Title: All you need is guitar pedals: the communicative construction of material culture in YouTube product reviews

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Abstract
Through an interactionist analysis of guitar pedal review videos this paper explores the communicative practices of product reviewing in YouTube. Focussing on one guitar pedal, the analysis reveals how reviewers positioned the pedal as an 'idealised object' and as part of the 'material good life' of guitarists. Reviewers' communicative strategies projected a sense of shared intersubjective experience of the pedal by bracketing out issues of knowledge, skill, and access to technology, and by constructing the vloggers' credentials as reviewers. This analysis contributes to our understanding of the structures of consumer cultures on YouTube, showing how reviewers communicatively construct audiences, products, themselves, and, more generally, the practices of material culture use in this specific art world. I argue that the interactionist perspective adopted here is an important and under-used framework for analysing consumer culture, and that it helps us to see how material culture is manufactured as a discursive, communicative act through the mundane activities of reviewing.

Keywords: YouTube, Guitar Pedals, Product reviews, Interactionism, Conversation Analysis, Ethnomethodology, Digital Capitalism

Introduction

Reviewing and selling in online environments

The internet has fundamentally changed the ways that knowledge is produced about the products that people buy and use, with the emergence of new discursive spaces where people can talk about their experiences of culture. Product reviews, as a sub-genre of 'consumer reviews' (Vásquez, 2014) are dominant features of this discourse (Park and Lee, 2019) and, alongside platforms such as Amazon (Skalicky, 2013), YouTube is one of the most prominent spaces where such reviews can be found (Blank, 2006). In YouTube, product reviews are a diverse genre that overlap with many other practices such as product demonstrations or 'unboxings' (Nicoll and Nansen, 2018), music tutorials (Marone and Rodriguez, 2019; Riboni, 2017) and even 'decluttering videos' (Zappavigna, 2019). Their purpose is to describe and usually to give an evaluation of an object or service, but also to 'enliven' them (AUTHOR REF) – that is, to construct them as *socially significant and experientially rich* and *to situate them within cultural practices of use*.

Review work is part of a broader set of practices related to selling and sales. The interactional accomplishment of selling has long been of interest to scholars who have shown in detail the ways that vendors construct relationships between themselves and customers and attempt to increase the appeal of their products (Clark et al., 1994; Pinch

and Clark, 1995; Svinhufvud, 2018; vom Lehn, 2014). Sales practices have been found to have particular communicative features, such as the use of three part lists in describing products (Brown, 2004; Soar, 2009) and emphasising the importance of 'treating yourself' (Bucholtz 2000). An important area of research in technologically mediated sales is infomercials - Glick's (2016) study of self-help infomercials showed how the hosts constructed the desirability of products by minimising the professional skills and training that inform therapeutic work, transforming concepts such as 'success' into a 'regular commodity' that people could buy. Bucholtz' (2000) study looked at the discursive practices of infomercial hosts in relation to callers/viewers and the creation of 'a sense of intimacy' and membership to the *mythical* virtual community. Bucholtz argued that such strategies masked the corporate interests of the channel in generating income through sales, foregrounding a 'folksy' and 'cosy' space that was organised around 'commodity fetishism' (Bucholtz 2000: 209).

Scholars from linguistics, discourse analysis and cognate areas have begun to turn attention to the specific linguistic/discursive practices found in online reviewing. Different platforms (such as Amazon, YouTube, TripAdvisor etc) and review genres (such as products, travel, restaurants and so on) have particular affordances and communicative/semiotic resources that reviewers draw on (Chik and Vásquez, 2016; Vásquez, 2014). Studies have found distinctive features such as a high use of slang expressions (Zappavigna, 2012), sharing of other people's opinions (Vásquez, 2014), a preference in some contexts for reviews based on personal experience (Parini and Fetzer, 2019; Skalicky, 2013) and in the case of negative reviews, a use of sarcasm (Feng and Ren, 2020). Researchers have explored the lexical features of online review work, looking, for example, at the frequency and uses of evaluative adjectives (Hunston and Sinclair, 2000), stance adverbs and attitude verbs (Vázquez,, 2014), as well mitigation strategies such as the uses of hedges and disclaimers in the construction of evaluation (Ren, 2018).

Pronouns have been shown to be particularly important for the construction of stance, both in relation to the products being reviewed and to a general audience (Bhatia, 2018; Vásquez, 2014; Virtanen, 2017). Vazquez found that due to the unknown boundaries and membership of an online audience (Marwick and Boyd, 2010) and the risk of creating unintended affiliations with unknown groups, reviewers tended to use first-person plural pronouns infrequently, more commonly adopting the second person plural 'you'. Bhatia's (2018) analysis of beauty vloggers showed how the pronoun 'you' was used to refer to both a specific 'second person' and a general audience while 'we' was used to construct shared user/viewer perspectives. Virtanen (2017) looked in detail at the use of pronouns in academic book reviewers, showing, for instance, how 'you' could construct both specific/generalised audiences, their characteristics, and the reviewers' own relationship to the audiences.

From the point of view of this paper, such work is valuable for pointing to the linguistic practices involved in producing recognisable genres of action. My concern here is in examining how such resources are mobilised in the practical organisation of guitar pedal reviews in YouTube.

Communicative practices on YouTube

In spite of its dominance as a cultural modality and as a context for reviews, very little is known about communicative practices in YouTube (johansson, 2017). Existing research has mainly focussed on comments threads (Antioco and Coussement, 2018; Bou-Franch et al., 2012; Parini and Fetzer, 2019; Park and Lee, 2019; Tsur et al., 2010; Willemsen et al., 2011), examining diverse issues such as users 'motivations' for posting (Wu, 2019), the effect of first person singular pronouns on information helpfulness (Wang and Karimi, 2019), and cultural differences in the construction of product reviews. Work by Parini and Fetzer (2019) has highlighted the ways that commenters also act as 'secondary reviewers', responding to video reviews to create complex group and individual evaluative stances. The authors show that reviewers in the comment threads treated personal experience as important to the adoption of an evaluative stance. Other work has shown that comments can take up quite different positions and enact very distinctive participation frameworks such as 'disrupter', 'spammer' or 'troller' (Boyd, 2014).

YouTube is however a complex multimodal space, and comments are part of a broader communicative infrastructure in which 'likes' and 'shares' are also critically important to the metrics of consumption and the algorithms of content presentation. The data emerging from this interaction and the algorithms that analyse them have a substantial role in shaping YouTube's agendas and practices (Balanzategui, 2021; Walczer, 2019) as they inform not just what people see but also impact on the types of content that sponsors wish to associate their advertising with and, in this way, with the very practices of content production (Caplan and Gillespie, 2020). Interactionism has a critical role to play in the examination of YouTube's cultural architecture through the study of the quotidian practices of sharing and interacting. A key focus for analysis is of the practices of video content performance, and a small body of work is emerging that looks closely at this. A central area of analysis has been how 'discourses' such as *fame*, *wealth* and *celebrity* (Blank, 2006; Marin, 2017) impact on/manifest in the structures of videos. Researchers have looked at how these discourses inform the 'identity work' of vloggers, and how reviewers manage the competing demands of entertainment and a sense of intimacy while, at the same time, 'teaching' the viewer about a product (Bhatia, 2018; Jaakkola, 2018; Jorge et al., 2018; Silva and Campos, 2019; Zappavigna, 2019). Another area of interest has been in how researchers interact with their audience: as we have seen, audience is a complicated issue in YouTube, comprising not just those who actively comment on videos, but also more 'passive' listeners or people who simply 'overhear' the videos are also part of the audience (Dynel, 2014).

Vloggers in diverse genres (including guitar tuition Marone and Rodriguez, 2019) have been shown to orientate to the construction of 'authentic' videos (Purcariu et al., 2018; Shifman, 2018), and of 'intimacy' (Rüdiger, 2021) and 'perceived interconnectedness' (Abidin, 2021) between themselves and their unknown audience (AUTHOR REF). Particular strategies used to achieve this include specific forms of addressivity and informal greetings (Isosävi and Vecsernyés, 2022), and through the use of pronouns discussed above. Castillo-abdul et al., (2021: 8) showed how fashion vloggers used name categories derived from the vloggers' own names to describe to the audience (e.g. Pavlova Charpentier referred to viewers as 'my pavlovers').

In this paper I draw on this work to look at how guitar pedal reviewers organise their videos to build an intersubjective sense of the products. My interest is not with the discourses of practice, but an analysis of the structures of interaction in online communication. Before I discuss the methods and conceptual framework in more detail I will turn attention to guitar pedals themselves.

Guitar pedals

While there has been a growing interest in guitar tuition and music making through YouTube (Burns et al., 2019; Waldron, 2011, 2012), almost no attention has been paid to the practices of selling that surround guitar culture. Guitar pedals are a critical part of the guitar playing 'art world' (Becker, 1982). Go into any guitar shop and you will almost certainly find a section of the store dedicated to the sale of guitar pedals. Guitar pedals are used to manipulate the sound of guitars (Bennett and Dawe, 2001; Herbst, 2019; Randles, 2015). There is a global market of guitar effects pedals worth around 300 million USD according to Market Report World which caters for what Herbst (2017) refers to as 'gear acquisition syndrome'. From the perspective of this paper, the medicalisation embedded in the notion of 'syndrome' draws attention away from the *cultural practices* of consumption: however, the term does illustrate the extent to which pedal consumption is engrained in the community. As Dunn (2012: 50) puts it, "guitarists are buying effects pedals in attempt to *sound like their heroes […]* When the guitarist, literally, buys into the fantasy of the guitar hero, he [sic] effectively embraces a desire for his own identity, his own individual sound." (original emphasis).

Guitar pedals are usually thought of in terms of a range of category types (See Appendix for a description of these). These categories describe the different ways that the pedals alter the signal entering them from the guitar. Guitarists often connect multiple pedals together in a chain (either between their amplifier and the guitar or as an external 'loop' from the amplifier) to create wide variations in sound. Commonly, guitarists use pedal boards to house their pedals, which work as a kind of sound palate that can be drawn on to sculp the sounds.

In spite of the importance of guitar pedals as an industry and as a feature of music making practice they remain a largely unexplored topic, with only a handful of studies in the field (Bingham, 2013; Fenn, 2010; Flood, 2016; Marone and Rodriguez, 2019). Bingham's (2013) doctoral work on online guitar communities provides the most substantial contributions to this area, illustrating the role that online forums and videos play in the cultural construction of pedals. Bingham also shows that these online contexts are central to marketing practices, offering companies the opportunity to demonstrate their products and giving consumers the chance to hear and learn about the pedals before buying them. Moya's (2017) genre analysis of textual reviews is one of the few studies that has looked closely at pedal reviews, showing the complexity of this genre, and the multiple discourse practices within it. Marone and Rodriguez (2019) examine video reviews on YouTube, pointing to the overlap between practices of teaching and reviewing. As has been found in other fields of online praxis, their analysis highlights that the notion of authenticity and 'celebrity' were key organisational principles in the videos (Marone and Rodrigues, 2019). In this paper, I explore this issue from a different perspective, emphasising the interactional construction of pedals by YouTube vloggers.

Context and Method

Due of the complexity of pedals and the quite specialist languages and technical issues involved in different pedal types, my analysis here focuses on reviews of one product – the Strymon Flint, a very popular pedal released in 2012 by the American company Strymon. The popularity of the pedal means that there are a large number of reviews available which facilitates the production of a broad data corpus. The pedal includes two of the longest-used guitar effects: Tremelo and Reverb. Tremolo is an effect that repeatedly lowers and raises the volume (amplitude) entering the pedal to create what is often described as a 'quivering' effect. Reverb is a simulation of the way that sound echoes (or 'reverberates') in a room and creates a sense of space.

At the point of data collection there were over 300 videos on YouTube that contained reviews of the Strymon Flint that were found with keyword searches, and there may have been many more that were not indexed with these keywords. I chose reviews that focussed solely on the Flint itself rather than product comparison videos. I included videos in both English and Spanish in order to address the common restriction of analysis that generally only draw on English reviews (AUTHOR REF). Spanish was chosen because of the author's familiarity with the language. There were far fewer Spanish examples than English ones, with only twenty-two in the data set and two in the final data corpus (see Table 1). By including Spanish examples my concern is not with comparing the linguistic structures of the two languages, but with how the reviewers present the pedal to the viewers, and how they construct themselves, their audiences, and the pedal itself as an artefact in the material culture of guitar playing. The communicative practices that I will be describing in the next section were substantially the same in the English and Spanish reviews, but due to the small sample size I make no claims about the generality of this phenomena.

My sample included examples from popular 'expert' channels (Marone and Rodriguez, 2019) with large numbers of subscribers (e.g. Martys Music with 176000 followers) to less popular ones (e.g Timberline productions with 93 followers – see Table 1). Similarly, I selected examples form 'professional' YouTube reviewers who earn money from sponsorship and advertising (JJ Tanis, SFAHPS), from shops and other sales outlets (MAT music, Dawsons, Reverb), as well as from individuals without obvious corporate links (Brendan Stratham, Sergio Targ). In total, 11 of the videos had commercial interests, with the other 7 having no clear relation to commerce.

As is conventional with this mode of analysis, sampling involved a process of saturation, with a sufficiently large corpus to facilitate comparison. The final data corpus comprises 18 videos posted online from between June 2012 when the product was first released and September 2019.

Table 1: Overview of Data Corpus

Chanel Name	Subscribers	Date of upload	Views	Likes	Dislikes	Duration	Language
Timbreline productions	93	22-Jul-15	392	0	0	12:01	English

Brendan Stratham	105	08-Feb-17	396	7	2	15:51	English
Sergio Targ	214	19-Jul-16	4619	17	0	08:36	Spanish
Pastorjaredstepp	475	22-Nov-13	2068	7	3	10:56	English
MAT Guitars	738	29-May-13	1600	5	1	02:59	Spanish
Crxyshdxmmy	1930	13-Jul-12	5878	12	6	03:24	English
PedalZoo.ru	3950	11-Jun-13	2919	25	2	22:42	English
Lance Seymour	7960	20-Jun-12	2793	13	0	08:12	English
The SFAHT pedal show	10,600	28-Oct-15	8489	28	7	13:22	English
Curtis Kent	11,000	08-Feb-13	6674	34	1	04:32	English
Electronica para musicos	11900	24-Oct-18	1016	38	0	07:14	Spanish
JJ Tanis	26,000	22-Dec-14	17533	182	4	10:51	English
Mike Hermans	33,600	25-Sep-19	7887	219	4	08:22	English
Soundpurestudios	33900	10-Dec-14	8981	17	27	03:40	English
60 Sycle Hum	43,100	27-Apr-16	68,181	627	22	08:22	English
Dawsons Music	89,100	09-Oct-15	10,688	43	4	05:54	English
Reverb	540,000	21-Jul-16	51826	229	5	02:42	English
Marty Music	176000	21-Feb-19	11,550	274	12	08:07	English

Analytic process and framework

The analysis presented here uses the interactionist concern with the construction of knowledge through communicative actions including talk, body posture, facial expression, movement, objects and other semiotic resources. Interactionism is now a well-established methodology for analysing online communication, and I will not discuss it in detail here(see Goodwin 1986; Ten Have 1998; Sidnell 2010 for details). A central principle of this perspective is that we can examine people's communication to understand the taken for granted endogenous meaning that *participants produce/negotiate in real world contexts and actions* (Sidnell, 2010) . My analysis draws on the conceptual language and tools from this diverse area of work to explore how YouTube vloggers organise their videos.

The analysis process involved producing an initial timeline transcription of the videos and then a full transcription of each video using Conversation Analysis (Jefferson, 1984) (See appendix for a list of the transcription symbols). The analysis presented here focusses on two of the common features of the videos: first, the ways that the pedal was placed within a broader 'technology structure' for the purposes of the review, and, second, how the pedal was described (its sound, features, structure, possible uses). Consistent with other similar

analysis of YouTube videos (Jorge et al. 2018; AUTHOR REF) I took the decision not to anonymise the data as it is publicly available.

Analysis
Audience
As has been found in previous research (Frobenius, 2011; Isosävi and Vecsernyés, 2022), the review openings were highly routinised and tended to begin with some form of introduction where the reviewers produced a greeting and, normally, introduced themselves/the channel and described the purpose of the review. While these structures are relevant for understanding YouTube sales practice, my analysis here focusses specifically on how the pedals themselves were constructed.

An important point to emphasise is that within the data corpus there were no examples where the skill of the viewer or the 'ambient audience' (Zappavigna, 2019) was made explicitly 'accountably relevant' (Button, 1991) to the use of the pedals. Unlike tuition videos or guitar reviews which often make use of the categories such as 'beginner', 'amateur' or 'professional' (Burns et al., 2019; Waldron, 2012), the reviewers here did not describe the pedal by its relevance to particular skill/expertise levels: instead, on the very few occasions that they addressed viewers directly, they were positioned in entirely generalised terms without reference to skill or expertise. This positioning typically involved projecting interests or aims on the part of the viewer and relating this to an account of the pedal's functionality. In Extract 1 we see the opening of Reverb's review with the pronoun 'you' functioning in a typical sales pitch where the reviewer project hypothetical motives for the viewer's interest in the pedal ('if youre looking to experiment with the entire history of tremolo and reverb effects', Line 1). 'If you' has been found in other review contexts as a way of constructing specific characteristics of audiences (Virtanen, 2017), and in this case it relates to the construction of a particular sub-section of audience with specific musical interest and goals. In continuation, the reviewer goes on to 'sell' the pedal ('its hard to do better than the strymon flint', Line 2): as with face-to-face sales contexts, assertion sequences such as this construct a positive alignment between viewer and product (Chen and Barnes, 2020), positioning the viewers' needs/interests as fitting with the pedals own structure.

Extract 1: Reverb - 0.09-0.32

| (Plate 1) | (Plate 2) | (Plate 3) | (Plate 4) |
| ("If") | ("looking") | ("entire history") | ("tremolo reverb") |

1   If youre looking to experiment with the entire history of tremolo reverb effects
2   (.h) with one compact pedal (.) its hard to do better than the strymon flint
3   tremolo reverb' (.) with toggle switches that let you access six different tremolo
4   and reverb effects and five adjustment knobs' the flint gives you an extensive
5   control (.) over your sound' (.) get tones ranging from the bright sixty five photo
6   cell tremolo (.) to the sentimental (.) eighties hall rock reverb

A similar action can be found at the end of Extract 2, where presenter Baxter (BX) hypothesises a possible aim 'if you won[na make a hot (.) hot (disk? Tra[ck (line 256) for which the pedal would be useful 'use the flint and steel' (line 258). In both Extract 1 and 2 and throughout the data, instead of addressing the skill/experience of the viewer the reviewers made the pedal relevant to certain activities or music practices and constructed particular sub-sections of audience for whom the pedal may be relevant.

Extract 2: Brendan Stratham – 14:39-14-51

```
254   Br    [errr first strymon pedal I am: hundred percent <extremely> happy with it (.h)
255         erm: (.) yeah (.)
256   Bx    if you won[na make a hot (.) hot (disk?) tra[ck
257   Br               [just (.) I love it              [yeah
258   Bx    use the flint and [steel
259   Br                      [use the flint and steel (.h) [erm
260     Bx                                                      [hehe
```

I shall return to the implications of this point in the conclusions of this paper, but for the remainder of this discussion I focus on how reviewers organised their presentations of the pedal.

The 'technology sequence'

I begin by looking at what I describe as the 'technology sequence', which was a repeated structure nearly always at the start of the video where the presenters list the technology used in the review (e.g. the guitars, amplifiers, pedals, software and speakers). Extract 3 provides a typical illustration of this sequence:

Extract 3: SFAHTPS - 1.16-156


```
(Plate 5)              (Plate 6)          (Plat 7)
("%ok: (.) quickly")   ("err:")           ("guitars")
18    Gabor   =that's one of my favourites of theres (.hhhh) %okay (.) quickly err: guitars
19            I have my: erm: jazz master (.) erm: (.) with err: er (.) duncan: erm:
20            *antiquities [I think
21    Alex                 [antiquities yeah cool
```



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(Plate 8)
("(.)")
22    Gabor   (.) and you
23    Alex     now this is a seventyseven greko strat (.) so: Japanese: lawsuit thing t (.h)
24            I think the pickups were changed out at some point but I don't know what
```

25   they are
26   Gabor   ahh (.) [okay
27   Alex   [so (.) yeah (.) strat type pickups

(Plate 9)   (Plate 10)
("strat" […………………………………………..]"
28   Gabor   strat (.) (.h) er: and were going >as always into the (stereotone oteus mini
29   twenty:)< (.)
30   Alex   yep (.) in the: osocab the: greenback and (.) stuff (.) >I assume its still the
31   greenback I haven't checked<

About a minute into the review host Gabor moves from a general evaluation of the
company who make the pedal with a loud '%ok (.) quickly err: 'guitars'" (line 18) marking a
shift in topic. The volume and suddenness of this, the shorthand reference to 'guitars', as
well as the explicit reference to doing it 'quickly' give the account a feel of a 'formality'
needing to be undertaken, perhaps analogous to other 'business at hand' such as the
opening of meetings (Svennevig, 2012). Gabor names his guitar ('jazz master' (line 19) and
then the pickups he uses '[Seymour] duncan: erm: *antiquities' (lines 19-20) and then points
at his co-host (line 22, plate 8) who names his guitar and its pickups (lines 23-27) and then
the amplification, speakers and software used in the recording (lines 28-31). The pointing
action also gives this a feeling of 'ordinariness', as it normalises the technology description
as an 'obvious' thing, requiring no elaboration of purpose (Goodwin, 2003).

In some cases the technology sequence came In a textual form, such as in the Soundpure
studios' and the 'Pop into the chemist' videos (Extract 4), where the technology was
presented as a caption on the screen at the start of the video. Whatever their mode, these
descriptions were always list-like, comprising a run-down of the brands of equipment used,
although they were occasionally accompanied by very brief (always positive) evaluations of
the equipment.

Extract 4: Textual technology descriptions

(Plate 1)   (Plate 2)
(Soundpure studios: 0:37)   (Pop into the chemist: 2.45)

This action may perform many functions, such as product placement marketing and demonstrating the reviewer's level of knowledge/status as a community 'insider'. Insider status is also evident in the uses of 'I', 'my', 'we' and other stance markers that construct the equipment as belonging to them, further enforcing their community membership. In joint reviews phrases such as 'We're going as always' found in Extract 3 (line 28) construct shared experience and common practices that the reviewers were engaged in, building a sense of regular practices enacted by the reviewers and enhancing their credibility.

From my perspective, the point to emphasise is that this part of the sequence established a 'technology context' which is, I suggest, analogous to the conditions of a scientific test. This is further evident in the regular enactment of the 'clean' or 'dry' sound of the guitar without the effect, which commonly occurred directly after the listing of technology. Extract 5 provides a typical example where co-presenter B plays a chord with the tremolo effect of the Flint activated which he then turns off, and then plays the chord again, saying 'heres just the dry' (line 58).

Extract 5: Marty's music – 2.36-2.40
(plays chord with tremolo activated, which eh turns off)
58   B   ok]ay so heres just the dry: he he her]es the dry: (plays chord)
59   M   [I like it already I know tha:t]
60   B   right (plays chord) No:w: (sound of him changing his pickup) if I want (plays
61   chord) lets start with the (bends down and changes reverb setting)

Another example can be found in Extract 6 which comes from later in the dialogue found in Extract 3. Having described the pedal's functionality, the presenters move to start the demonstration 'so yeah: so lets get into it' (line 75) and then demonstrates the tone of his guitar 'so this is wha: clean tone' (line 77) and then plays chords to demonstrate the guitar's sound. This is treated as sufficient by Alex in line 78 as a demonstration, and the pair move to start the test proper at line 79. In the videos with no voiceover, reviewers often played an example of music before engaging the pedal (e.g. 'Gas 'N' Go' review).

Extract 6: SFAHTPS - 341-355
75   Gabor   so [yeah: s]o lets get into it so: (0.3) erm (.) (alright?) I'll; I'll start I guess
76   Alex   [(yeah?)
77   Gabor   so this is wha: clean tone (repeatedly strums and picks a chord)
78   Alex   oka:y
79   Gabor   what shall we; which one do you want to start off with
80   Alex   lets try the trem
81   Gabor   tremolo

These two parts of the technology sequence situate the pedal in a broader architecture of technology that is treated by the reviewers as relevant to being able to 'hear' the effect. This technology is generally not elaborated with no explanation in the data of how the viewer should hear it or of what to pay attention to, and without explanation of technical specialist terminology. In this way, the reviewers constructed the sound as 'intersubjectively obvious' for the participants, and project a shared understanding on the part of the viewer/listener. Indeed, as we shall see, this reference to the wider culture of technology

and the presumption of the viewers understanding of it is a recurring part of how the pedal was described as a product.

Describing sound

Following the technology sequence, reviewers progressed to demonstrations of the pedal, which in all cases involved playing music to demonstrate the sound that would be made from different pedal settings. Occasionally reviewers would manipulate the pedal while the sound was playing (which was more common where there were two reviewers), and on other occasions reviewers set the sound first and then demonstrated it.

Three of the videos did not produce any account of the sound after the example. An illustration is found in Extract 7.
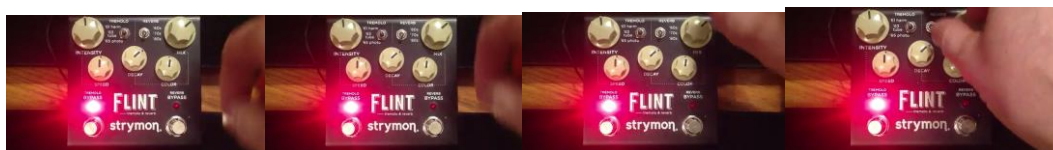
Extract 7: Curtis Kent - 0.31-0.35
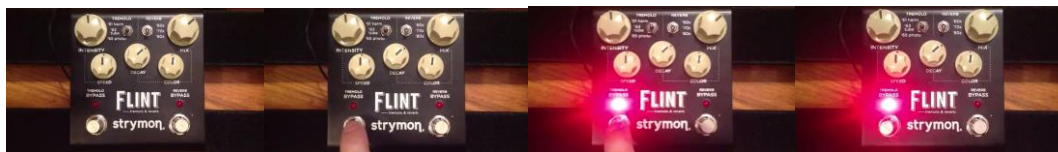
(Plate 1)   (Plate 2)   (Plate 3)   (Plate 4)
("so lets look at the:")('*tremelo* side')   ('first')
22   So lets look at the: *tremolo* side of the flint first
(Plays Musical example 0.37-0.55)

(Plate 5)   (Plate 6)   (Plate 7)   (Plate 8)
(">tube reverb sound<")
23   So thats the: (.) >tube reverb sound<

The reviewer begins by saying he will look at the 'tremolo side' of the pedal (line 22), using the formulation 'let's' to construct a shared framework of attention between reviewer and audience (Vásquez, 2014). He turns on the tremolo effect as he vocalised the word 'first' (Plate 3) and then, without touching the pedal, plays a musical example which lasts for around 30 seconds. As the example comes to a close he says in overlap with the continuing sound of a ringing chord 'so that's the: (.) >tube reverb sound< (line 23) and then moves the switch to a different tremolo effect (Plates 6-8), bringing to a close the presentation of that part of the pedal. This kind of presentation projects the sound as *intersubjectively obvious* to the listener and as not requiring explicit elaboration.

More commonly, however, reviewers produced descriptions of the sound after the demonstration or, on rare occasions, they produced an account prior to the demonstration. The descriptions were varied, involving seemingly ad hoc characterisations of the sound through metaphor, onomatopoeia, descriptions of the types of music where such sounds may be heard, physical representations of sound through gesture, descriptions of historical technology and verbal imitations of sound. However, a ubiquitous feature of the

descriptions was the use of the ordinary categories of pedals to situate them in relation to other similar products.

The first example is an unusual instance of a description coming before the demonstration (only found in 2 of the reviews). in Extract 8 the reviewer describes the function of the harmonic tremolo in relation to historical use in amplifiers (lines 21-23), and in line 23 makes reference to an effect that is 'more like a phaser' [mucho mas de phaser]). He then plays a musical example to demonstrate the sound and reaches in to change the setting to the next tremolo effect (Plate 1) saying 'with the seventy three tube' (line 24), marking the transition. The point to draw attention to here is the use of the reference to a 'phaser' as a way of accounting for the sound. A 'phaser' is a type of modulation pedal of which tremolo are another example (see Appendix). This 'category collection' (Stokoe, 2012) is used by the reviewer to mark a distinction in what 'this kind of sound' is like. As we shall see in the following examples, this comparison to other types of modulating effects was a recurring feature of how the flint was described.

Extract 8: Sergio Targ: - 1:29-1:53
20   en la parte del tremolo vamos a tener (.) los tres diferentes (.) tipos de tremolo
          On the tremolo side we have the three different types of tremolo
21   que se utilizaban en amplificadores (0.3) para el primero vamos a tener el tipo
          That were used in emplifiers (0.3) for the first one we have the harmonic type
22   harmonico que se funcionaba en los amplificadores con filtros generando un
          That worked on amplifiers with filters creating an effect
23   efecto mucho mas de phaser
          more like a phaser

Plays musical example

(Plate 1)   (Plate 2)
                 ("sesenta y tres")
24   en sesenta y tres tuve vamos a tener lo que so se conocía como power tube
   With the seventy three tube we have something that was known as power tube

Extract 9 come from later in the review shown in Extract 3. Gabor has played a musical example to demonstrate the harmonic tremolo setting and, upon completion, as the sound is fading out he makes a wave-like gesture with his right hand (plates 13-19) that can be read as a kind of iconic gesture enacting a wave-like movement (McNeill, 1996; Streeck, 2009) which pre-figures his verbal description. Physical gestures often both prefigured and accompanied verbal description, which has been shown to be a feature of other types of review work (AUTHOR REFERENCE). Gabor then goes on to describe the sound as having a '<phasery> ki[nda sound' (line 83), again invoking a comparison with phaser pedals.

The 'I quite like it' (line 86) enacts the right to make a claim of evaluation (a right that emerges from the reviewer's position of expertise and membership (Jaakkola, 2018; Teng, 2009; Vásquez, 2014; Zappavigna, 2019). The pronouns 'you' (in "if you turn up the intensity you can hear") are hearable not only as an instruction to the co-host, but also as a way of invoking a shared experience of the sound and the pedal between the reviewer and the audience at large.

(Bhatia, 2018; Jaakkola, 2018; Zappavigna, 2019

Extract 9: SAHTPS - 3:57-4:15
Plays musical example
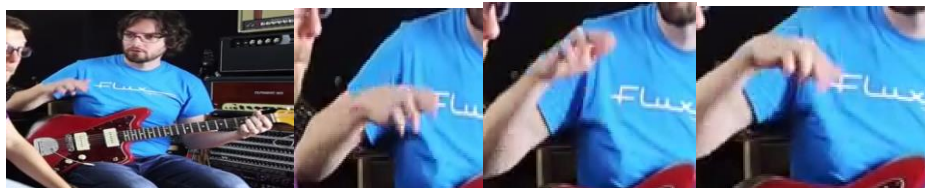
(Plate 13)   (Plate 14)   (Plate 15)   (Plate 16)

(Plate 17)   (Plate 18)   (Plate 19)

83	Gabor	(.h[h) so it almost has that kinda almost <phasery> ki[nda sound to [it
84	Alex	[s:: [tk [s::lightly
85		yeah
86	Gabor	(.h) erm but I quite like it has a; its its really it; if you if you (0.3) up
87		the intensity >you can hear it a bit more<

As another example, Extract 10 shows the end part of a section where the reviewer is demonstrating a tremolo sound. The action comes after the reviewer has played a musical example to demonstrate one of the tremolo sounds.

Extract 10: Timbreline Productions - 1:37-1:55
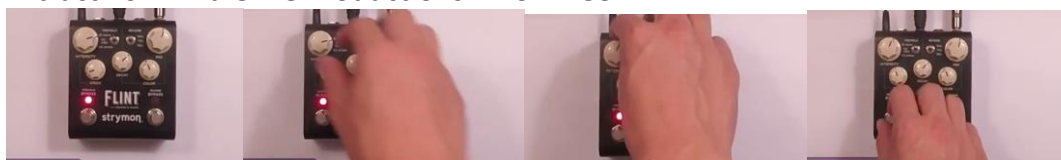
(Plate 1)   (Plate 2)   (Plate 3)   (Plate 4)
(playing musical   (altering sound)   (altering sound   (Turning pedal off)
example with pedal
on)

(Plate 5)
(Pedal off)
33   so that has kind of a: (.) <phasery goopy warbly> sound to it (.h) if your

(Plate 6)   (Plate 7)
34   looking for a good (.h) pedal that can h have the: er the good vibe sound
35   as well (.h) this is *that* >which I really like the sound of< 'its not quite phasery (.h)
36   its not quite chorusy its just (.) nice and goopy kinda chewey (.) and so:: now we'll
37   look at the tube tremolo

The reviewer turns buttons to miniplate the sound as it fades out (Plates 2-3) and then turns the pedal off (Plates 4-5). He then says 'so this has kind of a <phasery goopy warbly> sound to it (line 33). Later in the extract he uses other comparisons by describing it as a pedal that has a 'vibe sound' (line 34) (referencing another modulation effect similar to phasers). As he continues, he articulates a difference between this pedal and other modulation effects: "its not quite phasery (.h) its not quite chorus (lines 34-36) before describing at as 'goopy' and 'chewey' (line 36). At the end, the reviewer enacts a shift in the shared attention to a different part of the pedal ('now we'll look at the tube tremolo' 36-37), reiterating a participation framework involving himself and generalised ('knowledgeable') audience members.

As a final example, a very similar articulation is made in Extract 11, this time in relation to a both phasers and wah wah pedal. "its almost somewhere along the line of a ph:asery[:: er almost .wah kindof "but not really" (lines 51-52), with the his co-host Alex suggesting that the pedal 'breaks the line between (.) modulation (.) *types* I guess: (line 54).

Extract 11: TSFAHPS - 2.40-2.59
50   it it effects the frequencies its more of a filter (.) so you it goes in and out of:
51   high and low frequencies (.hh) so its almost somewhere along th line of a
52   ph:asery[:: er almost .wah kindof "but not really if that makes yea[h
53   Alex   [yeah   yeah it
54   kindof breaks the line between (.) modulation (.) *types* I guess
55   yeah (.) yeah (.)

Through these extracts we see how reviewers use the 'category collections' of modulation pedals as a resource to describe the Flint. In a similar way to how wine reviewers define taste through reference to the 'wine wheel' (earth notes, red fruits, botanicals, etc - see Mondada 2020), and how perfume reviewers use enshrined categories of smell (Alač, 2017), the vloggers here drew on the common-sense categories of pedal types to identify and

make available comparative characteristics. The examples presented here and throughout the data show that reviewers present these categories as *obvious* and *commonsensical*, requiring no elaboration or explanation: as such, the reviewers projected an assumption that viewers know and have a shared understanding of, for example, what a phaser sounds like. The categories were employed not just as labels, but as reference points that could be used to describe what the flint 'isn't' as well as what it 'is'.

This process of treating pedal knowledge as taken for granted was part of a broader normalisation of pedals as an integral feature of guitar playing. We get a glimpse of this in Extract 12: the reviewer begins the review by constructing a shared framework of attention 'here we have', followed by an assessment of the pedal as 'one of my favourite >all time< favourite pedals:' (line1). The 'one of my favourite' formulation is one found throughout the data[1] is phrasing is a common one used by reviewers. The reviewer describes the pedal as a tremolo and reverb saying that he loves this kind of dual function as you can 'get something else off of your pedalboard'. The generalised 'you' makes this affordance something that is relevant to all users, normalises the assumption that pedalboards are important, and, by implication, that both tremolo and reverb are critical effects to have on a pedalboard.

Extract 12: Soundpure - 0.43-1.02
1   Hey we have erm t t er one of my favourite >!all time< favourite pedals: the: the (.)
2   Strymon Flint (.) which is tremolo *and* reverb (.) erm I love it when you can can get
3   *two things* in one package and get something else off of your pedal board it makes
4   it pretty cool'

Within this type of articulation there is a discourse of 'efficiency of space' on pedal boards that reviewers often used as a means of upselling the flint: Extract 13 provides an instructive illustration. The reviewer has been playing a musical example to demonstrate the reverb setting of the Flint. He leans towards he pedal board, saying '>but you might notice<' (line 67, plates 8-10) and removes another pedal from the side of the board, which he lifts up saying 'I no longer have' and brings to the pedal close to the camera to show it, and then says 'my stereo wet' (line 67, Plate 11), which is another model of reverb pedal. He then throws the pedal onto the floor so that it is now removed from the board (plates 13-14). This action can be seen to performatively demonstrate the concept of space and the efficiency of dual pedal functionality.

Extract 13. Lance Seymour - 6:26-6:43

(Plate 8)   (Plate 9)   (Plate 10)   (Plate 11)   (Plate 12)

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[1] While I actively searched for examples, I could not find any instances of negative reviews of this pedal. On the contrary, reviewers more commonly referred to it as 'one of their favourite' pedals. It is comparatively easy to find examples of negative pedal reviews for other products so this does not seem to be a genre characteristic, but more research would be required to address this issue thoroughly.

("but you")   ("might")   ("notice")   (Stereo wet)

(Plate 13)   (Plate 14)
("(0.5) ah (0.5)[..............]")
67   (.h) >but you might notice< (.) I no longer have: (.) my (.) stereo wet (.) on the
68   board (0.5) ah (0.5) (I'd?) unplugged it at least (.hh) er: cos I don't 'need it now" (.)
69   er (.) this thing kind of handles all (.) all that pretty (.) stuff

Discussion

This paper has sought to provide an initial analyse how YouTube vloggers communicatively organise guitar pedal review videos. This question is part of a broader analysis of how cultures of consumption are constructed and performed in YouTube reviews. In this final section I argue that all of the videos - regardless of whether they had clear commercial interests or not – involved four recurrent practices that, together, encouraged the consumption of pedals (and of the Flint in particular) and that constructed pedal *use* as an ordinary practice in the guitar art world.

First, the reviewers used the technology sequence to project *mythical* intersubjectivity, bracketing out the ways that sound digitisation transform the sound (e.g. the way that sound is compressed and the impact of the audio technology used by the viewer such as headphones and speakers). In stark terms, the reviewer does not hear the pedal or the technology as the reviewer does – a difference that is analogous to the variation between a live concert and a recording of the concert on a mobile phone. The reviewers did not address how technological mediation makes this claim to intersubjectivity problematic, but instead used a quasi-scientific test structure to produce the *appearance* of shared experience and of test legitimacy. This shared empierce is also present in the use of plural pronoun utterances such as 'we' and 'let's' that invoke a shared focus of attention

Second, the technical skills required to play a guitar were bracketed out, and the knowledge embedded in the technology descriptions including the categories of pedal types were presented as intersubjectively obvious. In these ways, the reviewers relied on an assumed shared epistemic space with an *idealised viewer* that could understand and use the pedal. I argue that by bracketing out epistemic and skill variations, the pedal was treated as a *reified object* that could 'do music' independently of the skills and knowledge that are critical to using them. The videos enacted a practice where music can be made by simply manipulating the pedal's controls, with guitar or musical skill entirely absent from the accounts. This echoes the findings of research in areas of television sales which have pointed to the ways that products are often packaged independently from professional expertise (Glick, 2016). Pronouns of 'you' and 'we' were also critical to this work of objectifying users of a particular community type. As other research has shown (Virtanen, 2017), 'you' in particular projected users who shared the knowledge possessed by the reviewers themselves.

Third, the pedal was constructed as an *idealised object* of consumption that fits within the material 'good life' (Dittmar, 2007) and 'commodity fetishism' (Bucholtz, 2000) of guitar playing. In this sense, the genre of reviewing had much in common with how lifestyle programming enact commodification and the lifeworld practise of a given culture (Lorenzo-dus, 2006). We saw the ways that pedals in general, and this pedal in particular (but also guitars, amplifiers and other technologies) were constructed as 'normal' and even 'necessary' features of guitar playing. By foregrounding technology as the resources required to do music, reviewers produced a sense of the pedals as a critical part of music making and as a normal feature of the life of guitarists.

Fourth, while this analysis has not sought to address the issue of presenters' identity, it is evident that, as with lifestyle programmes (Smith, 2010), the reviewers could be seen to construct their expertise and credibility through their mastery of this taken for granted knowledge, as well as through the pedagogic stance taken in 'teaching' the viewer how to use the pedal, and, more generally, their membership to a community practice. Again, while it has not formed the focus of analysis here, there is evidence that in joint reviews the relationship between the reviewers and the enactment of shared perspectives through articulations such as 'we' was also critical to the construction of shared expertise and authenticity.

These four practices involve reviewer treating the pedal as desirable; projecting a viewer who is 'the right person to use the pedal'; characterising pedal ownership as normal; and showing the pedal to be transformative of music practice. I argue that these actions not only involve up-selling the pedal but also construct a material culture of consumption where pedals are central to and critical to the practice of guitar playing. These practices were evident in all videos, irrespective of their commercial standing, which suggests that these practices have become an embedded part of the genre of guitar pedal reviews.

These findings contribute to understandings of review work in YouTube, showing that cultures of consumption are performed in the act of reviewing. An important question remains about how prominent these structures are across other types of reviewing, or indeed across other YouTube genres. Addressing these questions will help us understand further how YouTube and other platforms of digital capitalism are transforming and constructing consumer practice. One of the limitations of this study is that it has looked at the videos as digital artefact but has not examined either the processes of making the videos or at how users make sense of and use them. Nor has this paper addressed the relationship between practices of video production and textual comments and other interactions in YouTube. These are important topics in understanding in more depth the performance and use of YouTube sales practices.

Appendix
Table 2: Guitar pedal typology

Type of effect	Description	Category

Boost	Increases the level of the signal going into the pedal resulting in a volume boost and, often with some form of distortion to the sound.	Overdrive pedals – these pedals 'break up' the sound to different levels.
Overdrive	Increases a signal so that it begins to distort	
Distortion	Similar to overdrive but with greater levels of 'breakup' in the sound.	
Fuzz	Fuzz 'clips' the sound wave more than overdrive so that it sounds more 'broken up' and distorted.	
Wah	Creates alterations in the sounds frequencies to make a 'crying' type sound.	Modulation Pedals - all of which create 'movement' in the sound by altering the way the sound wave behaves.
Delay	Generates a repetition of the sound entering into the pedal which is re-played to create single or multiple versions of the same sound.	
Chorus	Uses a delayed version of the input sound which is mixed with the original to create an oscillating type sound.	
Flange	Similar to chorus, but with a shorter delay time between the two signals.	
Phaser	Similar to both Chorus and Flange, but with the signal placed out of 'phase' with the original signal in different ways.	
Tremolo	Produces a regular oscillation in the volume of the sound.	
Reverb	Creates an 'echo' effect of the signal.	
Octave	Used to reproduce a version of the sound one or more octaves above or below the original sound.	
Compressor	Used to compress the sound wave by removing the extreme ends of the sound spectrum.	
Looper	Enable the recording of a sound that can be played back repeatedly on a loop	
Tuner	Show the pitches of the strings on a screen to enable the tuning of the instrument.	
EQ	Enable the adjustment of the signal by changing the volume of certain bandwidths of the sound.	

Table 3: Transcription symbols used in data extracts

=   Latched talk

:   Elongated sound

(.)   Brief Pause of less than half a second

(0.5) Duration of pause in tenths of a second

<>   Slower than surrounding speech

[ ]   Overlapping speech

><	Faster than surrounding speech
<>	Slower than surrounding speech
(.h)	inward breath – multiples indicate longer intakes
'	Falling intonation
"	Rising intonation
!	Louder than surrounding talk
%	Quieter than surrounding talk
*	Higher pitch than surrounding talk

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