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7 'Friendly' Comments

Interactional Displays of Alignment on Facebook and YouTube

Alexandra Georgakopoulou

Introduction

Interactional approaches to language view social relations of solidarity, friendship and affiliation, or hostility and disaffiliation from people and opinions, as intimately linked with *participation frameworks*: these refer to the roles and statuses that participants assume in communication (Goffman, 1981). The assumption is that social relations are signaled through semiotic and sequential choices. Studies of everyday conversations have amply documented these close links. Conversation Analysis and discursive psychology often use the term *alignment* to describe interactional processes of relationship building. With alignment, speakers signal, linguistically, paralinguistically and in embodied ways, their understanding of their interlocutors' positions. A typical feature of alignment, as documented within Conversation Analysis, consists in creating contributions that are lexically, syntactically, grammatically and sequentially similar to previous contributions (Stivers, 2008; Guardiola & Bertrand, 2013). Such similar sequences are viewed as the linguistic manifestation of convergent relations and behaviors, a sign within psychological research of affiliation with another. Although the exact relations between doing alignment *vis-à-vis* the communicative action of a speaker's prior contribution and expressing affiliation with the speaker and his or her stances are a matter of some dispute (see Guardiola & Bertrand, 2013), a prevalent position in Conversation Analysis is that alignment is a prerequisite for affiliation (Stivers, 2008): aligning with what and how a speaker communicates signals display of support and endorsement of their conveyed stance.

Alignment and Affiliation in Social Media

A comparable interactional approach to processes of alignment in social media communication is lagging behind, despite the fact that social media designing routinely encourages users to form aligned relations (e.g., Friends and Followers), using features such as Like, Follow, or Share. Media scholars have aptly shown that the digital architecture of social networking sites

has increasingly become ‘directional’ to specific forms of communication and relationships. It specifically prompts users to share their lives with as wide audiences as possible at the same time as getting validation and social proof from them (Marwick, 2013; van Dijck, 2013).

Several concepts have been proposed to describe the modes of such affiliative relationships. ‘Ambient intimacy’ (Reichelt, 2007, slide 4) describes positively the media enabling of relating with “people with a level of regularity and intimacy that you wouldn’t usually have access to, because time and space conspire to make it impossible”. And as Thompson (2008, n.p.) puts it, when talking about ambient intimacy on Twitter, “even supremely mundane” updates about our lives, when taken together, act as “little snippets [. . .] which coalesce into a surprisingly sophisticated portrait of your friends’ and family members’ lives, like thousands of dots making a pointillist painting”. To sustain such intimate and affiliative relationships, the users’ emotional labor and self-conscious monitoring of how well they are performing on the ‘like-ability’ front have been well recognized. Marwick (2013, p. 165ff) suggests that media affordances of relationships that are based on accruing status and being validated by others underlie the common presentation of self as a ‘brand’ with marketing strategies of positive product placement applied to the individual.

These descriptions of self and relations on social media, by media commentators and often by academics too, present a wide range from the celebratory to the dystopic (Baym, 2010). In addition, they work at a level of abstraction that does not easily allow us to see how relations are worked out at the more local level of posting and commenting. Narrative accounts of how people reflect on their social media engagements are surely useful, yet empirical studies of how users actually make sense of, take up, harness, resist or contest social media affordances, as “selectively perceived possibilities and constraints for action” (Barton & Lee, 2013, p. 27, citing Gibson, 1977), are necessary and underrepresented. There is then much scope for empirical research on how media affordances shape users’ *subjectivity* (self-presentation) and *intersubjectivity* (cf. interaction with other users).

Language-focused studies have begun to document systematicity in sequential patterns of social media communication, comparable to face-to-face interaction, thus clearly illustrating the benefits of such an approach. For instance, a study of comments on Facebook, as ‘conversational’ features, has shown that respondents create coherence and ‘tie’ their comment with previous ones and with the original post, by exploiting the time and space organization of Facebook environment (Frobenius & Harper, 2015). Similarly, analyses of YouTube comments have shown the complexity of participation frameworks of contributors compared to the viewing roles that films and television programs traditionally allowed. Participation ranges from adjacent turns, where a commenter can reply to an immediately prior comment, to nonadjacent turns, and video-turns, which involve comments on the triggering video clip (e.g., Bou-Franch, Lorenzo-Dus, & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2012). This

multiplicity of contributions, along with the anonymity of YouTube, has been found to foster linguistically signaled conflict and hostility (Bou-Franch, Lorenzo-Dus, & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2012). In addition, with their language choices, users may select specific audiences and exclude others, from the potentially large number of a post's addressees (see Tagg & Seargeant, 2016). In this way, they counteract social media constraints (e.g., *context collapse*; Boyd, 2011).¹

Studies such as the preceding provide evidence for the validity and usefulness of an interactional approach to the analysis of online data. A still underrepresented focus in this line of inquiry is into how relations are signaled not just with language choices (e.g., with code-switching, language play; Kytölä, 2012; Lee, 2016; Sage, 2016) but also via specific participation frameworks. Two reasons may be implicated in this gap of research. First, there is recognition that not all modes of analysis, originally developed for face-to-face conversations, can be automatically transferred to online data, and that 'digitally native' methods (i.e., specifically applying to online settings) will have to complement them, as will be seen in Section 2 (cf. Giles, Stommel, Paulus, Lester, & Reed, 2015, p. 45–51). Second, linking users' contributions to participation and social relations on social media poses specific challenges. New participation roles can be assumed by ordinary people; for example, they become (amateur) film- and video makers or citizen journalists offering their own footage to mainstream media. Similarly, communication originally confined to private spaces with few selected friends can be done in 'public' contexts with several unknown people. A prime challenge for the analysis of participation and social relations in such cases is to explore how interaction is achieved when multiple participants may tune in at different time zones, from different spaces (see articles in Georgakopoulou, 2015a), and with different degrees of familiarity with the original poster, from close friends to complete strangers. How do posters do sharing with such an audience in mind? How are relations of alignment and affiliation, which in face-to-face conversations often benefit from embodied and paralinguistic resources and from the adjacency rules of turn taking, signaled? How do users who may be 'in the know', having some sort of privileged access to the posting and/or poster, manage their participation and signal this knowledge? (See also Tagg & Seargeant, this volume.)

To address these questions, I have argued that the study of participation and social relations on social media platforms cannot be disconnected from (a) the type of discourse activity that users engage in and (b) the possibility for its circulation in different sites and its reach to different audiences (Georgakopoulou, 2013a, 2013b). The posting of an activity as a story or its becoming a story through subsequent sharing and engagement with it has important implications for interactional roles and relationships. Storytelling is a well-recognized primary mode for creating, however incipient, connections between events, feelings and characters 'plots' to make sense of self and the relations with others at the same time as (re)affirming

joint understandings (see De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012, Chapter 1). It is notable that alignment and affiliation have been closely linked with the telling of stories in Conversation Analysis. For instance, casting an interlocutor as ‘story recipient’ appears to increase the requirement on that hearer, for showing alignment with the type of activity and affiliating with the speaker’s stance on the reported experience (see Jefferson, 1978; Mandelbaum, 1987; Lerner, 1992). However, as I have argued in detail in previous work (Georgakopoulou, 2007), conversation-analytic studies of storytelling have largely privileged a specific kind of story, namely, personal experience past events accounts, which are routinely associated with strong floor-holding rights for the teller. The insights of such an approach for fragmented and distributed stories, often across media and audiences, are thus limited.

Small stories research, I claim, offers a set of methods and tools for capturing self-presentation and relations on social media (Georgakopoulou, 2015b), as I discuss in the following. Drawing on small stories analysis, in this chapter, I explore processes of alignment at the intersection of users’ interactional practices and social media affordances of participation. Based on the analysis of Facebook and YouTube data, I specifically document two systematic interactional patterns of doing alignment: *ritual appreciation* and *knowing participation*. Ritual appreciation involves positive assessments of the post and/or poster, expressed in highly conventionalized language coupled with emojis. These semiotic choices result in congruent sequences of atomized contributions, which despite not directly engaging with one another, are strikingly similar, visually and linguistically. Doing alignment through knowing participation² on the other hand creates specific alignment responses by bringing in and displaying knowledge from offline, preposting activities or any other knowledge specific to the post or poster.

My claim is that these two alignment practices cut across social media platforms but certain types of posting activities can be expected to provide heightened opportunities for alignment. I specifically single out two such activities, namely, posting selfies³ and spoof videos. Despite their many differences, not least on the basis of their occurrence in two different platforms, Facebook and YouTube (see Section 2), the two activities proved in my analysis to be similar in how users show alignment. In both cases, alignment is designed as a response to a post that is viewed and understood as an act of performance that invites scrutiny and appreciation of the self as character in time and place and/or of the post as an artful activity. This creates norms of affiliative engagement with the post. In addition, alignment in both selfies and spoof videos capitalizes on the story-making possibilities that a shared interactional history with the poster or any other prior knowledge affords. A contributor can thus produce specific alignment by elaborating on, amplifying and coauthoring the post.

Before I move to the analysis, I outline the main principles, heuristics of analysis and methods of small stories research.

Small Stories Research as a Narrative Interactional Paradigm for Social Media

Small stories research (Georgakopoulou, 2007), a paradigm for narrative and identities analysis, was developed to account, conceptually and analytically, for a range of narrative activities that had not been sufficiently studied in conversational contexts nor had their importance for the interlocutors' identity work been recognized. These involve stories that present fragmentation and open-endedness of tellings, exceeding the confines of a single speech event and resisting a neat categorization of beginning–middle–end. They are invariably heavily co-constructed, rendering the sole teller's story ownership problematic. They report mundane events from the teller's everyday life rather than big complications or disruptions.

In previous work (Georgakopoulou, 2007), I made the case for the significance of such stories in everyday life, as part of the fabric of social practices that ordinary people engage in. More recently, I have argued that small stories research prefigured the current situation when social media affordances have made stories with such features much more widely available and visible in public arenas of communication, through circulation (see Georgakopoulou, 2013a). Stories on social media are routinely mobile, multi-authored and multi-semiotic: widely distributed across media platforms, from online to offline environments and vice versa, and across different audiences. Small-stories research is well-placed to play a key role in the exploration of such stories on social media with its methods and modes of analysis, which are well suited to the analysis of fragmented and distributed narration (for examples of small-stories perspectives on new media, see Page, 2012; West, 2013; Dayter, 2015; Geogalou, 2015).

Small-stories methods of analysis call for a broad perspective on participation beyond a single event (see Section 3), whereby narrativity is an emergent property, a process of becoming a story through engagement. What is signaled as a story has organized implications for the ensuing participation modes and how relational stances on the post and/or poster, in this case, alignment, will be displayed. Such a flexible view of stories allows us to include in the scope of narrative analysis a host of activities that are central to subjectivity processes. For instance, the analysis can document traces of pre-posting activities, as these become part of a backstory and are invoked as the basis for alignment. Small-stories research requires open-ended, flexible methods of data selection and collection, as I show in the following.

Data and Methods

Life Writing of the Moment on Social Media

The data on which this chapter is based are part of a larger project titled "Life-Writing of the Moment: The Sharing and Updating Self on Social

Media".⁴ My aims have been to chart the *multi-semiotic forms* (linguistic/textual, visual, auditory) used in sharing everyday life (personal or public and political) as it happens on a range of social media (e.g., YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), in *emergent and remediating genres* (e.g., selfies, retweets, spoof videos, and remixes) and, where applicable, on the basis of specific (personal, political, social etc.) incidents and issues (e.g., the euro-zone crisis). With a small stories analysis of the above, I also document the kinds of subjectivities, including ethical and political selves, that life writing of the moment engenders and how such subjectivities are interactionally achieved.

My overall project is incident-based rather than single platform-focused: it tracks the phases and stages of a story's sharing, using popularity indexes and Google trends that show when the circulation of an incident peaks and on which platform. YouTube videos have emerged as a prime circulation phase for news stories. I have employed the concepts of *telling case* (Mitchell, 1984) and *critical moment* (Vaajala, Arminen, & De Rycker, 2013) to identify postings worthy of further investigation. Both concepts suggest that a micro-scale event or incident may provide a glimpse of meanings, ideas and values that are taken for granted or remain tacit under 'normal' circumstances. Tracking a critical moment or telling case is routinely done in my study with the help of adaptive ethnography (Hine, Kendall, & Boyd, 2009): this involves applying flexible routes to fieldwork over time to suit the mobile, ever-shifting landscape of social media. It also involves being open-minded about the use of 'remix' methods (see Markham, 2013), in the spirit of social media practices of remixing, namely, bringing together unlikely resources in imaginative and reflexive ways. For instance, the researcher's own immersion and participation in social media culture, involving processes of catching up, sharing and real-time tracking, are recognized as a major part of the development of ethnographic understanding. In addition, I have adapted *digitally native* methods (i.e., specifically applying to online settings) for fieldwork, for instance, observing systematically, as a 'lurking' participant in a specific site, activities and postings, so as to identify key participants. Some of these methods involve *auto-phenomenology*, that is, the researcher's reflexivity about his or her own position, stakes, and interests in the field of social media engagements. I have thus often examined my position as a 'digital tourist', even using it strategically in off-the-record chats with teenage participants and their use of Facebook. I have also drawn on observations and developed analytical lines as a result, on the basis of my identity as mother to a media-saturated teenage daughter.

Facebook Data: A Study of Selfies

In tune with the above methods of data collection, this chapter is based on two data sets. The first involves Facebook postings by a group of teenagers selected from amongst my daughter's friends (16–18 years old), as part of a

study of selfies (Georgakopoulou, 2016a). This previous study of Facebook status updates by users in their 30s had led me to identify the increasing importance and frequency of visual posts, in particular selfies from 2013 onwards. I decided to study this emergent salient practice, that is, selfie posting, by collecting data from female teenagers, as primary users. My Facebook 'friendship' with approximately 40 teenagers from my daughter's wide circle of friends helped me with initial orientations and subsequent intensive observations over a period of 18 months, which were akin to what Facebook (teenage) users often describe as 'stalking' somebody. On the basis of these observations, I selected, in March 2015, the top five selfie-posters for further scrutiny of selfie postings. It is interesting to note that none of the selected users has any privacy settings: their walls are accessible to non-friends too. I nonetheless sought consent to study their selfie postings from March 2014 to March 2015, on the understanding that I would follow principles of heavy disguise (Ortega & Zyzik, 2008) in any uses of comments for illustration and that there would be no reproduction of any visual material. I also asked the selected users to contact any friends who had commented on the selfies and seek their consent on my behalf, this time, on the understanding that no comments would be used for illustration from any commenters who had not consented or not been informed and that, unless absolutely key to my analysis, (parts) of the content and any identifying information would be altered by me, for ensuring heavy disguise.

In parallel with the analysis of the selfies, I embarked on off-the-record chats with a few of the teenagers from my Facebook list of friends. In these chats, following Markham's (2013) remix methods, I positioned myself as a 'digital non-native' when it comes to selfies, seeking clarification on patterns that I had observed and asking questions along the lines of '[W]hy do you guys do X? What does it mean? Which selfie should I look at?' and so on. I was also interested in things going wrong, moments of gaps between what is expected and what gets done and bad experiences from posting selfies, among others. The results of the analysis of the very few cases when selfies were queried and policed are beyond the scope of this chapter.

Finally, I involved my key informants in discussions about a possible approach to selfies, asking them to assist me in formulating some kind of a typology of selfies that captured their main visual arrangements in combination with what they commonly aimed to achieve. Perhaps unsurprisingly, their own descriptive language drew on existing lay characterizations of selfies: mirror selfies, beach selfies and so on. They did, however, make a clear distinction between 'solo' selfies, which I ended up characterizing as 'me selfies', and group selfies ('groupies'). They also attached great significance to whether a selfie was going to be a profile picture or not. The extra labor that goes into profile pictures has informed my analysis, as I show in the following. The third type of selfies that I felt I needed to add was that of significant other selfies (see Section 3.3.1). This addition allowed me to tap into a common communicative act that I had observed as being associated

with selfies, that of announcing or celebrating close relations with one person (e.g., best friend, mother, sibling) or indeed, a pet. This appeared to be distinctly different to group selfies (normally of 4–5 people).

The five users who I ended up choosing to analyze their selfies comprised three young women and two young men: having the two men in the list helped with the exploration of gendered patterns in terms of engagement with selfies. These are beyond the scope of this chapter and the analysis that follows is based only on the data from the three female posters. Table 7.1 provides information about the total number of selfies in each case, singling out ‘me’ selfies that were posted as profile pictures and the average number of Likes and comments that such selfies attracted. In terms of other information about the chosen users that is notable, as there were around 30 nationalities involved in the list of observed users and their friends, which hardly mapped with the people’s actual locations, I decided to note where users were located. Of the list of chosen individuals, Kate is London based with American parents. Maria is half-English, half-Greek and is London based. Saachi has got Indian parents, and she, too, is based in London. Petros is half Greek, half Romanian and is based in Greece. Aris is a Greece-based Greek. It is also notable that four languages are used systematically in the analyzed data, in the following order: English, Greek, Spanish and French, perhaps reflecting the languages that my daughter and I have knowledge of. I did not exclude any of these languages from my analysis of comments. In sum, this chapter is based on the close analysis of 189 selfies from three female selfie-posters (aged 16–17) and of a total of 1,713 comments that these selfies received (see Table 3).

YouTube Data: News Stories and Politicians from Greece

The second data set (from YouTube) is part of my study of the social media circulation of critical moments in post-2010 crisis-stricken Greece. The first

Table 7.1 Data set of selfies posted on Facebook by 5 top selfie posters

<i>Kate</i> (882 Friends)	<i>Maria</i> (1316 Friends)	<i>Saachi</i> (790 Friends)	<i>Petros</i> (1814 Friends)	<i>Aris</i> (1416 Friends)
N of Selfies: 44	58	87	39	27
Me selfies: 28	3	7	5	3
Selfies as profile pictures: 13	3	2	8	2
Average no of comments per selfie: 25	53	29	11	15
Average no of Likes per selfie: 161	388	264	135	153

incident that I focused on happened in the run up to the 2012 election in Greece, which was viewed at the time as crucial for the future of the Greek bailout and of the European Union. On a breakfast news show of live TV (June 7, 2012), a male member of parliament (MP) candidate (Ilias Kasidiaris) from the then rising far-right party Golden Dawn assaulted two female left-wing MPs (Rena Dourou and Liana Kanelli): he threw a glass of water at Dourou and slapped and punched Kanelli. The incident quickly went viral with numerous uploads of the clip of the assault on YouTube by ordinary people, which received varying numbers of viewers, from a few thousand viewers to a few hundred thousand. Of this large number of YouTube videos, I chose to single out for close qualitative and quantitative analysis the 50 most viewed videos. I have reported the results of this analysis elsewhere: in particular, I have shown how, the ways in which the context of the crisis was made sense of, depended on whether a *narrative stance* was taken or not, in the circulation of the incident and comments on it (Georgakopoulou, 2013b, 2014).

A subsequent transposition of the incident involved the production of spoof/fake videos, mash-ups and remixes⁵ and their uploading on YouTube; these are a recognizable genre of Web 2.0 (DiNucci, 1999; Seargeant & Tagg, 2014) production around popular stories. I closely analyzed such nine videos produced in the first month after the incident and all comments for each video until April 2015, amounting to 1,500 comments. I have reported elsewhere how these creative and largely satirical engagements with the original incident (cf. Häkkinen & Leppänen, 2014) ultimately involved *rescripting* the place of the incident that, in turn, effected changes in the plot and the evaluative stances on the original incident (Georgakopoulou, 2015c).

In this chapter, I report the results of the analysis of the spoof videos comments, in relation to how alignment is displayed. I also report results based on the analysis of comments on key spoof videos created as part of the prolific and intense mediatization of the former Greek minister of Finance (January–June 2015), Yanis Varoufakis, who has since achieved celebrity status. The first such memetic video, Varoufakis Thug Life, with a description of 'Varoufakis says NO to the Troika', was published on January 30, 2015, days after Varoufakis had been appointed as minister. I have analyzed all 190 comments posted until December 2015, in response to the video. The other video, 'V for Varoufakis',⁶ was produced by controversial German comedian and TV personality Jan Böhmermann for Neo Magazin Royale, a late-night talk show presented by him. The video was uploaded on February 25, 2015, and became very popular very quickly: it currently (last checked May 15, 2016) boasts 3,239,232 views and 5,042 comments. The video was posted in English, and the comments have mainly been in English. Comments in German and Greek have also been posted and not queried while the few comments in other languages, in particular French and Spanish, have been queried in terms of language choice. For a breakdown of the 3,000 comments posted until May 2015 that I analyzed, see Table 7.2. In the first instance, I coded the language of the comments and their sequential

Table 7.2 Sequential placement and language choice in the comments on ‘V for Varoufakis’

	<i>1st turns</i>	<i>Video turns</i>	<i>Replies</i>
English	43	5	2820
German	3	8	86
Greek	7	1	21
Spanish & French	2	1	2

placement as first turns, as replies to comments and as ‘video turns’ (see Bou-Franch & Garcés-Conejos Blitvich, 2014), that is, comments that specifically refer to the video production/producer and content as opposed to making general comments about, for example, the Greek crisis or the Eurozone. To sum up, my analysis in this chapter of YouTube comments on spoof videos in terms of displaying alignment is based on a total of 11 spoof videos and 4,690 comments.

Why Facebook and/Versus YouTube?

As I suggested earlier, the principle of my research is that there is merit in identifying how participation and relational processes vary across media platforms: I am interested in how different digital environments may afford differentiated degrees and types of disclosure of personal everyday life, as well as engagement with sociopolitical incidents that capture the social media publics’ imagination. I have thus far compared (private) Facebook and YouTube for story-sharing practices and engagement with them. In particular, I have shown how Facebook statuses and news feeds are conducive to signaling a story (*narrative stancetaking*; see Section 3.1) while YouTube video-sharing and editing facilities afford opportunities for creative reworkings with already shared stories (*rescripting*; see Section 3.1).

In terms of participation, Facebook is more oriented to one’s offline network and although it is possible to have complete strangers as ‘friends’, it would be unusual for friends’ lists not to be predominantly populated by people known to the user offline. Facebook has been found to be linked with and reaffirm offline relationships (boyd, 2014). This constrains the possibility for complete reinvention and anonymity compared to YouTube, although context collapse still applies to the many different degrees of closeness that a user may have with their ‘friends’. On the other hand, YouTube is much more public, or at least ‘semipublic’, in that most users have never met face-to-face, there are no registration requirements for them to view videos and, even though they need to register and have a password so as to post comments or videos, their ‘identities’ can still be demographically nonverifiable.

In light of the preceding differences, my expectation was that comparing how relationships, including displays of alignment, are managed on Facebook and YouTube, would yield rich insights into how context collapse may be harnessed to create common ground with (more or less close) friends as opposed to complete strangers. Despite this expectation, two practices of displaying alignment, ritual appreciation and knowing participation, proved to be salient on both Facebook and YouTube data: in the latter, it was mainly in the spoof videos that the practices were resonant. Despite the preceding and other differences in the two platforms and the production of posting selfies and spoofs, as I show in the following, they are brought together by a high degree of conventionalization in how users comment on such postings, especially if they wish to extend the economy of Like with their comments so as to express alignment with the post/poster.

Coding Alignment in Comments

In my engagement with the data, I have used the principle of, what I see as, 'zooming in': this involves further checking the data and adding codes or new analytical lines of investigation, based on previous results, real-time observations and/or changes in practices. In the case of the present exploration of alignment, based on previous analyses of narrative staccato elements and rescripting, I zoomed in and added more coding, both to the sampled YouTube comments and to the Facebook comments on selfie postings, so as to check the frequency of positive assessment and knowing participation patterns, that had emerged as salient as responses to posts. In particular, I coded explicit and implied references to knowledge of specific events, activities and/or characters as well as any information about the provenance of this knowledge (e.g., shared participation in an activity offline). I also coded references to and reaction to the state of non-knowing. In all these cases, I took into account the form that such references took and if and how they were linked with Facebook and YouTube facilities such as tagging participants, uploading videos and photographs, producing comments that related to the initial post or replying to another comments and so on (see Section 3.1). Finally, in the Facebook selfie data, I conducted more off-the-record chats with some of the focal participants to check for patterns of response and uptake to comments after the posting of a selfie. These chats confirmed my finding about a preference for reciprocation to comments on the part of the selfie posters. It also revealed that there are often 'hidden' responses. For instance, participants who did not thank friends after a positive comment or did not reciprocate overtly, claimed that they still reciprocated in other ways, for instance, by going back and liking a picture or post that a friend who had commented positively about their selfie had posted.

Analysis

Doing Alignment as a Response to a Performative Post

As already suggested, selfies and spoof videos provide high-stakes opportunities for alignment, as, in both cases, the posting is proposed as a performance act that raises the task of positive appraisal by the audience as an appropriate response. According to Bauman's (1986) influential definition of performance, a speaker assumes the responsibility to display communicative artistry and skill so as to be appraised and scrutinized by an audience. In this way, every performance calls forth special attention to and heightened awareness to the act of expression, in this case, 'the language, visual and other choices in the posting, and it sets up and an 'interpretative frame within which the messages being communicated are to be understood' (p. 168). Performance is thus intimately linked with the deployment of conventionalized resources that come to be recognized as part of it.

In the case of the data at hand, displaying a selfie or a picture comes with a conventionalized visual prominence of an edited self, who is placed at front stage, the window dressing of Facebook, namely, as a profile picture or cover picture. These pictures change less frequently than others, which are uploaded sometimes almost on a daily basis. In my data, profile selfies tend to change only once every 5 to 6 weeks, even for the most popular selfie takers. There is also a clear 'labor' (Marwick, 2013) that goes into uploading this type of photograph, which can be easily seen as part of a project of positive presentation of self and self-branding: profile pictures become part of Facebook's timeline too, so they are instrumental in proposing a self-identity over time. Spoof videos are similarly marked as performances, and they, too, require creative labor: rather than being simple uploads or circulations, they require video-editing techniques, overlaying of pictures and sounds, reenactments of incidents, and so on.

This performative, edited display calls for and is indeed taken up by users as shared appreciation and enjoyment. This engagement is what, in my view, qualifies aligned responses to selfies and spoofs as 'ritual', in Collins' (2004, p. 7) terms: "a mechanism of mutually focused emotion and attention producing a momentarily shared reality, which thereby generates solidarity and symbols of group membership".

Processes of shared enjoyment and pleasure have been documented as being of paramount significance in new media engagements, since the inception of computer-mediated communication (Danet, 1997), rendering many of its instances as occasions for playfulness and creative transgression: the latter, Deumert claims (2014), should be viewed as Barthes's *jouissance*, which still carries the elements of pleasure and sociability but goes one step further to include fun through subversiveness (evident in the satire of spoof videos). The important aspect of such pleasure-based interactions

is that they suspend, however temporarily, normal social order and routine. This is, I argue, at the heart of alignment by means of ritual appreciation: by engaging with an initial post, be it a photograph of a friend, or a satirical video, as partaking in an act of performance, commenters suspend ordinariness and/or reality. This suspension tends to be projected by the initial post. To display yourself as a 16-year-old young woman 'in view' of potentially hundreds of people certainly evokes occasions of catwalk and modeling and tallies with a micro-celebrity presentation of self, a set of practices that position the audience as a fan base (Senft, 2013).⁷ At the same time, to view, scrutinize and 'admire' your 'friend', often a close friend offline, as a micro celebrity on display, requires joining in (potentially many) others in a frame of spectatorship that is not part of your ordinary relationship with your friend. While the production processes of such a performative display are different in spoof videos, it is still the case that commenters are positioned as appraisers of an artful performance and to do so, they partly need to engage with a video that is ostensibly a send-up, as if it were 'real'. (This point will become clearer in the examples in Section 3.4.1.)

Closely related to the preceding performative aspects, the two activities illustrate and are shaped by the main story-sharing practices that I have documented (Georgakopoulou, 2013a, 2013b, 2015c). The first is *narrative stancetaking*, which positions the viewers/audience as story recipients of the post and so projects some sort of a narrative participation as the appropriate one. The second is *rescripting*, which involves visually and verbally manipulating an already circulated story so as to create alternative stories as satirical takes on it. Rescripting, I have argued, is one of the hallmarks of spoof videos. In both cases of selfie and spoof-video postings, as will be shown, narrative possibilities are important in the ways in which the post is produced and is engaged with. As I show, (more or less) implied associations among events, characters, emotive states and reactions in initial posts create conditions of story reciprocity, more specifically, what I call *positive story reciprocity*. This places certain members of the audience in a position to align with the stance in the original posting and to elaborate on, amplify and co-author it, on the basis of (shared) knowledge. Put differently, part of the imagined and intended audience in such cases is users-connoisseurs in the domain of spoofs who may specifically seek them out and subsequently share them.

Alignment Through Ritual Appreciation

'You Are Gorgeous': Selfies and Affiliation with the Poster

Elsewhere, I have proposed the following typology of selfies on Facebook based on their placement, visual arrangements, commonly associated

communicative purposes and ensuing engagement with them (Georgakopoulou, 2016a):

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| ❑ 'Me' selfies: display self | Profile/Album ⁸ |
| ❑ Significant other selfies: signal relationships | Cover/Album |
| ❑ Group selfies: capture the moment | Wall/Album |

In each of these types, the self is presented in specific visual perspective patterns. 'Me selfies' tend to be retouched, designed and edited portraits. Particularly as profile pictures, they present a left placement which, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), has the effect of proposing the 'photographed self' (the character) as a given (as opposed to new information). This works well with the overarching Facebook practice of constructing a more or less recognizable identity over time; profile pictures are a major part of that. 'Significant other selfies', on the other hand, normally present visual and verbal 'tie-signs' (Goffman, 1971, p. 226ff.), which inform and contain evidence about a relationship, its name, stage and terms. For instance, two best friends or partners may mirror one another as they are placed next to one another by doing a 'duck face' or sticking their tongue out. The caption may also provide 'tie-signs', for example, *my bae, me and my gorgeous girl, besties*, commonly followed by emojis, in particular, heart signs. Finally, in group selfies, fun moments and scenes are captured (e.g., eating or drinking out with friends), usually as panorama. The selfie taker in these cases, who tends to be the selfie poster too, clearly emerges as the main stage director or narrator of the moment, as what is captured and how is up to them.

As Table 7.3 shows, alignment by ritual appreciation emerges as the overwhelmingly preferred response in the case of 'me' selfies, while in significant other and group selfies, the preference seems to be for alignment by knowing participation. As already suggested, alignment

Table 7.3 Ritual appreciation and knowing participation in Kate, Maria and Saachi's selfies

	Sequences of ritual appreciation	Knowing participation instances
'Me' selfies N = 40 Comments = 980	100% (OF SELFIES)	30% (298 COMMENTS)
Significant other selfies N = 89 Comments = 626	63%	78% (493)
Group selfies N = 60 Comments = 107	31%	92% (99)

has often been documented as based on creating congruent contributions which mirror one another. In this case, my contention is that the congruence-creation goes one step further, enabled by the visual and spatial architecture of commenting facilities on media platforms and the diachronicity of contributions they allow for. This results in a pattern of several atomized contributions by commenters, which tend to be concentrated in a specific timeframe (close after the posting) but diachronic contributions, separated in time, are also possible. This happens, however, when the initial post for some reason becomes topical again. For instance, it could be that a newly added friend likes 'this' picture, and this brings it back to the consciousness of other friends, via notifications.

In addition, although the commenters as a rule do not engage with one another's comments, since their contributions look highly similar and are often format tied (Goodwin, 2007), it can be assumed that a contributor has read at least some comments before posting theirs. The conventionalization of expression, particularly regarding positive evaluative language, is readily detectable in such cases, as will be seen in Example 1. Besides the recurrence of specific evaluative lexis, there is a systematic coupling of language with emojis, in particular hearts. Zappavigna (2012), in her study of Twitter, documents certain stable pairings (i.e., 'coupling patterns') between interpersonal and ideational meanings, for instance of a positive attitude with the topic in a hashtag (a keyword or a tag word preceded by the sign #, helping social networks to automatically classify and social media users to find, content under particular topics). Her claim is that such coupled relations, which hold in a specific point of time and for specific activities, are conducive to the creation of communities on Twitter, based on shared values. In the case of the coupling of evaluative language with emojis in my data, the conventionalization of this relationship can be viewed as affording a sense of collectivity, as part of the act of displaying alignment: numerous highly similar positive appreciations of an initial post serve as the visual equivalent of lots of people clapping and cheering at the same time. This collective response is arguably less about shared values and more about many people acting together as spectators and as 'fans', responding appropriately to an act of performance, as suggested earlier.⁹ We can see how shared appreciation of the initial post and/or poster is expressed in similar, formulaic terms across contributions¹⁰ in the following example. This is a selection of comments on a selfie posted by Maria as a profile picture. Selfies posted as profile pictures by the selected participants commonly receive hundreds of Likes, as Table 7.1 shows, and quite a few comments. 35 comments were posted in this case. In the following, I have selected the 13 comments that were posted within a timeframe of two hours after the selfie was uploaded.

Example 1**435 Likes**

Anna Mariiii ☐♥☐♥☐☺

Like · Reply · December 29, 2015 at 6:37pm

Maria my luv!! <333

Like · Reply · 1 · December 29, 2015 at 6.41 pm

Maxine My gorgeous gyal ☐♥☐♥☐☺☺

Like · Reply · December 29, 2015 at 6:48pm

Maria You too!!!!

Like · Reply · December 29, 2015 at 6:49pm

Laura so buff!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Like · Reply · 1 · December 29, 2015 at 6:51pm

Maria Lyyyy

Like · Reply · December 29, 2015 at 6.55 pm

Sara Beautiful ☐♥☐☺♥☺

Like · Reply · December 29, 2015 at 6:56pm

Maria Miss u! X

Like · Reply · December 29, 2015 at 6:57pm

Hannah Woah so much beauty☐♥☐♥☐♥☐♥☐

Like · Reply · December 29, 2015 at 6:59pm

Maria thaaank u babe xxx

Like · Reply · December 29, 2015 at 7:05pm

Beth Sooooo hot

Like · Reply · December 29, 2015 at 7:19pm

Maria beth baby ♥☺

Ellen chicaaaa!!

Like · Reply · December 29, 2015 at 7:22pm

Leah Stunning <333

Like · Reply · December 29, 2015 at 7.31pm

Lizzy whaat you're soooo hot

Like · Reply · December 29, 2015 at 7.43pm

Maria You are xxx

Like · Reply · December 29, 2015 at 7.45pm

Kate Beyond beaut Maria!!

Like · Reply · December 29, 2015 at 8.13pm

Maria Like you can talk miss u : ((see me soon bb xxxxxxxx

Like · Reply · December 29, 2015 at 8.18pm

Selena Fit af

Like · Reply · December 29, 2015 at 8.24pm

Maria Aw thanku <33

We can see in the preceding example the use and recurrence of a closed set of evaluative lexical choices (e.g., *beautiful/beauty/beaut, gorgeous, hot*) that relate to physical appearance. These are coupled with emojis, mostly heart symbols and heart-shaped faces. This coupling of language with other semiotic modes, for example, punctuation (exclamation marks), typography (capitalization, repetition of vowels that simulate elongation in speaking, e.g., *sooooo*) has the effect of amplification and upscaling (upgrading) of the meaning. This upscaling was reported by Zappavigna (2012) too, in her study of the expression of appraisal (e.g., appreciation, evaluation) on Twitter. The effect of the addition of these contributions in a short space of time is, as already suggested, visual and linguistic congruence, which is spatially clustered and aggregated.

The other notable conventionalized choice in the data is the preference for—or even the norm of—reciprocity on the part of the poster that these responses create. We can see in earlier examples how Maria routinely reciprocates to the comments by thanking (*thanks so much babe*), paying back a compliment (e.g., *you can talk*) and/or replying with affective terms of address (*my lu*). These replies too are concentrated in a short space of time and there seems to be a preference for a minimal time lag (2–3 minutes) between a comment and a reply from the poster. My own observations and off-the-record chats suggest that after posting a selfie, posters are online for the first couple of hours at least, waiting for the comments and likes, and responding to the former. Maria's responses also present a coupling of affective language with emojis, and they, too, are very similar to one another, even though they are tied to a specific comment, thus forming dyadic exchanges between poster and commenter.

As already suggested, displaying alignment with the action of a prior turn often goes hand in hand with displaying affiliation with the speaker and their stance: put differently, affiliation presupposes some kind of alignment and it is rare that an aligned response will actually be disaffiliative in relation to the previous speaker. In the data at hand, alignment and affiliation are inextricably linked: as shown earlier, a positive assessment of the selfie posting as a prior communicative act is overwhelmingly done by means of positively assessing the photographed 'self', which, in turn, includes the poster.

"This Is Epic": Affiliation with the Post (and Poster) in Spoof Videos

Alignment by ritual appreciation in comments on spoof videos is based on displaying recognition of the performative aspects of spoof videos, in particular the allusive and creative aspects of a video's satirical performance. In this case, too, alignment and affiliation are closely linked: recognition of the satire is almost unexceptionally paired with appreciation and endorsement of it, on the one hand, and/or affiliation with the 'producer', on the other. In addition, the comments are, in this case too, linguistically similar,

9) Petros

GAMAEIIII
AWESOME!!!!

Additional choices for alignment by ritual appreciation capitalize on the possibilities offered by spoof videos for commenters to appreciate the production or the performance of the video but also to engage with the story of the video, often by making links with the original incident (see Section 3.4.1). In the latter case, commenters specifically refer to scenes (e.g. Examples 3 and 5, which refer to 0.16 and 0.15), address the characters directly, or echo words or catchphrases that were lifted from the original incident and recycled in the creative reworkings of it (see Häkkinen & Lepänen, 2014).¹¹ A comparable focus on the current 'fake' characters is seen in the following examples from 'Kasidiaris Kanelli slap beach':

10) lastmohican

Poly vyzares h kyria Dourou

Mrs Dourou has got great tits ((This is a reference to the woman in bikini who 'plays' the politician Dourou))

11) mystik777

*ahahah vlepete tin dourou meta to nero pou efage *splouts splouts**

Haha did you see dourou after the water thrown at her *splish splash*

Both in this case and the case of displaying alignment through knowing participation (see the following discussion), the performative aspects of the video take center stage and the oppositional comments frequently noted on YouTube (e.g., Lange, 2014) do not apply. This is evident in the management of participation frameworks too: alignment with a video is almost always done in video turns and atomized contributions; commenters do not tend to enter a dialogue with each other.

Alignment Through Knowing Participation

Bringing in the Backstory in Comments on Selfies

I have argued elsewhere that Facebook posts present systematicity in terms of the types of responses or action they project and how these are taken up by commenters (Georgakopoulou, 2013a). In particular, posts that report disruptive events in the poster's life are more likely to receive comments from their friends as opposed to a simple Like. ('Like' only is the case for routine everyday events). Reporting disruptions is also more likely to lead to an additional post from the poster where he or she thanks commenters for their wishes and interest and offers updates on the situation. In all these cases, I have argued, close friends with whom the initial poster has had

frequent interactions offline tend to bring in that offline knowledge when participating in posts with comments (Georgakopoulou, 2016b).

Knowing participation can take many forms and it can serve many functions, yet what is notable for our discussion is how it becomes the main type of contribution for displaying alignment, in particular *specific alignment*. This allows a more significant, productive participation, which elaborates on and coauthors the original message. Knowing participation is often done in the case of significant other' selfies and 'group selfies' (Table 7.3). These seem to serve different purposes for different Facebook 'friends': they may be an announcement for nonknowing recipients and an opportunity for display of alignment through offline selfie-taking and other knowledge for knowing friends:

12) Elena: [next to selfie of her and her best friend Anna, which is not reproduced here].

Waaaay up I feel blessed. With Hannah Bates.

Hannah: Awh luv u. xx

May 7 at 9 pm Like 2

Elena: Luv u too ❤️, We're gonna have so many more great times esp. now that we've got Mike 😊

May 7 at 10.47 pm Like 3

Hannah: Ha ha very tru ❤️❤️ let's hope we don't run into bryan again tho . . .

May 7 at 10.58pm

The private chat which develops between the two friends above elaborates on the caption of their selfie, a line from a song in fact ('Way up I feel blessed'), in ways which allude to their closeness. In particular, with the reference to 'Mike' and 'Brian', a backstory of shared interactional history is referred to cryptically. This is an example of specific alignment that signals understanding of the stance on the caption of the selfie and ability to amplify it.

We can see another example of specific alignment through knowing participation, as well as the juxtaposition of contributions from knowing participant Kate versus nonknowing participant Megan, in the comments to another 'significant other selfie' (of the female selfie poster with a young man). The selfie suggests a developing romance, as it is accompanied by hearts.

This is seen in Helena's response to Kate's comment that makes a typically cryptic reference to a backstory of Kate and Helena having discussed this relationship and Helena 'having taken her advice on board'. The backstory is normally part of the events surrounding a selfie and any allusions to it arguably elaborate on the selfie as part of an ongoing story and thus propose how it should be understood. Alignment through knowing



Image 7.1 Example 1.

Knowing friends such as Kate L. propose a positive assessment of the selfie,¹² which is based on offline or any other insider's knowledge in relation to the selfie posted. Such knowing allusive references are the main way in which specific alignment is provided and in particular affiliation of the type that we find documented in 'with' type of relationships. Mandelbaum (1987), for instance, has shown how couples signal a with-relationship interactionally, through collaboratively undertaken actions when telling a story, ranging from collaborative completions to one monitoring the other's storytelling for accuracy. In the data at hand, this is done in different ways, shaped by media affordances. In particular, narrative stancetaking in the original post or some other selection of knowing participants (e.g., tagging in a selfie) is 'read' by recipients as an invitation and even a requirement for participation that displays knowing status. This participation separates friends in the know from other friends, however aligned the latter may be with the post or poster.

participation may thus narrow down the interpretative options around a selfie for nonknowing recipients. Overall, the task of showing knowledge takes the following forms: commenters can expand on the narrative stancetaking of the initial post by constituting it as a story or providing more of the story; they can also refer more or less allusively to preposting shared activities ('the backstory').

Knowing participation emerges in the data as part of a status-acquiring and validating position, compatible with the well-attested phenomenon, in social relations online, of 'FOMO' (fear of missing out; see Marwick, 2013). This is evident in the interactional arrangements that have to do with non-knowing recipients: not knowing is often expressed as missing out and as explicitly asking for the backstory. It is also notable that such requests lead to some kind of (more) storying in relation to the selfie from the poster. This can be seen in the preceding example with Megan's comment, which seeks to find out 'what she has missed'. A narrative explanation from the selfie poster begins in the publicly available comments (*went out for bubble tea with a mate*), but the fuller story, we can speculate, is provided in

the private chat area to which the friends claim they will switch. (I did not have access to private messages). Overall then, even when they wish to align with a post, nonknowing participants can only do so in general rather than specific ways.

Recognition and Familiarity in Comments on Spoof Videos

Despite YouTube being a public forum, and the unlikeliness of shared offline interactional history between commenters, alignment is still created using knowing participation. In the case of spoof videos, knowing participation is bound up with displaying recognition of the allusive and creative aspects of a video's satirical performance.¹³ In particular, there are several comments in which commenters respond as recipients and appreciative viewers of *this* video but with an awareness of the original video that is satirized. Examples of such knowing contributions included the commenters making specific comparisons between the spoof and the original video. We can see this in contributions that specifically refer to the current video as a 'spoof' (Example 14) or in relation to the 'original' (Example 15). Both examples are from comments on the 'kasidiaris kanelli slap beach':

14) xaris22

*sto 0:09 ton blepete ton tipo pou erxete na boh8a? alla meta katalabe
oti kanoun plakes . . . xaxaxaxa kalo. eiste wraioi*

in 0.09 can you see the guy who is coming to help? But then he realized that they are just messing about . . . lol it's great, you are awesome

15) niko

*o gematoulis typos einai ligo flwros sthn arxh alla meta kati fernei apo
ton kasidiari*

the chubby guy is a bit wet at the beginning but afterwards he looked a bit like Kasidiaris

Another type of knowing contribution involved localizing and situating the video production into the respondents' own lives and experiences:

16) oli1599

*Xaxaxa paralia gorgona sta xania
Hahaha Gorgona beach in Chania ((Crete))*

17) Giorgio

*Sth gorgona to kanate sthn agia marina? Ekei meno
Did you make this in Agia Marina? That's where I live*

Contributions such as the above were read by other commenters as invitations for further display of knowledge regarding the beach that served as the location of the video. In these cases, the alignment with the posted video became more specific than positive aesthetic assessments, as it displayed familiarity and involvement with the actual circumstances of the video production. Alignment by means of knowing participation worked in comparable ways on Facebook, as was seen earlier. In this case, however, it was also conducive to adding context to 'anonymous' and 'de-individualized' contributors who, by bringing in knowledge from offline places, discovered and reaffirmed common ground with one another.

Conclusion

Drawing on small stories analysis (Georgakopoulou, 2007, 2013b, 2015b), this chapter has aimed at identifying specific interactional patterns on Facebook and on YouTube that display alignment with a post and/or the poster. My starting point was that default features of both platforms, in particular, the economy of Like, are directional to alignment displays but the specific ways in which such displays are done need to be discovered empirically. The analysis of the intersection of social media's affordances and actual users' practices surfaced two distinct, systematically organized interactional patterns: displaying alignment through ritual appreciation and through knowing participation. I showed how in both cases, narrative arrangements are important for explaining the patterns: an initial post is being shared as a performance and/or responded to as a story. In particular, alignment through ritual appreciation is premised on the initial post positioning commenters as viewers and spectators through some display of positive self-presentation or artistic production. There is a tendency for the most viewed/viewable and edited posts, in our case selfies posted as Facebook profile pictures, to focus projected alignment on the 'character', the performance of self held up for scrutiny. In knowing participation, on the other hand, audiences seem to respond on the basis of displaying knowledge of this and the original story.

The semiotic makeup of both is notable for the ways in which alignment is shaped by social affordances. The loss of embodied and paralinguistic signals, on one hand, and on the other, the possibilities for multiparty and diachronic contributions allow for clustered alignments: the fact that a post remains open affords the aggregation of linguistically and visually congruent comments. I also found that there is much condensation and conventionalization of semiotic choices into one single contribution, one that presents a systematic coupling of recurrent evaluative language with emojis. Such co-occurrence points to a preference for amplification of affective and evaluative processes and in turn to an enregisterment, processes where distinct forms of language become socially recognized as indexical of speaker attributes by other language users (Agha, 2005; see also Squires, 2010), of

alignment responses and participation, which differ significantly from the range of alignment actions reported in conversational contexts. Collaborative action in conversation has been found to be embodied and to benefit from the turn-by-turn unfolding of a conversation (e.g., Goodwin, 2007). In this case, it is in the interplay between semiotic resources and the visual and spatial media platform arrangements that alignment is managed, across multiple participants and atomized contributions.

What are the implications of these patterned types of alignment for how different media platforms afford social relations? In the case of Facebook, projecting and displaying knowing participation that exploits shared offline participation in events is in tune with the finding from other studies that Facebook tends to build on preexisting relationships (boyd, 2011; Georgakopoulou, this volume) and to therefore link online with offline experiences. At the same time, alignment through knowing participation allows us to fine-tune participation described with principles of relationality, for instance, common bond versus common identity communities (Schwämmlein & Wodzicki, 2012), proposed so as to differentiate amongst different social networking sites,¹⁴ ‘ambient intimacy’ (Reichelt, 2007) and ‘strange familiarity’ (Senft, 2013). As I suggested in the introduction to this chapter, such concepts presuppose the existence of some form of online community, which is not always straightforward to postulate (Tagg & Sergeant, 2016). They also tend to be divorced from empirical studies. This study, instead, has provided empirical grounding for how alignment-based relations are managed as well as setting norms and expectations about what gets done where and how. The close relation between performance, either post or poster-based and alignment through ritual appreciation, as attested to here, suggests the need for further studies of the conventionalization of participation modes which validate self-branding activities. At the same time, it also points to a close link between alignment and affiliation that merits further investigation. As suggested, conversation-analytical studies have shown how alignment, a way of signaling that the action performed by the previous speaker contribution has been understood, routinely leads to affiliation with the speaker’s stance as well. In this case, the two seem to be connected from the outset. By aligning with a post or the poster, affiliation is shown and vice versa: the main way to show affiliation is by aligning with the performative aspects of the post.

Alignment is at the heart of intersubjective understandings and exploring further forms and practices of alignment-based participation on social media, by employing micro-analytical modes, as earlier, can safeguard against normative conceptualizations of social media arenas either as relationality rich or as confrontational and hostile. To be specific, the present findings about knowing participation show a side to communication on YouTube that remains underrepresented, in the context of studies that have documented YouTube videos as fostering rants and conflicts (e.g., Lange, 2014). In addition, the distinct alignment responses in different types of

selfies bring to the fore their interactional and contextual aspects, thus calling into question the abounding pathologizing descriptions of selfies in the media, as narcissistic self-presentations.

Overall, the findings of this study advance our understanding of how participants manage social relations of (dis)identification in the interplay between media affordances, actual communication choices and participation frameworks. Alignment, especially knowing participation, can be an integral part of this interplay, in particular of how participants position themselves but also relate with others, within prescribed parameters of participation roles, such as 'friend' and 'follower'. This study has provided insights into differentiated degrees and types of participation, above and beyond these generalized facilities. Further exploration of semiotic choices and participation frameworks for displaying and managing alignment is key to uncovering how relationships of closeness and shared assumptions are established and (re)affirmed in social media communication.

Notes

- 1 Context collapse refers to the infinite audience possible online as opposed to more limited numbers of people a person normally interacts with face-to-face. In situations of a well-defined, limited group, speakers can 'size up' the situation and adjust their presentation of self. In a situation of context collapse, however, which Wesch (2008) compares to a 'building collapse', it becomes much more difficult to gauge what is appropriate and for whom.
- 2 Knowing reciprocity and knowing participation are well-recognized terms in Conversation Analysis (e.g., Goodwin, 1984; Lerner, 1992); hence, I opt for them here.
- 3 Selfie (also selfy) was notably the *Oxford Dictionary* word of the year 2013 (Oxford Dictionaries, 2013), defined as a photograph that one has taken of one-self, typically one taken with a smartphone or webcam and uploaded to a social media website.
- 4 This is a Project of the ERC funded Advanced Grant 'Ego-media: The impact of new media on forms and practices of self-presentation', <http://www.ego-media.org/> (2014–2019).
- 5 Henceforth, I use 'spooof' videos as a collective term for all these uploads.
- 6 www.youtube.com/watch?v=Af9WFGJE0M0 (retrieved May 15, 2016).
- 7 Mining one's own ordinariness so as to transform it into something extraordinary through the act of performative display on public media has been noted as a contemporary cultural phenomenon since the days of reality TV (Turner, 2006).
- 8 Including selfies in an album with other photographs is common practice in my data and in the off-the-record chats, it emerged that this is a way of safeguarding against coming across as 'self-obsessed'.
- 9 It is notable that commenters on the spooof videos often use 'encore', 'more of this' and so on, as part of expressing their appreciation.
- 10 There are certain gendered patterns to this type of alignment, including 'ritual banter' in lieu of 'ritual appreciation', which are beyond the scope of this chapter.
- 11 As I have argued elsewhere (Georgakopoulou, 2013a), these mainly involved the word *ohi* (no), repeated by the presenter before Kasidiaris hit Kanelli and the

phrase ‘ade vre numero’ (come off, you joke), with which Kasidiaris insulted the other politician, before throwing a glass of water at her.

- 12 ‘[T]his is piff ngl’ means ‘this is great/beautiful, I am not going to lie’.
- 13 In the case of the uploading of video clips from the original incident, I have shown how knowing participation was premised on narrative arrangements having to do with commenters positioning themselves as recipients of a story for which they had some prior knowledge (e.g., mostly regarding the ‘characters’).
- 14 In common bond communities, the members are interested in one another as individuals while in common identity communities, members share a social category and are attracted to the group as a whole.

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