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An analysis of multimodal features of YouTube videos

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1. INTRODUCTION

In today's society the boom of technology has brought us many new possibilities in communication and maintaining relationship with others. With different social media and messaging platforms there are no limits to staying connected to someone. And with the rise of these possibilities it looks as though the need to represent oneself also grew strong. Households are full of cameras on mobile phones, laptops, personal computers, drones. You can film anything from anywhere and post it on the Internet so it can be seen by anyone.

The most obvious example of this phenomenon are the newest Internet celebrities, better known as YouTubers.

The main issues I wish to discuss and analyze are: What is so attractive about filming someone's everyday life? Why people today love it so much when they can share every little detail with the entire world? What are the linguistic features of a popular and successful YouTuber? Why does Jenna Marbles have so many subscribers? What linguistic features YouTubers use to attract the audience and what features do they use to retain them?

I will address these issues focusing mostly on Jenna Marbles, one of the most popular YouTubers at this moment, who survived YouTube from the very beginning of vlogging until today.

2. WEB 2.0 AND YOUTUBE

Web 2.0 refers to World Wide Web websites that emphasize user generated content, usability and interoperability for end users. Examples of Web 2.0 features include social networking sites and social media sites (e.g., Facebook), blogs, wikis, folksonomies ("tagging" keywords on websites and links), video sharing sites (e.g., YouTube), hosted services, Web applications ("apps"). (Pauwels and Hellriegel 2009:52, Riboni 2017:193)

It is important to describe the term Web 2.0 because it is responsible for how we perceive and how we use the Internet today. Because of the great level of interactivity Web 2.0 allows, we do not just watch or listen to the content but we are also able to participate in it. YouTube is part of Web 2.0 being a video sharing site.

The story of the beginnings of YouTube is a typical "we started in a garage" story. In 2005 there were three men – Jawed Karim, Steve Chen and Chad Hurley – who wanted to explore new possibilities with the expansion of Internet and find an easier way to share videos with their friends and colleagues. Up until then this option was only available via e-mails. They opened a website that started out as an online dating site but seeing the new market possibilities they made it public and – the rest is history. When the first video gained a couple of hundreds of views people worldwide saw a new possibility for expressing themselves. Soon it came to be what it is today – a platform where there is 400 hours of video material being posted every second. And it became paradise for newly developing amateur filmmakers, or short-video makers. (Alexander, 2011; Burgess and Green, 2009; Adami, 2009; Pauwels and Hellriegel, 2009).

How did it all begin? After recognizing YouTube as a popular platform for mixed crowd of all ages where you can publish all kinds of content not worrying whether it will find its audience (because of the endless possibilities of worldwide viewers), many people saw it as an advantage and a business possibility. Today - courtesy of YouTube statistics - YouTube has grown into a database used by over a billion users, which means almost one third of all people on the Internet – and each day they watch a billion hours of videos and they generate billion views¹. Another important thing are the possibilities in financial gain depending on the range of your popularity. Only the most devoted can earn enough money to transform vlogging into a full-time profession.

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/intl/en-GB/yt/about/press/>

2.1. VLOGGERS AND DIGITAL STORYTELLING

There are many forms of digital storytelling or, to be precise, many platforms where one can express himself thus creating a story, to name some of them - blogs, podcasts, web videos, Facebook, Twitter. These are all possible platforms where you can make your story happen. Because of the connectivity² of these platforms your story can be placed and created using and combining more than just one of them. This means that even if your story mostly happens on YouTube, it is not the only one that creates your online identity. Many vloggers also have Facebook profiles, Instagram accounts and other social platforms where fans can follow them. That way we gain a complete picture of their lives. Also, there are examples of multiple accounts on YouTube, vlogs and podcasts along with the comments below videos. All of the above mentioned creates the narrative of a persona. Even comments which sometimes derive to thousands in number, have a story of their own, and often some knowledge gained there may be of importance for building up a complete picture of a YouTuber. The story that I will write about later discusses the importance of comments (see page 6).

What vloggers often do is they use traditional means of telling stories and apply them to the digital world. “Digital stories are narratives built from the stuff of cyberculture (...). Every culture tells stories. Each epoch brims with tales, insofar as records make them available (...)...people tell stories with nearly every new piece of communication technology we invent.” (Alexander 2011:5) And it is true. Every new discovery in technology always led to new ways of artistic usage. For example in music, there were only records in the beginning, and the records could hold only one or two songs, but after the extension to long-play vinyl, musicians could record and publish more songs on one album. Of course, this opened new possibilities so some of them decided to pursue the idea of creating a concept album – an album which contains, for example, 10 songs and all of them are connected in an organized order creating a unity, a story. You could hear a story unraveling in front of you if you listened carefully to the songs in right order.

So stories can be seen, heard or read everywhere. Narratives can emerge from more things than just a piece of paper. They can be in a story your mother told you when she put you to sleep, and they can be in the digital format.

² This connectivity refers to hyperlinks which are part of hypertexts. Hyperlinks or simply links are a reference to data which reader can quickly follow by clicking on the link. In this case, vloggers use hyperlinks on all of their social media in order to entice their viewers to watch even more of their material.

Bryan Alexander brings into perspective a lot of different aspects of the story that make it a story: Freytag triangle, the linear nature of story which means that “events have to be arranged in time or an event has to be broken down into a temporal sequence which makes intuitive sense to a person” (2011:6). Also, he mentions that for a story it is important that it has a meaning or a point. It has to have a meaning that a human being can relate to otherwise it becomes boring. The important notion here is *engagement* (2011:6), you have to engage audience with your story, and it has to touch them somehow. This can also be understood as a theme of the story. Later, I will show on a concrete example how this engagement and meaning are realized.

But digital storytelling methodology also shows us today that “myths and fables are not the only timeless stories. There are stories of your life, from your family, in your work experience that if you told them, would activate a deep recognition in almost any human being in the world.” (Alexander 2011:9) And these life stories are something that YouTube vloggers continually use in order to get closer to the audience. They tell people stories of their own lives and mostly because they live amongst them in the same time in the same or similar spaces/countries/cities people can relate easily to them. When teenagers and young adults across the world listen to Jenna Marbles’ rant about how ‘white girls dance in clubs’³, they will cry with laughter and recognize people from their own surroundings. It is because they go out and experience the same things and feel connected to the similar situations they have been through. People love to relate and love to feel that they are not alone in any kind of experience.

Simmons sees the skill of storytelling as ‘the unique capability to tap into a complex situation we have all experienced and which we all recognize.’ (Alexander 2011:11) We will feel more appeal to the characters if we recognize some of their traits of behavior or if we see them as real people, with all their flaws and virtues. Flaws are one other thing that YouTubers love to show and discuss in order to achieve sympathy, simplicity of the character and become loveable. I will show that later on through examples.

A sense of community is also a very important thing for YouTube. YouTube altogether, as well as YouTubers and Jenna Marbles, who I am using in my thesis as an example, work on making a sense of a community. Audience watching, commenting and participating in other ways creates that community with them. As Hellriegel and Pauwells (2009:58) say ‘the users

³ How To Dance Like A White Girl - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1GZPjASWSo&t=10s>

are put on a level of equality with the YouTube management and are even invited behind the scenes within the Web site to help develop functionality.’ So, as they say, we also, as regular customers and consumers of YouTube videos, help to make them better and post even our own videos. Audience is often invited by a vlogger to post a video response. Of course, it helps us to feel as a part of the group, developing our own sense of community. We feel encouraged, loved and invited to stay. We can also write down our comments, remarks and instructions on how we feel about a video. Every video has a comments section full of different commentaries, ranging from loving to hateful ones. Also, the comments can be disabled if the author demands so.

Comments section is the one to be treated respectfully. It connects the audience to the producer (or prosumer?) and that leads us back in the context of digital storytelling. In order to comprehend a person’s *channel* as a story, such as the one Jenna Marbles owns, we have to dive in to the example of importance comments section makes. Such is the story of a famous channel in the early history of YouTube *lonelygirl15*⁴: *lonelygirl15* is a famous vlogger whose story first went viral. In short – it was an experiment to see if this kind of “webseries” on YouTube will catch on in the same way teenage TV shows are popular on television. Soon after the story emerged, it won a significant fan base. It was obvious that new platform and new media such as this one was suitable for this kind of story. After *lonelygirl15* was found to be a hoax, it became even more popular. But the commentary section was something that held this story alive for a long time because people were always having a live discussion whether the story was a lie or the truth. Everybody had his theory about *lonelygirl* and the fact her vlogs were suspiciously well done. Numerous response videos were made and the dust did not settle even a long time after the discovery of *Bree*’s (her fictitious name) reality. The story even got to the newspapers. Comments on YouTube, online discussions and replies to blog posts were all used in order to explain this phenomenon. (Burgess and Green 2009, Alexander 2011)

⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/user/lonelygirl15>

2.2. THE PHENOMENON OF YOUTUBERS

So who are these YouTubers anyway? In short, they are a part of a generation of today's young adults in their twenties and thirties who found a new way to be creative in sharing their thoughts and feelings with the world. The new technology made it possible to film everything. The next step was to share it with others.

Interestingly, YouTubers are named vloggers – a name which comes from blending the words video and blogging – vlogging. These vloggers decided to upgrade their blogging and tell their lives not by writing but by filming themselves. Their form is similar to a personal diary with the addition of it being available to the public eye. Vloggers are usually describing their everyday lives spiced up with interesting comments or showing their everyday routines.

The main idea behind the viewer's 'investigation' of someone else's life is nothing new. People have always felt a general curiosity for other people's lives, which is already widely discussed in relevant literature as a phenomenon of voyeurism. However, referring to the Internet, sociology and cultural studies see this phenomenon as part of a larger, 'DIY culture' as well as so-called 'bedroom cultures' and 'webcam cultures' (Burgess and Green 22).

DIY acronym stands for 'do it yourself' meaning something that is custom, amateur and creatively made by an individual but bears the stigma of questionable quality. This is the way many YouTube videos seem to be made and thought of. Even though there are many different videos based on their genre, YouTube has always been abundant in vlog videos homemade by an individual. However, numbers show that in the past few years the most popular YouTubers have gained more views on YouTube with their seemingly simple homemade content than mainstream celebrities with their expensive video and music production. For example, PewDiePie⁵, one of the most popular YouTubers today, has approximately 18 billion views on his channel. The channel of the singer Luis Fonsi⁶, owner of the most viewed YouTube video of all time (music video for the song Despacito) has 12 billion views altogether.

An individual can create both good and bad quality videos. The point is in the possibility of an anonymous person to have such an impact on such a large crowd. This way one can

⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/user/PewDiePie/about> - June, 2nd 2018

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/user/LuisFonsiVivo/about> - June, 2nd 2018

become a well-known face and turn into a celebrity of caliber such as famous actors, singers and bands. And as Burgess and Green say “They are not celebrities, famous for being famous; rather they are *stars*. Some of them, in fact, are famous for doing something in particular very well, even if that ‘something’ is unlikely to accrue prestige in the traditional media or arts industries.” (2009:24)

Taking into account this definition, YouTubers can definitely be called *stars* (2009:24). They are not part of the traditional media; rather they are the future of the media, or the so-called new media, which is based on user generated content rather than large and expensive productions that have teams of hundreds of people working for them.

2.3. WHY MULTIMODAL FEATURES OF YOUTUBERS?

YouTube does not stand alone in the concept of mass entertainment. It goes along with television, newspapers and other websites, especially today’s most popular – social networks. With the popularity of Facebook and then later emergence of similar entertainment social platforms such as Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter, users and consumers turned out to be – creators themselves. YouTube is used by the so-called ‘prosumers’ (consumers + producers) because the people who use it also generate their own work there. (Pauwells and Hellriegel 52)

But what is specific to YouTube, since the concept of prosumers is a transient phenomenon of the Internet? For one, the popularity. Also, I believe that on YouTube the concept has flourished to so far unprecedented levels. Therefore, YouTubers have a very good reason to stick with YouTube. They can earn money and turn this filmmaking into a career. Not only do they have a personal satisfaction of being popular and loved by a lot of fans but they also earn money from advertising products in their videos or simply allowing YouTube to advertise before or after the video. Many of them leave their jobs and schools and dedicate their time to pursue YouTube career. Considering the money, it is hard to find a general statistics but noteworthy is the fact that “in 2014 the top YouTuber made \$4.9 million unboxing toys.

The whole channel is just her [the owner of the channel] unboxing Disney toys. Her top video, *Play Doh Sparkle Princess*, has garnered 217 million views.⁷

YouTube has come close to being a media on its own. But I will not digress on what constitutes a media and what is new media, at least for now. I will say that up to this day much has been discussed on the topic of new media and Internet. Also, in relevant literature there are many sociological analyses of vlogging and YouTubeing (Pauwells and Hellriegel 2009, Adami 2009, Saul 2014), who focus on the question of the ‘creators’ (the so-called ‘prosumers’) as well as the public recognition by the viewers. However, in my research, I have found almost no relevant literature that dealt with the linguistic element of YouTubers or any other part of the prosumer apparition in its whole. The closest was a paper that dealt with the linguistic and sociological features of make-up tutorials by Giorgia Riboni⁸. Although the methodology of that paper is linguistic, it is written about a subgenre of YouTube (beauty videos) that is far less personal than vlogging in general. In other words, beauty videos focus on advertising products and offering skills while vloggers do not show any explicit adverts but tend to discuss their private lives and everyday situations making their videos a private domain.

That is the main reason I chose to write on the subject of multimodal features of YouTubers, specifically a vlogger named Jenna Marbles. Multimodality is still a new discipline, but inevitable in a time where there is no more dominance of the text written on the paper but rather digital text on a screen which incorporates language, communication, image and sound. As Jones and Hefner say (2012), inspired by the pioneer in the field of multimodality, Gunther Kress: “In speech aural elements such as the pace, rhythm and the tone of your voice, as well as visual elements such as your gestures, facial expressions and body language all contribute to the message that you send.” (2012:50) Vlogs indeed are comprised of audio, visual elements, language, communication and speech which I will later analyse in chapter 3.2.

⁷ <http://www.pennapowers.com/how-much-do-youtubers-make/>

⁸ THE YOUTUBE MAKEUP TUTORIAL VIDEO A preliminary linguistic analysis of the language of “makeup gurus”, Giorgia Riboni, *Lingue e Linguaggi*, 2017, 189-205

2.4. ABOUT JENNA MARBLES

Jenna Marbles has been YouTube's popular face since 2010 when her first video went viral. It was called "How to trick people into thinking you're good looking" and today it has around 67 million views (as of May 4th, 2018). She has been filming ever since and her popularity never declined. Her videos cover different topics and she keeps posting videos persistently every week, on her main channel, which is one of the reasons she succeeds in keeping a permanent audience. At the time she has three important channels. The first one is the main channel where she mostly puts videos from her 'Sexual Wednesday' franchise. 'Sexual Wednesday' has nothing to do with the title but it follows her everyday life, her filmed sketches and topics she wants to discuss with her audience. The second is a weekly podcast she hosts with her boyfriend Julien Solomita, who also owns a YouTube channel and works as a YouTuber. The third channel is simply a second vlog channel where she puts random videos or too long and less important videos that do not fall into the category of 'Sexual Wednesday'. Because of the scope of the paper, the analysis will focus exclusively on the main channel. The main channel counts almost 400 videos at the moment.

As almost every popular YouTuber, Jenna Marbles⁹ has built her own set of expressions in order to be close to a certain type of audience, to build-up her own Internet persona and to stay fresh, innovative and funny in a YouTube world full of other people looking for their five minutes of fame.

⁹ Jenna has a Master's Degree in Sports Psychology and Counseling from Boston University and even though she has not stayed in her field of work, her skills are very visible and helpful when it comes to online communication. Even though these skills are not associated directly, the assumption is that knowing psychology helps you in understanding needs and wants of others both in everyday communication and online communication, but I leave this to a different discussion.

3. THE STUDY

For the first part of the study, I used methodology proposed by Biber and Conrad's 2009 *Register, Genre and Style*. I believe it is applicable to my thesis because the YouTubers' type of discourse can be described as a register by itself, a specific type of register to be precise. Biber and Conrad define register as "a variety associated with a particular situation of use (including particular communicative purposes)" (2009:6).

Due to the scope of my paper, I am not able to analyze the universality of YouTubers' register but I will focus on analyzing Jenna Marbles' variety using rules of register analysis by Biber and Conrad (2009).

Firstly, they divide analysis to three main parts: the situational context of use, linguistic analysis of the words and structures that commonly occur and the functional connection between the first two. I will use this type of analysis to explain the language and context of Jenna's videos. From Jenna's opus I collected ten videos that represent different kinds of her themes as well as from different years of her work (see list in Appendix). Also, the most popular videos were mostly taken into account.

3.1. THE SITUATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Biber says that "situational characteristics include the physical context, such as the actual time and place, but also many other considerations such as cultural diversity¹⁰, issue of register versus genre, issue of difference between specialized and general registers and so on." (2009:31)

Although register analysis usually gathers best results in a comparative approach, I will try to apply it to my analysis even though I will deal with just one register. Register analysis proposed by Biber and Conrad (2009) consists of following elements which I will try to

¹⁰ The culturally recognized register distinctions are very important for the analysis because not every part of Anglo-speaking world will understand an utterance completely the same. Not to mention, the differences between Western world and other, different cultures, such as Asian cultures which Western world often refers to as *Oriental*. Expressions from these languages that refer to some kind of cultural ritual of their own are not necessarily applicable or understandable in English language. Likewise, not every expression from the west will produce the same meaning for others. That is something I also leave for some other discussion.

follow and explain in the analysis: participants, relations among participants, channel (mode), production circumstances, setting, communicative purpose and topic.

3.1.1. PARTICIPANTS

Participants of this type of communication are Jenna and her audience. Jenna Marbles is the addressor, she is the leader of the communication and in most of her videos she is conducting a monologue. Sometimes she includes her boyfriend as the other addressor but both him and her pet dogs mostly play role characters in her videos, rather than address the audience directly. Audience in these types of videos is not what is traditionally thought to be the audience. As Bryan Alexander states “audience no longer describes this complex mix of many watchers, a large number of arrangers and comments, uploaders and creators, with amateur and professional roles cutting across all strata. “The People Formerly Known as the Audience” is Clay Shirky’s suggested replacement term.” (Alexander 2011:84, Shirky 2010:33).

There is no problem with identifying the addressor in this case because the addressor is directly in front of the screen. We are not sure whether the text spoken in the video is her intellectual property but in some videos she discusses that matter and states that she writes her own texts or just says whatever comes to mind while filming. With that in mind, we as the audience (or ‘people formerly known as the audience’) believe that she is the author and producer of everything she says on the screen.

At the moment, YouTube does not show demographic statistics for a single user but as Jenna often states¹¹ in her videos, her audience consists mostly of young females, precisely teenagers and young women. She also states that over time her audience grew older with her, she could see that the same people were still watching her videos, even though they got older. So her audience’s age also increased with time. Of course, with videos being online and available for everyone to see, there is no obvious way to identify who the set of viewers were over the time.

¹¹ She discusses this subject in the video 'Things I'm Bad At As An Adult' (0:04-0:25) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVA-4HqjZ4Y&t=194s>

3.1.2. RELATIONS AMONG PARTICIPANTS

To what level does the interactiveness between participants rise?

There are different kinds of connections and relations among participants. Biber states that *interactiveness* is the most important consideration here. Also, it is important to understand *social roles* between the participants as well as *personal relationships*. Participants can also have different degrees of *shared background knowledge* as well as so called “*specialist background knowledge*”. (Biber 2009:42)

In this case, there is a large level of interactivity. Firstly, Marbles uses a basic strategy for YouTuber’s success. She tries to create a sense of friendship between herself and the viewers. Having a situation where viewers can perceive you only through their computer screens she works a lot on having a strong interactivity. For example, she often addresses her viewers during filming (see chapter 3.2.). She also greets and says goodbye at the end of her videos, therefore acknowledging her viewership. Also, often she asks for comments, ideas or questions to be left in the comments section. The importance of comments section has previously been discussed in the chapter 2.2.

Comments section is used to build up the persona of YouTuber. Jenna often draws ideas for new videos from fans’ comments in the commentary section of YouTube videos. Not only that, but viewers are explicitly encouraged to leave comments and ideas for what they would like to see Jenna filming next. Or they are just invited to comment the current video (i. e. “*And if you guys wanna make a video response or leave in a comment things that you like to do instead of cleaning your room, or instead of your grown up responsibilities, leave them in the comment or make me a video response, I love to post them on my vlog.*”)

These comments can be compared to fan mail letters before the technological boom.

Not only do the addressees have the possibility of connection through comments but also they can contact Jenna, or any other YouTuber for that matter, through different social platforms. For example, Jenna is available on Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, her blog, Tumblr, Instagram and Twitch. Also, she offers a possibility of consecutively following her and Julien’s life both on her vlog channel and her weekly podcast. Taking all this into account, it is obvious that she offers an enormous amount of possibilities for connection with her fans. Communication channel is completely open.

3.1.3. CHANNEL (MODE)

Another important aspect of situational analysis is the question of channel or mode used for communication. This aspect is usually intertwined with other categories of situational analysis. In this case, the communication flows through spoken mode. Spoken mode is characterized by a specific addressor and specific addressees and this proved to be true in this case. Also, they are often on a high level of interactiveness. (Biber, 2009:43)

Secondly, we can distinguish among *specific mediums of communication*. Here, we are not dealing with a regular spoken mode such as face-to-face conversation is but rather with electronic communication. YouTubers record their monologue via cameras of diverse quality and then they publish it online. Videos are streamed on our servers and we are able to see them speaking whenever we want. This type of communication can also have an influence on the linguistic form that speakers employ.

3.1.4. PRODUCTION CIRCUMSTANCES

Even though this paper deals with a spoken mode, production circumstances of filmed speech are more similar to that of a traditional written mode, than that of a traditional spoken mode. Face-to-face conversation occurs in a short period of time and the people involved cannot think thoroughly what they are going to say. Filmed speech is a total opposite. Firstly, with speech being recorded, you can do anything with it. You can delete it, add something, revise or edit. It can be filmed in any time of day. It can look spontaneous and still be scripted. Or it can look scripted but be completely spontaneous.

Secondly, the addressee is also free to do whatever he wants with the text. He can listen to it whenever he wants and as many times as he wants. He can listen/watch the totality of it or he can just consume a part. He can even play with it and listen to the end and then after it – the beginning. There is no rule in how the consumption of the video should be done. The addressee can even speed it or slow it down. The text becomes a unit that can be transformed to one's wishes opposite to the traditional spoken text that cannot be revised because it occurs at a particular time between particular people who cannot just pause or stop because it would look ridiculous at the very least.

3.1.5. SETTING

“The setting refers to the physical context of the communication – the time and place. An important consideration here is whether the time and place are shared.” (Biber 2009:44)

In this case, the time and place are never shared. Jenna is free to film her videos whenever and wherever she wants or likes to, or wherever suits the story she is telling. The time and place can never be shared for a simple reason – the addressor and addressee do not share the same place or for that matter – even time. Technology allows communication to occur asynchronously. For example, Jenna can film something at night drinking tea and preparing for bed and the viewer can watch it five days later in the morning while drinking coffee. Later, he can respond. Or he can respond in a month. Or he can choose not to respond at all. The communication channel is open for any kind of scenario.

These are all differences from the traditional face-to-face conversation.

Jenna also chooses a *private place for communication*. Mostly she films from her home (kitchen, living room or bedroom). Even though she addresses strangers she treats them like friends and family in order to gain connections. Even if these connections are artificial. This will be discussed later.

Something that usually represents participants of communication being in the same physical context, changes when it comes to technological broadcast. Deictic expressions such as *yesterday* or *here* are symbols of shared physical context. But Jenna uses this as another method for artificial friendliness. These expressions allow her to relate with her audience and build rapport. Deictic expressions will be discussed in detail in chapter 3.2.

- 1) “I can show you what happened this week.”
- 2) “But when I do it, it looks something like this.”
- 3) “Heey, look at those boobies!”

3.1.6. COMMUNICATIVE PURPOSE

Communicative purpose of a register responds to the question ‘why?’. Why is somebody communicating? There are general purposes of a register which are possible to identify. Of course, many register do not compile only of one purpose. The register that I am describing

combines different purposes. The main goal of a YouTuber's communication is usually – to entertain.

There are even YouTube's official 'categories' for videos. Jenna's category is comedy. Also, her blog description of her persona falls under the category of entertainer. When we have in mind all that was mentioned above, it is not hard to conclude that Jenna's most important communicative purpose is to entertain the addressee. Of course, she needs linguistic means to do that, so she also uses other concepts such as narrating or reporting past events, describing state of affairs or revealing personal feelings and attitudes.

Another parameter relating to purpose is *factuality*. This is a tricky concept for a YouTuber because their work resides on a non-defined field between fiction and reality. For example, Jenna tells us stories from her daily life and films her daily life which makes her vlogs part of the reality. But sometimes she films stories that are part of her imagination, such as music videos or edited videos of her dogs that fall into the popular category of 'cute pet videos'. These are the examples of works of fiction. In conclusion, the addressor intends to provide factual information and personal opinion as well as fiction/fantasy. No personal account can truly be factual. In the end, the main intention is still to entertain.

A final parameter concerns the *expression of stance*. Whether it is an epistemic stance or a personal attitude it is very important to understand if you try to uncover the purpose of a register. My case shows that YouTubers like to express their attitudes a lot, sometimes a whole video is dedicated to expressing feelings or opinions concerning a defined subject. It builds the credibility of the character they are creating for the viewers. E.g.:

1. „I think I have maybe like a dirtiest room on planet Earth.“
2. „In my opinion, I think there's two kinds of white lies.“
3. „I think it's safe to say that everyone tells white lies to doctor's office.“
4. „Like, it's just so weird being trapped inside my brain, it's just so weird ass fucking place.“

3.1.7. TOPIC

Topic is an open-ended category that can be described at many different levels. It is possible to distinguish among *general topical domains* such as science, religion, politics, sports but any text can have its own *specific topic*. (Biber 2009:46)

YouTubers' topics are really an open-ended category because they cover an enormous field of ideas. Marbles' specific topics can be roughly divided into categories: beauty parlor/make-up

videos, videos with dogs or boyfriend, music videos and songs, rants/thoughts, impersonations, popular/viral challenges. What is obvious from the titles is that most of these topics are just for entertainment but the topic that brings diversity is *rants/thoughts* topic. These videos are dedicated to serious issues such as thoughts on politics or religion, thoughts on marriage, children and other issues in human life. There Jenna, sometimes elaborately or sometimes just simply, expresses her feelings and attitudes towards questions that usually concern human mind.

Her impersonations are oriented towards celebrities famous at the time when the videos were being made. They are usually singers (Justin Bieber, Madonna, Ke\$ha, Lady Gaga, Pitbull, Iggy Azalea, Adele), politicians (Sarah Palin, Donald Trump, Hillary Clinton) and other famous faces.

In conclusion, although this was not a comparative approach, which was mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, analysis of situational characteristics has still proven worthy for this subject. It represented various aspects of Jenna's videos such as their physical and temporal context as well as introduction to Jenna's technique of filming videos. Some features mentioned in this chapter are part of the multimodality I will continue to analyze in the next chapter.

3.2. MULTIMODAL FEATURES

Several aspects of multimodality have already been mentioned and some of them explained in the previous chapter. Notions such as time, place, communication between vlogger and the audience and spoken mode of the text are all multimodal features of the text¹². However, this chapter is dedicated to further analysis of the main components of multimodality in a video, hence the name of the chapter. These are linguistic and visual features.

This analysis consists of notions from pragmatics, multimodal analysis and discourse analysis that are employed here in order to explain multimodal elements that are most important for

¹² In this case, text does not have a traditional connotation of just the written form but any kind of text, spoken or written in a medium of communication.

Jenna's narrative. I have mostly relied on some features of metadiscourse as well as general traits of informal spoken language and discourse analysis.

As I already mentioned, Jenna's videos are constructed as monologues performed by her in front of the camera. They have a diaristic¹³ component which is explained by the fact that a person (in this case, Jenna) is alone or in company of her closest people and discusses her problems or opinions in a mode of a confession. All of the videos do not have a uniformed pattern of narrative because they are composed of different subjects but there are some similar narrative traits that can be found in every video.

3.2.1. LINGUISTIC FEATURES

Something that is immediately identifiable when you start watching Jenna's videos is that there are certain expressions that are repeated in every video. These kinds of expressions are called **formulas** and they can usually be found in the beginning and in the end of the videos and sometimes somewhere through the middle to emphasize the coming of the next part.

First, there is always a uniformed **greeting**. Jenna greets her viewers in the beginning creating a positive atmosphere, also going for the emotional appeal that affects the viewer and encourages him to watch the video until the end. In this case, Ms. Marbles begins videos with fillers and linking adverbials such as '*ok, so for anyone*', '*ok, time to pack*', '*so today I wanna talk about*'. There are examples like "*hello there friends*" which can refer to strangers or newcomers who watch her video for the first time, so she has to find a way to retain her old audience and possibly attract new people.

Formulaic expressions are very important for this type of YouTube personality. In order to be distinguishable in the sea of other YouTubers seeking fame, she has to have recognizable linguistic features. These eventually became her linguistic trademarks. Even though these are universal greetings, the way in which Jenna expresses them (the pitch, intonation, face expression) make it her own (see Figure 1 in chapter 3.2.2.).

¹³ Here, diaristic refers to the sense of 'writing a diary'. Vlogs originate from blogs and blogs from personal diaries. Jenna Marbles' vlogs resemble a diary because she always shares how she feels, what she has been doing in the day or tells stories from her past. The only difference is that this diary is accessible to anyone who has online connection. As a BBC's article states "While their mothers may have kept a diary under lock and key, now there is a different way of sharing secrets and young people are happy to tell the world" (<https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-39641264>)

Formulas are usually visible at the beginnings and ends of the videos. Sometimes also during the videos there is a parenthetical part that I emphasized in the beginning of the chapter (e.g. '*without further ado*' which she uses after the introduction and to emphasize that the most important and interesting part of the video begins¹⁴). That way she can leave a permanent marker in people's minds. Formulas often take form in greetings and goodbyes.

Examples: Greetings:

Hello there friends!

Alright, so I'm making this video...

So, today I want to talk about something...

Oh, hey, I didn't see you there!" (acting surprised 'seeing' us, the audience)

Oh, hi! – exclaims surprised like she didn't know she was being filmed.

Formulas also occur at the end of the videos:

Hey, make sure you subscribe to our channel; we put our new videos out every Wednesday!

Ok, see you next week, bye!

We'll see you next week! Bye. (with the dogs in her lap)

Make sure you subscribe to my channel!

The ending formulas are similar for every YouTuber and both the formulas for greeting and saying goodbye are part of a traditional form of communication between people. They are just adapted to the new media in a way they can function. So, when Jenna says hello, she knows she will get no answer but still she says it because it will make her audience more comfortable and welcome. That way she simulates a traditional conversation. Also, invitations to the subscription at the end of the video have proven to be fruitful so that is something YouTubers have generally taken over as a means of gathering audience.

Besides the elements of videos I have already mentioned, what strikes as typical characteristics of Jenna's videos are constructs that are not part of the sentence structure but are semantically implied throughout the videos. These elements are a sense of rapport between Jenna and her audience, profanity, parody and a form of self-deprecating behavior. As these elements are not explicitly said but rather implied I will look at them through the pragmatic¹⁵ prism.

¹⁴ This is also a typical YouTuber's tactics to keep the viewer interested and focused.

¹⁵ "Pragmatics, whose scope as an area of inquiry is extremely wide, views language as a phenomenon whose main constructs are located outside of language, in speaker meaning or intention and in rational communicative principles" (Gonzalez, 2004:11)

A sense of **rappor**t is created both linguistically and visually and it is present throughout the whole video. These are some of the moments when Jenna mentions the closeness or it is visible from the context:

‘... [you are now] full blown adutees like myself which just makes me infinitely happy because I feel like you understand me.’
‘...which you’re all familiar with that dark smoky eye baby pink lip...’
‘Everyone has to be on their best behavior because there’s a lady present!’

These examples are not a coincidence but show Jenna's means to create a friendly atmosphere with her audience.

Also, Jenna is not a stranger to **profanity**. Her videos are abundant with it. They contain expressions such as: “*bleach the absolute shit*”, “*blind as a fucking bat*”, “*ugly motherfucker*”, “*whore*”, *whore lashes*”, “*fucking weirdo*”. It is noticeable that these are not what we would refer to as “standard curses” or generally known curses. Jenna has a way with words which is probably one of her weapons when it comes to keeping the audience interested, of course, not only with curse words but other expressions too.

Profanity is an important pragmatic characteristic to discuss in Marbles’ videos. Marbles is famous for her vulgar expressions. Swear words that she uses are mostly the common ones such as ‘*shit*’ and ‘*fuck*’ although there are some original utterances of hers such as *whore lashes*, *giggle dick* or *my guinea pig had explosive diarrhea*. Swear words can have both positive and negative connotations but their main purpose is to express emotions, especially anger and frustration. Even though they really are mostly used for negative utterances, there are examples of positive value, such as when you want to express satisfaction, you can say something is “*pretty fucking good*”. These are examples from Jenna’s videos:

...You’re gonna be that asshole asking for pens eventually.
It’s my fucking gum.
You can do it too. Fuck you.

Here they are presented without a context, but it is visible they all have a negative connotation. Still, they are not pointed directly to the audience but are part of Jenna’s storytelling. That way she does not risk people to be offended and still keeps vulgarity as a part of her discourse as much as she wants to. Because of the friendly relationship she wants to build with the audience and the authenticity that she herself claims¹⁶ to pursue in her

¹⁶ Interview with Larry King, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9dj5WjFJFU>

videos, it is understandable that it will apply to an artificial friendly conversation which she tries to create. And curse words are a part of that kind of conversation.

The third trait that I will refer to considering pragmatics is sarcasm, or **parody**. For example, in the video “*How to trick people into thinking you’re good looking*”¹⁷ there is an obvious discrepancy between the title and the content of the video. Even though Jenna is saying that she is describing something that would be considered as ‘a good look’ there is certainly an implemented idea that she feels the opposite throughout the video. There are plenty of examples for this statement: “*Literally take a bunch of make up on your face. Neato.*”, “*I like to use colors like black, because it says I’m a whore.*”, “*Don’t forget your hoochie lipstick. I like this one, because it makes me look like a street walker.*” This surely does not look like Jenna believes the look to have a positive value. Although these are not expressions from the Standard English, the meaning is comprehensible through the context. For native speakers, these are probably recognizable as colloquial vulgarities.

Even though the title refers to ‘good looks’, the way in which she expresses herself makes it obvious that she is mocking the culture of heavy make-up. The *smokey eyes* as well as *bright pink lipstick* are something that was a trendy make-up when the video was filmed. But still because of its bright coloring and cheap look, Jenna highlights that it does not really breathe with elegance and style. She was mocking and questioning latest fashion trends even though she herself was sometimes the user of this kind of make-up.

There is another important pragmatic feature of Jenna’s videos, and that is showing one’s own flaws. It can be presented as making fun of yourself, your behavior or your amenities. It can be understood as a subtype of parody, although unlike the example above, this one seems to be meant sincerely.

Examples such as: “*if you are born really ugly like me*”, “*blind as a bat like me*”, “*a job that is super degrading – I picked dancing in my underwear*” at first may strike as odd. But general characteristic of Jenna, as well as many other YouTube stars, is **self-deprecating behavior**. They tend to reveal their flaws, both physical and mental, to look more ‘real’ and ‘normal’. If an ordinary teenage girl or young woman hears words like “*blind as a bat like me*” she will surely consider it funny and relatable especially if she is the one dealing with

¹⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYpwAtnywTk>

these issues on a daily basis. Also, this way YouTubers avoid coming out as obnoxious and that way possibly ruining their popularity.

Also, depicting your own physical flaws is a typical representation of women's bodies in media and advertising discourse today. This is what beauty industries want young women to believe so that they feel greater need for making oneself 'prettier'. As Ringrow (2012) says: "In the media, women's bodies are presented as a series of 'problems' which need 'fixing'. In light of this representation of the female body as always requiring 'work', advertising slogans must convince the reader that their brand can help address the beauty concerns of the target female." And not only does Jenna mention her flaws in some videos, but part of her repertoire is completely dedicated to the describing of her biggest flaws or mistakes she made in life. That is visible from some titles of her videos: *Things I am bad at as an adult*, *Embarrassing stories*, *Embarrassing stories 2*, *Things I suck at*, *Bad Habits*, *I suck at pranks* etc. These types of videos are 10-20 minute monologues in which she describes her *utter failure in being a full functioning adult person*, as she likes to point out.

These are all elements of **informal spoken language**. Informal language and speech are widespread on the internet. This kind of language is simple. Short morphological forms, shorter and syntactically simpler sentences prevail. It sets up a close relationship with the viewership and reaches wide audience. Besides the structure and semantics that have already been analyzed, in continuation more examples from vocabulary and grammar of spoken language will be brought into light.

Jenna uses the temporal deixis "now" – "now it's time to do your make-up", "now it's time to put on some fake lashes", "now remember". This is also an important example for the time lapse between the moment of the filming and the moment of the audience watching. Even though the video could be filmed any time in the past, the usage of adverb "now" makes it look like it is a synchronous conversation. When Jenna is using "now" people naturally feel like it is happening at the moment even though they are aware of the fact that it was filmed earlier. It imitates face-to-face conversation and creates a feeling of a friendly exchange of advice. Other deictics that are a part of Jenna's vocabulary are spatial and demonstrative expressions such as 'this', 'that', 'here' which all serve a purpose of verbal pointing.

Colloquial utterances are a part of every informal conversation. This is also an important linguistic trademark for Jenna Marbles. The fact that in her videos she does not portray herself but a persona of a ‘crazy likeable girl next-door’ she cannot use Standard English. She uses informal expressions which include nouns and adjectives such as: *douchebag*, *neatto*, *hoochie lipstick*, *comfy pants*, ‘*mom, pipe!*’, *super weird*, *full blown adultees*, *college-ish*. Other non-grammatical utterances include clauses and sentences such as: *dying fucking laughing*, *entertaining the fuck out of me*, *follows me on other ‘things’* (meaning other social networks), *let’s start*, *the thing was I had two books* (omitting), *the cringe is real*.

Many of the examples mentioned above fall into the category of terms from popular culture and famous internet coinages which are a story for itself. For example, the famous webpage *Urban dictionary*¹⁸ has a definition for all of these terms. Jenna, as a persona created by the Internet and being on the Internet is highly likely to help herself with these expressions. Her audience – the Internet audience – will surely understand her references.

Considering that Jenna’s expressions are colloquial throughout all of the videos, it is no surprise that there are many grammar features that indicate colloquial speech. For example, there are shortened verb forms typical for this kind of artificial face-to-face conversation such as *it’s*, *don’t*, *you’re*, *let’s*, *there’s* and *didn’t*. There are also contracted versions of modal verbs such as *gonna* and *wanna*.

The informality in language is not only visible in the lexical choices but also in the length of the sentences/clauses. Although the text is spoken but not written, her utterances are short and often elliptic. These are examples of shorter morphological forms and simpler sentences I have already mentioned: *Blue jeans? Ok, done! Two suitcases! Whatever. Better bring both*. Both sentences and verbs tend to be elliptic or contracted.

In the video ‘How to Pack a Suitcase’ the text begins with “*ok, time to pack*” which means that Jenna is throwing us instantly to the center of the topic. A **discourse marker** such as *ok* symbolizes a beginning of an utterance, it expresses attitude and organizes what the speaker is about to say. We are immediately thrown to the packing scene which is announced in the title of the video. Conet and Saxena (2014) say that “getting straight to the point” is one of the main points of preferable behavior for a YouTuber or vlogger in general, if he wants to retain his audience. As they say: “*People have clicked through to watch your video expecting*

¹⁸ <https://www.urbandictionary.com/>

something quite specific by reading the title or by looking at the image in the thumbnail. Make sure the video meets those expectations throughout.“ Marbles follows the advice constantly and proves this theory worthy because her audience just keeps growing. Other discourse markers Jenna uses are examples such as *you see, okay, well, yeah, so today, in my opinion, for example, like*. These are words that manage the flow of the discourse, sometimes express the writer's stance and mainly, symbolise a shift in the discourse.

Jenna addresses her audience directly throughout the videos using verbal expressions which indicate possibility or even certainty, which means she is mostly using modal verbs. There are examples with imperatives: *“take a shower!”*, *“remember!”*, *“make sure you subscribe!”* and there are even more examples with modal verbs which always come with an infinitive and second-person pronoun such as *“you can take”*, *“you can use”*, *“you’re just gonna have to get past it”*, *“you’re just gonna have to find a girl”*. Modal verbs “express meaning such as necessity and possibility. We use them to tell or allow people to do things.” (Oxford Learner Grammar, 2009:101) It can be seen from these examples that Jenna is using modal verbs as means to advise people or tell them how to do something. She is acting as a life guru who coaches people on how to have as fulfilling life as possible.

Some of the grammar features (second person pronouns, imperatives) mentioned above fall into the category of **engagement markers**. Engagement markers are used to create and maintain relationship with the readers (or viewers in this case) and also function as a part of a larger field of metadiscourse. Metadiscourse¹⁹ is important especially in the fields of text and discourse analysis. As Allami and Serajfard state (2012) “metadiscourse is one of the main means by which writers can have effect on the readers who at the moment constitute an audience for them.” (72)

There are also other examples of metadiscourse features such as self-mention, attitude markers, shared knowledge and interjections which are an essential part of Jenna’s rhetoric. These are expressions that help Jenna to connect with her audience and “keep things real” as she likes to point out.²⁰

The most obvious engagement marker is the second person pronoun ‘*you*’. Also, there is a possessive pronoun ‘*your*’. In examples such as *“you’re probably dirty”*, *“you’re probably*

¹⁹ Hyland defines metadiscourse as „a widely used term in current discourse analysis and language education, referring to an interesting, and relatively new, approach to conceptualizing interactions between text producers and their texts and between text producers and users.” (2005:1)

²⁰ Interview with Larry King, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9dj5WjFJFU>

gonna embarrass yourself” or “*your skin*” it is obvious that she refers directly to her audience thus acknowledging their presence. In that way she is also acknowledging the fact that her video would not make sense without someone who watches it. Also, she prepares her answers and commentaries based on what she *believes* the audience will think or ask themselves. That is explained by the phrase “audience dilemma” coined by Michael Wesch (2008), which I will explain in the next chapter because it concerns the visual features more than the language.

Self-mentions are a very powerful way of representing oneself and leave a permanent marker on your audience by showing your stance and thus creating your authorial identity (Hyland, 2005):

Welcome to my tutorial
I like to use color like black
If you are born ugly like me

Another way that the vlogger can involve his viewer and open up opportunities for communication and elicit responses is by using **attitude markers**. Attitude markers show the addressee’s emotional stance rather than the epistemological one and with this opens up a new way for the audience to think about his ideas, create his/her opinion or just really follow the advice the vlogger is giving. Jenna shows emotions and explains them rather often. These are usually showed by adjectives, attitude verbs or adverbs:

Get yourself a job that is super-degrading.
You’re probably gonna embarrass yourself.
God forbid you ever go in public.

Another thing that marks the discourse of YouTubeing and is part of metadiscourse is writer’s/speaker’s reference to **shared knowledge** (Hyland 2005) between the vlogger and his audience. The shared knowledge refers to any background cultural or interpersonal knowledge that a person is familiar with at the moment. A vlogger has to know how much shared knowledge he has with his audience because it affects the amount of detail he will go into to explain an idea. That is why it is no surprise that Jenna’s viewership contains mostly of teenage girls and young adult women with whom she has been sharing time and space of growing up and adapting to similar cultural conditions. For example, Jenna shows a plastic sword in this video and referring to things that she will pack in her bag for the trip she exclaims “*zombie apocalypse!*”. Without context, zombie apocalypse can look like a very random idea of a dangerous event but considering popularity of zombies in popular culture at

the moment, it is very logical that Jenna would choose them as something that evokes chaos and thus bring a 'plastic sword' for protection.

Other examples of Jenna's references to shared knowledge are: *cartoon eyebrows*, *home room*, *Spongebob* (a cartoon), *Elder Scrolls* (a video game) or just references to fashion in the 90's or popular expressions at the time (*the cringe is real*). She also refers to private situations that her fans should already be familiar with such as *Debbie Machine* (her mother) or '*is Cermet going to grow*' (her dog's name). Private references are rare in this case because she does not want to seem incomprehensible to potential new audience.

The last example of metadiscursive elements in Jenna's videos is the use of **interjections**. Interjections are mostly short words and expressions which demonstrate a spontaneous feeling or reaction. Because of the conversational nature of the text, which is spontaneous, there is a big chance of such an occurrence. There are different kinds of interjections but often they have emotional value, both positive and negative. In Marbles' case there are examples of both:

'Naaah, these are dirty.'

'Oh, I love these pants.'

'Ohhh, it's getting kind of full.'

In the first and the third example we can see that the interjections have a negative connotation. 'Naaah', meaning 'no' or 'oh no' express a disgust and also disapproval of wearing dirty pants on a trip. The third example symbolizes prolonged interjection 'ohhh' because it also represents a negative and whiny emotion due to the fact that the author will not be able to bring more things to the trip. On the other hand, second example 'oh!' is a positive interjection because it denotes enthusiasm with the fact that the other loving pair of pants is available for packing unlike the ones before.

The whole video is rounded with Jenna's transfer from 'the packing sketch' into the YouTuber persona she represents, sitting at her table at home with her dogs in her hands and in her lap.

3.2.2. VISUAL FEATURES

As I already mentioned in the previous chapter, in his famous speech²¹ at Library of Congress, Michael Wesch explains that people who decide to upload a video on YouTube, especially if it is for the first time, encounter a certain dilemma facing the camera and not directing their speech to a person. Even though it looks as a simple action, knowing that numerous people can watch your video later and nobody is there to give you instant feedback leaves a bizarre feeling in a person. That is why YouTubers develop their own amenities such as positioning their body in a certain way or speaking in one manner. They reinvent themselves because they cannot be the same as they are in face-to-face interaction. They adapt to a different kind of communication.

These elements are also known as paralinguistic features²². Paralinguistic features are related to body language – it is the use of gestures, facial expressions and other non-verbal elements (such as laughter) to add meaning to the speakers message beyond the words being spoken. Jenna uses a lot of paralinguistic features to improve relations to the audience such as laughter, excessive moving of the eyebrows while talking, widening her eyes, a lot of hand gestures and mimics. These examples are to be found in the beginning of the video ‘How I Used To Do My Makeup’²³ and in the Figure 1 below.

²¹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0F_EOQuQtZg

²² <https://www.teachitenglish.co.uk/attachments/1776/a-glossary-of-spoken-language-features.pdf>

²³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnV5NYy8bAQ>



Figure 1 Jenna Marbles' typical facial expressions

Jenna always films her videos in her domestic environment; she has changed several apartments or houses since she started recording. The interesting fact is that we, as an audience, can witness the rise in her career because every other house she buys is more luxurious than the one before.²⁴

Jenna's videos usually have similar composition, although sometimes they vary in environments in which they are being filmed. The videos are mostly filmed indoors; just a few of them are outdoors. They are made like soliloquies intended to the people in front of their computer screens. Jenna's head is in the center of the screen, she talks all the time usually embarking on long monologues revolving around her opinions considering different

²⁴ She was born and raised in Upstate New York, studied and graduated from Boston University. She began filming while still living in Boston, after recently graduating. Later, she moved to Los Angeles, California in pursuit of the improvement of her career because the YouTube headquarters as well as YouTubers community in general are located there.

subjects. What is visible from all of the images shown in this chapter (Figures 1, 2 and 3) is that Jenna's gaze is always directed towards the audience. She is looking directly at our eyes. "Contact is established, even if it is only on an imaginary level. This visual configuration has two related functions. In the first place, it creates a visual form of direct address. It acknowledges the viewers explicitly addressing them with a visual 'you'. In the second place it constitutes an 'image act' (Kress 2006:117). This kind of image act is called 'demand' (following Halliday 1985) in the sense that the gaze of the person in the video demands something from us, to enter into some kind of relationship. In Jenna's case, with the friendly smile on her face, she invites us in a relation of social affinity, which I have pointed out in several chapters.

In terms of the places where she is filming, as I already mentioned, mostly it is in her house, so these are personal spaces such as living room, bedroom or sometimes the kitchen. We can see Jenna in her pajamas or in comfortable, baggy clothes. These surroundings are contradictory in a way, because by letting us see almost every part of her home it feels like an intrusion on her privacy, and also something that only close people usually see. But at the same time she is very careful in not revealing her home address in any way. For example, when she is filming outdoors we never see entrance from the street to her house. We never see the view from the window if it would unveil the position of the house and, of course, there is never a written evidence of the address anywhere in her home. The usual visual for the interior is presented in the next two images (Figure 2).





Figure 2 Jenna's usual shots of interior

As it can be seen in Figure 2 (1st image), Jenna's head really is in the center of the screen, behind her we can only see beige walls and few simple pieces of furniture, such as painting or a chair in which she is sitting. Sometimes she has her make up on, and sometimes she does not. She also likes to experiment with her hair colors, so she often appears in a video with a new color, often of an unconventional choice. This kind of setting where we can see person's head and shoulders is called close shot or 'close-up'. The distance between the viewer and Jenna is enough to have a feeling as if we could touch her. This type of distance indicates intimate relationship (Kress 2006:124) and even though this is not a real relationship there is still an illusion of one. In chapter 3.2.1. I have discussed this from a linguistic perspective and here is a visual representation of creating the same sense of closeness.

Most of the videos include her pet dogs. Sometimes camera just rolls while she talks and has fun with one or more of her dogs and then slowly she includes us as the audience into her world, or their world. Often, she states "oh, *WE* didn't see you there" or "*We'll* see you next week" which indicates that she puts both herself and her dogs in the role of the hosts and addressors to the audience. She, as the one who is being watched, invites us as the audience into her world, her life with her dogs. This involvement to one's own life is not represented just through language but visually too. As shown in Figure 3, as well as the images before, we see that the videos are always filmed horizontally, probably because of YouTube's video format. Our eyes are always aligned with Jenna's eyes, we do not see her from above nor from below so this way we feel equal to her.

Also, the frontal angle of the image (we do not see her from any side or from the back) creates a sense of 'involvement'. “The horizontal angle encodes whether the image producer (and hence, the viewer) is ‘involved’ with the represented participants or not. The frontal angle says, as it were, ‘What you see here is part of our world, something we are involved with’” (Kress 2016:136). So, the same way paired personal pronouns (us/them, we/they) show affiliation to a certain group through language, the frontal angle of the videos aligns us with Jenna’s world (this is us) vs. some other world which does not belong to our world (that is them).

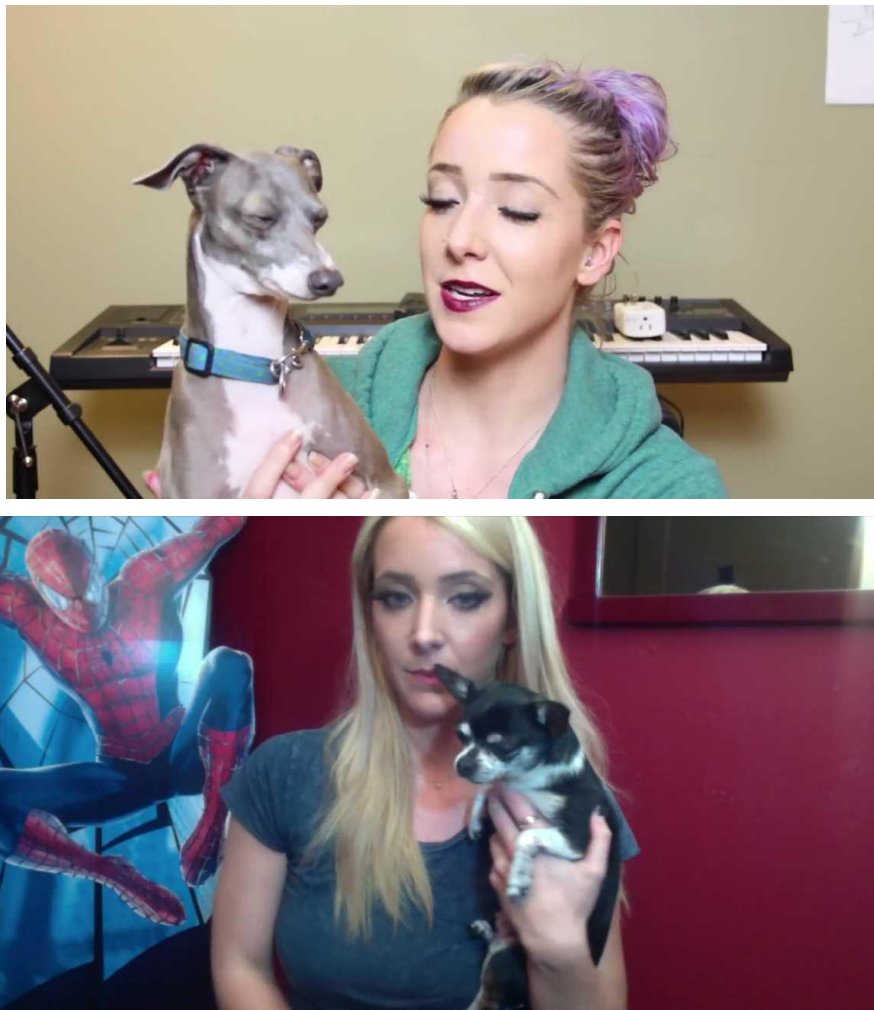


Figure 3 Jenna Marbles with her dogs

As a conclusion to this study, it must be said that even though it began as a search for new linguistic forms that evolved on the Internet, the analyzed features showed that the principles of traditional communication based on relations between people and language has stayed the same. It was just transposed into the so-called ‘new media’. There are no new linguistic forms

or new principles. The vocabulary has slightly changed as affected by the Internet, but it is an ongoing change of a language that will continue as every native speaker has the ability to enrich the language with new words. The only relevant change is that modes of communication are being combined faster than ever. It is visible in the structure of most of the language on the Internet because it is getting contracted and visually rearranged. But the **purpose of language and communication per se** stayed the same, and it seems as though it will always be the same.

4. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted as a preliminary analysis of multimodal features of YouTube videos. The all-encompassing subject of digital multimodality is still new in research and I think that this paper made a contribution to it, at least in the discourse of YouTube.

The ever increasing relevance of Web 2.0 and YouTube platform in communication between people, sharing information and connecting the world are discussed here as well as digital storytelling – a new way of presenting the old narratives. Notions such as community, channels, comments section and vloggers are something I dedicated the most attention to in the first part of the paper. In the second part of the paper, the situational analysis by Biber and Conrad as well as Ken Hyland's features of metadiscourse proved to be the most fruitful when it came to the analysis of multimodal features of YouTube videos. Throughout this part of the paper, I have shown that Jenna Marbles, as a prominent YouTuber, is dependent on formulaic expressions at the textual level and I have provided examples for that statement. What was concluded in the end was that her videos do not show any other agenda but simply to entertain and make potential audience laugh. A fixed set of expressions has proven to be welcomed in order to maintain the old audience and possibly attract newcomers. Many verbal examples serve as a proof of that set of expressions and Jenna's vocabulary altogether but they also serve as a representation of a typical language of a YouTuber.

In the end, I can conclude that YouTube videos represent an interesting as well as complex object of study and the analysis has much potential for further development. The paper I have produced is merely a scratch on the surface of possible analyses of the language of the YouTubers.

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Interview with Larry King – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9dj5WjFJFU>

Lonelygirl channel - <https://www.youtube.com/user/lonelygirl15>

Luis Fonsi channel – <https://www.youtube.com/user/LuisFonsiVivo/about>

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The rise of the tweenage vlogger by Jane Wakefield - <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-39641264>

Urban Dictionary – <https://www.urbandictionary.com/>

6. APPENDIX (LIST OF VIDEOS):

1. 'How to trick people into thinking you're good looking' - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYpwAtnywTk&t=1s>
2. 'White Lies' - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErLbge1PI80>
3. 'How To Dance Like A White Girl' - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1GZPjASWSo>
4. 'How Girls Pack A Suitcase' - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3qiXZRFmRY>
5. 'Things To Do Instead Of Cleaning Your Room' - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EvHwh9O9Tsg>
6. 'How I Used To Do My Makeup' - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnV5NYy8bAQ&t=120s>
7. 'How To Care For Your Cermet' - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1QOAd6o0C0>
8. 'Things I'm Bad At As An Adult' - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVA-4HqjZ4Y&t=191s>
9. 'Doing My Mom's Makeup' - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45eM2cd8Grk&t=44s>
10. 'Bad Habits' - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmt_kRyBbQM