%
Total	9224	121	1.31%

Sampling by crawl

A crawl strategy identifies unique web pages by following links from one page to another in a methodical and often automated manner (Cheng et al., 2007). A crawl search method takes a seed video and extracts metadata via the YouTube application programming interface (API) and by including all the links to other videos on the video's webpage. These links then become the seeds of the next round of search. In the case of YouTube these links have two sources: firstly, any links the user places in the video title or video description; and secondly the links in YouTube's list of recommended videos termed "up next" which currently appears on the right side of YouTube web pages. These links are generated automatically by YouTube's recommender algorithm based on a large number of features including the topic of the current video and which videos other users

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have watched after the current one. If the user is logged in then the recommender algorithm will also factor in the user's activity history (what the user has previously searched for and watched), and the user's gender, age and geographic location (Covington et al., 2016).

The software tool used to do the crawl was Bernhard Rieder's YouTube Data Tools' 'video network' tool that interrogates the YouTube API (Rieder, 2013). Initial tests showed that a search to depth 1 with each of the 68 videos in the sample in turn returned 3,204 videos. A search to depth 2 using a single video as a seed returned 3,951 videos. This suggests that using all 68 videos as seeds to a depth of 2 would return in excess of 120,000 videos which is too many to feasibly manually filter.

The crawl to depth 1 returned 3,204 videos that were manually filtered as previously to remove videos that did not meet the study criteria. Duplicate videos were also removed and if there was more than one video by the same user, the first video returned was selected. This gave an additional 53 videos, an acceptance rate of 1.7% (Table 3.1).

Combining the videos obtained from the keyword search and the crawl search gave a sample of 121 videos from 121 unique users filtered from 9,404 selected videos, an acceptance rate of 1.3%. These videos were manually saved to a YouTube private playlist "Bliss thesis corpus"² for ease of watching.

²YouTube playlist "Bliss thesis corpus" is available at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLaOivL3YbRTnzmLrgCzyhM3Swbwjy1MjK>

Data collection

A period of two months was left between identifying the sampled videos and collecting the data to allow for newly posted videos to acquire views, ratings and subscribers. Data was collected on videos and channels both manually, through the relevant YouTube web-pages, and via the YouTube API using the YouTube Data Tools video network tool.

If the information required was not immediately apparent from these sources then, as described above, other videos in the channel were examined and, if any links were provided, the video poster's other online presence. This included websites, social media accounts and, in one instance, a GoFundMe fundraising page.

Limitations

The aim of the data collection stage is to collect a random representative sample of YouTube videos made by older people. This proved surprisingly challenging due to platform-specific limitations associated with sampling videos with specific demographic attributes, in this case age. Four limitations of the chosen sampling methods are discussed below and a subsequent finding about identifying older users.

A key limitation of this methodology is that it is not able to produce a random sample of representative videos by older people as initially planned. The large and dynamic setting of YouTube makes truly random sampling of videos infeasible. The search methods

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introduce diverse biases because the results are affected by the choice of keywords and by YouTube's recommendation algorithm determining which videos are related.

The majority of the videos in the sample were selected on age-related keywords in the video metadata. This has the disadvantage of excluding videos in which the author did not include age-related terms in the title or description, or used other terms. It is possible that many videos made by older YouTubers were labelled with generic labels such as "Quick Update" or "A Few Favorite Hacks" that do not refer to age. This was mitigated by using a second method to identify videos, a video crawl.

The main limitation of the crawl strategy is that it returns semantically related videos, that is to say videos that are related through the text keywords assigned to it, rather than visually related through the content of the videos. The search results are biased towards the initial seed video: seeding a music video is likely to return other music videos. This method also seems to favour more popular and more recently uploaded videos (Karkulahti, 2015). This could be mitigated by using a greater variety of seed videos that cover a larger range of characteristics such as genre or geographic location, or running the crawl to a greater depth. However the process of discovery of videos potentially by older people, and the subsequent manual filtering make it impractical for this study.

A further limitation of the sampling methodology is that it only samples videos that are publicly available on YouTube and excluded

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ones that were designated as private. While this is both ethical responsible and procedurally practical, it may exclude some videos by older people. There is no public data on what proportion of videos uploaded to YouTube are private, so viewable only by a direct link and not visible by searching. An unknown proportion of videos made by older people are set to private.

A finding from this data collection process is the considerable difficulty posed in identifying older video makers. The method relied on people self-identifying their age or the analyst uncovering evidence of age from manual examination of the video and the user account. Considerable care was taken to ensure that each video was made by a person aged over 60 but this is likely to have excluded videos made by people in that age group because there was no definitive evidence. This suggests that explicit age categorisations that can be automatically detected by YouTube's search algorithms or manually detected are not common. Although there have been some advances in automated filtering of videos by content (for example Simonet, 2013), there is no automated filtering process for age, so a manual method is necessary. In this study the acceptance rate for videos meeting all the criteria is 1.3% of videos sampled. This process of manually watching and filtering videos proved to be tedious and time-consuming. It also presented the main and significant barrier to increasing the sample size.

In summary, this methodology presents some limitations for collecting data from YouTube with specific characteristics, in this case the

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age of the YouTuber: difficulty in collecting a truly random sample; reliance on user or YouTube generating keywords linked to the attribute of interest in the keyword search; reliance on semantically linked videos in the crawl search; data restricted to public videos; and slow and potentially incomplete manual methods of identifying videos made by people of a specific age range. These limitations are not specific to this study (for example Cunliffe & Dyfrig, 2013, p. 131; Thelwall et al., 2012; Yarosh et al., 2016) and are balanced against the limitations of other sampling methods.

3.3.2 Data coding

At the root of a quantitative content analysis is the system of categories used to classify and organise the data. The coding of the data with these categories turn the objectives of the analysis into a concrete procedure. The aim of the data coding stage is to apply coding schema of analytic variables in a systematic procedure that is stable, reproducible and accurate so that the analysis produces reliable data (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 211).

Twenty five variables in total were recorded, deduced or assigned for each video, twelve at video level and thirteen at channel level (Table 3.2). Some variables were recorded from data obtained via the YouTube API or read manually from the video's web page such the video title or view count. Some variables were deduced, for example how long the video channel has been active which was calculated from the date the first video was uploaded to channel.

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Table 3.2

Content analysis video and channel variables

Video-level variables recorded:

video title, unique video identifier, date uploaded, video description, YouTube category, tags, video duration, video views count, video likes count, video dislikes count, video comments count, content category.

Channel-level variables recorded:

channel name, channel ID, channel description, channel view count, channel subscribers count, videos in channel count, social media links, date first video uploaded, date most recent video published, still active (posted in last 6 months), channel active (years, months), YouTuber's gender, YouTuber's location (country)

Video content categories

An appropriate typology of videos was required to code the content of the videos. As significant prior work already exists on YouTube video authorship a deductive approach was held to be appropriate. YouTube has a set of 15 content categories (at the time of writing) that are available to the YouTuber when they upload a video. But these are not always a useful guide to content as the YouTuber's choice of category is subjective and potentially inaccurate. A YouTuber may assign a video to a particular category to influence audience expectations about the material, to increase viewer numbers or simply in error (Yew & Shamma, 2011). In addition if the YouTuber does not assign a category at upload YouTube assigns a default category, "People and blogs". This lack of consistency means the YouTube categories can not be taken as an accurate guide to content (Simonsen, 2011).

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Prior studies have developed alternative typologies to address these issues. Early work on YouTube mainly distinguished between professionally made and amateur videos (Burgess & Green, 2009b; Cha et al., 2007). More recent typologies have been developed for YouTube videos (Landry & Guzdial, 2008; Simonsen, 2011; Zhao et al., 2013) and specifically for YouTube vlogs, a blog in which the postings are in video form (Hillrichs, 2005). While most schema have less than 15 categories, some have very high granularity with thousands of categories (Aradhye et al., 2009; Simonet, 2013). Content categories will continue to evolve as new formats and genres become available.

No classification scheme is perfect with consistent, unambiguous boundaries (Bowker & Star, 1999). However Yarosh et al.'s (2016) work on youth authorship, which in turn drew on Purcell's (2013) large scale survey for the Pew Research Center, has informed this exploration of video characteristics. Purcell devised a scheme with seven categories: educational or tutorial videos showing people how to do things; intentionally staged, scripted, or choreographed videos; videos of an event the video author attended, such as a concert or sporting event; videos of friends and family doing everyday things; videos of pets or animals; videos of themselves or others doing funny things; and videos that mix content and material in a creative way. Yarosh et al. (2016) added another two categories: selfies and opinions; and acted responses.

A preliminary investigation indicated that additional categories for

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vlogs, sports and fitness, and interview and reportage were also appropriate. After examining all the categories in detail it was determined that Yarosh's categories of events attended, pets and animals, creative remix and selfies and opinions could be thematically absorbed into the other categories. The process resulted in the creation of seven categories to be used in this study: comedy; everyday things; how to and educational; interview and reportage; performance, music and creative; sports and fitness; and vlogs.

The content category variable was coded as one item from these categories. Considerable effort was placed on correctly coding the variables especially the video content categories. The videos were examined more than once and comparisons were made between videos in each category, and between categories to check the boundaries were consistent. Videos were considered to be comedy if they were intentionally humorous. Videos of self, family or friends doing commonplace activities were classed as everyday things. Videos that demonstrated a particular skill or teaching about a subject were classed as how to and educational. Interview and reportage included one person interviewing another or speaking direct to camera in a news reporting style. Performance, music and creative included performances of a staged, scripted, choreographed or musical activity to an audience or direct to the camera, for example reading poetry, as well as short films and animations. Videos of the self or others playing sport or doing a fitness activity were classed as sports and fitness. Vlog denotes a video blog, a first person and personal video on different topics including everyday life, beauty

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and make-up, and relationships.

The data was entered into a spreadsheet as is consistent with most current content analyses (Skalski et al., 2001). Following this coding process, the videos were analysed.

Limitations

The reliability of the data produced during the coding stage depends on the stability, accuracy and reproducibility of the systematic coding procedure (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 211). Stability was maximised by keeping a detailed research log of the coding decisions and examining the videos more than once to minimise any discrepancies in coding decisions. The categorisations were repeatedly compared between videos in the same category, and between categories. This ensured the coding rules were consistently applied. The accuracy of the data was ensured by checking the data was coded against the functional standard of the definition and possible values set out in the codebook definition of the category and possible values.

A limitation on how the methodology was applied was the lesser emphasis on reproducibility of the data. The coding was undertaken by only one coder, myself, and not tested against the coding of other coders. The rationale was that this study was conceived as an initial study to understand the broad terrain of older people's videos on YouTube. However testing the reliability of coding, and the independence of the result from myself as the coder, would have increased

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the reliability of the data. Secondly the function of the coding system was primarily descriptive rather than inferential.

3.3.3 Data analysis

At the data analysis stage descriptive statistics were produced for the coded data on the videos, the YouTubers, their channels and comments on the videos. These fell into three groupings. The first is author characteristics: gender, geographic location, length of time active on YouTube (since first video uploaded to the channel) and whether still active (in the last six months). The second is video content categories: comedy, everyday things, how to and educational, interview and reportage, performance, music and creative, sports and fitness, and vlogs. The third grouping is video popularity measured in audience size (number of video views), engagement (ratings and comments), and the number of subscribers.

These were compared with the findings of four other studies to elucidate similarities and differences (Table 3.3): Simonsen's (2011) study of YouTubers of all ages, Yarosh et al.'s (2016) two studies, of videos made by adults aged 18 years and over, and videos made by youths aged under 18 years, and Bärtil's (2018) very large study of channels, uploads and views over 10 years. While Bartl's dataset goes beyond the current study as it includes videos by companies and organisations as well as by individuals, the granularity of the analysis of videos over ten years, both annually and by content category, proves a useful comparator.

Table 3.3
Current study and comparator studies

Study	Label	Age range of YouTubers	Sample size
Current study	Current study	60+	121
Simonsen (2011)	All Ages study	All ages	473
Yarosh (2016)	Adult study	18+	2743
Yarosh (2016)	Youth study	Under 18	131
Bärtil (2018)	Large study	All ages	5,591,400

Limitations

This phase one study has limitations in sampling issues, challenges in identifying older authors, reliability of the data coding, and comparability with other studies. The final sample size of 121 could be potentially low for generalising results. This is however comparable to other studies of YouTube videos (Landry & Guzdial, 2008; McRoberts et al., 2016; Yarosh et al., 2016).

The sampling issues largely arise from the platform-specific features of YouTube itself. The inability to search for videos directly on the age (or other demographic characteristics) of YouTubers, and the subsequent reliance on the proxy method of keywords supplied by YouTube or by the YouTuber, and on a crawl strategy which tends towards semantically similar videos, means that a random representative sample of videos from YouTube made by older people proved impracticable. The related issue of identifying YouTubers aged 60 years and over manifested as a laborious and drawn-out manual scrutiny process. However it could be argued that these limitation also reflect the factors that influence what the wider YouTube

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audience sees too.

Secondly, the data coding stage under-emphasised the issue of reproducibility by using only one coder. This may affect the reliability of the data produced for analysis.

The final limitation is in the comparability of the data generated by this study with previous studies. The content categories selected were based on but not absolutely identical to categories used in previous studies, primarily Yarosh et al. (2016) and Purcell (2013). Some categories were simply renamed or amalgamated but some new categories are introduced to provide completeness and exhaustiveness. However enough similarity between the categories remains to allow meaningful comparisons to be made.

Summary

The aim of phase one of the thesis is to ascertain the typical characteristics of videos made by older people on YouTube. A primary challenge was developing an effective search strategy for videos on YouTube made by people aged 60 and above to create an adequately sized and varied sample. The second was to specify the types of videos made by older people on YouTube.

A quantitative content analysis was made on a sample of 121 videos. Comparisons were drawn with four other studies of the characteristics of YouTube videos. The findings are presented in Chapter 4 below. The dataset of videos acquired for this study provided the basis of the data used in the phase two study which is described

next.

3.4 Phase two: Membership Categorisation Analysis

This section describes the methodological steps taken to answer the research questions:

How do older people interact with others on YouTube through making use of the available social, technical and interactional resources?

How do older people invoke and negotiate age and other identities for themselves and others through interaction on YouTube?

First the procedures are outlined for selecting for the videos for the membership categorisation analysis (MCA) from the dataset collected in phase one. Next consideration is given to the issues in and processes of transcribing the video and textual elements of this study. Then the main tools of Membership Categorisation Analysis are described. After that how they are applied to the data is set out. Finally consideration is given to some of the limitations of this methodology and how they can be mitigated.

3.4.1 Data selection

Data selection takes place over three stages: an initial selection of videos from the dataset of 121 videos from phase one, a simple

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transcription and presentation of some of the data at data sessions, and a final whittling down of the video to create a final dataset from which a collection of instances is made.

The initial dataset from phase one was reduced in a number of stages. Firstly videos that had been removed from public viewing on YouTube were discarded. Next, as the study is of older people's presentation and response from the audience, those with little or no speech were discarded: these were primarily videos of physical exercise and fitness; performances including music, poetry and fiction; and demonstrations of craft or technical skills with no interaction with the audience. The videos were repeatedly watched to "to inductively identify areas of interest" (Housley et al., 2017b), specifically if they appeared to include explicit or implicit mentions of age categories or life stages, or descriptions that are resonant of these categories, "foregrounding [...] features of specific interest" (ten Have, 2004, p. 43). This reduced the list of potential videos to eighteen.

Secondly an initial transcript was made of each of these eighteen videos, a simple translation of the speech in the video into text. These were assembled with the "paratexts" (Simonsen, 2014, pp. 216–217) i.e. the video title, description and tags, the channel name and description, and the text comments added by viewers below the video.

This process was supplemented with presenting data at group data analysis sessions, "an informal get-together of researchers in order to discuss some 'data' – recordings and transcripts" (ten Have,

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1999, p. 140). Excerpts of the video and transcripts were presented at a King's College London micro-discourse analysis data session (2017), at a data session at the Linguistics department at Queen Mary University of London (2018) and at the EM/CA doctoral network meeting (2018).

The insights gained from observing a group of both novice and experienced researchers analysing this data were very useful in highlighting phenomena or accounts of practices that might have been overlooked. As ten Have (1999, pp. 123–124) notes, data sessions can be "a kind of playground to mutually inspire one's understanding of the data". The data sessions were also useful for gaining experience in learning the craft of the analytical process.

Thirdly, following the insights gained from repeated watching and from data sessions, the list of videos was whittled down once more to a final twelve videos. From these a collection of instances of explicit mentions of age and other identity categories was identified (Stokoe, 2012b; ten Have, 2004, p. 52). The twelve videos are:

- 5 beauty vlogs by women
- 3 gun reviews videos by men
- 2 lifestyle vlogs by women
- 1 travel vlog by a woman (part of a wider lifestyle channel)
- 1 creative music video by a man

Full transcripts of these video were made, as described below.

3.4.2 Transcription

The initial transcripts were iteratively refined using notation systems primarily devised by Gail Jefferson and Lorenza Mondada (Jefferson, 2004, pp. 13–31; Mondada, 2016). The speech in each of the videos was manually transcribed using Jeffersonian transcription conventions as these are standard practice in membership categorisation analytic (as well as conversation analytic) studies (Appendix B). Transcripts are records of what actually occurs. The Jeffersonian system details how talk is actually said as well as paralinguistic features such as pauses and laughter. This is supplemented by Mondada's multimodal annotation which captures embodied actions such as gesture, head movement and body position that would not be captured by the Jeffersonian system alone. As Jefferson states "Why put all that stuff in? Well, as they say, because it's there" (2004, p. 15).

Transcripts, however, are not the data of the study: they are an opportune way to capture the phenomenon of interest in the videos, paratexts and comments (ten Have, 1999, p. 77). The analysis occurs through repeated viewing of the videos, and reading and annotating of the transcripts in tandem. A transcript is a dynamic document: it is repeatedly revised, annotated and becomes more complex as the videos are re-watched. The transcript also changes to reflect what the analyst is interested in and paying attention to (Lau-

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rier, 2014b). In this way, transcripts are simultaneously both highly detailed and selective.

Making transcripts is time-consuming, but there are several benefits. The acts of writing and revising the transcripts can make the analyst pay attention to details that otherwise pass unnoticed, so transcripts can be considered a "noticing device" (ten Have, 1999, p. 78). They also reveal the rhythm and individual style of the person on camera. Consequently they allow for closer examination of the subtleties of the video and the meaning-making processes.

Although transcription and analysis are here presented as sequential steps they are in fact part of iterative cycles of transcription — noticing — analysis — transcription.

3.4.3 Membership Categorisation Analysis

Membership Categorisation Analysis is rooted in ethnomethodology and is often described as more an "analytic mentality" than an analytic method (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015, p. 6). It is a collection of practices which focus on empirical examination of the methods, techniques and orientations that members use to invoke and negotiate social categories in their everyday lives (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015, p. 6).

In this section first the key concepts in MCA are presented that describe how people use, understand and infer categories, attributes, relationships, expected behaviour and moral judgements. These

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concepts are membership categories, membership categorisation devices, and standardised relational pairs. Then it is specified how categories are applied and understood through the economy rule, the consistency rule and the hearer's maxim. It goes on to address how activities are connected with categories through category bound activities and predicates, and the viewer's maxim. Next the inference richness and representativeness of categories are outlined. And finally how the analysis was undertaken is described.

MCA developed originally as the concept of membership categorisation devices (MCDs) alongside conversation analysis in the work of Harvey Sacks, a student of Harold Garfinkel, and his collaborative work with Gail Jefferson, Emanuel Schegloff and their students in the 1960s and early 1970s. Sacks produced much of his thought about MCDs (and conversation analysis) in lectures to his students at UCLA and UC Irvine which became more widely available through the two volumes of his *Lectures in Conversation* first published in 1992 and later in 1995 (1995a, 1995b) (Lepper, 2000, p. 2). Sacks was interested in the way in which, in a particular instance, categories and their associated attributes are deployed (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015, p. 4). He saw social identity not as what people are but what they do. So, social identity is not fixed and innate characteristics but something people in society do in their everyday lives in order to explain, predict and describe others' behaviour. Categories are invoked within interactions and then may be "ascribed (and rejected), avowed (and disavowed), displayed (and ignored)" (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998b, p. 2). In this way, social

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identities are both practical accomplishments and essential tools for people to achieve and co-ordinate everyday tasks and interactions.

In Sacks' framework there are three main concepts and two rules of application which enable people to use and understand categorisation. The central concept is the **membership category** which is a common sense classification or social type used to describe people (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015, p. 8) such as "cook", "thief", "wife", "lover" (to borrow Peter Greenaway's 1989 film title). Membership categories are the culturally available resources which allow people to identify, describe, and make reference to themselves and other people. Watson (1978) introduced the idea of 'category incumbency', that a category is not fixed but achieved locally in the interaction. So an identity is not a fixed feature of person but is co-produced by the people in the interaction. Hester and Eglin went on to describe membership categorisation as "an *activity* carried out in local circumstances" (Hester & Eglin, 1997, p. 21, emphasis in original). Categories are not just names or descriptions, they also have associated properties such as category bound activities, discussed below (ten Have, 2004, p. 23).

The second concept is the **membership categorisation device** (MCD), which Housley and Fitzgerald (2015, p. 8) describe as the "lynch-pin" of the analysis. Sacks defines a membership categorisation device as a collection of "categories-that-go-together" (Sacks, 1995a, p. 238) and rules for applying them. Categories 'go together' through common sense practical reasoning in a local context. In a

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particular interaction "some membership categories can be used and heard commonsensically as 'going together', whilst others cannot be used and heard" (Hester & Eglin, 1997, p. 4). They give example of the categories mother, father, son and daughter that may be heard to 'go together' in the collection family in a way that trumpet player or marxist feminist do not (p. 4).

Sacks identifies a particular type of device that he terms a **standardised relational pair** (SRP) in which categories are paired with reciprocal rights and obligations in relation to each other. Examples include parent-child, doctor-patient, and advice seeker-advice giver (Sacks, 1995a, pp. 326–327; Sacks, 1974). When we hear one category being invoked, this suggests the other category and makes it relevant. For example when we hear the category 'doctor' in a specific interaction, we are likely to expect the category 'patient' and to assume certain mutual rights and obligations between them (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015, p. 8).

Sacks describes two rules of applying the collection of categories that contributes to people's understanding of which category may be relevant in the particular situation (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015, p. 9). The first is the **economy rule** that states that one category may be sufficient to describe a person at any one time. While a person can be a member of any number of categories, at the heart of coherent talk is the ability to use only those categories that are necessary to achieve the task at hand. Often a single category is sufficient to self-identify or categorise others in a specific context,

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and there is no need to say everything that could be said about that person. Other categories can be applied but one is likely to be adequate (Sacks, 1995a, p. 246).

The second rule of application is the **consistency rule**. This says that if a category is assigned to a person, then the other members can also be categorised by a category in the same collection or MCD (Sacks, 1995a, p. 246). For example, once a person has been identified as 'the doctor' then others can then be identified as 'the nurse', 'the patient' and so on (ten Have, 2004, p. 24). Hester and Eglin (1997, p. 5) provide another example: "if a person has been categorised as 'first violin' then further persons may be referred to in terms of other membership categories comprising the collection 'members of the orchestra'."

Together with these two rules of application is the **hearer's maxim** which suggests how participants hear and understand categories in use as consistent and recognisable: if two categories can be heard as being from the same collection then they should be heard that way (Schegloff, 2007a). To use Sack's well-known example of the child's story "The baby cried. The mommy picked it up" (1995a, p. 244), if 'baby' can be heard as from the collection 'family' then 'mommy' should be heard and understood as being from the collection 'family' too and, further, as the 'mommy' of this 'baby'.

Sacks argues that certain activities are attached to or bound to certain categories that he terms **category bound activities** (CBAs) (Sacks, 1995a, p. 241). CBAs are activities that are associated with,

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or seen as specifically characteristic of, members of a category in a taken for granted way (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015, p. 8; Schegloff, 2007a). A person who is seen as a member of a particular category can be expected to do particular activities. For example, someone identified as a milkman might be expected to deliver milk, and someone who delivered milk might be taken to be a milkman. The going together of categories and activities make them "a powerful cultural resource in warranting, explaining and justifying behaviour" (Widdicombe, 1998, p. 53). But categories and activities do not go together in a static or decontextualised way. The connection is found in the local context of the interaction in which the categorisation takes place (Hester & Eglin, 1997, p. 46).

Members can make a category relevant to the interaction without explicitly naming it by doing or naming an activity that is bound to that category. To continue the example above, a person delivering milk can be understood as being milkman even if they do not name themselves as this. As Schegloff (2007a) says "the doing of a category-bound action can introduce into a scene or an occasion the relevance of the category to which that action is bound".

Sacks' concept of category-bound activities was extended by Rod Watson and others to what he termed **category bound predicates** which includes knowledge, beliefs, entitlements, and obligations (Reynolds & Fitzgerald, 2015, p. 100; D. R. Watson, 1978, pp. 106–107). Since then others have suggested that predicates also include rights, attributes and competencies associated with or in-

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ferred by the categories. The introduction of predicates is significant because it recognises that when a category is heard, it is not only simple activities that may be inferred but these other entities too. This emphasises the use of categories and activities as not being fixed, finite entities but occasioned within a particular interaction.

Watson (1978, pp. 106–107) showed that an additional consequence of the association of categories with predicates is that if a member of a particular category does not behave as expected, for example if they do not claim the entitlements or carry out the obligations associated with that category, or do not display the knowledge expected from person in that category, then this can be regarded as noticeable and the member can be asked to account for it. An example raised by Wroe (2018) in her study of refugees and refugee advocates is that refugees are heard as being in the category "innocent victim" if they display the category predicates associated with that category, such as "helplessness", "passivity" and "suffering". If, however, they are not seen to have these attributes then they can be seen as being in the categories of "burden on public services", a "criminal" or "villain".

Associated with CBAs and predicates is the **viewer's maxim** (Sacks, 1995a, pp. 259–260) which suggests how participants view and understand category membership and activities. If a person exhibits the behaviour expected of a certain category then that is sufficient for the person to belong to that category. To continue the example from above, common sense knowledge asserts that seeing a per-

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son delivering milk to a house is adequate to categorise them as a milkman. So the viewer can make inferences about the person viewed based on their activities and the category associated with those activities.

Categories are more than just descriptive, decontextualised and pre-existing structures: they are also **inference rich** and **representative**. Categories contain “layers of social knowledge” (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015, p. 7) which Sacks calls “inference rich” and which store “a great deal of the knowledge that members of society have about the society” (1995a, p. 40). The use of a particular category depends on the common knowledge stored within it. If a category is assigned to a person, that person is assumed to embody the common knowledge about the category: specific activities, attributes and identities associated with it (Schegloff, 2007a). This shared common knowledge about categories enables other members to draw inferences about the attitudes and behaviours of the individual and to produce mutual understanding and social action.

Another key element of membership categories is that they are **representative**. When someone is assigned to a category they become a representative of that category. Everything that is known about that category also becomes known about that person. In addition, anything they do is presumed to be typical of that category (Sacks, 1995a, p. 41).

The **reconsidered model of membership categorisation analysis** has brought together various developments since Sacks’s initial

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analysis (Housley, 2002). It states the importance of acknowledging the situated work of categorisation. It draws together the categorical and sequential aspects of interaction to focus on how categorisation is achieved in interaction for each and every occasion of their relevance in a contextualised manner. While not breaking with Sacks' work Hester and Eglin identify that "there are various points in his writings which might, unadvisedly, lead one to conclude that Sacks was not wholly averse to a decontextualised model of membership categorization" (Hester & Eglin, 1997, p. 13).

The reconsidered model recentres the ethnomethodological perspective that sees membership categorisation as an activity is carried out in local circumstances (Hester & Eglin, 1997, p. 21). Rod Watson earlier made an important contribution in his development of predicates as category-predicated activities (D. R. Watson, 1978). This enabled consideration of the ways in which activities and other predicates can be tied to categories in the local situation of an interaction. It highlights "categories in context" (Housley, 2002), the local and contingent use of categories, and deprecates decontextualised models that fail to take account of the local and sequential accomplishment of instances of categorisation.

The reconsidered model of membership categorisation analysis is distinct from membership categorisation device analysis in the centrality it places on context. Context is not "an unspoken reified parameter" (Housley, 2002) that is imposed. The reconsidered model used in this thesis takes into account the locally configured and co-

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produced context in specific interactions analysed through both sequential and categorical aspects of interaction.

Techniques of the Membership Categorisation Analysis

The final stage of the membership categorisation analysis in this study is the systematic examination and analysis of the data for evidence of a category being invoked, its relevance to the participants, the effect the categorisation has on the interaction and the evidence for how it is produced, accepted, sustained, or rejected (Stokoe, 2012b).

The key analytic techniques for membership categorisation (and ethnomethodological) analyses are repeated viewing and noticing. This repeated and thorough examination of the data allows for seen but previously unnoticed details to be noticed (Laurier, 2013). The researcher is “forced to attend to the details of the interaction that would escape the ordinary listener” (ten Have, 1999, p. 78). Potential categorisations are noted and evidence is sought within the data for this being a membership categorisation and not just a reference to a person. Likewise evidence for the linking of categories with activities or other predicates is sought within the data of the unfolding interaction. A specific risk in the analysis is the “promiscuous” claiming of categories or associated activities (Schegloff, 1995, p. xlii) to interpret members’ behavior that is not grounded in the details of the data. Linking categories and activities “cannot simply be asserted on the analyst’s authority” (Schegloff, 1995, p. xlii).

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Instances within the data with similar features are then examined and attempts are made to provide an account for these practices. In this study the process is aided by the writing of memos, a practice borrowed from Grounded Theory. A memo is an “informal analytic note” (Charmaz, 2006, pp. 72–73) where early insights on the phenomena identified in the data are iteratively summarised.

Membership categorisation differs from “person description” as it is “mostly used as resources for identifying, describing, formulating, etc., persons – often aggregates of persons” (Schegloff, 2007b). He sees categorisation as action: the analyst must reflect on the action the speaker might achieve by using the membership categorization which could be complaining, disagreeing, teasing and so on. Categories and predicates are only meaningful when there is an evidential, observable effect on the interactions, that is to say they are both relevant and consequential. Otherwise they are just instances of description.

Categorisation must be demonstrably relevant to the participants. They orient themselves to an identity choice that they consider significant in that particular context (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998b, pp. 4–5). Further, different categories may become operationally relevant for an individual at different points of the interaction as the sequence of action unfolds (C. W. Butler & Fitzgerald, 2010; Sacks, 1995b, p. 327).

Once a categorisation has been identified that is relevant, the analysis must then evidence that it is consequential: that it matters and

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has consequences for other participants (Schegloff, 1995, p. xlix). Specifically, the analysis must evidence that the categorisation seems "to have some visible effect on how the interaction pans out" (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998b, p. 5). A categorisation can be greatly consequential for how a participant is understood and treated, how the interaction is understood, and what it encourages or discourages participants to do next (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 69; Schegloff, 2007b). The analyst must look for evidence in devices and practices that members use a category or attributes for themselves or others, and accept, reject, or seek to modify it (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998b, p. 2; Stokoe, 2012b).

In summary, the aim of phase two of this thesis is to determine how older people interact with others on YouTube through making use of the available social, technical and interactional resources, and how older people invoke and negotiate age and other identities for themselves and others. The main challenge has been the analytical commitment to identifying categorisations and their effects with evidence coming from within the data rather than pre-existing conceptions. A membership categorisation analysis was undertaken with a sample of twelve videos (drawn from the larger sample of videos from phase one) their paratexts and comments. The findings are presented in Chapters 5 to 7 below.

Next some critiques of MCA as a methodology are presented along with consideration of their importance for the work presented here.

3.4.4 Critiques of Membership Categorisation Analysis

Membership Categorisation Analysis faces a number of methodological critiques. The first concerns the relevance of categories, devices or attributes to the members. At issue is how the analysis determines that they are a membership categorisation and not just a “person description” (Schegloff, 2007b). As Schegloff (2007a) points out there are many possible categories that could potentially apply to members and the analysis must focus on those categorisations that are relevant to that interaction. Schegloff argues that referring to a person or describing them is distinct activity from categorising them. Membership categories are used as resources for “identifying, describing, formulating, etc., persons” (Schegloff, 2007b). This problem can be mitigated by an analytical commitment to evidencing categorisations that members orient to and the actions the member might achieve by using them and differentiate them from persons references or descriptions.

The second critique is analytical laxity in connecting categories, categorisation devices and attributes. The problem is the analyst’s use of their own common sense knowledge to make these associations independent of the members’ own orientations. Schegloff terms this the “promiscuous” introduction of categories (Schegloff, 2007a) that fit the views of the analyst rather than the members. In short, the analysis can be dependent on the analyst’s pre-existing knowledge rather than what can be evidenced from the participants’ own orientations. This can result in the analysis not providing evi-

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denced knowledge about the members' methods and so may exaggerate the theoretical claims in the analysis.

Stokoe (2012b) suggests that this 'promiscuity' is not inevitable. It can be argued that the analyst requires some familiarity with the culture in which the interactions take place (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998b, p. 10) – in this study the context of YouTube and YouTubers – in order to understand associations between categories, devices and attributes. Further, the analyst cannot just "switch off their cultural knowledge" (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998b, p. 9). But the analyst can mitigate against analytical laxity by homing in on those categorisations which are relevant to the members and consequential to the unfolding interaction.

The third critique of MCA – and one that is commonly directed to ethnomethodology too (as discussed in Chapter 2.2 above) – is that the microanalytic focus means that it cannot incorporate external factors that might influence the interaction without the participants explicitly orienting to them. The factors commonly identified are those such as gender and class. The critique can be countered by the argument that the micro-analysis provides warrantable claims about "the world and its categorical arrangements" (Stokoe, 2012b) which do incorporate these concepts.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has established the rationale for a two phase design to address the research questions for the complex and understudied phenomenon of older people's interactions on YouTube. It is, despite its methodological and ethical constraints, a rich and fascinating source of data in both videos, paratexts and written comments. Content analysis is the appropriate method to generate descriptive data about the YouTubers and their videos.

In the second phase, applying Membership Categorisation Analysis to YouTube videos is not as straightforward as applying it to face to face conversation because of the differences in the orientations of the participants that are viewable and hearable to both the participants and the analyst. However MCA has from the start with Harvey Sacks been used to analyse a variety of data including phone calls, newspapers and stories, and more recently has been used in a variety of asynchronous online contexts. It is a multimodal tool that can analyse not only linguistic actions but also embodied actions and the structure and content of videos. Following Sacks' principles MCA can be used to analyse any phenomena in which the members' methods include categorical actions.

The next three chapters present the analysis and interpretation of the data for this study using this methodology. The following chapter presents the findings from the phase one quantitative content analysis and subsequent chapters present the findings from the

3.5. CONCLUSION

phase two membership categorisation analysis.

CHAPTER 4

Older people's YouTube videos: a content analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the quantitative content analysis of a dataset of 121 YouTube videos made by people aged 60 and above (as described in Chapter 3.3 above). The aim of the study is to address the research question:

What are the typical characteristics of videos made by older people on YouTube?

The results are presented in three sections starting with an analysis of characteristics of the YouTubers who made the videos. The second step is an analysis of the content of the videos in the dataset. YouTube is more than just an online video hosting site as it provides tools for engaging with other users and providing feedback and networking. So the study also analyses markers of popularity as an indication of the size and response of the audience for these videos.

These findings are compared with existing studies of adults of all

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ages in order to address whether older people make different types of videos to other adults and whether they are more or less popular. Comparison is made with three other empirical studies. Firstly Simonsen's (2011) study of 473 videos by people of all ages, hereafter the "All ages study". Secondly Yarosh et al.'s (2016) study of 2,743 videos made by adults aged over 18, hereafter the "Adult study". And thirdly in Yarosh's same study a sample of 131 videos made by young people aged under 18, hereafter the "youth study". Useful comparison is also made with Bärthl's (2018) quantitative analysis of YouTube channels, uploads and views by video category over ten years.

Two issues must be taken into consideration with these comparisons. Firstly the studies do not use identical categories. The categories are mapped to the current schema as closely as possible but discrepancies may arise. Secondly in Yarosh's (2016) Youth study videos can be assigned to more than one content category so the accumulated frequencies for the categories total 142%. These comparisons are still worthwhile as they shed light on the individual and aggregated practices of older adults, other adults and youth who upload videos to YouTube.

This chapter starts by presenting the results of the content analysis. Section 4.2.1 describes the characteristics of the person uploading the video – termed the YouTuber. Section 4.2.2 reports the analysis of the content categories of the videos in the dataset. Section 4.3.3 reports the analysis of popularity markers - video views, audience

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engagement measured in comments and ratings, and channel subscriptions. Finally Section 4.3 presents a discussion of the results and Section 4.4 the implications of the content analysis.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 YouTuber characteristics

Five characteristics of the person uploading the video – termed the YouTuber - are analysed. First, and most obviously, the YouTubers are, or more accurately claim to be, aged sixty years and over. The method by which this is deduced (and the limitations of the methodology) is laid out in Chapter 3.3.1 above. Due to the limitations in the methodology there is not further breakdown of age beyond the range “60 and over”.

The second characteristic is gender which is deduced by manual inspection of the video and paratexts, taking evidence from visual appearance and use of pronouns. Overall, 39% of the videos are made by women, 55% by men and 7% mixed groups or unclear. So, where a video has a single author and their gender could be determined, 41% are women and 59% men. Comparison with other studies is limited as most do not record gender. The only significant study is C. Yang et al.’s study of 341 adult Taiwanese YouTube authors conducted in 2008 (2010). Their survey found 40% were women and 60% men, similar to the findings in this study. However given the length of time between the two studies (8 years) and the

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different methodologies it is uncertain how meaningful this comparison is. More interesting findings about gender with respect to the content and popularity of videos are discussed in the following sections.

The third YouTuber characteristic is geographic location. This is similarly determined by manual inspection of the video, paratexts and comments to find self declarations of location. This found that two thirds of YouTubers in the sample are from the USA, 17% from UK, 8% from the Canada and small numbers from Australia, the Philippines, Dominican Republic, Germany and Switzerland. The high proportion of YouTubers located in the USA is unsurprising as the sample is of English-language videos.

The fourth characteristic is the length of time the YouTuber has been active on YouTube, measured as the length of time between the date the first video was uploaded to their channel and the date of the data collection. The newest active channel in the sample was 4 months old and the oldest was 10 years and 8 months. Thus the dataset contains videos from channels which have been active for a wide range of time (Table 4.1). It can also be deduced that some of these YouTubers started posting videos before they reached 60 years of age.

The final YouTuber characteristic is whether the YouTuber is still active. This is defined as whether a video has been uploaded to the channel in the six months preceding the date of data collection. It is perhaps noteworthy that 55% of channels were still active and this

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Table 4.1
YouTubers' length of time active on YouTube

Channel active years	Video <i>n</i>	Still active* <i>n</i>	Still active* %
0-1	10	7	43
2-4	20	15	50
5-7	43	24	56
8-10	38	21	55
Total	121	67	55

* Uploaded a video in the last 6 months

proportion remained remarkably consistent whether the channel has been active 2 years or 10 years (Table 4.1). Unfortunately there is no other available data of channel activity rates for comparison.

Summary

The identified characteristics of this sample of YouTubers aged 60 years and over are as follows. Three fifths are men and two fifths women. They are predominantly from the USA: two thirds are in USA, one in six in UK, one in twelve from Canada and a few from five other countries. The sampled videos are found on channels which have been active for a wide span of time ranging from a few months to nearly eleven years, and just over half the video channels are still active. Most of these characteristics have been deduced by manual examination of the videos or channels. Comparison to other samples of users of similar or different ages is not possible as no such studies have been identified.

4.2.2 Video content

The genre of videos is central to understanding older people's making and sharing of videos on YouTube. The video content categories assigned are comedy; everyday things; how to and educational; interview and reportage; performance; sports and fitness; and vlogs, as defined in Chapter 3.3.2 above. Comparisons are made with two prior empirical studies: Simonsen's (2011) study of 473 videos by people of all ages, hereafter the "All Ages study," and Yarosh et al.'s (2016) study of 131 videos made by young people aged under 18, hereafter the "Youth study". The comparisons are not straightforward as the categories are not totally identical and the Youth study allows videos to be allocated to multiple categories so the frequency amounts to 142%. However in the absence of more suitable alternative studies the data is sufficient to provide at least indicative answers to the research question.

The most common categories of video content are vlogs (33%), performance, music and creative (22%) and how to and educational (20%) which together account for three quarters of the videos in the sample (Table 4.2). This is similar to the All Ages study (79%) and the Youth study (83%). This is a noteworthy finding as prior ethnographic studies have found that older people largely only share videos online about family and community events such as weddings and local festivals (Ferreira et al., 2017; Karahasanović et al., 2009), stories about an individual's life (Harley & Fitzpatrick, 2009a, 2009b; Riley, 2015) and sharing hobbies and interests (Harley & Fitzpatrick,

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2009b). This study demonstrates that older people are making a wide range of video content from fashion vlogs to playing ukulele to gardening tips and religious sermons.

Table 4.2
Video category frequency compared to other studies

Video category	Current study	All Ages study ^a	Youth study ^b
	%	%	%
Comedy	4	6	15
Everyday things	7	10	44
How to and educational	20	6	14
Interview and reportage	5	3	–
Performance, music and creative	23	26	44
Sports and Fitness	8	–	–
Vlog	33	47	25
Non-identifiable	–	2	–
Total	100	100	142 ^b

^a Simonsen (2011) ^b Yarosh et al (2016), videos can be assigned to more than one category

The gender differences are striking. Overall 55% of the videos in the sample are made by men, 39% by women and 7% by mixed groups. Within this, there are sharp differences: men make at least 70% of the videos in every category except vlogs in which 72% are made by women.

It is perhaps unsurprising that vlogs are so common in the sample as they are a highly popular genre on YouTube (Statista, 2018). Vlogs are also the most common genre in the All Ages study (47%) and third most popular genre in the Youth study (25%) (Table 4.2). This is the only category in which women are the majority: this may

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be due to how the videos have been categorised or it may be due to popularity of vlogging as a genre among women. Topics in the vlogs encompass a variety of subject matter from cosmetics to books and smoking cannabis. These were also very gendered: vlogs on travel and motorbikes were largely made by men while vlogs on beauty, fashion, lifestyle and relationships and sex were predominantly made by women. This is a novel finding as the gender-differentiated content of vlogs by older people has not previously been explored.

The second most common category, performance, music and creative, with 24 videos, is a broad category which includes poetry readings, music performances and short films. Again this is in line with other studies and music is possibly the most popular genre on YouTube (Liikkanen & Salovaara, 2015; Simonsen, 2011). It is in the top two categories in the Youth and All Ages studies and in Statista (2018) (combining the categories entertainment, music and film and animation). The proportion of this category, at 23%, is similar to the All Ages study (26%) and Statista (2018) (21%) but exceeded by the Youth study (44%). As with vlogs the prevalence of this category aligns more with studies of YouTubers of all ages (Simonsen, 2011; Statista, 2018) than prior qualitative studies of older people's video sharing (Ferreira et al., 2017; Harley & Fitzpatrick, 2009a, 2009b; Riley, 2015).

The most common grouping in the category is music with 24 of 28 videos. Two thirds of these videos are men singing and playing music direct to the camera, for example on a guitar or ukulele. As far

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as can be determined these are principally amateur or hobbyist musicians (though often very accomplished) playing either their own compositions or cover versions of pre-existing songs. This sub-category of videos is identified by Simonsen (2011) as first person musical performances but has not, to my knowledge, been further explored in prior studies. These tend to focus on the most popular music videos which are almost exclusively by professional musicians (Liikkanen & Salovaara, 2015; J. H. Park et al., 2018; Simonsen, 2011).

The third most common category is how to and educational with 24 videos (20%) of which 16 are by men and 8 by women. The format of nearly all the videos (22 of 24) is the demonstration of a process ranging from laying concrete foundations to using a knitting machine and making a violin, and most of these use a step-by-step format. The prevalence of this category fits with prior studies which show the popularity of demonstrations of practical skills of all kinds (Purcell, 2013; Wolf, 2016). The education component of this category has been previously reported as less common over many years (Bärthel, 2018), and the sample does not include any formal education videos. This category, at 20% of the sample, is more common than prior studies would suggest if older people acted like other age groups. The Youth study has a smaller proportion at 14% and the All Ages study has significantly less at 6% (Table 4.2). It is noteworthy that in the majority of videos (75%, 50% by men and 25% by women) the YouTuber makes reference to their professional experience in relation to the topic of the video in the video or the video

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title, description or channel description.

Summary

The findings demonstrate that older people make a wider range of videos than previously recognised. Prior studies suggest older people chiefly only share videos with family and pre-existing friends on a limited range of topics shaped by their domestic or local life and personal histories. The current study, however, suggests that the kinds of videos older people make are not so very different to the videos other age groups make.

Three quarters of the videos in the sample are accounted for by just three categories: vlogs; performance, music and creative; and how to and educational. The gender differences between the categories are marked: men predominate in all the categories apart from vlogs in which women are in the majority. The vlogs in the sample show similar gender differences. Those vlogs made by women are commonly on stereotypically female topics of fashion, beauty, lifestyle and relationships and (as discussed in Chapter 5 below) while men make vlogs about the more stereotypically male topics of travel and motorbikes. The performance category is dominated by men playing music and singing to camera, a previously unexplored sub-genre. The current study diverges most from these other studies in the prevalence of the how to and educational category: possibly older people feel they have expertise and skills to share.

The current study has more in common with the All Ages study (Si-

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mosen, 2011), as the most common categories are vlogs followed by performance, music and creative, than the Youth study (Yarosh et al., 2016) in which everyday things accounts for nearly half of the videos. Despite this difference it is notable that in all three studies the categories of vlogs, performance, music and creative, and how to and educational account for at least three quarters of the videos. These comparisons should however be treated with some caution due to methodological differences. A further limitation is that the sampling method did not return any videos from categories that are common on YouTube such as politics, gaming, and animals (Bärtl, 2018; Purcell, 2013). Despite these limitations, the findings give insights into the types of videos made and shared by older people, identify previously unexplored sub-genres and highlight points of similarity and difference with prior studies.

4.2.3 Video popularity

This section considers the popularity of older people's videos and channels in aggregate, by the category of video and, where possible, in comparison to other studies. Popularity of videos, and their channels, can be measured by a number of metrics that are easily available to researchers. Some variables are automatically recorded by YouTube and some require an additional action by the viewer. In this study popularity is measured in four ways. Firstly, it is measured by the audience size as quantified by the number of video views which is automatically logged by YouTube. Secondly, it is

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measured by audience engagement which is the combination of evaluative ratings and comments left by other YouTube users. Ratings are calculated as the total number of likes and dislikes given by viewers, shown graphically as thumbs up and thumbs down symbols. Comments is calculated as the number of comments left under a video. And finally popularity is measured by the number of subscribers to a YouTuber's channel which is automatically recorded by YouTube. All these measures are visible to viewers on the video's YouTube page under the video.

As YouTube is so large it is unsurprising that videos and channels show a wide range of popularity. While the most popular videos, channels or genres receive most of the media and research attention (for example Ferchaud et al., 2018; Simonsen, 2011), the true picture is that many videos and channels receive much fewer views, likes, comments and subscriptions (Bärtl, 2018).

Video views

The most direct measure of popularity is the number of views a video receives. In this study views ranges from 3 to 3,090,617, with a mean of 45,648 and median of 1,126. The discrepancy between the mean and the median indicates that the distribution is skewed so a smaller number of videos received more of the views while most gain fewer views. This is supported by the observation that while the highest ranked video in the sample received 3,090,617 views this is more than five times the views of the next two videos with 530,281 views and 362,215 views. At the lower end, 17 videos,

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14% of the sample, has less than 100 views. Videos by men received 2.7 times the mean number of views than videos by women.

YouTube as a company does not provide publicly available figures on average or median views so it is not possible to compare this sample of older people's videos with YouTube videos as a whole or with specific user group. These findings do, however, align with previous studies. The median number of views in Yarosh et al.'s (2016) Adult study is 1,700 which is comparable to 1,126 in the current study and markedly higher than the median number of views in their Youth study of 88 views.

The skewed distribution of views has been observable since YouTube's inception. Cha et al.'s (2007) study reported that the top 10% most popular videos accounted for nearly 80% of views. Bärthel's more recent (2018) study of over 5 million videos observed "how little attention most videos receive". Bärthel found that the top 3% of channels (measured by the combined views of all the videos in the channel) received 85% of all the views. Applying a similar metric in the current study, the top 3% of videos by views accounted for 76% of all the views (4,197,814 views) while the remaining 97% of videos by views accounted for 24% of views. At the aggregate level the skewed distribution of views aligns with prior studies.

There are clear differences in the popularity of videos in different content categories. The how to and educational category is the most popular by a large margin with 7,573 median views (Table 4.3). This is in part because the top three videos, two guns reviews and

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a building know-how video, are made by YouTubers who have a self-branded presence on other internet platforms including websites, Facebook, Twitter and other video-sharing sites, all of which are used to direct viewers to their videos on YouTube and so drive up views.

Table 4.3
Video category popularity by views

Video category	Videos	Total views		Median views
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>
Comedy	5	4,648	<1	165
Everyday things	8	20,140	<1	1,559
How to and educational	24	1,530,976	28	7,573
Interview and reportage	6	106,648	2	2,458
Performance, music and creative	28	3,355,475	61	469
Sports and Fitness	10	110,162	2	319
Vlog	40	395,358	7	465
Total	121	5,523,407	100	1,126

The second most popular category is interview and reportage (2,458 mean views). There are only a small number of videos in the sample (6) and one video, an interview with an author promoting her book about sex, has a relatively high view count of 92,261. Performance, music and creative has one of the lowest median views at 469 views. Perhaps unsurprisingly videos of men playing guitar or ukulele and singing songs, however accomplished, do not attract large number of views. This category does, however, have the widest range of views, from 16 to 3,090,617. The most popular video in this category is a scripted and acted short film about the perils of ageing made by an amateur film club. It was uploaded to

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YouTube in 2008 so it is the oldest video in the sample and has had longer to gain views. Comedy is the least popular category in the sample with 165 median views per video.

In summary, popularity measured in video views is more similar to Yarosh et al.'s (2016) Adult study than the Youth study. The distribution of views is highly skewed towards higher views in line with other studies (Bärtil, 2018; Cha et al., 2007). The category of how to and educational received the highest median number of views by a large margin and comedy, sports and fitness gained the lowest median views. Videos by men received nearly three times the number of views than videos by women.

Audience engagement: ratings and comments

Audience engagement with videos on YouTube is measured by the number of ratings, combining both positive and negative, and the number of comments left below the video. The number of ratings ranges from 0 to 7,632 per video with 95% positive, shown graphically as a thumbs up symbol on the video page, but one in six (17%) receive no ratings at all. The median number of ratings per video is low, at 9 for likes and 0 for dislikes. This is comparable to the Youth study with median likes of 3, in contrast to the Adult study's median likes of 27.

Comments range from 0 to 1,157 per video. Similarly, one third attract no comments and one third have less than ten comments. The remaining third attract an average of 89 comments. This is consis-

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tent with Frobenius's (2014) study of vlogs in which most had less than 50 comments. Again the median number of comments per video (3) is more similar to the Youth study (2) than the Adult study (73).

Table 4.4
Video category popularity by ratings and comments

Video category	Videos	Median ratings	Median comments
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
Comedy	5	10	0
Everyday things	8	15	3
How to and educational	24	41	5
Interview and reportage	6	12	1
Performance, music and creative	28	3	2
Sports and Fitness	10	3	1
Vlog	40	7	10
Total	121	9	3

The category breakdown of audience engagement offers some interesting findings. How to and educational has the highest median level of rankings and the second highest median level of comments (Table 4.4). This is consistent with W. Yang and Qian's (2011) study suggesting that high levels of viewer engagement with videos in this category has been remarkably consistent over the years. Vlogs have the highest median number of comments and is notable as the only category that has higher median comments than rankings. These two categories are also the only ones with any videos receiving more than 100 comments.

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In summary, audience engagement, as measured in ratings and comments, is relatively low in this study. This is more similar to Yarosh et al.'s (2016) Youth study than their Adult study. The categories of how to and educational and vlog receive the highest levels of audience engagement. The categories of sports and fitness, and performance, music and creative do not do well for audience engagement. Videos by men receive over five times the number of ratings and about four times the number of comments than by women.

Channel subscriptions

The third measure of popularity is the number of channel subscribers. When someone subscribes to a YouTube channel they are notified when a new video is published to that channel and the new videos are displayed in the subscriptions feed on their YouTube home page. Subscriptions are beneficial to YouTubers as they increase the audience for their videos. For viewers, subscriptions are one way to indicate an continuing interest in videos from that YouTuber.

The number of channel subscribers varies widely. 7% of the YouTubers have no subscribers and about a third (31%) have less than 100 subscribers but about a fifth (22%) have over a thousand subscribers. One outlier video, a gun review, accounts for 78% of total subscriptions with 2,301,621 subscribers. The median number of subscribers across the sample is 355, higher than but comparable to the Adult study median of 225, and both are much higher than the Youth study median of 88. The gender difference is notable:

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after removing the high-performing outlier video, made by a man, men still have nearly two and a half times as many channel subscriptions as women.

Table 4.5
Video category popularity by channel subscribers

Video category	Videos	Mean subscribers	Median subscribers
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
Comedy	5	223	33
Everyday things	8	806	125
How to and educational	24	110,835	3,303
Interview and reportage	6	232	76
Performance, music and creative	28	2,723	128
Sports and Fitness	10	1,828	185
Vlog	40	4,760	857
Total	121	24,412	355

How to and educational videos have by far the highest median number of subscribers (Table 4.5). It also has the highest mean number of subscribers but this is skewed by the outlier gun review video. The categories with the lowest average and median subscribers are comedy and interview and reportage.

In summary, the level of channel subscriptions is highly skewed, with one video accounting for nearly 80% of channel subscriptions. Even when this outlier is removed, the distribution of channel subscriptions varies widely. The category of how to and educational receive the highest number of channel subscriptions by a wide margin. Comedy and interview and reportage receive the least subscriptions. Male YouTubers have nearly two and a half times as

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many channel subscriptions as female YouTubers.

Summary

Popularity has been measured by video views, audience engagement and channel subscribers. All of these measures have wide and skewed variations showing that, in common with other YouTube users, a smaller number of videos by older people become very popular while many get much lower levels of attention. Overall the measures of popularity are comparable to Yarosh et al.'s (2016) study but interestingly with higher audience (measured in views) and channel subscriptions similar to their adult sample but lower audience engagement (through ratings and comments) similar to their youth sample.

The most popular category by far is how to and educational: videos in this category have the highest median audience, ratings and channel subscriptions and the second highest level of comments. This finding is particularly interesting as it diverges from other research which find this category at best moderately popular (Bärtil, 2018; Yarosh et al., 2016). This suggests that older people's how to videos are a productive site of further investigation.

The least popular category by some way is comedy. Other studies find this category to be moderately or very successful. This may be due to methodological differences: other datasets contain videos from companies as well as individuals. These may include videos by well-known comedians on media companies' channels. The sec-

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ond least popular category is sports and fitness which is in line with previous studies.

Two categories notably show mixed levels of popularity. Vlogs have high levels of comments and channel subscriptions but low on the other measures, which seems to suggest a committed audience who contribute to discussions under the video. This indicates that vlogs can be an interesting site of investigation of interaction between YouTubers and their viewers.

Videos in the interview and reportage category, conversely, have high levels of views and ratings and low levels of the other measures. This suggests an audience that watches and responds with a quick thumbs up or down but without the commitment to comment or subscribe to the channel. It is, however, not clear at this level of aggregation the reasons for the differences between the categories. There are striking gender differences: videos by men measured between two and a half and five times more popular than those by women. Again, the reasons are unclear.

Four individual videos are notable for their high popularity. The most popular video in the sample is a gun review in the how to and educational category. It has high levels of views and audience engagement and the channel has a very large number of subscribers. Remarkably the video was only uploaded two months before data collection so gained these measures of popularity in a short space of time. The third most popular video is also a gun review and both YouTubers have a strong self-branded presence across a variety of

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web and social media platforms that direct viewers to their YouTube videos.

The second and fourth most popular videos are in the category performance, music and creative. The second most popular, a humorous short film about ageing, is the oldest video in the sample so has had longer to gain views. The fourth most popular video, by contrast, is one of the newer videos. It is a creative response to a track recently released by a well-known rap musician so is likely to have drawn on the existing audience for this musician. The commonalities between these four videos are a connection to a pre-existing or potential audience through channel subscriptions, targeted promotion through other platforms, or utilising the popularity of another person, or being on YouTube a long time. While the characteristics of the most popular videos in the sample are interesting it must be borne in mind that the majority of videos achieve nowhere near the same levels of popularity.

These findings give insights into the popularity of older people's videos at the level of individual videos, categories of content and the aggregated sample. They challenge the view that older people only want to share videos online with a restricted circle of family and friends and not with strangers. The findings also highlight types of video for further investigation and identify points of alignment and discrepancy with prior studies.

4.3 Discussion

This chapter has reported on a content analysis of videos in the corpus collected for this research. This addresses the second research question of this thesis: “what are the typical characteristics of videos made by older people on YouTube?”. The findings of this study firmly refute the view that older people only make videos about personal, family, or local topics and only share them with family and friends. They demonstrate that older people make videos about a far wider range of topics and gain audiences beyond their existing friendship circles than has previously been recognised. Moreover the videos in this study have more similarities to videos made by other ages of adult than has previously been revealed in ethnographic studies.

How to and educational videos are not only the one of the most common genres of video in this study they are markedly more common than in previous studies of adult YouTubers and the most popular across the measures of views, audience engagement and channel subscriptions. W. Yang and Qian (2011) demonstrate that channel subscriptions increase video views and that the main source of views for how to videos is from channel subscribers, rather than from searching YouTube, following a recommendation from YouTube or through an embedded link in social media or other websites. So the high level of channel subscriptions for how to videos in this study is likely to be a driver in the high number of views.

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This leads to the question of why older people are making more how to videos than younger age groups. Stereotypically, older age is associated with wisdom, the accumulation of domain-specific knowledge and skills, and experience (Krampe & Charness, 2006, pp. 836, 840; Nagel et al., 2011). It could be speculated that the higher proportion of videos in this category is because older people have, or believe they have, skills and expertise which they can share. Epistemic authority will be considered in more depth in the subsequent ethnomethodological analysis of beauty vloggers (Chapter 5) and gun reviewers (Chapter 6).

The internet has been characterised as enabling individual experience and know-how to compete against more formal sources of expert knowledge (Wolf, 2016). So it is noteworthy that in three quarters of how to videos the YouTuber makes reference to their professional experience to warrant their claim to expertise and the right to share it with others. This is true in half of the videos by men and a quarter of the videos by women. This category includes several gun review videos in which the YouTuber demonstrates their knowledge of firearms and shooting and which are highly popular in views and comments. This suggests that the sub-genre of gun review videos by older people is a promising site of further investigation.

Vlogs are the most common kind of video in line with some previous studies. They have high levels of channel subscribers and more people leave comments on vlogs than any other category (W. Yang & Qian, 2011). Unexpectedly, however, the level of views

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is relatively low. Bärtil (2018) suggests a plausible explanation: as vlogs have become more popular over time the number of vlogs uploaded has increased faster than the increase in audience. Views have not kept pace with the available videos so the median number of views remains low.

Gender disparities are apparent throughout the study. YouTubers are more likely to be men than women, and men make the majority of videos in all content categories except vlogs in which women predominate. Men's videos are between two and a half and five times more popular than women's videos, as measured in video reviews, comments, ratings and channel subscriptions. How to videos are predominantly made by men and in this sample they include videos about fitness and health (including martial arts), gun reviews, building and woodwork skills. Vlogs in contrast are predominantly made by women. The topics are gendered with women mainly making vlogs about cosmetics, clothing, lifestyles, and relationships and sex. Men, in contrast, make vlogs about more stereotypically male topics such as motorbikes, travel and work.

One possible explanation for the gender disparity is that men's videos are more likely to be categorised as how to videos and women's as vlogs, either when the video is made, at the uploading stage when the YouTuber selects a category for their video, or in categorising them in the data analysis. Vlogs are a more personal and revealing style of video (Griffith & Papacharissi, 2010) even if they take the form of a step by step guide, a popular sub-genre among some

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vloggers (García-Rapp, 2016). How to videos suggest a less personal and more procedural instructional style (Wolf, 2016). Further work to investigate the content of videos, including the production and presentation styles may provide further insights into the kinds of videos older people make on YouTube.

There are, however, some challenges in the data presented above. As Bärtil (2018) indicates findings from studies of YouTube vary considerably depending on the methods of data collection, the time frame and the analytical method. The data collected in this study provides only a snapshot of the videos at a particular point in time. The sample in this study is also smaller than preferred so the results may be taken as indicative rather than conclusive. Further work could usefully collect longitudinal data on YouTubers as well as videos, investigate how their videos change over time as they become more experienced YouTubers and identify periods of activity and inactivity. Thirdly this content analysis did not investigate interactions between YouTubers and their viewers other than through enumerating views, ratings, comments and subscriptions.

Overall the results demonstrate that older people make YouTube videos of many kinds. Further work to investigate interactions between YouTubers and their viewers, the categories of how to videos and vlogs, and production and presentation styles may provide further insights into the saliency of age in the making and sharing of videos made by older people.

4.4 Implications

The analysis presented in this chapter identifies features of older people's videos including types of content and markers of popularity. Older people's videos have more similarities than differences to videos made by adults of all ages as described in previous studies. Some discrepancies are apparent, however, in particular the prevalence of how to videos and the high level of comments on vlogs. Assessing these is difficult without examining in detail the content of the videos and interactions with viewers

This leads to questions of how older people interact with viewers on YouTube and the use they make of social, technical and interactional resources. How salient is age in the content of the videos and in interactions, to both the YouTuber and their viewers? How is age invoked and negotiated through videos and interactions. Is age and accumulated experience invoked as an authority for expertise in instructional how to videos?

The following three chapters present the results of a membership categorisation analysis of a sub-sample of the videos used in this study, as described in Chapter 3.4.1 above.

CHAPTER 5

Constructing older age identities on YouTube

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapters established the need to examine older people's YouTube videos and subsequent interactions with commentators and described how the dataset of videos by older people was collected. This chapter now begins the ethnomethodological analysis. This chapter presents findings from the analysis of explicit age categorisations in the corpus of videos and paratexts (as defined in Chapter 1.2 above). This is to answer the third research question:

"How do older people explicitly invoke and negotiate age and other identities for themselves and others through interaction on YouTube?"

The findings demonstrate how YouTubers and their commentators use explicit age categorisations for varied interactional ends: for their own self-presentation, as a device for creating common ground with each other, and as a warrant for asking advice. Analysing older age categorisation practices helps further our understanding

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of how older age is conceptualised and orientated to by the members.

The dataset for this analysis is twelve videos selected from the dataset collected for the phase one study. The videos have been selected for explicit or implicit mentions of age categories or life stages, or descriptions that are resonant of these categories, as described in Chapter 3.4.1 above. The dataset consists of:

- 5 beauty vlogs by women
- 3 gun reviews videos by men
- 2 lifestyle vlogs by women
- 1 travel vlog by a woman (part of a wider lifestyle channel)
- 1 creative music video by a man.

Nikander (2002, p. 216) and later Charalambidou (2012, p. 115) and Heinrichsmeier (2016, p. 153) have shown that chronological age is salient in older people's lives through membership categorisation analysis of their talk. Indeed, age categorisations of self and others are found throughout the corpus: in eleven of the twelve videos and their accompanying data and comments age categorisations are made explicitly relevant by the participants.

In Section 5.2 six types of explicit age categorisation are identified and their frequency and distribution in the corpus are presented. The typology is informed by previous studies of age categorisation

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practices of older people in everyday talk, in particular N. Coupland et al. (1991, pp. 59–64), and further elaborated by Charalambidou (2012, p. 97) and Heinrichsmeier (2016, p. 152). Next these findings are explored in more detail with analysis of specific instances of the two most common types of age categorisation, namely chronological age expressed as an age grouping (Section 5.3) and as an exact chronological age (Section 5.4). Finally in Section 5.5 the findings are discussed to consider how explicit age categorisations may be used in presentation of self and building affiliative common ground with others.

5.2 Frequency and distribution of age categorisations

In this section the frequency and distribution of age categorisations made by participants are presented. The main types of categorisation, whether they are made by YouTubers or commentators, where the categorisations occur and who are the objects of the categorisations are detailed. As discussed above in Section 5.1, six broad ways the participants do old age categorisations are identified. The frequency of each of these is presented in Table 5.1. These 138 instances of age categorisation are found in eleven of the twelve videos (and accompanying data) in the corpus.

Quantification of chronological age is the most explicit way of categorising age. It can be considered the most "focused" (N. Coupland et al., 1991, p.65) and "[p]recise and unambiguous" (Bytheway, 2005) practice. Thirty five relevant instances (25% of all in-

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stances) of categorisations by exact chronological age, for example "I'm 60" (17 instances), or by age grouping, usually in expressed in decades, for example "women in our 60s" (18 instances) are identified in the corpus.

Table 5.1
Older age categorisations by type

Categorisation	Example	<i>n</i>	%
Chronological age	"I'm 60", "Women in our 60s"	35	25
Generic phrases	"Older"	32	23
Stage of life / generational role	"Retired", "Grandmother"	33	24
Temporal framing	"I've been married 34 years"	15	11
Term of address etc	"Girl you are so gorgeous"	13	9
Contrast	"In my younger days"	10	7
Total		138	100

The second type identified is generic older age categorisations, those that do not refer to a particular chronological age. These include the words "old", "older" "ageing", "mature" and phrases such as "at my age". These account for nearly one quarter of older age categorisations (23%).

The third type is stage of life categorisations, including generational roles. Stages of life made relevant in the data include "retired" and generational roles include "grandmother" and "granddad". These categorisations project the person being categorised as older (N. Coupland et al., 1991, p.60). This category also accounts for nearly one quarter of older age categorisations (24%).

These three practices of categorisation by chronological age (both by exact age in years and by age grouping), by generic old age

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words and phrases, and by stages of life (including generational roles) account for almost three quarters (72%) of all instances. The remaining quarter of instances are accounted for by three further types of categorisations.

The first of these is temporal framing which is the association of a person or an event with the past in a way which marks the person as older (N. Coupland et al., 1991, p.62-65). This can be through associating self or other with the past, for example "I stopped shaving in 1978" (Gunblastdotcom comment 139), or locating an ongoing event with reference to the past, for example "I've been married 34 years" (Melissa55 comment 85). There are 15 instances (11%) of temporal framing.

The second is the term of address (ToA) "girl" which is found in 13 instances (9%). This ToA has obvious age inappropriateness but has been found to be a common greeting among older women of a similar age, particularly as a sign of familiarity (Charalambidou, 2012, p. 153). There were no instances of the terms of address "boy" or "lad" or similar used by or directed at older men.

The final type of categorisation identified is contrast which accounts for 10 instances (7%). This can be a contrast with a younger self, such as "[i]n my younger years" (Melissa55 comment 119), or with younger others, such as "you are role model for younger members" (Task Force Chip comment 324).

Older age categorisations by speaker role

Older age categorisations are made almost equally by YouTubers and commentators (51% and 49% respectively) as can be seen in Table 5.2. YouTubers can make categorisations in their videos, paratexts and comments while commentators can only make them in text comments.

Table 5.2
Older age categorisations by speaker role

Speaker role	<i>n</i>	%
YouTuber	71	51
Commentator	67	49
Total	138	100

Older age categorisations by site

Two thirds (67%) of categorisations are made in comments under the videos (Table 5.3). Of these, nearly three times as many are made by commentators (49%) than by YouTubers (18%). YouTubers also make age characterisations in their videos (10%) and in the paratexts (22%). So, while most age categorisations in the comments are made by commentators, overall there is a negligible difference between the age categorisation made by YouTubers (51%) compared to commentators (49%). Furthermore, nine out of ten (90%) of characterisations occur in the medium of text (in the paratexts and the comments) and only 10% of age categorisations occur in videos.

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Table 5.3

Older age categorisations by site

Site of categorisation	<i>n</i>	%
Video	14	10
Paratexts	31	22
Comments by YouTubers	25	18
Comments by commentators	68	49
Total	138	100

Older age categorisations by object of categorisation

As can be seen in Table 5.4, the dominant practice is directing categorisation towards the self (35%). When categorisations including self and others simultaneously using an inclusive plural ("us") are added to this, it can be seen that more than half (78 instances, 57%) are self-categorisations. Categorisations that are directed to others excluding the self (using the second person "you") comprises 28% of instances. The minority practice is directing categorisations to others in general (referred to in the third person, "he", "she" or "they").

Table 5.4

Older age categorisations by self or other

Object of categorisation	<i>n</i>	%
Self ("me")	48	35
Self and others ("us")	30	22
Others excluding self ("you")	38	28
Others in general ("they")	2	16
Total	138	100

Summary

Explicit older age categorisations are common, being made explicitly relevant by participants in eleven of the twelve videos in this corpus. Overall, older age characterisations are made equally by YouTubers and commentators. They occur more commonly in comments rather than in the videos or paratexts.

These categorisations are more likely to be applied to the self rather than solely to other. The most common age categorisations involve chronological age, stage of life and generational roles, and generic age phrases.

In the following sections specific instances of older age characterisation are analysed in order to understand their formulation and the effects on the interaction.

5.3 Age grouping categorisations

Chronological age categorisations are a common part of people's social identity. They are widely used as a means of categorising individuals in everyday talk, the media, public policy and social research (Bytheway, 2005). In this study explicit reference to chronological age is the most common form of older age categorisation with 35 of 138 instances in 7 of the 12 videos. Half of the instances are exact age categorisations that refer to a specific chronological age in years such as "I am 63". The other half are references to age groupings, either expressed in decades such as "I am in my

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sixties", or as open-ended groupings such as "60 and over".

Nearly all the categorisations occur in the vlogs in the dataset (31 of 35 instances), rather than in other genres of video, and mostly commonly in beauty vlogs (24 instances), all made by YouTubers presenting as women. As described in Chapter 2.3 above, beauty vlogging is a highly popular YouTube genre with distinct characteristics and practices. Beauty vloggers regularly post videos on topics such as make-up, skincare and haircare (Garcia-Rapp & Roc-Cuberes, 2017). Beauty vloggers are commonly expected to be young women but there are many aged sixty and over with channels on themes such as mature skin, older eyes and anti-aging skin care.

In the instances of age grouping categorisations the age most commonly referenced is the sixties (60-69 years) with a smaller number of references to ages in the twenties to fifties. Most categorisations are self-referential, either to the self alone ("me", 21 instances) or a collective reference to self and others ("us", 11 instances), and only rarely applied to others ("them", 3 instances).

This section discusses a practice that emerges from the analysis: older women beauty vloggers who claim the category of being in their sixties or over sixty years in a collective reference to themselves and others. The frequency of these type of phrases in the corpus may be due to the way in which the corpus was collected, by searching for phrases based on chronological age terms (Chapter 3.3.1), but what is of interest how they are deployed and to what

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ends. These phrases are commonly used in the videos and paratexts such as video titles and channel descriptions, but less commonly in the comments.

The following example is from a video by Prairie Girl Lifestyle (hereafter Prairie Girl) titled "Gold Glitter and Bronze Eye Shadow Look - for women in our 60s". The video starts with a title card, a still image that announces the title of the video (Figure 5.1). It stays on the screen for eight seconds, long enough to be easily read, then cuts to the main part of the video with a closeup shot of Prairie Girl smiling at the camera. The title card is rich in linguistic and visual devices, including an age categorisation, which indicate who she is, the content of the video, and who the video is aimed at.

The title card has the text "Gold & Bronze Eye Shadow Tutorial" on the top half of the screen. On the bottom half of the screen is the text "for mature ladies - women in our 60s". In the middle are two images side by side. On the left is a still image of a person who is readable as Prairie Girl with her face made up in what is, by implication, the look she will demonstrate in the video, holding up an eye shadow palette and brush to the camera. On the right is a separate image of a similar eye shadow palette and brush.

The text in the upper part of the screen projects that the video is an "eye shadow tutorial". This is reinforced by the images of Prairie Girl wearing make-up, an eye shadow palette and a make-up brush. Make-up tutorials are a highly popular subgenre of beauty vlogging, structured as a set of step-by-step instructions to create certain

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Figure 5.1

Prairie Girl Lifestyle video title card



'looks' with the YouTuber using themselves as the model (Choi & Behm-Morawitz, 2017; Garcia-Rapp & Roc-Cuberes, 2017; García-Rapp, 2016). By convention the beauty vlogger models the completed 'look' at the start of the video, so by inference she is showing the look she will demonstrate in the video using the eye shadow from the palette she is holding up to the camera. Prairie Girl claims the category of 'beauty vlogger' for herself: she is then able to use the rich inferences of the category as a resource for her self-presentation (Sacks, 1995a, p. 40; Whitehead & Lerner, 2021). Attributes of a beauty vlogger are plausibly include 'interested in and knowledgeable about make-up products and techniques' and 'skilled at making videos'. Claiming the category 'beauty vlogger' also makes relevant the Standardised Relational Pairs 'YouTuber–viewer' and 'Make-up expert–make-up novice'. This indicates that this video is for those viewers who are 'interested in make-up' and 'interested in learning new looks and techniques of applying make-up'.

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The lower half of the screen shows the text "for mature ladies - women in our 60s". In US English "mature" is a vague formulation which indicates an older adult and carries neutral or positive associations (Chafetz et al., 1998). The subsequent declaration of gender and chronological age, "women in our 60s" performs a complex set of actions. The chronological descriptor "60s" reinforces the categorisation "mature" and narrows it to this single decade. This aligns with her on-sight appearance in the title card. She is viewably an older woman in the appearance of her skin and hair: age and gender are two categories that may be determinable on sight (Paoletti, 1998b, p. 171). She makes her chronological age relevant to the current situation, the video the viewers are about to watch. However by choosing the decade "60s" rather than a specific age she is leaving open where in her sixties she is. It possible also anchors her age to the start of the decade rather than the end She also make gender relevant through her use of 'girl', 'ladies' and 'women'.

By choosing "our" over the singular "my" she widens out the categorical attribution to those of her viewers who are also in their sixties. She places herself and them in the same category and so makes relevant that they share attributes and characteristics. Whatever attributes are ascribable to her as a woman in her sixties are also ascribable to her viewers who are women and ladies, and mature and in their sixties.

The phrase "women in our 60s" implicitly makes a distinction between those viewers who are included in the categorisation – older

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women – and others who are not included, specifically younger women and men. This phrase heads off the potential misattribution that her video is aimed at anyone who is interested in make-up and learning new techniques and looks regardless of their age and gender.

All these actions and inferences work to make the title card readable as indicating that Prairie Girl is a woman beauty vlogger in her sixties, the video is a make-up tutorial, and it is primarily of interest to and relevant for women also in their sixties who are interested in cosmetics and want to learn how to achieve the gold and bronze eye shadow look.

This brings us to the central ethnomethodological question of "why that now?" (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). What is Prairie Girl's purpose in prominently announcing her video is a make-up tutorial for women who are in their sixties like her, in the local situation in which a viewer has started to watch the video and can choose whether to continue watching or not? The analysis suggests she displays three purposes: self-presentation, establishing common ground and co-membership of a community with her viewers, and making an offer to the viewer to continue watching her video.

5.3.1 Self-presentation

Prairie Girl uses the age categorisation "in our 60s" as a component in projecting an identity that is more nuanced than just a YouTu-

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ber. She presents herself as beauty vlogger in her sixties who has made a tutorial video on creating the "Gold & Bronze Eye Shadow" look she visually demonstrates in the title card so her viewers can learn from her knowledge and skills.

Presenting as a women in her sixties who is a beauty vlogger is not unproblematic. Firstly she is exceptional to the stereotypical norm of beauty vloggers as young women (Bishop, 2018; Garcia-Rapp & Roc-Cuberes, 2017). Secondly there is commonly a disinclination, or even a cultural taboo, for older people to disclose their age because of sensitive associations with being seen as old and the perceived negative attributes of physical and cognitive decline (Heinrichsmeier, 2016, p. 161; Jaworski, 2003, pp. 157–158). Older women in particular are subject to judgements about their appearance (Fairhurst, 1998; Hurd Clarke & Korotchenko, 2011). So by choosing to reveal her age, within a decade, she opens herself to potential criticism about her ageing appearance. But she also indicates that the video is aimed at viewers who share this age category with her. In other instances in the dataset beauty vloggers use age categorisations in the tags, or keywords, that they give the video when they upload it, for example "women over 60" (MaryEllen After 60) and "over 60 women" (Catalina031).

By volunteering the personal information about her age, with a certain amount of vagueness about where in her sixties she is, and suggesting co-membership of the age category she is giving her and at least some of her viewers an opportunity to find common

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ground and co-membership of a community of older women interested in make-up.

5.3.2 Building common ground

Prairie Girl uses both visual and lexical devices to build common ground (Clark & Brennan, 2004, p. 127) with some of her viewers. First, she places a photograph of herself in the title card so viewers can assess her on-sight appearance as a viewably older woman. Second, she proffers common ground through claiming affiliative co-membership of the category women in our 60s. As Hofstetter (2016, p. 147) establishes in her study of members of parliament and constituents, placing self and other participants in the same category can achieve common ground by invoking shared characteristics, knowledge and experiences. In the current example Prairie Girl uses the inclusive "our" rather than the singular "my" to elicit their shared experience of being women in their sixties coupled with an interest in cosmetics and new make-up looks. Through these devices she suggests that she and viewers who are co-members of the same age categorisation share interests.

5.3.3 Making an offer to viewers

In the opening title card Prairie Girl makes a non-verbal but understandable offer to her viewers: to identify with her as co-members of the community of older women interested in make-up and then

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continue watching her "tutorial". Offers are an everyday part of interaction and suggest a commitment to future action. This is reinforced by her wide open eyes and wide smile, emphasised by her bright pink lipstick. She is doing what Hofstetter and Stokoe (2015) term a "request–offer", a hybrid of requesting and offering in which the speaker requests the other participant to do (or not do) an action so the offer can be fulfilled. She is offering to her viewers that if they continue watching they will see her tutorial on how to achieve the look she is illustrating and this will be of interest to them if they are a woman in their sixties interested in make-up and learning new looks.

In this offer she invokes the identities of beauty vlogger and viewer with their different attributes, rights and obligations. Prairie Girl has primary rights over the video (Rossi & Stivers, 2021): she has decided the genre, format and content. She welcomes her viewers with a smiling face and an inclusive reference to “women in our 60s” and encourages them to continue watching her "tutorial". In everyday interaction the preferred response to an offer is acceptance (Hofstetter & Stokoe, 2015). So she projects that the preferred course of action for her audience of older women interested in make-up is to continue watching the rest of video.

Both Prairie Girl and the viewer potentially benefit from the viewer accepting the offer. The viewer watches the tutorial, may enjoy it and acquire new knowledge and skills about the look that Prairie Girl says she will demonstrate. Prairie Girl may benefit from the

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Extract 5.1

Prairie Girl Lifestyle comments

1 C1: PG, Very nice eye look. The mascara went on very
2 nicely, no clumping. C1
3 PG: thanks C1 for your comment!

4 C2: Super great look. Nice to be watching your
5 videos C2
6 PG: Hi C2. Thanks for your comments. More to come!
7 Have a great weekend.

8 C3: Good Morning PG, wow what a gorgeous palette, I
9 especially love they liner duo, what a stunner.
10 You look FABULOUS. Thanks for sharing!! Hugs, C3
11 xoxo
12 PG: C3 You are a sweet, lovely lady and I thank you
13 for your support. Thank you for your comments.
14 Yes, the gel liner is really pretty and fun to
15 wear. Have a great week!

public demonstration of the video being viewed through an increased view count and potentially receiving a positive rating. Of her 238 viewers (at the time of data collection) three leave a positive rating and three leave a comment (Extract 5.1). Interestingly none of the commentators make explicit reference to age, possibly indicating that they accept and do not challenge her categorisation of being "in our sixties". All the commentators give compliments about either the look she has created (lines 1, 4), her appearance (line 10) or her video (lines 4-5). Pomerantz (1978, p. 82) terms these "supportive actions" which the recipient can accept or reject. Prairie Girl shows her appreciation with the phrases "thanks" (lines 3, 6) and "Thank you" (line 13).

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In summary, this excerpt from Prairie Girl's video and comments demonstrates how a YouTuber disclosing their chronological age, within a decade, can be an act of self-presentation as well as suggesting co-membership with some of her viewers. The age categorisation can be a means to initiate affiliative common ground between the YouTuber and viewers in same age category. This co-membership places a responsibility on viewers to be supportive to the YouTuber by continuing to watch the video and potentially leave positive ratings and comments.

5.4 Exact age categorisations

N. Coupland et al. (1991) suggest older people reveal their own age in order to invite others to assess that they are "doing good for their ages" (p.150) if they do not show the negative attributes associated with ageing, such as declining physical or cognitive health or appearance. More often in this data, rather than primarily claiming credit for doing well for their age, commentators disclose their age in order to claim affiliative co-membership of an age categorisation with the YouTuber and, in some instances, as a warrant to claim advice from the YouTuber.

5.4.1 Claiming affiliation

Two instances of claiming affiliative co-membership of an age category are found in the comments under a video by another beauty

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vlogger, Melissa55. This YouTuber has made chronological age relevant in a less direct way than in the previous examples but it is still readable that she is an older woman. Her on-site appearance in her video is of an older woman. Her video description includes "Be sure to check out Elle's page of Fabulous women over the age of 45 Mature Women of YouTube" which suggests that she is aged over 45. Lastly her channel name "Melissa55" carries the inference that "55" refers to her age.

Here in Extract 5.2 the commentator claims co-membership of the category 'older woman' through her age disclosure "I turned 51" (line 2), reinforced by the lifestage declaration "I am a grand mother of 2" (lines 4-5). Her age disclosure is placed between two declarations of recognition that now she is older she has new obligations towards caring for her skin and using different skincare routines: "I need to try this" (line 2) and "so I need to take better care of my skin" (line 3) and so the skincare advice in the video is now relevant to her.

Extract 5.2

Melissa55 comment C217

1 C217: Your skin looks good. Thanks for all your tips
2 I need to try this. I turned 51 this past July,
3 so I need to take better care of my skin. I'm
4 a grand mother of 2. You always look beautiful.
5 M55: Oh my goodness, C217, you look terrific!!! I
6 thought you were about 25. Girl, you keep on
7 using what you are because you look fantastic!
8 Much love, Melissa

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The commentator compliments the YouTuber's appearance at the start of the comment at line 1, "Your skin looks so good", and at the end at line 4, "You always look beautiful". The YouTuber responds to this with a string of similar compliments and positive assessments about the commentator's appearance, "Oh my goodness, *C217*, you look terrific!!!" (line 5) and "Girl, you keep on using what you are because you look fantastic!" (lines 6-7). Between these is the exaggerated age comparison "I thought you were about 25" (lines 5-6) which displays the social norm that looking younger is preferable to looking older.

In another comment under the same video the commentator starts her comment by disclosing her age "I am 63" (Extract 5.3, line 1), and so claims co-membership of the age category 'older woman'. She then describes her own skincare routine which uses the same brand as the YouTuber describes using in her video but different products (lines 1-3), without positively acknowledging the advice the YouTuber gives. So this is potentially hearable as challenging the YouTuber's epistemic authority to give recommendations and advice.

The YouTuber replies with a positive assessment of the commentator's different skincare routine, "Oh that sounds really good" (line 4). She then reinforces her epistemic authority through her knowing other people who use this method and "like it a lot" (line 6). She follows this with a compliment on the commentator's appearance perhaps to soften the assertion of epistemic authority (line 6).

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Extract 5.3

Melissa55 comment C140

1 C140: I am 63 and I do a Obagi blue peel one a year
2 and I do a TCA 12% peel i do myself if I have
3 a long weekend.
4 M55 Oh that sounds really good. I know several
5 people that do the Obagi blue peel and really
6 like it a lot. Your skin looks gorgeous!!!
7 Much love, Melissa

These disclosures of chronological age by commentators as claims to co-membership of an age category seem to fit with Flint et al.'s (2019) findings that in initial encounters between people there is an observed preference for and expectation of affiliative actions. These affiliative actions also help build common ground between the participants.

5.4.2 Warrant to seek advice

A second use of chronological age disclosure by commentators is as a warrant to seek advice from the YouTuber as in Extract 5.4 below. Here the commentator's disclosure of her chronological age builds her position as lacking in knowledge about skincare and warrants her asking advice. She orients to the YouTuber as being sufficiently knowledgeable through age and experience to give appropriate advice.

The commentator's first move is to rule herself out of membership of the category 'older woman' by revealing she is "young" and "25 years old" (line 1). This provides a specific context for the problem,

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Extract 5.4

Melissa55 comment C192

1 C192: I am young 25 years old :) would love to have
2 the skin as your later in life. What would you
3 suggest using for the younger me? I know you
4 used retina for 25 or over years :) I am
5 already adding a little bit of retina and i a
6 using vitamin c serum :) Much love <3
7 M55: aw, thank you so much. I really think at your
8 age, the Vitamin C serum is the most important.
9 It does a lot to actually protect your skin,
10 according to what my dermatologist has said.
11 It appears to protect against free radicals and
12 keep your skin younger, longer, so since you are
13 young, protection is the key. Thanks so much!
14 Love Melissa

that she is much younger and has less experience than the YouTuber in life in general and skincare in particular. She follows it with an outline of the problem, "would love to have the skin as your later in life" (lines 1-2) which allows her to claim co-membership of the category 'women interested in skincare'. Her request is formulated in quite broad terms but orients to their difference in age, "What would you suggest using for the younger me?" (lines 3-4).

Her warrant to ask this advice has several components including their co-membership of the category 'women interested in skincare'. Her age disclosure categorises herself as a young woman, lacking the relevant knowledge, and the YouTuber as an older woman who knows about caring for older skin. She draws on a commonly-held attribute of older people which is to give advice to younger people.

The YouTuber replies to her explicit request for advice with the pre-

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ferred response of accepting the role of advice-giver and suggesting an appropriate course of action (Heritage & Sefi, 1992, p. 370). She acknowledges the commentator's age disclosure with "since you are young" (lines 12-13) and assumes epistemic authority. She identifies the commentator's problem as the need for "protection" (line 13) and, drawing on her personal knowledge and experience, and on the higher epistemic status of her "dermatologist" (line 10), she recommends using a specific skincare product "Vitamin C serum" (line 8). The commentator does not provide an acknowledgement or response to the YouTuber's advice so the interaction finishes at this point and it is unknown whether she accepts or rejects the advice.

In this advice exchange the participants organise themselves into the paired categories of 'YouTuber-commentator' and 'advice seeker-advice giver', and the linked categories 'young woman' and 'older woman'. It is not uncommon for beauty vloggers to be asked advice by their commentators (Garcia-Rapp & Roc-Cuberes, 2017). The disclosure of the commentator's exact chronological age is readable as a display of epistemic asymmetry: she does not have the years of experience of caring for her skin that the YouTuber does. This gives her the specific warrant to seek advice about skincare from the YouTuber. She orients to the YouTuber as having the knowledge and expertise through her older age to answer her question.

Similarly in Extract 5.5 below the commentator discloses her age as a component of the warrant to ask advice from the YouTuber.

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Her age disclosure, "I'm 43" (line 1), positions her closer in age to the YouTuber than the previous commentator and potentially in the same age categorisation.

Extract 5.5

Melissa55 comment C19

```
1   C19:  Hi Melissa!  I LOVE your videos!  I'm 43 and
2         very focused on having incredible skin like
3         yours!  You are gorgeous IN and OUT! Question
4         for you, why do you not include your skin care
5         regimen onto your chest?  or do you use
6         something else and why?  Thank you so much!
```

In this instance her age disclosure does not highlight an epistemic difference between her and the YouTuber but is used to claim co-membership of the category 'older woman' with the attribute of being 'interested in skincare' and with the goal of having "incredible skin" (line 2). She builds this claim by indicating that she is interested not only in skincare for her face, which the YouTuber includes in her video, but also for her "chest" (line 5) which the YouTuber does not include in her video. She indicates her problem is needing advice on skincare for her face and chest.

Unlike the commentator in the previous example (Extract 5.4) this commentator does not receive a response from the YouTuber. There are differences in how this commentator and the previous one formulate their questions that may account for this. C192 asks a simple question, "What would you suggest using for the younger me?", which includes both the YouTuber and herself and which orients to

5.4. EXACT AGE CATEGORISATIONS

the YouTuber having the knowledge to answer her question.

The commentator in the current instance formulates a more complex question in two parts which focuses solely on the YouTuber and is readable as not fully appreciative or supportive of the YouTuber. Firstly she asks (lines 4-5) "why do you not include your skin care regimen onto your chest?". This is readable as a challenge to the YouTuber's primary right to decide what to include in their video and a potential criticism of her decision to omit information about skincare for the chest. The second part, (lines 5-6) "or do you use something else and why?", is formulated as a direct request for information from the YouTuber without orienting to how the information would be useful to the commentator. The commentator's failure to try to build rapport with the YouTuber through challenging their choice of video content, neglecting to signal their epistemic strengths, and not orienting to a relationship between the two of them may account for why the YouTuber did not reply to this comment.

In face-to-face interaction not responding to a direct question is rare and dispreferred. Social actions such as requests for advice "routinely and reliably receive response" (Stivers & Rossano, 2010): in one study more than 97% of questions received a response (Stivers & Robinson, 2006). In the current study a lack of response by YouTubers to direct questions from commentators is much more common: only 61% (31 of 51) of commentators asking a direct question to the YouTuber in the examples above received a response.

5.4. EXACT AGE CATEGORISATIONS

In summary, commentators' disclosure of their own chronological age can be deployed as a component in building a warrant to ask advice from the YouTuber. In these cases the topic of the advice sought is legitimate as it is the same as the topic in the YouTuber's video. The warrant can take two forms. The first, as shown in the first example (Extract 5.4), is to disclose one's age so it is readable as orienting to epistemic asymmetry: the commentator is younger than the YouTuber and so knows less about skincare. The commentator orients to the YouTuber as more knowledgeable about caring for older skin by virtue of her older age and experience. The local context of the video being a beauty vlog legitimises the request for advice, drawing on the beauty vlogger's assumed attributes of "kind and supportive of their audiences" (Garcia-Rapp & Roc-Cuberes, 2017) and willing to answer their questions in the comments. This allows the commentator to invoke the SRP 'Beauty vlogger-commentator' to ask for advice. In other instances of this type in the dataset the commentator builds on the epistemic asymmetry by claiming they have learnt about skincare from the YouTuber.

In the second formulation, presented in Extract 5.5, the age disclosure is employed to claim co-membership of the category 'older woman'. The commentator also claims co-membership of the category 'woman interested in skincare' and invokes the SRP 'Beauty vlogger-commentator' to provide the warrant to ask advice from the YouTuber.

Summary

In this section it has been shown that commentators produce exact chronological age categorisations to serve at least two functions: to affiliate with the YouTuber and as a component of a warrant to ask advice from the YouTuber. These disclosures of chronological age are spontaneously volunteered by commentators and not in response to a direct question from YouTubers. These categorisations are associated with an orientation to the SRPs 'YouTuber-commentator' and specifically 'Beauty vlogger-commentator'. It has also been shown that age disclosures are often closely associated with an orientation to epistemic authority, in most cases invoking the YouTuber as a epistemic authority though at times being readable as challenging the YouTuber's epistemic authority. The findings differ from previous studies, such as N. Coupland et al. (1991), that suggest that older people's age disclosure is a device to invite the response that they are doing well for their years and not showing signs of physical or cognitive decline commonly associated with older age.

5.5 Discussion

This chapter has investigated how YouTubers and their commentators use explicit age categorisations. This addresses the third research question "how do older people invoke and negotiate age and other identities for themselves and others through interaction on YouTube?". The findings are fourfold. Firstly age categorisa-

5.5. DISCUSSION

tions are salient to older women beauty and lifestyle vloggers, and their commentators. Secondly beauty vloggers in particular make chronological age relevant in their videos and paratexts for self-presentation and for introducing themselves to their viewers. Thirdly age categorisations are deployed to create common ground with at least some of their audience and as a means of reducing social distance. And finally age categorisations are used as a licence to future action: for YouTubers as an offer to their viewers to carry on watching and for commentators as a warrant to ask advice from the YouTuber.

The first finding is about the saliency of chronological age. There is reason to expect that older people will treat chronological age as significant to their lives. Charalambidou's (2012) study of older Greek women friends and Heinrichsmeier's (2016) study of older women clients of an English hair salon show examples of older women using chronological age in their everyday talk. These categorisations are most often applied to other participants or people not present than to themselves. N. Coupland et al.'s (1991) study, by contrast, of first acquaintance conversations between intergenerational pairs of women in their thirties and women in their seventies and eighties (1991, pp. 57, 59) found that older women mostly apply age-in-years categorisations to themselves. This suggests that volunteering personal information, such as one's age, can be a "getting acquainted" action that lessens social distance (Stokoe, 2010). But when participants are already acquainted over a period of time, such as when they have been friends for a long time (Char-

5.5. DISCUSSION

alambidou, 2012, p. 115) or are regular clients at a hair salon (Heinrichsmeier, 2016, p. 155), age-in-years categories are less often used as the other participants are already aware of their age. This suggests that the YouTubers' and commentators' actions conform to the context of initial encounters unless there is specific evidence they are already acquainted.

The particularities of the local context of YouTube are crucial in enabling specific orientations and devices. As Thell and Jacobsson (2016) show in their study of age disclosures in radio phone-in programmes, participants in particular environments orient to that environment and engage in specific devices in their interactions. In this setting, YouTubers make videos and put them online but they need to work at encouraging viewers to watch their video from among the billions of other videos on the platform.

Gardair's (2013) study of Covent Garden in London shows how street performers persuade people to change role from passer-by to engaged audience member by (among other actions) announcing the performance through a variety of physical, verbal and bodily devices. These include addressing passers-by individually to encourage them to stop and choose to watch the performance (2013, p. 119) and the use of "we" pronouns to align the audience with the performer (2013, p. 122). Although YouTubers are working in the context of online space rather than the physical space of an urban street, there is a similar need to persuade 'passers-by' who are deciding whether to watch the video to become 'audience'.

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YouTubers use the resources available to them to attract and keep an audience including the video title, description, thumbnail image, and the opening section of the video. They make the membership device 'YouTube' relevant along with the categories 'YouTuber', 'viewer', 'commentator' and the specific 'beauty vlogger', with all their rich inferences and attributes which display "who-we-are-what-we-are-doing" (Housley & Fitzgerald, 2015, p. 15) and help shape the participants' understanding of each others' actions.

This leads to the second finding that YouTubers, especially older women beauty and lifestyle vloggers, use age categorisations for the linked purposes of self-presentation and introducing themselves to their viewers. One means for the YouTuber to attract viewers who are unfamiliar with them is to announce who they are through volunteering personal information. This makes them less anonymous and gives themselves a "personality" in this online setting (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 252). Although viewers can see the YouTuber's on-sight appearance, volunteering their age makes it relevant to the audience. Similar unprompted self-disclosures are found in conversations between unacquainted people (Haugh & Carbaugh, 2015) and between speed-daters who are meeting each other for the first time and have only a few minutes of conversation before assessing whether they would like to meet again (Stokoe, 2010).

The YouTuber's self-presentation as being in a particular age decade can shape viewers' expectations of the video's content and who it will be of interest to. Invoking a membership category such as

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chronological age as a resource for self-presentation is to mobilise all the rich inferences (Whitehead & Lerner, 2021). For beauty vloggers, making videos in a genre that are commonly expected to be made by younger women (Bishop, 2018; Garcia-Rapp & Roc-Cuberes, 2017), it is unsurprising that age is pertinent when these videos are made by older women. The YouTuber disclosing that they are in their sixties (or other decade) provides a way of welcoming an audience who would find the videos interesting and relevant and a way of beginning to build a connection with their viewer.

One response from commentators is to volunteer their own age, as an exact age-in-years rather than as a decade. A commentator's age is less determinable to the YouTuber as there is no on-sight appearance to go on. So if the commentator also wants to orient to age the most direct method is to specifically disclose it. The main interactional purpose found in the data is affiliation with the YouTuber by claiming co-membership of the same (or close) decade.

The third finding concerns building common ground. Both YouTubers and commentators at times disclose their own age. Self-disclosure of chronological age is not just about disclosing information. It also serves the purpose of making a connection with potential viewers, managing expectations about the content of the video and reducing social distance.

In initial interactions in which the participants are unacquainted, common ground cannot be taken for granted. It must be worked at and interactionally accomplished (Enfield, 2008, p. 235). By reveal-

5.5. DISCUSSION

ing personal biographical information, the YouTuber makes a move from interactional distance to something more intimate. Stokoe (2012a), in her study of gender categorisations, demonstrates how claiming co-membership of a category can be a way of presupposing common ground between the participants. Using an age categorisation to include the YouTuber and at least some of their viewers projects a commonality between them and claims they have shared interests and attributes.

Common ground is a resource for social affiliation (Enfield, 2008, p. 223). Commentators use disclosure of their own chronological age to affiliate with the YouTuber, an action that reduces interactional distance (Jefferson, 1988). The age categorisation suggests to the viewers that they may be able to identify with the YouTuber and so find the video content relevant and of interest.

Despite beauty vloggers making age relevant, not all commentators directly reference age. It may be argued that this is because 'older age' is an "omni-relevant device" (Sacks, 1995a, p. 313) in these interactions, along with the categories 'YouTuber', 'beauty vlogger', 'viewer' and 'commentator' within the device 'YouTube'. An omnirelevant device is one whose categories are tied to a particular setting for example 'therapist' / 'patient' within the device 'group therapy' (Sacks, 1995a, p. 314). It is an overarching and default organising set of categories for the particular interaction (Fitzgerald et al., 2009). In the interactions between older women beauty vloggers who make age relevant, age is continually treated as potentially rel-

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evant and consequential for understanding the actions of the participants.

The fourth and final finding is that chronological age can be a warrant to further action. For YouTubers it can warrant an offer to viewers to continue watching the video and be supportive of the YouTuber. The YouTuber's primary purpose is to entice the potential viewer to watch their video and to have their viewing recognised in the automatically incremented view count, as well as potentially leave a positive rating or comment.

For commentators disclosure of their own chronological age can be a warrant to ask advice of the YouTuber. One formulation is to use younger age to signal the higher epistemic authority of the older YouTuber. In contrast other studies have found that older people have a lower status than younger people: younger people can be seen to be "in their prime" while older people are "too frail to contribute to society" (Pietilä et al., 2013). This has been commonly associated with loss of physical strength and cognitive ability: ageing bodies leading to loss of status (Calasanti & King, 2018). Broadly, the common sense view is that people have low status as children then their social status increases during adulthood until they start to visibly age, become bodily weaker and eventually frail, when their social status declines (Calasanti & King, 2018).

In this data this orientation to higher epistemic status with increasing age is often paired with a compliment. This is hearable as deferential and appropriate when a younger person is talking to an older

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person (Wood & Ryan, 1991). The commentators who articulate both affiliation to the YouTuber and acknowledge their higher epistemic status through their age are more often than not rewarded with a response from the YouTuber. This raises interesting questions about the relationship between age and epistemic status which would be a productive site of further exploration.

This chapter has described how older YouTubers use age categorisations in their videos and paratexts to make relevant more nuanced identities that just 'YouTuber' and 'viewer', and how that functions to make connections with their viewers. This allows commentators to respond affiliatively and opens the door to making requests to the YouTuber. In the following chapter I will explore the connections between age and epistemic authority through an analysis of the production of older YouTubers' videos.

CHAPTER 6

Video practices to build epistemic authority on YouTube

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents findings from an ethnomethodological analysis of the video making resources that YouTubers draw on to display epistemic authority. These findings address the fourth research question:

How do older people present themselves to others in their YouTube videos through making use of the available social, technical and interactional resources?

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how YouTubers use video practices to achieve interactional ends through three particular phenomena: constructing a narrative, setting the scene and establishing their epistemic authority. Identifying these video practices helps further our understanding of how they are produced in the local setting of the YouTube videos and what they might achieve.

Videos are actively assembled through a range of practices includ-

6.1. INTRODUCTION

ing the setting, shooting and editing (Mondada, 2009) by the YouTuber and at times by other people assisting them. The analysis in this chapter is done by reconstructing the video practices from the videos produced in these particular settings, rather than observing the YouTubers making their videos (Broth et al., 2014, p. 12). Although this presents a number of challenges, my experience as a video maker is useful in terms of understanding what was happening.

As identified in the previous chapter, a practice of older YouTubers is claiming epistemic authority which warrants them giving recommendations and advice to viewers and commentators. There is a common, or even stereotypical, association of older people with maturity, life experience, knowledge and wisdom, from the fairy-tale wise old woman to the grandparent giving advice (Liu et al., 2003; Nagel et al., 2011; Staudinger, 1999). Expertise comes from extended practice of a skill or activity (Krampe & Charness, 2006, p. 840) so being older gives more opportunity for length of experience. But recognition of epistemic authority is not assured simply due to older age, so YouTubers may use practices which build their epistemic authority.

The data for this analysis is three popular gun review videos produced by American men taken from the corpus selected for the phase two study. The videos have been selected for explicit and implicit claims of epistemic authority on knowledge about guns and practical authority in shooting guns. The total length of the videos is

38 minutes and they had, at the time of data collection, at least 250 comments each.

In Section 6.2 the narrative structures of the gun review videos are analysed along with the video production resources used to achieve them. The analysis is informed by typologies of the stages of video production in Bordwell and Thompson (2008, p. 15) and Broth et al. (2014, p. 16). Next these findings are explored in more detail with an analysis of the first impressions presented in the opening shot of the videos (Section 6.3), drawing on Jayyusi's (1988) analysis of the intelligibility of film structure and Stivers et al. (2011)'s exploration of the study of knowledge in social interaction. Then a specific setting that occurs in all the videos is examined: the work bench where the YouTubers talk about the guns and ammunition (Section 6.4) and use this to build their epistemic authority through the deployment of objective facts and examples of real world scenarios in which to use the guns, through citing other epistemic sources and through attempting to head off anticipated future challenges to their epistemic authority from viewers and commentators. Finally in Section 6.5 the findings are discussed to consider video practices may be used to build and use epistemic authority.

6.2 Narrative structure and editing

Videos are a "produced account" (Jayyusi, 1988), a purposeful and intended organisation of resources to create a communicative object. Videos are linear with one scene or sequence following an-

other. Narrative structure is the organisation of the story in a sequence of actions and events to be intelligible to the audience (Jayyusi, 1988).

A basic organisational feature of a video is the scene, a segment in the video which take place in one time and space. A video can only present scene at a time and viewers understand the break between one scene and the next through observable discontinuities in features of the scene. Scenes are a key resource in video production for making video comprehensible to viewers.

The videos analysed here have striking consistences in the narrative structure. At one level they all demonstrate the most simplified accepted structure for videos (both fiction and non-fiction): they have a beginning, a middle and an end, sometimes referred to as a three act structure (Giannetti, 2014, p. 338).

6.2.1 Scene order

The video with the simplest narrative structure is by Gunblastdot-com (hereafter Gunblast) which is a seven minute comparison of various 10 mm automatic pistols (Figure 6.1). The video starts with a 15 second title sequence with his Gunblast logo (fig.a). Next there is a scene of him at his work bench explaining the history of the 10 mm cartridge, real world scenarios in which it is useful, and features of various 10 mm pistols (4 minutes 35 seconds) (fig.b). Then there is a scene of him firing these pistols on the firing range (1

6.2. NARRATIVE STRUCTURE AND EDITING

minute 40 seconds) (fig.c). Finally there a 30 second outro (concluding) sequence (fig.d).

Figure 6.1

Narrative structure of Gunblast's video



(a) Title



(b) Work bench



(c) Shooting range



(d) Outro

The second video with a slightly more complex narrative structure is a seven minute review of a single gun, the Tanfoglio Polymer Frame 10 mm semi-automatic pistol, by Icarryone (Figure 6.2). His video starts with a 30 second title sequence (fig.a). This is followed by a scene at his work bench in which he gives background information on the manufacturer and describes the features of the model and ammunition (3 minutes 20 seconds) (fig.b). His third scene is a short sequence of him firing at targets on a shooting range

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(35 seconds) (fig.c). Next he is back at the work bench where he gives more detail about ammunition, the gun's recoil and its value for money (2 minutes 25 seconds) (fig.d). His video ends with a 30 second outro sequence (fig.e).

Figure 6.2

Narrative structure of Icarryone's video



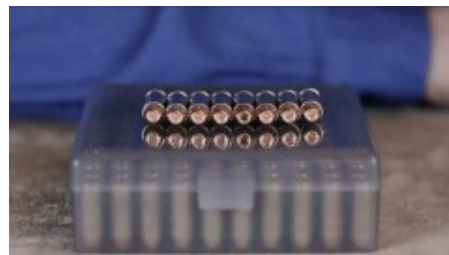
(a) Title



(b) Work bench



(c) Shooting range



(d) Work bench



(e) Outro

Slightly more complex again is the third video, by hickcok45, as the main part of this long video is filmed as a single continuous shot (Figure 6.3). Different sequences can, however, be identified within

this. This twenty four minute video is significantly longer than the other two and compares various 10 mm pistols and ammunition.

The video opens with not a title sequence but with him firing guns at a shooting range (15 seconds) (fig.a). Next, in a continuing shot, he walks over to the bench to discuss the relative features and merits of the guns and their ammunition (fig.b). In this long twenty three and a half minute sequence he moves between discussing and handling the guns and ammunition at his work bench and stepping a short distance to fire the guns at his shooting range. There are in total five sections in which he is standing at the bench and four (after the opening section) when he is firing guns. Then there is a scene in which he thanks the sponsors and mentions his other video channels and his Facebook page (30 seconds) (fig.c). Finally there is a 30 second outro scene which is a repetition of the opening few seconds of the initial firing scene but in slow motion (fig.d).

6.2.2 Differentiating scenes

An important factor in a video's intelligibility to viewers is how they are able to differentiate one scene from another. Scenes are distinguished from each other by discontinuity: any observable disjunction of setting, people, movement and so on can be understood as a spatial or temporal break and a progression in the narrative. These discontinuities can be introduced at any stage of the video production: the setting up before the camera starts recording, during the recording, and at the editing stage. Ending one scene and

Figure 6.3

Narrative structure of hickok45's video



(a) Shooting range



(b) Work bench



(c) Thank sponsors



(d) Outro

starting another is usually organised by editing: assembling shots sequentially so one scene follows from another and with a transition such as a cut, fade to or from black and a dissolve.

I carry one uses resources with precise consistency to indicate progression from one scene to another. Between each scene he uses a fade to a black transition so one image gradually disappears to show a black screen then the next image appears. Likewise he fades the audio to silence and then fades it up again. He makes distinct changes of spatial location, foreground and background image and camera framing. In a scene in which he is speaking he uses words and intonation to indicate the start or end of the scene.

In the movement from the title scene to the bench scene (Figure 6.4, fig.a) he fades the image to black (fig.b) then into the first image of

the bench sequence and fades the audio to silence and up again. The image changes from a montage of a medium shot of him firing a gun placed next to his logo to a close-up of a gun on a stand on a work bench with his midriff in the back ground (fig.c). At this point he says "today we'll take a closer look at the tanfoglio full-size polymer frame ten millimetre" (fig.c).

Figure 6.4

Icarryone's transition from title scene to work bench scene



Gunblast likewise uses visual discontinuities, visual transitions and spoken words to indicate a change of scene, this time from the bench sequence to the shooting range sequence. His speech at the end of the bench scene suggests he is coming to the end of his turn: he completes a syntactic sequence, "and you can read all about that in the text of the review", slows his speech, lowers the pitch and pauses after the word "review" (Figure 6.5). This is immediately followed by a rotating slide transition in which the bench image rotates out clockwise revealing the first image from next scene underneath (fig.b).

In the first image of the shooting range scene the setting has changed from his porch to another outdoor setting with trees and a building in the background (fig.c). He is wearing the same clothing which

suggests temporal continuity and he now stands sideways on to the camera, wearing ear defenders. He starts by looking at the camera and says "we'll start shooting the glock twenty nine SF" indicating the new activity. He then quickly lifts up his gun and starts firing.

Figure 6.5

Gunblast's transition from work bench scene to shooting range scene



hickok45 breaks this pattern in the transition from his bench scene to the scene in which he thanks his sponsors (Figure 6.6). The change of scene is indicated by visual discontinuities: he wears a different colour t-shirt, he stands among trees, there is brown leaf litter on the ground rather than green grass in the previous scene. This is added to by his words at the end of the bench scene, "life is good", which he intones in a lower tone and slower speed which suggests he is coming to the end of this turn (fig.a). The transition between these two images is a cut which is abrupt change from one framing to the other (fig.b). The implied logic is that this is a change of scene. hickok45 then undermines this logic by announcing "Oh since I'm still here" which suggests temporal continuity with the previous scene. This inconsistency is puzzling: hickok45 appears to be an proficient video maker who understands and uses the conventions of video production. He is, however, lighthearted during his

video and perhaps this is a playful approach to those conventions.

Figure 6.6

hickok 45's transition from work bench scene to shooting range scene



(a)



(b)

These examples demonstrate that YouTubers use a variety of resources to indicate the break between scenes which contributes to the understandability of the narrative of their videos. These resources include changes in visual image such as the setting, appearance of the YouTuber, framing of the shot, and moving between images with transitions such as fade through black, rotating slides and cut. They also use devices in their speech to indicate their turn is coming to an end or they are starting a new turn.

Use of these resources project epistemic authority in video production. The YouTuber knows how to set up, shoot and edit a video to make a coherent narrative across several scenes. This contrasts with Laurier's (2014b) home-movie maker whose videos "are made with amateur equipment, as a hobby and usually by one untrained person" and sticks with just the cross dissolve.

In summary these examples demonstrate that YouTubers use the resources available to them to produce a narrative structure that is

6.3. FIRST IMPRESSIONS

intelligible to their viewers. There are patterns recurrent across all the videos: they are all organised with a beginning, a middle and an end. Shorter intro and outro sequences top and tail the main part of the video which consists of work bench scenes and firing range scenes. Scenes are differentiated by purposeful changes in setting, camera framing, appearance of the person, juxtaposition of images from the two scenes and the edited transition between them. Having considered the overall structure of the videos the next step is to analyse the video content.

6.3 First impressions

"In everyday life" said the sociologist Erving Goffman "of course, there is a clear understanding that first impressions are important" (Goffman, 1959, p. 14). People have somewhat different resources to manage first impressions in videos than in face to face interaction. In video production first impressions are managed through the establishing shot which is the shot at the beginning of the story that provides the viewer with the context for the story: it depicts the place and time and shows the spatial relationship between the figures in the scene, key objects and the viewer (Bordwell & Thompson, 2008, p. 478; Giannetti, 2014, p. 523). The spatio-temporal locale is established by the setting which includes the physical location, time of day, weather and lighting. The spatial relationship between figures, objects and the viewer is established by the composition of the image into the visual planes of the foreground, midground

6.3. FIRST IMPRESSIONS

and background, by the appearance and arrangement of people and objects, and by the way in which the shot is framed and videoed (Giannetti, 2014, pp. 48, 314).

In YouTube videos, aside from the video preview image and the channel logo that the viewer might or might not see before starting to watch the video, the first opportunity a YouTuber has to manage first impressions is the opening shot of the video. First the opening image of the first main scene, after the generic title sequence, will be examined as a still image. Then the first few seconds of the video will be examined as a moving image.

6.3.1 Opening image

Figure 6.7

Gunblast's opening frame



6.3. FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Gunblast's video opens, after the title sequence, in the bench scene (Figure 6.7). He is located outdoors on a porch in daytime. In the background is the wooden wall of a building with a door, and an outdoor heater. On the wall to his left is a picture with an image of a bullet and some (unreadable) text. Hung up to his right are several adjustable gun rests for use in firing rifles. The setting appears to be rural.

In the foreground is a U-shaped wooden bench with a vice clamped to it on his right. Laid out at the front of the bench nearest the camera are three pistols, the grips facing towards him so they are easy for him to pick up, rather than being displayed to the camera. There is also a box of 10 millimetre Buffalo Bore ammunition, commonly known to be powerful, and a pile of loose bullets.

In the midground is the YouTuber himself standing behind his bench and leaning on it with both hands. He is facing full on to and looking at the camera which is set at eye level and straight on. The shot is framed as a medium shot so his head is at the top of the frame and his hands at the bottom.

He is white and visibly older with white-grey hair and beard and bushy eyebrows. He is casually dressed in a dark green uncreased T-shirt with his Gunblast.com logo, a khaki coloured cap with a gun logo and jeans with a leather belt. The most striking aspect of his appearance are the two long plaits in his beard that reach down to his stomach.

6.3. FIRST IMPRESSIONS

The first impression that Gunblast "gives off" (Goffman, 1959, p. 14) is that he is on the porch of his rural American home, dressed in standard US male rural clothing. His plaited beard suggests he is a non-conformist or at least has an independent streak. Everything in the frame, apart from the heater, is related to guns. It is difficult to discern what kind of gun enthusiast he is - there are no hunting trophies or military insignia on display for instance - but he has several pistols and gun rests for rifles which suggests he is a gun collector. Leaning on his bench, he looks relaxed and confident, as if he is behind the counter of a gun shop giving advice. The video seems to giving the viewer a window into his life as a rural American gun enthusiast and gun collector.

Figure 6.8
hickok45's opening frame



hickok45's video opens straight into a sequence of him firing two guns at various targets (Figure 6.8). He is outside in what seems

6.3. FIRST IMPRESSIONS

to be his rural backyard shooting range in the daytime. Stretching in front of him down a slope and up the other side into trees in the background are a large number of targets. Some are metal cutouts of animals and a cowboy, others are gongs hanging from stands. Nearer to the camera are homemade targets including watermelons and large water bottles resting on posts and, somewhat incongruously, a metal filing cabinet.

hickok45 is in the foreground with his back to the camera. He is wearing casual clothing, a t-shirt half tucked into knee-length shorts, a cap and ear defenders. He is holding a pistol in each hand, held up to be fired. He is white and visibly older with greying hair and a slightly rounded back and shoulders. The camera is straight on and tilted slightly downwards towards him standing a little way down the slope.

The first impression that hickok45 gives off is that he is unaware of the camera and is caught up in a private moment of playful shooting. His rural backyard firing range is big, densely packed, and fun. He is dressed informally, even scruffily, in standard American male leisure clothes. He is holding two guns ("dual wielding") in a relaxed way that implies pleasure rather than precision. The size of his firing range indicates he is a serious, and probably long-standing, gun enthusiast. There is no hint of the military about him though the animal-shaped targets receding up the hill suggest he may be a hunter. This video also seems to give the viewer a glimpse into his everyday life as a playful but serious gun enthusiast.

6.3. FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Figure 6.9

lcarryone's opening frame



lcarryone's establishing shot is a stark contrast to the others (Figure 6.9). In the foreground is a Tanfoglio Polymer Frame 10 mm pistol, the topic of the video, on a stand. This rests on a bench that is covered in a soft fabric. Filling the background is an ambiguous mid blue shape. The lighting suggests it is set indoors. The shot is framed straight on so the pistol is displayed in close up to the viewer and fills almost the whole frame.

The first impression that lcarryone gives off is that what is important is the gun: the location where the video has been made is of no interest. The image is framed like a still in a gunshop website or brochure. He gives away little about himself. It is all about the guns.

In summary, although these YouTubers take different approaches to their establishing shots, what fills the frame are the YouTuber, the gun under review or their firing range, all three of which appear to contribute towards categorisation as a YouTube gun expert.

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Despite these establishing shots being purposeful, rich with information, and drawing on the viewers' "visual competence" (Jayyusi, 1988, p. 290), it is difficult to fully infer from the visual particulars alone what category of gun expert they claim and how they project their epistemic authority. So next the establishing shots will be considered as moving image.

The first thirty seconds of each of the videos (after the title sequence) are rich in words, actions, audio, and camera movements that introduce the topic and format of the video, display their assumptions about the common knowledge between their viewers and themselves, and establish the YouTuber's epistemic credentials to discuss guns. This choice of duration is partly arbitrary and partly because two of the videos have a break at this point, through an edit or moving to a new setting.

6.3.2 Introducing the video

Gunblast introduces his video in the most straightforward manner. His first words introduce that he will be "shooting" (Extract 6.1 line 4). His gaze moves around throughout but he looks into the camera as he says he will be using "ten millimetre autos" (line 5). He displays the guns on the bench in front of him in the foreground of the shot.

Icarryone similarly makes a direct introduction to his video in his first words "today we'll take a closer look at the Tanfoglio full-size

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Extract 6.1

Gunblast introduces his video

- 4 GU: **##today* *we're out here shooting* *ah**
looks at camera *looks up---->* *at camera-->
#fig.1
- 5 **ten millimetre autos a little bit* *ah***
-----* *looks left->



figure 1

Polymer Frame 10 mm" (Extract 6.2 line 2). He names the gun to be reviewed and displays it to the camera and viewers in a close up shot. He does not, however, mention testing the weapon on a firing range.

Extract 6.2

lcarryone introduces his video

- 2 IC: **today we'll take a closer look at the tanfoglio
full-size polymer frame ten millimetre**



hickok45 starts his video with a fifteen second firing sequence, using two guns simultaneously in a skilled move known as dual wielding. As the viewer can see both him firing and the bullets hitting the

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targets this clearly demonstrates his expertise as a marksman. He introduces his video in stages through the next thirty seconds (Extract 6.3). After firing at the targets with his back to the camera, he turns toward the camera holding the two guns. His gaze moves repeatedly between the guns and the camera, giving significance to both the guns and the viewers.

Extract 6.3

hickok45 introduces his video

```
14 HI: ##they're* *both* *not* *the same firearm*
      *looks at guns* *at camera* *at guns* *at camera*
fig #fig.1
15 *but they're* *both ten millimetre*
      *looks at gun**looks at camera----*
(( 3 lines omitted ))
19 *let's take them up here and see ah #what we have*
      *»holding gun in each hand----->
      *»walks forward half left towards bench----->
      *»looks at bench----->
fig #fig.2
```



figure 1



figure 2

His first words after finishing shooting and turning towards the camera are "they are both not the same firearm but they are both 10 mm" so introducing the video as a comparison of different 10mm guns (lines 14-15). Shortly after he says "let's take them up here and see ah what we have" (line 19) as he walks to the bench, indi-

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cating that the guns will be examined and discussed at the bench.

YouTubers have an epistemic responsibility (Stivers et al., 2011, p. 17) to know what the topic and format of their video is, in these cases 10 mm gun reviews, as they are the creators of the videos. They also have a responsibility to tell the viewers what their video is about (Stivers et al., 2011, p. 18). They introduce their videos with words, gaze and displaying the gun or guns under review to the camera. Two of them do this in their first words, using the formulation "today" and "we" which projects the collective nature of the endeavour. The two who appear on screen also shift their gaze to the camera and guns at different points, notably they both look at the camera when saying "10 mm". Hickok also demonstrates his dual-wielding shooting skills with two of the guns.

6.3.3 Common knowledge

Interactants are expected to take responsibility for knowing what knowledge they have in common (Stivers et al., 2011, p. 13). All three YouTubers assume common ground with their viewers through their use of domain terms for guns and ammunition without giving an explanation. Between them they use in their establishing shots the terms ten millimetre, caliber, cartridge, recoil, polymer frame and cz seventy five design. hickok45 also uses the term dual wielding which is associated with film portrayals of cowboys and the American Old West.

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Gunblast makes a more oblique reference to a situation in the USA from about thirty years ago. He speaks about the FBI no longer using 10 mm ammunition because this made the gun's recoil (how much it moves backwards after shooting) "too much for some of those smaller, weaker agents" (Extract 6.4, line 16). He keeps his gaze, otherwise very mobile, on the camera while speaking these words.

He is referring to a notorious shootout in Miami in 1986 in which FBI agents, armed with less powerful pistols, were outgunned by two suspects. Following this the FBI introduced pistols with the more powerful 10mm ammunition. However these were soon deissued when they were found to be too hard for less experienced agents to control. This was widely thought to be women agents, the "smaller, weaker agents" that Gunblast mentions. Viewers require this mutual knowledge to make sense of this phrase.

Extract 6.4

Gunblast assumes common knowledge

```
14 GU: *the F**BI tried it for a little while  
      *»looks down**looks at camera*----->  
15 and* *found that the recoil was* *too much  
   -->* *looks up-----* *at camera->  
16 for some of those smaller weaker agents*  
   ----->*
```

In both these cases, domain terms used without a definition, and reference to a past situation without elaborating, the YouTubers are inferring that their viewers will understand what they are talking

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about through their mutual knowledge. If they do share this knowledge then the YouTubers are successfully following the social norm of not telling other people what they already know (Stivers et al., 2011, p. 19).

6.3.4 Gun knowledge

Right from the start of their videos YouTubers present their credentials for claiming epistemic authority about guns and ammunition. The YouTubers make a number of epistemic moves: they display their direct knowledge about guns, present their right to make assessments about them and demonstrate what they have come to know about the guns, their manufacturers and their history.

Gunblast, straight after he introduces his video, sets out his knowledge from his own experience over time: "ten millimetres is a project I've been working on for pretty good while" (Extract 6.5 line 6-7). Gunblast gives three positive assessments of the 10 mm: "it's a cartridge that I really like" (line 8), "I've really come to appreciate it" (line 11) and "it never really took off like it should" (line 13).

Icarryone says "those of you who watch my channel know that I'm a ten millimetre fan" (Extract 6.6 lines 9-10), suggesting he has been using 10 mm guns for some time, and makes a positive assessment of them. He cites his more regular viewers to support his assertion. In both cases the YouTubers use their direct experience of 10 mm guns over time to give them the epistemic right to both know about

6.3. FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Extract 6.5

Gunblast displays knowledge about guns

```
6  GU: *ten millimetres is a project i've been working on
    *eyes down----->
7    for pretty good while
    ----->
8    it's a* *a cartridge that* *i really like*
    ----->* *looks at camera-* *looks up-----*
(( 2 lines omitted ))
11   *i've really come* *to appreciate this cartridge*
    *»looks up-----* *looks down----->
12   it was introduced in in the eighties
    ----->
13   and it never took off like it should
    ----->
```

them and make assessments of them.

Extract 6.6

lcarryone displays knowledge about guns

```
3  IC: tanfoglio is a well-respected italian firearms
4    manufacturer who produces a complete line of
5    handguns based on the cz seventy five design
(( edit: cross fade ))
6    tanfoglio makes both polymer and steel frame
7    pistols in a number of different calibers
8    european american armory distributes these pistols
(( edit: cross fade ))
9    those of you who watch my channel know that i'm
10   a ten millimetre fan
```

hickok45 demonstrates his expertise through physical skill at shooting. The video opens with him with his back to the camera, a pistol in each hand, taking aim at two watermelons. He shoots them with multiple shots until they are pulped. He then turns to the hanging

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metal targets and firing at them in quick succession with both guns. As a commentator says, "[h]ad the range singing in this episode Hickok" (C1318).

Both Gunblast and Icarryone give plenty of background information about the 10 mm. Gunblast tells the story about the 10 mm cartridge and the FBI, as discussed above (Extract 6.4, lines 14-16). Icarryone gives information about the gun manufacturer Tanfoglio (Extract 6.6 lines 3-4), the guns it makes (lines 5-7) and the American distributor (line 9). hickok45 presents this information too but later in his video.

In summary, there are recurrent patterns in how YouTubers use the first thirty seconds of the main section of their videos to establish their epistemic authority. The resources they use include their words, gaze and display of guns to the camera. These YouTubers build their epistemic authority from their membership of the social categories 'YouTuber' and 'serious gun enthusiast' as well as their interactional role of 'going first'.

They orient to their epistemic responsibilities of introducing the topic and format of their video and propose what is common knowledge between themselves and their viewers. They claim epistemic primacy over their viewers from being serious gun enthusiasts with the attributes of direct personal experience with guns over time and learning about the guns' manufacturers, history and development. They speak with certainty with no use of markers of hesitancy such as 'I think', 'probably' or 'maybe'. This gives them the credentials to

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discuss and assess guns in their videos for viewers.

Prior interaction studies have shown that going first with an assertion or assessment implies a claim of epistemic primacy (Stivers et al., 2011, p. 15). Speakers should be seen to have epistemic primacy if they assert something first in a conversation. So these gun reviewers are able to claim epistemic authority through their knowledge, experience and local interactional position of going first.

Summary

These examples demonstrate that YouTubers use the first thirty seconds of their establishing shots to generate first impressions about the video topic and format and their credentials as serious gun enthusiasts. There are recurrent patterns across the videos: they establish the topic, format, setting of the video and the voice and, in most cases, the appearance, of the YouTuber. The YouTubers claim epistemic primacy and their right to make assertions and assessments through their interactional role of going first along with their direct personal experience over time. They also orient to their responsibility to their viewers to introduce the video topic and format, and determine they are speaking to fellow gun enthusiasts who understand specific gun terms. Having examined the establishing shot of the videos, the next step is to examine work bench scenes.

6.4 The work bench

The work bench is one of the two settings that occur in all the gun videos. There are recurrent patterns in the physical details of the work bench and the kind of actions the YouTuber does at the work bench. This section analyses three practices that occur in work bench scenes. Firstly how the bench is used as a platform for displaying their epistemic authority, secondly how they use other epistemic sources and thirdly how they anticipate challenges to their epistemic authority.

6.4.1 Platform for epistemic authority

The work bench in these videos is a large flat surface at waist height or a bit higher, clear of all objects apart from the guns and ammunition that are relevant to the topic of the video. This allows the YouTubers to pick up guns and display them to the camera to demonstrate their features. Gunblast's bench, complete with a vice, is viewable as outside on his porch. hickok45's is covered with an animal hide and is on the edge of his firing range, This allows for easy movement between shots of him handling the guns on the bench and firing them at targets. Icarryone's is filmed in closeup so the bench is only partly visible but is viewable as being at sitting height and indoors.

For gun enthusiasts a work bench is an important part of their activity. It is use for gunsmithing: maintaining, repairing and customising

6.4. THE WORK BENCH

their guns. hickok45 and lcarryone also refer to reloading ammunition: refilling cartridge cases by hand with gunpowder in order to get the strength they want and to save money through reusing the brass casings. It is similar to the benches or counters in gun shops at which customers can consult with the staff and handle different guns.

The YouTubers all talk about the features of guns and ammunition throughout their videos. In this section the focus is on two practices of interest: displaying their knowledge and building their epistemic authority through the use of objective facts and the introduction of real world scenarios for using the guns.

The use of objective facts

Gunblast uses the measurement of the barrel length of a gun when comparing two similar 10 mm Glock models (Glock is an Austrian handgun manufacturer). This comes in a sequence in which he stands at the work bench, describes the 10 mm guns that are being compared in his review and shows to them the camera. He picks up the Glock 20 SF (short frame) from the bench and cradles it in his hands, with his left hand under the barrel and his right hand on the grip (Extract 6.7 figure 1). He says that the gun has "got a little longer barrel" (line 62) at "four point six inches" (line 63). The unit of measurement he uses, inches, is an everyday unit and part of common knowledge. Viewers would be able to understand the length from hearing the words alone.

Extract 6.7*Gunblast: barrel length*

62 GU: **this weapon's got a little longer +barrel**
 »camera CU gun in hands-----+zoom out->
 63 **four point *#six inches* +gives you a little more**
 looks at camera *down at gun----->
 »-----+camera med.shot head,torso->
 fig #fig.1
 64 **velocity and it's not that much more bulk *over**
 »-----*looks up->
 »----->
 65 **the twenty nine s f we've also been shooting**
 »----->
 »----->



figure 1

Three things of interest happen here. Firstly, as he says the objective fact of the barrel length he looks directly at the camera (line 63). Secondly the camera operator starts zooming out just before he delivers this fact, perhaps in response to the YouTuber lifting his gaze to the camera. By the time his face is in the camera frame, at "six inches" (line 63), the viewer can see he is looking at the camera. Thirdly immediately after presenting this fact he says why it is important in the gun's efficacy as it "gives you a little more velocity" (lines 63-64).

These series of actions, cradling the gun and displaying it towards the camera, lifting his gaze directly to the camera, and the camera operator zooming out to make this gaze shift visible, all work to-

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gether to indicate his orientation to the significance of the fact. This is immediately followed by his explanation that the barrel length leads to increased velocity. A gun enthusiast viewer would know this means the bullet travels in a straighter trajectory and drives more energy into the target.

This sequence is intelligible as Gunblast both has knowledge of the gun's features, shown in stating the barrel length, and shows understanding of its importance in the gun's performance, in its increased velocity and therefore its efficacy. The interplay of his head and gaze movements and the camera framing also indicate that Gunblast and the camera operator are working collaboratively to achieve meaning in the making of the video.

hickok45 also uses an everyday measurement to compare two guns: he tells his viewers that the Colt Delta Elite and Colt 45 both weigh "38 ounces" (Extract 6.8 line 33). This comes after his opening sequence of firing at targets and at the start of him standing at the bench. He explains which guns he will use in this comparison between 10 mm and .45ACP ammunition. Again, he uses an everyday unit of measurement that is part of common knowledge.

While he gives this information about the guns his hands and the camera movement place emphasis on the objective fact of the guns' weight. Immediately before this extract he identifies both the guns, picking up each with his right hand as he names them and placing them down on the bench. Then he holds both his hands over the guns and moves his hand up and down a bit and finally touches

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Extract 6.8

hickok45: gun weight

31 **HI: @same here delta elite@**
@picks up gun, turns over on bench@
»gaze on guns----->
»camera med.shot figure at bench-->

32 **and then @er the series eighty* colt @forty five**
@picks up colt, gestures it towards camera@
@puts gun on bench
»-----*zooms in----->

33 **@same gun they @weigh I think thirty eight@ @@ounces#**
@points to colt on bench @@both hands down on guns»
@hands gesture above guns@
»camera zooms in to gun on bench ----->

fig #fig.1

34 **they weigh the@ @same these weigh about the same**
»hands on guns@ @lift hands off guns ----->
»camera zooms in to gun on bench----->



figure 1

them with an audible tap on the word "ounces" (lines 33-34). At the same time the camera operator starts zooming in from a medium shot which shows the YouTuber and a large expanse of the bench. This starts on the word "colt" (line 32) and is still zooming in to an extreme close up of the Colt forty five at the end of the extract.

As with Gunblast, the actions of the YouTuber - in this case his hand movements in gesturing at and tapping the guns on the bench - and the actions of the camera operator – in zooming in on the guns whose weight is being compared – work together to draw attention

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to the objective fact being given about the guns. Unlike Gunblast he does not give an explicit explanation of why this fact is significant so this suggests that he sees the explanation as common knowledge. The significance is hearable as any difference in the guns' performance cannot be ascribed to variation in their weight. This sequence as a whole is observable as hickok45 has knowledge about these specific models of Colt guns and understands what significance it has for the systematic comparison of the guns.

lcarryone also uses objective measurements as a means of displaying his knowledge about the gun under review. Unlike the others he uses more specialised units of measurement that are less likely to be understood by the general public but would be common knowledge about serious gun enthusiasts. In this except (Extract 6.9) he uses foot pounds, grain and feet per second.

Extract 6.9

lcarryone: bullet velocity

73 IC: *these loads produce approximately seven hundred
fig *fig.1
74 foot pounds of energy by pushing a hundred
75 and eighty grain bullet at around thirteen
76 hundred feet per second making this full power
77 ten millimetre round more than capable of
78 taking down medium sized game

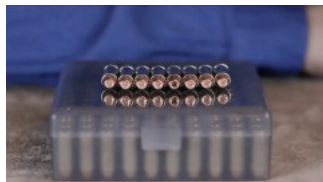


figure 1

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As he has framed the video so his face is not visible, his arm is visible in the background but does not move, and the camera framing is fixed, the main resource he uses is his choice of words. In this one sentence he produces three facts about the gun he is reviewing. He states first that it gives "seven hundred foot pounds of energy" (line 73-74), a measure of the bullet's muzzle energy. Second it is a "hundred and eighty grain bullet" (line 74-75), a measure of the bullet's mass. Thirdly it produces "thirteen hundred feet per second (line 75-76) a measure of the bullet's velocity. The final part of this sequence is an explanation of what these facts mean for the performance of the gun: it can take "down medium sized game" (line 78). This sequence is observable as Icarryone being knowledgeable about technical aspects of gun and ammunition features and understanding what this particular gun and ammunition combination is capable of doing.

Each of these extracts demonstrates how the YouTubers use information about the guns, presented as objective facts, to build their epistemic authority in this domain. These range from measurements in everyday units such as inches and ounces that are commonly understood to more specialised units such as grain and foot pounds. These measurements are also used to show their understanding about how these affect the gun's performance.

They use multiple resources to achieve this. Firstly they use head and gaze movements between looking at the camera, and so at the viewer, and at the guns and ammunition being talked about. Sec-

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only they use their hands to gesture at, touch, pick up, handle and display guns and the ammunition to the camera. Thirdly camera shots are framed collaboratively with the camera operator so the camera moves between wider shots that include the YouTuber and the bench and close ups which show the gun being talked about in detail. The final resource is what they display as common knowledge for their viewers and what they give explanations for.

Real world scenarios

The second practice in displaying their knowledge and building their epistemic authority is giving real world scenarios for which the guns will be appropriate. Icarryone uses the example of hunting as discussed above (Extract 6.9). He says the Tanfoglio gun loaded with standard 10 mm ammunition can be used for "taking down medium sized game" (line 78) which hunters would commonly know to be animals such as deer and pronghorn. He places emphasis on the words "more than capable of" (line 77) which suggests that he knows not only the features of the gun but also which situations it should be used in.

hickok45 gives what he calls "a more realistic situation" (Extract 6.10 lines 220-221) for using a 10 mm gun than firing at watermelons in his backyard. He proposes it as self-defence against predator animals and presents it as his personal choice of weapon. He says he would carry the 10 mm gun that he taps with the back of his hand for emphasis (line 222) if he needed to defend himself against "big animals" or "dangerous animals" (line 224). To viewers with some

knowledge of hunting or being in wild terrain this is hearable as animals such as bears, mountain lions or wild boar.

Extract 6.10

hickok45: self-defence against animals

220 HI: +@so I I kind of rolled+ into@ maybe* @*a more
 >looks at guns on bench-----**at camera->
 »hands apart, palms up----->
 +zoom out from CU bench+ +figure & bench----->
 221 realistic@ @situation* *just accidentally@ @ah that's
 »-----* *looks at guns on bench----->
 »-----@ @hands down on bench-----@ @lifts gun->
 »----->
 222 that again I'd be carrying*@ @*something like
 »-----* *at camera----->
 »-----@ @taps gun with back of right hand->
 »----->
 223 that@ @if I needed @serious# protection* *against@
 »-----* *looks down at bench->
 »---@ @right hand to camera, beats up & down----->
 »----->
 fig #fig.1
 224 big animals* ah* *@dangerous* *animals@
 »-*at camera* *at bench--* *at camera->
 -----@



figure 1

As he describes this scenario his shift in gaze and hand movements emphasise certain the words. When he says “if I needed serious protection” he both looks directly at the camera and gestures his right hand toward the camera with a repeated beat up and down

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((Extract 6.10 figure 1). When he says "big animals" (line 224) he looks down at the gun in his left hand and continues beating his right hand at the camera. In the last phrase of this extract, "dangerous animals" (line 224) he continues the hand gesture and shifts his gaze from the gun to the camera. The co-ordination of the words, gaze and gesture project that in this scenario the gun is key in providing the defence needed against these potentially dangerous animals

Gunblast describes the Tanfoglio 10 mm as one of his "defensive guns" (Extract 6.11 line 50-51). By inference this means for protecting himself against other people rather than animals. He is orienting to the importance of guns, particularly hand guns, in the USA for personal protection (Schaeffer, 2021). Like hickok45 in the example above Gunblast presents this as his personal preferred choice of weapon.

When he describes the lasers on his gun the camera operator zooms in to an extreme close up of the gun, the laser sights on top, and the YouTuber's fingers holding the gun (line 5). The camera operator is orienting to the importance of the laser sights in the YouTuber's description of his defensive guns. The YouTuber grasps the grip of the gun when he says the word "defence" (line 52) acting out the way he would grasp the gun in a situation of self-defence.

The examples how the YouTubers use real world scenarios to demonstrate that they do not just know about the features or specifications of the guns, they also know which gun and ammunition is right

Extract 6.11*Gunblast: personal defence*

49 GU: @this one has an@ @excellent crimson
 @gun in hands---@ @turns gun over-->
 +close up of gun in hands----->
 50 **tracer laser on it+ +which i like that on all my**
 »----->
 »-----+ +zoom in to laser sights--->
 51 **defensive guns anything i'm like carrying for**
 @grasps gun grip-----@
 »----->
 52 **#defence i like a laser on**
 @taps gun grip with palm->
 ----->

fig #fig.1



figure 1

for which situation. They use their gaze, at the gun or direct at the camera give an emphasis to key words in the scenario. This is alongside gripping or tapping the gun and gesturing with the gun or their hands. In cases where there is a camera operator they change the camera frame by zooming in and out to focus attention to certain details on the gun or actions of the YouTuber such as gaze or hand movements.

In summary this analysis has shown that these YouTubers use the workbench scenes as a place to display their epistemic access to knowledge about guns and ammunition and their epistemic authority over their viewers. They demonstrate knowledge not just about

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the features and specification of the guns and ammunition but also how these affect the performance of the guns, and which real world situations they are suited to. The analysis has demonstrated which things they assume are common knowledge and which require an explanation to their epistemically less authoritative viewers. It has also shown that the work bench provides a good setting for handling guns: picking them up, turning them round and placing them down while still visible to the viewer. This setting also allows for close up shots of the guns to show certain details and medium shots of the YouTuber from the waist up including their face, the work bench and the guns and ammunition lying on it. I have also shown that the YouTuber works together with the camera operator, when there is one, to frame shots to show detail or to show the speaker's gaze.

6.4.2 Other sources of knowledge

Two of the YouTubers cite other epistemic sources in order to bolster their own epistemic authority. Perhaps coincidentally they both cite people from Alaska although this is in the context that Alaska has one of the highest rates of gun ownership in the US (Schell et al., 2020).

Gunblast opens his work bench scene with a brief history of the 10mm cartridge and his story about the FBI (Section 6.2.3 above). Then he switches to a sequence describing the guns that he will compare in the video and makes assessments of them. But between the two he inserts a short sequence about the popularity

6.4. THE WORK BENCH

about Glock guns in Alaska (Extract 6.12). He says that "a lot of people" (line 29) carry Glocks in the north which he later respecifies as Alaska (line 31). He attributes this to the need for self-protection against wild animals and for hunting (lines 31-32). He does not specify his source and uses the more vague "I found" (line 33) which suggests this information came from another person, or people, rather than an official source.

Extract 6.12

Gunblast: Alaskan sources

```
29  GU: real good cartridge a lot of people ah up in the
30      north and place where they might run across some
31      animals that tend to hunt back like Alaskan
32      fishing gags and things like that they carry a
33      lot of glocks up there and ten millimetre i found
```

hickok45 similarly says that Glock 20 gun is popular in Alaska (Extract 6.13 line 50). As he has been talking about big game hunting immediately before this excerpt, the inference is that the guns are used for hunting and self-defence against the animals. It is common knowledge that Alaska has many big game species that are hunted including moose, caribou, bears and mountain goats. He also does not specify his source and uses the vague formulation "I hear from people all the time" (lines 149-150).

Both these YouTubers cite sources who have epistemic primacy (Stivers et al., 2011, p. 15), or greater relative rights to know, about which guns are popular in Alaska as they are, by inference, living in Alaska. The YouTubers co-opt these sources to boost their epis-

Extract 6.13

hickok45: Alaskan sources

147 HI: now if I'm going to Alaska I might take more
148 than just a glock obviously although the glock
149 er er twenty I understand I hear from people
150 all the time it's very popular in Alaska
151 and the ten and other guns too perhaps

temic authority to know about which guns are appropriate for different settings and activities. Their vagueness about their sources, "I found" and "I hear from people all the time" can be heard within the local context as the information comes from their personal networks of other gun enthusiasts.

Overall, however, these gun review videos are notable for the YouTubers not citing other sources of information, either peer or from higher epistemic authorities. They present their knowledge as an attribute of their categorisation as a gun enthusiast or gun collector and coming from their own experience over the years. One exception to this is citing other sources when heading off potential challenges to their authority which will be examined in the next section.

6.4.3 Anticipating epistemic challenges

hickok45 anticipates that he will be challenged by viewers for his view that the .45ACP ammunition is not always better than the 10 mm. In this extract he has recently returned to his work bench after shooting guns at targets and is considering the question of the difference between .45ACP and 10 mm ammunition.

Extract 6.14

hickok45: anticipating criticism from "novice shooters"

245 HI: if you're kind of new to shooting
246 you've never shot one of them or either
247 a novice shooter looks at that
248 and might think well that's a bigger bullet
249 it's heavier it's bigger forty five is
250 supposed to be the ultimate cartridge you know
251 well ten millimeters is actually more powerful

In the Extract 6.14 he flags that his view that the 10 mm is better to use in some situations because it is "actually more powerful" (line 251). He characterises the view that the .45ACP is better because it is "a bigger bullet its heavier its bigger" (lines 249-249) and it is conventionally thought to be the "ultimate cartridge" (line 250). He uses two devices to discourage his viewers from taking this view and encourage them to take his view.

First he characterises people who take this view as "new to shooting" (line 245) and "a novice shooter" (line 247), implying they know little and certainly less than him. This invites his viewers to do two actions: not align themselves with these newcomers with a lower epistemic status in thinking that the .45ACP is automatically a better cartridge, and to accept the YouTuber's higher epistemic status and his differing view that the 10 mm can be better in certain situations.

Secondly his use of the discourse marker "you know" (line 250) invites the viewers to align with his views. Here 'you know' signals a change in opinion in the sentence from the newcomer's view that

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the .45ACP is better to the YouTuber's contrasting view. It has been found previously (Fox Tree & Schrock, 2002; Jucker & Smith, 1998) that 'you know' is an invitation to the people being addressed to "follow along the same wave length" as the speaker (Fox Tree & Schrock, 2002) and fall in line with the speaker's opinions. It is used as a device to "involve the addressee in the joint construction of a representation" (Jucker & Smith, 1998, p. 196). In this case the YouTuber invites them to share his view rather than the conventional view that .45ACP is always better and to accept hickok45 is an epistemic authority on guns and ammunition.

Gunblast also uses the device 'you know' to counter potential criticism. During his story about the FBI taking up then dropping the 10 mm (also discussed above in Section 6.3.3) he says that the FBI, instead of just accepting that the "recoil was too much" (Extract 6.15 line 15) and switching to "weaker cartridges" (lines 18-19), should have given the "smaller weaker agents" (line 16) some "more training" (line 17). He uses the phrase "you know" (line 17) to signal the contrast between these two opposing views. This is immediately followed by "seems to me" (line 17) which also points to an upcoming change in view. His phrasing seems designed to head off potential criticism of his view that the FBI was wrong to deissue the 10 mm by inviting his viewers to adopt his opinion instead.

In another instance, hickok 45 heads off criticism about using too weak ammunition by using a different device of using exaggerated language to make their position seem ludicrous and thus invites his

Extract 6.15

Gunblast: anticipating criticism about the FBI

14 GU: the FBI tried it for a little while
15 and found that the recoil was too much
16 for some of those smaller weaker agents
17 which you know seems to me more training
18 would have been better than going to weaker
19 cartridges

viewers not to align with that view. He talks about "people out there" (Extract 6.16 line 64) so not the viewers he is addressing but other people. This infers distance between on the one hand him and his viewers and on the other hand people holding the opposing view. He does not explicitly say these other people use cartridges which are loaded to a higher strength than is standard for that cartridge. Instead he says they load them to "take down an elephant", a formulation that viewers sharing common knowledge about hunting in the USA would know is an exaggeration as there are no elephants to hunt in the USA. And furthermore even if a hunter were shooting elephants they would not do it with a 10 mm hand gun. The YouTuber invites his viewers who share common ground with him to know this is hyperbole that should be heard as non-literal (Norricks, 2004).

Extract 6.16

hickok45: anticipating criticism about weak ammunition

64 HI: there are people who load ten millimetre
65 out there to take down an elephant
66 and there are people out there who feel
67 that if you're not shooting something that
68 will take down an elephant in ten millimeter
69 you're a wimp and all that
70 so those people will have comments I'm sure

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He immediately follows it with a similar formulation: "people out there" (line 66) would be critical of others who do not use ammunition that is strong enough to "take down an elephant" (line 68), thinking they are "a wimp", a weak person. By inference these wimps include the YouTuber. By using formulations which can be heard as hyperbolic he implies the views of his potential critics do not have epistemic authority. His final point in this sequence is to assert that "those people will have comments I'm sure" (line 70), again inviting his viewers to infer that they are not the ones who hold this view and so they will not leave comments criticising him for using normal rather than super-strength ammunition.

In summary YouTubers head off potential future criticism from viewers and commentators using a number of devices. Firstly they use exaggerated characterisations of potential critics and hyperbolic formulations about their beliefs. Secondly there is use of the phrase 'you know' to contrast potential critics' views with their own, in line with previous findings (Fox Tree & Schrock, 2002; Jucker & Smith, 1998). The result of these devices is to distance potential critics from the majority of their viewers and invite viewers to align with the YouTuber rather than with the critics. The YouTuber thus encourages the viewers to use their common knowledge to jointly construct both the correct view about the guns and ammunition being reviewed, the lower epistemic status of potential critics and the higher epistemic authority of the YouTuber.

Summary

The examples in this section show that YouTubers use the work bench as a setting in which to assert their epistemic authority. The work bench as a physical object, standing at waist height and with a large flat surface, allows the YouTubers to adjust their body and gaze, handle the guns and ammunition, and display them to the camera.

At the work bench YouTubers initiate actions that aim to bring about future actions by their viewers. Drawing on the common knowledge shared with their viewers, they aim to jointly construct views about guns and ammunition that align with the YouTuber's views and jointly acknowledge the epistemic primacy of the YouTuber and the lower epistemic status of viewers and, in particular, potential critics.

YouTubers show their knowledge about guns and ammunition, coming from their own experience over time: how performance is affected by differing features and the real world scenarios in which various guns are useful. They decide what is part of the common knowledge with viewers and what needs to be explained and at times cite other epistemic sources to extend their epistemic domain. YouTubers head off potential criticism of their views by distancing potential critics from the greater part of their viewers and inviting viewers to agree with the YouTuber rather than the critics, through devices such as hyperbole and "you know".

The work bench is also a setting in which the YouTuber works jointly with the camera operator, where there is one, to accomplish the audio-visual production of intelligibility and meaning. This is accomplished through organising the scene into foreground and background, and dynamically framing shots to make visible the work bench, the details of the guns or the YouTuber's face, body and hands.

6.5 Discussion

This chapter has shown YouTubers use practices in the set up, shooting and editing of their videos to build their epistemic authority, either alone or in collaboration with a camera operator. The video is an intentional produced account which aims at establishing the YouTuber as an epistemic authority on guns and ammunition, and with epistemic rights and responsibilities. They do this through creating a narrative structure with distinct scenes which is intelligible to their viewers. They open the main part of their video by introducing the topic and format, establishing the setting and the person and appearance of the YouTuber, establishing the common ground between themselves and their fellow gun enthusiast viewers and demonstrating their knowledge about guns. They do most of the exposition at the work bench where they demonstrate their knowledge about guns through the use of objective facts about guns' performance, and the real world situations in which they should be best used. They draw on other peer sources of knowledge to widen their

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area of epistemic authority. They protect their epistemic primacy by trying to head off potential criticisms and inviting their viewers to align with them rather than critics.

The structure and organisational features of the video are established through the set up, shooting and editing. This forms the video into a linear sequence of clearly differentiated scenes. The videos follow a common pattern of having a beginning, a middle and an end. The introduction is usually an edited title sequence slightly adapted for the specific video. The middle comprises at least two scenes at the work bench and the shooting range. The end is an edited outro, usually with credits. Scenes are differentiated by discontinuities in setting, camera framing and audio, and transitions between them. As Jayyusi (1988) argues, the sequence of shots makes the video intelligible to viewers using their cultural understanding of membership categories: in these local situation the combined role of YouTuber and serious gun enthusiast, and the role of epistemically less authoritative viewer.

YouTubers use the opening part of the main sequences of the video to create at a glance intelligibility, so the viewer can comprehend the setting, the YouTuber's appearance and the guns and ammunition being reviewed: in sum to create a specific first impression (Goffman, 1959, p. 14). They use their interactional role of going first to introduce the video topic and format, demonstrate their credentials for claiming epistemic authority about guns and ammunition gained over time and establish common ground with their

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viewers. In this they are fulfilling their epistemic responsibilities to their viewers to know what knowledge they have in common and tell them what they need to know (Stivers et al., 2011, p. 13), in this case what the video is about.

A key setting is the work bench at which the YouTubers assert their epistemic authority. The bench as object is a pragmatic and effective place to display guns and present the YouTubers in an authoritative position. They assert their knowledge about various guns and ammunition including presenting facts about their features and histories, and the real life situations in which they can be used, in hunting, protection against animals and self-defence against other people. At times they cite other peer sources to extend the domain over which they can speak authoritatively. They anticipate future challenges to their epistemic authority and act to head them off by inviting viewers to take their view rather than that of critics.

This chapter has extended Jayussi's ethnomethodologically-inspired account of filmic intelligibility (1988) to YouTube videos by reconstructing video practices from the videos produced (Broth et al., 2014, p. 12). Video accounts are of interest because of what they tell us about the organisation of the accounts themselves: how the linear sequence of scenes is constructed, edited and placed in juxtaposition with each other. This account shows how they exploit the technical, embodied and linguistic resources available to them and the joint working with a camera operator to achieve the production of intelligible meaning.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusions

7.1 Introduction

This thesis set out to advance the understanding of how older people share videos and interact with others on YouTube. It used an empirically-grounded content analysis and interactional approach to study what older people do on YouTube. It focused on investigating the kinds of videos older people make and the fine-grained interactional practices observed between video makers and their commentators. The main question guiding this thesis was:

- (1) How do older people share videos and interact with others on YouTube?

From this followed the questions:

- (2) What are the typical characteristics of videos made by older people on YouTube?
- (3) How do older people explicitly invoke and negotiate age and other identities for themselves and others through interaction on YouTube?

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- (4) How do older people present themselves to others in their YouTube videos through making use of the available social, technical and interactional resources?

The findings demonstrate that, contrary to some prior studies, older people are making YouTube videos in a wide range of genres, with skill in presenting themselves and their interests and which are viewed by audiences far beyond their family and friends.

YouTube videos are intentional produced accounts and first moves in an asynchronous interactional environment. YouTubers use the available resources to present themselves and the format and topic of their video, create common ground and acknowledge common knowledge with their viewers, and, within the context of the information-sharing genres of how to videos and beauty vlogs, demonstrate their epistemic authority and skills and head off potential criticisms.

Age categorisations are explicitly invoked and claimed by some YouTubers. But age identities are not the only or main identities they orient to. They orient to other identities including, primarily, YouTuber but also beauty vlogger, gun reviewer, woman interested in skincare, and serious gun enthusiast. Perhaps more important is the invoking of epistemic authority coming from experience and practice gained over time.

To address this a total of 121 videos made by people aged sixty and over in English were collected. The data was analysed in two phases, initially with a content analysis of the videos alone, and

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subsequently, within an ethnomethodological framework, a membership categorisation analysis of identities as a local interactional achievement in the videos and comments.

This thesis makes three main contributions to our knowledge about older YouTubers in particular and more broadly to YouTube as a social setting and to older age identity practices in online settings. Firstly this thesis provides a novel methodological approach for researching older people's YouTube videos and their interactions on the platform. It describes a process to identify videos made by people aged sixty years and over which resulted in the creation of a corpus of over one hundred videos. The two-phase research design developed for the study allows for both comparative and in-depth analysis of the dataset. The content analysis provided new insights into the genres of videos that older people post to YouTube and allowed comparison to other age groups. The ethnomethodological membership categorisation analysis allowed for granular analysis of the salience of age categorisations and the practices of YouTubers and their commentators on YouTube. This provides a methodological framework that can be used in future investigations of YouTube as a setting for social interaction.

Secondly this thesis provides an analysis of the saliency of age, and the use of age categories and attributes, among older YouTubers and their commentators. Through the analysis of two distinct groups, female beauty vloggers and male gun reviewers, the thesis highlights differences between the two groups in the topics under

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discussion, and the distinct differences in category work between the female and male YouTubers.

Thirdly this thesis provides a rich and detailed understanding of YouTube as a setting for social interaction. It demonstrates how category work is an important component of self-presentation in videos and in interactions between video makers and their audience through written comments.

This chapter summarises the approach, findings, contributions and limitations of this thesis and suggests directions for future work. In Section 7.2 the findings of the analysis are set out. In the next two sections the main methodological and empirical contributions (Section 7.3) and limitation of the study (Section 7.4) are discussed. The penultimate section (Section 7.5) discusses potential directions for future work. Finally in Section 7.6 the thesis concludes with a brief reflection on researching older age in online settings.

7.2 Summary of findings

7.2.1 Features of older people's YouTube videos

In the first phase the content analysis produced two overarching findings on the typical characteristics of videos made by older people on YouTube (Chapter 4). Firstly it showed that older people made the kinds of videos and with audience engagement that was broadly similar to adults of all ages on YouTube. Secondly there was marked

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gender differences in the genres and topics of the videos made.

The analysis showed that older people made videos in a wider range of genres and topics than might be predicted from prior studies (Ferreira et al., 2017; Harley & Fitzpatrick, 2009a, 2009b; Karahasanović et al., 2009; Righi et al., 2012). The most common categories of videos were vlogs; performance, musical and creative videos; and how to and educational videos. This is in line with Simonsen's (2011) study of videos made by people of all ages with the exception that how to videos were more common in this study. One possible explanation is that older people have skills or experience that they wish to share with others.

The popularity of the videos, measured in the number of views, and audience engagement, measured in the number of comments and ratings (thumbs up or down), were similar to prior studies in being highly skewed so a small number of videos had high views and audience engagement and a long tail of videos had low views and audience engagement (Bärthel, 2018; Cha et al., 2007). One in six received no ratings and one third received no comments at all.

The gender differences were marked: men made the majority of the videos in every category except vlogs in which women were the predominant makers. This may be accounted for by a gendered preference for certain topics, or by the application of category definitions that might be more likely to assign women talking to the camera as a vlog and a man talking to the camera as a how to video. Vlogs made by women were predominantly about stereotypically fe-

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male topics of fashion, beauty, lifestyle and relationships while vlogs by men were more likely to be about topics such as motorbikes and international travel. One notable finding was the number of videos of men playing a musical instrument and/or singing to camera: this sub-genre has not been previously identified or explored.

7.2.2 Older age identities practices on YouTube

Chapter 5 produced four main findings. Firstly it showed that older age categorisations were salient to older YouTubers and their commentators. Secondly it showed how older age categorisations were used by YouTubers as self-presentation to introduce themselves to their viewers. Thirdly it showed how older age categorisations were used by YouTubers and commentators to create common ground and by YouTubers to encourage the viewers to watch their videos and be supportive in leaving a positive rating or comment. Finally it showed how commentators deployed age categorisations as a warrant to ask for advice from YouTubers.

Saliency of older age categorisations

Explicit age categorisations were common in the dataset and were made equally by both YouTubers and commentators. They most often occurred in comments, rather than in videos or paratexts, and were most commonly used to refer to self, or self and others, rather than to other people alone. Age categorisation took a number of forms of which the most common were chronological age such as

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“I’m 60” or “women in our 60s”, generic phrases such as “older”, and stage of life or generational roles such as “granddad” or “retired”. This is in line with prior studies of older people’s conversational interactions in which older age categorisations, both explicit and implicit, were found to be salient (Charalambidou, 2015, p. 97; N. Coupland et al., 1991, pp. 59–64; Heinrichsmeier, 2016, p. 152; Heinrichsmeier, 2019; Paoletti, 1998a).

Again, the gender differences were marked. The women making beauty and lifestyle vlogs and their commentators were more likely to overtly orient to older age through use of chronological age, generic phrases or stage of life and generational roles. The men making the gun review videos and their commentators tended to orient to age in a more subtle way by temporally framing their experience with guns using phrases such as “for a pretty good while” or referring to connected events from years ago.

Older age categorisation for self-introduction

The analysis showed that, although the women beauty vloggers’ older age was visibly available to their viewers through their on-sight appearance, they commonly made age relevant by using an age categorisation. Not only were age categorisations used, they were often used at a point when the viewer first came to the video, in the video title, written in the opening title or spoken in the first seconds of the video. I suggested that this was for the purposes of introducing themselves and the topic of the video to their viewers by volunteering personal information. By orienting to age at the start of

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the viewing experience the vlogger was making relevant they were an older woman making a video about older women's beauty tips.

Volunteering personal information has been found in prior interaction research in conversation among unacquainted people (Chen, 2017; N. Coupland et al., 1991, pp. 57–59; Haugh & Carbaugh, 2015; Stokoe, 2010). This also seems to fit with the counter setting observed by Charalambidou (2015) and Heinrichsmeier (2016, p. 155) of older people in conversation with others they know well in which self-referential use of chronological age was much less common. The researchers suggest that this is because the members are already aware of each other's ages. Benwell and Stoke suggest that disclosing information about the self in online settings is a means of "creating an identifiable personality in an otherwise fairly anonymous environment" (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006, p. 252).

Older age categorisation for building common ground

The analysis showed that older age categorisations were used by both YouTubers and commentators to create affiliative common ground with each other. Some of the age categorisations were applied to inclusively self and others for example "for mature ladies - women in our 60s". I argued this was for two reasons. Firstly it was a way for both the YouTuber and the commentator to claim the commonality of being older women with shared attributes and interests and so reducing interactional distance to create a greater intimacy (Jefferson, 1988). This is in line with prior research in claiming co-membership of a category can be a way of claiming common

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ground (Hofstetter, 2016, p. 147; Stokoe, 2010). Making age relevant was a means for the YouTuber to suggest to the viewer that although they might be strangers they may have the same interests and experiences that would make the video relevant and of interest to the viewer.

I further argued that using age categorisation to claiming affiliative common ground was a way to encourage the viewer with common characteristics and interests to be supportive to the YouTuber. So, for the viewer to see the video as of common interest and in the first instance continue watching the video and later to be supportive by leaving positive ratings and comments. Some commentators responded by reciprocally disclosing their own age within a positive comment, for example “I turned 51 this past July”.

Age categorisation as a warrant for commentators to ask for advice

The analysis showed how commentators used age categorisations as a warrant to ask for advice from the YouTuber. At times commentators disclosed their age as a way of highlighting their co-membership of the categories of older women and women interested in make-up and then signalling the vlogger’s epistemic authority. One commentator used her younger age directly to ask for advice from the older vlogger, orienting to the vlogger as having knowledge and expertise through her older age, with “[w]hat would you suggest using for the younger me?”.

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This fits with prior studies of beauty vloggers which show they are commonly asked advice by their commentators and are expected to reply (Garcia-Rapp & Roc-Cuberes, 2017). This analysis went further and showed in fine-grained detail how the paired categories of commentator–YouTuber became aligned with the paired categories of advice seeker–advice giver. It also seems to be in line with the common, or even stereotypical, association of older people with life experience, knowledge, maturity and wisdom and the practice of giving advice based on these attributes (Liu et al., 2003; Nagel et al., 2011; Staudinger, 1999).

7.2.3 YouTubers building epistemic authority

Chapter 6 produced three central findings. Firstly it showed how YouTubers used their older age and length of experience to build their epistemic authority on the topic of the video. Secondly it showed how YouTubers used their older age and experience as a warrant to make assessments and give advice to viewers, and how this was acknowledged by commentators. Thirdly it showed how YouTubers used their older age and experience to head off potential critics of their knowledge or assessments by lowering the epistemic status of these potential critics.

Building epistemic authority

The analysis showed how gun reviewer vloggers used a number of linguistic, physical and video-making resources to build their own

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epistemic authority. They spoke with certainty and lack of hesitancy and used domain terms without giving an explanation. The gun reviewers used terms such as calibre, cartridge, polymer frame and dual wielding. The beauty vloggers similarly used terms such as retinol, serum and peel without elaboration. They demonstrated their technical knowledge about the topic through the use of objective facts about the weight and dimensions of the guns and ammunition and the effect these had on performance, through giving background information about the history of the gun, manufacturer or distributor, and through presenting real world scenarios in which they claimed the gun or ammunition would be best suited, such as shooting animals or as self-defence against other people. Other epistemic sources were cited to bolster their own epistemic authority such as people “up in the north” in Alaska or, with a beauty vlogger, “my dermatologist”. While the gun reviewers did not explicitly use older age categorisations they did make reference to their length of experience with guns and ammunition through phrases such “a pretty good while”.

The YouTubers also bolstered their epistemic authority through physically demonstrating their skills in holding, aiming and firing the guns and accurately hitting targets. This took the form of hitting traditional circular or human-shaped targets or more unusual or humorous targets such as gongs and watermelons and, in one case, while using two guns simultaneously. The beauty vloggers likewise demonstrated their skills in using make-up tools, techniques and products to achieve a certain ‘look’.

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The analysis showed that YouTubers used video-making resources to build their epistemic authority on the topic. They used the setting of the videos, specifically with the gun reviewers the work bench and the firing range, with the physical arrangement of their guns, ammunition, gunsmithing tools and targets. The workbench was also an effective setting for presenting the gun reviewer as an authoritative figure and orient to their collection of guns and tools and expertise being built up over time. In those videos made with a separate camera operator they changed the framing and focus of the camera to orient to the significance of what the YouTuber was doing or saying to focus viewers on the epistemic point they were making.

Warrant to make assessments and give advice

The analysis showed how YouTubers used their epistemic authority to make assessments and give advice and recommendations. They deployed their claims of length of experience with using the guns and ammunition to make assessments of which situations they were best suited for and how this compared to other makes of gun or calibre of ammunition. For example, a gun reviewer introduced the ammunition he reviewed with “ten millimetres is a project I’ve been working on for pretty good while” followed by “It’s a a cartridge that I really like”.

The analysis also showed that while both gun reviewers and beauty vloggers gave advice and recommendations in the videos, direct requests for advice from commentators were not always responded to. This contrasts with prior studies in face to face interaction which

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found that requests for advice routinely and reliably receive a response (Stivers & Robinson, 2006; Stivers & Rossano, 2010).

Heading off potential criticism

The analysis showed how gun reviewers anticipated and headed off potential criticism, especially of their evaluation of guns and ammunition, by lowering the epistemic status of these potential critics in relation to the YouTuber and to other non-critical viewers. This was achieved through linguistic practices and formulations such as characterising the potential critics as a “novice” or “new to shooting”. YouTubers also invited their viewers to align with the them against these potential critics by referring to the potential critics in distancing terms as “those out there” and using exaggerated formulations about their beliefs and characteristics, such as being people who wanted an overly-powerful ammunition strong enough to “take down an elephant”. The phrase “you know” was also commonly used which Fox Tree and Schrock (2002) showed was a device to encourage the people being addressed to fall in line with the speaker’s opinion.

7.2.4 Being a skilled YouTuber

The analysis used the approach of reconstructing the video practices from the videos themselves (Broth et al., 2014, p. 12) to show that both the beauty vlogger and gun reviewer YouTubers presented themselves as skilled YouTubers who could make an effective video

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and introduce the topic and format of the video and themselves to the viewer.

Constructing the video

The analysis showed that the YouTubers demonstrated they could construct the video as a “produced account” (Jayyusi, 1988), a deliberate and skilled organisation of practices and resources to create a communicative object. They could set up, shoot and edit a video to make a narrative that was coherent to viewers over several scenes.

Both the beauty vlogs and the gun reviewer videos were edited together from different sequences and organised into a linear sequence of scenes, differentiated through editing and visual transitions. The structure of the videos fitted into the classic film structure of a beginning, a middle and an end (Giannetti, 2014, p. 338) which through cultural familiarity is intelligible to viewers (Jayyusi, 1988). This differentiated them from some other videos in the wider corpus of videos which were shot in a single take with no editing or differentiation of scenes. It also differentiated them from other amateur home-movie makers who used cross-cut dissolves primarily to gloss over visual discontinuities in the filming of the video (Laurier, 2014a). Within scenes the choice of settings were relevant to the topic of the video and conveying their knowledge about the subject: the work bench and shooting range for the gun reviewer and the dressing table for the beauty vloggers.

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The response from commentators suggested the videos were intelligible to viewers. None of the videos received comments indicating the viewers did not understand the video, found it confusing or criticised the its making. In contrast, commentators oriented to leaving positive comments about the video production, for example “I LOVE your videos!”.

Introducing the topic and format of the video

The analysis showed how the YouTuber demonstrated their skill at introducing the topic and format of the video and introducing themselves to the viewer. The YouTubers introduced the format of the video – a make-up tutorial or a gun review – using the varied available resources such as the title of the video, visually what appeared on the screen in the framing of the opening shot and verbally stating in the opening seconds of the main part of the video.

The YouTubers oriented to the viewers as strangers by introducing themselves as an older women beauty vlogger or an experienced gun enthusiast, using resources such as volunteering personal information and claiming co-membership of age and interest categories and so invoking shared characteristics, knowledge and experience, and orienting to common knowledge they therefore may share with their viewers (as elaborated in 7.2.2 above). The beauty vloggers presented their videos as by and for people interested in older women’s make-up and the gun reviewers presented their videos as by and for gun enthusiasts. These findings are congruent with Stiver’s (2011) work on face to face interaction in that YouTu-

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bers demonstrated their epistemic responsibility to know what the topic and format of their video is as they had made it (Stivers et al., 2011, p. 17), to tell their viewers what their video is about (p.18) and to know what they have in common with their viewers and commentators (p.13).

In summary the analysis shows how the video makers demonstrated they were skilled YouTubers in how they made the video and through the fine-grained detail of the content and, in particular, how they fulfilled their epistemic responsibilities by introducing of the topic and format of the video, introducing themselves and proposing to their viewers what attributes, interests and knowledge they have in common.

7.3 Contribution to knowledge

This thesis contributes to knowledge in three main areas. Firstly, in the area of older people's identities, the findings contribute to the under-researched area of older people's identities in online settings and, in particular, on YouTube. Secondly, in interactional accounts of online settings, the findings contribute to the understanding of YouTube as a site of social interaction. Thirdly, the methodology developed for the study establishes an innovative approach to collecting a corpus of videos from YouTube based on demographic characteristics of the video maker and to analysing videos and comments in a framework that both maps the terrain of YouTube and opens the black box of online interaction.

7.3.1 Older people's categorisation practices on YouTube

This thesis contributes to an understanding of the fine-grained detail of older people's age categorisation practices on YouTube and, in particular, the saliency of older age categorisations, the use of age categorisation as self-introduction, and the construction of positive older age identities. This thesis builds on the work of other ethnomethodological approaches to older age categorisation practices which use membership categorisation analysis especially Charalambidou (2012; 2015), Heinrichsmeier (2016; 2020), Nikander (2000; 2002) and Paoletti (1998a). They showed that older age categorisation is salient in older people's everyday talk and this thesis extends this into the online setting of YouTube.

Saliency of older age categorisation practices on YouTube

There has been an increasing interest in the area of older age categorisation practices in different settings over the last thirty years in the work of, for example, N. Coupland et al. (1991), Paoletti (1998a), Nikander (2002), Poullos (2009), Charalambidou (2012; 2015), Heinrichsmeier (2016; 2020), Róin (2014), Pirhonen et al. (2016) and Thell and Jacobsson (2016). This study builds on their work and shows that older age categorisations are salient to older YouTubers and their commentators, especially in the setting of older women's beauty vlogging. This thesis confirms the work of Poullos (2009) and in particular Heinrichsmeier (2016; 2020) and N. Coupland et al. (1991, pp. 57–59) that when age categorisations are used they are

most commonly applied to oneself or inclusively to oneself and others present.

Unlike these prior studies, this thesis has shown that this also includes disclosure of chronological age. Heinrichsmeier (2016; 2020) and Charalambidou (2012; 2015) found declarations of chronological age were mostly commonly applied to other people. This thesis showed that for YouTubers and, in particular, older women beauty vloggers and their commentators, declarations of chronological age such as "I am 63" and "I turned 51" were relatively common. I suggested this novel finding is due to two reasons. Firstly, the YouTuber's announcement of the topic of the video, older women's beauty tips, through the video title or opening of the video, has made older age relevant. This is in line with interview studies in which chronological age has already been made relevant by the interviewer (Nikander, 2000; Róin, 2014). Secondly, the setting of YouTube is one in which the video maker and their viewers may be strangers and are orienting to this unacquaintedness by introducing themselves through disclosing their own age (which is considered in more detail below).

Age categorisation for self-introduction

This thesis contributes to the understanding of the volunteering of personal information in self-introductions between unacquainted people and to openings and introductions in YouTube videos. This builds on prior work on the volunteering of personal information in talk between unacquainted people (Haugh & Carbaugh, 2015;

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Stokoe, 2010) in order to deal with the lack of contextual knowledge about each other. Disclosing personal information is a means of orienting to this unacquaintedness and helps to establish common ground between them. Haugh (2015) showed that unprompted disclosure of biographical information was marked among American speakers and often took the form of disclosure of past experiences and hobbies. Stokoe (2010) noted that unacquainted people in speed-dating situations often initiated their conversations with disclosure of occupation and where they live. This thesis extends these findings into the online setting of older women's beauty vlogs in which, as age is relevant, it is a common practice for YouTubers and commentators to disclose their own older age. Additionally, as all the older women beauty vloggers in the study presented as American there is perhaps a cultural preference for disclosure of biographical information.

This thesis also builds on the nascent study of openings in YouTube videos. Frobenius (2011) and Isosävi and Vecsernyés (2022) describe routine openings to YouTube videos in which the video maker gives a greeting, and introduces themselves and the purpose of the video. This thesis shows how explicit and implicit age categorisations are part of the openings of videos in two groups of YouTubers, older women beauty vloggers and older men gun reviewers. A common practice among older women beauty vloggers is to start the video with describing the topic and format of the video, such as a tutorial in how to achieve a certain 'look' through make-up and deploying older age categorisations such as "mature" or "women

in our 60s". This is also a practice used at times by commentators such as one who opens her comment with "I am 63". Older men gun reviewers routinely announce the topic of the review in the opening of the video. Age categorisations are less explicit but a common practice during the first thirty seconds of the video is to make reference to their experience with guns over time, through time phrases such "a pretty good while" which orient to their older age.

Building positive older age identities

Older age identities are often linked to negative attributes, particularly physical and cognitive decline and invisibility, which can result in ageist stereotypes as described in Section 1.2. This thesis shows, however, how older YouTubers constructed positive older age identities for themselves based on knowledge and expertise in the topic of the video they had chosen to make. This epistemic authority was asserted in two distinct ways. Firstly, older women beauty vloggers asserted their epistemic authority about make-up products, techniques and 'looks' through claiming membership of the category of older woman: being a member of the category gives them rights to make a video, and specifically a tutorial, about it. Secondly, gun reviewers built their epistemic authority through the length of time they had been using guns and the knowledge and physical skill that came with this engagement over time. In both cases their epistemic authority was in the main recognised and accepted by their commentators. One commentator on a beauty vlog

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acknowledged the YouTuber's length of experience with a product "I know you used retina for 25 or over years" then asked for advice with "[w]hat would you suggest using for the younger me?"

This is broadly in line with some prior studies of older people's talk which showed that older people construct their older age identities by claiming more positive attributes and distancing themselves from negative attributes. Charalambidou (2015) showed that older Greek women friends associated themselves with older age categories that were bound to more positive attributions. Heinrichsmeier (2016, p. 378) showed how older women in a hair salon distanced themselves from negative stereotypes of old age and embraced positive attributes. These show that older age is not an invariably and simplistically stigmatised identity.

This thesis also showed that positive older age identities were not the only identities claimed. The video makers also claimed the identities of skilled YouTuber, vlogger and reviewer, along with person interested in make up and gun enthusiast. They also claimed co-membership of these with gender identities: older women beauty vlogger, older man gun reviewer.

In summary, the first contribution of this thesis is to an understanding of the fine-grained detail of older people's age categorisation practices in the under-researched area of older people's identities in online settings and, in particular, on YouTube.

7.3.2 YouTube as a setting for social interaction

The second contribution of this thesis is to the understanding of YouTube as a site for social interaction and in particular an understanding of the kinds of videos older people make, the interactional strategies used by YouTubers and commentators in tutorial and review videos, and video production practices.

Characteristics of older people's YouTube videos

This thesis contributes the first known survey of older people's YouTube videos. The content analysis showed that older YouTubers made videos in a wide range of formats and topics, of which the most common were vlogs, performance, musical and creative videos, and how to videos. This is in line with Simonsen's (2011) study of YouTube videos made by people of all ages with the exception that older people made a greater proportion of how to videos. I suggested this may be because older people have experience and skills they wish to share with viewers. The popularity of videos, measured in views, and audience engagement, measured in the number of comments and ratings, fits with Bartl's (2018) and Cha's (2007) earlier large scale studies that a small number of videos had high levels of views and engagement and the majority of videos had low levels. The content analysis also demonstrated marked gender differences: men made the majority of videos in all genres apart from vlogs. This survey, while relatively small, sets the groundwork for future surveys of older people's YouTube videos.

Interactional strategies in tutorial and review videos

This thesis contributes to the understanding of interactional strategies used by older YouTubers and their commentators in tutorial and review videos. It builds on the interactional work in talk of Stivers et al. (2011) and shows how YouTubers fulfilled the interactional role of going first in a sequential sense: how they asserted epistemic primacy by setting out the topic and format of the video and the expected common ground with their viewers as an interest in and knowledge of make-up or guns. They deployed categorisations to introduce themselves to their viewers and make themselves less anonymous: as older, as experienced, as a beauty vlogger, as a gun enthusiast. They used going first to make assertions and assessments about the appropriateness of a make-up look for older women or the merits of a model of gun being reviewed.

As well as asserting their commonality with their viewers the thesis showed how YouTubers made moves to claim difference with their viewers through deploying category pairs of YouTuber–viewer, YouTuber–commentator, more knowledgeable–less knowledgeable, and advice giver–advice seeker. YouTubers used these identities to position themselves as having epistemic authority and so reinforcing their right to make assessments, give advice and head off potential critics. Commentators used co-membership of age categories to affiliate with the YouTuber and as a warrant to solicit advice. The handling of requests for advice differed on YouTube than in talk: direct requests for advice were more often ignored.

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This thesis demonstrates the utility of the technique of reconstructing the video practices from the videos themselves (Broth et al., 2014, p. 12), to show how YouTubers constructed the video as a “produced account” (Jayyusi, 1988, p. 271). It showed the consistency with which videos were structured through setting, filming and editing into a linear sequence of scenes to create a beginning, a middle and an end, as described in traditional film theory (Giannetti, 2014, p. 338). YouTubers’ practices included framing shots to highlight the object or action being referred to in the YouTuber’s speech and editing videos into delineated scenes through visual discontinuities and transitions. These practices marked out the YouTubers as different to amateur home-movie makers (Laurier, 2014a) and as being competent and skilled YouTubers.

In summary, the second contribution of this thesis is to the understanding of YouTube as a site for social interaction in the kinds of videos made, how interactional strategies were deployed and to what ends, and how video production practices differentiated the video makers as skilled YouTubers.

7.3.3 Methodological approach to studying YouTube

The third contribution of this thesis is the methodological approach that offers a distinctively different framework for researching YouTube. This framework contains two innovative approaches. The first is the method of building a corpus of videos from YouTubers that share demographic characteristics. The second is the two phase analyt-

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ical design that combines content analysis with an ethnomethodological approach in order to both map the broad terrain of older YouTubers and open the black box of interaction on YouTube to analytic inspection. This two phase design is suited to this highly under-researched phenomenon.

Firstly, the corpus building methodology addressed the significant challenges of sampling the variety of videos on YouTube made by older people. The platform does not allow for search or filtering of videos by demographic characteristics of the video maker. Additionally, YouTube does not select videos for viewing randomly: the search and recommendation algorithms are designed to suggest videos which are highly similar in content in order to increase the time a viewer spends on the platform. The approach that was devised comprised a sequence of steps: searching by a range of keywords that may be used by older people to self-describe, manual examination of the videos and their paratexts to identify if they met the inclusion criteria, and using these videos as a starting point in an automated crawl strategy.

While this was a time-consuming process that was not able to completely circumvent the YouTube algorithms that promote videos based on similarity of content rather than similarity of video maker, the corpus building methodology allowed the identification and collection of 121 videos made by people aged sixty years and over. This methodological approach could be further repurposed for future research studies to identify videos made by video makers with other

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demographic characteristics such as different age groupings, gender, ethnicity, nationality and religion.

Secondly, a two-phase methodological approach was developed to both investigate the broad terrain of the kinds of video that older people posted to YouTube and to enable detailed analysis of interaction between older YouTubers and their viewers and commentators.

The content analysis provided an overview of the kinds of videos older people posted to YouTube. In the absence of prior research into the phenomenon, and a certain amount of scepticism encountered by the researcher that people aged over sixty actually posted videos to YouTube at all, this thesis required an approach that mapped the terrain of the phenomenon. The content analysis enabled the identification of patterns in the data at the level of the videos that were analytically interesting in themselves and provided the first step in identifying instances in the data which were pivotal for the ethnomethodological analysis. The ethnomethodological approach enabled the opening of the analytic black box of interaction to examine the visual, linguistic and video production resources that constituted practices on YouTube. Ethnomethodology, and in particular membership categorisation analysis, showed how identities were made relevant, constructed and deployed in interactional strategies.

While the two approaches of quantitative content analysis and ethnomethodology may present as having no common basis, both are

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empirical approaches that identify points of analytic interest and enable comparison across the chosen dataset to identify patterns. This thesis demonstrated the value of linking content analysis sequentially with ethnomethodology to explore, categorise and closely examine older people's YouTube videos and provide detailed insights into this under-investigated area.

7.4 Limitations

The data for this study was a snapshot of publicly available YouTube videos by people aged sixty years and over with the accompanying comments, made in English and predominantly made by people from the USA, with non-commercial content. The dataset was generated at a specific time in a specific linguistic context. Given the large number of videos posted to YouTube from across the world, and the continuing rapid increase, a dataset identified at another time or in other languages and cultural contexts might produce a corpus that includes a different set of topics and different interactional practices. These videos were selected within a specific time frame. Although the videos in the corpus were published on YouTube over a period of about ten years it needs to be acknowledged that online communities are not static but undergo social and technological change. New genres and topics of video continually appear and grow in popularity. Therefore the findings should be used solely as a guide for other studies investigating older people's age identities and interactions on YouTube.

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Additionally, the small number of instances identified means the sample may not be representative of all videos made by older people on YouTube or of all interactional practices. The resource-intensive process of identifying videos by older people limited the size of the initial corpus to 121 videos and the ethnomethodological analysis was limited to seven videos, four by female beauty vloggers and three by male gun reviewers. The initial corpus did not contain any examples of certain popular categories on YouTube such as current affairs or sport, or popular formats such as haul videos or ask me anything (AMA) videos. Within ethnomethodology there is debate about the validity of a single case, or whether the analysis requires examination of a collection of instances (ten Have, 2004, p. 52). Nevertheless, the claims of this thesis are necessarily limited due to the size of the dataset. Using YouTube as a data source for empirically studying older people's identities is, however, at a nascent stage and this study presents an adequate initial examination of the data on which future studies can build.

Another limitation is the framing of the study around a category definition of older as aged sixty years and over while applying an ethnomethodological approach to studying identity as a member's resource. The position of this thesis is that self-identification as older is malleable and situationally-defined. To counter the use of this pre-existing category in the creation of the corpus care was taken in the analysis to privilege members' perspectives.

As a consequence of these limitations there are some questions

that this study was unable to answer. These are issues for future research.

7.5 Directions for future work

This thesis built on prior research but also provides a catalyst for future research. The study focused on a particular corpus of videos made by people aged sixty years and over. Future studies could examine how older age identities are produced and negotiated in other types of tutorial than women's make-up tutorials, other types of product review than gun reviews by men or in other YouTube formats such as personal vlogs and interviews. Studies could also extend to other age groups such as middle-aged people or to other nationalities and linguistic groups. YouTube is a rich source of data that is currently under-utilised in understanding online identity and interaction.

This study created a rich dataset of videos by older people and accompanying comments. There is significant potential for further analysis of the videos and comments in the corpus. There were a range of interactional features identified in the dataset that may form the basis of further analysis using categorical and sequential aspects of the interactions between the video and the commentators, and between the commentators. There were instances where commentators teased YouTubers about their older age or joked about their shared older age. Another fruitful strand of future research could be commentators challenging YouTubers' assess-

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ments or resisting their advice and recommendations.

The methodology devised in this study merits further investigation. The combination of corpus collection, content analysis and membership categorisation analysis may be a guide to the future analysis of YouTube videos and interactions. It could be transferable to the collection and analysis of videos by other age groups on YouTube or by other identity markers. The methodology further extends the applicability of membership categorisation analysis into online settings and offers unique insights into how people present, produce, recognise and manage age and other identities in their everyday activities on YouTube.

7.6 Concluding remarks

The study on which this thesis is based represents the first known study of older people's YouTube videos. This chapter summarised the findings of the thesis and pinpointed three key contributions to the understanding of older people's categorisation practices on YouTube, insights into YouTube as a setting for social interaction and a novel methodological approach to studying YouTube. It raised the limitations of the thesis and outlined directions of future study that emerged from it. YouTube offers an stimulating online setting in which in which to explore identity and interaction as it combines the intentional creation of videos with text-based interaction with viewers. It is hoped that this thesis will open the door to further research into older people's use of YouTube.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

Ethics approval

From: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Advice re ethics approval
Date: 28 June 2016 14:00
To: Melissa Bliss melissa.bliss@qmul.ac.uk

HC

Dear Melissa

Marvellous, in that case I am happy to confirm that your research as described does not need research ethics approval.

You are welcome to use this email as proof of this at your progression hearing, and in terms of any publication queries.

I hope it goes well.

Kind regards

From: Melissa Bliss
Sent: 22 June 2016 20:31:35
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Advice re ethics approval

Dear [REDACTED]

For my upcoming study I can confirm the following:

- 1) I will abide by the college's computer use guidelines which I have read
- 2) If I inadvertently view any video that is outside of YouTube's own guidelines (i.e. violent pornography) I will report to the site.

Thanks

--
Melissa Bliss

PhD candidate
Media & Arts Technology
School of Electronic Engineering and Computer Science
Queen Mary University of London, London E1 4NS

> On 22 Jun 2016, at 14:25, [REDACTED] wrote:
>
> Dear Melissa
>
> Do not worry, if you are just accessing your data in the public domain you do not need ethical approval at all. This is because, strictly speaking, you have no direct contact with any participants at all.
>
> However, if you could confirm the following good practice points for me that would be helpful.
>

- > 1) Confirm that you will abide by the college's computer use guidelines (I have attached a document to help you here)
- > 2) Should you inadvertently view any video that is outside of YouTube's own guidelines (i.e. violent pornography) you should report to the site.
- >
- > Kind regards
- >
- > [REDACTED]
- > Research Ethics Administrator
- > [REDACTED]
- >

APPENDIX B

Transcription notation

(1.0)	pause with duration in seconds
(.)	micro pause
.h	inbreath
(...)	Unclear speech
((inaudible))	Unintelligible speech
* *	gesture start and end point
* - ->	the action described continues across subsequent lines
- -Z->*	until the same symbol is reached
»	The action described begins before the excerpt's beginning
- - -»	The action described continues after the excerpt's end
#	The exact moment at which a screen shot is taken
fig	The screen shot referred to at #