J. R. Martin, Michele Zappavigna, Paul Dwyer and Chris Cléirigh

Users in uses of language: embodied identity in Youth Justice Conferencing

Abstract: This paper offers a multimodal perspective on how identities are performed and negotiated in discourse, concentrating on the interaction of language and body language within a particular genre, Youth Justice Conferencing. These conferences operate as a diversionary form of sentencing in the juvenile justice system of New South Wales, Australia. Typically, they involve a young person who has committed an offense coming face to face with the victim of their crime, in the presence of family members, community workers, police, and a conference “convenor.” We conduct close, multimodal discourse analysis of the interactions that occur during the Rejoinder step in a particular conference, and investigate an “angry boy” identity enacted by two young persons at this point in the proceedings. This persona is very different to the forthcoming and remorseful persona idealized by conference designers. The role of body language in intermodally proposing and negotiating bonds within the conference is explored.

Keywords: youth justice conferencing; restorative justice; systemic functional linguistics; gesture; affiliation

1 Users and uses of language

Systemic functional linguistics (hereafter SFL) has a longstanding interest in language variation, going back to the early development of the theory in the 1960s (Halliday et al. 1964; and cf. Gregory 1967; Ure and Ellis 1977). A key distinction is made between dialectal and registerial variation: dialects are different ways of saying the same thing whereas registers are ways of meaning different things. In later work, Halliday (e.g., Halliday and Matthiessen 2006 [1999], 2009) intersects levels of language (stratification), including context, with degrees of
potentialization (instantiation). The model thus relates the system of language, however theorized, to its use, however deployed, thereby reworking Saussure’s purported opposition of *langue* and *parole* as a complementarity (cf. Halliday 2008). This intersection of stratification and instantiation enables Matthiessen (2007: 539) to consider different kinds of variation with respect to these two axes. He extends Halliday’s original stratification axis along its vertical dimension (adding phonology to lexicogrammar, semantics, and context), which axis is cross-classified by instantiation (system, sub-potential/instance type, instance) along its horizontal dimension. Matthiessen positions dialectal variation as primarily phonological, morphological, and lexical (i.e., different ways of saying the same thing), in contrast to registerial variation which is primarily contextual, semantic, and lexicogrammatical (thereby meaning different things).

Inspired by Bernstein’s sociological work on coding orientation (e.g., 1971, 1973), Hasan’s research on semantic variation (2005, 2009) extended the original dialect and register variation picture by confirming that gender and class condition the ways in which users enact different repertoires of meaning in the same situation, a type of variation which Matthiessen (2007) refers to as codal. For Matthiessen, codal variation slots in between dialectal and registerial variation along the instantiation axis, where it involves holding contextual variables constant and observing semantic and lexicogrammatical variation within contexts across users. 

Significantly, as far as a discourse perspective on identity – the focus of the present paper – is concerned, SFL’s hierarchy of stratification affords both macro- and micro-analytical perspectives on the realization of identity in text (from context to phoneme as it were; Martin and Rose 2008; Martin and Rose 2007 [2003]; Halliday and Matthiessen 2004; Halliday and Greaves 2008); and SFL’s instantiation cline reconciles “essentialist” and “constructionist” perspectives on identity as reflected in and/or constructed through discourse (from inertia to innovation as it were; Martin 2006, 2008a, 2008b, 2010a). By treating context as a level of language (Martin 1992, 2010a), the model also focuses attention on the context of identity construction – “the different discursive environments in which identity work is being done” (Benwell and Stokoe 2007: 5), environments which we approach through the lens of SFL genre theory (Martin and Rose 2008).

The point of departure these perspectives establish for this paper is the idea that users of language perform their identity within uses of language. Identity, in other words, is always already conditioned by register and genre, so that who we are depends on the roles we play in a given situation. The identities we enact with language at a particular point in time are influenced by the particular stage of the particular genre in which we happen to be involved. The way we use verbal and body language to enact our persona depends both on the linguistic repertoire we have accrued in our lives and the pressure of the genre. Below we unpack this
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perspective on identity with respect to the roles played by Young Persons in New South Wales Youth Justice Conferences, suggesting that their personae do vary, but vary within limits engendered by the genre as it unfolds. We explore their performances multimodally, with an emphasis on the couplings of verbalization and body language. We conclude the paper with some suggestions for remodelng the relation of users to uses of language in SFL.

2 Youth Justice Conferencing

We adopt a multimodal approach to exploring how identities are enacted by participants within NSW Youth Justice Conferences, a process available in Australia for sentencing a young person who has committed a crime as an alternative to sending them to the Children's court. The approach is qualitative, applying discourse analysis within a single case study in order to explore in detail the patterns in language and body language of the participants interacting in a single video-recorded conference.1

The model of language we assume in our research is metafunctionally organized as involving ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004, 2009) and stratally organized as involving phonology/graphology realizing lexicogrammar realizing discourse semantics realizing register realizing genre. Note that Halliday’s level of context is stratified as register and genre in our model, with register organized metafunctionally as a projection of ideational meaning (field), interpersonal meaning (tenor), and textual meaning (mode), after Martin (1992), Martin and Rose (2008). This architecture is outlined in Figure 1.

In this paper we are particularly concerned with the ways in which values are textually composed, as ideational categories are coupled with evaluative interpersonal ones,2 and unfold in discourse as invitations for participants to align. In Knight's (2010) terms, ideation and evaluation couple, and when shared they engender the bonds through which participants commune. To explore the evaluative dimension of this process we draw on Martin and White's (2005) model

1 This recording was part of a small sample (<10) collected during a five-year research project funded by the Australian Research Council. The project received ethical clearance from the NSW Attorney General and the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. All subjects provided informed consent. The names of people and places have been anonymized.

2 We use the term coupling here, following Martin (2010a), Zappavigna et al. (2010) to refer to the co-selection of linguistics resources across ranks, metafunctions, strata, and modalities which are not specified by system/structure cycles (see also Painter et al. 2013).
of appraisal, in particular the system of **ATTITUDE** (how emotion and opinion is construed in discourse).

We use “bond” here as a technical term (rather than in the general sense often used of “social bonding”) to refer to the social relation generated as we negotiate a particular shared coupling of ideation and evaluation in language.

Proposing a bond involves a process of discursively sharing a coupling during an interaction. The bond, once proposed, may then be intermodally negotiated by the participants. Our decision to focus on attitude–ideation couplings and gesture arises out of an interest in understanding the multimodal nature of this negotiation. We are particularly concerned with suggesting a research strategy for exploring the bonding processes that do and do not occur in NSW Youth Justice Conferences.

In a model of language and social context such as that outlined in Figure 1, genre is defined as a recurrent configuration of meanings which unfolds in stages and phases in the process of instantiation.\(^3\) In our work we have expanded this

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\(^3\) We are using stage and phase here in the sense of Martin and Rose (2008), where stages are the highest ranking elements of genre structure and phases are “sub-stages” that may or may not appear, appear in different sequences, and may be found in other genres. This use of the term phase overlaps to some degree with the development of the term by Gregory (1967) and his colleagues.
characterization of genre to allow for multimodal realizations across verbiage and body language, as pursued below. The particular macro-genre (i.e., genre complex – see Martin and Rose 2008) in focus here is an evolving designed genre, initially formulated as part of the NSW Young Offender’s Act (1997). This act establishes a scaled response to offenses by adolescents, beginning with a warning (delivered by police at the site of the offense), then a caution (involving a formal meeting at a police station), and moving on at the discretion of the police or magistrate to a youth justice conference – all as an alternative to going to court before a magistrate.

Youth Justice Conferencing is inspired by the philosophy of restorative as opposed to retributive justice; the former sees crime as a “violation of people and relationships . . . It creates obligations to make things right [and] involves the victim, the offender and the community in a search for solutions which promote repair, reconciliation, and reassurance” (Zehr 1990 as cited in Van Ness et al. 2001: 3). Ideally conference participants involve a Convenor, the Young Person (hereafter YP) who committed the offense, their Victim (or Victim representative), Support Persons for the Young Person and Victim, the Arresting Officer, a Youth Liaison Officer, and where relevant an Ethnic Liaison Officer and Translator.

The general macro-generic organization of the conferences we have studied and observed is presented as Figure 2. They begin with a Mandate, which institutionalizes the conference as a legal proceeding. This is followed by Testimony, through which the offense is recounted. In the ensuing Rejoinder, support persons and police officers evaluate the impact of the offense. This may be followed by a Caution, in which the Youth Liaison Officer looks forward and comments on the choices open to the YP as far as reintegration into the community is concerned. This is followed by the Outcome Plan, where agreement on reparation through community service is reached and then by Reintegration, through which legal proceedings are brought to a close and participants have an opportunity to mingle as members of the community. This maps out an idealized “passion play” envisaged by conference designers whereby there is a “regular tangible, visible progression through clearly marked stages of tension, anger, shame, remorse, apology, forgiveness, relief, and cooperation” (Moore and O’Connell 1994: 70). For discussion of the relation of the conferences we have observed to this ideal, see Martin (2009), Martin et al. (2007, 2009, 2010).

In previous work we began to document the way in which the identities constructed, enacted, and composed by Young Persons are sensitive to the steps of the Youth Justice Conference macro-genre. By way of modeling these performances, we have drawn on Maton’s legitimation code theory (Maton 2007, forthcoming), in particular his work on specialization. Maton models identity in specialized fields topologically in terms of the strengths of what he calls epistemic relations
(between sociocultural practices and the part of the world they are oriented to; henceforth ER) and social relations (relations between sociocultural practices and their actors or authors; henceforth SR). Martin (2009) adapts this perspective on identity with respect to Testimony, treating the dimensions as broadly commensurable with plotting an ideational epistemic dimension against an interpersonal axiological one. As far as the Testimony step of conferences is concerned, designers and advocates seem to have in mind an ideal YP who provides a detailed recount of the offense and is convincingly remorseful about what went on. As
Martin et al. (2007, 2009, 2010) and Zappavigna et al. (2008a, 2008b) document, however, it is far more common for YPs to enact a “small target” persona who construes a minimalist account of the offense (with details “extracted” by the Convenor), and who enacts next to no evaluation of what went on (so that regret has to be “promoted” by the Convenor). On this basis we established an ideational/epistemic axis of “forthcomingness” (how detailed is the YP’s recount of the offense: i.e., +/– ER) intersecting with an axiological/social axis of “remorsefulness” (how contrite is the YP’s attitude to what went on: i.e., +/– SR). The persona performed through a retrospective topology of this kind can be glossed as redeemed (+forthcoming, +remorseful), accused (–forthcoming, –remorseful), guilty (+forthcoming, –remorseful), and prodigal (–forthcoming, +remorseful).

Martin et al. (forthcoming) adopt a similar strategy with respect to Caution, where the Youth Liaison Officer seems to have in mind an ideal YP who makes rational decisions about their future and who decides to reintegrate with family and community. The identities performed through a prospective topology of this kind can be glossed as reintegrated (the rational, re-affiliating ideal), delinquent (YPs who get inadvertently caught up in offending behavior because they continue to hang with mates), criminal (YPs who choose to hang with their mates and purposefully pursue a life of crime), and law-abiding (YPs who steer clear of their mates and stay out of trouble for fear of being caught). These complementary identity profiles are outlined in Figure 3, and unfold during the conference from a

![Fig. 3: Retrospective and prospective identity profiles for Testimony and Caution](image-url)
past-oriented logic of redemption to a future-oriented logic of reintegration. The main point we are making here is that the personae YPs construe, enact, and compose are sensitive to the steps of the macro-genre as it unfolds. Their ideal retrospective identity in other words is not performed through the same semiotic resources as their prospective one. The choices they make as users of language in other words depend on their use – or to put this more technically, their coding orientations interact with genre.

3 Performing embodied identity

We now turn our attention to a closer reading of the way in which YPs use language and body language in the Testimony section of the conferencing macro-genre, starting with the verbal record. As noted above, in this step many YPs adopt a small target persona and retell the bare bones of what went on, generally prompting the Convenor to extract further detail. Here is an example of this kind of minimalistic admission:

(1) [Mobile phone]
YP: Yeah, I was, I was walking to a mate’s house. This guy just came up to me and goes “Do you want to buy a phone?” and I go “No” and I go “Do you want to swap?” [inaudible] want to swap with my phone and he looked at my phone and he goes “Yeah” and we swap and I went and stayed at my mate’s house and when it came to night time I was going back home, and he was walking, was walking up the road and the police just came and got us.
Convenor: . . . [Convenor nodding expectantly]
YP: That’s it.

This unforthcoming persona contrasts with a more compliant identity, which we occasionally find, in which a much fuller account is offered. Example (2) gives a representative sample of such an account (the complete retelling is roughly twice as long):

(2) [Train tracks]
YP: Well um I was just staying at [suburb], staying at a friend’s place, [name], and um, and her mum’s and she had her own flatmates so I . . . (and mum had her own) and I was staying at theirs ( ) so I could get

4 Round brackets are used in the transcripts to indicate where the transcriber was uncertain of the wording due to the quality of the audio or the speed of speech.
back ( ). And um, well, we had ( ), y’know, we was just sitting around, chuffing on so um . . . we just started taking drugs and um (mainly we) um, got some, um, acid trips. And we got on top of some, yeah. I was under the influence of drugs at the time. We were just walking around ( ) with nothing else to do and (saw some) shops down the road so (I had, sort of like) had the munchies so I started to go down the road, and um, steal a packet of chips and yeah. Well first, we stood out the front, like y’know, really suss, and talkin’ about it and then we all walked into the store and stood around and (just laughing and) next thing you know, sort of like, walked down there and went (out) and back up to the front and um, and then ( ) yeah, went back in and grabbed a bag of chips and then we started running down the road.

Turning from an ideational concern with how forthcoming the YP is to an axiological concern with how sorry they are, we can also ask how evaluative resources give significance to the commissioned recount. Typically, as with the minimalist “Mobile phone” record of events above, the YP does not evaluate what happened during his testimony. Rather, evaluation has to be extracted by the Convenor:

(3) [Mobile phone]

Convenor: Do you think that mum and dad were disappointed in you? Were you disappointed in yourself? Or not? Or you don’t care?
YP: Yeah.
Convenor: Yeah or you don’t care?
YP: Disappointed in myself.

This reluctantly contrite persona contrasts with one we occasionally find, in which the YP is more of a self-starter as far as remorse and apology are concerned, responding with feeling to the Convenor’s relatively open-ended questions:

(4) [Train tracks]

Convenor: So how long after the incident did you have a chance to sort of reflect back on it and think about what happened.
YP: Pretty much that day (I called home and I was describing to my mum) that doing that stupid incident that night because that day I (wanted to) go back and apologise cause ( ) I always go there and I felt so bad cause um, they’re always nice to us and we went and done stupid things ( ). Yeah, I was stupid.
Almost as rare in our data as the ideal forthcoming, remorseful YP is the transgressive “guilty” one, who is quite open about what has happened, but makes excuses and blames others, and is generally unconvincing as far as showing remorse is concerned. Below, in the Rejoinder step of another conference, the Convenor pushes against this stance, reminding the YP that the offense has seriously affected the Victim’s life. This conference involves two young offenders, who have roughed up a student in a school library; YP1 has excused their behavior on the grounds that the Victim has allegedly been picking on a female friend of theirs. The following extracts give three key phases of the interaction, which we will focus on below in exploring couplings of verbal and body language.

(5) [library]
Convenor: It’s affected his life.
YP1: Yeah I know it has. That’s what I am saying. It’s changed a lot. I- I do realise what we’ve done.
Convenor: =5Well the snickering and the smiling doesn’t make me think that-
YP1: =[inaudible] Yeah well I’m not a rat from [Location X]
Convenor: W- I know that.
YP1: I’m not one of those friggin’ retarded people that just say “oh yeah I done that. I w- I’ll do it again”. [pause] I’ll do everything that I can to change everything that’s happened. Seriously. Walk the streets, mate. Go have fun. Go get drunk. Do whatever. Party on. [inaudible]

(6) [library]
YLO: =See you two guys are a bit like the old farmyard rooster.
YP1: =The what?
YLO: =All farmyard roosters are all fluffed up and want to impress people. So you go into the school grounds all fluffed up ready to go
YP1: =No.
YLO: and then you want to impress people so you barge through and just “I’m here. I’m here to do what I like. No one’s going to stop me”
YP2: =[inaudible] [shakes head then folds arms]

5 = is used in our transcription convention to signal overlap with preceding turn.
YP1: Happy now? [referring to the fact that YP1’s sister, who has attempted to speak on her brother’s behalf, breaks down and leaves the conference circle in tears.]

YLO: Pardon?

YP1: Happy now?

YLO: Mate, I’ve been doing the job for 22 years and there’s people that have different sides to them. There’s the side you portray to your family, there’s the side you portray by yourself, and then when you get together as a group, there’s another side that comes out again.

YP2: A fluffed up rooster.

YP1: = Yeah. Maybe you’re the fluffed up rooster. [inaudible]

YP2: = A bad way to describe me.

YLO: Well, we’re not here to sling comments at ya.

YP2: You slinged one.

YP1: = [inaudible]

YLO: It was an analogy - an analogy I drew - that’s all - to try and portray what it looks like.

YP1: = Yeah. I see. I see, mate.

The characterization of YP1 and YP2 as farmyard roosters by the YLO is a pivotal moment in the conference that sets the interpersonal tone of their interaction thereafter. It provides the opportunity for the performance of a defiant “guilty” identity, comparable to the persona parodied in Chris Lilley’s ABC Australian television satire Angry Boys.6 This is a very different individuation pattern to the small target strategy for construing self that dominated our sample.

Thus far we have focused on YP personae in terms of their verbiage. From a multimodal perspective this is clearly incomplete. Indeed, it is the body language of YP1 that the Convenor flags as transgressive conference behavior when commenting on his smiling and snickering. The smirking demonstrates to her that YP1 has not been taking the discourse of the Victim seriously and that body language of this kind is undermining the redressive power of the conference macro-genre. This raises the question of how the multimodal repertoire of a YP, conditioned by the demands of the macro-genre, and mediated by the interpersonal pressure of the circle configuration of a conference, can construe a suitably remorseful persona. What kind of body language should a “redeemed” YP persona

6 Angry Boys was an Australian television series in the style of a “mockumentary” written and starring Chris Lilley. The series explores the struggles of young male identity and includes characters involved in the Australian juvenile detention system.
produce? In order to explore this issue, we must first outline the SFL model of body language in which our work is grounded.

4 Modeling body language

The model of body language which we will deploy here in relation to identity performance arose out of previous work investigating the co-patterning of gesture and phonological structure (Zappavigna et al. 2008b). Analysis of body language is a new region in SFL-based multimodal discourse analysis, although it is relatively established in other disciplines such as cognitive science (e.g., Kendon 2004; McNeill 2005). SFL-oriented work has included exploration of gesture realizing process type and interpersonal meaning (e.g., Martinec 2000, 2004), and in relation to face-to-face teaching in classrooms (Hood 2011). These perspectives can be usefully compared with Halliday’s (1985) initial framing of gesture as paralinguistic – as a resource functioning to support the language systems. Gestures are, in Halliday’s (1985: 30; our emphasis) model, “not part of the grammar, but rather additional variations by which the speaker signals the import of what he is saying.” As a mode of expression, we have interpreted the gestures in our data as having a prosodic structure which we might think of as akin to an intonation contour because it was not obvious how to divide them clearly into constituent units. Other perspectives such as Martinec (2000, 2004, 2011) have suggested that gesture as a modality of communication may have a constituent rhythmic structure in terms of how it works in tandem with language – a complementary semiotic system (cf. Martinec and Salway 2005 on intermodal relations).

Cléirigh (2011) proposes that body language can be modeled as three semiotic systems: protolanguage, language, and epilanguage. It should be stressed that, although we introduce these semiotic systems separately for explanatory purposes, they are not mutually exclusive: all may operate together in any communicative event.

As a linguistic system, body language works in tandem with language. For example, it is produced (relatively) synchronously with the rhythm of the spoken language or in tune with its major pitch movement. As Table 1 specifies, the meanings realized may be textual or interpersonal but not ideational.

As epilanguage, body language realizes textual, interpersonal, and ideational meaning (Table 2), though it does not have a systematic relationship to specific lexicogrammatical categories. This form of body language includes gestures such as those that involve drawing in the air and, which in the absence of speech, are thought of as mime.
Users in uses of language

In addition to linguistic body language functioning in sync with speech prosodies and epilinguistic body language illustrating verbal meanings, we have a resource called protolanguage. As a protolinguistic system, body language has developed out of infant protolanguage with kinological expression organized microfunctionally. The model draws upon Halliday’s (1975) interpretation of the microfunctions that emerge during the protolinguistic period of language development as glossed in Table 3. Cléirigh (2011) comments that the personal microfunction “potentially includes such states as nervousness, agitation, restlessness and discomfort” enacted through jiggling legs, fidgeting, and posture shifts; his interaction potentially includes degrees of involvement realized through “facial and postural orientations (who faces whom?).”

Table 1: Linguistic body language (Cléirigh 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lexicogrammatical systems</th>
<th>Prosodic expression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Phonology</strong></td>
<td><strong>Kinetic</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potential focus of new information</td>
<td>Salience gesture (hand, head) in sync with the speech rhythm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textual focus of new information</td>
<td>Tonicity gesture (hand, head) in sync with the tonic placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information distribution</td>
<td>Tonality gesture (hand, head) co-extensive with tone group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal key</td>
<td>Tone gesture (eyebrow, hand) in tune with the tone choice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Epilinguistic body language (Cléirigh 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Kinetic expression</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Textual</td>
<td>e.g., reference: exophoric vs. endophoric; personal vs. demonstrative (near speaker, addressee, both, neither)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpersonal</td>
<td>e.g., modality and polarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ideational</td>
<td>phenomena: elemental (&amp; configurational)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to linguistic body language functioning in sync with speech prosodies and epilinguistic body language illustrating verbal meanings, we have a resource called protolanguage. As a protolinguistic system, body language has developed out of infant protolanguage with kinological expression organized microfunctionally. The model draws upon Halliday’s (1975) interpretation of the microfunctions that emerge during the protolinguistic period of language development as glossed in Table 3. Cléirigh (2011) comments that the personal microfunction “potentially includes such states as nervousness, agitation, restlessness and discomfort” enacted through jiggling legs, fidgeting, and posture shifts; his interaction potentially includes degrees of involvement realized through “facial and postural orientations (who faces whom?).”
5 Intermodal personae

Before proceeding with our analysis of phases 5–7 of the library conference introduced above, recall that, following Knight (2010), we treat bonds as shared couplings of ideation and attitude. In our analyses below we show couplings of ideation and attitude in square brackets above the examples in focus. We selectively consider some important respects in which YP1’s persona is performed intermodally as he negotiates bonds. Phases 5–7 feature increasingly transgressive behavior by YP1, the full impact of which can only be appreciated by considering more than the verbal transcript alone. Our analysis moves through some key phases of the conference bond by bond, looking at how ideation is coupling with attitude, and how this coupling is negotiated verbally and nonverbally by participants.

Phase 5 begins with the Convenor accusing YP1 of not being genuinely remorseful, as indicated to her by YP1’s and YP2’s snickering and smiling behavior:

(8) [ideation: YP1 & 2 snickering & smiling/attitude: unremitful]

    Convenor: It’s affected his life.
    YP1: Yeah I know it has. That’s what I am saying. It’s changed a lot. I-I do realise what we’ve done.
    Convenor: =Well the snickering and the smiling doesn’t make me think that-

This coupling is rejected by YP1, who first reconstrues himself ideationally as not from Location X (and by implication as not insincere):

(9) [ideation: YP1 not from Location X/attitude: not insincere]

    YP1: =[inaudible] Yeah well I’m not a rat from [Location X]
    Convenor: W- I know that.

YP1 is leaning forward, engaged in the circle, but relatively self-contained with his hands clasped and his feet crossed; he does not make eye contact with the
Convenor until the end of his turn, when he looks up to his left at her to check on the impact of his rebuttal (Table 4).

YP1 then looks away again, protesting that he is not a “retarded” person; this coupling of ideation and attitude is supported by linguistic body language (falling gesture with right arm on *retarded*). Epilinguistically the key feature during this gesture is the palms down prone position of his hands (see screen capture in Table 5), which, following Hood (2011), we can interpret, in terms of appraisal theory (Martin and White 2005), as contracting the dialogic space as YP1 further dismisses the Convenor’s accusation.

### Table 4: YP1’s body language – “I’m not a rat from [Location X] . . .” (SP = support person)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body language system</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Screen capture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>protolinguistic</td>
<td>no eye contact while speaking, leaning forward, hands clasped, feet crossed; eye contact with Convenor at end of turn</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Screen capture" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 5: YP1’s body language – “I’m not one of those friggin’ retarded people”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body language system</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Screen capture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>protolinguistic</td>
<td>no eye contact while speaking, leaning forward, feet crossed, hands clasped (except for gesture); eye contact with Convenor at end of turn</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Screen capture" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>linguistic interpersonal</td>
<td>right arm rises and falls in tune with tone (tone 1 high falling)</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Screen capture" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>linguistic textual</td>
<td>right arm falls in sync with major pitch movement (tonic syllable <em>retarded</em>)</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Screen capture" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epilinguistic interpersonal</td>
<td>palm-down prone hand during linguistic gesture</td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Screen capture" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
YP1: I’m not one of those friggin’ retarded people . . .

The main shifts in body language as YP1 continues his rejection of the charge of insincerity is to raise one or another or both arms with hands in supine palms up position (Table 6). He does this in support of four of his five tone groups in the corresponding spoken discourse, as he quotes what a “friggin’ retarded” person might say and proposes how he will otherwise behave. This expands the play of voices in the conference – YP1’s voice among others.

YP1 then proposes a bond to his Victim, assuring him that he has nothing more to fear when he goes out and parties on. The offer of security is generically welcome; but the categorization of the Victim as someone (presumably like YP1 and YP2) who likes to go out, have fun, get drunk and party on, is a generically inappropriate construal (and acknowledged as such through YP1’s half smile and full smiles from his sister and YP2). The “party boy/no worries” coupling at stake here is parlayed protolinguistically through eye contact with the Victim as YP1 continues to lean forward (Table 7). Epilinguistically YP1 uses hand motion to mime a heading off movement illustrating “Walk the streets, mate”. He culminates this turn with open palm supine hand gestures both before and after “Party on”, nodding in reinforcement of his offer.

YP1: . . . Walk the streets, mate. Go have fun. Go get drunk. Do whatever. Party on. [inaudible]
YP1’s transgressive categorization of his Victim as a party boy in fact precipitates an arguably intemperate intervention by the YLO, who denigrates YP1 and YP2 as barnyard roosters, lording over their flock. Space precludes a detailed examination of the YLO’s body language. In brief, he uses eye contact and a deictic hand gesture to address both YP1 and YP2, supports “No one’s going to stop me” with two downward beats of his right arm, and most significantly, mimes the fluffed up rooster three times (while saying “all fluffed up”, “all fluffed up”, and “I’m here”).


YP1 verbally rejects this coupling proposed by the YLO. YP1 does not simply withdraw in exasperation from the bond proposed but mocks it, flippantly imitating the YLO’s rooster mime. He can also be seen to laugh snidely under his breath at the YLO (Table 8). This is an insolent challenge to YLO’s authority, with both YP1
and the YLO now interacting well outside the normal bounds of the conferencing genre.

As the YLO continues, YP1 makes three embodied moves (Table 9). To begin, he disengages protolinguistically, lowering his gaze to floor, leaning back, and scratching the back of his head with his left arm. He then resumes eye contact, re-crosses his feet and half-smiles; epilinguistically he places his left hand to his
Users in uses of language

... and then you want to impress people so you barge through and just “I’m here. I’m here to do what I like. No one’s going to stop me”

Matters soon get worse as YP1’s sister breaks down while attempting to defend him from the fluffed up rooster charge and has to leave the conference. YP1 accuses the YLO of having engineered his sister’s collapse and of enjoying the result, affirming his proposal by nodding his head up and down (Table 10).

(15) [ideation: YLO/attitude: happy]
    YP1: Happy now?
    YLO: Pardon?
    YP1: Happy now?

Rejecting this bond, the YLO replies that people have different sides to them, with the implication that, while YP1’s sister might see one persona, his behavior with his mates is another story. Both YPs withdraw protolinguistically from this accusation. YP2 has his arms and feet crossed, slouching back, with his gaze to the ceiling and then down to the floor; YP1 meanwhile lowers his head and slumps forward (Table 11).

Table 10: YP1’s body language – “Happy now? . . .”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body language system</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Screen capture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>protolinguistic</td>
<td>leans forward in direction of YLO, uncrossed feet, eye contact with YLO, eyes wide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>linguistic textual</td>
<td>head nods in sync with rhythm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epilingualistic</td>
<td>nodding head</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interpersonal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11: YP1 & YP2’s body language – rejecting YLO’s bond

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body language system</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Screen capture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>protolinguistic</td>
<td>YP2 arms/feet crossed, slouching back, gaze to ceiling then down to floor; YP1 leaning forward, eye contact then head down, slumping forward</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Screen capture" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epilinguistic</td>
<td>YP1 supine hands before slumping forward</td>
<td><img src="image" alt="Screen capture" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interpersonal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(16) [ideation: YP1 & 2 behavior in family/attitude: not arrogant pride (hubris)]
[ideation: YP1 & 2 behavior with mates/attitude: arrogant pride (hubris)]
YLO: Mate, I’ve been doing the job for 22 years and there’s people that have different sides to them. There’s the side you portray to your family, there’s the side you portray by yourself, and then when you get together as a group, there’s another side that comes out again.

YP2 sarcastically re-encodes the dark side (*a fluffed up rooster*), and rejects that bond by proposing another one attributing it as wrong (*a bad way to describe me*).

(17) [[ideation: YP2/attitude: arrogant pride (hubris)]/[attitude: incorrect]]
YP2: A fluffed up rooster.
<<...>>\(^7\)
YP2: =A bad way to describe me.

YP1’s reaction overlaps with YP2’s, as he accuses the YLO himself of being the fluffed up rooster – leaning back again and pointing at the YLO with his index finger as he does so (Table 12). YP1’s bent arm as he points and the fact that he tilts his head left to peek around his accusing finger gesturally mitigates the coupling, in acknowledgement of its irreverence.

\(^7\) These represent intervening clauses and here represent something being omitted.
Table 12: YP1’s body language – accusing YLO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body language system</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Screen capture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>protolinguistic</td>
<td>leaning back, eye contact with YLO, tilted head looking round hand</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epilinguistic interpersonal</td>
<td>bent arm for pointing gesture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epilinguistic textual</td>
<td>pointing at YLO with index finger</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13: YLO & YP1’s body language – “Well, we’re not here to sling comments at ya . . .”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body language system</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Screen capture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>protolinguistic</td>
<td>YLO leans forward with elbows resting on knees, eye contact with YP1 YP1 slouching back, feet crossed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>linguistic</td>
<td>YP1 nodding in sync with YLO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epilinguistic</td>
<td>YP1 hand on chin (as if reflecting)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ideational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>epilinguistic</td>
<td>YLO hands supine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interpersonal</td>
<td>YP1 nodding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(18) [ideation: YLO behavior/attitude: arrogant pride (hubris)]

YP1: = Yeah. Maybe you’re the fluffed up rooster. [inaudible]

This degree of disrespect for authority is unique in our corpus, and has no doubt been enabled by the YLO himself stepping out of line. The YLO attempts to recover from this by commenting metalinguistically on what is going on, suggesting that he was not intending to insult the YPs by proposing a bond, but simply drawing an analogy. In relation to this bond, YP2 contradicts the YLO verbally (“You slinged one.”) while YP1 slouches back, with his hand on his chin as he skeptically considers the retort and replies sarcastically “Yeah. I see. I see, mate.” (Table 13).
(19) [ideation: YP1 & 2 /attitude: not bad]

YLO: Well, we’re not here to sling comments at ya.
YP2: You slinged one.
YP1: =[inaudible]
YLO: It was an analogy- an analogy I drew - that’s all - to try and portray what it looks like.
YP1: =Yeah. I see. I see, mate.

The extended performance by YP1 of the angry boy persona in this conference raises questions about the role of YLOs in the macro-genre. Although trained and certified to deliver cautions, as in step 2 in the potentially diversionary NSW justice program for young offenders outlined in Section 2 above, they are not specifically trained for conferences (unlike Convenors); nor was a role specifically envisioned for them by conference designers. Martin et al. (forthcoming) suggest that YLOs may in fact be regularly delivering “cautions” as a prospective future-oriented move before the Outcome plan step of the macro-genre. By proposing the “fluffed up rooster” bond in this conference, the YLO is in fact violating one of the basic tenets of reintegrative shaming (Braithwaite 1989), namely that conferences not stigmatize offenders’ character but rather focus on their behavior and its consequences and thus precipitate rituals of forgiveness and reconciliation.

6 Users in uses of language

In this paper we have been concerned with some of the identities performed by YPs in NSW Youth Justice Conferences in their Testimony, Rejoinder, and Caution steps, focusing on the interaction of language and body language in the Rejoinder step of one conference in particular. In the conferences we have analyzed and observed, the forthcoming, remorseful, rational, and re-affiliating persona (mapped out in Figure 3) idealized by conference designers and supporters has only occasionally been performed. More common is the reluctant small target YP – reticent, undemonstrative, and making no promises about giving up the mates who might lead them astray.

In order to model the personae performed, we have adapted the topological display of identities developed by Maton (2007, forthcoming) in his Legitimation Code Theory for the intersection of epistemic and social relations in intellectual and educational fields. This gives us a tool for mapping the coupling of axiology with ideation as conferences unfold, in relation to two personae – on the one hand the persona encouraged by the conference designers and fostered by the Convenor, and Youth and Ethnic Liaison Officers (generally with the help of both
Victim and YP Support Persons) and on the other hand the personae more regularly performed by adolescent working-class males (often from indigenous or migrant backgrounds) who commit most of the offenses dealt with in NSW conferences.

We have been particularly focused in this paper on sharpening our tools for analyzing personae by focusing on the coupling of verbal interaction with body language. We have undertaken this not only because the meanings exchanged cannot be fully interpreted on the basis of one modality alone, but because body language gives us an important insight into the bonding process flagged by Knight (2010) in her work on laughter in casual conversation. Our analysis of the interactions that occurred in School Library YJC has suggested that one important function of body language is to support the proposal of bonds in discourse. Linguistic body language, for example, can be used to highlight significant couplings of ideational and attitude (e.g., YP1 emphasizing he is not “retarded”). In addition, the participants in School Library YJC often used eye contact and a palms-up hand gesture to indicate that they were proposing a coupling that might align the interactants (e.g., YP1’s “no worries, party on” proposal). In turn, the participants to whom the bond was directed used body language to enact their response to the proposed coupling by either physically withdrawing from the interaction, or if engaged, accepting, rejecting, laughing-off, or mocking the bond (e.g., YP1 imitating the YLO’s fluffed-up rooster gesture).

Recently a new generation of SFL researchers (e.g., Bednarek and Martin 2010) has begun to supplement work on realization and instantiation by proposing a third hierarchy, individuation. Individuation brings a focus on users of language back into the picture, alongside uses. To date, SFL researchers have explored two complementary ways of thinking about individuation. One, inspired by Hasan’s work on semantic variation (Hasan 2005, 2009), interprets individuation as a hierarchy of allocation whereby semiotic resources are differentially distributed among users – both in terms of which options are available and, of those available, which are likely to be taken up in specific contexts of instantiation. Bernstein uses the metaphor of reservoir and repertoire to describe the semiotic affordances of users in relation to their communities as a whole along these lines:

I shall use the term repertoire to refer to the set of strategies and their analogic potential possessed by any one individual and the term reservoir to refer to the total of sets and its potential of the community as a whole. (Bernstein 2000: 157)

A second, complementary perspective on individuation looks at how personae mobilize social semiotic resources to affiliate with one another – how users share attitude and ideation couplings, in Knight’s (2010) terms, to form bonds, and how
these bonds then cluster as belongings of different orders (including relatively “local” familial, collegial, professional, and leisure/recreational affiliations and more “general” fellowships reflecting “master identities” including social class, gender, generation, ethnicity, and dis/ability). As with realization and instantiation, it is difficult to find a neutral term which privileges neither a top-down nor a bottom-up perspective. We will adopt the term individuation for this hierarchy here, keeping in mind that it is concerned with both how semiotic resources are distributed among users (allocation) and how these resources are deployed to commune (affiliation). An outline of this user-oriented hierarchy is presented as Figure 4.

In this paper we have focused on the bottom end of this hierarchy, studying the bonding processes enacting personae at one step or another of the conferencing macro-genre. As Karl Maton has pointed out (personal communication), the ideal retrospective YP for the convenor in the Testimony and Rejoinder steps, and ideal prospective YP for the YLO in the Caution step (Figure 3 above), perform comparable personae – both embody an identity capable of displaying publicly that they are self-disciplining social subjects that have internalized the power that will ensure they maintain ways of acting, thinking, and being appropriate to a citizen (after Foucault 1977). Generalizations of this kind across personae show how we might eventually conceptualize affiliation as a hierarchy of bond complexes – of shared values at ever higher levels of abstraction, configuring sub-cultures and eventually master identities organized by gender, ethnicity, class, generation, and dis/ability. But this is an immodest proposal given the low-

![Figure 4: Individuation from the perspectives of allocation and affiliation](image-url)
level bond complexing we have flagged as performing YP identities in the data under scrutiny here.

Basically, what we are suggesting here as far as modeling variation is concerned is that we need three hierarchies – realization, instantiation, and individuation. The realization hierarchy formalizes the resources which vary at various levels of abstraction (phonology, lexicogrammar, and so on; Figure 1 above). Processes of instantiation then actualize each stratum on this hierarchy as text (variation according to uses of language), at the same time as processes of individuation deploy resources from each stratum, in each instantiation, to perform the personae through which communities align (variation according to users of language). An outline of the cartography we need to foster research into users alongside uses of language is suggested in Figure 5.

The different orientations to meaning implicated by an individuation perspective on semantic variation have repercussions for instantiation, since they condition both recognition and realization rules (Bernstein 2000: 104f). Recognition rules allow speakers to identify the specificity or similarity of contexts, and thus orient to what is expected or legitimate in that context; realization rules

Fig. 5: Realization in relation to instantiation (uses) and individuation (users)
enable speakers to produce culturally specific texts and practices. Taking all three hierarchies into account is a challenging task; but as social semioticians we have to keep in mind that speakers always already individuate as they instantiate as they re/deploy the realization resources of their culture.

SFL has a long-established tradition of work on users in relation to uses of language. What we are proposing here is that to foster this tradition we need to open up an additional hierarchy alongside realization and instantiation, so that we can better appreciate not just how the system is used (langue and parole in Saussure’s terms) but the allocation of resources to users of language and their use of those resources to affiliate as well – by way of better addressing Firth’s user-focused goals:

The unique object of Saussurian linguistics is ‘la langue’, which exists only in the collectivité. Now at this point I wish to stress the importance of the study of persons, even one at a time, and of introducing the notions of personality and language as in some sense vectors of the continuity of repetitions in the social process, and the persistence of personal forces. (Firth 1957: 183)

Acknowledgment: The authors acknowledge the support of the Australian Research Council for a Discovery Project grant supporting this restorative justice research.

References


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