A Cognitive Semantic Analysis of Vloggers' Mental Health Crises Experiences on YouTube

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Abstract

The current study is a cognitive semantic investigation of a sample of mental health-related narratives that are video-blogged (i.e. vlogged). The focal end is to examine how vloggers manage to construe their videos, their self, and other elements in the story world. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach to the YouTube videos by exploiting cognitive semantic theories in integration with complementary concepts, the study aims at tracking both construals of the overall vlogging personal narrative experience. It examines the preliminary conceptual blends that precedes the construction of the video/story world. It proposes a conceptual modelling for the overall configuration based on the vlogs genre addressed, namely personal experience of mental illness. Construal of specific elements in narratives were inspected encompassing the self with respect to other selves, viewers and experience. In order to achieve this purpose, the study employs Mental Spaces and Conceptual Blending Theory. In integration with the cognitive semantic theories, McNeill's narrative model has been exploited to depict the overall architecture of the video space. The study examines conceptual metaphors, force dynamics, viewpoint multiplicity, subjectivity, and stancetaking focusing on the introductory sections in three sample vlogs. The research came up with the findings that vloggers narratives manifest multiple versions of the self and shifts in viewpoints that are projected across the spaces unfolded. In addition, narrators tend to shift viewpoints and locate themselves in different spatial positions with their illness and their audience, which was encoded by deictic tools, tense, modality, while taking into consideration the virtual platform of YouTube.

Keywords: Vloggers, Mental Spaces, Stancetaking, Mental Illness, Blending.

1. Introduction

Mental illness has always been viewed by communities as one of the taboo topics. Those inflected are used to either suffer alone or else be socially stigmatized. This state of marginalization has been radically altered through active movements of opening up about mental illness which started to find its way in the recent few years. A movement that is led by mental health sufferers themselves disclosing about their experiences and advocating for their cause on social media platforms. Vlogging has been discerned to be one of the most powerful tools that has been widely exploited by individuals struggling with mental disorders in fighting the stigma through spreading their voices, which rendered a phenomenon worth of inspecting across various disciplines.

1.1. Vlogs and personal experience

Initiating as early as the 1990s, the virtual interactive communities, of what was primarily known as weblogs, truncated as blogs, started to acquire a notable popularity. Blogs are "journal based web sites that typically use content management tools to allow the others to post contents on the web sites". The derived verb 'blogging' denotes, thus, "the act of writing in a blog" (Gordon, 2006, p. 33). Conversely to "physical communities", blogs have been described by Keisler as one of the "virtual communities...(that) provide a way for people to socialize with others but also maintain a distance from others and can usually breakdown societal and organizational barriers" (as cited in Karakostas, Kardaras, Zichova, 2012, p. 64).

The vastly growing online activity, namely "vlogging has been a YouTube phenomenon since the site's inception in 2005". A vlog could be defined as "a personal video diary in which the vlogger addresses an online audience". It is an intimate way of self-expression, where "vloggers typically sit in front of a camera and express opinions or describe events from their daily lives" (Mustonen, 2017, pp. 1, 5). Furthermore, Wen, Yonghong, Tiejun, & Qiang (2010) confirm that "[I]n recent years, blogging has become an exploding passion among Internet communities. By combining the grassroots blogging with the richness of expression available in video". Accordingly, vlogs could be currently acknowledged as a "powerful new (multi)media" that "have gained much attention worldwide" (p. 1).

1.2. Health-Related Vloggers' Narratives

Health-related vlogs or else illness vlogs have evolved as one of the distinguished vlog genres. It is always associated with a vlogger disclosure of his/her experience with a specific health condition, which is typically introduced in the form of a narrative and is directed to the vlog's followers, i.e. also known as subscribers, or other external visitors. Health vlogs' patent distinction is ascribed to various factors, among which are the way they are delivered, the content they hold, the effect they have on their producers, and on

their viewers via the interactional features they offer. They prove to not be only a sharing tool in which patients talk openly about their challenging stories, but also as a healing tool. This has been scientifically proven across multiple studies (Kleinman 1988, Sandelowski 1991, Frank 1998), among others, as Heilferty (2009) explicates that "there is evidence that narrative expression can help to diminish the psychosocial side effects of illness" (p. 1540). She further elaborates that in such "online narratives"…,"patients articulate in rich detail" the multidimensional aspects of a critical period of their lives, when they are authentically publicly and personally attempting to explore, survive, challenge, and passing through conflicting feelings of frustration, fear, and hope. The richness of their story continues with the consolidation reflected by their viewers, where "they receive responses from and maintain relationships with family, friends, even strangers across many miles" (p. 1539). One more distinctive characteristic that applies to health vlogs, (and vlogs in general) is that the webcam allows its users to be viewed "on what is at once the biggest and smallest stage – the most public space in the world, entered from privacy of our own homes", thus the vloggers "exist in spaces—spaces that fluctuate between private and public" (Arduser, 2017, p. 69).

1.3.   Purpose of the Study

The current study aims at examining the construal of vlogging personal experiences about mental-illness crisis on YouTube as manifested through their own accounts. the current study aims to:

1- uncover the overall conceptual and narrative structure of YouTube vlogging experience as exhibited through mental health videos.

2- examine the conceptual representation of self and other elements presentation, such as stance taking and viewpoint multiplicity.

3- capture the similarities and differences in the video sample selected based on the type and time of occurrence of mental health problems.

1.4.   Research Questions

How could Mental Spaces Conceptual Integration Theory (MSCIT) function as an optimal conceptual model for representing the complex layers of YouTube vlogging about mental health crisis experience?

How far could McNeill's model prove compatible with the data, and MSCI theory?

What are the types of networks and vital relations depicted through the overall vlog setting and throughout the video content space?

What types of linguistic cues captured throughout the sample vlogs under study that manifest viewpoint shifts?

What types of stances depicted through the sample vlogs examined?

In what way does the type of mental illness, i.e. neurotic vs. psychotic mental illnesses or mental illness crisis recency (i.e. proximal (day to week before recording) vs. distal episodes) result in similarities or differences regarding the factors under examination?

1.5.   The Study Hypothesis

The study hypothesis that cognitive semantic-multidisciplinary integrational approach to mental illness vloggers narratives on YouTube could help provide insights into the conceptualization of their experiences in new media.

1.6.   The Study Rationale

This study aims to investigate a data category that is characterized by two compelling contextual aspects: the medium, YouTube, and the narrative genre, personal experiences with mental illness. As a relatively recent phenomenon, vlogging remains under-researched, particularly in the context of mental health videos. Sangeorzan, et al. (2019) highlight the scarcity of qualitative research on the use of YouTube for health-related purposes. Gordon (2006) declares that in spite of the growing popularity of vlogs, little research has been conducted "to study the vloggers community" (p. 63). While health vlogs have primarily been examined through the lens of psychology, psychiatry, and sociology, a cognitive linguistic/semantic analysis of mental health narratives presented by vloggers is conspicuously absent in the existing literature, to the best of my knowledge. Further, the growing applications of cognitive semantic theories in both fictional and non-fictional narratives, as well as new media, suggest intricate connections to broader aspects of human cognition. This study proposes to delve into these connections, offering insights into self-presentation in relation to personal experiences and interactions with others, thereby addressing the gap in the literature.

It is worth noting here that mental spaces and conceptual blending theory has been selected for its compatibility with the data under study, as oral personal narratives represent one of the means by which explicit linguistic expression provides insights into higher cognitive processes. It is also chosen for its structural integrational aspects with other phenomena such as viewpoint shifting and compression. These processes can be tracked through the configurations of spaces, the representations of different elements, and the mappings created throughout the course of meaning construction.

1.7.   Limitations of the study

The study is not meant to be quantitatively statistical in methodology, so the number of videos is limited with the aim of being representative of the data selected. In addition, for the sake of preciseness the types of mental disorders covered have been restricted to sample illnesses from each category of the two main types, namely neurotic and psychotic mental disorders. The study also is limited to vloggers personal productions on their own channels, where other sources and platforms, other than YouTube have been excluded. The study make reference to multimodality, however it does not intricately address the multimodal dimension in the data. These limitations, however, are still required to be addressed in future research.

1.8.   Statement of the problem

Vlogging in general and vlogging about personal mental illness experience is a significant relatively recent phenomena that is still under researched. Examining vlogs with respect to overall structure and content within the scope of cognitive semantic tradition is anticipated to provide in depth insights into vlogging in general and vlogging about different mental illness experiences in particular. Other interrelated phenomena that have been applied to multiple discourse genres (news reports, fictional and oral radio narrative) are still to be explored in relation to new medium such as vlogs such as viewpoint shifting, split selves, subjectivity and stancetaking.

2. The Methodology

The present research is a qualitative study that adopts a phenomenological approach to the data. A sample of 4 videos have been selected from YouTube, spanning from 2018 to May 2021. The chosen videos represent the genre under investigation, which includes personal narratives or experiences associated with either neurotic or psychotic mental illnesses. The focus is on vloggers sharing their experience with depression, anxiety, and panic attacks for the neurotic types, and schizophrenia, or schizoaffective disorder for the psychotic type.

The selection of videos will also be guided by the variation in vloggers' popularity, determined by the number of viewers and subscribers, ranging from hundreds to thousands. Videos of poor quality, characterized by low resolution, muted audio, or audio distortion, will be excluded. The duration of the videos will be capped at 30 minutes to maintain manageability of the data. In addition, no personal communication for permission will be established between the researcher and the vlogger due to the public nature of the data. However, videos without available transcripts will be eliminated, as the availability of a transcript

is a voluntary option set by the vlogger and could indicate copyright restrictions.

2.1. Procedures

Prior to the selection of candidate videos, filtering and categorization is then applied based on the aforementioned criteria. After thoroughly watching the videos, copying, and correcting automatically generated transcript typos and mistakes based on the original audio, each video would be analyzed through mental spaces conceptual integration theory, where an overall mental spaces configuration of the video is set out and preliminary emerging blends are signaled throughout transitions between narrative and extra-narrative spaces and sub-space, and across sub-spaces within the same space, through marked selective excerpts from the video following given cues such as tenses, deixis, among other tools. This goes concurrently with investigating linguistic markers as well as rhetorical significance of stance, degree of subjectivity, and different elements across mental spaces configurations. Accordingly, commonalities and differences are spotted out between video categories and findings and results are discussed based on the aforementioned research questions and hypotheses.

It is worth noting that studies in which Mental Spaces and Conceptual Integration Theory application to narratives are adapted in the analysis are consulted. Thus, examples of research work consulted in this study are Oakley (1998) on *Maus II: Survivor's Tale (vol. 2)*, Dancygier (2015) on *Raban's Travels narratives,* Sanders and Krieken on new narrative reports, in addition to Porto and Romano (2010) on Spanish personal radio narratives.

The Framework of analysis

3. Theoretical Framework

The analysis conducted on the data under study is carried out under the framework of computer mediated communication studies in general with adopting a semantic cognitive approach. It employs first; the mental space theory and its emergent descendant Mental Spaces Conceptual Integration Theory (MSCIT). This is in addition to drawing relevant concepts and principles from cognitive semantic rooted theories, such as conceptual as analytical tools for analyzing the verbal production supplied by the vloggers. Second; the analytical division combines the aforementioned theories with dissecting notions such viewpoint shifting, stancetaking, and force dynamics.

3.1. Computer-Mediated Discourse/Communication (CMD(C))

Research on computer-mediated discourse, in the linguistic sense, has started as early as the mid-1980s. The research in this area has obviously gained enormous floor with the revolutionary and vastly expanding web-mediated communication and social media platforms. Herring (2001) states that "CMDA

applies methods adapted from language-focused disciplines such as linguistics, communication, and rhetoric to the analysis of computer-mediated communication". Accordingly, it is, essentially, concerned with examining "online behavior" through studying emergent discourse patterns resulting from speakers' choices. Hence, these patterns show to be conditioned by "purely linguistic considerations, together with reflecting cognitive and social factors" (p. 4). As a result, through focusing on health problems related vlogs' narratives and viewers' interaction, the current study aims to contribute to computer mediated discourse studies, which is accomplished via employing cognitive-linguistically based relatively new theories, namely The Discourse Space and Mental Space theories, in addition to multimodal discourse analysis.

3.2. Cognitive Semantics

Springing from the cognitive linguistic tradition, which "is broadly concerned with investigating the relationship between language, the mind and socio-physical experience", cognitive semantics comes as one of the most developed branches of the field (Evans, 2009, pp. vi, vii). It is, particularly, concerned with examining "conceptual structure (knowledge representation), and conceptualization (meaning construction), or in other words the relationship between "experience, the conceptual system, and the semantic structure encoded by language". Hence, "Cognitive semanticists perceive "language as the lens through which cognitive phenomena can be investigated" (p. 25). Being set as a guiding approach (i.e. cognitive semantics) rather than a theory, different scholars within the field started to work on developing theories that though initially are distinct, yet are typically found to overlap with one another. Thus, principles from such theories as **Mental Spaces Conceptual Blending Theory,** and conceptual **Metaphor Theory**, along with complementary phenomena such as viewpoint and force dynamics are employed for the current study.

3.2.1. Mental Spaces Theory

Mental Spaces have been compared to "packets in which temporary online discourse information is stored". In addition, the discourse would not be managed without being able to maintain "track of the mental spaces already opened and the new ones that can be opened at any time" (Oakley & Pascual, 2008, p. 438). The main outline of the theory's structure is conventionally made up of one base space, also recognized as reality space and other branching ones. The input **base space** is specified as the one from where other projected spaces initiate and expand, interlinked with **space builders** that bond it with the divergent ones. This could best be sketched through the following diagram:
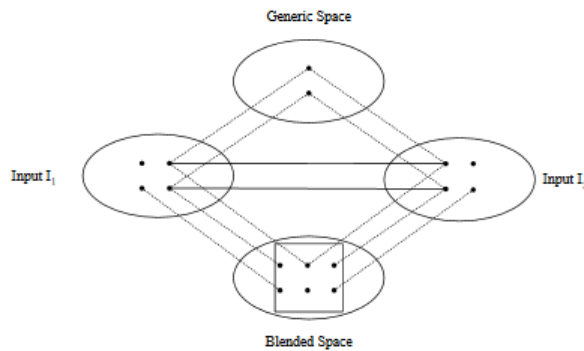
(Liu & Gao, 2010, p. 84) Fig. 1

Romano, Porto & Molina (2013) elucidate that by virtue of "*input narrative spaces* ... the narrator leads the hearer through incomplete, **fragmented** *narrative spaces*". These are connected through certain tools such as *space builders*, which include "attentional markers, such as discourse markers, tense shifts, personal pronouns, adverbial expressions, as well as repetitions, sighs, clicks, breathing, repairs, etc., that signal a new or discontinuous narrative segment with respect to previous ones". They encompass also *"narrative anchors",* these are the "linguistic expressions, concepts or ideas that are repeated or re-elaborated at different points in the narrative and which help the listener link the different spaces or the different fragments of a space". The input spaces network would eventually give rise to a "final emergent story" that *"arises through a gradually increasing network of cross-mappings and blends that come from multiple *input* narrative or mental spaces, signaled by the different *space builders*, and from the collective, shared background knowledge, i.e. generic space, that is going to help follow the stories and build a coherent global narrative" (pp. 73, 76).

3.2.2. Conceptual Blending Theory

According to Fauconneir and Turner (2002), the integrational network is composed of four spaces. Two input spaces, a generic space and the blend. The two inputs would be evoked based on the scene or the discourse given, whereas the generic space maps onto the two input spaces as it shares "what the inputs have in common". However, it has been argued later that the generic space is by itself an emergent property rather than an input. This postulation has been based primarily on viewing mental spaces as "scenes and scenarios" that are instantly activated as we think and talk, and not solely 'conceptual packets', which is a consequence of a direct engagement with the scenes, which renders the generic space as an output rather than an input space (Oakley & Pascual, 2017, p. 438). As for the blend, it designates the output constituted out of the elements projected from the input spaces, and as a result the prior cross mapping that took place between them.

3.2.2.1. Compressions and Vital Relations

Blending has been depicted as "a compression tool par excellence" (Fauconneir & Turner, 2002, p. 114). Blending via compression has been traced in human rituals, in sensory perception and sensation, as well as in persuasion and revelation (pp. 78-82). It is the "finer-grained structure" of the links between the

inputs. These types of conceptual links have been identified as "vital relations" (p. 92). Oakley and Pascual (2017) elucidate that vital relations provide the tenet of input spaces cross mappings, and blend composition between elements across any given network of spaces. Vital relations designate a wide scope of concepts such as "Time, Space, Cause-Effect, Change, Identity, Part-Whole, Representation, Category, Similarity/Difference (Analogy/Disanalogy), Intentionality, and Uniqueness" (p. 427).

3.2.2.2. Typology of Blends

Fauconnier and Turner (2002) specify the tenets of constructing "integration networks" which primarily draw on cross mappings, regulating frames and internal structure. Accordingly, blended or integrational networks have been classified into four types. These are the simplex, the mirror, the single-scope, and the double-scope blending networks. The simplex network is "one in which human cultural and biological history has provided an effective frame that applies to certain kinds of elements as values, and that frame is in one input space and some of those kinds of elements are in the other input space" (p. 120).

3.3. Viewpoint multiplicity in Discourse

Traveling across viewpoints has been explored in relation to various discourse types both fictional and non-fictional, being postulated as the convention in any given communicative act. This has been explicated by Dancygier (2021) portraying multiplicity of viewpoints as "the norm" rather than "an exception. Viewpoint multiplicity in narratives has been identified as a "window on core characteristics of human cognition", which has been found to "be introduced and managed in flexible and context dependent ways by linguistic elements of various kinds" (Verhagen, 2016, pp. 3, 4).

Parrill (2012) outlines some of the instances of viewpoint markers induced by linguistic cues, such as internal and external viewpoint expression via the use of pronouns. It has been evident that an internal viewpoint would more likely be induced by the use of second person pronouns, where readers or listeners would adopt a point of view inside the scene, whereas an external viewpoint is more likely induced by third person pronouns (pp. 99-100).

3.4. McNeill's narrative structure

In his research, McNeill (1992) investigates the structural dimension of narratives. His observations on narrative structural dimensions and his research on gesture have led him to define three levels that specify different narrative dimensions. The first of which is the narrative level, where the story world or in other terms the narrative space is presented. The narrative level sentences are characterized by being perceived by the listener as a "simulacrum of world occurrences in their actual order, following "a temporal constraint", which has been previously emphasized in previous works such as in Labov and Waletsky (1986), among others. The second level is recognized as the metanarrative level. This level designates references to the "structure of the story" at the time it is being

constructed, which implies perceiving the story and commenting on "as a unit" or "an event" per se, e.g. "it was a Sylvester and Tweety cartoon". The third level is identified as the paranarrative level, where storytellers "step out of the official narrator role (and) speak for themselves", e.g. "the first scene you see is…". This is perceived as the level at which the emphasis shifts on the interaction between the narrator to the listener, as could be evident in the interactional question: "have you seen any of the Bugs bunny cartoons?" (pp. 184-186).

4. The Analysis:

4.1. Mental Spaces skeletal configurations

The following section is composed of two main parts, the first of which dissects the preliminary stages of conceptual blending set up prior to the stage where extranarrative and narrative spaces are unfolded. It displays the skeletal mental spaces configuration as rendered by the case model vlogs inspected while underscoring demonstrative sample cases wherever required. The second part focuses on zooming in into the selected vlogs of mental health crisis, analyzing cases of retrospective vlogs with more panoramic retrospective accounts and recently experienced episodes of mental health crisis both neurotic and psychotic ones.

4.1.1. Setting up the Vlogging Scene: Preliminary Blends

In analogy to the backstage operations and mental complexity that accompanies all human activities, the process of vlogging has been found to be no exception. Inspecting the preliminary cognitive dynamics of the vlogs under study (also with the process in general), it has been found that the process is an outcome of a series of sequential blends, which run even in rather earlier stages to stepping into the story world or in other words the video blended space. The following sections examines instances of these initial blends while taking place on the YouTube platform adopting viewers' perspective at some points.

One of these primarily occurring blends is set via the role-value outer relation, which compress into Uniqueness in the blend. The role assigned to all content creators here is that of a 'vlogger', which is mainly recognized by internet users in general and YouTube users in particular. This is categorized as a *simplex network*, where input space 1 contains the role: vlogger, organized by content creation which shall be connected with the values as identified by the vlogger's real name that is either written down in the biographical identification in the channel's page or mentioned under the thumbnail screen. This is then compressed into uniqueness in the blend. This is portrayed in Emily's video as a model, where this preliminary conceptual mapping applies for all vlogs.

Fig. 2

Table 1		
Input space 1	**Input space 2**	**Blended space**
Role: Vlogger	Value: Emily	Role – value vital relation
-Organized by digital content creator frame. -Characterized by the intentional structuring and presentation of information in a way that communicates a specific message or narrative to the audience.	The value here is obtained from inferences conducted by the viewers via navigations through the channel and the video page.	Vlogger/Emily
This is a **simplex integration network** in which a "a frame to value connection is established between outer spaces, rendering uniqueness in the inner space.		

The product of the ***simplex network*** continues to be processed, as it becomes an input space in subsequent networks. This could be tracked in the vlogger/proper name turning to an input space that cross maps with the thumbnail input space 2 to be projected into a personalized, topic-oriented vlog spaces.

4.1.2. Componential architecture in thumbnail blends

Thumbnails are intended to "direct viewers' attention" towards selecting and taking the action of clicking it to proceed to the video world. Attention to thumbnail depends on the construction of an analogical blends that has its elements being selectively project from input spaces, yet subjectively as it depends on each viewer elements of attention. However, thumbnails are originally blends that are formed conventionally of a textual input and a multimodal input.

Each thumbnail could be regarded as a proposition which entails a story world that is about to unfold under the condition of taking the decision and action of clicking the thumbnail. This, therefore, suggests a ***blend*** that has an outer space vital relation of ***cause-effect.*** Hence, the viewer decision to click the thumbnail in one input space is an effect to a cause that is inhabited in another input space. The cause here could be identified as the psychological impact of the thumbnail on a specific viewer. A third input space here will be the thumbnail space itself where projection of part (selective projection) or the whole of its constituting elements take place in relation to individual viewers. The effect could be attributed to either the whole thumbnail blend or one or more selectively projected elements, which might be originating from the text or the visual image modes. Psychological motivation may also be not thumbnail triggered (internal motivation rather than external one), as an audience may be predetermined to watch the video either for solely educational interest or for being a regular follower of the vlogger. All sorts of psychological motivations (internal/external/both) would cross map with the effect which is the action of clicking located in input space 2, which lead to the viewer stepping into the anticipated video space which could be attested in fig. 3 below:

Fig. 3
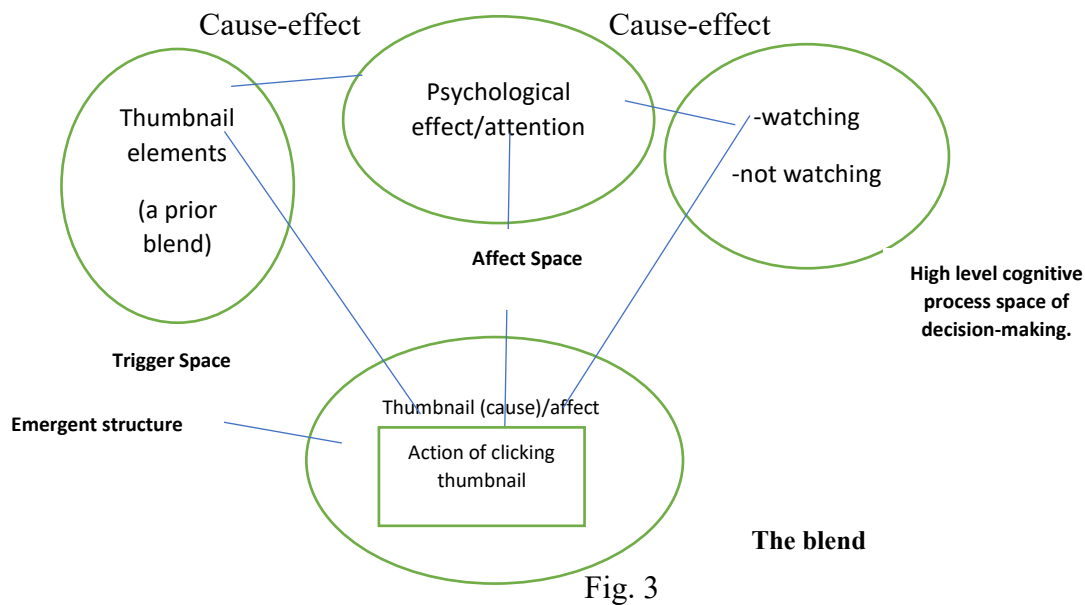
Based on the identification of multimodality as 'the coexistence of more than one semiotic mode within a given context' (Gibbons, 2012, p. 8), the thumbnail space shows to be an output that is constituted of a ***double scope network***. The network is constructed of two input spaces, one of which comprises the semiotic features (i.e. gestures, proxemics, etc.), whereas the second comprises elements that are triggered by means of the attached texts on the exhibited thumbnail. This goes in compatibility with Fauconnier (1994) enunciation of mental spaces as not being exclusively triggered and structured by the linguistic component. Emily's thumbnail is analyzed here as a representative model as follows:

Table 2		
Input space 1 (Image)	Input space 2 (caption)	Thumbnail Blend
Multimodal modes, e.g. postural behavior, gaze, gesture, proxemics, layout, etc.	This input space is built up by virtue of the speech builder nominal head 'Story', which entails an anticipated story space that from viewers' perspective would take place conditionally upon clicking the thumbnail and proceeding to watch the video.	A clickable image

Selecting proxemics and gestures in the case of Emily as an illustrative model of multimodal components, the vlogger chose to capture the whole video in a medium close shot, which shows only her face and the upper quarter of her body. This limits the background view to a limited part of what shows to be her own room. The medium close shot shows to be predominantly favored by the majority of vloggers under study here as well as generally. Such framing of a medium close shot allows viewers to see the vlogger's facial expressions, body language, and gestures more clearly. This can create a sense of engagement and intimacy, as viewers feel closer to the vlogger and can better connect with their emotions and reactions the multimodal modes depicted in Emily's case would include the proxemics of the medium close shot of the vlogger, the gaze, in which the eyes are directed up and left, implying as a result a visual construction of a remembered imagery.

It could be pointed out that the thumbnail could be metaphorically conceived of as a book cover. This could be maintained by virtue of establishing an outer space relation between an input space 1, which comprises the conceptual frame of a book cover, with its title and other front cover elements. The second blend comprises the text and the multimodal dimension of the thumbnail, where each element cross maps with its counterpart. The organizing frame of the blend is recruited from books space, rendering *a single scope network* in which thumbnails perception as book covers with titles (video title), author (vlogger), and competing designs of book covers/ customized images for the purpose of enticing readers/viewers to open the book/click the video. This mapping of the book frame unto YouTube images renders such analogy between book covers and thumbnails.

Vloggers tend to utilize various techniques that reflect various representations through amalgamation of both image and text in the thumbnail in their attempt to grasp viewers' attention. Signaling attention system, i.e. where both *alerting* and *orienting* comes to be activated as parts of the signal attention system in relative degrees to particular phrases. This could be evident through analyzing two sample (Emily's and Lauren's) video captions, which represent the textual space in the thumbnail blend as could be observed in the caption: **"EMILY'S STORY: PSYCHOSIS" by Emily**. The vlogger here shows to conceptually distance herself from her experience with mental illness. This could be evident by virtue of using her name in 'Emily's story' instead of using the more conventional 1st personal possessive pronoun 'my', which results in maintaining a distance between her social, vlogging self or subject of consciousness and one aspect of Emily's self,

that is the experiencing (mentally distorted) self. This could be interpreted as a self-protection strategy, where she maximally objectified her experiencing self, placing it 'on-stage' using the omniscient **proper name 'Emily'** as an alternative of 'I', thus yielding an ***optimal viewing arrangement***. In opposition, the subject of consciousness is sent to the background, or off stage as it acts here as an observer, which leads to a total immersion of the cognizer, which she seems to choose consciously or subconsciously to maximally separate from.

The nominal 'story' here is part of the thumbnail blend so it does not function as a space builder in the video multileveled narrative spaces which are yet to synchronically take place with playing the video. The colon separating the two nominals, namely 'Emily' and 'psychosis' could be an indication of denial that this psychosis is not attached to the same self as hers, which is enhanced by maximally objectifying herself by mentioning her name rather than an 'I'**.** The attention here is distributed equally among the two nominal phrases (Nps) due to being stranded and separated by a colon, rendering two units of conceptions. This comes in addition to being both written in capital. The effect of capitalization has been allocated to '***alerting***' as an element of attention. This is asserted by Oakley (2009) stating that "alerting correlates with typographic phenomena in written communication, such as ALL CAPITAL spellings or **bold face** type". The nominal phrase (Np) 'Emily's Story' suggests an external viewpoint rather than an internal one.

4.1.3. Dynamics of viewer-vlogger virtual meeting

It is worth noting here that the action of vlogging takes place when the vlogger decides to talk to the camera and post the video on YouTube. A vital relation, thus is established where the camera is cross mapped into the audience, rendering projection of camera/audience in the blend, where the camera becomes representative of the viewers, which takes place along with the projection of the vlogger's/name (role-value) from input space This could be categorized as a ***multiple scope network*** as it is organized by two frames, namely the digital camera frame, and human frame.

Setting the general mental space configuration of the vlogs examined, it should be first discerned that the inspected videos can solely be conceived as products of "Blended Classic Joint Attention" (BCJA) (Turner, 2017). According to Turner, the principle is analogues to the conventional classic joint attention, which involves agents sharing common spatiotemporal grounds and physical presence. The can best be interpreted as "a scene we understand by blending the scene of classic joint attention with other things that do not in fact fit that scene, in order to make them fit that scene in the blend" (p. 3).

Having an asynchronous online experience between a vlogger who record a video at a point in time in one space meeting with a viewer who plays and watches the vlogger speaking at different time is a product of an integration network. This is accomplished by virtue of cross mapping different times from two input spaces and linking them via the vital relation of TIME. This is conceptually further processed into compression in the inner space. Having different times coming together as

synchronically taking place is categorized as scaling TIME vital relation. In addition, the viewer steps virtually into the vlogger's place of recording the video, which is in most cases a room in their house. This creates a link between the vlogger and the viewer input spaces which projects into the viewer sharing the same location of the vlogger via SPACE vital relation.
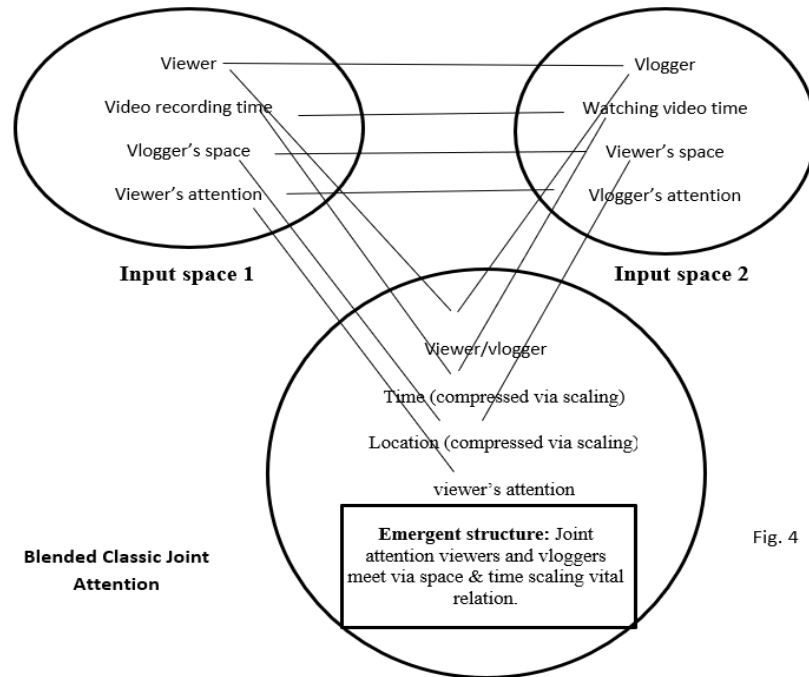

Fig. 4

To elaborate, the blend reflects the outer space relation that is established between the two elements, namely the vlogger and the viewer who both projects concurrently into the blend. They come together and meet in the blend at the same exact time and the same location. The vital relation of TIME and SPACE is **scaling** for both, as scaling is characterized by the compression of TIME and SPACE, in which two events in different temporal and spatial dimensions take place concurrently and at a common place respectively. This conforms with Oakley (2008), elucidating that "complex human behaviors and abilities never occur in a vacuum; in fact, they will not even get off the ground without shared attention" (p. 287).

The blend, however, is characterized by certain peculiarities regarding the awareness and the perceptual access capabilities for each of the members projected. Though sharing common virtual space, yet it is the viewer who exclusively has access to see the vlogger. The vlogger in turn is aware of the audience presence at the time of recording the video despite the lack of perceptual visual or auditory access to him/her. The viewer and the vlogger are projected at the blended space as separate elements, yet what makes them confronted in the blend is scaled TIME and SPACE vital relations. This has been also termed as **"anticipated grounds"** by Sanders and Van Krieken (2018) in news world narratives, which when applies here

denotes that vloggers narrative is construed by their expectation that the viewer watches the video on the day it is recorded (p. 300).

The viewer has perceptual visual and auditory access to the vlogger face, as most vlogs under analysis capture a close up to a medium close-up shot. The background is frequently part of their bedroom, or another room. In such cases of an uncomplete image as a whole one, thus, a face and a part of the room in the thumbnail are linked by part-whole vital relation to a whole person and a whole room, compressing into identity in the blend. In addition, representation gets at work as well linking a real person and setting in a reality space with virtual counterparts in the virtual space, leading to compression into identity in the blend. In addition, metonymy or part whole vital relation could be at work, connecting the vogger's face to the whole body, and the background to the whole place she is recording the video at. The part-whole vital relation in both cases is compressed into Identity in the input space. The narrative episodes and different instance that took days, months, or years are timely compressed via time syncopating vital relation across mental spaces.

4.1.4. Vlogs Mental Spaces Configuration

Drawing on the priorly constructed simplex network, viewers get themselves engaged with the vlogger in a multiple leveled structured discourse that could be tracked down through the constellation of mental spaces unfolded via the vlogging context. Adopting vloggers' perspectives, it could be discerned that the deictic center is based in the ***origo***, that is the now, here and I. These reference points are located in the Base space, which is according to Fauconnier (1998) "an anchor for the configuration, often the space we start in" (p. 73). Considering the vlogging context, the base space comprises someone whose setting is a room, and who indulges in the vlogging activity by means of using vlogging equipment such as the camera, a mic, and a ring light. Moreover, this space hosts vlogger's purpose of making the video usually abducted from projections from the thumbnail blend and the video page. Moreover, the anticipated viewers occupy the base space as well.

The Base space represents the physical real components of the video elements. It encloses the priorly constructed joint attention blended space, with the three video blended spaces embedded in. Projections, cross mappings, and viewpoint shifting, as well as alternation in focus are all at work as would be demonstrated through different levels of the video. Three basic spaces as depicted through the videos. These are the metanarrative, the narrative, and the paranarrative spaces. Each of these spaces is a product of a blend that constitutes a multimodal space (vlogger's face, posture, eye gaze, hand gesture, …), and a speech instigated space, which is a recurrent process for all the main spaces initiated in the base space.
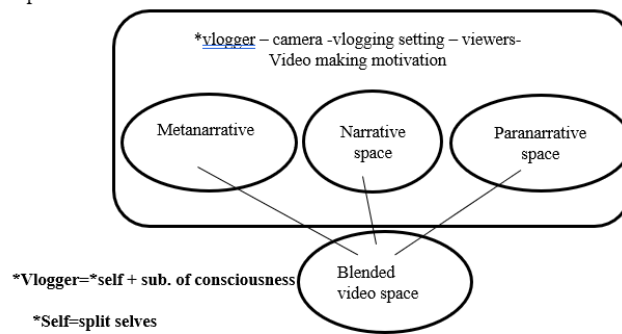
Fig. 5

Fig. xx Main outline of video blending configuration

Metanarrative and paranarrative are part of an extranarrative space and are in turn interconnected with the narrative space. Similarly, to the narrative space, they are composed of a plethora of spaces, subspaces, and blends, which are dissected throughout the upcoming sections.

4.1.4.1. Architectural Configurations of Extranarrative and Narrative Spaces

Zooming closer into the structure of each of the main input spaces, narrative space could be first generally modeled as illustrated through the following space configuration:
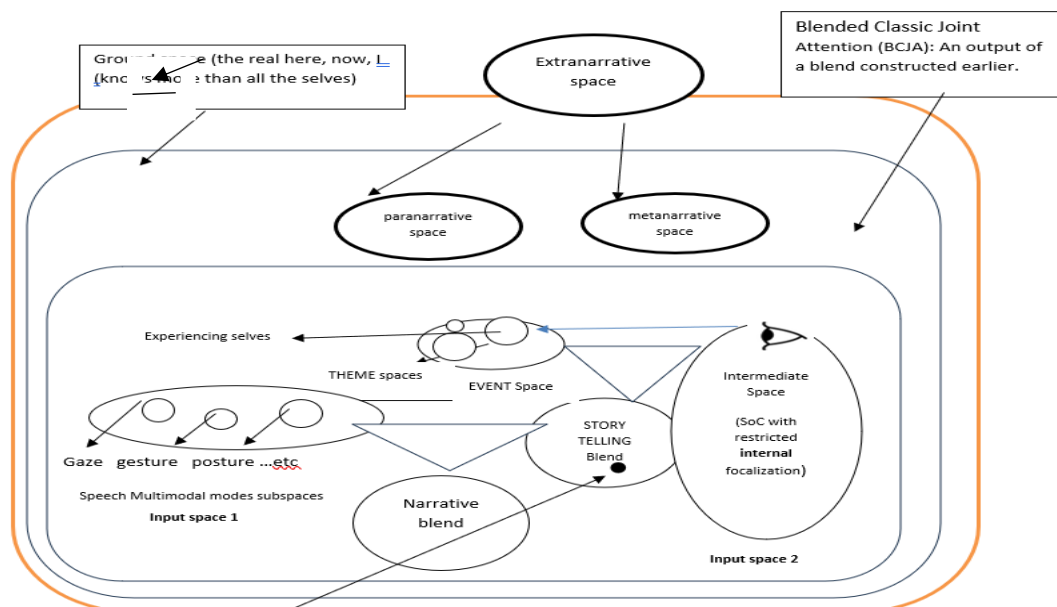
Vlogs postulated Megablend   Fig. 6

Analogously to the narrative space, metanarrative and paranarrative spaces are embedded within the Blended Classic Joint Attention space or what could be alluded to as a virtual base/ground space. Additionally, they are, at many cases, discerned to be constructed at an earlier stage of the video before the set-up of the narrative space as could be detected through the second section of the analysis given below. They also are presumed to be activated, or else have new spaces opened intermittently which may take forms of commentary or evaluation, which shall be investigated in the next sections.

The STORYTELLING space is an output blend that is constructed of the EVENT input Space and the INTERMEDIATE input space. The EVENT space encompasses elements within the story world such as occurrences, state of affairs, experiencing selves, and spatiotemporal dimensions. It is composed of THEME embedded spaces and subspaces that frequently cross map through outer and inner vital relations with other spaces. The INTERMEDIATE space is adapted from Sanders and Van Kreiken (2018), where it "serve[s] an elaborative function in which protagonists explain their motives and desires that drive their actions" (p. 300). It, thus, holds typically an internal viewpoint of the experiencing selves as well as other characters at the time of event, state of mind, etc. It is also marked by "a restricted field of vision", which here could be interpreted as the subject of consciousness or else the cognizer appraising or commenting on one aspect of/or an experiencing self. It has the subject of consciousness active during or around the time of events or occurrence of state of affairs. It might, therefore, encompass mental, emotional, and perceptual processes taking place by a split subject of consciousness in relation to observed and evaluated experiencing selves together with other elements.

This configuration goes in alignment with Lakoff (1996) speculation at which he addresses selfhood in terms of "the *Divided-Person Metaphor*, according to which a person, a single entity", is conceived as two entities, namely the subject and the self (p. 99). The Subject in turn represents the "locus of consciousness and rationality, the center of all subjective experience". As for the self, it encompasses "at the very least our bodies, our emotions, and that part of us that acts in the world" (p. 102). The following diagram proposes a depiction of the hierarchy of subject of consciousness (SoC) and selves as could be detected throughout the narratives:
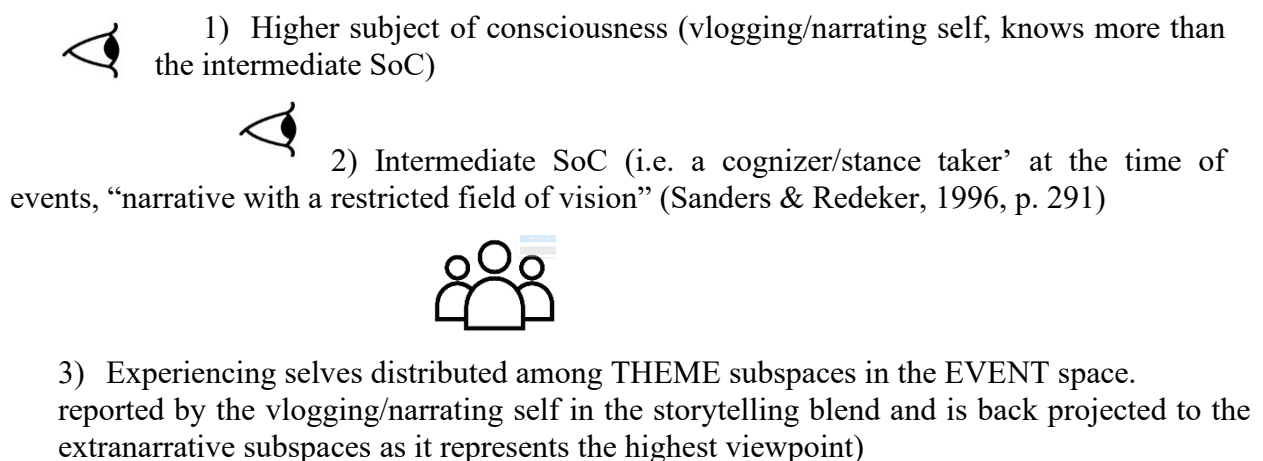
1) Higher subject of consciousness (vlogging/narrating self, knows more than the intermediate SoC)

2) Intermediate SoC (i.e. a cognizer/stance taker' at the time of events, "narrative with a restricted field of vision" (Sanders & Redeker, 1996, p. 291)

3) Experiencing selves distributed among THEME subspaces in the EVENT space. reported by the vlogging/narrating self in the storytelling blend and is back projected to the extranarrative subspaces as it represents the highest viewpoint)

Fig. 7

In analogy to the narrative blend, both the *metanarrative,* and the *paranarrative level* render two blended spaces. As for the metanarrative blend, it consists of a *multimodal metanarrative space* and a *presentation space* in which the vlogger is assigned the role of a vlogger/presenter/content creator. This role conforms with McNeill (1992) identification of the metanarrative level structure as referencing "the story about the story" (p. 185). Rodríguez (2022)

further explains that the metanarrative level "consists of metalinguistic references to the structure of the story" (p. 307). Concerning the *paranarrative level*, it is signaled by stepping outside the storyline. It is marked by references "to the context where the storytelling is happening". This, for instance, can be evident in the speaker abandoning the "role of narrator and giv[ing] his or her opinion about the events in the story, make a reference to an interlocutor, or address his or her audience" (Rodríguez, 2002, p. 307).

In this section analysis of excerpts from different vlogs parts of retrospective videos about mental illness narratives (neurotic and psychotic) is conducted. Through their narratives, the vloggers establish a network of input spaces that is embedded in a narrative space.

5.2. Part Two: Analysis of excerpts in three vlogs' introductory sections

5.2.1. The case of Kris as representative of retrospective neurotic narratives

The following videos are created and posted by three vloggers who decided to share their experiences about their struggle with mental illness on their YouTube channels. The first video was posted on the popular Kallmekris channel. In this vlog, Kris discloses her struggle with neurotic mental illness. The video is entitled "My Story: Battling Mental Illness", was posted on May 26, 2021, and has been viewed by 2,760,992 viewers. The vlogger is considered a celebrity as her channel has hit a total number of 8.57 million subscribers by the time of current study. This video is considered a deviation from the conventional content she used to create and present on her channel, as her channel is more focused on presenting entertaining content. The introductory section, aka; the introductory chapter in YouTube world, of Kris goes as follows:
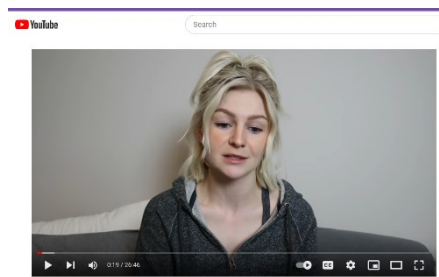
Kris   (Fig. 8)

- **Kris**: Hello everybody *I* am callmeChris and *you can* (*effective deontic stance-permission*) call me Chris and **today we're** talking about some more serious stuff um since it is mental health awareness month *I* and because *I've gotten* so many requests to talk about my mental health journey and stuff that *I've gone* through that has gotten me **here**…

In the previous excerpt, Kris uses the trans-spatial operator copular verb 'to be' in the identification sentence 'I am callmechris (and you can call me Kris). This sentence result in the mapping of the role: vlogger unto the values (vlogger's name) rendering the blend (vlogger/Kris as The channel's name is also mapped unto the channel's name as well, which assign both values to the same role, rendering identifying the vlogger by both her real name and her

YouTube identity name. The spatiotemporally virtual shared space is verbally manifested through the adverbials 'today' and 'here' respectively. Functioning also as a space builder, 'today' builds up a temporal space in which the vlogger meets the viewer in the *paranarrative space*.

It could be noted that the adverbial spatial 'here' could also bear the metaphorical implication of 'to this point in life'. *Proximal deictic expressions* could be notably traced to verify the integration and subsequent compression in the spatiotemporal dimension (i.e. projected from the BCJA) and to make a vlogger-to-viewer personal meeting possible in the virtual space. This could be further demonstrated linguistically through the use of present tense, which designates a state of momentarily face to face interaction. Kris use of personal pronouns has been noticed to bear *viewpoint shift* at some instances, which is enhanced by a shift in tense as well. This could be attested in the transition from *I* (internal viewpoint) to *you* (external viewpoint). She uses second person pronoun '*you*', which is anaphoric to '*everyone*', followed by intimate request of casually calling her 'Chris', thus boosting the intimate rapport with her viewers.

The virtual common floor in the blend is further corroborated by the use of the first person plural inclusive '*we*', which is followed by the present continuous in "*we're talking about some serious stuff*" to engage her addressee at a timely compressed space within an external narrative space. Viewpoints are filtered through the vlogging/narrating self. It could be noted here that the use of '*we*' could strategically signify her attempt to hide herself amongst the side of her addressee before openly presenting her suffering *experiencing I self*. Additionally, the first reference to *experiencing self* has been presented in the *paranarrative space* (excerpt a). This could be attested through the subclausal "stuff that *I*'ve gone through" marked by the *I+present perfect*, which signals *a past self* that has been living an experience that has been affecting her life up till the moment of the video recording.

Kris shows clear tension between two versions of the vlogging/narrating self across counterpart spaces, namely the *hesitant self* and the *determined self*. The hesitant self is placed in a relatively recent past relative to the now of the virtual dimension, which is evident in the past space opening 'I thought' vs. the later use of the present '*I think*' associated with the determined self-version. Different stances are therefore revealed against the presupposition, namely vlogging about personal experience, which is demonstrated through the excerpt below:

I thought (*epistemic cognitive evidentiality stance*) *it* would be a good time (*epistemic modality*) uh to talk about *this stuff* and I've been holding off *doing this*…because *It's* just a *it's* a very *touchy subject* for me *but I* think (*epistemic cognitive evidentiality stance) it's* really important (*effective stance: assessment*) to talk about *this stuff* …

- **Input space 1 (belief space)**: constructed via the space builder (*I thought*), has the elements: hesitant self encoded by present perfect progressive and past

tense attested in 'thought' & 'have been holding off', is managed by internal viewpoint encoded by the personal pronoun (I), psychologically driven reasons, encoded by referring to the topic as 'a very touchy subject

- **Input space 2 (counterfactual space)**: constructed via the space builder, contrastive 'but', marking thus a counterpart-counterfactual space which is set up in contrast to input space 1, with more firm belief and decision of making this particular vlog in which she beats her fear of talking about her mental health struggles.

A belief subspace is constructed in the *metanarrative space* by virtue of the space builder, construction *'I thought'* (sub.+ mental state verb). This space comprises two counterpart spaces with the hesitant self, beliefs, social pressure of stigmatization, and fear of judgement, etc. placed in space 1 and determined self, placed in space 2, along with sharing driving reasons, that include social and ethical commitment of raising awareness, fighting stigma and helping other sufferers. The elements selectively projected from these spaces, result in the projection of the determined version of the self, along with few hesitant self-rationale, which is reflected through the linguistic evidence. Exchanging the mental illness or her personal experience with the cataphoric 'it' (4 times) in addition to using the referring expressions 'this stuff' (twice), 'touchy subject" and referring to vlogging about the matter as "designate the apparent hesitation and self-conflict of the vlogger, placing herself slightly at an emotional distance from her mental illness experience at the video beginning, which is postulated to be altered towards the end.

Transitioning to the *narrative space*, kris initiates from a present tensed negated sentence that is led by the agent I acting as a cognizer and expressing the narrating self in the narrative input space. The starting commentary sentence here is regarded as a narrative base space from in the *narrative space*, as other narrative subspaces are embedded in. This space is characterized by being launched from a narrating time of a now and here which is a projection from the origo in the BCJA. A temporal shift soon takes place as soon as the prepositional phrase "*in the middle school*" is mentioned. The prepositional phrase acts as a *space builder* for input *narrative space 1*, which hosts a number of subspaces some of which combine to form narrative blends, which could be attested in the following excerpt:

> **Kris*: …I*** don't even know where to start to be honest *I* guess I will start *(effective attitudinal stance towards reciting her personal experience).* ***in middle school*** because that's kind of when everything started um *I* was diagnosed pretty young with depression ***my mom*** had and still suffers with depression um but ***she*** knew *(epistemic cognitive evidentiality stance)* a lot about it and ***she*** could <u>see</u> the signs in ***me*** uh when *I* was younger um *I* just would (effective attitudinal stance) isolate ***myself I*** was not very social outside of school and sports and stuff that kind of forced me to be social and I just was not ever happy um I pretended to be happy a lot uh something *I* got really

really good at… so *I* would (*effective attitudinal stance*) just always um put on this happy mask and tell jokes and make everybody smile….

Encoded by the subject *I*, and followed by a passive voice; Kris introduces her first younger experiencing self (input subspace 1). Initiating in a passive voice foregrounds the loss of control and vulnerability from the very beginning. A second input analogues space (input subspace 2) is built up immediately initiated by virtue of the Np space builder '*my mom*'. This renders an integrational network in which Space 1 inhibiting the elements; kris's younger self, depression, lack of awareness of depression and past temporal dimension maps onto space 2, hosting the elements; mom, further past temporal dimension (of diagnosis), depression, high awareness of depression. This mapping takes place by the workings of analogy between the vlogger's experiencing younger experiencing self and her mother in a past time. In the blend, the mother and her daughter are projected separately, however by virtue of time scaling compression vital relation, they come to exist at the same time of kris's diagnosis, where the mother's earlier self brings her experience and awareness of depression signs. This stresses kris's mother's role in diagnosing her daughter by recalling her earlier symptoms she experienced herself.

A shift in viewpoints from the vlogger/narrating self to the mother's takes signaled by the use of she+past tense which is enhanced by the pronoun being followed by the cognitive and perceptual predicates (knew and could see) respectively. This has been recognized as an "implicit viewpoint by a narrative subject of consciousness (she), where "Implicit viewpoints guide readers into interpreting the described events from the viewpoint of this subject of consciousness rather than the narrator" (Sanders and Van Krieken, 2019, p. 291). The narrator continues the sentence by putting herself onstage via objectifying herself in the prepositional phrase 'in me'.

A new subspace 3 is built up by the temporal conjunction 'when' which hosts an earlier younger self of Kris, attaching the quality of 'the way she behaves'. This space hosts the metaphorical mapping *"CONSTRAINT ON SUBJECT BY SELF IS FORCIBLE CO-LOCATION OF SUBJECT WITH* SELF" (Lakoff, 199. 13). In addition, based on force dynamics, the subject of consciousness is classified as an antagonist '*I*' that exerts constraint of isolation over the agonist, namely '*myself*'. Social force dynamics continue to play a role in the next phrase "sports and stuff…forced me to be social" where the objectified self encoded by the agonist 'me' was beaten by the social force, antagonist, encoded by social activities 'sports and stuff'. This is further enhanced by the vlogger disclosure of never being happy, but rather pretending as being so. This quality of the self has been corroborated by "*THE REAL SELF IS INSIDE, THE PUBLIC SELF IS OUTSIDE*" conceptual metaphor, encoded by the phrase 'put[ing] on this happy mask", in which the PUBLIC SELF is not necessarily compatible with the Subject's values" (Lakoff, 1992, p. 20)

5.2.2. The case of Emily as representative of psychotic narratives

The next vlog is by Emily, a mental illness sufferer who decided to share her personal experience with psychosis, a condition where an individual can experience a disconnection from reality. This vlog is one of the most viewed on her channel, reaching up to 19,124 views by the time of this study. The video is entitled My story: Psychosis/Mental Health, and was posted Aug 17, 2018 on her channel <u>Emily Newman</u>. Emily has been noticed to follow a different strategy in the opening part of her introductory section as could be viewed in the excerpt below:

Emily   (Fig. 9)

a) ***Emily***: *so **I** guess this is my **I** guess (epistemic stance/hedge) my story and this is kind of serious and **I'm** kind of scared to put **this** out there but **I** think (cognitive epistemic stance/hedge) **it** needs (deontic impersonal effective stance) to happen not just for **me** but **for other people** to see and understand life takes **you** on a path (**it** can be extremely unpredictable and that's where **it's** kind of taken **me** **I** want to (deontic stance: volition) just need some definitions before **I** get into what happened…*

Emily initiates her video by setting up a ***metanarrative*** space, which comprises story space constructed by the space builder construction (discourse marker (so) +I+hedging verb) 'so I guess'. This space has the vlogging self, the video, the video posting and associated stance (feelings and judgments led by the cognizer of SoC). This excerpt is led by the vlogging/narrating self viewpoint (i.e. I and you represents an internal viewpoint, though there is a switch to an external viewpoint as attested in 'it need, it's …taken me") in the ***metanarrative*** space. This vlogging self, however, splits here into two counterparts across two mental subspaces, whose elements are selectively projected to a blended space. The counterpart spaces could be schematized as follows:

- **Subspace 1:** hesitant self, stance (judgment, feelings) encoded syntactically by the personal pronoun+present tense I guess, this is kind of serious, I'm kind of scared.

- **Subspace 2:** determined self, stance (judgment, feelings) encoded by deontic stance in 'it needs to happen', verbs of perception in 'for people to see and understand'. The former phrase also is noticed to render the conceptual metaphor '**KNOWING IS SEEING'**.

The elements in both spaces represent the tension and fear of sharing personal story of a highly sensitive content with open ended number of viewers. This is manifested through the counterpart spaces postulated as well as by transitioning from 'I' to a generic 'you', signaling as a result a compressed viewpoint through which a more commonly shared view of life is presented. This places the vlogger and the viewer in the same experiencing group, which lessen the feeling of discomfort for a second before she shifts to place herself through the pronoun 'me' on stage as a powerless object in the newly constructed input subspace 3, with life, vlogger, viewers, who are mapped onto the conceptual metaphor '**LIFE IS A JOURNEY'**, having the vlogger and viewers (values) mapped onto the passengers (role) who are encountered constantly (frequency is encoded here by the present tense) by unfamiliar and 'unpredictable' routes. The mapping of the passengers narrows down to the vlogger herself as she objectifies herself 'life …taken me', and placing life as an agent who has the power to control and drive people along scary paths. Based on force dynamics, life here is the antagonist who pushes people (agonists), including the vlogger, against their will powers.

The vlogger tends to place a distance between herself and her story, which is about to unfold before an open-ended audience through devices of repetition (I guess, my), interruption (this my I guess…my) as well as using the hedge "guess". This is in addition to using the indexical 'this', which though signals proximity, yet implies vloggers' tendency of avoiding an explicit mention of the topic's name. This is also discerned with the pronoun '*it'*, which both replace the more elaborate phrases, namely 'this' for this video/personal experience and it for video/opening up/talking about her psychosis', which enhances the sense of reluctance to start the *narrative space*.

Emily next moves on to the *narrative space*, however she temporary shifts to the *paranarrative* space, before returning back to the narrative space, which could be noticed through the following excerpt:

*Emily: ...what **I** went through is called psychosis those who don't know what it is the definition of it is a mental disorder characterized by disconnection from reality…when it happened the best way that **I** can (effective-deonticity) explain it is it's almost as if you're not yourself anymore **I** pretty much lost myself and **I** am very very very fortunate to have the people that **I** do in my life and the friends **I** have...what psychosis can be is a breaking point where **you** kind of lose **your** sense of reality ... one example is thinking that someone is in **your** house when they're not thinking that people are around **you** when they're not thinking that the computer is talking to **you** and **I** think **I** experienced all these things within that **I** think (epistemic cognitive evidentiality stance) is a month and kind of what happened was my brain thought that the world was kind of out to get me in a way you kind of feel like no matter where **you** go someone's*

*gonna either hurt **you** someone's trying to hurt **you** mentally not physically and your reality kind of like disappears and **I** think (epistemic cognitive evidentiality stance) the scariest part of it was me knowing what was going on in my mind…*

It could be discerned that the previous excerpt initiates in the subclausal '***what I went through…', is a space builder*** which sets up a psychosis experience space that comprises an experiencing self that is encoded by the personal pronoun I+past tense constructions (I went through, I lost,). This space is interconnected with the intermediate ***narrative space*** that is inhibited by the subject of consciousness. This goes broadly under '***Divided self Metaphor***', where the vlogger keeps attempting to express the way psychosis feels like through such expressions as '**you're not yourself anymore", "I…lost my self", "you…lose your sense of reality".** A clear distinction of separate self entities is rendered via the previous expressions. This has been conceptualized in terms of "**CONSTRAINT ON SUBJECT BY SELF IS FORCIBLE POSSESSION**" (p. 16) conceptual metaphor, where vlogger's subject of consciousness loses control over the self.

The vlogger turns rapidly to the ***paranarrative space***, starting a "faceless stance" (no marked stance detected) of a factual definition space of 'psychosis', before shifting back to the ***narrative space*** once again using the narrative space activating temporal subclausal "when it happened…", which takes the viewers back in time again to the time of psychotic episode occurrence. The viewer now has more knowledge about the mental illness as the pronoun it by virtue of access principle, according to which "an expression which names or describes an element in one mental space (paranarrative definition subspace) can be used to access counterpart of that element in another mental space" (Fauconnier, 1997, p. 41).

Emily keeps shifting focus across both the ***paranarrative*** space, and ***narrative space*** as well as shifting viewpoints. This is marked by the use of I and you. The frequent use of 'you' (8 times) signals a frequent traveling to the ***paranarrative*** space. The second person pronoun tends to be generic. It represents a compressed viewpoint, blending both the experiencing self and the viewers. Rhetorically speaking, the use of you functions as a device for maintaining emotional distancing through which the narrator presents her experience, while emotionally protecting herself. She shifts to the ***narrative space***, using the epistemic stance marker '***I think'***, which activates the ***narrative space*** of the experiencing self, which could be detected by the use of the past tense (***I experienced***). The first ***I,*** as a result, in ***I think*** signifies the vlogging/narrating self in which a higher viewpoint is held. As for the second ***I occurrence, it*** signifies the experiencing past self which could be deduced from the switch in tenses, that is from present to past.

4.2.3. The case of Emelie as representative of recent psychotic episode

The third vlogger's narrative, entitled The Worst Psychosis in my life, is by <u>Emilie and posted on her Emilieolesenlife</u> channel. In her narrative, Emilie shares her latest psychotic episode details with her audience. Her video recorded 53,207 views and was posted on June 25, 2019. The following excerpt represents the introductory section of the vlog:
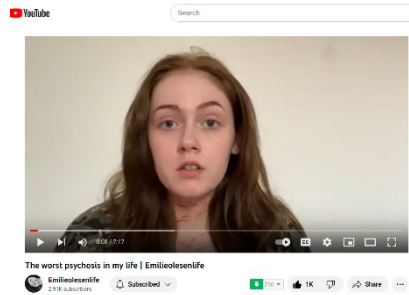
Emilie   (Fig. 10)

*hi everyone welcome to my channel and welcome to **this** video which is **gonna** be about **my** life's worst psychosis **I** have ever been in which happened **yesterday**…*

Emilie starts by building up the ***paranarrative*** space via contacting with her viewers, welcoming them to her channel. This takes place before she shifts rapidly to the ***metanarrative*** space, where the focus transitions to the 'this video' and it content. She swiftly moves from her origo deictic center of a BCJA here and now in the extranarrative spaces to the ***narrative space*** using the temporal adverbial 'yesterday'. This adverbial space builder starts a new temporal space at which the vlogger/narrating self is expected to begin her narrative. The viewer, as a consequence, projects his now and here to Emilie's yesterday. Emilie abruptly starts her story, where the transition takes place as follows:

*…story is that **I** had not slept for hours and **I** was shaking **I** couldn't eat and **I** don't know (epistemic cognitive evidentiality stance) how **it** got to **that this** point but um suddenly **I** thought (epistemic cognitive evidentiality stance) a demon was in my apartment like a real Dean real if **you** believe in that a demon not like like a goofy demon like a real that **you** have seen (experiential evidentiality) on pictures um and **I** was convinced (Truth-factual validity) **he** was in my kitchen…*

This excerpt reflects the freshness and the sharpness of the episode she experienced in the ***narrative space*** 'yesterday' and drive some of her thoughts about the possible reasons that might have triggered it. The constructed temporal space comprises here two input subspaces, which could be schematized as follows:

Input subspace 1 (reality/trigger space): constructed by the noun+copula construction '*story is*' comprises the real experiencing self, deprived of sleep, food, shaking, distal epistemic stance to what brought her to the break down point.

Input space 2 (delusional belief space): constructed by the space builder construction '*I thought*', comprises the delusional experiencing self, demon, location, her beliefs, and emotions.

The two subspaces are cross mapped into each other by virtue of identity, cause and effect as well as time vital relations. The first space is located temporally further than subspace 2. The vlogger however shifts to the ***paranarrative*** space by projecting the demon, demonstrating how it physically looked like and excluding possibly presupposed images (as would be presumed to be visualized by some viewers), i.e "not like like a goofy demon". This negation renders a counterfactual space with elements of a type of demons that oppose the one she met in her delusional episode. Emilie, thus, shifts from present perfect in 'I have ever been' to past tense which marks a temporal shifting backwards at a point in time slightly preceding the episode in 'had not slept', 'was shaking', and 'couldn't eat'. These verbs have commonly been introduced by an experiencer ***I*** that has a deictic center past to the now point of the story in ***the narrative space***.

The vlogger then travels from the newly constructed narrative space to an input space within the external narrative space of a deictic now and here self (marked by present tense 'I don't know' and the indexical proximal '***this***' instead of the instantly corrected distal '***that***'). This is accompanied by a switch to an external viewpoint marked by third person pronoun '***it***' which could implicitly refers to her psychosis or psychotic episode. A marked shift in viewpoint is signaled by the pronoun ***he*** which could be identified as ***Deixis am Phantasma***, which is used to refer to non-present entities. The ***he*** is coreferential to a demon that is only perceived through the experiencer's senses and is restricted to a delusional input space in the story world.

5. Findings and Discussion

Addressing the first research question, the analysis of the selected vlogs revealed that Mental Spaces and Conceptual Blending/Integration Theory (MSCIT) proved to be an efficient tool in construing vlogs' complex structural and contextual levels. A MSCI model has been proposed, which captured the possible mental spaces configurations representing the different angles of vlogging experience. This included presenting integration networks depicting thumbnails, vlogger identity construction, overall video configuration. In addition, simplex integration and double-scope networks have been attested

throughout preliminary stages. The asynchronous virtual nature of video blogging leads to the establishment of virtual common deictic center in which a time and place compression constantly takes place. Thus, Conceptual Integration Theory could efficiently construe the virtual setting of YouTube vlogs, which takes place through compressions, where Time, Space, Identity vital relation were detected across outer spaces that led to the inner spaces, namely into blends.

McNeill's model has been shown to work in compatibility when applied to the vlog's context as well as with Conceptual Integration theory. The three narrative division sections, namely paranarrative, narrative, and metanarrative, have provided a systematic tool for dissecting the vlogs examined. The division could be optimally overlapped with Mental Spaces Integration Theory, where this could be established through the configuration of mental spaces, where the three spaces were inhabited by embedded mental spaces, which encompass subspaces and blends.

Other integrational phenomena such as viewpoint shifting/multiplicity as well as stancetaking could be analyzed in compatibility with mental spaces and conceptual integration theories, which renders that they are complementary in the realm of YouTube and narratives. Abrupt shifting in viewpoints could be attested in Emilie's opening part, with sudden transition to the narrative space. This is in opposition to Kris and Emily who with reluctance to start their stories kept maintaining the same viewpoint though the alternation in pronouns at the beginning (from I to you). Shifts across spaces have been marked by switch in tenses (e.g. from present in paranarrative/metanarrative spaces to past in narrative space). The use of you as both a generic pronoun as well as a pronoun that signals compression (experiencing self of the vlogger+viewer(s)) functions as a protective strategy for the vloggers at the time of disclosing personal intimate experience, thus balancing emotional engagement with a certain level of distance. This strategy has been noticed the most in the case of Emily. Epistemic cognitive stance marked by I think/thought has been noticed to be the most occurring. Additionally, conceptual metaphor that account for split selves have been captured in Kris and Emily's narrative spaces.

With respect to the remarkable similarities and differences attested, it has been discerned that the three vlogs begin with extranarrative space construction. Accordingly, transitions have been attested to take place from paranarrative space to the metanarrative space and the vice versa. in the introductory sections of three vlogs examined, which are followed later by the narrative space construction. Thus, initiating with the paranarrative and metanarrative spaces shows to be common across the three vlogs. Rapid transitions have been detected in the case of Emilie which could be attributed to the recency of episode and accompanied emotional charge. In addition, one distinction that

could be distinguishing Emilie's narrative space configuration is the delusional input space which is identified by a Deixis am Phantasma that represents delusional entities.

The following table outlines the most significant results depicted, providing instances of occurrence wherever required from the analyzed excerpts:

Aspect	Case 1: Kris	Case 2: Emily	Case 3: Emilie
Vlogs mental Spaces shift sequence	Paranarrative > narrative	Metanarrative>narrative >paranarrative>narrative> paranarrative	Paranarrative> metanarrative> narrative
Space builders/ Space activation tools	-*Today*> adverbial>temporal space *I thought*> sub.+ mental state verb> belief space. *but*> conjunction> counterfactual space *In middle school*>temporal space.	*So I guess* > story belief space *What I went through* > subclausal> psychosis experience space *I think* > sub.+mental state verb> narrative space activation. *When it happened*> subclausal> narrative space activation.	- *story is*> noun+copula construction> story space - *I thought* > sub.+ mental state verb > delusional space.
Viewpoint cues across spaces	**Internal viewpoint deictic markers:** -I+present/present perfect: express viewpoint of vlogging/narrating self -I+present perfect-past: express past experiencing self viewpoint filtered through a higher narrating self. -Inclusive we > present continuous: expresses compressed internal viewpoint of vlogger/narrator+viewers **External viewpoint markers:** you (also denotes compressed viewpoint (vlogger/narrator+viewers). It: expresses external viewpoint.	**Internal viewpoint marker:** I+present simple: expresses vlogger/narrator viewpoint. -I+past simple: expresses experiencing self viewpoint filtered through the higher narrating self. **External viewpoint markers:** -You (compressed viewpoint blending narrator and viewers) -for other people+ inf.-It+present simple.	**Internal viewpoint marker:** I+present simple: expresses vlogger/narrator viewpoint. -I+past simple: expresses experiencing self viewpoint filtered through the higher narrating self. **External viewpoint markers:** -It + past simple -He+: expresses deixis am phantasma.

common Blends	Vlogger/name (Role-Value) > simplex network. -Blended Classic Joint Attention> Scaling Time and Space vital relations Cause-effect in thumbnail viewer decision making> double scope network. Image/caption in thumbnails> double scope network Thumbnail/book cover> single scope network		
Narrative internal blends	Vlogger – Mom counterparts > Analogy-syncopated Time vital relations. Hesitant self – determined self > Identity – Time vital relations.	Hesitant self – determined self > Identity – Time vital relations.	Real self-Delusional self> Identity, Cause and Effect & Time vital relations
Conceptual metaphors	"THE REAL SELF IS INSIDE, THE PUBLIC SELF IS OUTSIDE" > *'put on this happy mask'*	-"CONSTRAINT ON SUBJECT BY SELF IS FORCIBLE POSSESSION"> *'you're not yourself anymore", "I…lost my self", "you…lose your sense of reality'.* -'KNOWING IS SEEING'> *'for people to see and understand'.* - LIFE IS A JOURNEY> *'life takes you on a path'*	
Stance	Epistemic cognitive evidentiality stance: *-I thought (2 times)* *I think-she knew* Effective stance*:* *-you can call me Chris (deontic).*	Epistemic cognitive evidentiality stance: I think (2 times) Effective stance: *'the best way that I can explain* (deontic). *'it needs to happen'* (deontic). *'I want to'* (volition).	Epistemic cognitive evidentiality stance *-I don't know* *-I thought*
Force dynamics	'I just would isolate myself' an antagonist 'I' that exerts constraint of isolation over the agonist, namely *'myself'*. Social force dynamics continue to play a role in the next phrase -"sports and stuff…forced me to be social":. The objectified self encoded by the agonist 'me' was beaten by the social force, antagonist, encoded by social activities.	'life …taken me' The expression places life as an agent who has the power to control and drive people along scary paths. Based on force dynamics, life here is the antagonist who pushes people (agonists), including the vlogger, against their will powers.	

Thus, with regards to the differences depicted, Emilie shows to have shorter temporal spans across mental spaces shifts, which reflects the recency of the psychotic episode. The stance used is epistemic stance of uncertainty, which manifests the state of confusion that is a result of delusional state of psychosis she has just passed through. Deixis am phantasma that bears an external viewpoint is depicted. In addition, no conceptual metaphors in which divided selves has been detected as is the case with other retrospective narratives of Kris and Emily.

In opposition, conceptual metaphor has been spotted in the cases of Kris and Emily, with more instances of occurrence in the case of Emily. Conceptual integration between counterpart selves also has been captured in both cases, which reveals their reluctance till the last moments of recording the vlog. They tend to switch from the first personal I to the generic you, before they return back to the I, where the tend to hide themselves among the lines of their viewers using the conceptual device of compression.

6. Conclusion

To conclude, this study examined vlogging experience, employing an interdisciplinary framework rooted in the cognitive semantic tradition within the broader context of Computer-Mediated Discourse. Focusing on a sample of YouTube vlogs addressing mental health crises. The research applied an integrated approach, merging Mental Spaces Theory, Conceptual Blending Theory, and McNeill's narrative model. It aimed to understand how vloggers construct and convey mental health experiences, proposing a conceptual model for the vlogs' genre.

7. Recommendations for further research

An integration theoretical model such as the one employed here could provide promising results if applied to more vlogs genres. In addition, a mixed quantitative-qualitative approach to mental-health related vlogs and to other vlog genres would render enriching results, especially if incorporated with corpus linguistics methods. Gender, nationality, or age based collected data could be variants for research in YouTube vlogs context.

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تحليل دلالى معرفى لفيديوهات المدونين المتعلقة بتجارب أزمات الصحة العقلية على اليوتيوب

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المستخلص:

هذا البحث هو دراسة دلالية معرفية لعينة مختارة من الفيديوهات السردية المتعلقة بالصحة العقلية لمدونى الفيديوهات من خلال منصة اليوتيوب. ويهدف هذا البحث بالأساس الى تقصى إسترايجيات التمثيل الدلالى المعرفى لعناصر الفيديوعلى المنصة الإفتراضية والحكايا ليشمل الفيديووتمثيل النفس والمرض وغيرها من العناصر ولتحقيق هذا الهدف تتبنى الدراسة اطارمتعدد التخصصية بحيث تستخدم النظريات الدلاليه المعرفية جنبا الى جنب مع مفاهيم بحثية تكميلية أخرى لتحقيق الهدف من الدراسة الا وهو تتبع عمليات الدمج المعرفى والتى ينتج عنها عناصر الفيديو المختلفة والتى تشمل أيضا العناصر السابقة للعالم السردى وتقوم الدراسة بإقتراح نموذجا معرفيا معتمدا على النظريات والمفاهيم المستخدمة لتحليل الفيديوياهات السردية قيد الدراسة بالإضافة الى ذلك يقوم البحث بدراسة الاستعارات المفاهيمية,وديناميكيات القوة وأدوات تعددية المنظورويخلص البحث الى أن الفيديوهات السردية تحوى الظواهر المعرفية المختلفة قيد الدراسة حيث تظهر على سبيل المثال ظاهرة تعددية المنظوروانقسام النفس وضعها على مسافات متباينة على مدار السرد من نسخ النفس الاخرى ومن تجربة المرض ومن المتابعين.

الكلمات المفتاحية :الفضائات،التكامل، النفس، الدلالية