


Analysing the discourse of knowledge transfer practices: A study of proximity in psychology-related podcasts

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ENG Abstract: This paper offers a study of proximity (Hyland 2010) in knowledge transfer podcasting discourse aimed at broad digital audiences. To do so, ten podcast openings were retrieved from *The Psychology Podcast* (Kaufman 2014-present), a popularising English-medium channel with an interview-like style. Samples of the podcaster's and the experts' discourse were compiled and analysed by adapting Hyland's (2005a, 2005b) stance and engagement categories to podcast discourse. Results from the manual close-readings of the transcripts showed that Self mentions (SM), Attitude markers (AM), Listener mentions (LM) and Immediate addressee (IA) are particularly frequent in these podcast openings. Moreover, closer examination of the use of these rhetorical devices by the experts and by the podcaster revealed that they perform different roles. Whilst the former functions as a *scientist-storyteller*, narrating their personal *how did I get here* story, the latter acts as the main *catalyst* for drawing the listeners in. Building on available research into popularisations (Caliendo 2014; Scotto di Carlo 2014; Spinelli and Dann 2019; Engberg 2023b; Liu and Jiang 2024), this study will argue that podcasting discourse couples transfer of knowledge with *affinity appeals* to broad audiences, allowing for the creation of a space based on communication as well as personal connection.

Keywords: Knowledge transfer practices; broad digital audiences; podcasts; proximity; affinity.

^{ES} Analizando el discurso de prácticas de transferencia del conocimiento: Un estudio de la proximidad en pódcast de psicología

Resumen: Este trabajo ofrece un estudio de la proximidad (Hyland 2010) en el discurso de pódcast de transferencia del conocimiento dirigido a audiencias amplias digitales. Para ello, se recopilieron las aperturas de diez pódcast de *The Psychology Podcast* (Kaufman 2014-present), un canal que populariza en inglés con un estilo similar al de la entrevista. Las muestras del discurso del podcaster y de los expertos se recogieron y se analizaron mediante la adaptación de las categorías de posicionamiento y compromiso (Hyland 2005a, 2005b) al discurso de los pódcast. Los resultados de las lecturas manuales mostraron que las Automenciones (SM), los Marcadores actitudinales (AM), las Menciones al oyente (LM), y las Alusiones directas al receptor inmediato (IA) son particularmente frecuentes en las aperturas de estos pódcast. Además, tras examinar detenidamente el uso de estos mecanismos retóricos por parte de los expertos y del podcaster se descubrió que desempeñan funciones diferentes. Mientras que el primero hace de *científico-narrador*, contando su historia de *cómo llegué aquí*, el segundo actúa como *catalizador* principal, atrayendo a los oyentes. Partiendo de investigación disponible sobre popularizaciones (Caliendo 2014; Scotto di Carlo 2014; Spinelli and Dann 2019; Engberg 2023b; Liu and Jiang 2024), en este estudio se argumentará que el discurso de pódcast acopla la transferencia del conocimiento con *apelaciones a la afinidad* de audiencias amplias, lo que permite la creación de un espacio basado tanto en la comunicación como en la conexión personal.

Palabras clave: Prácticas de transferencia del conocimiento; audiencias amplias digitales; pódcast; proximidad; afinidad.

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1. Introduction

The current blossoming of digital knowledge communication practices may be regarded as a phenomenon that both responds to and further fuels society's urge to know. Partly owing to and as a result of the digital transformation, the latest scientific breakthroughs, especially those related to health and wellbeing, are drawing the attention of large, heterogenous publics eager to expand their knowledge of the world beyond their own areas of expertise. As Morris (2023) notes, “[c]uriosity about the world around us seems to remain strong for many” (1), and the e-revolution has conveniently become a powerful ally to satisfy such need. Indeed, “[t]he proliferation of books and TV and radio programmes on popular science are testament to this” (Morris 2023, 1).

Digitisation has become a global facilitator for easing and accelerating one of today's pressing challenges: the democratisation of science (Wilkins 2008; Bartling and Frieeseke 2014; Banks and Di Martino 2019; Kastberg 2019). Gradually, the status of scientific knowledge is shifting from being considered the private preserve of experts to being advocated as a public good (Borgman 2007; Sampedro 2014; Luzón and Pérez-Llantada 2019; Rowley-Jolivet 2019; Lorés 2020; Engberg 2023b). This ethos is encapsulated in the principles underpinning present-day Open Science policies. Open Science (see Bartling and Frieeseke 2014, 9 for alternative terms) emerges out of legitimate demands and subsequent attempts to bring science closer to expert and non-expert audiences. Such initiative rests upon the belief that citizens ought to be recognised as stakeholders along the process of research, which should therefore be shared at all stages (Puschmann 2015; Engberg 2023b).

As might be expected, the undertaking of making specialised knowledge accessible to blurred audiences with varying degrees of expertise entails a wealth of adjustments which has not gone unheeded by an extensive body of literature (Burns et al. 2003; Kastberg 2011, 2019; Banks and Di Martino 2019; Engberg 2016, 2020a, 2020b, 2022, 2023a, 2023b; Belcher 2023). At the level of medium and format, experts need to adapt their pieces of research to the conventions of genres other than specialised research articles (RAs), frequently turning to the digital sphere (Herrando-Rodrigo 2014; Suau-Jiménez et al. 2021). Accordingly, this migration process leads to concomitant modifications at discourse, sentence and word levels –from reformulation processes (Gotti 2014); to colloquial features (Biber and Gray 2016); to evaluative language (Lorés 2020); to different syntactic constructions (Herrando-Rodrigo 2022). As the metaphor of scientists sheltered in the ivory tower becomes obsolete (Puschmann 2015), expert discourse has to be tailored to build a bridge to society at large. Ergo, since the target audience changes, so do knowledge transfer genres. The urge to reach out to a broad audience leads to the urge to reconsider traditional conceptions of genre, to acknowledge the evolution of conventional genres and embrace the emergence of new ones (Bhatia 2002, 2011; Askehave and Nielsen 2005; Herrando-Rodrigo 2014; Miller 2016).

The object of this study, i.e. psychology-related podcasts, stands as a case in point, as podcasting is gaining momentum in the academic, scientific and popular realms (Stanley 2006; Ono and Ishihara 2010; Gürsul and Canim 2013; Newman 2019; Nee and Santana 2021; Liu and Jiang 2024; Vuković-Stamatović and Čarapić 2024) and has become “an interesting venue” (Engberg 2023a, 11) that illustrates how “scientific communication [...] is increasingly finding new outlets online” (Scotto di Carlo 2014, 2). In connection to the current state of affairs, Ye (2021) relates the creation of podcasting to the latest trends in knowledge communication and consumption:

[P]odcasts are likely to have been created in response to the new context of the information era when scientific communication has become faster, and people are increasingly thirsty for new information to improve their lives or shape their thinking and decision-making. (1)

Owing to their location in the “peripheral digital public sphere” (translated from Navas-Echazarreta et al. 2022, 211), podcasts, as a new knowledge dissemination practice¹, are open to an “unstable” audience that is broadly and digitally reached out (Herrando-Rodrigo 2014, 46). With the aim of unpacking the rhetorical strategies geared to engage such a heterogenous listenership, the rest of this paper is structured as follows: section 2 introduces the notion of popularisations and seeks to define and frame the podcasts in this context. Afterwards, the third section details the corpus of this analysis as well as the methods informing its compilation. Subsequently, section 4 describes the analytical framework for this study before moving on to

¹ In line with other scholars (Herrando-Rodrigo 2022), the present study will henceforth adopt the word *practice* as an umbrella term to refer to podcasts used for knowledge dissemination purposes. This decision has been made in the hope of avoiding tentative classifications regarding genre, for a thorough genre analysis of podcasts lies outside the purview of this project.

section 5, which delves into the results and discussion of the findings. Finally, a summary of the main points and some final conclusions closes the study in section 6.

2. Literature review

2.1. Popularising expert discourse

Popularisations may be regarded as one of the prevailing forms of communication in tune with the core ideas of open science research policies (Herrando-Rodrigo 2022; Engberg 2023b). Borrowing Calsamiglia and van Dijk's (2004) words, the construct of popularisation involves "a recontextualization of scientific discourse, for instance, in the realm of the public discourses of the mass media or other institutions" (370). As Gotti (2014) observes "[t]he main criterion for distinguishing between fully specialized texts and popularizations is the *different audience targeted*" (16, emphasis added). "Popularization in fact addresses not an expert group within the discipline but an audience of non-specialists" (Gotti 2014, 16); or, rather, an audience that may be scientifically literate in other fields of expertise (Lorés 2023).

In the media, the journalist or reporter assumes a very active role as manager of the reformulation of the text produced by specialists and now destined for a new public. In this approach, the journalist carries out a *creative re-elaboration* which implies more than mere terminological adjustments and involves all linguistic levels from the structure of the new text to its communicative function, from a change in register to a consideration of the public's prior knowledge of the subject matter. (Gotti 2014, 23; emphasis added)

In a recent article, Engberg (2023b) notices that the terms *dissemination* and *popularisation* are often employed interchangeably. Yet, to optimise the potentials of terminology, he draws on the framework of knowledge communication (Thomassen 2015; Kastberg 2019; Engberg et al. 2023) and develops a continuum to help distinguish these scientific practices (see Engberg 2023b, 165, for a comprehensive description of his four-tiered cline). Accordingly, a popularisation "aims at not only telling the non-expert addressee about the expert knowledge, but also to make them like it by making it part of the non-experts popular culture" (Engberg 2023b, 162-63). In contrast to disseminations, popularisations specifically lack "an institutionalised framework" and are intent on "bridging personal bridges and emotional bonds" (Engberg 2023b, 166). Their primary concern may not be to transform the broad audience into disciplinary specialists, but rather, to connect with them on a personal level.

As a result, popularisation can be understood as a process involving discursal efforts aimed both at easing knowledge accessibility and at enhancing relatability by means of harnessing personalising strategies, such as personal narratives or anecdotes (Caliendo 2014; Gotti 2014).

2.2. Knowledge transfer podcasts

Against this background, the podcast has recently emerged as a digital popularisation practice which brings on a new possibility for keeping abreast of the latest finds (Newman 2019). Essentially, a "[p]odcast (derived from iPod and broadcast) is a digital media file distributed over the Internet" characterised by its "standardized format, regular updating of content [...] free subscription" (Egorova 2018, 79), and "the idea of automatically downloaded content" (Stanley 2006, 1). These affordances reflect and meet the needs of "the plugged-in smartphone generation" (Newman 2019, 59) and our current consumption habits and lifestyles, such as multitasking and commuting (Stanley 2006; Newman 2019; Liu and Jiang 2024, 3, "on-the-go contexts"). On account of its set of distinctive features, podcasting is regarded as a liberating alternative to broadcasting – "a different animal, though in fairly subtle ways" (Biewen 2016, as cited in McHugh 2016, 14). By way of illustration, many producers remark on "the intimacy that comes with knowing your listeners have deliberately chosen your show" (Biewen 2016, as cited in McHugh 2016, 14). Equally, Spinelli and Dann (2019) find the "companionable, spontaneous, and intimate" to be integral traits of podcasts, "an intimacy and directness of contact that speaks of something personal and personable" (66).

Therefore, as happens with popularisations (see section 1), podcasts leverage complex processes other than elaborations or reformulations to rise to a significant challenge (Liu and Jiang 2024). Not only do podcasts transfer expert knowledge in a non-technical manner, but in doing so they have the power to seize the attention of a very diverse global audience (Marwick and Boyd 2011, "context collapse"; MacKenzie 2019; Liu and Jiang 2024, "audience heterogeneity"). Besides, digital podcast audiences are able to opt for whatever podcast channel satisfies their needs best; a freedom of choice which is unafforded by traditional formats such as radio (Newman 2019). This means that podcasters may not fortuitously catch listeners' attention, but rather, they are expected to seek it out actively. This quest to attract a wide audience is no mean feat, considering that human attention, in the midst of an abundance of information, has come to be viewed as "a scarce commodity" (see Hyland 2023 for the concept of "attention economy" in academia and the publishing industry). This piece of research thus aims to provide a small contribution to the study of the rhetorical strategies that may help establish a rapport with the audience in podcasts of knowledge transfer, which are yet understudied (Ye 2021; Liu and Jiang 2024). To do so, *proximity* (Hyland 2010), transposed to popularising aurally-transmitted discourse, will be the focal point of analysis. This concept can be described in the words of Hyland (2010) as follows:

I use the term *proximity* here to refer to a writer's control of rhetorical features which display both authority as an expert and a personal position towards issues in an unfolding text. It involves responding to the context of the text, particularly the readers who form part of that context, *textually constructing both the writer and the reader as people with similar understandings and goals*. (117; emphasis added)

In other words, proximity refers to how speakers project themselves in relation to both the target addressee(s) and the ideational material of the text, i.e. “the representation of ‘what’ [...] is being presented to the audience” (Caliendo 2014, 117). Thus, the rhetorical features which construct proximity may vary significantly across discourses and manifest themselves through different facets (Hyland 2010; Luzón 2013; Caliendo 2014). In this study, this notion is approached through the lens of Hyland's (2005a, 2005b) *stance* and *engagement* categories.

First and foremost, this article seeks to analyse how proximity is constructed through the use of stance and engagement categories in the openings of *The Psychology Podcast* (Kaufman 2014–present). Secondly, it aims to look into the podcaster's and the experts' discourses to see how they foster such a proximity bond with the broad digital audiences. To attain these goals, the following research questions guided the analysis:

- i. What are the most frequent stance and engagement categories contributing to the construction of proximity in the opening parts of episodes from *The Psychology Podcast*?
- ii. How are the most frequent stance and engagement categories used by the podcaster and by the experts to construct proximity with the broad digital listenership?

3. Corpus compilation, methodology and data

This piece of research relies on a corpus comprising 10 podcast openings retrieved from *The Psychology Podcast*, hosted by Dr Scott Barry Kaufman (2014–present), which can be accessed online (e.g. on YouTube) and through different applications (e.g. Spotify, Apple Podcasts)². This is an English-medium podcast channel that follows an interview-like dynamic in which the podcaster, Dr Scott Barry Kaufman, invites an expert in a psychology-related field to join the show for each episode.

The rationale behind the decision to focus on the openings of these episodes is influenced by the workings of audience engagement. It could be hypothesised that, as happens with RAs abstracts –which are, to some extent, designed to hook the reader (Hyland and Tse 2005), the first minutes of a podcast are a “[listener]’s first encounter and are likely to influence their decisions to continue to the full [episode] or go elsewhere” (Hyland 2023, 4). Therefore, it was believed that the beginnings might be particularly rich in rhetorical strategies aimed at gaining and securing listeners' attention and engagement.

Below, Table 1 shows the podcasts that make up the corpus, spanning 2014–2023, since the corpus collection began in early November 2023. For the sake of simplification and future reference, the podcasts were coded according to their release date, i.e. Pdd.mm.yy. All the openings were transcribed with the aid of the AI-powered “Dictate” tool afforded by Microsoft Word (version 16.59 for Mac) – see Ansó-Millán 2024a for the transcripts comprising the PsyPods corpus. Furthermore, manual revisions of each machine-generated block of text were subsequently carried out to correct mistakes, arrange the layout and guarantee accuracy –particularly, as regards references to experts' names, works and specialised terminology³. Each opening averages 783 words and is about 5 minutes long, totalling 7,825 words and 50,17 minutes of transcribed audio.

Table 1. Description of the PsyPods corpus: Title, code, number of words and duration

Title	Code	Number of words	Duration (min)
2: Daydreaming and Mental Contrasting for Goal-Fulfillment	P16.11.14b	747	4.83
7: “What is it like to be a psychopath?”	P18.01.15	769	4.68
44: The Cognitive-Experiential Self-Theory of Personality	P22.05.16	727	5.85
Roy Baumeister Identity, the Self, and the Meaning of Life	P29.03.17	811	4.96
James Fadiman Psychedelics and the Founding of Transpersonal Psychology	P11.01.18	832	5.66
Rex Jung The Neuroscience (and Neuroplasticity) of Intelligence, Creativity, and Genius	P21.11.19	776	4.85
Richard Haier The Nature of Human Intelligence	P25.06.20	646	4.84
Judson Brewer Unwinding Anxiety	P10.06.21	763	4.5
Carl Hart Drug Use for Grown-Ups	P14.04.22	961	5.85
The New Science of Awe Dacher Keltner	P04.05.23	793	4.15

² To ensure as neutral a compilation as possible, the podcasts were chosen haphazardly through a random name picker available online. The selection process was made by inserting all the podcast titles from each year in the Wheel of Names (n.d.).

³ Despite thorough revisions, a few words remained ambiguous. For the sake of transparency, these have been visually signalled through low dashes (____) in the transcripts. Fortunately, they were negligible and did not hinder the study of proximity in any way.

To limit the analysis to the podcast openings, a pilot study guided by a Swalesian genre-based approach was conducted (Swales 1990). By transcribing a complete episode (Ansó-Millán 2024b), the purpose was to deduce rhetorical patterns for subsequent extrapolation. The identification of the moves was informed by Chang and Huang's (2015) and Ye's (2021) taxonomies of TED talks and 60-Second Science podcasts, respectively. In the case of *The Psychology Podcast*, five overarching obligatory moves were identified, illustrated in Table 2 below. Yet, it is the first three rhetorical moves, namely, *listener orientation*, *constructing credibility* and *introduction*, that comprise the openings under scrutiny.

As regards the data, manual close readings of all the transcribed episodes were carried out following in the footsteps of other researchers (Mur-Dueñas 2021; Herrando-Rodrigo 2022). Besides, the data set was also divided into two sub-corpora – one corresponding to the podcaster's discourse and the other to the experts' discourse (Ansó-Millán 2024c). This decision was deemed necessary so as to answer the second research question (stated above in section 2.2.), since it allows a “comparison of the host's and scientist's language use based on their distinct roles and objectives” (Liu and Jiang 2024, 11). For the quantitative analysis, the frequencies of stance and engagement were normalised to a text length of 100 words. Although a significant body of research draws on normalisations per 1,000 words (Hyland 2005a), given the limited size of the present corpus, this figure seemed a little too large.

Table 2. Working definitions of the moves in *The Psychology Podcast* influenced by Chang and Huang's (2015) and Ye's (2021) taxonomies

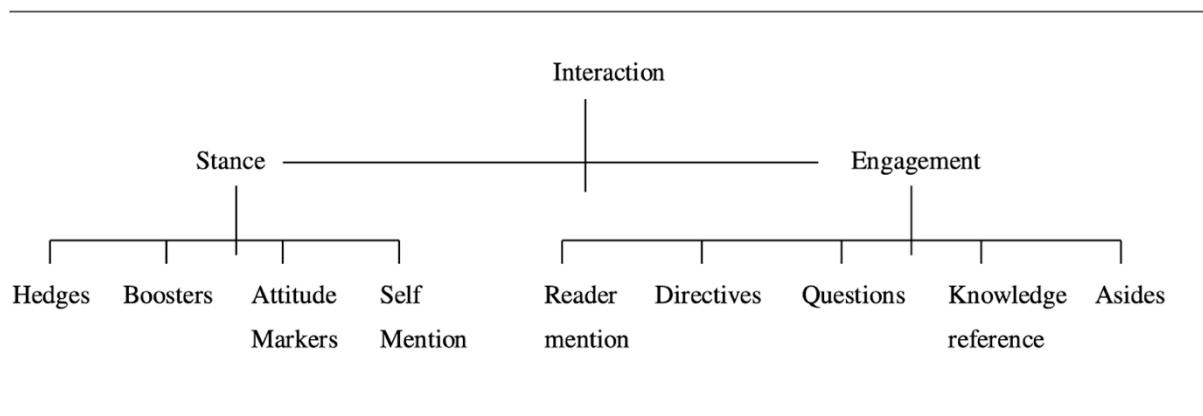
Move	Function
Listener orientation	A welcoming move that serves to greet listeners and briefly introduce the podcast channel.
Constructing credibility	This move is intended to establish the trustworthiness of the expert. It underscores their authority by referring to their work and position in their field of expertise.
Introduction	Through this move, listeners are provided with the backstory of the expert. It is signalled by an explicit question whereby the podcaster traces back to the genesis of the expert's interests in their domain.
Discussion	The discussion follows an interview-like style in which a wide range of topics are discussed in connection with the expertise of the guest.
Termination	The host brings the podcast to an end by thanking the guest. This move may be additionally performed through steps motivated by a promotional or engaging intention.

4. Analytical framework: Stance and engagement categories for podcast discourse

As some scholars observe, the concepts of *stance* and *engagement* are frequently understood in combination (Herrando-Rodrigo 2019). In truth, both make reference to how interlocutors “comment on their propositions and shape their texts to the expectations of their audience” (Hyland 2005a, 3). Nonetheless, it is worth delineating these two phenomena separately. On the one hand, in the context of academic prose, *stance* denotes “the ways writers present themselves and convey their judgements, opinions, and commitments” (Hyland 2005a, 5). On the other hand, *engagement* alludes to “the authors' recognition of the presence of readers” and encodes an intention to guide readers through a particular understanding of the text, encouraging them to partake in the discourse (Mur-Dueñas 2021: 658).

This paper takes Hyland's (2005a, 2005b) framework of stance and engagement as a heuristic for looking into the broader concept of proximity (Hyland 2010). Figure 1 below displays the categories that were originally developed to analyse academic discourse (Hyland 2005a).

Figure 1. Interactional framework of stance and engagement in academic discourse (Hyland 2005a, 5)



Since these categories (Figure 1) were originally aimed at the study of academic interaction, some adjustments were made in the hope of adapting them to the analysis of the “audio-centric” (Liu and

Jiang 2024, 5) podcast discourse under scrutiny. Figure 2 below shows the categories that were subsequently obtained.

These are the discursive features analysed in the present study of podcast openings. For the sake of clarification, Table 3 and 4 briefly define each category and provide some of their possible linguistic realisations. Further examples will be provided throughout the next section (5).

Figure 2. Categories of stance and engagement tailored to podcast discourse (adapted from Hyland 2005a, 5)

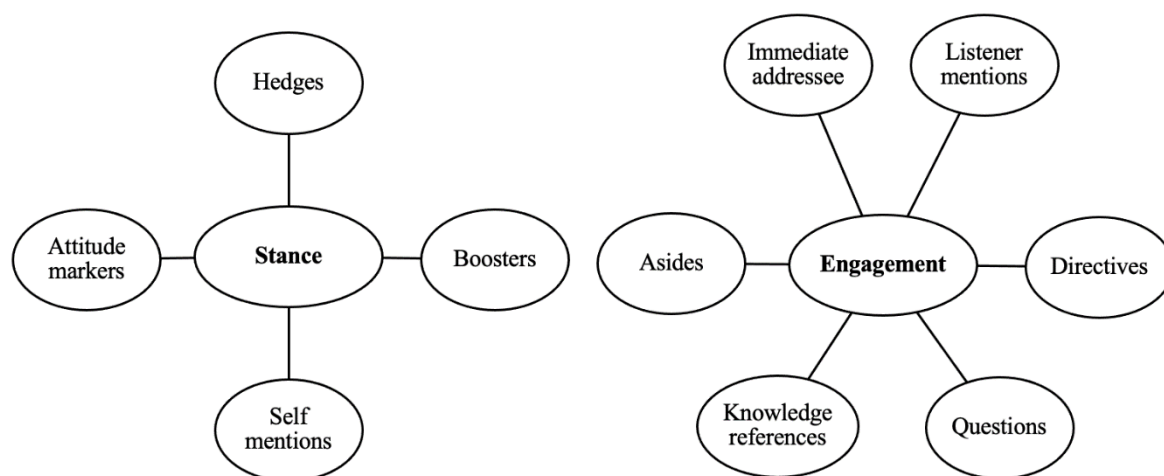


Table 3. Definitions of stance categories tailored to podcast discourse (adapted from Hyland 2005a, 7-11)

STANCE	Definitions
Hedges	Hedges allow speakers to mitigate their statements and present them in a more vague, non-assertive manner. Some of these devices include <i>perhaps</i> , <i>might</i> , <i>suggest</i> , <i>at least</i> .
Boosters	These are devices that enable speakers to foreground certainty and conviction when making statements. Examples of boosters are: <i>demonstrate</i> , <i>obviously</i> , <i>surely</i> , <i>clearly</i> .
Attitude markers	Attitude markers lay bare speakers' attitude towards the message, conveying emotions such as shock, surprise, vexation, etc. These are usually performed by attitudinal adjectives, adverbs, or verbs –like <i>fascinating</i> , <i>important</i> , <i>unfortunately</i> , <i>agree</i> .
Self mentions	This feature is embodied by the use of first-person pronouns (<i>I</i> , <i>my</i> , <i>mine</i> ; exclusive <i>we</i>) which allude to the speaker's self. This explicit personal reference allows speakers to foreground their own personal contribution to the information being communicated.

Table 4. Definitions of engagement categories tailored to podcast discourse (adapted from Hyland 2005a, 11-15)

ENGAGEMENT	Definitions
Listener mentions	As the counterpart to reader pronouns, these are instances in which listeners are explicitly addressed. Some of the most obvious realisations are the use of second-person pronouns (<i>you</i> , <i>your</i> , <i>yours</i>) and inclusive <i>we</i> . Other nouns alluding to the audience could include <i>people</i> , <i>listeners</i> , <i>audience</i> .
Immediate addressee ⁴	Immediate addressee features are here used to refer to those instances where the podcaster or the expert explicitly address each other. Linguistically, these are chiefly realised by second-person pronouns or by the use of their respective proper names.
Asides	These signal digressions from the main argument. Asides unveil an aspect of the speaker's identity and can be seen as receiver-oriented, for they further acknowledge the presence of an audience.
Knowledge references	This engagement feature entails the notion of <i>sharedness</i> . Knowledge references allude to those cases in which the speaker presents a piece of information and demands the listener to recognise it as (un)familiar. That is to say, the speaker systematically presupposes that they share the same knowledge with the audience (<i>we know that...</i>).
Directives	Directives invite the addressee to think or act in a particular way. These are usually realised through imperatives (<i>let's</i> , <i>consider</i> , <i>think about</i>), modals of obligation (<i>must</i> , <i>should</i>) or adjectives expressing necessity or relevance (<i>it is important to...</i>).
Questions ⁵	Questions are “the strategy of dialogic involvement par excellence” (15). They are directed at interlocutors, therefore eliciting their engagement in the conversation by treating them as participants.

⁴ The category of Immediate addressee was added in response to the “double-sided audience” involved in the podcasts, “co-present and on-line” (Caliendo 2014, 111). The reason why this feature was added is based on the belief that the interaction between the podcaster and the experts may be an additional means for constructing proximity with listeners.

⁵ Regarding Questions, it is important to clarify that this study contemplated rhetorical ones only. This was done on account of the questions that were to be inherently expected on account of the interview-like format of these podcasts.

5. Results and discussion

In what follows, this paper proceeds to report on the results of the discourse analysis and provides some interpretations vis-à-vis the research questions stated above in section 2.2. To do so, section 5.1. discloses the use of the categories of stance (5.1.1.) and engagement (5.1.2.). Afterwards, section 5.2. looks at the discourse features as employed individually by the podcaster and the experts, before moving on to the end with some final remarks (section 6).

5.1. Stance and engagement categories in podcast openings

Table 5 below provides the overall results of the distribution of stance and engagement categories in the corpus.

Table 5. Use of stance and engagement categories in the podcast openings.
Total number of tokens and normalised results per 100 words

Hedges (H)	Boosters (B)	Attitude markers (AM)	Self mentions (SM)	Immediate addressee (IA)	Listener mentions (LM)	Directives (D)	Questions (Q)	Knowledge references (KR)	Asides (AS)	Totals
90 (1.15)	128 (1.64)	239 (3.05)	303 (3.87)	185 (2.36)	194 (2.48)	21 (0.27)	13 (0.17)	9 (0.12)	21 (0.27)	1,203 (15.38)

Holistically, it can be noted that some categories seem to prevail more than others, both in terms of stance and engagement (Table 5). However, to attempt at an in-depth analysis, the results of stance and of engagement are addressed separately in sections 5.1.1. and 5.1.2, respectively.

5.1.1. Expressing stance

As mentioned above, the frequency rate of each stance category varies significantly in these openings. Table 6 zooms in on these results and highlights their distribution in percentage and as normalised per 100 words.

Table 6. Distribution of stance categories in the podcast openings.
Percentages (%) and normalised results per 100 words

Stance categories	Percentage (%)	Normalised result per 100 words
Hedges (H)	11.84	1.15
Boosters (B)	16.89	1.64
Attitude markers (AM)	31.41	3.05
Self mentions (SM)	39.86	3.87
Totals	100	9.71

As far as the specific use of each category is concerned, what can be first observed in this table (6) is that the categories of Hedges (H) and Boosters (B) show considerably low frequencies in comparison to Attitude markers (AM) and Self mentions (SM).

Hedges (H) comprise 11.84% (1.15) of the stance tokens, a figure which points to a limited use of hedging devices in the openings. Example 1 and 2 display some of the linguistic realisations of Hedges that were commonly found:

- (1) And so, we started to look at normal brain functioning and that *kind of* led to my career. (Expert, P21.11.19)
- (2) But he hadn't really delved into the neurobiology as well, he certainly hadn't focused on L type calcium channels *at least*. (Expert, P14.04.22)

Generally speaking, the low frequency of Hedges found in this analysis is consistent with earlier studies on popular discourse. It is widely acknowledged that this category "marks out a modest and careful researcher [...] unwilling to make overblown claims" (Hyland 2010, 124). However, this, when extrapolated to popularisation purposes, leads "hedges simply [to] reduce the importance and newsworthiness of a story by drawing attention to its uncertain truth value" (Hyland 2010, 124). In this sense, by distancing themselves from their propositions and withholding their attitudes, interlocutors could unwillingly be distancing themselves from their audience's trust.

As to Boosters (B), they seem to be fairly on a par with Hedges; the former amounting to 16.89% (1.64) to be precise (Table 6 above). As opposed to Hedges, Boosters reverse tentativeness and foreground certainty, thus imbuing the message with an amplifying effect. The following excerpts (3 and 4) exemplify the use of boosters in the openings:

- (3) *Of course* nobody checked whether it *actually* changed self-esteem or not; they just assumed it back then. (Expert, P29.03.17)
- (4) So, you know, I think that *there's very few topics that are more important than this one*. (Podcaster, P10.06.21)

Example 3 above draws on two boosting adverbs that express the expert's firm conviction about his statement. Similarly, Example 4 uttered by the host performs an additional function, as it is oriented towards presenting the topic as genuinely relevant and timely. In general, the low frequency of Boosters may be somewhat surprising in the light of the literature on popularisations (Hyland 2010; Liu and Jiang 2024). Nevertheless, whilst it is true that the podcaster and the experts may be interested in transferring knowledge in an overtly sound way, populating their speech with boosting markers may produce a "close dialogue" that leaves the listeners out (Garzone 2020, 120). Along these lines, the figures obtained for Hedges and Boosters may herald a desire to attain a rhetorical equilibrium by equally refraining from casting doubts or being too assertive. Furthermore, by being cautious about resorting to boosting, the podcaster and the experts make room for the audience's critical thinking and opinion formation, thus, in turn, granting them more agency.

What stands out in Table 6 above are the high frequencies of two stance categories in particular, Attitude markers (AM) and Self mentions (SM) –31.41% (3.05) and 39.86% (3.87), respectively. Firstly, regarding the former, these are used to "assist speakers in expressing surprise, importance, agreement, or frustration" (Albalat-Mascarell 2023, 9). Some instantiations of Attitude markers found in the corpus are shown below (Examples 5 and 6):

- (5) And I thought well that's an *interesting* approach you could take (Expert, P29.03.17).
- (6) So, what I really *like* about this episode is being able to really dive into the realities of the matter (Podcaster, P14.04.22).

The prominence of AMs in *The Psychology Podcast* openings is in tune with available research into popularising discourse (Caliendo 2014; Scotto di Carlo 2014; Liu and Jiang 2024). For example, Liu and Jiang (2024) noted that "scientists express attitude significantly more in podcasts than they do in the detached, fact-based RA abstracts" (24). This difference could be therefore attributed to the "informal nature of podcasts", which "affords researchers greater latitude to express emotions, assessments, and personal reactions" (Liu and Jiang 2024, 24).

As to Self mentions (SM), these comprise just under half of the total stance tokens – 39.86% (3.87). The linguistic instantiation for self-referencing par excellence is the use of first-person pronouns and is exemplified in the following utterances:

- (7) When *I* was a student at Brooklyn College, for the first three years, *I* didn't know what *I* should be. (Expert, P22.05.16)
- (8) *I*'ve known you for quite some time and even before you knew *me*, *I* knew you, as *I* was working on *my* dissertation and citing your excellent work on the neuroscience of intelligence and the P-FIT theory. (Podcaster, P21.11.19)

These two examples (7 and 8) encapsulate a rhetorical strategy that instead of being based on "an attempt to 'suppress the self'" (Garzone 2020, 107), bolsters one's visibility. Here, because of the great use of SMs, the process of transferring knowledge appears to be led by the exploitation of the speakers' own personal dimension, fostering relatability with listeners by sharing values, interests and understandings. Contrary to "the de-personalization typical of specialized texts" (Garzone 2020, 105), podcasts, like science blogs, constitute "hybrid discursive spaces that incorporate practices from public and personal/private discourses (self-reference, informality, expression of feelings)" (Luzón 2013, 453). Through a "strong authorial presence" that "adds a human touch to technical discussions" (Liu and Jiang 2024, 21), podcast discourse seems to favour a personal, conversational style.

5.1.2. Eliciting engagement

Regarding the categories "encoding the presence of the addressee" (Garzone 2020, 157), Table 7 below turns now to the frequency of engagement categories, displaying their percentages and their normalised results.

Table 7. Distribution of engagement categories in the podcast openings.
Percentages (%) and normalised results per 100 words

Engagement categories	Percentage (%)	Normalised result per 100 words
Immediate addressee (IA)	41.62	2.36
Listener mentions (LM)	43.74	2.48
Directives (D)	4.76	0.27
Questions (Q)	3	0.17
Knowledge references (KR)	2.12	0.12
Asides (AS)	4.76	0.27
Totals	100	5.67

As happened with stance (section 5.1.1.), this table is quite revealing in that it highlights the considerable use of certain features and the rare occurrence of others. Four out of six are the categories with figures under a 5% threshold: Knowledge references (KR), Questions (Q), Directives (D) and Asides (AS).

Knowledge references (KR), comprising 2.12% (0.12) of the engagement tokens found in the corpus, represent the less recurrent category, closely followed by Questions. Sentences 9 and 10 below show some realisations of the former:

- (9) So, *first of all for listeners*, Martin Seligman is one of the founders of the field of Positive Psychology. (Podcaster, P16.11.14b)
- (10) The answer is: there's no good reason and their politics, *as we all know*, transcends science and transcends evidence, when it wishes to. (Expert, P11.01.18)

Both are instances of KRs but the former is prompted by the assumption of a potential lack of knowledge (Example 9), whilst the latter by presupposing a shared fact (Example 10). The limited use of KRs could be explained by bearing in mind the heterogeneity of listeners. After all, appeals to shared knowledge may not be easy to make due to “context collapse” (Marwick and Boyd, 2011). That is to say, the easy accessibility to the podcast channel is likely to cause a blending of expert and lay audiences (Blanchard 2011; Luzón 2013). Ergo, as the boundaries between expert and non-experts become blurred, so does the conviction for a shared common ground on which to draw.

Questions (Q), although hardly used here (3%; 0.17), fulfilled different functions, as the following examples illustrate:

- (11) *Is there anything that Dr Rex Jung can't do?* It's the question. (Podcaster, P21.11.19)
- (12) I was asking, *has anyone ever looked at normal brain functioning? Why would you do that?* And so we started to look at normal brain functioning. (Expert, P21.11.19)

In Example 11, the podcaster uses hyperbolic language to emphasise the expert's potential, thus inviting the audience to consider him a trustworthy authority in his field. On the other hand, Example 12 introduces instances of direct reported speech, where the expert reveals how he decided to start his research because he noticed an important gap that needed to be filled. Undoubtedly, these rhetorical questions “arouse interest” by treating the listener as “a conversational partner sharing his or her curiosity and following where the argument leads” (Hyland 2005a, 15).

Concerning Directives (D), these, like Asides, amount to 4.76% (0.27) of the total engagement occurrences in the corpus. Frequently, instances were found in the *listener orientation* move (see Table 2 in section 3 above) where the host, through an imperative, encourages the audience to *enjoy the podcast* (see, for instance, P16.11.14b in Ansó-Millán 2024a). However, additional uses of Directives were also found, such as the following:

- (13) *Let's start* with your PhD. (Podcaster, P14.04.22)
- (14) *Take me back* to the beginning of this research where you're like, you know what? I'm going to try to scientifically tackle a topic that, perhaps, to a lot of other psychologists may have seemed out of reach for measurement. (Podcaster, P04.05.23)

The infrequency of this category also aligns with Liu and Jiang (2024)'s results. A possible explanation for this could be found in Jiang and Qiu's (2022) claim that directives could unwillingly produce an inimical expert-listener hierarchy.

Moving on now to consider Asides (AS), it is worth noting that there are some cases where these rhetorical categories necessarily overlap. In this regard, it should be noted that instances of Knowledge references tend to coincide with Asides (see Examples 9 and 10 above). Nonetheless, alongside this function, Asides offer other types of remarks as well:

- (15) I want to hear more about this moment where he's like, 'dude' –*I'm sure he didn't say dude*– he's like [...]. (Podcaster, P11.01.18)
- (16) And we found some interesting things –*nothing really amazing*. (Expert, P25.06.20)

These two examples display different types of digression. The first (15) functions as a clarifying comment uttered by the podcaster, whereas the second (16) unveils the stance of the expert, who explicitly evaluates the information being conveyed.

As regards Immediate addressee (IA) and Listener mentions (LM), Table 7 above shows that they are the most recurrent ones in the data set, amounting to 41.62% (2.36) and 43.74% (2.48), respectively. Although listeners are unequivocally the ultimate target audience, the fact that the Immediate addressee is the second most frequent engagement category here seems worth mentioning. After all, the podcaster and the experts are not only openly aware of the presence of the listeners, but they also consciously acknowledge the presence of each other. Instantiations of IAs are illustrated by the following examples (17 and 18):

- (17) And then I went to the United States and worked with Martin Seligman in Philadelphia, where *you* are. (Expert, P16.11.14b)
- (18) There are lots of things that we can talk about that I know will be of immense interest to *our* listeners. (Podcaster, P18.01.15)

Needless to say, Immediate addressee features mostly draw from the same pool of strategies available for Listener mentions, such as second-person pronouns (Example 17 above). However, IAs may be additionally performed through the use of the podcaster's and the expert's proper nouns, or through a first-person plural pronoun which might be evocative of exclusive *we* (Example 18 above). Although overlooked by other researchers who did not choose to exploit an IA-LM distinction (Liu and Jiang 2024), these devices may positively contribute to “fostering a sense of intimacy and proximity” between the podcaster and the expert (Liu and Jiang 2024, 25), which is then expanded to encompass the audience thanks to the use of LMs. The fact that Immediate addressee seems to be part of the rhetorical strategies in these openings may signal a deliberate endeavour to embed the transfer of knowledge in an interaction that echoes a conversation between close acquaintances.

Regarding Listener mentions (LM), the host and the experts make use of various linguistic forms of address that, albeit varying in the scope of their targeted group of listeners, represent overt appeals to the heterogeneous digital audiences. Example 19 illustrates two prototypical linguistic devices to this end:

- (19) Each episode will feature a guest to stimulate *your* mind and give *you* a greater understanding of *yourself*, others and the world *we* live in. (Podcaster, P11.01.18)

It has been well documented that the use of second-person singular pronouns (*you*, *your*, *yours*) may be the most explicit way to encourage audience engagement. These constitute an informal way of addressing a listenership who is, in theory, personally unknown to the interlocutors of the podcasts. Furthermore, the inclusive *we* is another powerful linguistic signifier that “sends a clear signal of membership by textually constructing both the writer and the reader as participants with similar understanding and goals” (Hyland 2010, 125). In the realm of podcasts, both interlocutors and listeners are bound together by a shared interest in knowledge communication and consumption –or, at least, one that is systematically being fostered and promoted by the communicators (Lorés 2020). Alongside these two canonical forms of allusion to the addressees, the next examples (20 and 21) display some additional ones, such as the use of common nouns (e.g. *listeners*) and indefinite pronouns (e.g. *everyone*):

- (20) So, first of all for *listeners*, Martin Seligman is one of the founders of the field of Positive Psychology. (Podcaster, P16.11.14b)

- (21) I'm just going to speak for *everyone*, how's that? (Podcaster, P10.06.21)

The use of generic nouns and indefinite pronouns to appeal to listeners should be explained in the light of the “need to reach out to dissimilar audiences worldwide” (Scotto di Carlo 2014, 7). Words such as *anyone*, *everybody* and the like, deliberately frame an idea as consensual or a feeling as reciprocal. These items could help construct proximity by presupposing that each podcast participant can get actively involved in the message being conveyed. Whether or not it resonates with the listeners will depend on their own individual opinions and life experiences, but what matters is that they are likely to engage with what is being said to ponder whether they agree or disagree. On the other hand, these words can also be restrictive by segmenting these broad audiences and therefore, making the podcast experience more customised. To illustrate this, Examples 22 and 23 below feature defining relative clauses postmodifying *people* and *everybody*, which narrow down the targeted listener profile and yet retain an appeal to those individuals for whom the statements apply.

- (22) That feeling of craving and clinging and grasping that *a lot of people who are addicted to things* mentioned. (Podcaster, P10.06.21)

- (23) When we talk about these drugs, we talk about them as if *everybody who uses these drugs* will meet criteria for substance use disorder. (Expert, P14.04.22)

What all these examples (19-23) of listener-addressing appear to have in common is an underlying attempt to appeal personally to the affinity of the audience. The concept of *affinity* denotes a feeling of similarity to and understanding of someone or something (Collins Dictionary n.d.). It entails a “relationship existing between things or persons that are naturally or involuntarily drawn together” and, moreover, “implies a susceptibility or predisposition on the part of the one drawn” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.).

Reflecting on the utterances discussed above, two different ways of appealing to the audiences' affinity seem to be used in these podcast openings. One represents a *binding strategy*, which fosters the sense of participation in a larger community of people with shared understandings and goals. This may be performed through the use of inclusive *we*, common nouns (*people*, *listeners*), and indefinite pronouns (*anyone*, *everybody*) – see Examples 19, 20 and 21. The second way could be thought of as a *segmenting strategy*, achieving the opposite outcome; namely, that of enabling the listener to feel more individually appealed. This effect may not only be fostered through the use of second-person pronouns (Example 19), but also through (pro)nouns followed by postmodifiers which narrow down the scope of the address to smaller groups of listeners bound together by particular habits or preferences (Examples 22 and 23). By acknowledging a diversity of profiles of podcast listeners, individuality is preserved to some extent. This appears to contribute to adding a personal dimension to podcasting discourse, “giving the impression that [...] [podcasters] are active, they are talking to ‘you’ the listener, directly” (Spinelli and Dann 2019, 65). In the hope of illustrating the above, Figure 3 represents the strategies for listener-addressing. These could be thought of as falling along a continuum, ranging from a broader to a narrower scope of affinity appeal depending on whether they are targeting a larger group of listeners, or a smaller group of individuals:

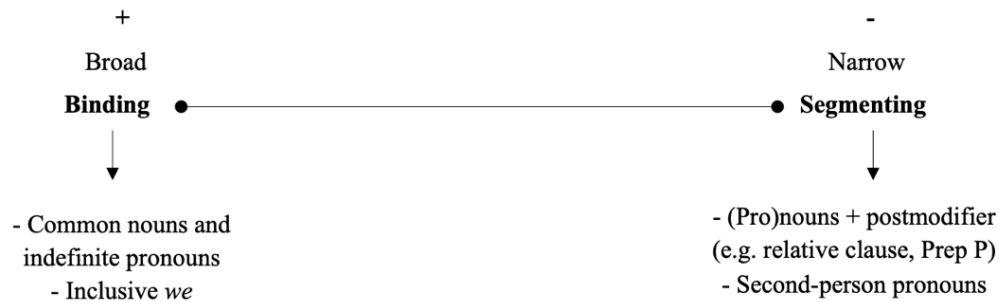


Figure 3. Strategies for listener-addressing identified in the podcast openings

This analysis would like to consider the working notion of *affinity appeal* as a phenomenon whereby interlocutors seek to connect with listeners by drawing upon their own personal experiences, stories, likings, recollections, etc. It could be argued that just as in real-life, face-to-face situations where we tend to bond with people on the grounds of *relatability*, proximity with listeners in podcasts may be enhanced by the same token. In this respect, by means of balancing different forms of affinity appeals, with a broader and narrower scope, interlocutors both segment listeners and bind them together under the same “podcast community” (Spinelli and Dann 2019). This community may be reminiscent of the notion of “affinity spaces” (Gee 2004, 2005), which, explained by Jones and Hafner (2012), can be seen as “virtual places where people interact to promote a particular shared interest or common goal (i.e. a shared ‘affinity’)” (116). These spaces are accessed by audiences with “very diverse backgrounds, including people of different ages and genders and with different regional, linguistic and professional affiliations” (Jones and Hafner 2012, 116). It may therefore be the case that, one of the ways in which the podcaster and the experts seek to establish a closeness with listeners is by means of employing different forms of addressing the digital audience to elicit their affinity (i.e. *affinity appeals*).

5.2. Stance and engagement categories in the podcaster’s and the experts’ discourses

After discussing the results of stance and engagement categories, this paper proceeds to answer the second research question of the study related to the podcaster’s and the experts’ discourse choices (see section 2.2.). To do so, the rest of this section picks up on the most salient features singled out throughout sections 5.1.1. and 5.1.2. to look at how they are used in the podcaster’s and the experts’ data.

To recapitulate, four categories have emerged as particularly salient in these podcast openings: Self mentions (SM), Attitude Markers (AM), Immediate addressee (IA) and Listener mentions (Table 5 above). As a result, Table 8 below focusses on these and compares their frequency with respect to the podcaster and experts.

Table 8. Frequency of the most frequent categories in the corpus across the podcaster’s and the experts’ data (normalised per 100 words)

Most frequent categories	Podcaster	Experts	Totals
Self mentions (LM)	1.14	2.73	3.87
Attitude markers (AM)	1.24	1.81	3.05
Listener mentions (LM)	1.27	1.21	2.48
Immediate addressee (IA)	2.03	0.33	2.36

In general, when looking at the breakdown of these four features across the two sub-corpora, they appear to be employed differently by the podcaster and the experts. Regarding the podcaster, Listener mentions (LM) and Immediate addressee (IA) show the highest frequencies, with normalised results of 1.27 and 2.03, respectively. Particularly, it is his use of IAs (2.03) which contrasts sharply with that of experts (0.33). In the case of the latter, on the other hand, it is Self mentions (SM) and Attitude markers (AM) which showcase the most prominent results, with normalised frequencies of 2.73 and 1.81, respectively (Table 8 above).

In terms of audience-addressing, it is worth noting that the experts, unlike the host, were much more likely to explicitly address the digital audience (1.21) than their immediate interlocutor (0.33). This observation has also been made by Liu and Jiang (2024), who explain that “in host-scientist conversations, when a scientist uses *you*, it is aimed not specifically at the host but rather as a generalized form of address” (Liu and Jiang 2024, 25).

Regarding AMs, both the experts and the podcaster seem equally reliant on them in general terms (1.81 and 1.24, respectively). These markers enable them to resort to expressing their own opinions and judgments, embracing their subjectivity as a means of resonating with the digital audience. Certainly, the “expression of attitude not only transforms knowledge dissemination into an engaging process but also enhances its accessibility and emotional bonding with the lay audience” (Liu and Jiang 2024, 23).

However, in contrast to AMs, the use of SMs differs between the experts and the podcaster, with the former employing them (2.73) twice as much as the latter (1.14). This also echoes the results obtained by Liu and Jiang (2024), who aptly observe that self-references “inject personal authority and narratives into this public-facing discourse, and frame research findings through anecdotal accounts of their own experiences” (21).

In light of the above, it could be argued that the podcaster and the experts work as synergistic forces, co-operating to construct proximity but in slightly different ways. After interpreting their choices of stance and engagement, it could be argued that each of them seems to perform a particular role. Firstly, the podcaster could be regarded as a *catalyst* for eliciting the expert’s story whilst attracting listeners. This elicitation takes place in the *introduction* move (see Table 2 in section 3 above), and is very often realised through a question aimed at tracing back to the origins of the expert’s interest in their domain as illustrated here:

- (24) Why do you think there is such an interest in understanding psychopaths and then I would obviously like to know, *why are you personally interested in, how did you get interested in this topic?* (Podcaster, P18.01.15)

On cue, the expert starts to disclose the “story’ behind the research” (Liu and Jiang 2024, 19), using their personal anecdotes and experience to contextualise their research area, hence acting as a sort of *scientist-storyteller*. Example 25 below encapsulates part of the account of the expert’s background story in one of the episodes:

- (25) [...] and I remember distinctly at the dinner table just asking my parents: well, how does somebody get like that? or how could they come and behave like that from our little sleepy, you know, neighbourhood that we grew up in? And so that [...] got me really interested. (Expert, P18.01.15)

This personal touch identified in podcasting discourse (McHugh 2016; Egorova 2018; Spinelli and Dann 2019; Liu and Jiang 2024) is reminiscent of the “personalisation” trait that has been found to be inherent in TED talks (Giannoni 2008; Caliendo 2014), which are essentially delivered through narratives (Caliendo 2014; Scotto di Carlo 2014; Garzone 2020). These narratives aim “to capture and intrigue the listener from the start so that he/she is induced to continue listening” (Caliendo 2014, 121). Along these lines, Scotto di Carlo (2014) distinguishes between two different types of stories found in her qualitative analyses of TED talks, i.e. “who am I’ stories” and “why am I here’ stories” (6). Both types share with *The Psychology Podcast* the fact that they focus “on the relationship that the experts have with the content of the talk and on how they are personally involved in the topic of the speech” (Scotto di Carlo 2014, 15). However, what the openings under scrutiny seem to offer could perhaps be rather regarded as *how did I get here* stories. As illustrated in Example 25 above, experts here trace back to the beginning of their careers and reveal what motivated them to start. That is to say, *how did I get here* stories revolve around the genesis of the experts’ interests, or the coming into being of their scientist persona. Moreover, since personal stories instil “a sense of communality and similarity between the scientific community and the audience” (Scotto di Carlo 2014, 6), they may be thought of as a strategy aimed at resonating with listeners’ affinity. Indeed, the expert’s background story may or may not resonate with everyone, but it depicts the expert as someone who is potentially relatable.

The “narrative-imbued discourse” of podcasts (Liu and Jiang 2024, 27) may signal a new approach to knowledge transfer practices which integrates a humanistic perspective (Xia 2023). This “emphasis on the behind-the-scenes narratives” (Liu and Jiang 2024, 20) might be a by-product of the sociocultural shift forecast by postmodernist critics like Lyotard:

In other words, audiences are no longer interested in general and distant stories anymore, *they prefer little, personal and direct stories*. They prefer to listen to who is directly involved in research, technology and science. They not only want to listen to innovative ideas, but they also want to know *why an issue matters to the speaker personally*. (Scotto di Carlo 2014, 6; emphasis added)

6. Concluding remarks

This analysis has sought to shed light on the construction of proximity (Hyland 2010) in connection with knowledge transfer practices by focussing on psychology-related podcasting discourse. To do so, the purpose was twofold. On the one hand, this paper aimed to unpack how stance and engagement features (Hyland 2005a, 2005b) were generally employed in the opening parts retrieved from *The Psychology Podcast* (Kaufman 2014-present). On the other hand, once the most frequent strategies were identified, it intended to look into how these were used in the discourse of each speaker involved in the knowledge transfer practice: the podcaster and the experts. All in all, it was found that Self mentions (SM), Attitude markers (AM), Listener mentions (LM) and Immediate addressee (IA) were especially prominent, amounting to a normalised result of 11.76 altogether (out of 15.38 overall). In combination, these features steered the podcast discussion towards a dynamic reminiscent of personal conversations. By and large, it can be first concluded that podcasting discourse capitalises on personalisation (Caliendo 2014) to foster relatability and build up a rapport with listeners. Additionally, as to the second research query, according to their distinct uses of stance and engagement, it can be claimed that the podcaster and the experts play different roles. Whilst the former act as a *catalyst* for bringing on the story behind the scientist; the experts become *scientist-storytellers*, unfolding the personal events that sparked their interest in their research areas.

Ultimately, the findings of this study suggest that podcasting discourse favours the construction of a personal atmosphere, creating digital affinity spaces that bind together a listenership with similar understandings, likings, and goals. Indeed, as observed by a growing body of research into popularisations

(Caliendo 2014; Scotto di Carlo 2014; Spinelli and Dann 2019; Engberg 2023b; Liu and Jiang 2024), it appears that we are moving towards an era of knowledge transfer practices marked by the need to resonate with a broad digital audience that is not only thirsty for specialised knowledge but also for getting to know the expert behind it. These new societal trends require scholars to become effective communicators and language mediators capable of transferring science in a way which is digestible and relatable (Bertemes et al. 2024). Thus, future studies could centre on exploring further the mediation strategies involved in the communication of science to diversified audiences to design and implement evidence-based training courses targeting popularisation techniques.

Furthermore, another future line of research could focus on investigating the manifold didactic potentials of podcasts in the L2 English classroom. A number of studies have been carried out that looked into the exploitability of science podcasts as a source of academic listening, by gauging lexical density and speech rate (Vuković-Stamatović and Čarapić 2024); or as a means of increasing students' motivation in English-speaking assessment (Perry 2024). However, more research still needs to be conducted to assess the viability of employing science podcasts in primary, secondary and tertiary education as a springboard to foster not only English language proficiency, but also interdisciplinary competences, such as digital and media literacies.

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