

Topical and communicative expertise by original posters and commenters on the subreddit "Change My View"

Our study focuses on persuasive discourse on the subreddit "Change My View" (CMV). This community on Reddit understands itself a site for reasoned debate – perhaps a counterpoint to the polarisation that arguably sets the tone in other social media debates. Part of the debating culture on CMV is a validation system for persuasiveness, which is called *delta*. Original posters (OPs) put opinions to the community and award deltas to those responses that managed to change their view. Interestingly, and in contrast to up- downvotes, Reddit's way of quantifying community evaluation of posts, deltas are primarily used as individual assessments by OPs of individual posts' efficacy as attempts of persuasion. This process as well as communication at large on CMV are constrained by a number of codified community norms. However, as long as OPs and responses stay within those constraints, the assessment of responses by OPs by means of a delta is an expert feature in the sense that OPs take ownership of their own opinion, but also in terms of the malleability of their own views: They display motivation for their contextualised opinion and often a sense of understanding of the larger debate in which they situate the debate they start (topical expertise); they also construct their identity as expert CMV posters (communicative expertise), among other things by declaring their opinion changeable and by creating argumentative pathways for their addressees to contradict their stated views.

In our corpus-assisted discourse analysis of three connected corpora containing original posts, delta-awarded responses and non-delta-awarded responses, we ask how OPs and commenters (successful and unsuccessful in terms of persuasion) use authorisation and authentication strategies (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005) to display both types of the aforementioned expertise. We ask in particular how OPs both invite and pre-emptively argue against counterarguments (e.g. by using concessive structures such as "although I") and about the difference between successful and unsuccessful attempts at persuasion in terms of their discursive strategies regarding expertise of self and other (e.g., OP).

Bucholtz, Mary, & Hall, Kira. (2005). Identity and interaction: A sociocultural linguistic approach. *Discourse Studies*, 7(4–5), 585–614. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461445605054407>

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