Persuasion in smoking cessation online: an interpersonal pragmatics perspective

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Table of Contents

List of tables

List of figures

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1 Introduction

1.1 Setting the scene

Over the past two decades, people have become accustomed to turning to the Internet for health advice (e.g. 80 % of American Internet users have stated having searched for health information online [Willerton 2008: 311], asking "Dr. Google" to diagnose what ails them. In the UK context, more than half of all Internet users (51 %) reported searching for health-related information online (Office for National Statistics 2016). As the gamut of governmental websites on a myriad of public health risks (and other conditions) indicate, this development has not gone unnoticed by the Department of Health. While traditionally in print-form, public health communications are now also to a great extent online (see Neuhauser & Kreps 2010a/b). Regardless of its online or offline nature, public health communication is framed by the goal of persuading target audiences to change their behaviour. One of the definitions that can be found for persuasion in the *Oxford English Dictionary online* is "the addressing of arguments or appeals to a person to induce cooperation, submission, or agreement" (OED online 2016: sense 1). Thus, persuasion is conceived as a process between at least two parties (sender and receiver), which can target different communicative outcomes through reasoning or urgent requests to act or believe something. This study analyses what communicative or persuasive strategies are employed in smoking cessation online in a UK setting, adopting an interpersonal pragmatic approach. Persuasive attempts range from getting addressees to stop smoking, to make addressees accept pieces of advice, to get them to agree to a proposed course of action as well as to reinforce their determination.

Locher's (2006) study of an online health advice column "Lucy Answers" provides the methodological foundation for this project. Her discursive moves analysis to arrive at the discursive structure of Lucy Answers has informed my investigation of the arguments used to persuade on a discourse level. Further, she combined her exhaustive content analysis of discursive moves with an in-depth analysis of the relational work used in the advice letters, allowing her to illuminate how the asymmetry between advice-seekers and the professional advice-giving team is negotiated in discourse. The subject of this study consists of a range of online, asynchronous practices (websites and forums), which inform and give advice on smoking cessation in the UK. By being as inclusive as possible of UK online smoking cessation sources (N = 30), I attempt to show general, persuasive discourse (and multi-modal) patterns linked to the public health risk of smoking. While these sources all share the purpose of trying to persuade users or readers to stop smoking, persuasive efforts can take different shape and form. If we compare sources with different organizational backgrounds (e.g. governmental versus commercial ones) or with different technical affordances (e.g. mono-directional sites versus forums), this observation holds even more true.

Example (1.01) is a passage from a commercial website, producing and distributing nicotine replacement therapy and providing help on-site to quit smoking. It nicely shows how persuasive attempts include different discursive activities or discursive moves as well as how the interpersonal dimension is considered and plays into the persuasive process. Far from bluntly stating that readers need to stop smoking for their own health's sake, the authors paint the picture of a difficult situation, in which readers could potentially find themselves. Only after intricately orchestrating the introduction in order to emotionally involve readers do the authors shift to providing action alternatives and giving specific advice on how to go about quitting smoking.

(1.01) You want to give up smoking, but have tried a few times before and failed. Your friends and family may be cynical about your next attempt, and deep down, you're probably beginning to doubt yourself too. If this is how you feel, don't be disheartened. Quitting smoking can be one of the hardest things you'll ever do. Not only are you fighting a physical addiction to nicotine, you're also battling a psychological dependence on the habit. But we believe you have the power to overcome the addiction.

If you've got your eye on the summit, the climb can seem quite daunting. But if you're focused on getting to the next base camp, suddenly it's a lot less scary. Rather than adopt an all or nothing approach, we encourage you to break it down into manageable steps. This means you can take it one day at a time. [...] (S03)[1]

The commercial nature of the website in example (1.01) may partially account for how carefully the introduction is built up to draw readers in and to signal that authors have their best interests at heart to demonstrate the benevolence of the website (see Sillence & Briggs 2015). In the forums, persuasion does not consist of persuading each other of the necessity to stop but of reinforcing and supporting each other's decision to stop. Example (1.02) shows the reaction from a responding participant to an initiating participant who shared his progress of having reached the second day of his quit smoking journey. The responding participant engages in various discursive activities to reinforce the other participant's determination. Apart from literally cheering on the initiating participant, she evaluates the latter's capability to quit, promises incentives to motivate the initiating participant and gives advice in the form of spe-

[1]The abbreviations in (1.01) and (1.02) refer to the number of the sources in the overall corpus (see Ch. 2).

cific coping strategies. Finally, the responding participant shows that she cares about the quitter's success, resulting in a potentially bonding effect.

(1.02) yeah! come on Mike!
you can do this.
this time next week you'll be in week two already, with a stash of cash to blow on something.
dont give in to the craves, just breathe long and slow through every one of them. go outside for 5 mins and breathe very slow...it helps...each crave is taking you a step closer to being a non smoker, remember that when they hit you. want to see you in day 3 tomorrow my friend.okay????????? (S06, t12)

While example (1.02) is not a straightforward case of response-changing persuasion—that is, getting the initiator to change their behaviour— (see Miller 2002), I argue that persuasion occurs in the form of response-reinforcement. The responding participant uses a range of relational work strategies to involve the other interactant, which support her discursive activities and signal her genuine interest in the other interactant's well-being.

In the course of this thesis, it is my aim to illuminate patterns of discourse strategies, relational work strategies and identity construction. Thereby, I want to illustrate how the concepts of relational work and identity construction are particularly useful to discuss different facets of persuasion.

1.2 Studying persuasion from an interpersonal pragmatic perspective in online health discourse

The relevance of persuasion in health discourse in different modes and contexts has been highlighted by researchers from a variety of fields such as the sociology of health (e.g. Furedi 2008; Lupton 2013a/b; Seale 2002/2003; Wainwright 2008; etc.), risk communication (Henwood et al. 2003; Neuhauser & Kreps 2010 a/b; Thompson et al. 2009) and rhetoric (e.g. Segal 2005/2009; Spoel 2008; Willerton 2008). Researchers have focussed on how medical practitioners may need to persuade patients to comply with their recommendations in face-to-face health encounters, have discussed the effectiveness of communicative elements—such as the use visual elements in public health campaigns—as well as the potential of health interventions online (e.g. Bigi 2011; Camerini et al. 2010; Eysenbach 2001; etc.). Pervasive ideologies such as "healthism" (i.e. the imperative of taking responsibility over one's own health and of remaining/being healthy), “the informed patient, the shift from medical to lay expertise and how these developments exert persuasive power on individuals’ identities and their lives have been illuminated on a societal level (Lupton 2013a/b; Seale 2002; Wainwright 2008).

While health discourse has also been a hot topic in linguistics, e.g. face-to-face encounters but also increasingly online (see Harvey et al. 2007; Heritage & Sefi 1992; Morrow 2006; Richardson 2003/2005; Silverman), the role of persuasion has been less explicitly theorised. This is surprising and points to a research gap, considering the ongoing popularity of communicative measures—especially in the form of written text— to change individual health and lifestyle choices in public health. Even within e-health (see Eysenbach 2001 for a discussion of the term), the written mode is still at the forefront. The absence of persuasion as a theoretical concept in linguistic health discourse studies might have to do with the prevalent understanding of persuasion as a perlocutionary effect in speech act theory (Austin 1962; Searle 1999; Sornig 1989). This relegates the investigation of persuasion to evaluative effect studies since, as linguists, we focus on the form and function of an utterance. Kenneth Burke (1950: 41) provides a more open notion of rhetoric or “the art of persuasion”, defining it as “the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents”. I find Burke’s notion of rhetoric a good starting point for a linguistic analysis of persuasion in e-health discourse, as it emphasises the fact that persuasion is both discursive and interpersonal. Moreover, rhetoric studies highlight that, far from being effects alone, persuasion is a process, which involves all elements of a communicative situation (Ilie 2006). Aristotle established the working principles of persuasion to highlight how different factors play together (see Cockroft & Cockroft 2005; Ilie 2006). He mentions the use of arguments (logos), the credibility of speakers (ethos), and the personal and emotional involvement of the audience (pathos). While the use of arguments may be the most straightforward principle, credibility and personal involvement point to how interpersonal pragmatics can contribute to the discussion by looking at linguistic realization.

If we understand persuasion as an interpersonal and discursive process, which exploits arguments but also features the relational aspects of credibility and personal involvement, we find that several sociolinguistic and discourse-analytical studies have in fact explored how persuasive aspects come into play in online health discoursein very varied settings. Without resorting to the term ‘persuasion’, these researchers explore different facets of persuasion and forego the necessity of measuring effects by looking at social practices; i.e. at “socially recognized and institutionally or culturally supported endeavour[s]” (Gee 2011: 17). In other words, researchers can identify persuasive intentions and look at linguistic strategies as they would be recognized as such within the specific setting and the sequencing of activities. Hamilton (1998), for instance, described the versatility of narratives in a discussion list on bone marrow transplantation, where they had the function of establishing competent thus credible identities of individual participants as well as of socializing new members into the community. Harrison and Barlow (2009) pointed out how narratives help to create an authoritative identity and legitimize advice administered from one peer to another. Richardson (2003; 2005) analyzed how interactants "warrant" their contributions to convince others of their point of view on a peer-to-peer forum. Locher (2006) showed how an online health advice column was strategically compiled by a professional writer team so problem-seekers follow up and accept what they have been advised. She investigated this persuasive endeavour on several levels, such as the linguistic composition of the advisory texts, emergent relational effects and how these two aspects contribute to a credible expert persona.

What this eclectic selection of studies highlights is that there is a link between persuasion, relational work and identity construction. Locher and Watts (2008: 96) define relational work as "[…] all aspects of the work invested by individuals in the construction, maintenance, reproduction and transformation of interpersonal relationships among those engaged in social practice". Relational work is based on the premise that there are always both informational and interpersonal aspects to communication (Locher 2008: 510). This is an immensely useful notion for this study, which regards persuasion as an interpersonal process that relies on both informational and relational elements to change someone's behaviour or attitude. To return to the aforementioned working principles of persuasion: relational work facilitates analyzing how personal involvement is created linguistically and what specific interpersonal effects are at work in each practice (e.g. showing solidarity or empathy). When persuading, a speaker needs to be credible, trustworthy and to come across as authentic, which makes the link of persuasion to 'identity' patent. I embrace Bucholtz and Hall's (2010: 19) notion of identity as a "discursive construct", adopting their purposely broad definition of identity as "[…] *the social positioning of self and other*" (2010: 18; italics in original). Relational work and identity construction are also connected; for example, in a conference talk on the role of personal disclosure in building trust, Bamberg (2013) pointed out that "[if] you want [or give] empathy, you'd better come off as authentic". Fittingly, Locher (2008: 509) argues that relational work can also be called "identity work". She explains that "[…] relational work refers to the ways in which the construction of identity is achieved in interaction, while identity refers to the "product" of these linguistic and non-linguistic processes" (Locher 2008: 511). I am looking to contribute to the discussion of how identity construction and relational work intersect by using these concepts to explore persuasion in the written, asynchronous, computer-mediated context of smoking cessation in the UK. The need for such a study has been highlighted by Locher and Limberg (2012: 23), who have called for more research on written practices, mentioning health campaigns as ideal sites for combining interests in advising and persuasion. While identity, relational work and persuasion incited several scholarly contributions individually (Bucholtz & Hall 2005; Gass & Seiter 2007; Locher 2008; Miller 2002; Sornig 1989; etc.), how they interlink in health computer-mediated contexts has not received much scholarly attention and represents a gap in theory (notable exceptions are Richardson 2003; Koteyko 2009; Locher 2006). Hence, I will draw on insights from all these individual fields, which will allow me to establish a comprehensive analytical grid.

1.3 Research questions

To analyse persuasion from an interpersonal pragmatic perspective in my online smoking cessation corpus, I have compiled two sets of research questions, consisting of eight questions in total. In view of the large amount of data I collected, I felt it necessary to conduct an analysis of persuasion in different stages. The first set of questions deals with persuasion on a broad level, addressing the question of the UK smoking cessation online landscape at large but also dealing with logos in a generalised manner by pointing out the topics discussed as well as the multi-modal features used. The second set of questions is where I focus on the working principles of persuasion in discourse, performing comprehensive analyses of discursive moves, relational work and identity construction. Therefore, I established two sub-samples. The first sample consists of mono-directional, professional websites, which is contrasted with the second one, consisting of peer-to-peer interaction in lay communities.

Research question for the overall corpus — persuasion on a broad level

(1) What smoking cessation sources are available in a UK context?
(2) What topics are commonly discussed?
(3) What are typical multi-modal or design features?

Research questions for selected sub-samples—focussing on the working principles of persuasion

(4) What characteristic discursive moves are employed in the different practices? Linguistic realization?

(5) What is the visual arrangement of selected sub-sites and how are they embedded in the larger context of the practices?
(6) How are relational work and identity construction used to establish expertise and credibility in discourse?
(7) How are relational work and identity construction used to create personal involvement and emotional appeal in discourse?
(8) How can these aspects be linked to the aim of persuading the readers to quit smoking?

To answer my first research question, I first collected my data in an organic way, emulating the search behaviour of lay people trying to quit smoking. As a next step, I conducted a content analysis to determine frequent topics used as well as common multi-modal features. These steps answer reseach questions two and three. The content analysis of these sources guided me to select two sub-samples in a meaningful way (see Ch. 6), conducting a cluster analysis (a statistical method for grouping similar things together).

Within the two sub-samples, I looked at the remaining five research questions. Questions four and five are targeted at answering the question of logos in the datasets. Therefore, I conducted systematic content analyses of discursive moves of the entire forum interaction sample and of selected sub-sites in the website corpus to answer question four. The notion of "discursive move" is useful to arrive at the linguistic setup of the practices under scrutiny. Similar to Hymes' idea of "speech action" (2003: 38), discursive moves designate the situated meaning of an utterance. Miller and Gergen (1998: 192) explain that discursive moves are "[…] the kind of contribution that the entry made to the ongoing interchange". Discursive moves are identified in a bottom-up process, which helps me to get to the informational structure of selected practices. This methodological procedure has been successfully used in recent advice literature (e.g. edited volume by Limberg & Locher 2012; DeCapua & Tian 2015; Hampel 2015). By quantifying my analysis, I am able to show the distribution of discursive moves according to frequency and sequence. I view this as a crucial step to discuss the use of arguments to persuade someone beyond a mere topic-level (which can be overlapping within smoking cessation). Thus, linguistic patterns can be better contextualized and meaningfully interpreted by linking them to discursive moves. Research question five addresses the visual design and layout of practices and their impact on the transmission of content, which is a crucial aspect in this multi-modal context (see Sillence & Briggs 2015). Additionally, the hierarchical and nested structures of websites require the additional analytical step of looking at the embedding of sub-sites and how the setup enhances and support the persuasive function.

Questions six and seven specifically address my theoretical interest regarding how interpersonal pragmatics can be useful to analyze persuasion. To shed light on the interpersonal nuances of persuasion, I draw on studies by Locher (2006), Morrow (2012) and Placencia (2012), which have convincingly combined analyses of discursive moves and relational work strategies. They also used discursive moves as a first step of analysis before focussing on the relational side of interaction in a second step, which facilitates a fine-grained and situated interpretation of findings. I conduct qualitative close reading analyses of selected sub-sites of websites and of two topics in the forum sample, which will help show how aspects of the working principles of persuasion, ethos and pathos:, are realized. Finally, I continuously comment on and draw the link between my analysis and theoretical concepts of persuasion.

1.4 Structure

The thesis consists of 11 chapters overall: an introduction, a material description chapter, three theory chapters, five results chapters and a conclusion. In the second chapter, I provide a comprehensive overview of my corpus, explaining in detail how I collected the data, giving further background on the public health risk smoking in the UK, and reflecting on my decision-making process regarding ethics. Ch. 3-5 contain my literature review regarding my main theoretical pillars and how I adopt theoretical insights into persuasion and empirical findings from previous research for my own study.

In Ch. 3 I discuss how persuasion is approached across different fields. Thus, I reflect on the ontological state of persuasion to operationalize the concept for an empirical linguistic analysis. Rhetoric and communication studies have a body of literature on what persuasion is, which goes beyond persuasion as a perlocutionary effect. After establishing a working definition from this interdisciplinary perspective, I will set out to explore the link between persuasion and power, which has been one of the outlooks on persuasion from a sociolinguistic perspective. Moreover, I will introduce the findings of previous research regarding what role the mediated aspect of communication may play. Finally, I introduce some insights into how persuasion is analyzed in linguistics, starting from speech act theory, to language strategies used to influence someone. In Ch. 4, I introduce and summarize key concepts of interpersonal pragmatics. Thus, I start out with defining relational work before musing on its link to the discursive notion of identity construction. To round off, I explain how I view their connection to persuasion. In Ch. 5, I move on to survey literature on health and computer-mediated communication (CMC), which addresses aspects of persuasion and interpersonal pragmatics on an empirical level. I start out with how persuasion has been studied in online health discourse on a broad societal level before I outline the advantages that have been described of using online means for promoting public health. In a separate section, I specifically focus on how the speech event ‘advice’ has been studied in online health practices since advice-giving can be considered a typical activity to persuade that is additionally linked to matters of trustworthiness, credibility and involvement.

Ch. 6 is a first result chapter, which is not of linguistic nature in the strict sense. However, the content analysis of topics and multi-modal features, besides answering the question of logos on a semantic level, enables me to select sub-samples in a systematic and justified way. Chapter seven and eight depict the results of my analysis of the website corpus. In Ch. 7 I explore aspects of logos by looking at the discursive structure of two types of sub-sites (FAQs and practical tips sections), how they are embedded in the larger website context, their internal structure and their visual design. In Ch. 8 I perform fine-grained analyses of how ethos and pathos are constructed by focussing on relational work strategies and identity construction. My analysis of the forum data, in Ch. 9 and Ch. 10, is similarly structured. In Ch. 9 I investigate the discursive structure of the forum practices, arguing that it can be linked to the working principle of logos. As in Ch. 6, I analyze the linguistic patterns of the two most frequent discursive moves and show how they are linked to persuasion. In Ch. 10 I center on the two most common forum topics (relapse and requesting help) to examine how relational work and identity construction contribute to ethos and pathos in detail. Finally, in Ch. 11 I summarise my most important findings and discuss their implication.

This study fills an important and underrepresented research niche by taking a discursive stance on persuasion in online health discourse and provides fresh insight into a well-studied matter by using an interpersonal pragmatics approach. It is therefore an important contribution to current developments in (im)politeness research, where there is a tendency to move away from an etic concept of (im)politeness to look at the linguistic variation caused by interpersonal aspects of interaction more holistically (see Locher 2015). Finally, my study offers empirical research on online health websites, which are an understudied area of online health discourse, but also adds to previous studies on online health support groups by explicitly looking at interaction through the lens of persuasion.

2 Material description—the online field of smoking cessation in the UK

In this chapter, I describe how the entire corpus of thirty sites was collected and compiled. Therefore, I start out by expanding on the reason for choosing the topic of smoking cessation as the object of this study in Section 2.1 Afterwards, I will explain how the data search was conducted and what exclusion parameters I had set up (Section 2.2). At the same time, this section answers my first, general research question regarding the smoking cessation landscape online in the UK:

- What smoking cessation sources are available in an online UK context?

Moreover, I elaborate on how I preserved the corpus in the ever-changing context of the Internet. As a next step, the items of the corpus are listed and discussed. Further, I compare my findings to two previous studies that worked with a comparable search procedure to find smoking cessation sites. Their findings will help to assess representativeness of the type and number of sources found. In Section 2.3, I will describe the corpus in detail using Herring's (2007) faceted classification scheme to single out important situational and medium factors. Thereby, I will be able to convey an overall impression of the background and the set-up of the sources. In other words, the first three sections aim at giving insight into the selection and composition of the corpus and its main characteristics. Finally, I will describe what factors influenced my decision-making regarding ethical and copy-right consideration; the former being regarded as one of the four main methodological challenges when doing sociolinguistic research online (Bolander & Locher 2014: 14).

2.1 Smoking as a public health risk in the UK

Smoking as a health risk is an ideal topic to investigate persuasive strategies in online public health sources for several reasons. Firstly, the dangers of smoking are well-established, in fact the World Health Organization [WHO] (2016) considers tobacco consumption an "epidemic" posing "one of the biggest health threats the world has ever faced […]". The organization Action on Smoking and Health [ASH] (2016) provides a number for this health threat in a UK context, arguing that each year around 96,000 deaths are smoking related in the UK. In the same vein, Cancer Research UK (2016) explains that smoking is "the most important preventable cause of cancer in the world". It is noteworthy that Cancer Research UK considers smoking to be a "preventable cause", emphasizing that lifestyle changes would significantly reduce this number.

Moreover, it already points to what kind of action non-governmental and government agencies undertake to reduce the detrimental effects of smoking on the population: prevention. Smokers appear to want to get rid of their addiction (for health or financial reasons) with over "6 in 10 smokers saying that they want to quit" (Department of Health 2011: 32). Nonetheless, only half of these six smokers try to quit in any given year, which is one of the reasons the UK government sees a necessity to intervene. Public Health England (2015) underlines the need to become active in smoking cessation, claiming that "[w]e need to step up our efforts to help people quit"[2]. The policy paper "Healthy Lives, Healthy People: a tobacco control plan for England" (2011) published by the Department of Health set out several areas of action that should result in reducing smoking rates. They include legislative measures of restricting tobacco display in shops, looking into "plain packaging", and of keeping up taxes to regulate prices of tobacco. However, they also feature plans to become active on a local level, providing appropriate stop smoking services in communities and promoting local campaigns (Department of Health 2011: 32).

For my purposes, it is especially interesting that the UK government highlights the importance of "effective communication for tobacco control" (Department of Health 2011: 41), which refers to public health campaigns to educate audiences. It involves mass-mediated messages that aim at persuading readers to stop smoking. Three goals of communication for tobacco control are outlined: (1) reinforcing the motivation of smokers to quit, (2) triggering quitting action and (3) making quitting more successful by signposting people to the most effective support available (Department of Health 2011: 42). The Internet is likely to play an important role in mass-communicating the dangers of tobacco since 51 % of all Internet users look for health-related information online (Office for National Statistics 2016) and since it is a relatively cost-effective means for health promotion (Lupton 2013a: 6; see also Freeman & Chapman 2012: 858, who emphasize the increasing interest in intervening in health behaviour online). The three areas of persuasion are also likely to be decisive and to shape the communicative efforts on non-governmental and commercial sites online whereas support sites mostly focus on the first point of reinforcing each other's motivation. Written language takes center stage in these matters, as the Department of Health (2011: 41) stresses that "[marketing communications and mass media] remain important levers in influencing behaviour". Hence,

[2] Prevention efforts may have proven fruitful, as the smoking rates have fallen to the lowest on record in England in 2015 (BBC News 2016).

the persuasive objective of these sources will result in patterns of persuasive discourse strategies that can be uncovered.

2.2 Collecting the data and an initial overview of the corpus

To find and collect the different online sources, I decided to conduct a GOOGLE search using the search strings “stop smoking” or “quit smoking”. Thereby, I tried to emulate how lay people would look for information on quitting smoking (see also Bock et al. 2008; Freeman & Chapman 2012; for comparable although not identical search procedures regarding smoking cessation sites). The rationale behind this procedure was to compile a list of sources that smokers would actually encounter when searching for help to quit online. Additionally, I clicked on links provided on the websites encountered to see whether I could find other relevant sources. Websites were only included if they were set in the UK (as indicated by their URL or site content) and if they provided active help to stop smoking, i.e. they had to give some advice or information on how to go about quitting smoking. The searches took place in stages between April 2011 and April 2012, with the parameters becoming more refined as the project and its research questions evolved. Each site was initially coded for its organizational affiliations (governmental, commercial, advocacy, etc.) as well as for whether smoking cessation was the main or only one topic among many. While I found these distinctions useful to get a descriptive insight into the corpus setup, I did not find that explanatory force to justify dividing the corpus into further sub-samples. Therefore, I opted for conducting a detailed content analysis to answer my further research questions at a later stage (see Ch. 6).

The searches resulted in a list of 37 sources. However, seven sources were excluded retrospectively when it came to saving and preserving the corpus. Three of these had ceased to exist by the time I wanted to download the list of sources. In the case of two sources, technical difficulties in downloading due to hyperlinking and their nested structure led to their exclusion. Finally, two sources were excluded as I considered them to be less pertinent in comparison to the rest of the corpus. This resulted in a corpus of 30 sources dealing with smoking cessation in a UK context. To address “the speed of change” on the Internet, which Crystal identified as one of three research challenges (Crystal 2011: 10, in Locher 2014: 558), I used HTTrack to download all thirty sources. HTTrack is a free open source Web crawler, which is also an offline browser (see Roche 2016: about section). In other words, the use of this programme allowed me to surf and access the web sources on my local computer (more or less) the way they were at the time of downloading. This means that any changes or additions to the websites after the time of downloading are not included. The advantage of this procedure is that I could preserve and archive websites, which enabled me to conduct a synchronic analysis of linguistic practices as well as multi-modal features at a certain moment in time (in 2012) without continuously re-evaluating and recapturing websites. In the context of corpus, the smoking cessation landscape online changed from 2012 to 2016 as will be indexed in Table 2.1 and will be discussed afterwards. Thus, my approach helps me establish a comparison between the current status- quo and the one in 2012, allowing me to indicate how certain (possibly political and / or technological) developments impacted this corpus.

In Table 2.1, all web sources that make up the corpus are listed in alphabetical order. In the middle column, I added the shorthand source code, consisting of S (for Source) and a number[3]. These shorthand source codes are used to refer to sources throughout the thesis. In the utmost right-hand column, I comment if the URL is outdated or does not exist anymore or if there is anything else noteworthy. This information is based on check-up searches I conducted at the beginning of September 2016.

[3] The numbering is based on the initial list of sources, which I had ordered thematically. For ease of reference, I specified the sources alphabetically in this overview table.

Table 2.1 Individual web sources making up the overall corpus in alphabetical order

URL Sources	Source code	Comments
nhslocal.nhs.uk/my-health/conditions/s/smoking-(quitting)/why-it-should-be-done	S29	Moved to new URL
Quitsupport.healthunlocked.com	S08	
smokefree.nhs.uk/	S17	Moved to new URL
stopsmoking.org.uk/	S07	Does not exist anymore
Stopsmokingforum.uk	S06	URL name changed to protect participants / does not exist any-more
www.ash.org.uk/stopping-smoking	S13	
https://www.bhf.org.uk/heart-health/risk-factors/smoking	S15	
www.bristolstopsmoking.nhs.uk/success.html	S20	Moved to new URL
www.cumbria.nhs.uk/YourHealth/Smoking/HintsandTipsforQuittingSmoking.aspx	S27	No longer updated
www.electroniccigarettes.co.uk/	S02	Does not exist anymore
www.exsmokers.eu/	S01	
www.forum.nosmokingday.org.uk/	S12	Redirection to BHF website (S15)
www.healthexpress.co.uk/blog/stop-smoking/	S05	
www.iquitonline.com/flash4page.html/,	S14	
www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/what_we_do/specialist_services1/stop_smoking_service1/	S30	
www.livewellsuffolk.org.uk/stop-smoking.php	S25	No longer updated
www.netdoctor.co.uk/smoking/	S16	
www.nhsstopsmokingiow.co.uk/index.php	S18	Does not exist anymore
www.nicorette.co.uk	S04	
www.niquitin.co.uk/	S03	
www.quit.org.uk/	S09	Does not exist anymore
www.quitbecause.org.uk/index.php	S10	Does not exist anymore
www.sbpct.nhs.uk/your-health/smoking.aspx	S28	Moved to new URL
www.sheffieldstopsmoking.org.uk/blog	S19	Moved to new URL
www.smokefreehertfordshire.nhs.uk/reception	S23	Does not exist anymore
www.smokefreenorfolk.nhs.uk/contact-us/	S24	
www.somersetstopsmoking.nhs.uk/	S21	Does not exist anymore
www.southessexstopsmokingservice.nhs.uk/news/ne	S22	Does not exist anymore

wsitem.asp?news_id=5		
www.wequit.co.uk/	S11	New host
www.westsussex.nhs.uk/services-stop-smoking	S26	No longer updated

My corpus attests to Crystal's claim of the speed of change as a challenge for linguists doing research online. Nonetheless, the analysis of these partially outdated websites can still give us valuable insight into patterns of persuasive health promotion strategies in web sources. Table 2.1 shows that nineteen of the thirty sources have undergone changes since the time of capturing in 2012. Nine sources do not exist anymore while three are no longer updated. In the latter case, this means that one can still access the site but website visitors are made aware of its outdated status. Moreover, six sources moved to a new URL – by typing in the old web address, one is automatically redirected to the new one. The forum (S12) is especially interesting: when googling it in 2014, it showed that the entire forum had moved to (S15). However, even though the original URL still redirects one to (S15), the online group cannot be found anymore in 2016. When I text-searched examples to see whether the group can still be found, the posts now appear as a sub-site to (S08). In the case of (S11), the URL is currently hosted by a new organization without connections to the previous one.

It is striking that seven of the twelve sources that do not exist anymore or are no longer updated were websites of regional NHS and regional smoking cessation services. Further, four out of the six sources that moved to a new URL also have a governmental link. It is likely that several sources were closed down due to policy reasons, as it is indicated in two sources — (S26) and (S27) — that they ceased to operate due to the Health and Social Care Act 2012 at the end of March 2013. This act involved a major reform of the National Health service, resulting in the abolishment of primary care trusts responsible for providing community health services[4]. Additionally, the Tobacco Control Plan for England set out a five-year strategy (Department of Health 2011:4). Thus, we can speculate that some of the regional smoking cessation services sites may have been closed down as a result of its completion. We may also be witnessing the "straitened economic circumstances" (Lupton 2013a: 3) or economic and political pressures within the UK, and their effects on health promotion. In terms of (S02), a source that distributed e-cigarettes, the UK established strict laws regarding the sale and promotion of e-cigarettes in May 2016 (Department of Health 2016). It heavily restricted the promotion of e-cigarettes, prohibiting, for instance, any claims about being more beneficial to users' health than regular cigarettes. Thus, resellers cannot promote e-cigarettes as quitting means, which was one of the commercial cornerstones in (S02). At the same time,

[4] See www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-social-care-act-2012-fact-sheets.

there has been a boom in the use and the sales of e-cigarettes between 2012 and 2016[5], resulting in the burgeoning of e-cigarette providers. Thus, the source in question could also have been sold off.

To get a sense of how representative my corpus is in terms of the search procedure employed, its size and its composition, I considered two previous studies that have looked into “web-assisted tobacco intervention sites” (Bock et al. 2008; Freeman & Chapman 2012). In both studies, researchers imitated the search behaviours regular Internet users would employ. They used search strings such as “smoking cessation”, “quit smoking”, “smoking” to find results on GOOGLE (Bock et al. 2008: 2; Freeman & Chapman 2012: 859), which is similar to how I proceeded. Nonetheless, there are three important differences to point out, which account for a variation in websites found. Firstly, both studies restricted themselves to the first page of findings on the search engine. Secondly, neither study followed up on links found on a website. Thirdly, both studies had a broader search focus, including results from a range of English-speaking countries. Despite these differences, these studies are interesting points of comparison as they give insight into how many sites one can (approximately) find, the latter’s organizational backgrounds and general tendencies in smoking cessation sites.

Bock et al. (2008: 2) conducted two searches (one in 2004 and one in 2007) in order to assess the “landscape of smoking cessation sites”. Interestingly, the number of relevant sites decreased from 46 to 23 websites with only nine websites being included in both corpora. Thus, the high frequency of change in my own corpus seems to be within a normal range[6]. Further, the number of relevant websites is comparable between Bock et al.’s newer corpus and my data set (23 to 30), especially if we take into account that I additionally used linking to compile my corpus. Another interesting fact is that there is little to no overlap between Bock et al.’s corpora and mine. Only two sites occurred in both data sets: the pharmaceutical website by Nicorette (US in their case and UK in mine) as well as the charity website by QUIT (AUS in their case and UK in mine). The searches may have been influenced by the fact that national Google sites were used (US in their case, Swiss and UK google sites in mine) but also by the fact that my search included results beyond the first page. This may explain the discrepancy of websites encountered and may have resulted in my finding a higher number of relevant websites for the UK. Freeman and Chapman (2012: 861) conducted their search in 2010 and found 68 relevant sites for five English-speaking countries, making it difficult to compare the size of their corpus and mine. While they do not share an overview of

[5] Ash.org.uk reports an increase in e-cigarette users from 700,000 to 2.8 million adults in the UK between 2012 and 2016 (ASH 2016).

[6] However, since their second search procedure consisted of only including the results from the first page, it could also mean that some of the websites found in the first study only decreased in popularity and moved to the second findings page while still existing.

their sources, they highlight that they found country-specific websites for Nicorette and ASH, both of which are also part of my corpus. Further, Freeman and Chapman (2012: 861) explain that the sites found were overwhelmingly anti-smoking with only one pro-smoking website. This finding coincides with my search findings where all sources took a clear stance against smoking. It depends on one's ideological stance of whether to judge the website selling e-cigarettes (S02) as pro- or anti-smoking. However, since the website promoted e-cigarettes as a means to quit, I categorized it as anti-smoking. Freeman and Chapman also illuminate the organizational backgrounds of the sources, providing an interesting point of comparison. In Table 2.2, Freeman and Chapman's and my findings are listed side by side according to the organizations behind sources. Freeman and Chapman's data description table was the starting point, which means that I also used their labels to classify my own data. I only added the label *forum* alongside their *Blog* and *e-cigarettes* to *Cigarette rolling papers*.

Table 2.2 The frequency of type of organization behind websites compared between Freeman and Chapman (2012) and this project

Type of organization	*n = (Freeman & Chapman 2012; sampling 2010)*	*n = (Rudolf von Rohr; sampling 2012)*
Non-profit	22	10
Media	13	-
Government	11	14
Treatment (for-profit, non-pharmaceutical)	9	2
Pharmaceutical	7	2
Blog/ Forum	2	1
Cigarette Rolling papers/ e-cigarettes	1	1
Directory	1	-
Social media	1	-
University	1	-
Total	68	30

One important difference between Freeman and Chapman and my data is their inclusion of 'media sites', by which they refer to entertainment and news sites. My search parameters excluded these types of websites since one criterion for inclusion consisted in that sources needed to provide help on-site to stop smoking. It is likely that for the same reason I do not have any hits for 'Directory' and 'University'. Further, I did not include social media sites due to privacy reasons as it would have involved logging in to access data (see also Section 2.4 on ethics). It is noteworthy that in both corpora, about a third of all findings consist of non-profit websites. While sixteen per cent of Freeman and Chapman's corpus is composed by websites sponsored by the government, it is nearly half in mine. Also, commercially-oriented websites amount to 23.5 per cent in Freeman and Chapman's corpus whereas they are thirteen per cent in my corpus. Moreover, blogs / forums as well as websites selling specific tobacco paraphernalia only made up a small part of both samples. Overall, I would speculate that the prevalence of governmental sites in my corpus can be attributed to my search criterion of the sites having to feature help to quit smoking. It highlights that the communication of public health in the UK is overwhelmingly within the responsibility of the government, even though non-profit organizations are also active in the mix (see Table 2.2). At the same time, the high number of governmental sites could also be idiosyncratic to the UK. As I mentioned above, the UK had primary care trusts until March 2013, which individually provided public health communication on their websites.

2.3 Detailed corpus description

To convey a better idea of the characteristics of my corpus, I use Herring's (2007) etic classification scheme to describe the sources. It is based on Hymes' SPEAKING model, providing ten "medium" and eight "social" factors. As Bolander and Locher (2014: 15) aptly point out, this classification grid can serve as a research tool in itself since these factors have been shown to influence language use in a computer-mediated context. Alternatively, it can also be used "[...] as a descriptive framework which makes manifest the diverse properties of computer-mediated data" (ibid.). I use Herring's classification scheme as the latter to give an impression of the setup of my corpus. In Table 2.3, I present both medium and social factors from Herring (2007: 6; 8) together (see also Bolander & Locher 2014: 15-16 for a detailed explanation of each factor).

Table 2.3 Herring's (2007) faceted classification scheme—medium and social factors

Medium factors	**Social factors**
(M1) Synchronicity	(S1) Participation structure
(M2) Message transmission (1-way vs. 2-way)	(S2) Participant characteristics
(M3) Persistence of transcript	(S3) Purpose
(M4) Size of message buffer	(S4) Topic or Theme
(M5) Channels of communication	(S5) Tone
(M6) Anonymous messaging	(S6) Activity
(M7) Private messaging	(S7) Norms
(M8) Filtering	(S8) Code
(M9) Quoting	
(M10) Message Format	

Herring (2007: 12) underlines that not all facets are equally relevant in different data sets, suggesting that researchers focus on factors that they find relevant based on their knowledge of the data. In this vein, I will discuss my corpus according to those social and medium factors that help enhance its general understanding. With respect to my corpus, I find one caveat regarding Herring's scheme that it seems to be geared towards the analysis of interactional practices when considering the titles and descriptions of each facet. In a later study, however, Herring (2013) acknowledges the multi-modality and compositionality of platforms. Even so, the faceted classification scheme is still a fruitful means for a general data description. Due to the size of the corpus, I cannot elaborate on each site individually, but it will help me to highlight tendencies and point to possible differences and overlaps between corpus members. Next, I first comment on relevant medium factors before discussing pertinent social factors.

2.3.1 Relevant medium factors for the overall corpus

The entire corpus consists of asynchronous communication (M1), where the texts or messages (in the case of forums) are produced without the reader or contributor having to be online at the time of writing. Indeed, two-third of the sources are unidirectional like traditional written discourse, which means that they do not allow users to contribute content (see also Ch. 6 & Ch. 7). While user-to-user interactivity is restricted to nine and user-to-site interactivity to ten sources, nearly all sources try to engage readers through other technical means. Twenty-five sources encourage readers to change the mode of communication and get in contact via private messaging offered on the website (M5, M7). Further, twenty-six sources allow some customization by readers, for instance, by the use of budget calculators to see how much money readers could save, by enabling readers to filter content according to their needs (M8) or by providing tests assessing readers' readiness to quit. Considering the fact that previous research has time and again emphasized the importance of interactivity for successful public health communication (Freeman & Chapman 2012; Neuhauser & Kreps 2010; Warnick 2007; etc.), it is not surprising that most of the sources endeavour to connect to readers on this dimension. In terms of (M5), most sources use a range of communication channels. Even the few sources that are relatively linear and are predominantly text-based, include some graphics and / or images (27 of 30 sources). Half of the corpus is linked to social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube[7], making it possible to share content as well as access the source-related social network groups. Moreover, eleven sources include videos that readers / users can watch.

In view of this last medium factor, I find it necessary to situate my corpus regarding "the central development" in computer-mediated communication from Web 1.0 to Web.2.0, taking place in the first decade of the 21st century (Bolander &Locher 2014: 16). Herring (2013: 2) explains that Web 2.0 is characterized by "participatory information sharing", "user-generated content" and the function of the Internet as a social platform. Moreover, Herring (2013: 4) points out that these characteristics are often combined with or are a reaction to "structures and/or (multimedia) content provided by the sites themselves". In her chapter on the pragmatics of language use in CMC settings, Locher (2014: 558) paraphrases six distinctions between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 made by Zappavigna (2012), which are useful to asses my corpus as a whole (italics added by Locher 2014):

- The *mode of usage* is "read" in Web 1.0 and "write and contribute" in Web 2.0
- The *unit of content* is the "page" in Web 1.0 and the "record" in Web 2.0
- The *state* is "static" in Web 1.0 and "dynamic" in Web 2.0
- How *content is viewed* is achieved in a "web browser" in Web 1.0 and in "browsers, RSS (Really Simple Syndication) readers, mobile devices, etc." in Web 2.0
- The *creation of content* is "by website authors" in Web 1.0 and "by everyone" in Web 2.0
- Web 1.0 is the domain of "web designers and geeks", while it might represent "a new culture of public research" in the case of Web 2.0

The "mode of usage" in my corpus is still mostly one of reading. However, as I mentioned above, around a third of the sources facilitate user-contributions. These are also the same sources that are not as easily classified as having "the page" as the "unit of content". For instance, netdoctor.co.uk (S16) as well as healthexpress.co.uk (S05) both feature extensive informative articles that can be selected as well as forums to which users can contribute (in S16) or blogs where users can leave comments (in S05). Additionally, the source quitsup-

[7] Instagram has not been used yet in this corpus, which can most likely be attributed to the fact that it only came out in 2010 (Herring 2013: 3) with the data being captured between 2011 and 2012.

port.healthunlocked (S08) can more clearly be assigned to Web 2.0, featuring posts by experts and by community members where users can comment if they want. At the same time, the main governmental website (S17) seems to fall somewhere in between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 as it has the taxonomy of a website but is interlinked with social network sites and features a message wall. The "state" of sources can again be linked in parts to the possibility of user-contributions, which would point to it being static in two thirds of the cases. Even so, since twenty-six sources enable user-medium interactivity, there is a (user-generated) dynamics to sources. In my corpus I would stipulate that content is mostly viewed in web browsers, placing it again firmly in the Web 1.0 era. With respect to point five, the "creation of content" is in firm hands of website authors in my corpus. Although around a third of the sources allow the addition of content by users, only three sources enable relatively un-monitored contributions (S06, S12, S08) (see Ch. 6). In other sources, contributions are closely controlled by website producers (e.g. S05, S11) or are only uploaded after monitoring (S17, S18). Thus, authorial control seems to be too highly valued, possibly in view of safeguarding the quality of informational content (which is one of the main concerns regarding user-generated content, see Prestin & Chou [2014: 186]). Finally, the last point is an observation of a more general nature and difficult to pin down to individual sources. Nonetheless, I argue that the sources are clearly based on the ideology of responsible citizens who "manage their own health" (Lupton 2013b: 397-398).

In sum, the thirty sources can be placed on a continuum: At one end, some sources are still text-laden and built-up in a quasi linear fashion with only few, static pictures as multimedia content and a reduced extent of hyperlinking, placing it in the realm of Web 1.0. At the other end, a few sources encourage commenting by users on their own content, feature hyperlinks to social network sites and take full advantage of different communicative modes. The bulk of sources can probably be placed somewhere in between, resisting an easy categorization as Web 1.0 or Web 2.0.

2.3.2 Relevant social factors for the overall corpus

The corpus consists of public discourse about smoking cessation, which is accessible without registration or logging in (playing into the social factors 'participation structure' and 'topic'). Message transmission is mostly one-to many with website authors communicating to a broad audience. The diversity of addressed readers is also indicated by the fact that readers can often customize content by selecting characteristics that are applicable to them (e.g. pregnant smokers, relapsed smokers etc.). In twenty-four cases, there is the possibility to switch from one-to-many to one-to-one message transmission as readers are invited to get in contact either via e-mail or chat. Even so, communication is a unilateral matter in one-to-many sources. The sources facilitating user-to-user interaction — such as the forums (S06) and (S12) and the blog-like support platform (S08) — differ from the rest as they enable many-to-many message transmission. However, users can also engage in one-to-one communication if they choose to engage in private messaging. Moreover, these sources tend to have some very active members building the core of the group as well as some members who only post at irregular intervals (see Ch. 9 for a detailed description of S06 and S12).

In a broad sense, the social factor purpose is identical for all sources in that it is about getting readers to stop smoking. However, the individual sources also have more defined purposes according to their organizational agenda. In Table 2.4, I illustrate the composition of the corpus according to their specific purpose. These labels are not mutually exclusive, but I categorized the sources according to their focus.

Table 2.4 The composition of the overall corpus according to purpose in alphabetical order

Purpose	*n*
Activist	2
Commercial	4
Educational	13
Partly commercial	1
Partly smoking	7
Support	3
Total	30

Two sources predominantly target legislative and societal changes, which is why I labelled them as “activist”. Four sources have a clearly “commercial” purpose, as they either promote their own products on site or encourage users to order medication from the site. Sources with an “educational” purpose are entirely dedicated to informing on the health risk smoking, educating readers on the disadvantages of smoking and the benefits of quitting. One source was categorized as “partly commercial” since the commercial aspect seems to be secondary (S16). Readers can access health information on a wide range of topics, but the source also provides links to products and features advertising. If the purpose of the source is “partly smoking”, it refers to the fact that many health topics are covered, one of which is smoking cessation. Sources whose main purpose is to give ‘support’ target users who have decided to quit smoking, helping them to persevere in their enterprise.

Finally, the social factor "activity types" can be described as consisting of advice-giving and information-giving, which can be linked to the persuasive purpose overall. Phatic exchanges, such as praising, empathizing and bonding, are also of great importance, but often accompany advice and information-giving. In the case of the forums, particular topics are more likely to feature phatic exchanges as main activity, such as newbie-threads and success stories (see Ch. 10). The discussion of selected social factors has given further useful insight into how these different sources are organised and set up. I will touch upon some of the social factors that I have forgone describing now (e.g. 'norms' and 'tone) in later chapters (see Ch. 9; Ch. 10) when looking at specific sub-samples.

2.4 Ethical considerations and copyright challenges

Bolander and Locher (2014: 14; 17) point out that ethical considerations are one of the four main methodological challenges that linguists who work with computer-mediated data are facing. Two documents developed by the Association of Internet Researchers (Ess et al. 2002; Markham et al. 2012) provide assistance to ethical decision-making by suggesting guidelines that online researchers should take into account. My ethical deliberations regarding my dataset have been based on these two immensely influential documents, using them as heuristic to make ethical decisions. To illustrate my reflections, point out objections and explain how I solved dilemmas, I use Markham et al.'s (2012: 8) "Internet specific ethical questions". In the following, I will go through questions that were relevant to this project.

Markham et al. (2012: 8) mention that researchers need to consider how the context of a particular source is defined, including Terms of Use and expectations of privacy (see Ess et al. 2002. 1; on venue & ethical expectations). My corpus mostly consists of websites that only allow uni-directional communication not unlike print mass communication. In these instances, I take a clearly text-based approach, emphasizing the nature of websites as publications (McKee & Porter 2009: 82). In the case of four sources — (S06), (S08), (S12), (S23) — the picture is different as they consist of two forums, a platform for various online support groups and a website that offers a private "meeting room" to discuss problems with other quitters or with an advisor. Since there are non-corporate, individual people interacting in these sources, it could be argued for a person-based view of research, which stresses the nature of online sources as place (McKee & Porter 2009: 82). In the case of (S23), participants can only interact with others and / or view their interactions after logging in. Thus, the group is presented as a protected space, which is why I only analyzed the publicly available website part of this source. In terms of the two forums, (S06) and (S12), the interaction is visible without having to log in even though participation requires users to register. Hence, communication occurs in a public context regarding technical affordances. In full awareness of the debate around what is public and what is private on the Internet, I carefully deliberated for how to classify forum interaction. Bolander and Locher (2014: 17) point out that our understanding of public-private in computer-mediated communication has shifted to not only considering technical aspects but also to include content. I put forward that the selected interactions from smoking cessation forums are not sensitive, as the focus is on the positive reinforcement of each other's goal to stop. A study by Bond et al. (2013: 5) on ethical dilemmas regarding the use of health discussion board posts revealed that the interviewed users were aware of their posts being in a public domain. Moreover, the interviews showed that users felt that it was important that their perspectives were investigated in research (ibid.). These findings point to the fact that many online health support group users may be aware of the accessibility of their contributions as well as they may value that their interactions can further research. Regarding (S08), the Terms of Use stated that the data of contributors could be used for research by institutions associated to the site. Contributors were informed that they could opt out of being researched by contacting site hosts[8]. Since the site had only started and only featured few contributions at the time of data collection, I decided not to contact the hosts and abstain from close analysis of posts. Thus, I only coded the site descriptively, establishing the relative frequencies of topics neither looking at nor quoting from interaction.

The second overall question Markham et al. (2012: 8) raise is the one of access to context. As a researcher, I was a passive observer in these publicly available contexts. In the case of uni-directional websites, I focused entirely on the published text without contacting website producers any further. Similarly, I did not actively participate in forum interaction but was a silent observer. Moreover, I decided to choose a determinate time frame of interaction for the forums (March 2012 - April 2012). Thus, I did not focus on specific contributors and their development as such, but I centered on interaction and the informational structure of threads at large during a restricted period of time. Regarding the "perceived privacy" in the forums, I put forward that contributors are aware of the public nature of their posts. I base this assessment on the fact that some users refer to having left messages in private group sections or that the private message system is explicitly referenced. Neither of these are included in the corpus.

With respect to "the primary object of study" (Markham et al. 2012: 9), firstly, I have conducted a content analysis, listing and describing elements of websites at large. Secondly, I have performed close-reading analyses of seven websites, where I investigate two sub-

[8] The Terms of Use have changed in the meantime and it says that users will be contacted for informed consent.

sections per site in detail. However, even in these cases, the text is my main interest. Thirdly, I also analyze eighty threads in total from the forums (S06) and (S12). There, I have conducted a quantitative analysis of discursive moves to show the set-up of the discursive practices at large. Thus, again I would point out that my interest is in the text and not necessarily in the individual contributors. Moreover, I performed close-reading analyses of a sub-sample of 27 threads, scrutinizing relational work and identity construction strategies. I try to illuminate common and re-emerging patterns, not focusing on what individuals contribute. Additionally, I use a numbering system to refer to threads in the forum corpus. In this way, I make the identification of single threads more difficult. Furthermore, my focus on language patterns protects individual posters, on the one hand, but it also points to the emergence of discourse practices that emerge within the community at large.

I used the HTTrack crawling software to mine and save the data to circumvent the research challenge of the speed of change online (Crystal 2011: 10, in Locher 2014: 558). As this may supersede the limits of fair use of material, I will not make my corpus available for further research[9]. Otherwise, I have decided to anonymize the data retrieved from forum interaction. I took out location markers and changed pseudonyms, which is in line with minimizing any potential harm to participants. I decided to anonymize as I cannot know whether they have used the same pseudonyms in more delicate contexts, which would allow a connection. Moreover, I changed the name of (S06) to protect this non-organizational group (which unfortunately ceased to exist completely by now, meaning that the data cannot even be found by text-search). Naturally, this poses the valid question of the authorship of posts. However, I justify this step by upholding anonymity and my emphasis on patterns of discourse at large.

Since I undertake a linguistic analysis, exact quoting of examples is necessary. While this is not an issue in websites, it may be more contentious in the case of forum interaction. In Markham et al. (2012: 14), they refer to Markham's (2012) argument of refashioning data to further protect users. In this vein, Fage-Butler and Nisbeth Jensen (2013: 23) mention that they sometimes slightly changed quotations in their study of an online forum for thyroid patients. Equally, Richardson (2005: 30) changed misspellings to make it harder to retrieve examples through a text-search. Nonetheless, I felt that my focus on language requires exact quoting including misspellings, which is open for debate.

Regarding the presentation of my findings, I mostly introduce decontextualized, anonymized snippets of forum interaction, which should make identification of posters in (S12) more difficult. The speed of change on the Internet has additionally ensured that interaction in (S06) is no longer retraceable. Regarding websites, I mostly discuss textual phenomena,

[9] UK law allows data mining for non-commercial research since 2014 (Intellectual Property Office 2014).

where the amount of text quoted falls within the fair use of material for non-commercial research within the UK. However, I have included screenshots of websites in Ch. 6 and Ch. 7. In the guide to "copyright notice: digital images, photographs and the internet" (Intellectual Property Office 2015: 3), it is stated that "copyright works" can be used "without permission from the copyright owner, such as [...] for non-commercial research"[10].

The potential harm of the research is outweighed by its benefits. One could argue that the possible identification of contributors as smokers may result in their stigmatization in the case of forum interaction. I would retort that I ensure appropriate protection by anonymizing as well as (by the nature of a PhD project) working with data that is not current but four years old. In fact, the variability of the Internet has made it impossible to trace data from (S06) and needs specific text searches to identify (S12). Further, I stipulate that the quitting accounts are of overwhelmingly positive nature, which positions users as empowered citizens who exhibit self-efficacy. I claim that my research of user interaction provides important insights into how patients experience and make sense of the quitting process. This could potentially inform the set-up of future online support systems (see Harvey and Koteyko 2013: 186, who argue for the importance of "foster[ing] successful supportive relationships online").

Additionally, I decided that obtaining informed consent was not necessary. In the case of websites, I deemed it to be unnecessary due to their publication-like format. Regarding forum interaction I did not ask for informed consent either as I judged the content and access to be public. I also used Sveningsson's (2004) grid for this decision (adapted by McKee &Porter 2009: 21), where she added the dimension of non-sensitive and sensitive information to the public-private dichotomy. Since I characterise the forum interaction as public and mostly non-sensitive information, it does not require informed consent. At the time of downloading and analysis, both forums were public ally available without restrictions. Nonetheless, some researchers advocate obtaining consent when quoting directly from participants (e.g. Eysenbach & Till 2001: 1105). Similarly, some of the participants interviewed by Bond et al. (2013: 7) were entirely opposed to quotations being used without consent while others did not mind. Apart from my considerations regarding the dimensions outlined by Sveningsson (2004), the option of gaining retrospective consent for actual quotes would have been difficult due to the fact that both URLs for the forums ceased to be operated by now. While I could have asked all contributors of my sub-sample for consent before knowing what quotes I was going to use, it would have been a difficult task, considering the corpus consisted of eighty threads. These were 52 participants in (S06) and 99 participants in (S12) for the sub-sample. I did not view

[10]However, they recommend asking for permission to be on the safe side.

permission by proxy (i.e. by an administrator) as a viable option since I felt it would have been a delegation of ethical decision-making.

Furthermore, the evolution of the forum (S12) points to another challenge that one can face as a researcher of computer-mediated practices. As mentioned above, its URL is not operating anymore. When clicking on it, you are redirected to the website of the British Heart Foundation. However, the forum cannot be found there anymore. A random text-search of one of the posts in the sample led me to a sub-site of (S08). It seems that the whole forum interaction has been moved to this patient support platform, which hosts a range of different topics. Now, this poses the issue of which Terms of Use hold true for my research, as (S08) has strict rules regarding the use of posts. I argue that the rules at the time of downloading apply since the group has completely changed in the meantime[11].

Finally, these reflections on ethics have helped me do justice to the data when setting up my corpus as well as for analysis. I have undertaken the appropriate measures to protect the contributors in the forums and acknowledge the authorship of websites hosts.

In this chapter I have laid out some of the extra-linguistic factors around smoking as a public health risk and how it connects to persuasion. Further, I have answered my first broad research question regarding the smoking cessation landscape online in the UK when elaborating on the collection and composition of the corpus. My detailed corpus description set the ground for my in-depth analysis in later chapters, where some of my observations can be linked to these social and medium factors. Finally, I have explained the steps, informing my decision-making process regarding ethics. In the next chapters, I will elaborate on the theoretical background of persuasion and show how I intend to operationalise top-down notion of persuasion for an empirical analysis, taking an interpersonal pragmatic approach (Ch. 3 & Ch. 4). Further, I will comment on previous research that has looked at aspects of persuasion in online health contexts (Ch. 5).

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[11] The support group has altered its setup: at the time of downloading in 2012 (S12) had 48,043 members, compared to 792 members now. Moreover, it was altered from being a thread-based discussion board to blog-like entries that can be liked or commented on. Thus, threads from 2012 changed their nature with the initial post becoming the main blog entry that features comments (respondents' posts). Further, the titles of the sub-forums– now tags for posts –have changed and some sub-forums have been entirely abolished. Finally, it seems that few former members have moved to the new site, which means that posts from former users in 2012 are attributed to generic member names.

3 Persuasion across different fields

Persuasion has received wide attention across a broad range of fields such as rhetoric, communication studies, social psychology and linguistics. Concomitantly, these research areas have highlighted various aspects of the persuasive process, using different methodological steps, which include designing experiments, working with natural data, or the researcher's intuition. In the following, it will first be outlined how persuasion has been conceptualized in rhetorical studies and communication studies, which will be necessarily of eclectic nature. However, the reflection on the ontological status of persuasion in these fields warrants consideration of some of their key concepts. Moreover, researchers have worked extensively on health discourse in both fields. The theoretical parameters outlined in (new) rhetoric and communication studies justify and provide a steady basis for an interpersonal pragmatic approach to conduct a linguistic analysis of persuasion (Sections 3.1 and 3.2). I will then discuss how persuasion is linked to power, drawing on philosophical, communication and linguistic research (Section 3.3). In Section 3.4, I include how the computer-mediated setting may affect persuasion, which leads over to the linguistic analysis of persuasion (Section 3.5). Starting with speech act theory, I will outline discourse strategies that have been pointed out off- and online. Finally, I will summarize important points to arrive at a working definition of persuasion. Further, I will establish four hypotheses regarding theoretical insights and my dataset, to which I will return at the end of the thesis.

3.1 Rhetoric

Traditionally, persuasion has been (and continues to be) studied in the field of rhetoric. Aristotle's "working principles of persuasion" are still useful analytical concepts. For instance, Pfau and Parrott (1993: 25) have argued that "Aristotle's theory of rhetorical discourse has withstood the test of time, furnishing axioms that guide today's practitioners of persuasion and campaigns". This perspective warrants introducing some important points of rhetoric studies. I will start out with a definition of persuasion in classical rhetoric, focusing on the working principles of persuasion. I will show how more recent approaches have added the setting and ideological context to the picture, moving away from locating all the control over the persuasive process within the speaker. Unsurprisingly, this has put the interrelationship between agency/intentionality and context when persuading under the analytical lens. To deal with this more complex picture of persuasion, Burke (1950) has come up with the notion “identification”, which is already the first pointer to how persuasion might interact with identity construction.

3.1.1 Aristotle’s working principles of persuasion

Ilie (2006: 575) explains that although there has been a continuous struggle regarding the scope of a definition for rhetoric, the most commonly used notion is that it is “the art of persuasion”. Aristotle’s and Cicero’s treatment of rhetoric comprise both the skill of persuading and the analysis of persuasive strategies (ibid.). Thus, applying strategies to make the audience change their mind and subsequently studying the composition of texts and speeches with respect to their systematic structure are both part of rhetoric. From this definition of rhetoric, we can derive that “to persuade” is an activity that involves moving an audience to “[…] adopt some action or belief” (ibid.). When speakers persuade, Ilie (2006) observed “five stages”: (1) invention, (2) arrangement, (3) style, (4) memory and (5) delivery (Ilie 2006: 576). Ilie (ibid.) points out that these stages are “recursive” and “interrelated” in actual discourse production. The stages refer to the types of arguments used, the structural properties of a message, the formal features of arguments, mnemonic helps, and the delivery of discourse (the latter is said to be where credibility and personal involvement is established). They highlight the complexity of facets and aspects playing into persuasion, making clear that it should be understood as a process rather than an end result.

According to Ilie (2006: 574), one of Aristotle’s greatest achievements was to elaborate a communicative model of rhetoric that accounted for “all the situational elements occurring during the speaking situation: speaker, language and audience […]”. Aristotle considered the audience to be the most important factor in the persuasive process, to which speakers should adapt their arguments accordingly. This emphasises the addressed nature of persuasion (Dillard & Pfau 2002: ix; Segal 2005: 37). Nevertheless, Aristotle argued that the final speech results from the interplay between these three elements. Fittingly, he has identified three types of rhetorical appeals or “working principles of persuasion” (1) ethos, (2) pathos and (3) logos (Cockroft & Cockroft 2005: 4). Each principle refers to an element of Aristotle’s communication model, although a discrete assignment is overly simplistic. Persuasive means can be categorized according to which principle they mostly relate. The principles are simultaneously at work in every persuasive process (Cockroft & Cockroft 2005: 81).

‘Ethos’ : is linked to the personality of the speaker; that is whether an audience judges the speaker to be credible and trustworthy. Authority or expertise enhance ethos (Ilie 2006: 577). Segal (2005: 147) even suggests that expertise equals ethos in the health context. Cockroft and Cockroft (2005: 28) explain that ethos comprises personality and stance. The former refers to characteristics brought into interaction whereas the latter indicates how speakers position themselves in interaction. 'Pathos': relates to how the speaker manages to emotionally involve the audience "in terms of [their] own experience" (Ilie 2006: 576). Cockroft and Cockroft (2005: 17) view the creation of empathy in order to emotionally engage interactants the main task of pathos. 'Logos': concerns the message itself or what is "true or apparently true" within speech or "the issues at heart of a debate" (Cockroft & Cockroft 2005: 15). Hence, it refers to the reasoning process offered by the persuader. Aristotle's idea of types of persuasive appeals lend themselves to be transferred to an interpersonal pragmatic context. Interpersonal pragmatics puts forward that there are always informational and relational aspects to any communication (Locher & Watts 2008: 78). While logos draws on the informational, pathos and ethos clearly belong to the relational. Identity construction and relational work seems to interface with persuasion, for instance when positioning oneself as expert or when displaying empathy.

Aristotle's working principles highlight the intricacy of persuasion since they reinforce each other and cannot be easily disentangled. At the same time, they provide entry points for operationalizing persuasion for a linguistic analysis. The resulting questions are: (1) what main arguments are mobilized? This should be answered on a content (topics) as well as on structural level (i.e. the analysis of discursive moves within a text; see Locher & Limberg 2012 on "discursive moves"). (2) How is credibility established linguistically on websites? (3) How do interactants on peer-to-peer sites legitimise or warrant their contributions? (4) How is personal involvement created through language in these contexts?

3.1.2 Agency vs. Context

Although Aristotle's categorisation of a rhetorical act featuring sender, text and recipient is still relevant, its disregard of the larger communicative context is striking from a discourse analytical point of view. Several researchers have worked towards accommodating the influence of context in more recent work on rhetoric. In this line, there has been an attempt to loosen the emphasis on the speaker in classical rhetoric. Segal (2005: 14), for instance has criticized that classical rhetoric is biased towards the sender inasmuch as it regards the outcome of persuasion to be entirely dependent on the skills of the individual speaker. Several critics have argued that ideological currents can also work unconsciously on an individual (see Segal 2005).

Social psychologist Billig (1996: 78) steps away from insisting on speakers' control of interaction by underlining the dialogic nature of rhetoric (i.e. persuasion). Cockroft and Cockroft (2005: 4-5), who work with Billig's notion of rhetoric, explain that persuasive discourse should still be conceptualised as "controlled interaction", where the persuader tries to take into account potential counter-arguments. They describe the persuader's role as "[…] seek[ing] to *exploit* specifically the ideological, personal and contextual elements involved in every interaction" (2005: 5; italics in original). Cockroft and Cockroft allow for the importance of the setting and ideological context in persuasion. However, their description is still firmly set in an Aristotelian framework, as it presumes that the persuader is aware of ideological/contextual elements at play and can consciously and meticulously compose a message. Segal (2005: 14) clearly diverges from Cockroft and Cockroft's more classical perspective when she explains that persuasion is not a simple linear process where agents "[…] [speak] through crafted texts to an audience […]" but that they are always also vehicles for current discourses (in a Foucauldian sense). The interrelationship between intentionality (agency) and context is thus a fluent one. In this line Segal (2005: 14) argues that modern rhetorical criticism provides tools for analysing "language in use" or "in its service to power".

Since the focal point of discourse analysis (DA) is also language in use, Eisenhart and Johnstone (2008: 3) have pleaded for combining both approaches. They see two main advantages in that: While rhetoric profits from DA's bottom-up, data-driven approach, DA benefits from rhetoric's toolbox (2008: 4). Eisenhart and Johnstone (2008: 6) also describe the interplay between agency and context as a central theoretical interest in contemporary rhetoric; especially since rhetorical discourse tends to be described as targeted discourse or "[…] discourse that is intended to change […] the situation for which it was designed […]". They attribute the difficulty in defining agency to diverging notions of the self, where the rational individual is opposed to the individual who is a member of a community that endorses certain values and practices. Similarly, the communication scientists Gass and Seiter (2007: 26-27) argue against an exclusively intent-based definition of persuasion, putting forward that persuasion can occur without the conscious awareness of the sender. They point out that socialization processes may not always be "mindful" but still instill values and beliefs. Further, Gass and Seiter (2007: 26) explain that persuasion can happen spontaneously in interaction without previous planning. Moreover, they argue that there may be "unintended receivers" of persuasive attempts, which can also be unintentionally influenced. In the same vein, as researchers determining intent may be difficult as "actual" and "stated" intent may not be identical (Gass & Seiter 2007: 27). Finally, they point out that that in interactional contexts the intent-based definition of persuasion is even less appropriate. They highlight that there may be mutual attempts at persuasion, which makes it hard to pinpoint whose intent counts.

A similar discussion on agency has also been led in recent work on identity construction. In a social-constructionist stance on the self, social practices are the "[…] frames and limits within which interactants select the linguistic and strategic resources of identity presentations and negotiations […] (De Fina 2010: 208). Bucholtz and Hall (2010: 26) put forward that agency is the "accomplishment of social action", which makes the question of whether the individual acted intentionally less pressing. They rightly explain that "habitual actions" can as much have an effect as "deliberate ones". Consequently, agency has to be situated within social practices. Similarly, persuasion takes place within "the frames and limits" of social practices. To do justice to the tension between agency and context in rhetorical spaces, Eisenhart and Johnstone suggest "a heuristic" based on discourse analytical principles. It nicely shows how Aristotle's model of rhetorical spaces can be expanded. Eisenhartand Johnstone present six dimensions on which text (discourse[12]) and context interact or "shape" each other.

- Discourse is shaped by the world, and discourse shapes the world.
- Discourse is shaped by language, and discourse shapes language.
- Discourse is shaped by participants, and discourse shapes participants.
- Discourse is shaped by prior discourse, and discourse shapes the possibility for future discourse.
- Discourse is shaped by its medium, and discourse shapes the possibilities of its medium.
- Discourse is shaped by its purpose, and discourse shapes possible purposes.

(Eisenhart & Johnstone 2008: 11)

Traditional rhetoricians considered purpose—or persuasive intent—to be at the heart of shaping discourse. While the goal of interaction still frames discourse in a decisive way in my project (i.e. getting people to stop smoking), there are more aspects to be taken into account that explain why a piece of discourse is the way it is. Discourse is produced in a particular social context (world), in which the structural features of a language influence what can be expressed and in what form. Participants and their interpersonal relationship—for example what roles speakers and audience have—also impact on communication. Cultural knowledge and expectations, which arise from prior discourse, equally affect every new piece of discourse. The medium can have an effect on the possibilities of discourse which is patent in a

[12] I use "discourse" as in Gee's definition of 'Little "d" discourse' which means any instance of language-in-use or any stretch of spoken or written language […] (emphasis in original; Gee 2011: 205).

computer-mediated context. Eisenhart and Johnstone regard discourse and context to be in a circular relationship: While these six aspects shape a specific piece of discourse, the same piece of discourse feeds back into moulding the context of future interaction. This heuristic illustrates why the idea of a rational, controlling speaker-persuader has its constraints. Hence, in this project, persuasion is viewed as a process occurring in social practices, in which some ideological and contextual factors function beyond the individual's control or awareness.

3.1.3 New rhetoric—identification

Segal (2005: 11), a rhetorical critic of health discourse, acknowledges that a persuader acts in a specific socio-cultural context, being thus a representative of 'new rhetoric'. She (2005: 5) views rhetoric as the "[…] persuasive element in discourse […]". Thereby, she adheres to Burke's definition of rhetoric as a function of language, which he describes as "the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents" (Burke 1950: 41). Whereas classical rhetoric is characterized by its application of top-down categories on public discourse, rhetoricians such as Burke and Black have opened up the field to analyzing every kind of discourse, such as health discourse (see Segal 2005). Black advocated that "[r]hetorical studies are properly concerned with the process by which symbols and systems of symbols [exert] influence upon values, attitudes and actions […]". This leads to the inclusion of any discourse that aims at influencing social action, transgressing "the realm of public address" (Black 1992: 14/15 quoted in Segal 2005: 9). Moreover, Black (1992: 14/15 quoted in Segal 2005:9) argued that persuasive discourse is "about intent, not necessarily accomplishment". In other words, persuasion refers to the process and not the outcome, which gives reason to why linguistics should also look at persuasion despite not being able to measure effects. Black's arguments also point to how persuasive discourse is interlinked with influence. They suggest that influence has been exercised when others effectively change their behaviour and/or beliefs whereas persuasion is the process beforehand (regardless of its outcome)[13].

Rhetorical studies, situated in the field of literary criticism, endeavours to have a holistic outlook and aim at "understanding human action" (Segal 2005: 2). They are purposely open regarding methodological procedure, focusing rather on *what* and *why* than on *how* (Segal 2005: 10)—the latter would lead to a linguistic analysis of surface strategies. In their negligence of form, rhetorical studies differ from a linguistic approach. However, the notion of "identification" introduced by Burke (1950) highlights where interpersonal pragmatics and

[13] This corresponds largely to Wartenberg (1990)'s understanding of influence, which will be treated later on.

rhetorical studies overlap. Whereas persuasion referred to strategically designed speech in an Aristotelian framework, identification allows for including "a partially unconscious factor in appeal" (Segal 2005: 11). Intentionality is less important for Burke as, according to Segal (2005: 11), he sees "[…] all discourse as action, all action as motivated". According to Burke (1950: 46), persuasion and identification are intertwined concepts:

> As far as the relation between "identification" and "persuasion": […] a speaker persuades an audience by the use of stylistic identifications; his act of persuasion may be for the purpose of causing the audience to identify itself with the speaker's interests; and the speaker draws on identification of interests to establish rapport between himself and his audience.

Burke brings out several aspects that are crucial for a linguistic analysis. Firstly, he argues that certain linguistic strategies—stylistic identifications—can be persuasive, which is also linked to identity construction. For instance, depending on context, a speaker might use an accommodating style, possibly to create involvement and establish relations of similarity, or they may opt for a more distanced language, possibly to indicate hierarchy. Second, power relations may play a role, as aligning the audience can be the speaker's main goal. Finally, he stresses that persuasion can be used for purely interpersonal reasons. These ideas indicate the interface between rhetoric and interpersonal pragmatics: on the one hand, relational work (see Locher & Watts 2008:96) is used to achieve certain interpersonal effects that consequently persuade the other. On the other hand, transforming the relationship through identification may be an end in itself. The last point is especially pertinent on peer-to-peer sites, on which the persuasive goal is less related to ultimately getting someone to quit smoking but to negotiating relationships by maintaining and enhancing face (i.e. legitimizing oneself as contributor, showing and accepting solidarity, etc.). Burke's suggestion that identification and persuasion are linked emphasizes the interpersonal dimension of the latter. His point can be used to make a strong case for using relational work as an analytical concept.

3.2 Social scientific perspectives on persuasion

Empirical research on persuasion is also undertaken in the areas of psychology and communication science (Dillard & Pfau 2002: x). In this social science perspective, research is mostly effect-oriented, measuring the influence of certain variables on receptors (see Dillard & Miraldi 2008: 699). The theoretical roots of such research lie in rhetoric, which shows in the adaptation of Aristotle's means of persuasion—ethos, pathos and logos—for systematic analyses (Dillard & Pfau 2002: ix). Psychologists and communication scientists have furthered philosophical reflections on the ontological status of persuasion, which helped them to operationalize the concept in empirical studies. Moreover, research on persuasion in the health context, even more so in the light of the rise of e-health, is a pulsating field in communication sciences (e.g. campaigns and advocacy programmes; see Eysenbach 2001; Kreps &Neuhauser 2010 a/b; Parrott et al. 2002; Salovey et al. 2002; etc). For these two reasons I think it is worthwhile to investigate contributions from a social-scientific perspective in spite of not sharing the same methodological outsets.

In this section, I will summarize important conceptual notions of persuasion from communication science. I will provide a definition of persuasion, discuss its main parameters and reflect on how broad or narrow a definition of persuasion needs to be (Section 3.2.1). Further, I will consider what the possible outcomes of persuasion (based on Miller 2002) are in Section 3.2.2. There are three kinds of outcomes that have been influential among communication scholars. They were originally described by Miller, a well-published researcher of interpersonal communication (Dillard & Pfau 2002: xii). In the following, I will make clear how they are also enlightening for linguists.

3.2.1 What "being persuaded" means

Given Miller's influence in his field, I will discuss his definition of what "being persuaded means" in detail, complementing it with and adding observations from other researchers (Jowett & O'Donnell 1999; Gass & Seiter 2007). Miller definition of what "being persuaded" means emphasises two aspects right away. First, persuasion is regarded as a process. Second, the focus lies even more keenly on the audience than in traditional rhetoric, as he centres on the receiving end and not "persuasion" per se. Miller points out that "being persuaded" refers to:

> […] *situations where behaviour has been modified by symbolic transactions (messages) that are sometimes, but not always, linked with coercive force (indirectly coercive) and that appeal to the reason and emotions of the person(s) being persuaded.*
>
> (Miller 2002: 6; italics in original)

Three characteristics of persuasive discourse are emphasized: (1) it takes place through symbolic means, (2) it is linked to power, and (3) it addresses the receptor on a rational as well as an emotional level, which makes the rhetorical roots of the field latent. I will treat each point in-depth below.

(1) Modification through symbolic transaction:

When talking about "symbolic transactions", Miller (2002: 5) regards them to be predominantly of linguistic nature. Thus, similar to Burke (1950), he views the role of language as "integral" for persuasion. However, Miller (ibid.) concedes that non-verbal symbols may reinforce "the meaning and/or credibility of verbal messages". Other scholars accord more weight to the non-verbal element in persuasion, which has to be taken into account in the context of the multimodal web. In fact, O'Donnell and Kable (1982: 9) explicitly acknowledge the importance of non-verbal symbols in persuasion. Similarly, Gass and Seiter (2007: 30) find it problematic to link persuasion with mainly linguistic action. They rightly contend that language may not cover the whole range of the persuasive process, for example, a picture as part of the persuasive activity in magazine adverts. Even though Miller under-emphasizes the importance of non-verbal symbolic means (e.g. images), his idea of the persuasive process taking place on a symbolic instead of a physical level makes sense. It stresses that persuasion takes place through communication in discourse.

(2) Persuasion is linked to power

Miller's idea of persuasion as "indirectly coercive" (2002: 4) establishes a connection between persuasion and power. If being persuaded occurs on a purely symbolic level, verbal or non-verbal, being coerced implies threatening someone with physical or real-life sanctions, or more neutrally, consequences (Miller 2002: 4). Said sanctions or consequences are issued by an individual agent or result from the larger social context.

Miller does not define coercion explicitly, but his use of the concept seems to overlap with Wartenberg's understanding, who explains coercive power in the following way:

> [S]ocial agent *A* exercises *coercive power* over social agent *B* if and only if (1) *A* has the ability to affect *B* in a significant way; (2) *A threatens* to do so unless *B* acts in a certain way; and (3) *B* accedes to *A*'s threat and alters his course of action.
>
> (Wartenberg 1990: 96; emphasis added by Locher 2004: 23)

Now, Miller puts forward that a great part of persuasive discourse should be regarded as "indirectly coercive" because its effectiveness stems from whether condition (1) "*A* has the ability to affect *B* in a significant way" holds true. The status of communicators as agents is at heart (i.e. their ethos). Thus, speech acts such as threats and promises have perlocutionary effects if the speaker has the power to coerce the recipient into compliance (Miller 2002: 4). Different to Wartenberg, Miller argues that threats are instances of "indirectly coercive" persuasion rather than straightforward coercion because they are verbally issued. In this line, he (ibid.) posits that acts of coercion are often preceded by "persuasive messages", which would be (2) in Wartenberg's definition of coercion. This indicates that Miller does not think coercion is exercised through symbolic transaction, which I contest. It is disputable whether coercion cannot be articulated linguistically as in the case of threats. I regard threats as a form of coercion (and not persuasion) because it is the fear of real and tangible consequences which makes someone comply. Persuasion, as it has been stressed across fields, should be accepted in "a voluntary fashion" (Jowett & O'Donnell 1999: 27), which admittedly opens another can of worms in terms of agency and context.

Fittingly, other persuasive strategies can be more subtly "indirectly coercive" if they capitalize on social power/ideological underpinnings. Miller (2002: 5) asserts that the threat of negative social consequences or the promise of social rewards (e.g. being (un-)popular, being respected), can persuade (i.e. indirectly coerce) someone into modifying their behaviour or attitude. These threats and promises may happen implicitly and unintentionally (not through a single agent) in a particular social context. There may be a preferred choice in interaction, and consequences must be dealt with if one behaves differently, which brings us back to the (unresolved) tension between agency and context. Values or beliefs influence our behaviour but may not be deliberately taught and accepted (Gass & Seiter 2007: 24). Thus, receivers may not notice that they are being persuaded. Therefore, Gass and Seiter (2007: 28, emphasis in original) imply that persuasion and coercion are interrelated as messages may contain "voluntary *and* involuntary elements", coinciding with Miller's notion of persuasive discourse as sometimes being "indirectly coercive". It illustrates that coercion and persuasion are internally linked and that they occur more often than not in mixed forms (see Locher 2004: 24).

(3) Persuasion appeals to the reason and emotions of an audience

Miller's final characteristic of "what being persuaded means" refers to the working principles of persuasion. He (2002: 6) argues that there are transactional and interpersonal aspects to each persuasive message, which appeal "[…] to the reason and emotions […]" of an audience. He proposes to accept that persuasive discourse is "an amalgam of logic and emotion" (ibid.) which is difficult to disentangle. Miller (ibid.) argues that even logical arguments often have an "emotional overtones" However, he acknowledges that the pervasiveness of reason and emotion may differ. The credibility of the speaker, or Aristotle's third means of persuasion, is conspicuously absent in Miller's definition. The ostensible lack of "ethos" is due to his interest in how persuasion affects the audience. His stance on the speakers' role is insinuated when he points out that messages are more likely to be accepted if speakers are credible or have status, referring to persuasive discourse as "indirectly coercive".

Three comments have to be made with respect to Miller's perspective on persuasion as appealing to reason and emotions of an audience. First, his argument that the working principles of persuasion are interdependent is in line with many rhetoric scholars (see Cockroft & Cockroft 2005). Second, this interdependence sets out the need for an interpersonal pragmatic angle, which recognizes that, any discourse (not just persuasive) features interpersonal and informational aspects to any discourse. Third, adopting an interpersonal pragmatic approach facilitates considering persuasion as relational interactive process, which also allows to include the role of speakers/senders.

3.2.2 Outcomes of persuasion

Miller's description of different outcomes of persuasion has had a big impact within social scientific persuasion literature (see Dillard & Pfau 2002: xii). These outcomes designate distinctive "types of persuasion". They show how broad persuasion can be understood and what different goals and motivations may lie behind it (which will be useful for characterising persuasive purposes on different sources). "Being persuaded" has three different results: it can be a (1) response-shaping, (2) response-reinforcing, or (3) response-changing process (Miller 2002: 7-13).

The first type refers to "learning" or conditioning. Miller (2002: 8) points out that not all learning is persuasion, but only cases of "attitude formation" that are in some way linked to "values that are prized by society". For instance, he refers to how people's response toward nuclear power can be shaped depending on what values are incurred (e.g. "family security" versus "a comfortable life"). Socialization processes are thus also a kind of persuasion (Miller 2002: 7). This is especially relevant for peer-to-peer forums on which newcomers will have to adopt common posting practices to be accepted as a full member.

Response-reinforcing persuasion occurs if it aims at strengthening attitudes and convictions. Response-reinforcement highlights the continuity of persuasion as a process. It serves to uphold values and norms "making them more resistant to change" (Miller 2002: 9). This kind of persuasion tends to be downplayed but Millerstresses its importance with respect to maintaining interpersonal relations (whether in political campaigns or "romantic relationships") (Miller 2002: 9). Miller provides the following example from the public sphere: political campaigners need to keep their allies as well as gaining new ones. In the "personal sphere", response-reinforcement is equally important, e.g. couples need to continuously reinforce their affect for each other. The first two types of persuasion also make evident why looking as persuasion only as "effects" or "success" is not enough (Gass & Seiter 2007: 27). The third type of outcome, response-changing persuasion, is the most prototypical and the most researched one (Miller 2002: 12). It comprises cases where the audience is asked to adopt new behaviour or to change attitudes, e.g. to persuade someone to stop smoking. This outcome is the most difficult to achieve as it features altering one's action environment (Jowett & O'Donnell 1999: 29). Finally, Gassand Seiter 2007: 34) reinforce again that these outcomes are "constrained" by context, which includes sociocultural factors, medium choice, the goals of participants and the number of participants.

In my data, all three outcomes of persuasion are targeted. On websites, people are taught why smoking is bad, they are continuously reminded that stopping improves their lifestyle and health and is beneficial for their loved ones, all of it amounting to get people to stop. On peer-to-peer sites, interactants are socialized into communicative practices, support ("reinforce") each other in their journey to quit smoking and teach each other tips and tricks. Response-changing persuasion is less patent at first sight; however, it is still present in situated interaction (e.g. advising someone to follow a proposed course of action).

3.3 Persuasion and power

As shown before, power plays into persuasion in various respects. In rhetoric as well as communication science, persuasion has been linked to "ideology"; i.e. the formation of values, beliefs and attitudes (see Eisenhart & Johnstone 2008; Engelstad 2009; Gass & Seiter 2007; Segal 2005; "response-shaping persuasion" by Miller 2002: 8). Socialization into a value system persuades people to view and behave in the world in a certain way. Moreover, the success of persuasion has been linked to the power or status of speakers (e.g. Ilie 2006; Miller 2002; Segal 2005; ect.). Speakers' power to potentially enforce consequences may augment their credibility or trustworthiness. It foregrounds that identity construction is a valuable approach to trace power (hence also persuasion) in interaction. Clearly, persuasion and power interact on a structural (macro-) as well as on a more local (micro-) interactional/discourse level (see Wartenberg 1990). Drawing the link to this project, ideological assumptions on smoking have changed dramatically. For example, while the cowboy hero Lucky Luke used to smoke in early comic books, he exchanged the stub with a piece of straw later on. Also, if one's physician points out the necessity of quitting smoking, it may have more impact (due to context and the former's expertise) than if it is someone unknown. Sociolinguistics and most prominently critical discourse analysis (CDA) often approach persuasion from a power angle (Fairclough 2001; Locher 2004; van Dijk 2008; etc.). A main concern is trying to bring together how individual action is framed by structure and vice versa, specifically investigating what role language plays (Wodak & Iedema 2005: 1603; van Dijk 2008: 87). In the following section, I will define power and elaborate some perspectives on how power is connected with persuasion on a societal level. Secondly, in view of health context investigated, I comment on institutional discourse and its connection to persuasion. Finally, I focus on how power and persuasion intersect on an interactional/micro-level. In the course of this review, the working principles proposed by Aristotle will resurface and will be linked to power.

3.3.1 A definition of power and a glimpse into research of power as persuasion

In terms of defining power, Fairclough (2001: 30) and van Dijk (2008: viii) both put forward that power relations have to be understood socially and above all in terms of control, particularly control over discourse means. Control over public discourse implies control over its production, which leads to mental control over the public mind. Social power is observable in interaction and it is exercised "[…] when the real or potential actions of A exercise social control over B […] result[ing] in the limitations of B's social freedom of action" (van Dijk 2008: 29). Consequently, the link between power and persuasion is as follows: if group A has gained control over group B's "mental models, knowledge, attitudes", they "indirectly control their future actions" (van Dijk 2008: 70). This happens discursively through the selection of certain arguments and release of favorable information (van Dijk 2008: 29). In order to exercise power, social actors need to have some hierarchically distributed resources (knowledge, wealth, authority) legitimising their superior position (van Dijk 2008: 4). However, these resources may be contested in actual interaction (Locher 2004: 31; van Dijk 2008: 29). Thornborrow (2002: 134) corroborates this point of view, putting forward that "[…] power relations in interaction are not necessarily fixed, predetermined states of affairs, but are constantly shifting and being redefined between participants on a very local level". This implies that power is analyzable on a local, interactional level where it "can be construed as one participant's ability to affect or influence what the next participant does in the next turn" (Thornborrow 2002: 136).

Mayr (2008: 11) explains that there are two major research traditions on power, depending on whether they focus on "domination" or "persuasion": (1) "mainstream" and (2) "second-stream" power research. Mainstream research studies power in terms of organizations, such as the court or the church, and how they ensure "compliance" and "legitimize" their position. In these studies, power is considered to be "repressive". Further, power is reified as it can be maintained or lost (Simpson & Mayr 2010: 2). Second-stream power research analyses "strategies or techniques of power", i.e. "the routine exercise of power" (Mayr 2008: 13). The main interest lies on how people with social power, or in Mayr's terms (2008: 11) people "who have privileged access to social resources", persuade others to maintain this distribution. Engelstad (2009: 211) argues that persuasion is indirect power when it shapes "actors' knowledge and beliefs about the nature of the world, and their conceptions of how the world ought to be […]". Critical discourse analysts have called this "power by consent", which is exercised in and through language (see Fairclough 2001; van Dijk 2008). Considering the emphasis on language in second-stream research, it is not surprising that the bulk of sociolinguistic (certainly critical discourse analytical studies) are positioned there. As van Dijk (2008: 38) points out, the "discursive enactment of power is mostly persuasive". Fairclough (2001: 3) puts forward that power as persuasion occurs through ideologies. Ideologies can be defined as "[…] embody[ing] an interest-dependent (re) construction of social reality and mainly emerge in and through language" (van Dijk 2008: 35) or as "[…] the power to project one's practices as universal and 'common sense' […]" (Fairclough 2001: 27). CDA uncovers how discourses or ideologies influence people's minds, attitudes and, ultimately, actions (Fairclough 2001: 3)[14]. For instance, Mayr (2008) provides an example which is of direct relevance to this project. She suggests that neo-liberal ideology pervades public health discourse: Good health is in the hands of the individual who is responsible of being fit and making sensible lifestyle choices. Conceptualizing health as an entirely personal and private matter neglects the social dimension inherent in many health issues. For instance, according to Cancer research UK (2016), there are clear socio-economic differences between smoker rates.

3.3.2 Institutional discourse and persuasion

Several sociolinguistic studies focus on how discourse and the exercise of power are interlinked within institutions[15]; connecting second-stream with mainstream power research (e.g. Fairclough 2001; Mayr 2008; Thornborrow 2002; van Dijk 2008; etc.). The main reason for the academic interest is that "social power [is] often *organized* and *institutionalized* […]", which has a great impact on our everyday life (emphasis in original, van Dijk 2008: 66). As Mayr (2008: 1) aptly puts, institutions have "considerable control over the shaping of our rou-

[14] See Wodak and Meyer (2009: 26) for an overview of different CDA approaches.

[15] I am aware that in previous literature there tends to be a distinction between "organizations", referring to commercial corporations, and "institutions", referring to "the public organs of the state" (Mayr 2008: 4). For the sake of legibility, I use "institutions" as an umbrella term, referring to state agencies as well as big commercial establishments.

tine experiences of the world and the way we classify the world". This can be put down to the fact that institutions enjoy control and "preferential access" over public discourse (van Dijk 2008: 15). As such, institutional discourse is linked to persuading, as it has the possibility to imprint ideologies. On the level of social interaction, the exercise of power in and through discourse is often connected to the "institutional role" of speakers (van Dijk 2008: 37), which may enhance their ethos. Linked to this idea is the conversation-analytical focus by Thornborrow (2002: 11) on how institutional identities, which presuppose an asymmetry in rights and obligations, play out in interaction. Thornborrow (2002: 135) describes how turns can be pre-allocated due to institutional identities but also how this system may be challenged in actual conversation. Many studies which conduct a micro-level analysis of institutional interaction focus on spoken discourse (there are exceptions; e.g. Locher 2006; Ferrarotti 2013). With respect to how institutional identities and contexts are reflected in written computer-mediated discourse there remains much to be done, which is a research gap which I aim to address through this research.

To conceptualize institutional discourse, Habermas's (1962) notion of communicative and strategic discourse has been very influential (see Mayr 2008; Thornborrow 2002). Habermas proposes that communicative discourse ideally takes place between participants who aim for mutual understanding. Strategic discourse is "power laden and goal-directed" (Thornborrow 2002: 2). It tends to be asymmetrical in its power relations with some participants systematically exploiting discursive resources to fulfil their intentions and "mak[e] people do things" (Mayr 2008: 5). The connection to persuasion is obvious. Institutional discourse is considered to be strategic discourse. However, there has been some criticism against the division between communicative and strategic discourse. Thornborrow, for instance, problematizes the idealisation of communicative discourse. She argues (2002: 3) that in every interaction there are interests at stake and inequality may be experienced. Thus, the difference between strategic and communicative discourse may be not clear cut and may more accurately be described as degrees on a spectrum. Nevertheless, keeping in mind that some discourse can be overtly "goal-directed" is helpful.

Thornborrow has come up with some parameters that characterize institutional discourse ("talk" in her case). These are convenient for my project to contextualize most of my sources. I will use an abbreviated and adapted version of her four points in order to apply them from a conversational to a computer-mediated (written) context. In this study, institutional discourse is regarded as:

1. [Discourse] that has differentiated, pre-inscribed and conventional participant roles and identities […].
2. [Discourse] in which there is an asymmetrical distribution of turn types between the participants such that speakers with different institutional identities typically occupy different discursive identities […].
3. [Discourse] in which there is also an asymmetrical relationship between participants in terms of speaker rights and obligations […].
4. [Discourse] in which the discursive resources and identities available to participants to accomplish specific actions are either weakened or strengthened in relation to their current institutional identity.

(adapted from Thornborrow 2002: 4)

Institutional websites tend to have a monologic setup: in contrast to talk, it is the medium which already prescribes participant roles of writers and readers; i.e. "producers and interpreters" (see Fairclough 2001: 41). Institutional websites are asymmetrical in that they usually allow none to very little and only very controlled interaction. Ng and Bradac (1993: 5) consider this kind of unidirectional, monologic communication the prototypical format of persuasion. While interaction is mostly one-sided, this asymmetry may be purposely blurred. Nevertheless, producers' discursive identities (e.g. as advice-givers) will still emerge in text. This also holds true for their audience's discursive identities; however, they will be positioned by the producers' use of language. With respect to points (3) and (4), producers cannot overstep their boundaries and be overtly critical of interpreters (users) who smoke. Depending on whether they address consumers or citizens, this obligation to respect the individual's decision may be more or less dominant. Interpreters, on the other hand, have the right to be informed truthfully and extensively but have the obligation to act responsively as citizens. A great deal of the rights and obligations will only become apparent through a detailed analysis. A final caveat: this elaboration of institutional talk does by no means imply that peer-to-peer interaction be void of norms and expectations. Although peer-to-peer sites have a less strategic and more communicative purpose of supporting one another, interaction takes place within a community of practice, which entails participant roles as well as rights and obligations (see Wenger 2008).

3.3.3 Influence: Power and persuasion in interaction

I have outlined some main theoretical concepts in terms of how power is connected to persuasion in a large societal context as well as how the notion of institutional discourse is helpful.

Now, I will focus on how persuasion and power are tied together on a "dyadic" or micro-level. The philosopher Wartenberg (1990: 7) puts his main focus on power-over; that is the "dynamic" nature of power. According to Wartenberg (1990: 104), one way in which power is articulated is "influence". Göhler (2009: 28) agrees that power-over is "a social relation", but he goes a step further than Wartenberg by positing that to have power over someone is to exercise influence. Göhler (2009: 28/29) considers power-over to be "transitive" in that it "[…] translates the will of an actor into another actor's will and thereby exercises influence". Göhler's points suggest that there is an interdependence between influence and persuasion. However, how persuasion and influence exactly intersect varies according to researchers. Some scholars consider persuasion to be in a hyponymic relationship to influence (see Ng & Bradac 1993) whereas others view influence as the outcome of the persuasive process (see Segal 2005). After introducing Wartenberg's definition of power-over, I discuss his different forms of influence and explicate wherever necessary their link to persuasion. Wartenberg's views are especially relevant for this project, as he is acutely aware of the importance of social context, but also incorporates how power is articulated between two individual agents.

Wartenberg (1990: 71) explains that a participant's power over another should be conceptualized as a field. Resorting to a metaphor, he (1990: 74) argues that power over functions like a magnet, which changes its surrounding space, particularly the movement of objects. This leads him to the following definition of power-over (emphasis in original): "A social agent *A* has *power over* another social agent *B* if and only if *A* strategically constrains *B*'s action environment" (1990: 85). Wartenberg's use of "strategically" warrants an explanation. He makes (1990: 85) clear that a single action is only a case of power-over if it is part of a larger pattern of trying to exercise power. Locher (2004: 26) criticizes Wartenberg's notion of strategy because it "[…] seems to exclude an unconscious exercise of power". I agree with her point of view that, for instance, social roles in specific contexts can lead to "power […] be[ing] exercised without intention" (2004: 27)[16]. Interestingly, the negative ring to constrain is replicated in Göhler (2009: 28), who views any restriction of someone's "field of action" as bad for recipients despite "possibly noble intentions". To understand what an "action environment" is, we need to consider Wartenberg's notion of social agency. He (1990: 80) argues that social agency hinges on two aspects: (1) "the objective situation" and (2) the social agent's "assessment of her situation". The second part is again bi-partite. First, it refers to what social agents consider to be their alternative courses of action in a given situation. Second, it includes how a social agent evaluates said courses of action. Wartenberg (1990: 81)

[16] Locher (2004) introduces an example of how the presence of a superordinate may affect the behaviour of a secretary in an office.

highlights that these action alternatives are restricted to reasonable options for the social agent; that is, it does not refer to any possible physical outcome. Thus, social agents' action environments are constituted by their judgment of action alternatives they consider to be at their disposition. The identity of a social agent, "her sense of self", will consequently be a crucial factor in such a judgment of action alternatives (Wartenberg 1990: 83). The selection of a course of action does not necessarily happen with conscious intent, as Wartenberg (1990: 84) is quick to point out. Returning to Wartenberg's definition of power-over, it becomes clear that the constraint of *B*'s action environment implies that *B* cannot access all their action-alternatives freely because of *A*.

Social agents' action environments can be constrained in different ways, which is the articulation of power (Wartenberg 1990: 6). He distinguishes three types of power-over, which are linked to each other: (1) force, (2) coercion and (3) influence. Force involves a physical intervention by the one exercising power and is thus inept for establishing "long-term" power relations (Wartenberg 1990: 93). Coercion involves social agent *A* threatening social agent *B* with real-life consequences if *B* does not adhere to *A*'s proposed course of action. *B* obeys in view of this threat. Wartenberg (1990: 97-99) illustrates this with the example of an environmental group which is not granted the right to demonstrate and is threatened with prison. If they do not demonstrate, they have been coerced into staying at home. Influence—other than in the cases of 'force' and 'coercion'—is accepted by the one on whom it is exercised. Wartenberg (1990: 105) comes up with the following definition (emphasis in original):

> An agent *A influences* another agent *B* if and only if *A* communicatively interacts with *B* in such a way that, as a result, *B* alters his assessment of his action-environment in a fundamental manner.

Wartenberg highlights three aspects of influence: it is relational, discursive and needs to be effective. All aspects have been mentioned as well when talking about persuasion. I will say more with respect to how I view the link between persuasion and influence a little later. The discursive nature of influence is key for a linguistic focal point and has been emphasized by Ng and Bradac (1993: 17), who have put forward that "[l]anguage is the primary instrument for achieving influence". Wartenberg (1990: 105) makes out four kinds of influence, which are dependent on the means by which an agent's action environment is constrained: (1) rational persuasion, (2) personal persuasion, (3) expertise and (4) manipulation. Wartenberg (1990: 104) argues that not all three kinds involve the exercise of power. The names of the types indicate a link to Aristotle's working principles of persuasion 'logos', 'ethos' and 'pathos'.

Rational persuasion refers to when influence is exercised because new information is provided by one party. Interactant *B* reassesses their action environment because of information provided by interactant *A*. As such, Wartenberg (1990: 107) argues that, since *B* is treated as an independent individual who freely re-evaluates their situation, there is no constraint of *B*'s action environment. Hence, there is no exercise of power. However, Wartenberg's conception of rational persuasion as untainted by power is problematic. He presents us with a highly idealised case, where neither the source, e.g. the personality of *A*, the form in which the reasons are given, nor the larger cultural context[17] plays a role. Moreover, other researchers clearly disagree with this point of view (Engelstad 2009; Ng & Bradac 1993). Engelstad (2009: 216) regards trying to "change […] normative conceptions" or "beliefs" of others by providing "new information" as an indirect exercise of power. Ng and Bradac (1993: 5) explain that "facts and logic" alone do not suffice for persuasion, but they have to be tailored to the context. This task is mostly carried out through and by language. Applied to my data, it is relevant whether the consequences of smoking are presented in statistical or in text-form, what speech acts and lexical items are used, and whether pictures accompany main arguments. Thus, I put forward that even rational persuasion is a form of exercising power.

Personal persuasion takes place when interactant *B* changes her action-environment according to *A*'s wishes because of interactant *A*'s charisma. Wartenberg (1990: 108) emphasises that B proceeds without resorting to rational arguments, e.g. new information. Consequently, personal persuasion depends on the trustworthiness of *A* (similar to Aristotle's ethos). Power is exercised because *B* is prevented from taking other possibilities into account because of *A*'s personality. It is thus the interpersonal dimension that allows *A* to influence *B*.

In the case of *expertise,* expert *A* exercises power over *B* by giving advice. As a result, *B* has her action-environment constrained. Wartenberg treats expertise separately from the trustworthiness of a speaker even though one could argue that expertise is linked to trustworthiness (see also Aristotle, who categorizes both, trustworthiness and expertise, as part of ethos). He (1990: 108) points out that expertise is located in-between rational and personal persuasion. Similar to personal persuasion, participant *B* changes her action-environment because of the expert persona *A* without being able to reassess the situation rationally herself. However, similar to rational persuasion, expertise implies the possibility of *B* gaining access to the same knowledge *A* has. Thus, *B* would then reach the same conclusions as *A* through

[17] Dedáic (2006: 702) points out that in a postmodern perspective the premise of reason as being neutral has been put into question.

rational thinking. Further, Wartenberg (ibid.) distinguishes between "distributive expertise" and "a relation of apprenticeship". The first kind refers to instances where expert *A* recommends a course of action in a concrete situation, such as a physician advising to stop smoking because of health problems. Distributive expertise is expected to be heavily featured on websites to inform users about the advantages of quitting and the harm of smoking. However, specialized knowledge is also likely to be mobilized interactionally to warrant claims on peer-to-peer sites. Apprenticeship is based on the hierarchical distribution of knowledge between master and apprentice (Wartenberg 1990: 109). The apprentice wants to acquire the same knowledge as the master. Wartenberg underlines the importance of the apprentice's trust into the master's competence, which affirms the link between trust and expertise. Power is exercised over the apprentice, as she follows the master's guidance to achieve her goals. Hence, power is manifested in asymmetrical relationships which can be based on unequal knowledge of a given topic. In my data, relations of apprenticeship can be found in the form of lay expertise. Expertise is created sequentially through linguistic means on peer-to-peer sites. Narratives or testimonials could be a monologic discursive attempt to create such a relation on websites.

Manipulation is a special type of influence. Wartenberg (1990: 110) argues that manipulation is influence which has been exercised by resorting to "morally questionable means". Further, he distinguishes between cognitive and emotional manipulation. In both cases, there is a constraint of one participant's action-environment, i.e. power is exercised. The first is a hybrid case of rational persuasion: *A* influences *B* to do something through reasoning. However, *A* does not reveal that *B*'s prospective actions are for *A*'s own good, thus *B* is manipulated cognitively. Emotional manipulation refers to instances in which *A* influences *B* by appealing to *B's* emotions. As a result, B is hindered from making a rational decision. Emotional manipulation is reminiscent of pathos, which is one of the three working principles of persuasion in rhetoric.

Wartenberg has tried to keep the types of influence fairly separate, singling out rational persuasion as a kind of influence, where no power is exercised. However, this is a philosophical abstraction, because the distinct types of influence are interrelated and difficult to separate. Wartenberg subsumes persuasion under influence but does not discuss hierarchies. I argue that persuasion and influence are two sides of the same coin. I agree with Black (see Section 3.1.3): influence is about accomplishment while persuasion is about the process. The persuasive process should then mainly be located in the attempt to change *B*'s "assessment of their action-environment". Finally, Ng and Bradac (1993: 17) have put forward that "[l]anguage is the primary instrument for achieving influence”. Thus, the discursive nature of influence invites a linguistic analysis of persuasion.

3.4 Persuasion online

Persuasion is carried out mainly linguistically; however, it is also necessary to include the larger communicative context. Warnick (2007: 42) ascertains how important the visual design of online texts is: only if the first impression is attractive enough, are users going to stay on the web source and focus on the content (see also Pauwels 2012: 255; Sillence & Briggs 2015: 472). Web sources have become more complex as they combine pictures, videos, graphic elements and text to a meaningful whole (Koteyko 2009: 113; see also Herring 2013). According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 177), web sources can be considered multimodal texts, as they combine a range of semiotic codes to create meaning. My main interest is how technical and structural idiosyncrasies of websites can be mobilised to support persuasion online. First, I will focus on intertextuality and interactivity which are two main rhetorical strategies on web sources (Warnick 2007: 43). Secondly, I will discuss the non-linear nature of web sources and how it affects persuasion.

3.4.1 Intertextuality and interactivity

According to Warnick (2007: 15), there are two main rhetorical strategies that are used online in order to involve users and keep them on site: *intertextuality* and *interactivity*. Intertextuality can be defined as “[…] when one text is in some way connected […] to other texts in the social and textual matrix” (Warnick 2007: 95). The rhetorical appeal of intertextuality lies in the fact that it is likely to capture users’ attention. Intertextuality aims at readers’ complicity as they have to work actively to construct the meaning of the text, drawing on their experience or knowledge (Warnick 2007: 91). Hence, intertextuality establishes identification by creating an “in-group” sensation (often through the use of humour, such as with parodies or satires). If we understand intertextuality as a way of quoting from and alluding to other texts, it is also a way of representing a multitude of voices, such as in the case of testimonials, which are abundant in my data.

Interactivity is ubiquitous online and covers various means of involving the users to keep up their interest (Warnick 2007: 43). Warnick (2007: 71) argues that the rhetorical potential of interactivity lies in its ability to promote identification between website producers and users. Similarly, and particularly with regards to online health communication, Freeman and

Chapman (2012: 859) argue that interactivity makes information more accessible "enhanc[ing] [users'] sense of belonging to a site". In other words, interactivity targets the users' involvement and can consequently result in persuasion. Different scholars have diverging notions with respect to where to locate interactivity, disputing whether it is a technical property, belongs to the text or depends on user perception (Warnick 2007: 69). Thus, the following notions all designate one aspect of interactivity: First, it can take place between users and medium. The former can click on hyperlinks and customize the content of the site, interacting with the system (Warnick 2007: 75). Second, interactivity can relate to users interacting with each other, such as on discussion forums and chats. A variant of user-to-user interaction is in place when website producers endeavour to establish some sort of reciprocity by getting feedback from users (e.g. "contact us"), or by inviting them to action. For instance, the Bush/Cheney campaign website in 2004 encouraged users to organize a neighbourhood walk to show their support (Warnick 2007: 84). Interactivity can also take place in the form of user-site contributions; e.g. some websites allow users to contribute content to the site, like pictures, comments, participation in polls, etc. However, Warnick's study of the Bush/Cheney campaign website showed that its interactive features, like its blog and chat centre, were a means of controlling instead of opening up discourse. Further, user-to-site contributions seemed to be limited. Warnick (2007: 84) hypothesizes that this is due to concerns over losing authorial control over the direction of campaign discourse and over having to appeal to a large audience. With respect to my own data, it is important to take into account how and whether interactivity is strategically employed. The degree of interactivity, i.e. whether readers are able to add their own material/text, will be informative in terms of how producers position users. Finally, interactivity can also occur on a textual level. Certain linguistic features (the use of first person pronouns, active versus passive voice) can help engaging users (Warnick 2007: 73; see also Section 3.5.2.3). Extensive textual interactivity helps establish an impression of dialogicity on websites, which, in turn, is connoted with a more approachable style.

3.4.2 The non-linear structure of web sources

One important aspect of most web sources is their non-linear structure. Text information is stored in modules (or hyperlinks) within hypertexts, which can be singularly accessed (Janoschka 2004: 171). While linear texts "[…] impose a syntagmatics on the reader", non-linear texts work paradigmatically (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006: 208). By "paradigmatically", Kress and Van Leeuwen refer to the fact that websites are constructed as modules. Each module has to be meaningful and "self-contained" on its own. Since there is no fixed sequence, users create their reading paths individually. Website reading can be considered another form of interactivity since readers actively engage with the text when they select what to read and decide where to go next (Janoschka 2004: 191; see also Koteyko 2009: 113). Even if websites enable multiple reading paths, their composition is not random (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006: 204-205). Warnick (2007: 29) explains that non-linearity is considered by website producers when they direct readers by making certain elements more salient. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 201) explain that the most salient part of a message carries most weight, thus attracting readers' attention. Salience is brought about visually in multimodal texts by means of many factors, such as size, colour, perspective and focus (ibid.). For instance, verticality can be strategically employed (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006: 186). Images/text modules at the top of multimodal text are said to introduce what is aspired and to appeal emotionally to the viewer (ibid.). In contrast, images/text modules that are set at the bottom tend to offer "practical information", belonging to the domain of "what is". For instance, one might encounter "direction for action" or "practical consequences" at the bottom of websites (Kress &Van Leeuwen 2006: 187). The non-linearity and paradigmatic nature of hypertexts does not hold entirely true for forums. The surface levels feature thematic blocks, which can be singularly selected. However, once a user opens a thread, there is a sense of sequentiality. Contributions are listed chronologically and may refer back to previous posts.

3.5 The linguistic analysis of persuasion

Let us now turn to how persuasion is analysed in linguistics. One of the most well-known linguistic conceptions of persuasion is from speech act theory: it defines persuasion as a perlocutionary effect, tying persuasion to speech acts. Such an effect-oriented understanding (similar to other outcome-oriented notions) of persuasion poses the problem of how to study its linguistic patterns from a qualitative perspective in natural data. Dedaić (2006) suggests two procedures for how to analyse persuasive argumentation linguistically. Even though she specifically refers to political speeches, her approach is also valid in the context of online health discourse. As analysts we can either identify strategies on the linguistic micro-level assigning functions or start from "the communicative situation and function of a text" looking for strategies performing said function (Dedaić 2006: 702). In order to forego the necessity to measure persuasive effectiveness, I need to opt for the second approach, which consists of looking at persuasion in their social context. In other words, I look at social practices that are characterized by their persuasive purpose of moving people to stop smoking. Hymes (2003:

38) provides us with the appropriate framework for analysing speech acts in a larger setting since he added a social dimension to speech acts. She argues that speech acts are part of speech events/activities that have certain norms and rules for language use. Speech events/activities are in turn part of a larger speech situation, which is characterized by social and cultural norms. Gee (2011: 17) calls speech situations "practices", describing them as "socially recognized and institutionally or culturally supported endeavour[s]". Since persuasive intentionality is given on the institutional, professional and peer-to-peer sites of this project, I can compare the situated use of linguistic patterns (for instance, speech acts) and relational effects in view of their persuasive goal regardless of the actual success of the persuasive attempt.

3.5.1 Speech act theory: persuasion as a perlocutionary effect

By adopting a practice-based approach, I can still make use of the theoretical insights of speech act theory, which reflected on where to locate persuasion and how it comes about. Austin (1962:120) proposes three levels of analysis in communication: (1) locutionary acts, (2) illocutionary acts and (3) perlocutionary acts. To simplify, he argues that, while locutionary acts correspond to linguistic form and semantic content, illocutionary acts refer to how locutionary acts are used or what they do (e.g. ask a question, give an order, make a request, etc.). Perlocutionary acts are, as Austin (1962: 108) puts it, what you "[…] bring about or achieve by saying something […]". Searle (1999: 136/7) elaborates on what constitute perlocutionary effects when he explains that they are the "consequences that illocutionary acts have on hearers", which are psychological effects that go "[…] beyond linguistic communication". Both, Austin (1962: 108) and Searle (1999: 137) argue, that persuasion is a perlocutionary act or effect, resulting from the use of illocutionary acts. Further, Searle (1999: 137) comments on intentionality regarding perlocutionary acts. He rightly points out that whereas perlocutionary acts can be intentional or unintentional, illocutionary acts are always intentional (which coincides with Bucholtz and Hall 2010 and their view on agency, which can also be performed through habitual actions). Nevertheless, as Austin (1962: 117) adds, some actions may be performed with the clear perlocutionary object to persuade.

The different levels of communication outlined by speech act theorists are useful staring points for a systematic analysis of persuasion in my corpus. While speech act theorists propose an effect-oriented definition of persuasion, which transgresses "linguistic communication", it is still the combination of linguistic form and function that results in persuasion. However, we need to add the interpersonal dimension to the speech act division. Since persuasion is targeted communication, the relational level becomes ever more important. The perlocutionary effect of persuasion is brought about through the interplay of form, function and relational work, which exploits Aristotle's working principles ethos, pathos and logos. The working principles are active on the interpersonal level. We can reformulate them in terms of what underlying assumption was used to transform the relationship between interactants: (1) ethos/credibility suggests "Trust me I am an expert or I am a good person", (2) Pathos/personal appeal is used by speakers to identify with their audience, implying "I am like you", "I know what you are going through", "I care about you", and (3) logos/argumentation works with the premise "you are the expert because you are a rational being". Although these working principles are mainly achieved discursively, they are not restricted to language. Other multimodal elements, such as images, videos, or layout can enhance or supplement them.

3.5.2 Linguistic strategies of persuasion

In the following, I will focus on specific linguistic strategies or text structures that previous research has emphasized in relation to persuasion. After briefly commenting on the use of narratives, I will introduce what speech acts have been said to be employed for persuasion, and comment on the role of addressivity. Finally, I will look at syntactic structures and mitigation, which can both influence the uptake of a message.

3.5.2.1 The use of narratives

Van Dijk (2008: 38) suggests that the use of narratives can help establish emotional engagement (i.e. pathos), which may show the "(un)desirability of future actions". While van Dijk discusses the effect of narratives in a macro-context (e.g. the influence of novels and movies), it is clear that narratives can also be employed to emotionally involve participants in interaction. Durant and Lambrou (2009: 159) assert that personal narratives are very "subjective and emotive accounts of events" that are used to touch people and move them emotionally in media accounts, for instance, in the case of survival stories or journeys to quit smoking in my dataset. At the same time, personal narratives are deployed to construct identities. As such, they can be used to display expertise; that is to create ethos :. Durant and Lambrou (ibid.) emphasise that personal narratives can acquire a level of authenticity and authoritativeness unattainable by other sources, as they are "closest to what has happened".

Cheng's (2008) case study of an online educational chatroom among software engineering students, nicely illustrate the multi-functionality of narratives. She focussed on how narratives furthered ethos construction on a micro-level and what discourse functions they had on a macro-level. She describes that several positioning strategies were used to establish ethos within narratives, such as using *we* to indicate a common identity and taking on responsibility for positive actions, which showed contributors in a good professional light (Cheng 2008: 206). Participants sometimes evaluated their own narratives by indicating how they felt about events. In turn, this allowed other participants to judge the other's identity (i.e. ethos) based on the former's evaluation. Additionally, collaborative story-telling (e.g. if some participants asked questions to get the narrative along) helped to reinforce group-membership and signal common ground, thus strengthening ethos of all interactants involved (Cheng 2008: 212). Individual stylistic choices were another strategy used to further ethos within the micro-level of a narrative, such as creating a detached persona through impersonal constructions or personalizing a narrative through the use of *I*.

Moreover, narratives in their entity carried out different discourse functions on the macro-level of the chat interactions. Sometimes students shared non-classroom related personal stories, which had the main function of constructing their identity outside the educational context. Exchanging narratives helped to establish common ground and to bond with other interactants (Cheng 2008: 218). At the same time, narratives could "provide evidence for a claim" (Cheng 2008: 220), functioning as a warranting strategy (see Richardson 2003). Some participants used narratives to "illustrate a class point" (Cheng 2008: 220), which tended to occur if the teacher explicitly elicited students' experience. Finally, students told narratives in order to introduce a problem to class discussion (Cheng 2008: 223). Several of these uses of narratives also occur in this data set and are important in terms of persuasion.

3.5.2.2 The use of specific speech acts

Speech act theorists have elaborated a grid of speech act categories, suggesting what the main purpose of each speech act category is. Thus, this allows us to hypothesize what kind of perlocutionary effect the particular speech act category is used for. Searle (1999: 148) distinguishes five functions for illocutionary acts: (1) assertives, (2) directives, (3) commissives, (4) expressives and (5) declarations. Assertives are speech acts with which the speaker comments on what they believe to be true, such as descriptions and statements. Directive speech acts aim at getting the audience to align with the proposed content. Orders, requests, advice, warnings are examples for directive speech acts. Commissives entail a commitment by the speakers to what they have said, such as in the case of promises or guarantees. Expressive speech acts tell us about the speakers' emotional states. Welcoming, thanking, apologizing belong to expressive speech acts. Finally, declarations (e.g. performatives) are speech acts that bring about a change in the real world, such as christening someone or resigning from an office.

Directive speech acts seem to be the prototypical ones to persuade someone, because of their aim to make the audience align with proposed content. Advice appears to be a typical directive speech act used to signal expertise and to influence someone else's future actions, especially if we consider Searle's definition (1969: 67) of advice as "telling you what is best for you". Locher (2006: 3) has put forward that advice includes a recommendation of a future action by the advice-giver, which can thus be seen as a clear attempt to get someone to "re-assess their action environment" (see Wartenberg 1990). However, when van Dijk (2008: 38) explains how experts influence future actions of non-experts by describing "undesired alternative courses of action", he discusses a range of speech acts that are used for that matter, such as predictions (assertives) as well as warnings or advice (directives). It is worth keeping in mind that perlocutionary acts are not tied to specific illocutionary acts (Austin 1962: 109). In other words, any speech act can ultimately be used to persuade. So, the question arises regarding what illocutionary acts are used in what form (locution) to achieve the perlocutionary effect of persuasion in the context of the health risk smoking. It is also interesting to find out whether sources resort to directive speech acts, making their intentions clear to get the audience to align, or whether they are less direct about this aspect and restrict themselves to information in the form of statements or declarations.

3.5.2.3 Integrating the audience—linguistic accommodation, form of address and oth-linguistic structures

Durant and Lambrou (2009: 15), who work with Jakobson's model of communication, make persuasion dependent on the conative function of interaction—in other words, on "[…] how the addressee is approached or appealed to". We can deduce that linguistic structures to address readers are crucial with respect to the involvement aspect of persuasion. In this regard, Simpson and Mayr (2010: 115) highlight the importance of speaking styles in establishing rapport (and involvement) between interactants. They have explained that an audience is more likely to align with an expert's point of view if the latter accommodates linguistically to them. Linguistic accommodation personalises interaction and is therefore likely to be more appealing to the audience. For instance, colloquialisms can be used to attract specific target groups in advertisements (Benwell & Stokoe 2006: 180), which is a strategy that has also been described in magazines (McKay 2006: 316-323). In her study of online web advertisements, Janoschka (2004: 194) also emphasises that linguistic persuasion takes place by the communicative integration of the addressee. She points out that establishing an "interactional relationship" and striving for a conversational feel is crucial within her data to persuade readers to click on and activate the advertisements (ibid.).

To involve readers, terms of address are a crucial linguistic means. Fairclough (2001: 52) describes the phenomenon of "synthetic personalization" in mass media, which refers to communication that is seemingly directed at individuals instead of a large group of people. Benwell and Stokoe (2006: 180;182) stress that, apart from individualizing mass communication, synthetic personalization serves to create (or at least give the appearance of) equality and common ground between communicative parties. They (2006: 180) explain that synthetic personalization relies on features imitating "natural conversation", especially in form of terms of address. Personal and possessive pronouns as well as possessive determiners (*you, yours, your,* etc.) are associated with interaction, emphasising the immediate connection between sender and receiver (Janoschka 2004: 139; see also Koteyko 2009). The second person pronoun *you* and the second person possessive determiner *your* have the advantage of referring to individuals and of being of general nature at the same time (Benwell & Stokoe 2006: 180). Also, Ferrarrotti (2013: 130) found out in her study of promotional texts on university websites that the direct addressing of readers by means of *you* is a "high-involvement strategy", which can be deployed for persuasive purposes. Similarly, the first person plural pronoun *we* can also help "to enhance proximity" if it is "inclusive" of readers (Ferrarrotti 2013: 130; see also McKay 2006: 316). Ng and Bradac (1993: 159) explain that by successfully deploying "inclusive we", speakers/writers trigger identification and affiliation in their audience, which ultimately strengthens persuasive endeavours.

Questions are another means of directly addressing and involving readers in mass media texts (Benwell & Stokoe 2006: 181). Janoschka (2004: 133) detected a preference for yes-or-no and rhetorical questions in online advertisements, which she attributed to the fact that such types of questions do not entail detailed answer on users' part. Imperatives are another way of integrating readers since a reaction from the latter is expected (Benwell & Stokoe 2006: 181). In her data set of promotional websites about probiotic yoghurt, Koteyko (2009: 121) argues that imperatives signal "the construction of a personalised relationship between producer and consumer", functioning thus as "recommendations" instead of "commands". Janoschka (2004: 135) found imperatives to be frequently employed in her data, which she attributes partly to the shortness of the verbal form, partly to the fact that imperatives urge users to become active/to interact. She (2004: 137) adds that imperatives can explicitly guide users' action in the local context of the online advertisement, usually in combination with a deictic term (e.g. *click here*). Deictic terms rely on communicative participants sharing context for their interpretation. Thus, deictic terms help create an illusion of immediacy and of co-presence in the case of unidirectional mass media texts (Benwell & Stokoe 2006: 182).

3.5.2.4 The use of mitigation

Mitigation is used to lessen the impact of a speech act (Ng & Bradac 1993: 91). As such, it is an integral part of interpersonal communication because it can be face-saving for both speakers and hearers (see Ch. 4). According to Schneider (2010: 255), "[m]itigation expressions are fine-tuning-devices that achieve a compromise between what the speaker wants to say and what the interlocutor is willing to accept", which makes it clear how mitigation plays a role with respect to persuasion. As a face-saving relational work strategy, mitigation can make potentially face-threatening activities like giving advice or showing support more acceptable to a party (Locher 2006: 4; Locher 2013a: 341). If speakers (or writers) mitigate their speech acts, they minimize their responsibility for the content proposed as well as reduce possible "risks and offences" (Schneider 2010: 255). Moreover, mitigated speech acts facilitate interventions by addressees without being overly face-threatening to speakers (Schneider 2010: 256; see also Hyland 2006: 695). Mitigation can occur in different linguistic forms: for instance, as "single expressions" (e.g. *sort of, perhaps*), through the use of modal verbs, as "parenthetical expression" but also through syntactic structures (the use of questions instead of imperatives or requests) (Schneider 2010: 261-263; see also Locher's comments 2006: 108 on how syntactic realization mitigates the directness of advice).

Mitigation devices have mostly been classified[18] according to their scope; that is, whether they modify "propositional content" or "the commitment to the truth of a proposition" (Schneider 2010: 259). One way of categorizing mitigation devices is by distinguishing between being reader and content-oriented (which can be further sub-divided into being "accuracy-oriented" and "writer-oriented") as suggested by Hyland (2006: 695-696; Schneider 2010: 260). Even though their categorisations do not entirely overlap with Hyland. Ng and Bradac (1993) also work with three types of mitigation devices that express reservations. They argue that they can be directed at the addressee, the speaker or the content. Ng and Bradac (1993) provide several examples, which is why I refer to them to illustrate each respective category.

"Addressee-oriented" reservations are employed to soften impositions on the audience, for instance, by providing the addressee the possibility to turn down a request (Ng & Bradac

[18] See Schneider (2010: 258) for an overview of how the classification of mitigation devices developed in the literature.

1993: 111). In academic discourse, addressee-oriented hedges are used to further the relationship between writers and readers, inviting the latter to enter in a dialogue and welcoming their feedback (Hyland 2006: 696). Ng and Bradac (1993: 109) explain that tag questions (ex.3.01) and disclaimers (ex.3.02) are commonly used to express reservations towards the addressee.

(3.01) Do me a favor, will you?
(3.02) If you wouldn't mind […] (Examples from Ng & Bradac 1993: 111)

Examples (3.01) and (3.02) show that the speaker tries to maintain the addressee's face by means of mitigation since the latter is given the opportunity to opt out if necessary.

"Speaker-oriented" reservations either establish doubt with respect to the speaker's justification to say anything or reduce their commitment to the propositional content. Ng and Bradac (1993: 112) provide a range of linguistic structures that can be used to express speaker-oriented reservations: disclaimers, tag questions, hedges and parenthetical verbs. Speaker-oriented disclaimers are used to indicate reluctance to say or do something and to question the speaker's right to say anything at all.

(3.03) I hate to do this, but […]
(3.04) I'm no expert, but […] (Examples from Ng & Bradac 1993: 112)

Additionally, these disclaimers have an interesting rhetorical function: for instance, example (3.03) still enables the speakers to utter whatever they want to. Further, disclaimers such as in example (3.04) can be a powerful rhetorical strategy used to appeal to common-sense (see also Richardson 2003). Speaker-oriented reservations in the form of tag-questions can be used to convey uncertainty, to soften "influence messages" or to downtone accusations or criticisms (Ng & Bradac 1993: 112). In (3.05), the tag question attenuates the face-threatening aspect of the criticism uttered:

(3.05) Some of the mistakes are quite unnecessary, aren't they?
(Example from Ng & Bradac 1993: 112)

Hedges are another means of qualifying the propositional content of an utterance. Ng and Bradac (1993: 113) illustrate this with a court scenario in which a witness is testifying.

(3.06) I saw a sort of European-looking person pointing a kind of knife at the victim.
(Example from Ng & Bradac 1993: 113)

The hedges *sort of* and *kind of* in the witness's statement express her insecurity regarding what she has seen and her unwillingness to commit entirely to her claims. According to Ng and Bradac (1993: 112), parenthetical verbs, such as *I guess, I suppose, I reckon,* are also used to express the speaker's uncertainty with respect to propositional content. However, parenthetical verbs do not automatically index uncertainty, they can also have a boosting function (especially if experts use it) (Locher 2004: 115).

"Content-oriented" reservations are used by speakers to link what they say to someone other than themselves (Ng& Bradac 1993: 113; sometimes they are also called "attribution shields", see Schneider 2010: 259). Hence, speakers deny their accountability for propositional content. Content-oriented reservations can be articulated by employing adverbs such as *allegedly, reportedly, supposedly* or by using un-defined referents like *someone* or as in example (3.07):

(3.07) A source close to the White House has indicated that […]

(Example from Ng & Bradac 1993: 113)

The examples indicated here are not exhaustive. There are more strategies to mitigate content, such as the use of indirect speech acts (Schneider 2010: 263). What all mitigation strategies have in common is that they all resort to "fuzziness" (Schneider 2010: 255) or "indirectness" or "tentativeness" in some way (Ng & Bradac1993: 92).

3.5.2.5 The use of misleading and masking strategies

Ng and Bradac (1993: 7) discuss that, apart from mitigation, there are two other strategies that are used to depoliticise a persuasive attempt: (1) misleading and (2) masking. The purpose of depoliticizing is to make persuasion "more subtle" and thus more likely to be taken up by the interactant (ibid.). Misleading refers to when interactants intentionally cover up their positions or hide their true feelings in devious messages (such as in lies, secrets) but also in equivocal messages (Ng & Bradac 1993: 119). Equivocal messages have a face-saving function since they help to reduce communicative conflict (Ng & Bradac 1993: 123)[19]. Messages can be considered equivocal based on four dimensions that are relevant to any interaction: sender, content, receiver, and context. Senders can use certain linguistic structures to distance themselves from or hide their own responsibility for unpleasant content, see example (3.08).

[19] Devious messages imply a purposeful and morally questionable deception of the audience. This intention is, on the one hand, difficult to establish and, on the other hand, is not expected to play an important role in the data of this study.

(3.08) the management requires me […] (Example from Ng & Bradac 1993: 123)

In terms of content, speakers can be misleading by being vague and not positioning themselves clearly towards what is being discussed. Further, speakers can be misleading with respect to addressees; that is, they can avoid addressing receivers directly by speaking in general terms (thus not specifically mentioning receivers) or by treating them as "members of a social category" (Ng & Bradac 1993: 123). In my corpus, this strategy could be employed when dealing with delicate topics like second-hand smoking or smoking during pregnancy. For instance, there is a clear change in form of address from direct *you* and *I* to a more depersonalised style in the FAQs in (S17) when second-hand smoke is being discussed (3.09).

(3.09) Q: What is secondhand smoke?
A: Secondhand smoke is other people's tobacco smoke. […]
(own example, from FAQs [S17])

While before the readers, who are likely to be smokers, received their own voice in the questions and were directly addressed in the answers, example (9) depicts a factual request for information that is answered in an impersonal, generalized way, talking about "other people's tobacco". In terms of context, misleading is defined narrowly as avoiding giving a direct answer to a question, thus overlapping with misleading in the content dimension (Ng & Bradac 1993: 124). Misleading in equivocal messages partly corresponds to mitigation. For instance, Caffi's notion of deictic shields coincides with misleading in the speaker dimension (Schneider 2010: 260).

Masking is a strategy of foregrounding certain aspects of reality while leaving others away (Ng & Bradac 1993: 144). It is prototypically employed by institutions in rules, regulations and news headlines. Masking strategies also help to present events in a way they serve the writers' and/or speakers' interests. The main aim is to prevent a more "critical reading", which could endanger social control (Ng & Bradac 1993: 145). Based on findings from CDA, Ng and Bradac (1993: 152) distinguish between lower-level and higher-level masking devices. The first category features four linguistic strategies on the sentence or utterance level: (1) truncation, (2) permutation, (3) generalization and (4) nominalization.

Truncation refers to when utterances are shortened, i.e. when an element of a sentence is deleted. For instance, agents or referents can be left out in rules, obscuring hierarchical relationships. Similarly, consequences for not complying with a rule are sometime absent. However, the use of modal verbs like *should* or *must* indicate obligation while simultaneously implying repercussions in the case of disobedience (Ng & Bradac 1993: 156). Permutation takes into account that first-position constituents are given more prominence than subsequent constituents in English. Since the subject is in first position in English syntax, constituents that are initialised are action-takers. Hence, permutation can be used to strategically lay focus on a sentence constituent. Passivization is one means of putting the object to the beginning of the sentence. It emphasizes the object and downplays or deletes the role of the agent (Ng & Bradac 1993: 157). Generalization designates when writers/speakers are unspecific with respect to referents (ibid: 159). So, instead of addressing readers or speakers in specific by singular *you*, "broad person categories" are used (e.g. *people*, *smokers*). Nominalization transforms an activity into an event by turning a verb clause into a noun phrase. On the one hand, if a verb clause is turned into a noun phrase, it means that modality and tense are lost, making the activity static. On the other hand, it lessens the importance of participants by relegating them to "a peripheral syntactic structure" or by omitting them altogether (Ng & Bradac 1993: 161). Therefore, it is an ideal strategy for hiding responsibility and agency. Example (3.10) illustrates two sentences with the same propositional content, where the second one is a nominalized version:

(3.10) A) The club president will expel any member from the club who has been absent from meetings more than three times.
B) Being absent from meetings more than three times means automatic expulsion. (Examples 49 and 51, from Ng & Bradac 1993: 161)

Ng and Bradac (1993: 161) explain that the nominalization of A) turns the club president's act of expelling into an event with no named participants.

Higher-level masking devices work beyond the single utterance level, emerging either within the larger utterance context or from in-group language. Speakers and writers rely on the larger utterance context if they strategically switch personal pronouns in order to position themselves favourably (Ng & Bradac 1993: 164). Equally, substituting nouns by pronouns can result in obfuscating connections especially if the referent is not in the immediate surroundings ("loose referring"). The use of in-group language is also a form of masking since outsiders cannot easily follow (ibid.). At the same time, in-group language builds on mutual knowledge and joint experiences, through which common ground is created, increasing the efficiency of communication (Ng & Bradac 1993: 168).

3.6 Towards a working definition: Summary and hypotheses

This, by necessity, brief introduction into approaches to persuasion across different fields has provided insight into how to conceptualize persuasion. Moreover, it has given me pointers for how to operationalize persuasion as a process for an empirical linguistic study. I will now summarize the main ideas that I am adopting for further analysis. New rhetoric views persuasion as trying to form attitudes or to induce actions in other people through (mostly) linguistic means. Therefore, persuasion should be regarded as a process and not as accomplishment (see Segal 2005: 9). Persuasive discourse is shaped by various contextual factors, which supersede the speaker's control (Eisenhart & Johnstone 2008: 11). If we adopt the socio-constructionist view that agency can be exercised habitually (Bucholtz & Hall 2010: 26), persuasion can be exercised beyond the strategic planning of speakers, but is framed by and occurs within social practices. Burke (1950: 46) suggested that persuasion relies on processes of identification, signalling the importance of the latter to create rapport. This indicates that interpersonal pragmatics with its emphasis on relational work and identity construction can be a fruitful approach to study persuasion in a non-effect oriented way. Aristotle's working principles of persuasion (ethos, pathos and logos) also support the claim that the interpersonal dimension to persuasion is of utmost importance. He argued that there are three aspects to persuasion: (1) the topics or arguments used in a text (logos), (2) the identity of the speaker (ethos), and (3) the personal involvement of the audience (pathos). I suggested that all three principles can be reformulated according to how they transform the relationship between interactants. Addressees are positioned as experts in logos , which highlights the former's rationality. Persuasion also relies on senders' expertise and credibility, which helps establish a relationship of trust. Further, addressees must be involved in persuasion, which happens by signalling a relationship of similarity and/or affection in pathos.

The social scientific study of persuasion—here mainly represented by Miller's perspective (2002) —shares various premises with rhetoric, such as persuasion consisting of symbolic transaction, which can be reinforced by non-verbal symbols. Miller clearly links persuasion to power, arguing that persuasion takes place in a social context characterized by norms and values. Further, persuasion is described as a mixture of both reasons and emotions, which are difficult to keep apart and may differ in their pervasiveness. The social scientific perspective adds a layer to the understanding of persuasion when considering outcomes of persuasion, which go beyond the default idea of changing behaviour. Three types of persuasion are distinguished: (1) response-shaping, (2) response-reinforcing and (3) response-changing persuasion. The first type refers to socialization processes whereas the second one describes efforts to keep up and reinforce a decision. The final type is the prototypical type of persuasion, describing instances where the audience modifies their behaviour or their attitude, which is what smoking cessation websites mostly target. These different outcomes make it clear why it is also possible to study persuasion in peer-to-peer interaction, in which response-shaping and response-reinforcing persuasion are more important than response-changing persuasion.

Sociolinguistic studies, especially critical discourse analysis have often approached persuasion in terms of how it can be linked to the exercise of power. Persuasion has been described as the discursive enactment of power. Thus, power and persuasion are interconnected, both on a macro- (i.e. ideological) level as well as on a situational, interactional level. Even though my main focus is on the situational level of power and persuasion, the larger social dimension is also important to understand online smoking cessation sources in the UK. The exercise of power through persuasion takes place on a social level since ideological discourses can indirectly control the future actions of individuals. Institutions (such as the NHS or the British Heart Foundation) decisively shape public minds in the case of stopping smoking. Institutions have preferential access to public discourse and produce strategic or goal-directed discourse. Therefore, institutional discourse implies asymmetrical roles between participants in terms of rights and obligations. If we look at the micro-level, it shows that power and persuasion can be contested and negotiated in interaction. To have power over someone is to constrain someone’s action environment through different means (force, coercion, influence). According to Wartenberg (1990), to influence someone is to exercise power over someone communicatively through reasoning, charisma, expertise or emotional appeal; which shows a strong connection with persuasion. In this study, I focus on the exercise of power in the form of influence. I see the difference between persuasion and influence as being one of process versus product: while persuasion is the process of getting someone to re-assess their action alternatives; we can speak of influence being exercised if persuasion is successful.

The online setting of this data means that there are some medium-related idiosyncrasies to persuasion which have to be taken into account. Online sources have additional technical means to involve users—mainly intertextuality and interactivity (see Warnick 2007). Both strategies aim at engaging users to stay on site and creating identification with the content presented. While intertextuality is based on establishing complicity by drawing on common experience and/or knowledge, interactivity targets involvement by letting users customize content or exchange their views with others or by allowing some sort of reciprocity (e.g. through the contribution of user comments). When analysing websites, one important structural aspect to consider is their non-linearity. Most online sources present their content in modules, which means they have to be "self-contained" in terms of content (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006: 208). As users determine their own reading paths, website producers try to direct their attention by making certain elements more salient by means of composition, colour or layout. I will consider intertextuality, interactivity and the non-linear structure of website when describing the overall setup of sources and when interpreting linguistic strategies of persuasion.

In terms of analysing linguistic means of persuasion, speech act theorists have proposed that persuasion is a perlocutionary effect of communication. However, it is important to remember that this study is not effect-oriented. In order to avoid having to measure persuasive effectiveness, I focus on describing linguistic strategies within practices that have a clearly persuasive purpose (see Dedaić 2006). The link of persuasion to speech acts is crucial for my overall analysis, especially to describe how the interpersonal dimension is intertwined with the informational side of speech acts. Previous studies have described a range of linguistic strategies that can be employed to align interactants or to make persuasion more acceptable. Narratives can be used to emotionally involve users but also to signal and create expertise, contributing to ethos . Further, speech act theory has put forward that directives (e.g. advice, orders, warnings, etc.) have the function of getting someone to align with the proposed content. Especially advice is a characteristic speech act for persuasive purposes as it involves telling someone what is best for them and includes a recommendation for a future action without being coercive.

However, we have to keep in mind that there is no fixed form-function correlation, which leaves the question of what speech acts are used in the practices under scrutiny. The integration of the audience, which can be linked to pathos, has received considerable attention by linguists. The use of an approachable or a similar style as the readers/audience has been described as a means of involvement in mass-mediated texts since it creates rapport (see Benwell &Stokoe 2006; Simpson & Mayr 2010). Fairclough's notion of synthetic personalization in mass-mediated texts is especially important in my uni-directional, more monologic part of my data set (Benwell & Stokoe 2006; Janoschka 2004; Koteyko 2009). By employing linguistic structures that are typically used in interactional contexts—for instance, second person pronouns, questions, imperatives—producers try to individualize mass communication and to create common ground. Mitigation reduces the impact of a speech act, thus possibly making persuasion more acceptable (see Hyland 2006; Locher 2006; Schneider 2010). As a face-saving relational work strategy, mitigation helps interactants downplay impositions on the other's action environment. There are a range of other syntactic structures which can be employed to make persuasion subtler, e.g. misleading and masking (Ng & Bradac 1993). The neat distinction between these two structures is not important for my purposes, but they entail interesting linguistic strategies. These strategies often involve shifting the focus on a different constituent of a sentence, hiding agency (e.g. passivisation, nominalisation) or being vague in terms of referents (generalization). It is also of interest to describe when strategies to make persuasion subtler are at work, especially since they are usually employed for their interpersonal function.

Finally, my overview of persuasion across different fields, which is not exhaustive, lets me establish some hypotheses with respect to theoretical considerations and to my own data set. They are based on the working principles of persuasion and are important guiding points for my empirical analysis, which will be taken up again in my conclusions (see Ch. 11).

> **H1**: More diverse discursive effort will be invested into credibility (ethos) on peer-to-peer sites than professional sites. For instance, governmental sites are prone to profit from their institutional status and therefore might focus more on pathos and logos. Contributors on peer-to-peer sites may prefer to refer to and draw on their personal experience to create expertise whereas professional sites potentially rely more on research findings to warrant claims. Linguistically, this results in different realizations with personal accounts featuring structures that establish the comparability of experiences "like you" and referrals to research being likely to be characterized by numerical structures or nominalized sentences.

> **H2:** Personal involvement (pathos) is prone to be heavily supported by multimodal elements on monologic websites and to be mainly discursively realised on peer-to-peer sites. Further, relational effects such as "bonding" and "empathizing" will be abundantly used to create personal appeal in both monologic and interactive sources. Similar to print mass-mediated communication, monologic sources will rely on strategies that belong to "synthetic personalization" to individualize and customize their content. Shifts between second person pronouns *you*, inclusive *we* and passivized sentences are strategic changes that give interesting hints at what is at stake interpersonally.

> **H3:** For argumentative appeals (logos), the content of arguments will overlap to a great extent on all websites. However, monologic websites might focus more on the benefits of quitting while peer-to-peer sites will also tackle the disadvantages of quitting (such as withdrawal effects) and actively negotiate the pros of quitting. Speech activities such as "warning" and "advising" might prevail on monologic as well as more interactive sites in order to influence future actions of non-experts. While warnings describe "undesired alternative courses of action" (van Dijk 2008:38) , advice is a speech act used to tell the hearer what is in the latter's best in-

terest (Searle 1969: 67). Regarding differences between professional websites and peer-to-peer forums; contributors to the latter will have to present their arguments after having established their credibility.

H4: The empirical, qualitative linguistic study of the working principles of persuasion profits from an interpersonal pragmatics approach. It allows me to operationalize concepts like ethos, pathos, logos in terms of identity construction and relational work. Thus, this approach facilitates the data-based analysis of persuasion as a process and not as a result or perlocutionary effect. Moreover, drawing on Hymes' notion of the hierarchical distribution of speech acts as taking place within speech activities, linguistic patterns can be described according to which working principle they contribute and how they are used to navigate interpersonal concerns.

4 An interpersonal pragmatics perspective to persuasion

Taking an interpersonal pragmatics stance to persuasion in online health interaction has barely been done explicitly so far. However, it promises interesting insight into approaching the three working principles of persuasion from a bottom-up perspective in discourse. It allows me to identify linguistic patterns of interpersonal variation that can be linked to the working principles of persuasion. For that matter, it is necessary to explain the key premises of interpersonal pragmatics, its main concepts relational work (its link to face) and identity construction to be able to show how I intend to combine them with a linguistic analysis of persuasion. By discussing and introducing theoretical concepts linked to interpersonal pragmatics in this chapter, I lay the ground for discussing specific case studies that have dealt with interpersonal aspects and persuasion in online health practices in Ch. 5.

4.1 Interpersonal pragmatics—relational work and face

In their introduction to the handbook of interpersonal pragmatics, Locher and Graham (2010: 2) state that interpersonal pragmatics is interested in "[…] facets of interaction between social actors that rely upon (and in turn influence) the dynamics of relationships between people and how those relationships are reflected in the language choices that they make". The working principles of persuasion suggest that, apart from mere content matters being transmitted, the relationship between participants is also being transformed in the process. Thus, interpersonal pragmatics is a sensible entry point for the analysis of persuasion in online healht discourse. Interpersonal pragmatics is not a clear-cut linguistic approach[20], but encompasses research that deals with the interpersonal side of communication (Locher 2014: 312). In this vein of research, a common assumption is that communication features both content and relational aspects, which are intertwined. Watzlawick et al. (1967: 54; quoted in Locher & Graham 2010) suggest that the relational aspect has a meta-function and qualifies the content side. The concept of relational work has been proposed by Locher and Watts (2005; 2008) to deal with the interpersonal side of communication. Locher and Watts (2008: 96) define relational work as "refer[ing] to all aspects of the work invested by individuals in the construction, maintenance, reproduction and transformation of interpersonal relationships among those engaged in social practice". From this definition, we can derive that relational work allows the analysis of

[20] See for instance the special issue in the *Journal of Pragmatics* 58 (2013) and Locher (2014) for a description of development of how the relational aspect has been studied in linguistics.

the whole gamut of pragmatic variation caused by interpersonal aspects of interaction, making it suitable to analyse persuasion[21]. Relational work belongs to discursive and emic approaches to (im)politeness, which argue that the relational aspect of communication is negotiated within interaction and its evaluation is based on judgements that are sensitive to contextual interactional norms (see Locher 2013b: 146; Locher 2014: 317).

The notion of "face" is at the centre of relational work since aspects of face influence how people interact with each other. Goffman (1967: 9) used the lay-person notion of face in terms of 'losing face' and 'saving face' as a starting point for his discussion of this element of social interaction. He (1967: 5) defined face as "the positive social value a person effectively claims for himself by the line others assume he has taken during a particular contact". In other words, a person's sense of face is concerned with how they want to be perceived and how it is verified by others. In order to forego the more static understanding of face by Brown and Levinson, Locher and Watts (2008) return to the Goffmanian sense of face. Locher (2006: 113) explains that the concept of "face" refers to the "the public self-image or 'mask' that interactants want to display and have confirmed in interaction". Locher and Watts have been criticized for adopting Goffman's terminology by some scholars (for instance by Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2013: 16[22]), however, Goffman's definition has the advantage of highlighting the negotiable and interactional nature of face. Scollon et al. (2012: 48) argue that Goffman's notion of face has two somehow "paradoxical" sides as it covers the need of interactants to remain independent and to be respectful of other interactants' independence as well as the need "to be involved with other participants and to show them our involvement". Apart from the relational work, the process of "[…] how speakers manage the relational anticipation of discursive approval […]" (Hall & Bucholtz 2013: 124) has been termed in various ways, such as Hall and Bucholtz referring to Goffman's term "facework" or Spencer-Oatey's (2007) preferring "rapport management". Relational work refers to the process of handling face concerns in interaction, i.e. confirming, maintaining, enhancing or challenging face in interaction (Locher 2013b: 147). To describe relational work analytically, Locher (2013b: 148) uses second order terms, distinguishing between three types of relational work strategies: (1) face-saving, (2) face-threatening (3) and face-enhancing strategies. While face-saving strategies designate discursive work "to mitigate a face-threat" and maintain the independence of the other interactant, face-threatening strategies encompasses behaviour that endangers an inter-

[21] Locher (2015: 8) raises the question of how (im)politeness theories can be linked to studies of persuasion and rhetoric.

[22] Garcés-Conejos Blitvich (2013: 16) argues Goffman's notion of face is incompatible with (im)politeness approaches that locate their analyses in social practices since Goffman saw face as linked to the interactional and not the social order.

actant's face. Finally, face-enhancing strategies serve to heighten involvement between interactants (Locher 2006: 114).

The concept of relational work and its core element face allow us to draw a first link to persuasion: ethos refers to how the speakers' (or in this case writers') credibility is established "in the eyes of the public" or of the interactants (Engelstad 2009: 217). Thus, ethos construction can be connected to a relational notion of face since whether speakers appear as credible depends on the judgement of the audience. At the same time, it already points to how identity construction and relational work are difficult to keep apart as being credible (in a non-essentialist and performative sense) not only affects interactants' relationship but also constitutes identity work. Similarly, if we view logos as indirectly establishing the addressees' as experts, face-enhancing strategies as well as identity positioning are at work. Also, approaching persuasion through the lens of interpersonal pragmatics reveals that the three working principles are not neatly separable. For instance, if writers appeal to the reason of their audience, they position their audience as commonsensical, which may result in enhancing the writers' own trustworthiness or be considered as a bonding attempt. Pathos creation is about how the audience becomes emotionally involved and the creation of empathy within the audience (Cockroft & Cockroft 2005: 15; Ilie 2006: 576). Engelstad (2009: 217) adds another nuance when he points out that pathos is about "how to make people listen and arouse interest in the matter". In interpersonal pragmatics terms, pathos focuses on how speakers relate to their audience, that is, how the face needs of the audience are negotiated. Further, the notion of pathos as emotional involvement indicates an interesting interface between relational work and emotion, to which Langlotz and Locher (2013) have pointed. They state that relational work is evaluated based on emotional reactions, arguing that "[e]motions guide and influence the dynamic and interactive construal of relational meaning" (Langlotz & Locher 2013: 92). With respect to pathos construction, we can deduce that speakers aim at stirring emotions in their audience in order to further the relationship between each other. Even though "emotions are not empirically accessible" (Langlotz & Locher 2013: 91), I can show how they surface in language by describing relational work strategies that prompt emotional engagement.

4.2 Interpersonal pragmatics— relational work and identity construction

As already hinted at above, pathos and ethos construction are not only linked to relational work but also to identity. Firstly, Engelstad (2009: 218) posited that pathos "[…] is raised by evoking matters related to the identity of listeners, or what they detest and are opposed to", which is a view corroborated by Johnstone (2009: 34), who explains pathos "appeals to the characteristics of the audience". Secondly, ethos construction concerns the personality of speakers, whether they are considered credible and trustworthy (Johnstone 2009: 34). Thus, how interactants are positioned or position each other in and through discourse is crucial to understanding the interpersonal aspect of persuasion. Therefore, it is important to introduce what concepts I have adopted from the identity literature, how identity is linked to relational work and how those concepts can be married to persuasion.

From a socio-constructivist point of view, identity emerges discursively and can be defined as "*the social positioning of the self and other*" (Bucholtz & Hall 2010: 18, emphasis in original). Thus, similar to Goffman's approach to face, socio-constructivist approaches to identity stress the relational nature of identity which can be negotiated in discourse. Additionally, identity construction is bound up with relational work and its core concept face, since, as Hall and Bucholtz (2013: 130) stress, "human positioning is always sensitive to the reflection of one's image in the eyes of another". How one positions oneself or someone else is entangled with how one wants to be perceived by others. Bucholtz and Hall suggest that identity construction and face are linked through stance, the latter being used to "navigate" face concerns (Hall & Bucholtz 2013: 126). DuBois and Kärkkäinen (2012: 439) argue that stance-taking involves the social positioning of self and other. They propose that stance is in fact a triplex act, emerging relationally: interactants use language to evaluate objects while they simultaneously position themselves and others. At the same time, they signal (convergent or divergent) alignment. According to DuBois and Kärkkäinen (2012: 440), alignment describes how a particular stance is related to a previous one, i.e. whether different positions are in agreement with each other. This is where the negotiation of face (i.e. the interpersonal aspect) comes in. While the extension of the connection between identity and face is still up for investigation (see Garcés-Conejos Blitvich 2013; Locher 2013b,2014; Spencer-Oatey 2007), Locher provides a succinct summary for how face needs, identity construction and relational work interface:

> Interactants take their face needs, i.e. the projected image they wish to portray in an interaction […] into account when using language. The work they invest, i.e. the choices they make in interaction in situ, is what we term relational work, and the result of their choices is identity construction. (Locher 2013b: 146)

From the quote above, we can deduce that Locher concurs with Hall and Bucholtz (2013) insofar as face needs influence how interactants position themselves and others. Moreover, she explicitly introduces "relational work" as an intermediate step, which she considers the discursive process that leads to emergent identity positions or "stance" (Bucholtz & Hall 2010: 22). While identity research within a socio-constructionist paradigm also studies how doing identity is achieved rather than focussing on the product, they do not necessarily resort to the concept relational work (de Fina 2010: 207). Even so, de Fina (2010: 206) contends that the shift in focus from identity to the process of identity construction points to an interface between identity studies and interpersonal pragmatics (see also Locher 2013b).

To fruitfully connect identity construction with persuasion, it is indispensable to have a closer look at the processes of how identity is constructed. Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 586) have come up with a framework for the linguistic analysis of identities in interaction in their seminal paper, delineating five fundamental principles to the study of identity. These five principles are (1) the emergence principle, (2) the positionality principle, (3) the indexicality principle, (4) the relationality principle and (5) the partialness principle. The emergence principle relates to the loci of analysis, as it states that identity emerges (rather than pre-exists) in social practices. For example, in this study, contributors to forums do not start out as advice givers but can become advice-givers through their discursive actions. Moreover, website authors construct themselves as empathetic listeners in discourse. Secondly, the positionality principle broadens the understanding of identity as a macro-category (such as male-female) to include interactional roles and stances, being thus a clear breach from essentialist and more static notions of identity. Thirdly, the indexicality principle refers to the linguistic means interactants use "to indexically position self and other", which suggests how identity can be negotiated in discourse (Bucholtz & Hall 2010: 21). Since I am interested in the linguistic strategies used to involve hearers or to construct positions of expertise and credibility, the third principle is quoted in its entirety:

> 3. Identity relations emerge in interaction through several related indexical processes, including: (a) overt mention of identity categories and labels; (b) implicatures and presuppositions regarding one's own or others' identity position; (c) displayed evaluative and epistemic orientations to ongoing talk, as well as interactional footings and participant roles; and (d) the use of linguistic structures and systems that are ideologically associated with specific personals and groups. (Bucholtz & Hall 2005: 594)

Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 594) call process (a) a "direct way" of producing identity in discourse since it consists of invoking labels that carry identity connotations. In contrast, process (b) is less direct, relying on interactants to pick up on linguistic cues. The third process (c) refers to the creation of stance through evaluation, showing “affective orientation” (i.e. emotional cues) or “epistemic orientations[23]” (i.e. the display and negotiation of knowledge) (Bucholtz & Hall 2010: 22). Page (2012: 114) pointed out that evaluations are used to “modulate stance” and can “achieve important relational work”, hinting at the interface between identity and relational work. The fourth and final indexical process (d) refers to how language choice or the use of dialects invoke particular identity associations.

The relationality principle emphasises the intersubjective and relational nature of identity processes. In other words, emergent identity positions only become meaningful in relation “to other available identity positions” (Bucholtz & Hall 2010: 23). Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 598) criticize that the identity relations of “sameness and difference” have been over-emphasized. They propose that there is “a broader range of relations” to take into account, some of which they list in their definition of the relationality principle:

> 4. Identities are intersubjectively constructed through several, often overlapping, complementary relations, including similarity/difference, genuineness/artifice and authority/delegitimacy.
> (Bucholtz & Hall 2005: 598)

Bucholtz and Hall (2008: 161) do not see these relations as top-down categories that can be imposed on data. Rather, they suggest that data-driven analyses eventually lead to uncovering multi-dimensional and intersecting identity relations. They (2005: 599) argue that the relations listed are neither “exhaustive” nor “mutually exclusive”. Each pair of relations is considered “complementary” since they always refer to two endpoints of the spectrum. Adequation and distinction (to use Bucholtz and Hall’s technical terms), refer to identity processes in interaction in which participants are either positioned as similar/the same or as different. With respect to the link to persuasion, relations of adequation can be established to involve hearers, making the hearer susceptible to the speaker’s message because they are both alike (see also Wright [2015: 492] who, when discussing participation in online support groups, argued that “similarity between a sender and a receiver may increase persuasiveness of messages”). As a case in point, testimonials on smoking cessation websites convey the argument someone like the reader has successfully gone through quitting and/or has used the services offered and is pleased (see Thurnherr et al. 2016). Person deictics can be strategically used “to enhance proximity” for that matter since they give information about how interactants relate to each

[23] Heritage (2012: 370) explains that in conversation analysis “[…] *epistemics* focuses on the knowledge claims that interactants assert, contest and defend in and through turns - at -talk and sequences of interaction” (emphasis in original).

other (Ferrarotti 2013: 120; see also Page 2012: 154). Relations of distinction, on the other hand, play a role when constructing an expert voice as it has the underlying premise "I am the expert—not you". The complementary relations of authentication and denaturalisation (genuineness and artifice) describe discursive processes through which identities are "verified" or shown to be incoherent (or "fragmented") (Bucholtz and Hall 2010: 24). The relations of authentication are especially relevant with respect to ethos construction. First, expertise has to be 'written into being' by using an authentic register in this computer-mediated data set—what counts as "authentic" differs depending on customs of the participants within the context. Second, participants have to convince each other of the authenticity of their messages to receive help and give advice in forums (see Harvey and Koteyko 2013). The use of narratives in online health support forums has been described in several previous discourse-analytical studies as means to create authentic expert and solidarity positions, through which discursive actions like advice or reassurance were backed up (e.g. Armstrong et al. 2011; Kouper 2010; Page 2012; Sillence 2010; Thurnherr et al. 2016; Veen et al. 2010). Finally, authorisation and "illegitimation" relates to how social structures (i.e. institutional voices) are invoked in discourse to confirm or dismiss identities. Again, we can draw a link to persuasion as authoritative confirmation, such as governmental backing of a website or other credentials by a well-known institution, works to enhance the credibility of a source as well as the readers' willingness to believe and accept what is written. Overall, since I view persuasion as an interpersonal discursive process, Bucholtz and Hall's relationality principle of identity construction permits the accommodation of my interest in studying persuasion from the perspective of interpersonal pragmatics.

Finally, the partialness principle refers to the constraints of intentionality regarding identity construction. Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 607) put forward that identity cannot be fully accounted for by the conscious actions and decisions of a rational individual, but that identity is partially a result of "ideological and material constructs", the interactional context and habit. Bucholtz and Hall's notion of intentionality corresponds with the perspective I adopt in my study of persuasion. While traditional rhetoric placed the persuasive intent of speakers at the centre, I follow Segal (2005) and Eisenhart and Johnstone (2008) who argue that that agency and intentionality can also be habitual or part of ideological processes (and as such not deliberate). Hence, Bucholtz and Hall's notion of intentionality is combinable with mine, which makes it possible to adopt their framework for the study of persuasion.

4.3 Relational work, identity construction and the link to persuasion

Although I have hinted at how persuasion can be linked to relational work and/or identity construction, I want to reflect further on that interface. Therefore, I revisit Burke's notion of identification and its interrelation with persuasion. Since Burke works within a framework of rhetoric and literary criticism did not use a constructivist approach to identity, it is not advisable to adopt his notion of "identification" one-to-one. Nonetheless, Burke's description of identification hints at how relational work and what kind of identity relation can be important for persuasion, providing thus a good starting point for my own argumentation. His main premise consists of claiming that identification is necessary for persuasion to occur. In other words, he suggests that in for speakers to be persuaded, they must portray themselves as alike with hearers, which can be linked to the working principles pathos as emotional involvement but also to ethos (referring to the personality of speakers). He reflects on how persuasion and identification overlap in the following few lines:

> As far as the relation between "identification" and "persuasion": […] a speaker persuades an audience by the use of stylistic identifications; his act of persuasion may be for the purpose of causing the audience to identify itself with the speaker's interests; and the speaker draws on identification of interests to establish rapport between himself and his audience.
>
> (Burke 1950: 45)

I argue that Burke's musing can be interpreted through the constructivist lens of identity, providing the basis for using the perspective of interpersonal pragmatics to persuasion. Relations of authenticity and similarity are established through stylistic identifications, signalling common background. On the one hand, the bonding element of using a familiar, authentic style contributes to pathos construction. On the other, speakers enhance their ethos since using a specific style increases their appeal as a person. Similarly, Scollon et al. (2012: 51) listed "use H[earer]'s language or dialect" as an involvement (i.e. face-enhancing) strategy. Secondly, Burke puts forward that identification can also be the outcome of persuasion. From an interpersonal pragmatic perspective, speakers use relational work to make other participants align with their point of view and to establish relations of similarity. Finally, if speakers point to interests they share with their audience to create rapport or common ground, they engage in face-enhancing relational work and interactionally mobilise relations of similarity (see Scollon et al. 2012: 51, on "claim[ing] common point of view […]). This strategy contributes to pathos since it appeals to "the characteristics of the audience" (see Johnstone's 2009: 34 understanding of pathos). Thus, going back to Burke's view of identification has highlighted that using identity construction and relational work promises interesting insights into a linguistic analysis of persuasion.

After considering different theoretical positions on persuasion, relational work and identity construction, Figure 4.1, visualizes how I consider these three phenomena to be interrelated.

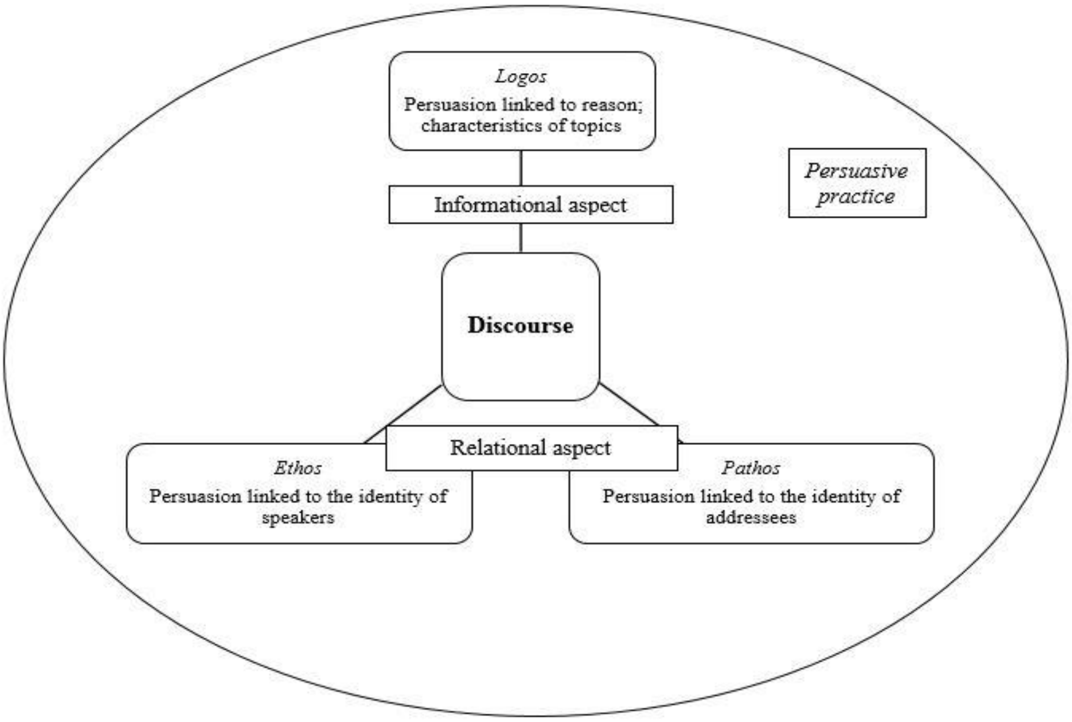

Figure 4.1 Persuasion and its link to relational work

Before discussing Figure 4.1 in detail, there are several caveats that need to be presented as the diagram represents a simplification of interrelated processes. Firstly, informational and relational aspects are neatly separated in the diagram, which gives the false impression that this is possible in empirical analysis. Secondly, the working principles of persuasion are depicted as single entities while in reality they are entangled and are also difficult to be kept apart. Nevertheless, the figure captures important points I want to highlight. First, the object of analysis is the discourse used in a practice that has a persuasive frame. From the perspective of interpersonal pragmatics, said discourse has informational and relational aspects. Logos exploits the informational features of communication, where the interpersonal dimension is less direct but nonetheless present. The construction of ethos and pathos are linked to the interpersonal side of interaction, relying heavily on how the relationship between interactants is shaped. Participants use relational work to emotionally involve each other and to create their expertise, credibility and trustworthiness. This process is linked to identity construction (identity relations of similarity/difference, genuineness/artifice etc.) since defining or transforming a relationship involves the positioning of each other by necessity. Finally, despite the fact that ethos and pathos are assigned to speakers and addressees, their construction never occurs in isolation but has always to be set in relation to the other interactants.

4.4 Summary

Burke's definition of the art of persuasion as "the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents" (1950: 41) foregrounds the interpersonal and discursive nature of the process. Further, the working principles of persuasion by Aristotle specifically address the fact that apart from the content side of arguments (logos), there is a relational dimension between speaker (ethos) and audience (pathos) which affects whether persuasion is successful. Since interpersonal pragmatics endorses the view that all communication always features both informational and relational aspects, it makes this perspective especially useful to operationalise persuasion for an empirical linguistic analysis, allowing to describe how interpersonal effects intersect with informational aspects. To study interpersonal effects, I have adopted the notion of relational work, which, as an emic approach to (im)politeness, highlights the discursive, situated negotiation of the interpersonal side of communication between interactants. At the heart of relational work is the concept "face" or "the public self-image or 'mask' that interactants want to display and have confirmed in interaction" (Locher 2006: 113). Drawing the link to Aristotle's working principles of persuasion, I argue that persuasion builds on the face needs of interactants. The ethos of speakers depends on the judgement of hearers whereas pathos relates to the involvement aspect of face or the need of interactants to be involved with other interactants. By analysing what relational work strategies (face-enhancing, face-threatening, face-maintaining) are used in different online practices, it is possible to connect themes and the discursive structures of information (discursive moves) to patterns of creating personal involvement and/or trustworthiness. Thus, relational work allows the analysis to take the interpersonal facets of persuasion into consideration when examining the linguistic realisation of different online practices that deal with smoking cessation.

Further, previous research suggests that there is a close connection between relational work and identity construction, so that the discursive negotiation of relationships is difficult—if not impossible—to keep separate from identity construction. In fact, Bucholtz and Hall's (2005: 586) definition of identity as "*the social positioning of the self and other*" highlights that identity is inherently a relational phenomenon. Studies dealing with identity construction provide an additional promising layer to the analysis of ethos and pathos, especially since these two principles are both linked to the identity construction of speakers and addresses respectively. According to Bucholtz and Hall (2005)'s sociocultural linguistic perspective, there are five principles to the analysis of identity. For their indexicality principle, they list different linguistic mechanisms that are used to index identity, and which can be employed to zoom in on pathos or ethos. Importantly, Bucholtz and Hall point out that stance-taking is a means of positioning the self, which is influenced by face concerns. Thus, it becomes evident that there is an overlap between the concepts relational work and identity construction (see also Hall & Bucholtz 2013). Bucholtz and Hall highlight the intersubjective, relational nature of identity in their relationality principle, which is why the study of relational work with identity construction can be combined. Some of the complementary identity relations they describe are likely to be at work when ethos and pathos are created. For instance, relations of similarity can contribute to pathos as they may be triggered by empathy or when common ground between interactants is constructed, which works towards involving interactants. Similarly, if relations of authenticity and authorisation (in the sense of expertise or credibility) have been established, they may enhance the ethos of speakers. Thus, taking relational work and identity construction strategies into account facilitates the discovery of linguistic patterns in showing interpersonal effects. These can then be set in context with persuasion in the specific online practices about smoking cessation focussed on in this study.

5 Previous research on health discourse in computer-mediated communication

As already pointed out in the introduction, research on health discourse is vibrant across different fields focussing on communication in a health context (see Davis 2010: 382). Research ranges from theoretical to applied outsets, can be of qualitative or quantitative nature and with either natural or elicited data (McKay 2006a: 253). Nevertheless, Harvey (2010: 141) asserts that the main focus is still on face-to-face encounters and relatively little "[…] is known about the discursive practices and exchanges that take place within [e-health websites]". Regarding research on health communication on the Internet, Heaton (2011: 228) puts forward that the main emphasis has been put on exploring reasons for "why people seek information and how they use it". Moreover, Heaton (2011: 217) specifies that online health support groups have been investigated either by shedding light on why users participate or on the structure of interaction. Sociolinguistic research of online health discourse can often be categorized as the latter, whereby there are also several studies that illuminate other practices than online health support groups (e.g. Koteyko 2009; Locher 2006; Richardson 2005; Thurnherr 2017 etc.). Few linguistic studies explicitly link their research to matters of persuasion, even though they may deal with its connected aspects, such as the creation of trustworthiness and emotional involvement. Therefore, I will introduce and comment on these studies through the lens of persuasion, making the connection to the working principles of persuasion explicit. In order to contextualize and situate my study with respect to previous research on health communication, apart from presenting sociolinguistic case studies, I will also draw on findings about online health discourse from communication studies, the sociology of health and discursive psychology.

The main ideological tenets of contemporary public health discourse in a Anglo-Western context will be introduced in Section 5.1. Previous literature has identified four key topics: (1) the individual's responsibility for their health, (2) the power shift within the medical area and (3) the role of information and (4) the potential of the Internet for distribution of information and patient empowerment (see Burgess 2008; Gwyn 2002; McKay 2006a/b; Sarangi & Clarke 2002; etc.). Firstly, I will elaborate on these four points since they potentially influence how smoking cessation is conceptualized and have shaped and continue to shape the practices in question. I consider these ideological facets to be part of how persuasion works on a larger societal level, impacting health consumers potentially beyond their awareness. Afterwards, I will elaborate on some of the advantages previous research has identified for using the Internet for public health matters (Section 5.2). Further, I will focus on how persuasion has been shown to surface on a discursive level in previous studies on online health discourse (Section 5.3). As I explained in Ch. 3, advice-giving is a prototypical speech activity for persuasion as it involves attempting to impact someone else's decision. I also argued that persuasion is connected to issues of credibility/trustworthiness/expertise and to the creation of personal appeal and emotional involvement. I expect advice-giving to be frequent on public health sites and peer-to-peer sites dealing with smoking cessation, especially since sources aim at moving readers to a change in lifestyle. Additionally, as pointed out in previous studies, advice-giving implies an asymmetry in knowledge between advisors and advice-seekers in Western contexts (Locher 2013a: 340), which is thus also connected to expertise and authority. Thus, I will introduce studies that deal with seeking and giving advice on health matters online. In this context, I will illuminate how advice-giving is connected to expertise and credibility and their creation on a discourse level (Section 5.3.2). Sharing one's own experience will be singled out and discussed in more detail since the multi-functionality of this discursive strategy with respect to establishing credibility and expertise, being empathetic and giving advice has been highlighted time and again. Moreover, I pinpoint how the interpersonal dimension has been shown to come into play in online health advice and its connection to persuasion. At the end of this chapter, it will become clear how persuasion in the form of ideology on a macro-level may shape the practices in question, how the Internet may be particularly useful to tailor health messages and how persuasion permeates advice-giving (and advice-seeking) in online health practices. Finally, the most important points will be summarized in Section 5.4.

5.1 Ideological currents in public health discourse: persuasion on a societal level

5.1.1 "Healthism"—the responsibility of the informed patient and discourses of empowerment

Previous research describes that one of the central ideological currents in public health discourse is the emphasis that is laid on the responsibility of individuals over their own health (e.g. Burgess 2008: 61; Gwyn 2002: 8; McKay 2006a: 255; Neuhauser & Kreps 2010b: 112). In this line, people have been reconceptualised as health consumers by public health discourses (Mayr 2008: 13). Health problems are categorized as personal ones, which have to be amended by "proper life-style choices" (ibid.). Thereby, making healthy life-style choices has become fraught with moral implications or as Burgess (2008: 6, emphasis in original) explains: "'Awareness' of risks to our health […] has become a *new form of showing oneself to* *be a responsible citizen*; taking active measures to limit the impact of these evils an even greater sign of modern virtue". Hence, if being healthy is a lifestyle issue, it is inevitably tied to people's identity (McKay 2006b: 312). Moreover, as McKinlay and McVittie (2011: 99) rightly state: "Being healthy is viewed as preferred and socially desirable identity, one that usually requires little or no justification". Unsurprisingly, there are consequences to be borne if one does not comply. These may consist in feelings of guilt or anxiety (Gwyn 2002: 8 or Thompson et al. 2009: 188) or people who willingly take chances of becoming ill (for instance, by smoking) may become "increasingly stigmatised" (Wainwright 2008: 90; see also Section 5.1.2). Lupton (2013a: 5) refers to these discourses of "taking charge" of one's own health as well as ignoring social and economic factors as "healthist". Similarl to Gwyn (2002) or Wainwright (2008), she stresses that healthism may lead to constructing people who do not adhere to this principle or are ill as "inferior or morally deficient" (ibid). Lupton (2013a: 5) points out that "the values of healthism" inform or tend to be the ideological undercurrent of health promotion campaigns and medical advice. Moreover, over the last few years, technological developments have led to a boost in mHealth, which refers to collecting one's health data with the help of apps or other tools on mobile devices. Lupton (2013a: 2) argues that "self-tracking" is increasingly positioned as a part of "managing and improving one's life", thus it has become one way of showing oneself as a responsible health consumer.

In the context of being a responsible health consumer, Henwood et al. (2003: 590) refer to the widely-spread notion of the "informed patient". They explain that the idea behind the informed patient is that health consumers actively engage in finding health information that is relevant for them. As a result, health consumers can enter in a dialogue with medical practitioners, which consists of a more symmetrical relationship and involves shared decision-making (ibid.; Seale 2002: 13). Therefore, the role of health information becomes crucial. In fact, Henwood et al. (2003: 591) point to health policy documents in the UK, in which "quality information" is presented as a right for patients. In the same vein, Rudd et al. (2010: 279) have posited that "[…] information is a prerequisite to action". The importance of good and quality information is even rhetorically mobilized on the Smokefree website by the NHS. In a picture that depicts two smiling young men, the following quote appears (emphasis in original):

(5.01) "It becomes so much **easier** with the right information" (S17)

In the context in question, it can be inferred that the impersonal pronoun "it" refers to quitting smoking. The statement as supposedly uttered by one of the two men epitomizes the entire discourse behind the informed patient. On a general level, it emphasises the importance and effectiveness of patients seeking health information themselves. On a local level, website readers are encouraged to browse through the website and are assured of it being of good quality. To return to the concept of "the informed patient", the reasoning behind is that if patients only know enough and have access to the *right information*, they will make the right and responsible choice regarding their own health (Henwood et al. 2003: 604). In fact, informed patients are assumed to be more actively engaged in their own health matters (Heaton 2011: 220). In turn, this is said to be connected to the empowerment of patients, as they experience greater agency (Henwood et al. 2003: 591).

Health consumers' understanding of health and medicine is mainly shaped by the media, most notably "through the coverage of risk" (McKay 2006b: 312). McKay makes out a multitude of places where patients encounter health information, such as "[…] television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and increasingly the internet, providing a constant and readily accessible supply of health care information and advice" (2006b: 311). The development of the Internet is seen as one of the key factors in changing the relationship between healthcare practitioners and patients, resulting in redefining the traditional power distribution within the medical system and leading to patient empowerment (Heaton 2011: 220; McKay 2006a: 254; Sarangi & Clarke 2002: 140; etc.).

Firstly, consumers can easily access scientific knowledge and health advice without "the traditional learned intermediaries" (Hall 2006: 271; see also Sarangi & Clarke 2002: 140). Recent statistical numbers show that 51% of Internet users look for health information online in a UK context (Office for National Statistics 2016). Thus, unsurprisingly, many researchers have discussed the empowering potential of the Internet (e.g. Camerini et al. 2010; Heaton 2011; Henwood et al. 2003; etc.), also in view of its potential to save costs in health prevention (see Lupton 2013a).

Secondly, the Internet enables lay people to switch from being health information consumers and to becoming producers. Non-experts can "[…] blur the boundary between audience and producer" (Seale 2003: 516), as they can easily participate in Internet forums, create personal homepages, maintain blogs or post on social media platforms (see also McKay 2006a: 254). The development of Web 2.0 has boosted the emphasis on user-generated interaction, making health communication a "collaborative" effort (Prestin & Chou 2014: 191). Peer-to-peer interaction on forums or social media makes it possible to network without great trouble, which enables patients to potentially join forces (Heaton 2011: 220; Seale 2003: 516). In fact, the opportunity of self-help and/or networking between patients has been put forward as great asset of the Internet (Armstrong & Powell 2009; Caiata Zufferey & Schulz 2010; Ziebland & Wyke 2012, etc.). Camerini et al. (2010: 93) even say that "[t]he absence of any geographical barrier increases the variety of expertise that can be found in an online health community, leading to an increased empowerment of its users". Patients find support and receive advice from others undergoing similar experiences on online platforms. In the US context, it has been shown that 60% of Internet users looking for health information have searched for health experiences of others online (Wright 2015: 489).

Previous research emphasised that lay expertise and experiential advice is highly valued by individuals, which may be because patients' experiences are more relatable than abstract numbers typical in medical information (Sillence 2010: 377; Wright 2015: 490; etc.). Already over a decade ago, Seale (2002: 13) argued that the personal illness story—that is lay expertise—has gained in authority to the extent that it even may be mobilized against evidence-based medicine (see also Sarangi & Candlin 2003: 121). By sharing on the Internet, individuals can potentially "reshape authoritative knowledge" and become "expert patients" (Armstrong et al. 2011: 3). Moreover, it has been suggested that reading about other people's experience can influence individuals' decision-making process regarding their own health (Ziebland & Wyke 2012: 221). Nonetheless, Armstrong and Powell's (2009: 319) study of patients' perspective on health advice posted to Internet discussion forums suggests that experiential knowledge is viewed to be complementary to medical information from institutional settings instead of challenging it.

Wright (2015: 490) explained that online health support groups are predominantly joined for two reasons: (1) information seeking or (2) emotional support. In the former case, Internet consumers are said to be mostly reading without engaging in posting activities. In the latter, participants are more likely to post and encourage each other (ibid.). Therefore, online health support groups have been said to be especially useful for users whose illness is stigmatised or rare. Similarly, even if users live in relative isolation, they still can exchange their views with and read from other patients (Caiata Zufferey & Schulz 2010: 61; Wright 2015: 491; Ziebland & Wyke 2012: 232; etc.). There are additional advantages to sharing one's health experience in a computer-mediated context. After an extensive literature review Ziebland and Wyke (2012: 230) identified five further domains, which may be affected by patients' online experiences. Firstly, interacting online with other patients may help to establish relationships online, which can lead to an increased sense of confidence regarding one's condition or helping one to feel connected and normal (see also Prestin & Chou 2014: 189). Secondly, reading others' experiences can affect how patients navigate health services, for instance, by influencing the choice of a provider or a clinic or by preparing them for issues coming up in consultations. Thirdly, users learn how to tell their own story by reading other people's experiences (see also Stommel & Lamerichs 2014: 199). Thereby, they acquire the vocabulary to bring across their account and better transmit important aspects to health professionals or also friends and family. Fourthly, users can visualize their own condition by accessing other people's experiences, which may help them making decisions regarding treatments, motivate them to keep to behaviour changes or alert them to upcoming changes in their appearance. Finally, sharing experiences online can be strategically used to instil inspiration and trigger behaviour change, such as in the form of testimonials in commercial and health prevention sites. According to Ziebland and Wyke (2012: 239), narrative evidence has been found to be more effective than statistical evidence to avoid people disconnecting from the information presented.

5.1.2 Caveats against the discourses of responsibility and empowerment

While the discourses of responsibility and especially the notion of empowerment have been embraced by some, others have viewed them critically (e.g. Henwood et al. 2003; Lupton 2013a/b; Segal 2009; etc.). From a sociological point of view, the discourses of responsibility and empowerment disregard the effects of socio-economic factors on health despite the fact that their impact has been well established by research (Lupton 2013a: 5-6; Lupton 2013b: 5; Neuhauser & Kreps 2010a: 11). This may result in disadvantages for people who do not live up to the ideals of self-responsibility, as they may be viewed as "inferior and morally deficient" (Lupton 2013b: 5; see also Gwyn 2002: 8 or Thompson et al. 2009: 188; Wainwright 2008: 90). Further, it has been criticized that states use the focus on individual responsibility and the role of information as an excuse to provide fewer services and to focus on programmes offering "short-term savings" (Lupton 2013a: 5; see also Zethsen & Askehave 2006).

Several researchers have cautioned against automatically equating access to quality information with patients' empowerment. It has been pointed out (Henwoodet al. 2003; Neuhauser & Kreps 2010b; Segal 2009) that the right information does not automatically result in behaviour change but that it depends on the uptake of the audience. In this context, Segal (2009: 352) recognises that there tends to be an over-emphasis on information or source reliability and a disregard for patients' complexity. For instance, Internet users may be led by fear or anxiety when searching for a diagnosis of their symptoms online (Segal 2009: 363). Thus, these users do not conform to the idea that quality information results uni-directionally in rational decision-making regarding one's health. Segal (2009: 363) puts her criticism in rhetorical terms, explaining that while it is presumed that that people make health decisions based on logos , pathos—or anxiety—can be a driving force when looking for health information (see also Neuhauser & Kreps 2010b: 113). Thompson et al. (2009) studied public health campaigns against smoking in New Zealand and have come to similar conclusions as Segal. Their results also showed that people did not act completely rationally when facing fear-arousing messages and sometimes even came up with alternate, rational explanations for not quitting, e.g. by relativizing the dangers of smoking compared to drinking (Thompson et al. 2009: 188). To address the problem of people not directly moving from reading information to behaviour change, Heaton (2011: 228) finds “the trans-theoretical model” useful. The model suggests that there are five stages to change, which affect how people react to health promotion efforts. Computer-mediated campaigns may be more adept in doing justice to said stages as they enable the personalization of information. The notion of different stages in which users can be accounts for why “information alone is not sufficient to change behavior” (Heaton 2011: 228; see also Neuhauser & Kreps 2010b).

Additionally, there is the caveat of weighing information coming from patients and experts. Even though empowerment is said to be patient-centred, bio-medical knowledge is granted more weight than lay knowledge. Henwood et al. (2003: 591) found several constraints regarding the formation of informed patients. They state that the expert, bio-medical, position tends to dominate if there is a clash in opinions. In their study about women considering hormone replacement therapy, several participants relayed that their views were disregarded when they did not coincide with the GP’s (Henwood et al. 2003: 605). Thus, medical practitioners were reluctant to engage in a more symmetrical partnership. Similarly, Segal (2005: 35) emphasised that it is the experts who determine the parameters of decision-making, which can be argued to run counter to the discourse of symmetrical decision-making in empowerment. Moreover, some patients may not want to adopt the role of the empowered, active informed patient. For instance, in Henwood et al.’s study (2003: 602), one woman did not challenge her GP in consultation, as she felt intimated by the authority of medical doctors. Further, some patients may alternate between passive and active positions, making it difficult to establish shared decision-making (Henwood et al. 2003: 592). Additionally, Henwood et al.’s findings (2003: 604) showed that some patients preferred to leave responsibility with their GPs, which runs counter to the ideological tenet.

Another caveat regarding the responsible health consumer and empowerment, concerns issues of health literacy. People may not know how to search for appropriate medical information; they may have difficulties to understand or find it hard to contextualize the information provided (Henwood et al. 2003: 604). This can cause problems insofar as part of the available information does not aim at informing the consumer but rather at pre-empting legal claims (e.g. in the case of pharmaceutical companies; Zethsen & Askehave 2006: 645). In this vein, Hall's (2006: 271) analysis of freely available medical leaflets showed that while many of these appeared to contain disinterested medical advice, they were actually promoting certain pharmaceutical products. Even so, the commercial purpose was disguised and appeared to be of an informative nature (Hall 2006: 282). Thus, for this project, it will be interesting to see how pharmaceutical websites manage the balance between information and economic interests when providing online help for smoking cessation.

Finally, some concerns regarding patient empowerment and the rise of expert patients have also been voiced by medical health professionals. On the one hand, there is the fear that symmetrical decision-making and the informed patient places additional demands on health professionals going beyond available resources (Armstrong & Powell 2009: 314). On the other hand, some researchers apprehend that information patients exchange among each other or find themselves may be of poor quality (see Armstrong & Powell 2009; Camerini et al. 2010; Prestin & Chou 2014). For instance, Camerini et al. (2010: 99) are uneasy with entirely peer-governed online platforms and find it essential that health professionals lead and guide discussions. This last caveat points to why it is important not only to look at professionally maintained sites but also "pure" peer-to-peer formats to describe information and support practices in an unmonitored context.

5.2 The advantages of using the Internet for promoting and finding health communication

Public health is linked to fostering and improving the health of individuals, partly by promoting lifestyle changes and preventing illnesses. In other words, many public health matters, including smoking cessation, are connected to "behavioural factors" (Neuhauser & Kreps 2010a: 9). Intervention by states to move citizens to change their lifestyles are still mainly of discursive nature, that is in the form of health communication (Neuhauser & Kreps 2010a: 10). The Internet has had a great impact on public health communication in terms of transmission and customization of information. Further, there are several advantages to using the Internet for public health messages, for instance, as mentioned above, it is cost-efficient. Locher (2010: 51) identified five incentives to use an online format for an advice column for health professionals.

(1) Availability and anonymity
(2) Personal appeal and identification
(3) Possibility of reaching many with a "personalized" response
(4) Possibility of adapting the text to the needs of the target groups
(5) The archive and hyperlinking (Locher 2010: 51)

Even though these points refer to online advice columns, they have in parts also been discussed by other researchers. Points 2-4 tend to receive most weight regarding public health interventions (see Heaton 2011: 22; Neuhauser & Kreps 2010a: 9; Wright 2015; 490/491). The first point refers to how the Internet is anonymously accessible at any time without appointment, reducing barriers to find information. Availability and anonymity have often been cited especially as advantage of participating in online support groups (Stommel & Lamerichs 2014: 199; Wright 2015: 490; Ziebland & Wyke 2012: 221). Points (2) to (4) are all about the degree of individualization of mass-communication possible on the Internet, which are highly relevant for persuasive mechanisms. In fact, these points are more likely to be realised on a discursive level, relying thus on linguistic variation.

The second point refers to the fact that Internet users can identify with the online advice-seeker, thus enhancing identification. Neuhauser and Kreps (2010a: 15) also see the potential of customising and tailoring information to users as one particular benefit of e-health interventions. Similarly, Schulz and Rubinelli (2010: 4) argue that the Internet may improve the persuasiveness of health campaigns because it facilitates the tailoring of health messages to the individual. Thirdly, even though texts may be geared to the specific advice-seeker in question, they are carefully formulated to include a broader audience. Moreover, Neuhauser and Kreps (2010a: 15) call the Internet "a hybrid medium" as it has the potential reach of mass media while still allowing for reaching individual users. Fourthly, in the case of the online advice column, the texts are framed as such as to fit to the site's regular audience and their declared mission. The fifth point relates to hyperlinking and the interconnected-ness of sources on the web, which can be strategically used in health communication interventions. Further, interactivity and the possibility to create content has been considered to be the technological element with most persuasive force in online health promotion (Freeman & Chapman 2012; Neuhauser & Kreps 2010a). On the one hand, interactive communication—such as games, user-comments, e-mails, online communities—may lead to a higher involvement of Internet users, which may make them more likely to engage with health information messages (Neuhauser 2010a: 15). On the other hand, interactivity transfers more control over to patients regarding information selection, which is also in tune with according greater agency to patients to make their own decisions.

In contrast to Locher (2010), Richardson (2005) focuses on the receiving end of health information online, listing four main aspects of how individuals profit from seeking information online. Some of these points have been touched upon in Section 5.1.1:

> (1) Overcoming the problem of access to professional structures […]
> (2) Allowing access to non-mainstream information of which the medical establishment disapproves […]
> (3) Expanding face-to-face social networks into cyberspace social networks, perhaps 'de-medicalizing' health knowledge, or mediating it via trusted personal contacts rather than 'authorities'
> (4) Buying drugs and other health related items—legitimately or otherwise.
>
> (Richardson 2005: 2)

It is stressed again that the Internet facilitates access without time or geographical restrictions in the first point. Richardson's second point describes the advantage of finding counter-discourse online, which contradicts official health policy positions. Noticeably, this is one of the aspects that have been considered problematic from a health professional perspective which have issued concerns regarding the quality of information in user-generated content (e.g. Camerini et al. 2010; Prestin & Chou 2014, etc.). The third point refers to the great potential of tapping into lay or experiential knowledge of others users online, which may lead to the emergence of other than scientific expertise (see also Wright 2015: 490). Finally, the fourth point discusses how the Internet offers the possibility of purchasing legal (or illegal) medication without having to leave one's home. This is an aspect of lesser importance for this particular project; nonetheless, the first three benefits are important to contextualize the forums, featuring user-to-user interaction.

5.3 Persuasion in online health discourse: seeking and giving advice online

5.3.1 The discursive structures of health advice online—the logos aspect

The Internet users in my data actively use the Web to find guidance regarding their health issues, which may be in the form of advice, information and support. In this section, I particularly focus on the speech activity of advice in online health practices and its link to persuasion for the following reasons. As mentioned in Ch. 3, advice-giving is a particularly interesting speech activity in regard to persuasion since it involves interactants telling someone else what is best for them, thus they try to impact someone else's action environment. Further, advice-giving is a frequent speech activity in many online health support groups (see Armstrong et al. 2011; Kouper 2010; Morrow 2006; Sillence 2010; etc.), possibly because of the opportunity for finding alternatives to medical knowledge or for getting insights from people with similar experiences (Fage-Butler & Nisbeth Jensen 2013; Seale 2003; Sillence 2010). A third and final reason to focus on advice lies in the fact that information and advice-giving can be difficult to keep apart. Thus, information can be interpreted as non-directive advice depending on context (Sarangi & Clarke 2002: 146; Locher 2013b: 341). In this section, I will centre on what kind of discursive patterns of advice-giving in online health practices have been found in previous research. I argue that the linguistic structures of advice can be connected with logos, or the structure of arguments for persuasion. As pointed out in Ch. 3, apart from topics used, I view the discursive set-up also as part of argumentation, which can be investigated linguistically. First, I will look at how advice-givers have been shown to structure advice in different settings, ranging from online health support groups to online advice columns. I follow this sequence as the act of advice-giving is more straightforwardly linked to persuasion. Nonetheless, even when seeking advice, participants face rhetorical challenges, as they have to persuade others of the authenticity of their claim (Galegher et al. 1998: 511; Harvey & Koteyko 2013: 167). Thus, I will also illuminate aspects of seeking advice.

5.3.1.1 Giving health advice online

In their overview article on interaction in online support groups, Stommel and Lamerichs (2014: 207) argued that advice in online support groups is risky for all parties as advice-givers may be resisted and advice-seekers may face impositions. In their focus on advice, they outlined some important discursive aspects earlier studies highlighted. Personal experience has been shown to be multi-functional in terms of it being used to qualify advice-givers as legitimate as well as functioning as indirect advice in the interactional context. Further, there seemed to be a preference for indirect advice in the form of "if- then", which leaves the main responsibility with advice-seekers (2014: 201). The ensuing studies discussed will also touch upon some of the matters discussed by Stommel and Lamerichs, such as ways of reducing one's responsibility for the advice-seeker's compliance or the role of personal experience.

Morrow (2006) analysed patterns of advice-giving in an online forum "about depression while also taking into account the influence of the online setting and the interpersonal dimension of advice-giving. He (2006: 536) explained that usually a problem message started the discussion, which is followed by one or several advice messages. In fact, messages following up problem descriptions, nearly always featured advice. Advice itself tended to not occur on its own but was surrounded by other content, which Morrow suspected was in order to reduce potential face-threats. For instance, advice-givers often referred to their own experience before offering advice, which had the double effect of signalling solidarity and understanding as well as establishing their competence. Morrow (2006: 544) observed that advice moves could be linguistically realised in very different manners, ranging from direct advice (using short imperatives) to more indirect advice (featuring hedges like *perhaps*, modal verbs, interrogatives) as well as the devaluing of their contribution. It is important to point out that employing imperatives were not associated with being particularly imposing advice but that it indexed solidarity and closeness in this discourse context (ibid.). Further, the use of non-directive advice in the form of presenting alternatives and questions (e.g. '*Do you know if there are any support groups for parents who's [sic] children have ADHD in your area?'* (Morrow 2006: 545; example [4d]) left room for advice-seekers to opt out and reject advice.

Harrison and Barlow (2009) explored the link between relational work and advice-giving in the context of an online self-management programme for people with arthritis. They focused on how the interpersonal dimension affected the realisation of advice, in view of the fact that advice "[…] casts doubt upon the competence of the recipient in Western cultures" (Harrison & Barlow2009: 96). Participants were paired up to give each other feedback and to evaluate their action plans. Due to this specific setting, there was usually just one turn, the feedback post, after the action plan (Harrison & Barlow 2009: 100). Based on Locher's (2006) study, they categorized advice according to their syntactic form, imperatives, interrogatives and declaratives, which showed that, declaratives made out 64 per cent of advice moves. Moreover, the declaratives can be divided into three sub-categories: (1) general statements (mostly non-agentive), (2) agentive with modals (2nd person) and (3) agentive with narrative (first person). Interestingly, Harrison and Barlow's (2009: 103) analysis showed that workshop facilitators (trained peers) employed different strategies to regular workshop participants with the latter mainly using interrogatives and narratives. The use of narratives among participants was found to be conspicuous and multi-functional (Harrison & Barlow 2009: 106). Narratives were a means of giving non-direct mitigated advice while also signalling the authority of advice-givers as having overcome certain obstacles. Moreover, by giving indirect advice in the form of narratives, participants respected the "self-managing ethos" of the programme, ultimately leaving the responsibility for decisions with recipients (Harrison & Barlow 200: 107). Additionally, the use of narratives had further interpersonal effects such as signalling common ground between participants, bonding with one another or as a way of displaying empathy. Finally, Harrison and Barlow (ibid.) argued that the narratives worked to establish a "sense of community" since the narratives could be accessed by all participants.

In her study about an online motherhood community blog, Kouper (2010) investigated how advice was sought. She especially paid attention to how the interpersonal dimension of advice was handled since this particular speech activity may "impose upon the freedom of an advisee" (Kouper 2010: 3). In this community, advice was mostly solicited: the initial entry worked as set up the advice-giving frame, to which participants reacted by giving advice in their comments. Messages in which advice was given differed in terms of their degree of directness, with Kouper (2010: 7) distinguishing between four categories: (1) direct advice; (2) hedged advice; (3) indirect advice and (4) description of personal experience. Analysis showed that direct advice and personal experience were equally frequently employed to give recommendations, both making up just over forty per cent of all advice moves (Kouper 2010: 12). Moreover, direct, un-mitigated, advice (i.e. imperatives or sentences containing *should*) was used in "trivial" or uncontroversial situations which were minimally face-threatening (ibid.). Similarly, participants could tell their personal experience in short accounts for simple issues, which Kouper (ibid: 13) viewed as a way of giving indirect advice where many solutions are possible. When responding to more complex, sensitive problems (e.g. regarding sleep-training of babies), participants also told their personal experience, which established their authority without taking over the responsibility for advice-seekers' decisions. Thus, giving advice in the form of personal experience allowed participants to navigate between being directive towards their participants and showing support and empathy. In her study of advice-giving in a breast cancer online support group, Sillence (2013: 483) observed that personal experience was used in 49 per cent of advisory moves. As Kouper, she also found that personal experience was more likely to be used with sensitive or more complex topics (e.g. treatment options, living with breast cancer, etc.) and was less pertinent in other issues (e.g. employment rights). Moreover, Sillence put forward that the use of personal experiences stressed that advice-seekers need to make their own decisions. It was left up to advice-seekers to decide whether they viewed the other's story as advice or not.

While Sillence (2010) focussed mostly on aspects of credibility and trustworthiness with respect to advice-giving in an online forum on prostate cancer, she also highlighted some discursive aspects. Firstly, she (2010: 391) observed that the initial post to the message board, containing the request for advice, set clear limits regarding what kind of advice was expected. Moreover, in her data advice-givers preferred not to be too directive and leave the main responsibility with advice-seekers. In terms of form, advice-givers used hedges, employed if-clauses to establish hypothetical scenarios and humour to down-tone advice. Interestingly, they also referred to the opinion of the entire group in order to reduce their own agency. Moreover, they gave advice for introspection (to use Locher's [2006] categorization) by asking advice-seekers' a range of questions to reflect on their stance. Finally, Sillence found that some advice-givers gave advice in the form of factual information, which reduced the imposing potential of advice even further.

In her analysis of a fictional advice-giver in an online advice column, Lucy Answers, Locher (2006) analysed discursive moves in the response letters to arrive at the discursive set-up of the advisory practice[24]. Her study, including her methodological approach, is the basis for my own project. She uses Miller and Gergen's (1998: 192) definition of discursive moves as "the kind of contribution that the entry made to the ongoing interchange". Her catalogue of discursive moves gave insight into what kind of discursive activities were actually used and how they were sequenced in the online advice column since discursive moves are established bottom-up based on the data. Unsurprisingly, "Advice/referral" was the most common discursive move, regardless of the topic categories (Locher 2006: 75). However, other discursive moves were sensitive to topic, which is why Locher divided advice in different topics into two larger groups. The first one consisted of the topics "fitness", "general health", "sexual health", "drugs" and was of an informative nature as "general information" is the second most frequent discursive move. The second group dealt with more personal subjects, featuring the topics "emotional health", "relationships" and "sexuality", in which 'assessment' was the second most frequent discursive move. Locher's analysis (2006: 84) showed that there is a preferred sequence for advice-giving. "Advice" was embedded within the response letter, which was usually preceded (not necessarily directly) by "assessment", i.e. evaluating advice-seekers' situations, or "general information". "Advice/referral" or "farewell" acted as final moves, each in half of the cases.

A further important finding of Locher's (2013b: 345) is that the mission of the institution of assisting advice-seekers in their decision-making process was reflected in the linguistic choices. The online advice column advises in a non-directive way (Locher 2006: 143), leaving decisions up to questioners. In terms of the linguistic realisation of advice, Locher (2006: 89) found declaratives, functioning as "suggestions" (64), to be used in 52 per cent of all advice moves. Declaratives were further sub-categorized into "agentive" and "non-agentive" realizations, of which the latter was more frequent with 62 per cent of all declaratives (92).

[24] I will come back to Locher's catalogue of discursive moves in more detail in Ch. 9.

Thus, the use of non-agentive declaratives highlighted that non-directive advice-giving was preferred. Moreover, this assertion can be further evidenced by the fact that two thirds of non-agentive constructions consisted of "*be* + subject predicatives". Agentive declaratives usually consisted of "*you* + modal verb" whereby the frequency of the modals *can* and *may* highlighted the optional character of advice. Further, lexical hedges were also employed to additionally down tone advice in the declarative category. Conditional "if-clauses" were employed in 19 per cent of declarative advice, clarifying at whom advice was targeted, establishing relevance and engaging readers. Imperatives that "invite future action" are the second most common type of advice with 36 per cent of all advice moves (Locher 2013b: 347). The verbs *try* or *take* frequently occurred to realise imperatives inviting future action, highlighting the nature of imperatives as suggestions. Interrogatives were employed more sparingly and to "invite introspection" (9 % of all advice moves) and only rarely to "invite future actions" (2% of all advice moves). 63 per cent of the interrogatives inviting introspection were formulated as yes/no questions, answering which will already guide readers to find a solution. Importantly, these types of questions stress again the non-directive character of advice (Locher 2006: 103).

5.3.1.2 Seeking health advice online

Several researchers have analysed how interactants seek advice in online health support groups, noting that messages do not necessarily contain explicit requests for advice (Stommel & Lamerichs 2014: 200). For instance, Miller and Gergen (1998: 195) found problem disclosure to be more common than requests for help in their study of an electronic bulletin board on suicide, arguing that problem disclosure was more personal and conveyed a sense of urgency. Morrow (2006: 540) also described that that problem messages did not necessarily have to feature requests for advice. Problem messages often contained explicit requests for specific advice when advice seekers had questions about medication (ibid.). Advice-seekers enquired about how other members experienced the use of specific medications, with interest in symptoms or side effects. Some advice-seekers were interested in having their self-diagnosis confirmed, often by presenting two alternatives in the form of "either/or" questions (see example [5.02]):

> (5.02) do I have postnatal depression or am I just another bored housewife who sees into things too deeply?' (from Morrow 2006: 540, example [5a])

Morrow pointed out that by offering two options, the advice-seeker positioned herself as having some competence and insight in her problems. Thus, it is a way of dealing with the potentially face-threatening aspect of seeking advice where individuals position themselves as less knowledgeable. In the same vein, if advice-seekers asked yes/no questions, they achieved a similar effect (but it occurred less frequently in this group; Morrow 2006: 541). General requests for advice were asked frequently, often in the form of short phrases, such as *Please help* or *Any ideas?* (etc.) (ibid). The phrase *Please help* could occur both in opening or closing position, which I would argue frames the entire problem message as request for advice.

In her analysis of two sample threads in an online forum about prostate cancer, Sillence (2010) found that one advice-seeker was interested in experiences from other members (or from someone they know) who also opted for the treatment of his choice. Sillence (2010) argued that the initial interactant clearly set out what type of advice he was interested in and was looking for confirmation of his decision for treatment. In the second case, the advice-seeker recounted that he had just received the border-line diagnosis of prostate cancer and felt that he could not just wait until he made a decision for treatment. Even though he requested general advice, he warned advice-givers that he did not want them to tell what to do. Thus, the advice-seeker did not want to be challenged, inviting advice from members who have adopted a similar point of view. In fact, in both cases, forum discussion did not lead to changes in posters' viewpoints (Sillence 2010: 391).

Kouper (2010: 9) found that four types of advice solicitation were used in the motherhood community blog analysed (which she based on Goldsmith's 2000 typology of advice solicitation): (1) Request for advice, (2) Request for opinion or information, (3) Problem disclosure and (4) Advisor volunteers advice. The most common types of seeking advice were requests for opinion and problem disclosure, both of which are a more indirect way of advice solicitation than the first group (featuring explicit requests for guidance). When requesting an opinion or information (e.g. *What do you think*?), it was less transparent whether advice-seekers were interested in emotional support or guidance for action. Disclosing one's problem was also viewed as ambiguous way of seeking advice, as it was not straightforward in what kind of input (support, information, advice) posters were interested (Kouper 2010: 6). Similar to Sillence (2010), Kouper (2010: 16) hypothesised that seeking advice online may not be necessarily about receiving instructions for action but rather about bonding and having a platform to externalize one's thought and advance one's decision-making process.

In her study of an online breast cancer support group, Sillence (2013) was particularly interested in advice solicitation, again finding that participants targeted advice-givers holding similar opinions. Similar to Kouper (2010), Sillence (2013: 481) modified Goldsmith's typology of advice solicitations, which differ in their degree of directness and transparency, resulting in the following five types: (1) Request for advice, (2) Request for opinion or information, (3) Problem disclosure, (4) Announcement of a plan of action and (5) Anyone in the same boat? Interestingly, Sillence (2013: 482) arrived at similar results as Kouper (2010) since problem disclosure (35%) and request for opinion or information were the most common types of asking for advice. The same boat type of advice solicitation occurred in 20 per cent of all cases. It referred to instances where participants disclosed their problems and subsequently specifically requested either experiences from people who had gone through the same or accounts from others who were currently in the same situation. This type of advice solicitation was more common in sections that discussed treatment decisions. Thus, Sillence (2013: 483) suggested that regarding their own medical decision-making process, women were particularly interested in hearing from women with a comparable medical history to their own. This is not unlike Morrow's (2006: 540) findings, outlined above, who found that when talking about the use and effect of medication, advice-seekers were likely to be interested in experiential advice. In their study about a thread from an online support group about celiac disease, Veen et al. (2010: 29) also showed how the advice-seeker explicitly elicited descriptive experiences of others in a similar situation rather than advice or evaluations. As a response, the advice-seeker received "second stories" that only indirectly commented and evaluated her problem. Similarly, Armstrong et al. (2011: 11) showed how after one participant was interested in hearing other's experience, another participant carefully built up her answer by hedging, using her personal experience before moving on to an actual recommendation.

In Locher's (2006) analysis of an online health advice column, she also conducted an analysis of discursive moves in the problem letters, providing more extensive insight into how advice-seeking letters were structured. She (2006: 209) found that advice-seekers used problem statements, provided background information, employed apologies and thanks, asked questions and requested advice*,* etc. In the advice-column under scrutiny, problem letter writers sought explicit advice in the form of questions*,* as it was the most frequent discursive move overall (38%) in the problem letters and was typical in a closing position. Background information and problem statements each made up 21 per cent of discursive moves used in problem letters. Requests for advice*,* by which Locher (2006: 211) refers to requests for advice that are not interrogatives with respect to syntax, made up 7 per cent of all discursive moves. Regarding linguistic realization, questions were realised in the form of yes/no questions in 54 per cent, as wh-questions in 39 per cent and as alternative questions in 5 per cent (Locher 2006: 231). Thus, compared to the peer-to-peer practices, asking for advice seems to be more direct in the case of the professional advice column. However, Locher (2006: 233) argued that if problem letter writers use the discursive move request for advice they are likely to engage in face-saving relational work, such as hedging.

5.3.2 Aspects of expertise, credibility and engagement in health advice online—ethos and pathos negotiation

As shown in Ch. 3, as well as logos, there are two more working principles of persuasion: ethos and pathos. Ethos is connected to speakers' or writers' trustworthiness, credibility and expertise. In contrast, pathos refers to the emotional engagement and involvement of the audience. While these aspects are often not explicitly discussed as belonging to persuasion, they frequently resurface in studies on online health advice and information. On a macro-level, questions of how credibility and trustworthiness are established are crucial due to the emphasis on quality information within the framework of empowerment in public health discourse. Credible and trustworthy information is more likely to be accepted (see Sillence& Briggs 2015). On an interactional level, it is also of major concern how advice-givers legitimise their contributions or establish their expertise in order for their advice to be accepted. Similarly, advice-seekers face the challenge of being perceived as authentic and legitimate contributors (see Galegeher et al. 1998; Harvey & Koteyko 2013). Further, the speech activities of seeking and imparting advice are intricate on an interpersonal level, as it can be threatening to the advice-seeker's face (Armstrong et al. 2011; Morrow 2006; Locher 2006/2013a; Sillence 2010/2013; etc.). Therefore, advice-givers may engage in relational work to signal common ground or a connection with advice-seekers. In the same vein, advice-seekers may highlight common background and engage in bonding to signal their legitimacy as contributors (see Harvey & Koteyko 2013: 169). In the following sub-sections, I first discuss how expertise, credibility and emotional engagement have been shown to emerge discursively on the part of advice-givers (Section 5.3.2.1). Secondly (Section 5.3.2.2), I focus on discursive strategies that advice-seekers have been shown to use to establish their status as authentic contributors.

5.3.2.1 Ethos and pathos construction when giving advice online

Previous research has pointed out that advice-giving is a delicate act in English-speaking contexts, involving an asymmetry between interactants in terms of authority and expertise. As previously hinted at, in order for advice to be accepted, advice-givers need to present themselves as sufficiently knowledgeable and advice-seekers need to find the advice-givers sufficiently trustworthy and credible. Thus, aspects of face for both interactants are at stake during the speech activity of advising, which may result in interactants engaging in face-saving relational work (Locher 2013b: 340). In peer-to-peer online contexts, advice-givers cannot rely on institutional backing to index their trustworthiness but in order to position themselves as experienced and knowledgeable, they have to carry out discursive work (see Harvey & Koteyko 2013: 171; Stommel & Lamerichs 2014: 201). Any advice-giver needs to warrant their "credibility, trustworthiness and reliability" to be able "[…] to influence the conduct or attitude of others" (Locher 2006: 182-183).

Richardson's (2003: 172) study on warranting strategies, which are discursive strategies used to "give fellow participants reasons to take the information seriously", provided the basis for several subsequent studies that focused on credibility. In her analysis of a newsgroup discussing the potential health risks of mobile phone radiation, she found that users invested discursive effort into establishing their credibility. Richardson identified five commonly used warranting strategies:

(1) Referring to sources
(2) Drawing upon personal experience
(3) Using a personal contact as an expert
(4) Using self as an expert
(5) Using a technical register (Richardson 2003: 176)

First, referring to outside sources was a frequent strategy, by which, as Richardson argues, users exploited the trust established by mass media or scientific publications (also common in Galegher et al. 1998: 516). Ultimately, this was a way of shifting responsibility since the claim originated elsewhere than the writer. In terms of linguistic means, a tendency was observed for interactants to be vague regarding referents as they used unspecified third person plural pronouns *they*. Further, interactants hedged content by combining *they* with verbs such as *claim* or *say,* saving their own face in case of being challenged subsequently. Secondly, even though using personal experience was a means of warranting, it seemed to be perceived as a weak means of supporting content in this particular group (Richardson 2003: 183; as also argued by Galegher et al. 1998: 515). This finding stands in contrast with later studies of online health support groups, where the importance of personal experience has been highlighted as it appears to take up an almost privileged position (see Armstrong et al. 2011; Harrison & Barlow 2009; Morrow 2006; etc.). Strategies three and four both are a type of warranting by "reference to status", in which interactants deploy their own or their contact's status to convince others of their arguments. The fifth strategy is also a way of indexing one's expert status albeit in an implicit way. In other words, interactants to not explicitly claim expertise but create their identity through linguistic means, for instance through the use of specialized vocabulary or nominalization (Richardson 2003: 181). Finally, some interactants explicitly declared their non-expert status when introducing their opinions. Thereby, they displayed their awareness that warranting of content is required but these disclaimers could also act as persuasive appeals to common sense (Morrow 2006: 542 also observed the same strategy in his corpus).

Armstrong et al. (2011: 3-5) analyzed how participants of an online diabetes community established themselves as reliable and authoritative when giving advice, information and emotional support. They found different strategies to bring about expertise, for instance, some participants performed an informed patient identity. In other words, they indicated how they engage in keeping up-to-date on or how they are connected to activities to current diabetes research (11). Users also referred to their own professional status (e.g. a nurse), to outside links and used an informational style to construct themselves as authoritative sources and to support their information (11-12). In a few cases, users constructed themselves as reliable by stating how they had advanced points of view that now are also endorsed by medical professionals. Overall, referring to personal experience was the most common warranting strategy, which as a discursive strategy became more multi-functional over time (Armstrong et al., 2011: 9). At the beginning, its main function was restricted to positioning users as legitimate and authentic participants. Armstrong et al. (2011: 14) claim that personal experience eventually had such a strong stand in the community that it could be utilised to doubt biomedical expertise. After forum norms were set in place, telling one's personal experience facilitated establishing a reliable expert identity; it enabled speakers to give indirect advice but was employed to bond with and display empathy for others (14). I argue that this last point reveals how sharing personal experience can be connected to pathos, as it helps strengthening or building an emotional link between interactants. Moreover, Armstrong et al. (2011: 7) add that, in their data, personal experience combined with the rhetoric of gratitude (term from Arminen 2001) led to a general sense of solidarity and support. The rhetoric of gratitude referred to how participants showed their appreciation of someone's input while also signalling how they themselves are of help. Hence, participants bonded by reacting positively to advice while still maintaining their competent identity.

Sillence (2010: 380) located strategies to create trustworthiness on two levels. First, there were some general strategies that fostered the credibility of the entire online community. For instance, the community drew on medical discourse by requiring that posters share their medical history (diagnostic details) on their profiles in order to receive advice (381). Additionally, participants were aware of and frank about their "limitations of their expertise", highlighting that any decisions cannot be made by the group but by the individuals for themselves. In fact, Sillence (2010: 382) found that individual preferences were granted more space than a collective opinion. Thus, she viewed the group as somehow contradictorily providing both opportunity for identification and individualism. Further several warranting strategies, which have also been described in other studies, were commonly employed: for example, participants referred to other websites and sources of information; they presented their own history and experiences, or they shared their key statistics. The latter two strategies were mobilised in interaction when posting as well as in a more static fashion to describe participants' profiles. Sarangi and Candlin (2003: 119) also pointed to the warranting effect of statistical figures and the rhetorical weight of population-based probabilistic risk assessments in health discourse. Although it is impossible to break probabilistic risk assessments down to the individual, statistics are often employed to depict an undesired future outcome to convince someone of making a preferred choice.

Regarding personal experience, Morrow (2006: 542) also insisted on the fact that advice-givers need to qualify as legitimate or credible when giving advice in an online forum. In his sample, nearly all advice-givers shared their own experience before giving advice. While a few advice-givers also referred to the experience of acquaintances, there was little warranting otherwise (e.g. no one referred to professional status). Moreover, as others have also observed (e.g. Armstrong et al. 2011; Sillence 2010; Thurnherr et al. 2016; etc.), sharing one's experience had the effect of advice-givers expressing their solidarity with advice-seekers. Thus, I argue that they emotionally involved interactants, which contributed to pathos. However, in Morrow's study participants also resorted to explicit declarations of empathy in order to connect with and emotionally involve advice-seekers. For instance, advice-givers expressed that they were feeling sorry or that they were in the same situation. Also, they normalized what advice-seekers were going through or reassured them that they were not to blame for their condition and that they would feel better soon (Morrow 2006: 543). Additionally, advice-givers engaged in face-enhancing relational work by wishing others well and offering ongoing contact.

The fictional advisor persona Lucy gave advice to college students in an online health advice column in an US context. Locher (2006; Ch. 8) found that the persona of Lucy as an expert advisor emerged over time in the practice, pinpointing a range of aspects that contributed to this expert identity. Firstly, Lucy referred to herself in the third person as "Lucy", which stressed her expert identity but was also a means of reminding readers of her artificial nature (Locher 2006: 187). Advice-seekers were generally addressed by the pronoun *you*, which had the advantage of addressing both advice-seekers and anyone else reading the reply, leaving room for identification (a linguistic feature which Galegher et al. 1998 also found to one of the advantages in the context of electronic support groups). Secondly, Lucy referred advice-seekers to other, outside sources, "quote[d] facts in numbers and percentages" (Locher 2013a: 348) and invoked her status as health educator. Moreover, Lucy gave detailed background information and could expand on the original question in her answer. In that respect, general information and referral were the discursive moves that consolidated Lucy to be a knowledgeable source of information (Locher 2006: 189). Moreover, Lucy made "readers think and gives options" (Locher 2006: 193-194), by giving advice in a linguistic form that reinforced the non-directive ideology typical of counselling contexts. The use of interrogatives and imperatives inviting readers to reflect on their problems had the effect of constructing the latter as active agents in the decision-making process. Similarly, declaratives were framed as suggestions, which also left the decision ultimately with readers. In addition, it is noteworthy that Lucy's response letters were characterized by the use of an accessible vocabulary (cf. Richardson 2003) in order to relate to and reach the target audience, consisting of college students (Locher 2006: 198). Even so, it was ensured that Lucy did not become too colloquial, which could have endangered the expert status of the advisor persona. Further, Lucy took a clear stand on problem letter writers' actions, sanctioning their behaviour and attitudes in line with the site's mission statement (as signalled by the use of the relational work strategies praising and criticizing). Lucy also emerged as an empathetic advisor who showed awareness of difficult situations through the use of various relational work strategies. By displaying empathy, bonding with readers and hedging through humour, Lucy was constructed as a caring advice-giver, who was at the same time "clever and witty" (Locher 2006: 201). As a last point, Locher (2013b: 348) mentioned that overall layout and the visual design of the website also marked the advice column as expert professional source.

One further important aspect of Locher's (2006) study was the investigation of the interpersonal dimension of advice-giving. While she focussed on the whole spectrum of relational work—i.e. face-threatening, face-saving and face-enhancing strategies—I want to focus on face-enhancing, which are also called involvement, strategies and how they can be linked with the pathos side of persuasion. Face-enhancing relational work strategies belong to supportive relational work, all aiming at creating a connection to the hearer's— or in the case of this study, advice-seeker's—personal situation. For instance, the display of empathy co-occurred with acknowledging concerns, admitting the difficulty of complying with advice as well as reassuring[25] advice-seekers that they will be fine (Locher 2006: 134). As another involvement strategy, bonding contributed to creating positive rapport between advice-seekers and advice-givers. Bonding mostly occurred in the discursive move assessment, thereby supporting the attempt of making advice-seekers align with a common point of view. Additionally, farewell moves were likely to feature bonding, which can be seen as trying to reach out to readers once more (Locher 2006: 137). The third face-enhancing relational work strategy praising was used to positively evaluate advice-seekers "attitudes and actions" (Locher 2006: 139), which also represented the positions endorsed by (or "institutional goals of") the advice column (ibid.). Correspondingly, praising seemed to be tied to the discursive move of assessment and was followed by additional information as to the reasons for the positive evaluation (e.g. in the form of explanation or general information).

5.3.2.2 Ethos and pathos construction when seeking advice online

While it may be obvious as to why advice-givers need to establish their expertise to be perceived as trustworthy, advice-seekers face a "rhetorical challenge" of their own (Harvey & Koteyko 2013: 167). They need to convince potential advice-givers of their authenticity and genuineness as contributors (which is related to ethos), thus employing discursive strategies to construct their legitimacy (see also McKinlay & McVittie 2011: 192 or Galegher et al. 1998: 511). In their overview book of health communication, Harvey & Koteyko (2013) put together discursive strategies that were observed in several online health support groups in previous research. I will comment on each strategy and complement Harvey & Koteyko's observations, with findings from additional studies.

> (1) Indicating one's condition by describing symptoms and/or mentioning the history of the disease. This is one of the most common opening moves, which is often used to articulate a relation with the shared problem of the group […].
> (2) Making direct […], or indirect requests for information […]
> (3) Making references to shared experiences […]. This is another common strategy of establishing one's legitimacy. […]
> (4) Describing personal successes and elaborating on positive improvements […]
>
> (Harvey & Koteyko 2013: 169)

As Harvey and Koteyko indicate, the first discursive strategy is commonly employed to signal legitimacy and authenticity. This fits with Morrow's (2006: 539) observation that writers of

[25] It is therefore not surprising that empathizing occurred mostly in assessment moves (Locher 2006: 136).

problem posts described their symptoms and provided necessary background information. Additionally, advice-seekers reflected on how they were feeling, which Morrow attributed to the overall topic of depression (see also Vayreda & Antaki 2009: 936—they found an "emotional overlay" to be typical in the first posts of members who were newly diagnosed with bipolar disorder). Armstrong et al. (2011: 9) also observed that the contributors to a diabetes forum outlined their medical history to index their status as legitimate contributor. Similarly, advice-seekers detailed the development of their disease and their current options in Sillence's study (2010: 382). In the case of Lucy answers (Locher 2006: 211), advice-seekers provided additional background information about a problem, which sometimes also featured medical details depending on the problem. Closely linked to this strategy are justification clauses as described by Kouper (2010: 10) and Sillence (2013: 482): Users explained why they were asking for advice, which may range from being worried, lacking appropriate knowledge or to using the forum as a last resort.

In terms of the second strategy mentioned by Harvey and Koteyko, advice-seekers do not necessarily ask for explicit advice but may prefer to ask for descriptive accounts or generally be interested in other people's opinions (see Section 5.3.1.2). Thirdly, advice-seekers refer to shared experiences by telling a story or by pointing out commonalities, by which they not only constructed their identities as authentic but also involved readers in interaction. For instance, one of the advice-seekers in Sillence's (2010: 382) study explicitly positioned himself as wanting to learn from the collective experience of other members, which has an involving effect. In the case of the breast cancer forum, Sillence (2013: 482) described that advice-seekers provided further background on their condition in narrative form. Fourthly, advice-seekers can report on their successes or relate how their health has improved. In a previous pilot study, I described how forum users shared their progress in their journey to quit smoking (Rudolf von Rohr 2015: 287), which encouraged other participants to engage in face-enhancing relational work, such as praising and bonding.

There are additional strategies that have clear interpersonal dimensions as they are used to appeal to other posters (not mentioned in the list). For instance, Eichhorn (2008: 73) found that "self-deprecating comments" were a common means of soliciting support by advice-seekers in the context of eating disorder discussion boards (see also Rudolf von Rohr 2015/2017). From an interpersonal pragmatics perspective, it can be argued that self-deprecating comments have an appealing effect on other members, inviting them to contradict this initial evaluation. In Lucy answers, advice-seekers sometimes apologized in advance for the length of their letters or for being imposing, which has a face-saving effect (Locher 2006:

209/210). Further, Kouper (2010: 10) observed that advice-seekers frequently expressed "appreciation in advance", thanking for prospective advice. In Lucy answers, advice-seekers sometimes thanked Lucy for her services or for her help in advance. Locher (2006: 238) considers thanking to be a type of hedging in this case since advice-seekers want Lucy to do some work. Similarly, by thanking in advance, advice-seekers may increase the probability of beneficial uptake or answers in the motherhood community blog that Kouper studied. Morrow (2006: 539) also found that "short expressions of appreciation" were sometimes used to close requests for advice.

Finally, a further part of being an authentic advice-seeker is exhibited beyond the first post as it appears that it is common for advice-seekers to return to the forum (or the thread) to thank others for their contribution (see Armstronget al. 2011: 7; Harrison & Barlow2009: 104; Sillence 2010: 383; Sillence 2013: 482). I argued in Rudolf von Rohr (2015: 280) that thanking has an interpersonal function, as it helps to maintain a positive relationship, but that it also is a testament to advice-seekers' authenticity as it shows that they appreciate advice and support and that it may have been useful to them in some way. Morrow (2006: 545) locates the function of thanks-messages in advice-seekers engaging in relationship management, acknowledging "advice-givers concern and gesture".

5.4 Summary

In this chapter I reviewed previous studies of health communication online and their link to persuasion. I outlined several ideological tenets of current health discourse, pointing out that these have persuasive force on individuals on a macro-level. Moreover, several advantages of using the Internet to promote as well as to find public health communication were identified. The third part of this chapter centred on the persuasive mechanisms on a discursive level when looking at research about online health discourse. Thereby, the focus was set on the speech activity advice since it involves participants trying to influence someone else's decisions. Further, advice-giving has been associated with the need of establishing credibility, expertise and trustworthiness—clearly pointing to persuasion, too. Thus, previous studies were approached through a lens of persuasion, illuminating aspects of the three working principles of persuasion, logos, ethos and pathos.

The larger ideological developments are important to situate and understand my corpus on smoking cessation in its larger context. I showed that great emphasis is placed on the responsibility of individuals regarding their own health. In other words, health problems are often conceptualized as requiring proper lifestyle choices by individuals. This has led to some criticism by researchers as being “healthist” due to the fact that social and economic factors tend to be overlooked in this course. Moreover, some researchers raised the valid question of the effects of healthism on non-complying individuals, which may range from guilt to stigmatization. In view of the emphasis of individuals’ responsibility over their health, it is not surprising that quality information is viewed as pre-condition to make decisions. In fact, patients have the right to access quality information in the UK as it is argued that being informed allows patients to make good and sensible decisions. Thus, the Internet is of great importance as it facilitates easy access to all kinds of health information, enable uncomplicated networking and emphasise the importance of lay expertise. All of these aspects have been said to lead to an empowerment of patients and Internet users.

Despite the positive idea of patient empowerment, there have been some caveats regarding the discourse of empowerment. As mentioned above, non-compliance with the ideals of responsible health citizens is not without tangible consequences. Moreover, there is a fear that states can legitimise providing less health services and programmes when too much emphasis is put on individual responsibility and information alone. In the same vein, the focus on information sometimes disregards the fact that patients do not always act rationally but may be guided by fear and anxiety, impacting the comprehension of information. Additionally, some citizens may have difficulty in understanding or finding health information, which puts them at a disadvantage. Finally, some researchers are afraid that in purely peer-to-peer context, the quality of information may not be good enough.

The Internet has been hailed as an effective vessel of public health communication—both for heath information producers as well as consumers. Availability, anonymity and the possibility of individualization and customization have been identified as main advantages apart from the cost-effective nature of Internet messages. From a user’s perspective, overcoming problems of professional access, networking, buying drugs online as well as non-mainstream information have been singled out as some of the benefits.

I put forward that the discursive patterns of advice-giving can be linked to logos , the structure of arguments of persuasion. The studies under scrutiny had in common that advice-givers tended to prefer to leave the ultimate responsibility for decisions with advice-seekers, stressing optionality. In this respect, sharing personal experience has been highlighted as important strategy since it could be understood as indirect advice. Moreover, advice is usually couched within other content; it may be preceded by own experience, assessment, general information, etc. Several studies noted that initial posts did not necessarily contain explicit requests for help, which could be due to the hierarchically lower position posters adopt when seeking advice. Further, advice-seekers could index their competence by using yes/no or alternative questions, displaying partial expertise over their problems. Asking for experiential accounts has been found another way of implicitly requesting advice.

Advice-givers need to index their authority over a topic in order to be perceived as a trustworthy source of information and guidance. In the anonymous and written context of online support groups, this means that posters rely on discursive means. Previous research has found a range of warranting strategies that were used to highlight expertise and credibility. They are of a diverse nature, ranging from referring to links, using a specialist vocabulary, drawing on personal experience, and so on. In terms of pathos, sharing personal experience has been observed time and again to have an involving function, signalling common ground and solidarity. In some cases, advice-givers explicitly stated their sympathies, normalized feelings, wished others well and praised behaviour, which can all be said to work towards emotional involvement.

In online health support groups, advice-seekers also face the challenge of having to construct their identities as legitimate contributors. Therefore, they employ a variety of discourse strategies, such as describing one's medical history, referring to shared experiences, sharing successes, but also thanking for advice etc. They all contribute to demonstrating the authenticity of (their ethos as) help-seekers. Moreover, some strategies, like appreciation in advance, self-deprecating comments but also pointing out commonalities, have an involving effect, pertaining to pathos construction.

To sum up, this chapter showed that persuasion is a useful framework to discuss current health discourse. It revealed what persuasive pressures are at work on a macro-level while also illustrating how persuasive mechanisms permeate advice-giving in online health discourse. The latter of which has been argued to be "one of the core activities users engage in" in online health support groups (Stommel & Lamerichs 2014: 200).

6 Conducting a content and a cluster analysis in the overall corpus—emerging topics and patterns

To understand what "the issues at heart of a debate" (logos) are (Cockroft & Cockroft 2005: 15), three different levels have to be taken into account: (1) topics, (2) their informational structure and (3) their linguistic realization. Topics refer to the content used to persuade whereas the informational structure deals with how said topics are channelled through discursive moves. Finally, linguistic realization relates to form and what language is used for the first two levels. In this chapter, I approach the working principle of persuasion logos mainly through topic, which I analyze by conducting a descriptive content analysis of the overall corpus. Since I can only venture into disentangling how informational and interpersonal aspects are strategically employed by doing this kind of systematic and time-consuming work (which includes the coding of discursive moves at a later stage), analyzing topics covered in my data is a necessary and crucial step. Moreover, the importance of information has been highlighted in the patient empowerment literature (see Ch. 5). In other words, it is crucial to establish what health practitioners (as well as peers on forums) view as relevant information for smoking cessation. Moreover, multi-modal aspects and design features are also investigated in view of the persuasive potential that has been assigned to the variety of semiotic modes, to interactivity and to customization possible on the Internet (see Ch. 3 and Ch. 5.). Further, in order to have a solid basis for selecting sub-samples for detailed linguistic analyses, the content analysis provides an additional layer of knowledge to merely extra-linguistic factors. In other words, the content analysis makes it possible to distinguish between more similar and more dissimilar sources, on which I can ground my decisions for sub-sampling. Through doing this, I address the following research questions in this chapter:

- What topics are commonly discussed in the corpus?
- What are typical multi-modal or design features found in the corpus?

To answer these two research questions, a qualitative content analysis has been carried out (Guest et al. 2012: 147; Saldaña 2013: 88). The content analysis allows to me to address both aspects as I can systematically illustrate what issues have been raised and what medium factors occur. The numerical evidence of the content analysis leads to a secondary step: the cluster analysis. The cluster analysis is a data reduction technique, which makes it possible to group similarly coded sources together. These two procedures equip me with numerical evidence to focus on certain topics as well as to select smaller samples for further analysis.

Looking at how the same topic code is realized differently in terms of discursive moves, relational work, identity construction and linguistic form is going to be my approach to discuss persuasion in selected websites.

After outlining my main methodological steps for the content analysis (Section 6.1.1), I present the topics and multi-modal categories that occur in the data and explain selected categories (Sections 6.1.2 -6.1.2.3). Further, I will discuss and interpret some quantitative findings of my analysis (Section 6.2). In Section 6.3, the method for cluster analysis is described and emergent groups within the corpus are elaborated. Finally, the results will be summarized, and implications will be discussed (Section 6.4).

6.1 The content analysis—descriptive coding

In this section, the coding method is explained, analytical steps that have been undertaken are illustrated and results are discussed in two parts: The definitions and characteristics of individual codes are located in this section and relative frequencies and co-occurrences of codes are described in the results section (6.2). Before explaining the methodological steps in more detail, some terminological matters have to be resolved. I am not conducting a quantitative "content analysis" in a traditional sense, which consists of analysing "[…] the frequency and saliency of particular words or phrases in a body of original text data in order to identify keywords or repeated ideas" (Namey et al. 2008: 138). I adopt a qualitative approach, with the aim of identifying the main topics and multi-modal features that occur on each website, which is what Saldaña (2013: 88) calls "descriptive coding". Descriptive coding helps summarize what is going on in each source, "lead[ing] primarily to a categorized inventory […] or index of the data's contents" (89). As such, descriptive coding is similar to Namey et al. (2008: 138)'s notion of "thematic analysis", which is about "[…] identifying and describing both implicit and explicit ideas". However, Saldaña (2013: 14) questions the idea of coding themes since in his view themes only emerge after the coding has been conducted. Guest et al. (2012: 17), on the other hand, explain that applied thematic analysis "[…] identifies key themes" and that "themes are transformed into codes". Considering these diametrically opposed definitions of theme, I prefer using the term "descriptive coding" instead of "thematic analysis". Even though Saldaña (2013) and Guest et al. (2012) describe very similar processes, the concept of descriptive coding which provides a summary of data fits my research intention of capturing the most frequently used arguments.

6.1.1 Methodology: the coding process

The entire corpus consisted of 30 online sources, which were coded descriptively (see Saldaña 2013). To do justice to the computer-mediated nature of the data, as well as including topics/arguments in the coding, the multi-modal set-up of each site was also considered. Technical features, such as interactivity, and the use of different modes, such as pictures or videos, have an impact on persuasion. Admittedly, multi-modal codes may also work on levels other than purely logos, i.e. ethos or pathos, but the working principles should be seen as a heuristic help: their neat separation is realistically unattainable.

Several steps were undertaken in order to establish an Excel spreadsheet that could be used to achieve reliable results. First, "measurement codes", which are codes that signal "presence or absence of information" for each source (MacQueen et al. 2008: 124), have been developed bottom-up. Focussing on measurement codes allowed forgoing further segmenting the sources at this stage. The initial code list for topics encompassed explicit ideas such as "smoking is expensive" but also structural observations such as "listing practical tips". The codebook for the multi-modal set-up emerged in a mixture of adapting theory and bottom-up analysis. Codes refer to the structure of websites/online sources (user-user interactivity and they also inventory what multi-modal aspects are found on the source (such as pictures or downloads). Descriptive coding of the data in a pilot study led to 68 topic codes and 34 multi-modal codes, which were ordered into super-categories, i.e. categories which are on a higher hierarchical level (see Saldaña 2013: 9). Following MacQueen et al. (2008: 126), all codes were put into a 0/1 matrix in a spreadsheet, which was tested for inter-rater agreement by two fellow researchers at the University of Basel. If a code occurred on the site, it received a 1 on the spreadsheet to signal its presence. Thus, the aim was to get to "relative code frequencies" (Guest et al. 2012: 141), which means it was only relevant whether a code occurred on a site but not how often in absolute terms.

After the first coding comparison, the codebook was revised and refined, featuring 43 codes (excluding super-categories). The new codebook was checked for its reliability by a student intern who coded a fifth of the entire corpus. For 35 out of 43 codes[26], a percentage agreement of 83 per cent or higher was achieved for individual codes, with an overall percentage agreement of 87 per cent. Codes with poor agreement were reworked and redefined again and two codes were dropped completely after discussion (see MacQueen et al. 2008: 133). Following Guest et al.'s suggestions (2012: 91), problematic codes were re-applied to a section of the data to resolve coding discrepancies. This led to an acceptable percentage

[26] Super-categories were not coded as such. They received a 1 if one of the hierarchically lower codes was present. Hence, they were not included to calculate inter-coder agreement to avoid skewing the numbers.

agreement for the problematic codes, resulting in an overall percentage agreement of 94 per cent. Thus, the final codebook consisted of 34 topic codes, of which 6 were super-categories, and 17 multi-modal codes, of which 4 were super-categories. Finally, the entire 30 sources were systematically coded with the categories listed in Table 6.1[27].

Table 6.1 presents all the topic and multi-modal codes that were used to code the corpus. The table is divided into topics and multi-modal codes to facilitate comprehension. Moreover, the codes have been put into their super-categories, which function as headers, in alphabetical order. Every super-category is highlighted in grey and explicitly labelled as such. In the right-hand column, a short definition of the super-category or the code is provided. Due to the bottom-up nature of how the codebook developed, there is a degree of overlap between certain topic codes. Topic codes that strictly refer to informational content are mutually exclusive (signalled by * in the table) with the exception of "smoking is bad for your health", which can occur as a general statement or can also be specified by mentioning particular health drawbacks. The super-category [Facing quitting][28], however, mostly describes how information is structured. In other words, it features strategies for how content is presented, which means that its codes often interface with codes from [lifestyle] and [bio-medical reasons to quit smoking]. For instance, "listing practical tips" feature references to health or lifestyle concerns.

[27] See Appendix I for a detailed codebook, featuring inclusion and exclusion criteria.
[28] Super-categories are highlighted by square brackets while codes are highlighted by quotation marks throughout the chapter.

Table 6.1 Topic and multi-modal codes in the entire corpus presented in sequence and in alphabetical order according to super-categories

Code name	Definition
Topic codes	
Facing quitting: aspects to consider (super-category)	Preparing smokers for a quit Making smokers aware of aspects that should move them to quit
Addressing common questions/worries	With respect to quitting. In form of FAQs or myth-busting; often in some sort of question-answer format
Listing practical tips	Explicit tips to deal with withdrawal/quitting Often in bullet points
Testimonials of quitters	Quote or story by ex-smoker
Toxic ingredients in cigarettes*	Toxins in cigarette are listed on source
Inform on quitting (super-category)	On physical/psychological changes and challenges during a quit
Coping strategies for withdrawal	How to go about physical or psych. side effects of quitting
Different phases of quitting*	Explicit talking about “different stages” of quitting
Quitting: influence on weight*	Talks about food cravings because of quitting Also includes tips for the prevention of weight gain
Quitting whilst pregnant*	Talks about quitting while pregnant, how it is hard but beneficial
Recovery of the body*	How the body recovers: often detailed physical description
Point out bio-medical reasons to quit smoking (super-category)	Any mentioning of health benefits of quitting and health disadvantages of smoking
All kinds of tobacco are unhealthy*	How snuff, shisha is not healthier than cigarettes
Second-hand smoke affects others*	Effects of second-hand smoke on family/pets
Smoking affects sense of taste and smell*	Often phrased positively: senses improve after quitting
Smoking and reproduction*	How smoking affects fertility, is harmful during pregnancy
Smoking is bad for your health	General reference to how smoking damages one’s health
Smoking is linked to lung disease*	Explicit mentioning of how smoking leads to lung cancer or COPD
Smoking increases risks during surgery*	Mention how smoking slows down wound healing
Point out lifestyle reasons to quit smoking (super-category)	Explain why smoking is bad or quitting is good with respect to lifestyle
Quitting benefits employers*	Point out why it is lucrative for employers to provide quit smoking services for employees
Quitting boosts self-esteem*	Link quitting with an increase in self-confidence
Smoking affects beauty*	Comments on how smoking leads to premature ageing, wrinkles, a bad smell, yellowing of teeth
Smoking affects the (ecol.) environment*	Explain how smoking is bad for forests or the environment
Smoking is bad for your sex life*	How it can affect men’s stamina or the libido in general
Smoking is expensive*	Point out how much money one can gain by quitting or how much one wastes by smoking
Quitting and nicotine substitutes (medication) (super-category)	on NRT
Medical alternatives to replace smoking	Talking about different medical treatments in detail
Support: involving potential quitters (super-category)	Offering support on site or pointing out programmes
Offer personalised support/contact*	Possibility to contact someone and get feedback
Quitters ask for help/support	Quitters ask for support and help
Quitters comment on how they are doing	Quitters comment on their physical state, their motivation

Code name	**Definition**
Topic codes	
Recommend stop smoking programmes*	Recommend going to a local service or provide an online programme
Support is helpful	Mentioning importance of support from friends and family as well as the usefulness of stop-smoking services
Multi-modal codes	
Interactivity (super-category)	Possibilities of interaction with source
Author— user interactivity	Website producers encourage users to interact with them by text, phone, e-mail or having them join an online programme
User— document interactivity	Possibility to make permanent changes to a source
User—medium interactivity	The use of hyperlinks or any temporary customization of a source
User— user interactivity	Possibility to directly interact with other users/readers
Links (super-category)	Shows network of a source
Links to other websites	Links to other mono-directional stop-smoking sources
Links to web 2.0 sites	Links to social media account, e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.
Multi-modal elements (super-category)	Semiotic channels other than language
Highlighting	Noticeable use of italics/colour to highlight certain aspects
Pictures	Use of pictures
Pictures with people	Pictures with people (is linked to the code above as it specifies whether pictures featured people)
Use of cartoons or symbols	Support of content through symbolic means
Videos	Testimonial or informative videos as downloads, links, or on source
Possibility to obtain material online (super-category)	Downloading or shopping of items
Commercial	Ordering items against payment, buying apps for money
Informative	Free downloading or ordering of documents or other items

In the following discussion, I will leave aside clear and uncontroversial codes, focus on less straightforward codes and highlight particularly important ones. I will adhere to the alphabetic order in Table 6.1 when presenting examples and, where possible, provide outlooks for the linguistic analyses to follow. Each example is marked with the super-category it belongs to (square brackets) as well as the name of the code that is discussed.

6.1.2 The description of topic codes

"Addressing common questions/worries"[29] includes passages that take up any concerns readers may have. These sections tend to have their own hyperlink on websites, frequently subcategorised to headers designated as *quitting*. However, their persuasive purpose may differ

[29] While the code names of sub-categories are marked by quotation marks, quotes from primary sources are in italics in the text.

depending on the purpose of sources: non-commercial sites want people to set aside reservations about quitting smoking whereas commercial sites want to dispel doubts about the safety of their products. "Addressing common questions/worries" often takes place in a question-answer format, such as FAQs, which are"[…] a special kind of virtual space which tries to simulate a discussion between insiders and outsiders" (Turnbull 2013: 298). Hence, "addressing common questions/worries" is interesting in terms of persuasion as it is an area that explicitly features multiple voices with writers positioning their readers but also themselves. Example (6.01) is part of a FAQs section about nicotine replacement therapy, which can be found under a tab called *Let's quit* on a charity website (S10):

> (6.01) [Facing quitting] **Addressing common questions/worries** (S10)
> Q. Does NRT work?
> A. It can help but it's not the only answer for every person. Clinical trials demonstrate that it can double your chances of success but it is not a magic wand and you do need to be properly motivated. View the QUIT Guide to Stopping Smoking for more information.

Since the letters *Q* and *A* precede questions and answers respectively, the dialogic format is highlighted. Readers are encouraged to identify with the questioner's role while the website authors assume an expert identity. It is noticeable how website authors use discursive strategies to establish credibility and further involve readers, such as hedging the first declarative statement (*It can help*), warranting a statement by referring to scientific research (*Clinical trials demonstrate*) and finally referring readers to other sections of the website (*View the QUIT Guide*).

Some instances that are captured by this code are not called FAQs but have a more evocative name, such as *myth-busting*. Myth-busting is realized differently than the prototypical FAQs since myths are usually presented in declarative statements. The next examples are both examples of *myth-busting* from sources with different institutional backgrounds: (S07) is maintained by a charity and (S04) is a commercial website. The myths are located under *Quitting Smoking* on the website. They consist of a mix of statements from different perspectives, e.g. first person, *you*, or impersonal statements. The reader can select and click on a myth, which leads to a sub-site either confirming or dismantling the statement as a myth. This is illustrated in example (6.02), which is about whether it is true that one gains weight after stopping smoking. The truth of the propositional content is partially acknowledged, as indexed by the hedge *maybe*, but dismissed as not being factual in the *long-term*. In (S04), *Nic-*

otine myths specifically deal with any worries potential customers may have in terms of using NRT products. They consist of impersonal declarative sentences, which are explicitly designated as *myth* and *fact. Myths* and *Facts* are contrasted with and set against each other, such as in (6.03), where it discusses how harmful nicotine really is.

(6.02) [Facing quitting] **Addressing common questions/worries** (S07)
I'll put on weight if I quit
Maybe for a short period, but not long-term

(6.03) [Facing quitting]*:* **Addressing common questions/worries** (S04)
Myths: Nicotine is carcinogenic
Fact: Nicotine is not proven to cause cancer. […] The risks associated with NRT, to aid with nicotine withdrawal, are significantly outweighed by the risks of smoking.

"Testimonials of quitters" refer to any personal narratives or short quotes by former smokers who either comment on quitting in general or on the services/products they used, having thus manifold purposes with respect to persuasion. Since former smokers vouch for the content of the sources, "testimonials of quitters" simultaneously appeals to a reader's reason and establishes credibility. Moreover, readers are involved by being encouraged to identify with the former smokers in testimonials, with the implication that "they were just like you and made it with our help". The presentation and style of "testimonials of quitters" varies over different sources, ranging from one single quoted sentence in directly reported speech to several paragraphs written from a first-person perspective, sometimes featuring a picture and/or name of the quitter. Depending on their length, "testimonials of quitters" are either interspersed with other informational material or are accorded to a specific link[30]. While most "testimonials of quitters" are text-based, they sometimes appear as video clips, which are introduced by a text, giving some background information on a sub-site. Figure 6.1 depicts a screenshot of one example of the code "testimonials of quitters" taken from the main NHS governmental stop smoking website. It consists of a single sentence with no clear originator since there is no name:

[30] See Thurnherr et al. (2016) for a detailed discussion of the form and functions of testimonials.

Figure 6.1 Screenshot of one example of the code "testimonials of quitters" [Facing quitting] from (S17)

The quote is set against a picture of a happy man, who is laughing and carrying his child over his shoulder in a playful way, which automatically lets readers connect the picture with the quote. The arrangement of the picture and the text make gives the testimonial multiple meanings: Firstly, the presence of the child points to the desirability of quitting, reminding readers of the effects smoking has on their family. Secondly, in the context of the website, the testimonial also helps enhance the credibility of the suggestions offered on the website. Example (6.04) is an excerpt from *a patient story* from the regional website of South Essex (S22). Before the text, a picture shows a couple who are looking straight into the camera and are breaking a cigarette in half. In contrast to the previous example, the people are clearly identified by name and location. Thus, their testimonial has the main function of warranting the effectiveness of the stop smoking service they used:

(6.04) [Facing quitting]: **Testimonials of quitters** (quotation marks in original) (S22)

Steve and Lorraine […] are among thousands of people whose health has improved thanks to South East Essex Primary Care Trust. The couple, both 53, had smoked throughout their entire adult lives.

"We had tried to stop on our own. In fact, we had pretty much tried everything but nothing worked," said Lorraine. […]

"Coping strategies for withdrawal" refers to suggestions and tips on how to deal with cravings and other withdrawal symptoms after stopping smoking. It overlaps, thus, with the categories “listing practical tips” and, in some instances, with “different phases of quitting”. This category can take different shape: For instance, strategies can be presented in a conventional table format, in which symptoms are paired up with tips in each row, or they can also be illustrated by a narrative of how smokers act when suffering from withdrawal. The next examples are taken from a non-governmental website, (S14), which works with cartoons to convey information. Similar to a comic book, the pictures and captions sequentially show how cravings come and pass, nicely involving the reader with few words (see Fig. 6.2 – Fig. 6.5):

Figure 6.2 Screenshot of how [Inform on quitting] "coping strategies for withdrawal" is realized in (S14), second part

Figure 6.3 Screenshot of how [Inform on quitting] “coping strategies for withdrawal” is realized in (S14), first part

Figure 6.4 Screenshot of how [Inform on quitting] "coping strategies for withdrawal" is realized in (S14), third part

Figure 6.5 Screenshot of how [Inform on quitting] "coping strategies for withdrawal" is realized in (S14), fourth part

By means of using cartoons, information is packaged playfully into an easily understandable narrative, which shows empathy for the struggle of smokers and promises that there is a happy ending.

"Different phases of quitting" refers to when the process of quitting is divided into several stages, which occurs in diverse ways. It can be a discursive description of the journey to quit smoking, detailing what each ex-smoker has to go through. Such textual explanations provide opportunities for self-reflection and normalization: readers may feel understood and comforted when they can identify as being in a particular phase. Alternatively, "different phases of quitting" can be present without explicit discussion if they are used to structure a website into sub-pages (e.g. *preparing to stop*, *after quitting* etc.), assigning fitting articles for each stage. Since readers select their reading path depending on where they see themselves, "different phases of quitting" becomes a means of tailoring to addressees. Example (6.05) is from the smoking section on the NetDoctor website (S16). The text includes no less than seven "phases of quitting"; including a first phase, in which smokers have no desire to quit at all. By considering this as the first phase of quitting, any smoker is implicitly positioned as a future quitter. Passages from phase one and two are presented in the following:

(6.05) [Inform on quitting]: **Different phases of quitting** (bold in original) (S16)

1. Pre-contemplation: smoking isn't a problem

In this phase, you're not thinking about giving up smoking.

You don't feel smoking is a problem and you have no desire to stop. […]

You're also at this stage if you think you 'can't' give up because you haven't the willpower or you're worried about effects such as weight gain.

2. Contemplation: smoking has disadvantages, but I'm not yet ready to quit

In this phase you are aware of the pros and cons of smoking, but aren't yet ready to do anything about them. […]

"Recovery of the body" features descriptions of how long ex-smokers need to restore their health. It usually features a timeline, comprising the development of the health of ex-smokers for over 15 years after the last cigarette. Timelines are situated in sections where explicit reasons for quitting are given, e.g. *health benefits, why quit?, why should I stop?*. Even though recovery timelines are nearly identical content-wise on all sources, they differ regarding the form in which they are presented. This refers to the directness of language used but more often to visual aspects. Some timelines are lists in run-on text while others are differentiated by colour or occur in an even more whimsical form, such as a lottery scratch ticket. In terms of persuasion, there is an element of promise in "recovery of the body", showing the desirability of quitting in the near future (see Van Dijk 2008: 38). For instance, the first point on timelines of recovery is already set at twenty minutes to emphasise that many health advantages are within grasp. Introductory sentences to timelines usually highlight the fact that good health is within the reader's reach as well, featuring time expressions such as *within minutes, quickly, almost as soon as you quit*. In example (6.06), which is from a charity website linked to the British Heart Foundation, the timeline makes out the main bulk of the sub-page *health benefits*:

(6.06) [Inform on quitting]: **Recovery of the body** (S11)

Here's the good news: the health benefits begin almost as soon as you quit. After ...

20 minutes	Blood pressure and pulse return to normal
8 hours	Nicotine and carbon monoxide levels in the blood are halved, oxygen levels in the blood return to normal
24 hours	Carbon monoxide is eliminated from the body and the lungs start to clear out the build up of tar […]

While the initial sentence maintains how quick a recovery can be, the first three points confirm this claim, emphasising positive health developments through the use of the lexical items *normal*, *halved, clear.*

"All kinds of tobacco are unhealthy" includes sections, in which it is explained that, apart from smoking cigarettes, other forms of consuming tobacco are harmful. Thus, potential notions that there are healthy smoking alternatives to cigarettes are targeted. However, the weight given to this issue varies considerably between sources. It ranges from one sentence to several paragraphs on specific sub-sites on which toxic ingredients and health disadvantages are described in analogy to smoking cigarettes. Some of the titles of sub-sites on which this code is located (*South Asian Tobacco use, Smoking Shisha*, etc.) indicate that "all kinds of tobacco are unhealthy" often refers to smoking shisha or chewing paan. Thus, specific cultural groups within the UK are addressed as is the case in example (6.07) from the British Heart Foundation (S15):

(6.07) [Point out bio-medical reasons]: **All kinds of tobacco are unhealthy** (S15)

It's not just cigarettes that are harmful, smoking shisha can also damage your health. […] The average shisha-smoking session lasts an hour and research has shown that in this time you can inhale the same amount of smoke as from more than 100 cigarettes.

Example (6.07) neatly shows that "all kinds of tobacco are unhealthy" has an educative function in terms of explaining the harmfulness of other forms of tobacco consumption when it is pointed out that a shisha session equals the smoke of a hundred cigarettes.

"Quitting benefits employers" describes any instances in which employers are encouraged to provide on-site support for smokers. The line of reasoning presented is that by helping employees quit smoking economic benefits will ensue. Websites that offer workplace-schemes especially make a point of how "quitting benefits employers". These workplace-schemes are usually introduced in specifically labelled sub-sites (e.g. *corporate health, workplace*), describing the nature of the stop smoking service provided and the advantages of reducing the number of smokers among employees. Even though the core arguments for how "quitting benefits employers" remain the same, the focus of responsibility can shift across sources, as in examples (6.08) and (6.09). In the first example (6.08), the tone is impersonal and more detached, emphasising the disadvantages for employers caused by smokers. The second example (6.09) addresses employers more directly and in a more positive way, trying to appeal to their sense of business:

(6.08) [Point out lifestyle reasons]: **Quitting benefits employers** (emphasis in original) (S09)

- **Money** – Individual smokers cost anything between £1,664 and £7,774* each year
- **Morale** – effects of fag breaks on non- smokers [sic!] morale
- **Productivity** – lost through breaks and ill health […]

(6.09) [Point out lifestyle reasons]: **Quitting benefits employers** (S21)
Supporting your staff to stop smoking not only reduces sickness absence and increases productivity, but also improves your company's image. It has been shown to make staff feel more motivated and increase loyalty. […]

The next topic code might not immediately come to mind when considering smoking cessation. "Smoking affects the (ecol.) environment" designates any ecological or environmental consequences caused by smoking. It is an argument that is thought to reach a younger audience since it is located in sections, such as *Under-18s guide to quitting* or *Smoking and young people*. Regardless of whether "smoking affects the (ecol.) environment" is elaborated in a longish text passage, presenting a detailed list of how tobacco consumption damages the environment, or is captured in a single, general, sentence, the overall gist remains the same: adolescents should not just quit for themselves but for the greater good. Example (6.10) is part of a regional smoking cessation website, (S25), which provides a set of reasons to quit smoking for *teen smokers.* The detrimental effects of tobacco plantations are listed as the fourth reason to quit. The strong claim that *quitting helps save the planet* is warranted by referring to research and using the technical term *deforestation*:

(6.10) [Point out lifestyle reasons]: **Smoking affects the (ecol.) environment** (S 25)
4. Quitting helps save the planet. Deforestation due to tobacco production accounts for nearly 5% of overall deforestation in the developing world, according to research published in the medical journal The BMJ.

"Support is helpful" encompasses explicit references of how support facilitates the quitting process, which are often complemented by telephone numbers and addresses and are found in help sections of websites (*help with quitting, your services*). Regional governmental websites emphasise the usefulness of support in the form of stop smoking services, which has the persuasive function of encouraging users to get in touch off-line. Example (6.11) is from the regional stop smoking website of Somerset, (S21), but the same numerical evidence (*4 times more likely*) is also used to warrant the usefulness of stop smoking services in other regional websites.

(6.11) [Support]: **Support is helpful** (S21)
You're up to 4 times more likely to stop with our help compared to will power alone.

Since the effectiveness of the services is quantified, better results when quitting are promised. The quantitative structure *more likely* additionally implies a scientific basis for this claim. In contrast to (6.11), readers are encouraged to stay online and participate in a discussion forum[31] in example (6.12), which is part of a commercial stop smoking website (S03):

(6.12) [Support]*:* **Support is helpful** (S03)
When you're quitting smoking, you need all the support you can get. And no-one understands what you're going through like another quitter. So log on to our Discussion Forum and you can meet up with lots of people in the same situation as you. […].

When comparing the two examples (6.11) and (6.12), it becomes evident that "support is helpful" is mobilized for different purposes. While the main goal is to motivate readers to get in contact offline in (6.11) (emphasis lying on *our help*), agency is put on the reader (*you)* and

[31] The forum mentioned in the example was not active when capturing this particular website.

on peer-to-peer help available on site in (6.12). Hence, website authors try to involve readers and keep them online as long as possible.

6.1.3 The description of multi-modal codes

The super-categories [interactivity], [links], [multi-modal elements] and [possibility to obtain material online] describe the technical features and the setup of the sources. These include medium-specific idiosyncrasies that are crucial for persuasion online (see Section 3.4). Since these codes may not be manifested linguistically, they are more difficult to illustrate. Therefore, I will describe each super-category and explain potentially ambiguous sub-codes, providing examples of how codes may be indexed through language. I will discuss super-categories in alphabetical order (see Table 6.1).

[Interactivity] comprises to what extent readers can participate and co-determine interaction, which previous studies on online health communication have considered a decisive parameter for effective interventions (see Neuhauser & Kreps 2010a/b). Following Warnick (2007: 69), I view interactivity as a multi-layered phenomenon: there is "author-user", "user-document", "user-medium" and "user-user interactivity". "Author-user interactivity" is about motivating readers to get in touch with authors, involving either a request for readers to register to an online smoking cessation programme or a change in communication channel, e.g. from website to email, or from website to phone. Example (6.13) shows how "author-user interactivityis linguistically advertised, trying to move readers to get in touch with the local stop smoking service, linked to the source. Part of the slogan (*take the first step*) is repeated throughout the website, which is hyperlinked to a sub-site where visitors find a phone number. Thus, "author-user interactivity" may appear as a banner on each subpage (ex. 6.13) or may be encountered in particular sub-sites that are called *Contact us, Interactive,* which detail an e-mail address, a phone number or even a form which can be filled in on the page and be sent off.

(6.13) [Interactivity]: **Author-user interactivity** (S18)
TAKE THE FIRST STEP AND CONTACT US NOW

In the case of "user-document interactivity", website visitors can effectuate more permanent[32] changes to a source, for instance by uploading a picture, rating a piece of advice or

[32]"More permanent" in comparison to medium-user interactivity, i.e. when re-visiting the website, the original change is likely to still be there.

publishing a comment. Thus, "user-document interactivity often co-occurs with "user-user interactivity". "User-user interactivity" is typically found on peer-to-peer sites since it designates the possibility to interact with other users directly on the source. Example (6.14) shows how the NHS stop smoking site (S17) advertise their message wall[33], which further below is followed by appealing to readers to contribute their opinions (*Add your own message)* and a hyperlink reiterating the same request (*ADD NOW*):

(6.14) [Interactivity]: **User-document/User-user interactivity** (S17)
Getting in touch with other people who are quitting smoking is a great way to stay motivated. Use our message wall to post messages for other people who are quitting. […].

This example shows how "user-user interactivity" involves "user-document interactivity" in asynchronous CMC genres. It also reveals that "user-user interactivity" can take place in a highly mediated form. Even though the message wall promotes direct peer interaction (and posters even comment on previous contributions), editorial control is firmly within the site producers' hands. In fact, website authors advise visitors that they *cannot guarantee that every message will be published* in their disclaimer. Finally, "user-medium interactivity" refers to how readers can create their own reading paths on a source by clicking on hyperlinks or to how sources can be temporarily personalised, for example, by filling out an addiction test or by calculating the money spent on cigarettes.

[Links] describe the network of a source, informing readers about how well-connected the source in question is. Since being linked to well-respected websites may demonstrate or help increase the trustworthiness of a website, links are particularly important for sources with no official backing. In contrast, "links to Web 2.0 sites", i.e. the social media accounts of websites, have a different function as they are attempts at prolonging interaction on a different platform.

[Multi-modal elements] make note of semiotic channels other than language whereas the other multi-modal codes designate technical features, i.e. the infrastructure of a website. Since Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006) have explained that images as well as the arrangement of a text contribute to creating meaning in online sources[34], the purpose of this super-category is to document whether and what kind of semiotic channels other than text are in use. "Cartoons

[33] In the meantime, this source does not feature a message wall anymore and offers no possiblities for user-generated content. However, there is a Facebook page in the same name, suggesting that the popularity of social media made hosting their own platform obsolete.
[34] [Multi-modal elements] and more technical features are both subsumed under multi-modal codes as the technical set-up also crucially influences the creation of meaning.

and symbols" support text on sites by offering iconic illustrations of content (see Fig. 6.2 - 6.5). "Cartoons and symbols" often serve as hyperlinks, on which users click to take a shortcut to specific content on websites. Hence, they act as a succinct announcement of what readers are to expect. In peer-to-peer sites, "cartoons and symbols" have a relational function (e.g. smileys or welcome-back balloons). "Pictures" are employed to personalise testimonials (see Fig. 6.1) or to emphasise salient points made in the text; e.g. health benefits may be stressed by the use of an image. The sub-division into "pictures with people" has occurred on the basis of Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006), who outline how depicted people can carry out image acts, establishing an interaction with readers. Figure 6.6 from a commercial website,

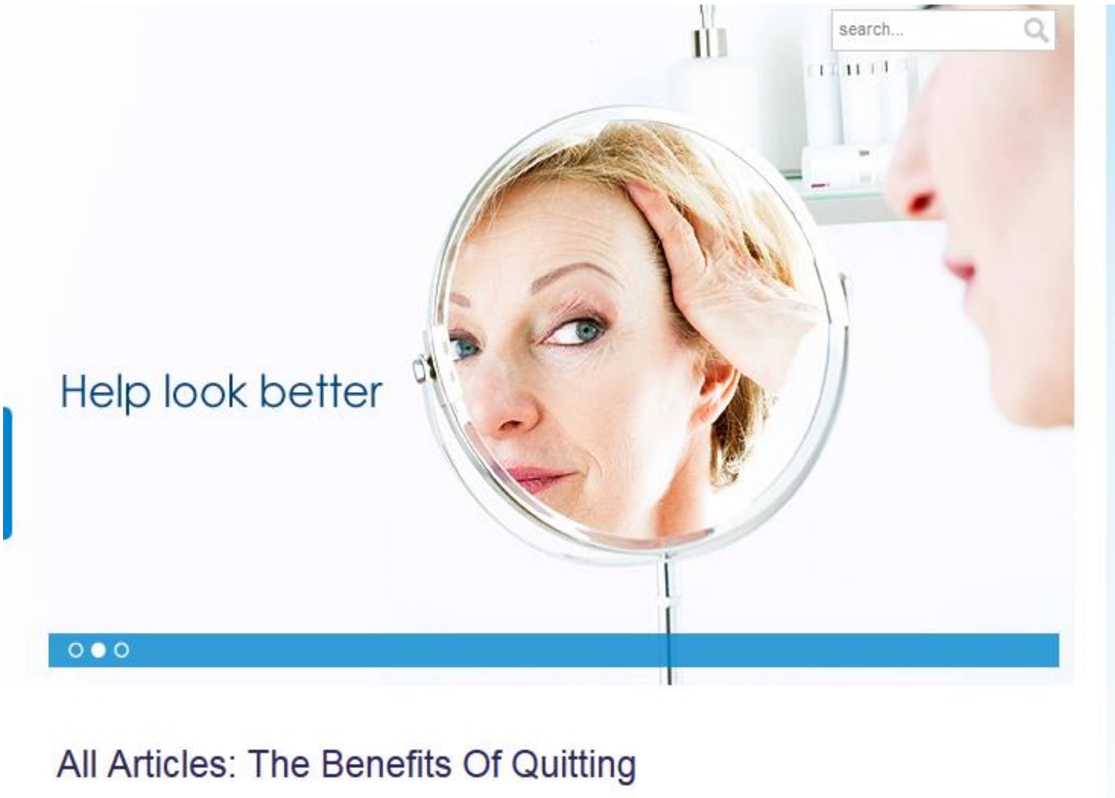

Figure 6.6 Screenshot of how [Multi-modal elements] "picture with people" is realised in (S03)

(S03), depicts a woman looking in the mirror, closely examining herself with the caption *Help look better:*

"Highlighting" includes the noticeable use of different colours or italics to put passages of sources into relief in order to structure a text, guide the readers' attention or to indicate hyperlinking. Finally, "videos" indicate whether the source includes filmic material to convey information or to show testimonials, which may be directly accessible, offered as a download or be linked to a YouTube account.

The super-category [possibility to obtain material online] refers to downloading or ordering of items on a source (free or for purchase). Sources offer a range of downloads, which can be in the form of informational leaflets in pdf format, providing more detailed tips or information, or in the form of quit smoking apps, offering guidance through quitting smoking journeys. Items that can be ordered encompass stop smoking guides, leaflets or the NHS *quit-kit* (including diaries, guides, support CDs).

6.2 The results of descriptive coding

In this section, the numerical results of the descriptive coding are discussed, which will point to informational focal points. After a numerical description of the coding of the corpus (i.e. mean, mode and median of average code occurrences per source), I indicate the distribution of codes per source in the overall corpus according to topic and multi-modal codes. Finally, frequent codes will be indicated, highlighting what arguments are considered to be the most relevant ones when persuading people to stop smoking.

Table 6.2 Overview of the mean, median and mode of all codes applied in 30 sources

Possible codes applied per source N = 41	Mean	21.3
	Standard deviation	5.1
	Mode	23
	Median	21

Table 6.2 gives us an overview of the main descriptive statistics of the codes applied to the corpus, showing that the sources featured 21.3 categories on average out of a total of 41 categories (excluding super-categories). 77.3 per cent of the sources were coded close to 21.3 categories, in a range of 16 to 26 categories, taking into account the standard deviation of 5.1. This observation is corroborated by the mode, the most common value, at 23 categories (four sources) as well as the median, i.e. the value which indicates the separation point for the higher and lower half of the data, at 21 categories (see Bortz 2005: 35-36).

Table 6.3 displays how the overall corpus is segmented in terms of the percentage of codes occurring per source, highlighting the two ranges where most sources are located in grey.

Table 6.3 The distribution of the 30 corpus members according to the percentage of codes used per source*

Percentage ranges in steps of ten per cent →	100 % =	10-<20	20-<30	30-<40	40-<50	50-<60	60-<70	70-<80	90-<100
All codes	41	-	1	4	9	8	5	3	-
Topic codes	28	1	4	6	3	10	4	2	-
Multi-modal codes	13	-	-	3	1	9	12	2	3

*The coding percentage per source is shown for all codes, for topic codes and for multi-modal codes.

While the first row details the segmentation of the corpus when all codes are considered, the second and third rows show the set-up of the corpus for topic and multi-modal codes respectively. Table 6.3 reveals that the sources are more diverse in their coding with respect to topic than to multi-modal codes. The sources differ from covering only 18 per cent up to 79 per cent with respect to topics whereas they range between 31 per cent and 92 per cent for multi-modal codes. The national stop smoking website (S17) is ranked highest overall, being in the highest percentage ranges for both topic and multi-modal codes. Obviously, as the main governmental smoking cessation source, (S17) caters to a broad audience, trying to leave no questions unanswered. The least coded source was a charity website focusing on policy measures against tobacco (S13) (appearing in the lowest percentage ranges for multi-modal setup and topics), which dedicates only one sub-page to helping stop smoking[35].

6.2.1 The frequency of topic codes

Code frequencies allow us to identify which topics and strategies prevail in the corpus, however, two caveats have to be mentioned: First, the following code frequencies are relative frequencies, indicating the presence or absence of a code (see Namey et al. 2008). Second, as Namey et al. (2008: 144) point out, "[…] codes represent interpretive summaries of data, rather than the primary data themselves". In order to facilitate legibility, the frequency of topic codes is discussed according to super-categories (in square brackets) in alphabetical order (see Table 6.1).

[35] See Section 6.2.2 for a more detailed overview of the results, where the coding for clusters of sources is shown.

Table 6.4 The frequency of topic codes in [Facing quitting: aspects to consider] in 30 sources

Topic	Yes↓
[Facing quitting: aspects to consider]	27
Addressing common questions or worries	14
Listing practical tips	17
Testimonials of quitters	19
Toxic ingredients in cigarettes	16

As depicted in Table 6.4, 27 sources bring up one of the codes that belong to [Facing quitting] at least once. Half of the sources discuss “addressing common questions/worries”, which partly covers similar issues like “listing practical tips” (e.g. regarding withdrawal). In contrast to “listing practical tips”, however, “addressing common questions/worries” is targeting readers who have not decided to stop yet. Advice in the form of “listing practical tips” is usually given on the premise that readers have taken the decision to stop, trying to directly influence and guide readers’ future behaviour. “Testimonials of quitters” seems to be a common category in order to engage readers, appearing in two thirds of all sources. More than half of the corpus discusses “toxic ingredients”. Since showing “toxic ingredients of cigarettes” points out how poisonous and unhealthy cigarettes are, it is a strategy to appeal to the reader’s reason as well as to generate fear.

Table 6.5 The frequency of topic codes in [Inform on quitting] in 30 sources

Topic	Yes↓
[Inform on quitting]	26
Different phases of quitting	6
Quitting whilst pregnant	12
Quitting: influence on weight	13
Recovery of the body	16
Specific coping strategies for withdrawal	10

Even though the number of 26 sources containing the super-category [Inform on quitting] is comparable to the previous super-category [Facing quitting], there is greater variety between sub-categories as depicted in Table 6.5. “Different phases of quitting” occurs only in 6 sources (20%), which may be an indication that such a diagnostic approach to quitting could have been viewed as being too technical on other sources. Interestingly, 12 sources (40%) raise the issue of why pregnant women should stop smoking. 40 per cent is a high number considering the delicacy of the matter of smoking and pregnancy. However, the tone tends to be supportive and non-judgemental, emphasizing that it is not too late to stop. A similar number of sources (13) specifically deal with the issue of food cravings and keeping off weight when stopping smoking. Sources usually pre-empt concerns around potential weight gain by stressing that it is avoidable. About half of the sources mention the "recovery of the body", promising the improvement of health matters once readers have quit smoking. Mentioning other "specific coping strategies for withdrawal" is a slightly less common category than the category of how quitting can "influence one's weight". While it asserts that gaining weight is a prime worry for smokers who are trying to stop, one could hypothesise that discussing negative side effects of quitting smoking are not the top priority of sources that want to convince readers to stop smoking.

Table 6.6 The frequency of topic codes in [Point out bio-medical reasons to quit] in 30 sources

Topic	Yes↓
[Point out bio-medical reasons to quit]	30
All kinds of tobacco are unhealthy	7
Smoking affects others	17
Smoking affects sense of taste and smell	16
Smoking and reproduction	14
Smoking harms your lungs	25
Smoking increases risks during surgery	2
Smoking is bad for your health	29

Table 6.6 verifies that [bio-medical reasons to quit] is the super-category that features the main arguments against smoking, which are connected to the physical effects of smoking in some way. 7 sources (23%) stress that other forms of tobacco, e.g. shisha, roll-ups, snuff, are as unhealthy as cigarettes, which is an attempt to cater to and include a diversity of readers. Smoking shisha or chewing paan is linked to South Asian ethnic minorities whereas roll-ups are associated with younger smokers. Interestingly, second-hand smoke is only talked about in 17 sources (56%) which can be attributed to small regional websites or sources that have just short sections on quitting leaving this category away. In view of space restriction, persuasive efforts are directed at smokers themselves instead of bringing up this additional—guilt-inducing—factor. The consequences of smoking on someone's sense of taste and smell are brought up in 16 cases (53%). Since this is a comparably minor drawback of smoking compared to other damages to the respiratory system, small regional and policy websites again

forego talking about this particular bio-medical reason. The fact that smoking can affect one's fertility and may complicate conception is dealt with in 14 sources (46%). In contrast to the two previous categories, whether this argument is raised seems to be tied to other factors than the size of the source. For instance, two small regional sources deal with this topic (e.g. S22, S30) while other, bigger, sources leave it aside (e.g. S14, S07). 25 sites (83%) describe in more detail how "smoking harms your lungs" whereas only two sources (6%) emphasize that smoking slows down wound healing, increasing the risks for surgery. The scarcity of this argument can be attributed to the fact that it concerns only a small group of readers; i.e. the ones about to undergo surgery. Unsurprisingly, the fact that "smoking is bad for one's health" is not only the main bio-medical reason but also the main reason against smoking overall so that 29 sites mention the health repercussions of smoking. The one site that does not outline general health damages still discusses specific lung diseases from smoking.

Table 6.7 The frequency of topic codes in [Point out lifestyle reasons to quit smoking] in 30 sources

Topic	Yes↓
[Point out lifestyle reasons to quit smoking]	27
Quitting benefits employers	6
Quitting boosts self-esteem	8
Smoking affects beauty	17
Smoking affects the (ecol.) environment	4
Smoking is bad for your sex life	7
Smoking is expensive	24

Table 6.7 indicates that 27 sources (90%) point out some lifestyle reason for why one should quit smoking. [Pointing out lifestyle reasons to stop smoking] is a super-category which features explicit attempts to persuade readers. The arguments used target the rationality of readers. 6 sites include the category "quitting benefits employers", addressing employers with the ulterior motive of persuading them to make use of quitting smoking services. The code "quitting boosts self-esteem" is mentioned on 8 sites (26%). It appears to be invoked as an extra-benefit to more obvious lifestyle arguments since it co-occurs with the most common lifestyle reasons "smoking is expensive" in 7 cases and with "smoking affects beauty" in 6 (with an overlap of 5 cases where all three occur)."Smoking affects beauty" is the second most frequent lifestyle reason, appearing in 17 sources (56%). The environmental argument against smoking is featured only in four sources, specifically targeting teenage smokers. The code "smoking is bad for your sex life" is also geared at a specific sub-audience, namely men. The

low number of 7 instances (23%) can be explained with the potentially embarrassing nature of the topic. The costs of smoking are by far the most common lifestyle argument against smoking, occurring in 24 sites (80%).

Table 6.8 The frequency of topic codes in [Quitting and nicotine substitutes] in 30 sources

Topic	Yes↓
[Quitting and nicotine substitutes]	24
Medical alternatives to replace smoking	24

Table 6.8 makes clear that 24 (80%) of all sources discuss medical alternatives to replace smoking. It indicates that smoking is a serious addiction that warrants medical help. At the same time, pointing to medication may also work to reduce readers' anxiety when contemplating quitting since it features a promise of easing withdrawal symptoms.

Table 6.9 The frequency of topic codes in [Support: involving potential quitters] in 30 sources

Topic	Yes↓
[Support: involving potential quitters]	29
Offer personalised support/contact	21
Quitters ask for help/support	3
Quitters comment on how they are doing	3
Recommend stop smoking programmes	22
Support is helpful	28

As Table 6.9 shows, offering support or stressing the importance of support is important throughout the corpus. Only one source, (S02), does not feature any of the sub-categories around [support]. This can be attributed to the economic goal of this source, which is to advocate quitting smoking by changing to e-cigarettes. Sources appeal to readers to get in contact and "offer personalised support/contact" beyond the online site itself in 21 cases (70%). If we look at coding co-occurrences, it shows that 16 sites (53%) try a double strategy of involving readers: they simultaneously "offer personalised support/contact" and "recommend stop smoking programmes". The codes "quitters ask for help/support" and "quitters comment on how they are doing" only appear in three sources each, pinpointing that few sites facilitate user-to-user interactivity. 22 sources (73%) recommend their on-site support in the form of an online programme or an associated local service. Finally, 28 sources (93 %) maintain the usefulness of support in general, including stop smoking services as well as friends and family.

Such a claim entails an emotional appeal to readers since they are reassured that quitting can hardly be done in isolation and that struggling is part of the process.

6.2.2 The frequency of multi-modal codes

In analogy to topic codes, the number of occurrences of multi-modal codes are also considered according to super-categories (in square brackets) in alphabetical order (see Table 6.1). The numerical evidence of multi-modal codes indicates what typical multi-modal setups are, pointing to important elements of the design and to the technical inventory of smoking-cessation sites.

As Table 6.10 reveals, the overwhelming majority of sources are interactive (29) since only one, heavily text-based, source does not feature any kind of interactivity (S26)[36].

Table 6.10 Frequency of multi-modal codes in [Interactivity] in 30 sources

Multi-modal codes	Yes ↓
[Interactivity]	29
Author-user interactivity	25
User-document interactivity	10
User-medium interactivity	26
User-user interactivity	9

25 sources (83%) promote “author-user interactivity”, which is a way of keeping up communication after readers have visited or left a source. Further, it is also a means of personalising interaction since readers are promised help for their individual problems. 26 sites (86%) allow readers to temporarily customise contents, for instance, by interacting with the medium by filling out cost-calculators, clicking on explanations or determining their own reading path. Thus, readers may feel better accommodated as they can adapt sources to their needs. In contrast, “user-document” and “user-user interactivity” occur less often. Only a third of all sources allow for readers to make permanent changes to sites, which suggests that authorial control ranks higher than allowing readers to individualise content. Even though nine sources permit user-user interactivity, there are also different degrees of intervening and controlling interaction. Three sources (including the two forums entirely dedicated to smoking cessation; S06, S12) allow open and un-monitored “user-user interaction”. While one source

[36] The sub-page “stopping smoking” on (S26) is hyperlinked to other health topics. However, since the sub-site dealing with smoking is not hyperlinked to other stop smoking material, it did not count as interactive stop smoking source.

provides a closed/private forum for registered users (S23), another source offers forums on a whole range of health topics (S16). Another three sources feature a limited commenting function (such as to a blog, a message wall or sharing quit pledges), which are closely monitored by website authors (S05, S11, S17). Finally, (S18) encourages readers to submit questions to the website which may eventually be published. Thus, some sources present a restricted form of "user-user interactivity", which highlights that website authors view it as risky for their persuasive purposes to have too much of unmonitored interaction.

Table 6.11 shows that all sources make use of [Links] to other sites on the Internet. These help readers situate a source, as they show its network and its points of reference.

Table 6.11 The frequency of multi-modal codes in [Links] in 30 sources

Multi-modal codes	Yes↓
[Links]	30
Links to other websites	28
Links to web 2.0 sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)	15

28 sites (93%) refer to other smoking cessation sources; often to (S17), the governmental stop smoking website. Only two sites refer solely to their own social media accounts without offering other smoking cessation links. One of them, (S08), is entirely focused on online support through peers and experts, adding further social media sources for self-help. The other is a regional stop-smoking site, (S19), considering the *smokefree* logo by the NHS a good enough trust marker as well as an indirect hint in terms of where further information can be found[37]. 15 sites (50%) are linked to Web 2.0 sites like Facebook or Twitter, which is a means of facilitating "user-user interactivity (even though not on the same URL). Freeman and Chapman (2012: 859) view social media as a tool to create user-user interactivity, which they argue is necessary for effective public health communication. They explain that "[interactivity] is also about ensuring that users are able to better engage with online health information and content that invites their participation and enhances their sense of belonging to a site". Interestingly, my analysis revealed a greater use of social media sites than the study by Freeman and Chapman (2012), which also looked at smoking cessation websites and showed that Twitter was the most common social media link (25% of their corpus featured Twitter links). Even though the two studies are not comparable in terms of data size and set-up, it seems likely that different capturing times (Freeman & Chapman in 2010; Rudolf von Rohr in 2012) contributed to

[37] The site has been updated and now features *useful sites*, which highlights that links are important for sources in terms of not only networking but providing complete information.

different percentages. Thus, the comparison of both findings may indicate a tendency to take more advantage of social media sites in public health communication.

Table 6.12 displays that the whole corpus used at least one kind of [multi-modal element] as this super-category occurs in all sources.

Table 6.12 Frequency of multi-modal codes in [Multi-modal elements] in 30 sources

Multi-modal codes	Yes↓
[Multi-modal elements]	30
Cartoons or symbols	12
Highlighting (colour, bold, italics)	29
Pictures	27
With people	26
Videos (links to video or on site)	11

"Cartoons or symbols" is one of the less favoured codes, being used by 12 sites (40%). It varies to what degree symbolic means are adopted to convey meaning across sources: While symbols mainly serve as hyperlinks to sub-sites on (S17), an entire quit smoking journey is narrated in a comic book style in (S14). An overwhelming number of 29 sites (97 %) use visual means such as "highlighting" to direct their readers' gaze. Moreover, pictures are a popular means of enhancing and diversifying content, which is used by 27 sources (90%). Only one of those 27 sources do not personalize its images by depicting people. Finally, about a third of the corpus is either linked to content on YouTube or has videos on the website, showing testimonials, short stories or demonstrations[38].

Table 6.13 indicates that 18 sites (60%) offer material online out of which 17 supply free additional information or help in the form of pdfs and apps. Thereby, interaction between source and reader is prolonged, extending persuasive process beyond the momentary visit. Pursuing obvious commercial interests could be seen to diminish the persuasive strength of a source, which can be a disadvantage. However, out of the 5 sites (17%) which sell goods only two target financial profits (S02, S05[39]). Two sources charge money to send hard copies of free online material (S13, S14) while another source collects money for their charity through their shop.

[38] For instance, make-up is put on a young smoker to demonstrate the effects of smoking on the aging of one's skin on one website.
[39] (S02) has a variety of e-cigarette equipment in their shop whereas (S05) sells medication online.

Table 6.13 Frequency of multi-modal codes in [Possibility to obtain material online] in 30 sources

Multi-modal codes	Yes ↓
[Possibility to obtain material online]	18
commercial (buying items)	5
informative	17

6.3 Conducting a cluster analysis- the grouping of sources according to their coding

Due to the number of sites included as well as the number of variables (codes), it is difficult to detect patterns manually in the corpus, which is aggravated by the fact that various codes are shared by several sites. A cluster analysis is a statistical procedure that identifies which sources/cases are more similar to each other by calculating the distance between cases (based on the coding of each case). Namey et al. (2008: 147)[40] explain that "[a] cluster analysis is a statistical method for grouping 'like' things together." The goal of a cluster analysis is to put a large amount of data into sub-groups, i.e. "[…] a group of relatively homogenous cases or observations", making the data set more manageable (Burns & Burns 2008: 552; emphasis removed). It is possible to focus either on specific cases or on variables, drawing on the results of the cluster analysis. Uprichard (2009: 144) provides a good argument for why a cluster analysis is useful: she sets out that a cluster analysis is a "descriptive and exploratory" technique, which serves researchers as a starting point and not as statistically significant end result. Thus, the caveat of a cluster analysis is, as Uprichard (2009: 142) and Everitt et al. (2011: 4) point out, that there is no possibility to get to the true or correct results of a cluster analysis. Rather, results can be useful or "better or worse representations of the cases" (Uprichard 2009: 141, emphasis removed). Nonetheless, the merits of conducting a cluster analysis are, as highlighted, that it helps classify cases into groups in larger data sets, making it possible to see patterns. However, as Guest et al. (2012: 151) rightly stress, "it is up to the researcher to interpret those clusters, give them a name, and figure out an explanation (based on the data) of why the codes group together this way". Next, I will describe the methodological steps undertaken in more detail (Section 6.3.1) before discussing the findings of the cluster analysis (Section 6.3.2).

[40] Emphasis in original.

6.3.1 Methodology

In this section, the selected clustering method, similarity measures and the clustering algorithm that have been used for analysis are outlined. A hierarchical agglomerative method of clustering has been chosen, which means that the analysis starts out with all individual members of the corpus, which are then continuously fused into groups based on similarity until there is only one single cluster left (Everitt et al. 2011: 72). The advantage of agglomerative hierarchical clustering techniques is that one can see how groups are merged in a table and a dendogram. Thus, hierarchical clustering lends itself to analysing a relatively small data set as it facilitates the decision of where a "reasonable number of fairly homogenous clusters" lies (Norusis 2011: 377)[41].

To conduct a hierarchical agglomerative cluster analysis, Norusis (2011: 377) explains that three choices need to be made:

- A criterion for determining similarity or distance between cases
- A criterion for determining which clusters are merged at successive steps
- The number of clusters you need to represent your data […]

The first criterion refers to what measure is selected to compare either similarity or distance between cases. Since there are a variety of measures, the type of variables under scrutiny is crucial. In this study cases have been categorized according to binary variables, i.e. absence or presence of values (0/1), for which similarity measures are commonly used (opposed to distance measures) (see Everitt et al. 2011: 46). Further, it has to be determined whether the absence of a variable should be included in the analysis when dealing with binary data. Thus, one has to decide whether the similarity between cases is established on the basis of the features they exhibit or whether the absence of features makes cases similar as well[42] (Everitt et al. 2011: 47). Since the absence of features does not automatically make cases more similar in this particular study, the Jaccard co-efficient was selected as similarity measure because it ignores "co-absence count" (ibid.).

The second criterion settles how distance is defined between clusters, which is the "[…] clustering algorithm, i.e. the rules that govern between which points distances are measured to determine cluster membership" (Burns & Burns 2008: 557). There are various methods to define distance—such as considering the two closest points or the average of the distances

[41] In contrast to other methods, such as k-means clustering, where the number of clusters has to be known beforehand (Norusis 2011: 388).
[42] Everitt et al. (2011: 46) provide "gender" as an example for a binary variable where "zero-zero matches" should be included in calculating similarity.

between all pairs of cases across two clusters—which result in different solutions (Uprichard 2011: 141). In this study, the complete linkage method (furthest neighbour) was employed, in which "the distance between two clusters is defined as the distance between the two furthest points" (Norusis 2011: 387). This method was adopted because it is appropriate for dealing with similarity measures and produces "compact clusters with equal diameters" and is not prone to "chaining", i.e. producing "unbalanced clusters" (Everitt et al. 2011: 79). Moreover, Guest and McLellan (2003: 195) have highlighted the advantages of using complete linkage, arguing that it "[…] performs well when the groups tend to form naturally distinct groupings".

The third choice that needs to be made according to Norusis (2011) stresses the fact that researchers must determine the right number of clusters based on their knowledge of the data. Burns and Burns (2008: 557) consider this step to be the most problematic one of cluster analyses. Nevertheless, there are recommendations for how to go about cluster selection, such as comparing cluster trees or analysing co-efficient values in order to validate one's decision[43], which both have been followed in this study (Everitt et al 2011: 264; Norusis 2011: 383). Figure 6.7 depicts the vertical icicle plot of the cluster analysis, showing how the cases are joined together in each step of clustering. The plot needs to be read from bottom to top. The last point (30) is the first step of analysis, where each case stands on its own. Braces (and the corresponding cluster numbers[44]) were added to index the clusters.

[43] Norusis (2011: 383) argues that cluster formation should be stopped "[…] when the […] decrease (for similarity measures) in Coefficients column between two adjacent steps is large".
[44] The programme SPSS automatically determined the numbering of cluster groups.

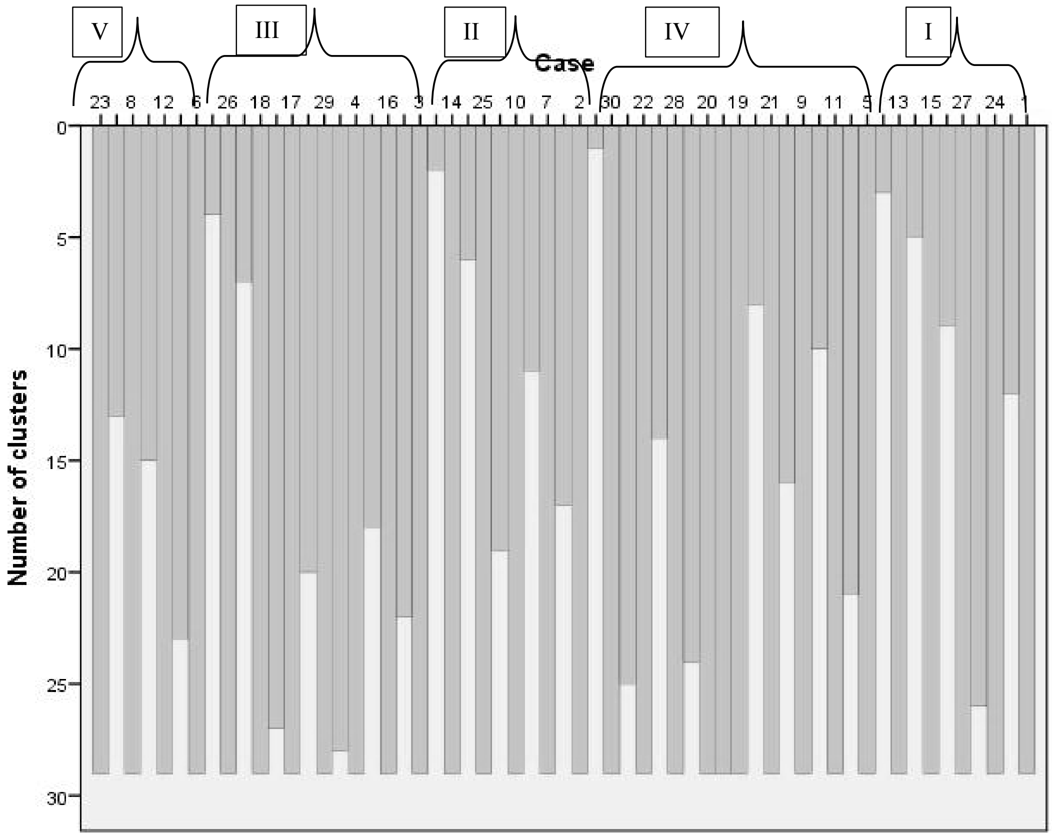

Figure 6.7 Vertical icicle plot of the cluster analysis—output from SPSS (braces and cluster numbers added)

The icicle plot also suggests that some cluster groups are more similar than others, for instance, in the case of cluster (III) (S18), (S17), (S29), (S04), (S16) (S03) grouped together already at the number of 18 clusters.

While the icicle plot and the cluster tree indicate that the data can be divided into five groups, the co-efficient column revealed that there is a large decrease between six and five clusters (steps 24 and 25), making six the ideal cut-off point. However, since choosing six clusters would result in one single-case cluster, containing only (S13), the five-cluster solution was preferred. This is a reasonable decision since (S13) mainly differs from other sources in that it is the least coded source.

To sum up, the cluster analysis was conducted in IBM SPSS 21, using the Jaccard coefficient and the complete linkage method. After examining the agglomeration schedule, five clusters were chosen as the optimal number and the analysis was re-run. Following Everitt et al.’s (2011: 261) guidelines, “masking variables” were excluded from calculation. They explain that any variable that does not help distinguish between groups should be left aside, which meant that the values of super-categories were omitted[45].

6.3.2 Results of the cluster analysis: Corpus description

While the cluster analysis in SPSS produces an output in the form of a table in which each case is categorized into a cluster, it does not offer any explanation for why a particular source is in a cluster (Burns & Burns 2008: 553; Guest et al. 2012: 151). To determine how present a variable is in each cluster, the custom table function in SPSS was used. It put cluster variables into columns and the topic/multi-modal variables into rows, which made it possible to get to the sum of a variable in a cluster. Since 1 equals yes, the sum is indicative of how many sources exhibited the variable in the cluster discussed. Table 6.14 shows how many sources are in each cluster and the numerical occurrence of a variable per cluster. The percentage indicates to what extent respective variables have been covered in the cluster under scrutiny. The variables that are typical for a cluster are highlighted in grey to increase the legibility of the table. In the last row, the total of yes for each cluster has been divided by the number of group members in order to be able to compare the coding diversity across clusters. The numerical values of super-categories have been excluded in order to avoid double-counting (they were excluded in the cluster analysis as well). After Table 6.14, I will discuss each cluster in more detail where I will also list the members and elaborate on the dominanr features of each cluster. Further, I will explain the names of clusters, which are based on said dominant features.

Table 6.14 Distribution of topic and multi-modal categories in raw numbers/percentages within clusters (typical/defining variables of clusters in grey)

Sources put into 5 groups→ (N= 30) 100% = *Topic and multi-modal categories* (excluding super-categories; N = 41) ↓	(I) n= 5		(II) n = 5		(III) n = 7		(IV) n = 9		(V) n = 4	
	n= yes	%↓	n= yes	%↓	n= yes	%↓	n= yes	%↓	n= yes	%↓
Topic codes										
Facing quitting: aspects to consider (super-category)	4	80	5	100	7	100	7	78	4	100
Addressing common questions/worries	0	0	5	100	4	57	2	22	3	75
Listing practical tips	2	40	4	80	5	71	3	33	3	75

[45] Masking variables are again identified based on the researcher's knowledge of the data.

Testimonials of quitters	3	60	2	40	4	57	6	67	4	100
Toxic ingredients in cigarettes	0	0	3	60	6	86	6	67	1	25
Inform on quitting (super-category)	1	20	5	100	7	100	9	100	4	100
Coping strategies for withdrawal	0	0	2	40	5	71	0	0	3	75
Different phases of quitting	1	20	1	20	4	57	0	0	0	0
Quitting whilst pregnant	0	0	0	0	6	86	5	56	1	25
Quitting: influence on weight	0	0	3	60	5	71	2	22	3	75
Recovery of the body	0	0	4	80	7	100	5	56	0	0
Point out bio-medical reasons to quit (super-category)	5	100	5	100	7	100	9	100	4	100
All kinds of tobacco are unhealthy	1	20	2	40	2	29	2	22	0	0
Smoking affects others	1	20	4	80	6	86	3	33	3	75
Smoking affects sense of taste and smell	0	0	5	100	7	100	4	44	0	0
Smoking and reproduction	0	0	1	20	7	100	6	67	0	0
Smoking increases risks during surgery	0	0	0	0	1	14	1	11	0	0
Smoking is bad for your health	5	100	5	100	7	100	8	89	4	100
Smoking is linked to lung disease	2	40	5	100	6	86	8	89	4	100
Point out lifestyle reasons to quit smoking (super-category)	4	80	5	100	7	100	8	89	3	75
Quitting benefits employers	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	67	0	0
Quitting boosts self-esteem	1	20	1	20	2	29	1	11	3	75
Smoking affects beauty	1	20	3	60	6	86	6	67	1	25
Smoking affects the (ecol.) environment	0	0	3	60	0	0	1	11	0	0
Smoking is bad for your sex life	0	0	1	20	3	43	3	33	0	0
Smoking is expensive	3	60	5	100	6	86	6	67	4	100
Quitting and nicotine substitutes (medication)/ (super-category)	1	20	4	80	6	86	9	100	4	100
Medical alternatives to replace smoking	1	20	4	80	6	86	9	100	4	100
Support: involving potential quitters (super-category)	5	100	4	80	7	100	9	100	4	100
Offer personalized support/ contact	2	40	2	40	5	71	8	89	4	100
Quitters ask for help/ support	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	75
Quitters comment on how they are doing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	75
Recommend stop smoking	5	100	1	20	7	100	8	89	1	25

programmes										
Support is helpful	5	100	3	60	7	100	9	100	4	100
Multi-modal codes										
Possibility to obtain material online (super-category)	3	60	3	60	4	57	8	89	0	0
Commercial	2	40	2	40	0	0	1	11	0	0
Informative	3	60	2	40	4	57	8	89	0	0
Interactivity (super-category)	5	100	5	100	6	86	9	100	4	100
Author-user interactivity	4	80	4	80	6	86	9	100	2	50
User-document interactivity	0	0	0	0	4	57	2	22	4	100
User-medium interactivity	4	80	5	100	5	71	9	100	3	75
User-user interactivity	0	0	0	0	3	43	2	22	4	100
Links (super-category)	5	100	5	100	7	100	9	100	4	100
Links to other websites	5	100	5	100	7	100	8	89	3	75
Links to Web 2.0 sites	3	60	1	20	4	57	5	56	2	50
Multi-modal elements (super-category)	5	100	5	100	7	100	9	100	4	100
Highlighting	5	100	5	100	7	100	9	100	3	75
Pictures	4	80	4	80	7	100	9	100	3	75
Use of cartoons or symbols	1	20	4	80	2	29	2	22	3	75
Videos	1	20	3	60	2	29	5	56	0	0
With people	4	80	4	80	7	100	9	100	2	50
Possibility to obtain material online (super-category)	3	60	3	60	4	57	8	89	0	0
Commercial	2	40	2	40	0	0	1	11	0	0
Informative	3	60	2	40	4	57	8	89	0	0
Total column (without super-categories) ↓	97		144		237		272		110	
Normalization (Total/n group)	19.4		28.8		33.8		30.2		27.5	

Cluster (I) stands out from the rest since its members are less coded than in other groups, only having a diversity index of 19.4 (out of 41) codes per source. When we look at the coding pattern of the cluster, it becomes clear that there is little on [Facing quitting] and [Inform on quitting] (apart from “Testimonials of quitters”). Thus, these sources are less concerned with providing help “on-site”. This impression is confirmed when considering [Support: involving potential quitters] where the codes “recommend stop-smoking programmes” and “support is helpful” are emphasised. As mentioned above, these two codes are often employed to encourage quitters to seek help in local stop-smoking services. With respect to offering reasons to quit, health damages in general and the costs of smoking are prominent, but not distinctively more than in other clusters. When looking at multi-modal codes, “author-user interactivity” and “links to Web 2.0” are noticeable. This matches the initial observation that members of cluster (I) are not about helping on-site but about referring readers to useful addresses or links instead. Cluster (I) consists of single-page sections or small sites, which may explain the emphasis on referring. Table 6.15 lists the member of cluster (I), which I called “Referral”, in numerical order of the sources.

Table 6.15 Members of cluster (I) Referral, in numerical order

(S01) Exsmokers.eu
(S13) Ash.org.uk
(S15) Bhf.org.uk
(S24) Smokefreenorfolk.nhs.uk
(S27) Cumbria.nhs.uk

Cluster (II) has a diversity index of 28.8, pointing to the fact that overall more topic/multi-modal codes are raised than in the Referral group. Since every single cluster member uses the category “addressing common questions”, we can deduce that a lot of weight is put on moving quitters to reflect on quitting. Four out of five members employ the category “listing practical tips” to encourage readers to go beyond reflecting and to stop smoking. In terms of the super-category [Inform on quitting], the recovery of the body timeline is frequent, but other aspects feature less noticeably, with “quitting whilst pregnant” being completely absent. The super-category [support] is weak in presence since there are few recommendations and possibilities to contact someone. The code “support is helpful” even has the lowest percentage compared to the other clusters.

While there are several lifestyle reasons represented in cluster (II), the presence of “smoking affects the ecological environment” is conspicuous. As this code is associated with smoking and youth, it shows that most sources that have a section for adolescents are in cluster (II). The occurrences of “smoking affects others” and “smoking affects sense of taste and smell” are also distinctive (only cluster (III) has comparable values for these codes). Authorial control is cautiously guarded in cluster (II): There is no “user-user” or “user-document interactivity” and only one source features links to Web 2.0 sites. Even though this holds also true for the Referral group, it is more noticeable for cluster (II) because these sources dedicate more than only one sub-site to smoking cessation. In other words, the lack of space cannot explain the absence of user-interactivity. Finally, the use of cartoons/symbols is comparably high, which may be due to the, in parts, young audience. Cluster (II) is designated “Pseudo-interactive” since the high presence of the code “addressing common questions/worries” suggests an endeavour to include the readers’ perspectives. Nonetheless, the number of codes used in [Interactivity] reveals that only a controlled form of interactivity (“author-user”) is possible. Table 6.16 shows the members of cluster (II) in numerical order:

Table 6.16 Members of cluster (II) Pseudo-interactive in numerical order

(S02) Electroniccigarettes.co.uk
(S07) Stopsmoking.org.uk
(S10) Quitbecause.org.uk
(S14) Iquitonline.com
(S25) Livewellsuffolk.org.uk

The third group has the highest diversity index overall with 33.8. In the super-category [Facing quitting], every sub-code is covered and occurs between four to six times, (in 57% up to 86% of all group members). “Toxic ingredients in cigarettes” is the highest coded sub-category in [Facing quitting], which implies that providing as much relevant information about smoking as possible is important in cluster (III). This finding is supported when the super-category [Inform on quitting] is analysed: Cluster (III) is the only group to bring up every sub-code, mentioning “the recovery of the body” in all sources and having the most occurrences of “phases of quitting”. Further, six out of seven members deal with “quitting whilst pregnant”, which is the highest number (in absolute and relative terms) across all clusters. As in the Referral cluster, the codes “recommend stop-smoking services” and “support is helpful” appear in every cluster member, but the code “personalised contact/support” is more extensively used in comparison. Regarding the super-category [Pointing out lifestyle reasons to quit smoking], arguments that concern the individual smoker are stressed, as the categories “smoking and its effects on beauty”, “smoking is expensive” are frequent and “smoking is bad for your sex life” has the highest percentage rate in this group.

In contrast, lifestyle reasons that do not directly affect or address smokers themselves (e.g. concerns about the environment, employers) are absent. While “smoking affects others” and “smoking affects sense of taste and smell” are as salient as in cluster (II), the code “smoking and reproduction” is most commonly used in cluster (III). The overall high numbers of codes belonging to [bio-medical reasons to quit smoking] raised affirm the initial hunch that supplying varied and detailed information is crucial in this group. The audience is further engaged by having the opportunity to interact with others in three out of seven instances or to contribute content in four cases, leaving only cluster (V) with a higher rate. Cluster (III) covers every aspect around quitting extensively, trying to cater to all types of smokers. The strong presence of the first two super-categories, [Facing quitting] and [Inform on quitting], suggests that any doubts regarding disadvantages of quitting are handled. Thus; this cluster is called “Covering all aspects”, as this endeavour is reflected throughout. The members of cluster (III) are detailed in Table 6.17:

Table 6.17 Members of cluster (III) Covering all aspects in numerical order

(S03) Niquitin.co.uk
(S04) Nicorette.co.uk
(S16) Netdoctor.co.uk
(S17) Smokefree.nhs.uk
(S18) Nhststopsmokingiow.co.uk
(S26) Westsussex.nhs.uk
(S29) Nhslocal.nhs.uk

Cluster (IV) has the second highest diversity index with 30.2. However, the foci are placed differently compared to Covering all aspects (cluster III). For instance, “addressing common questions/worries” and “listing practical tips” are of less importance. Still, this group has the second highest rate of “testimonials of quitters” (most in absolute numbers), which often serve to legitimise content and services. While the code “medical alternatives to replace smoking” is featured in every cluster member, only three out of five sub-categories are dealt with in [Inform on quitting]. Thus, smokers are seen as having made the decision to quit and receive advice on the next steps to be taken in these sources. This assumption is supported by the fact that eight out of nine members “offer personalised support/contact”, urging readers to become active. All codes belonging to [Lifestyle reasons to quit smoking] appear at least once within the cluster, but they are less stressed than in clusters (II) and (III) with the noticeable exception of the category “quitting benefits employers”. This category actually only occurs in cluster (IV). All sub-categories are covered in [Bio-medical reasons to quit smoking] but they are again given less weight than in clusters (II) and (III).

Unlike in the super-category [Lifestyle reasons to quit smoking], there is no salient category. Some of the multi-modal codes clearly distinguish this group from the rest. Nine out of ten members offer “informative downloads” and the entire cluster features “author-user interactivity”, which is also linked to the high number of the category “offer personalised support/contact”. Based on these observations, cluster (IV) can be designated as the “Let us and others help you" group. Concrete steps of how to go about quitting—such as instantiating company measures, downloading material and direct contact—are at the forefront whereas arguments for why to stop in the first place are secondary. Table 6.18 lists all members of cluster (IV) in numerical order:

Table 6.18 Members of cluster (IV) Let us and others help you in numerical order

(S05) Healthexpress.co.uk
(S09) Quit.org.uk
(S11) Wequit.co.uk
(S19) Sheffieldstopssmoking.org.uk
(S20) Bristolstopsmoking.nhs.uk
(S21) Somersetstopsmoking.nhs.uk
(S22) Southessexstopssmokingservice.nhs.uk
(S28) Sbpct.nhs.uk
(S30) Leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk

Even though cluster (V) has the second lowest diversity index at 27.5, it is close to the indices of clusters (II) and (IV) at 28.8 and 30.2. Cluster (V) differs from the rest because it is the interactive group; i.e. its members are mainly peer-to-peer sources. Hence, "addressing common questions/worries", "listing practical tips" as well as "testimonials of quitters" are salient in the super-category [Facing quitting]. This makes sense considering that the purpose of these sites is peer-support from smokers to smokers. When looking at the codes used from [Inform on quitting], it is striking that coping strategies are predominantly discussed. Categories that deal with quitting in the long term, such as "the recovery of the body" and "different phases of quitting", do not seem to be of immediate concern. Unsurprisingly, [Support] is the most important super-category for cluster (V), in which the codes "offer personalised support" and "support is useful" are emphasised. Moreover, three out of four members let participants comment on their progress as well as ask for help from others. With respect to [Lifestyle reasons to quit smoking], the categories "smoking is expensive" and how "quitting boosts one's self-esteem" stand out; the latter category being most prominent in cluster (V). Hence, when quitters motivate each other, the benefits of self-efficacy outweigh others, such as "smoking affects beauty" or "smoking affects the ecol. environment". Only the three most frequent codes belonging to [Bio-medical reasons to quit smoking] are raised in cluster (V) ("smoking is bad for your health", "smoking is linked to lung disease", "smoking affects others"), leaving other side effects completely away. The super-categories [Point out lifestyle reasons to quit smoking] and [point out bio-medical reasons to quit smoking] are less present than on monologic sources because participants have already decided to stop smoking. They seek support for and reinforcement of their decision as well as they look for tips to get through the quitting process. Cluster (V) is the only group that does not make any material available for downloading, which can be put down to the peer-to-peer interactive nature of practices: Participants expect and give advice on site. Thus, the technical features of "user-user" and "user-document interactivity" make cluster (V) truly different, letting participants determine the content themselves. Therefore, this cluster is termed the "Help yourself" group, in which support is given online from and to other participants with similar experiences. Table 6.19 provides an overview of the members of cluster (V) in numerical order.

Table 6.19 Members of cluster (V) Help yourself in numerical order

(S06) Stopsmokingforum.co.uk
(S08) Quitsupport.healthunlocked.com
(S12) Forum.nosmokingday.org.uk
(S23) Smokefreehertfordshire.nhs.uk

6.4 Summary

The goal of this chapter has been to explore logos (or the structure of arguments), by looking at the topics that were raised in the overall corpus. In this vein, aspects of pathos and ethos have also been touched upon (e.g. in the case of testimonials), which is inevitable considering the interlinked-ness of the working principles of persuasion. It has been argued that logos is multi-layered, one part being the semantic/topic level and other parts consisting of structural and linguistic ones. To arrive at the semantic/topic level, I asked the research question of what kind of topics are commonly discussed. Further, to do justice to the multi-modal nature of the practices, I was also interested in what typical multi-modal and design features can be found. These features have been shown to influence persuasive attempts in a crucial way.

A content analysis was conducted to answer both research questions, which led me to identifying common arguments and typical technical setups in the overall corpus. It neatly illustrated that some arguments and technical features are more prominent than others. 41 categories have been developed, out of which 28 describe the content of the sources while 13 deal with technical features. Due to the bottom-up nature of the coding process, there is some coding overlap. This concerns especially those codes, which are not purely thematic but also describe strategies of how information is conveyed, such as the codes "addressing common questions/worries", "testimonials of quitters" and "listing practical tips". The numerical results of the content analysis showed that the most common coding value is 23 codes displayed per source. 17 out of 30 sources exhibited between 40–60 per cent of all codes, which corresponds to 16 to 24 codes. The relative frequencies illustrate that some codes like "smoking is expensive", "smoking is bad for your health" and "support is useful" are frequently employed arguments in all sources, while others point to a specialized focus of particular sources, e.g. "quitting benefits employers" and "smoking affects the (ecol.) environment". The coding of multi-modal categories made clear that "author-user interactivity" tends to be preferred over actual "user-user interactivity", which I argue suggests that sources try to control information and participation. Also, links to social media sites occurred in half of the corpus, which is an increase compared to an earlier study analysing smoking cessation sites (see Freeman & Chapman 2012).

Although the content analysis pointed to certain tendencies, the number of codes made it difficult to group sources according to their similarities/dissimilarities. A cluster analysis, an explorative statistical method, was conducted to establish patterns within the corpus. The analysis showed that the corpus of 30 sources can be sensibly divided into five groups. Subsequently, the coding results and the clusters have been put into a cross-table which helped single out the characteristics of a group. Based on this information, as well as the normalization of coding occurrences per group (diversity index), clusters have been described and named. These procedures facilitated dividing the corpus into the following clusters: (I) Referral, (II) Pseudo-interactive, (III) Covering all aspects, (IV) Let us and others help you, (V) Help yourself. Cluster (I) distinguishes itself by the absence of many codes which is reflected in the low diversity index. The low coding rate and the emphasis on "recommend stop smoking programmes" and "author-user interactivity" led to the conclusion that these sources are not about on-site help but about Referral. Cluster (II) is called Pseudo-interactive since it often features the code "addressing common questions/worries" as a manner of adopting the reader's perspective. However, it does not allow actual "user-user interactivity", which would let readers raise their own points, but only "author-user interactivity". Cluster (III), Covering all aspects, has the highest diversity index, discussing codes from the super-categories [Inform on quitting], [point out lifestyle reasons to quit smoking] and [point out bio-medical reasons to quit smoking] extensively. These sources seem to work on the premise that if readers only knew, they would quit smoking. Cluster (IV), Let us and others help you, includes smokers in a professional context and promotes informative downloading and direct contact.

At last, cluster (V), the Help yourself group, differs because of “user-user interactivity”. It includes peer-to-peer sites, which feature practices of giving mutual support and advice. Interestingly, the supportive aspect is also reflected in the use of codes belonging to [point out lifestyle reasons to quit smoking], which highlight the effects of quitting on one’s psyche.

Overall, the content analysis was the first step of my multi-layered analysis of persuasion. While it is does not focus on a linguistic level, it still validly answers how the working principle logos is put to action on a topic level in the smoking cessation sources. Moreover, the results of the coding provide an important help for fine-tuning the corpus and establishing subsamples in a systematic and informed way. The cluster analysis was used as a means to make sense of the corpus and group members together based on their structural and thematic similarities. In the following chapters, I will focus on a detailed analysis of two groups Cluster (III), Covering all aspects, and Cluster (V), the Help yourself group. The first choice is due to the fact that it is the cluster with the highest diversity index, potentially also promising a broad range of persuasive discourse strategies. The second one is because of its distinctive feature of enabling user-generated content. I am interested in investigating how persuasion is at work in unmonitored peer-to-peer contexts, also in view of some concerns that have been raised concerning health information and support exchange between lay people (e.g. see Camerini et al. 2010; Prestin & Chou 2014). However, the clusters itself will again be broken down into smaller samples, the manner of which will be explained in detail in the ensuing chapters (see Ch. 7 – Ch. 10). I will start out by analysing the logos side in cluster III, focussing on discursive activities, the embedding of sub-sites and visual design (Ch. 7). Secondly, I will delve into the construction of ethos and pathos in Cluster III, pointing out identities that emerge from discourse strategies creating expertise, credibility as well as emotional involvement (Ch.8). Thirdly, I turn to the Cluster V, where I investigate the informational structure of two forum practices by coding discursive moves (Ch.9). Fourthly, I illustrate how identity construction and relational work contribute to ethos and pathos construction within two topics in the forum corpus (Ch. 10). Finally, to conclude on another note, the results found here could also be useful in an applied linguistics context, helping health practitioners to develop public health campaigns that depend on lifestyle changes.

7 Discursive activities, the visual arrangement and the embedding of the website sample and the link to persuasion

In Ch.6, I performed a content analysis to answer my research questions about the multimodal setup of sources as well as about what the most common arguments are. In Ch. 3, I argued that these two aspects are part of the reasoning process—or logos—offered by the persuader. In the same chapter, I also pointed out that the manner in which arguments are discursively realised—that is what discursive moves are used and their linguistic realisation—need to be considered for a thorough analysis of logos. Indeed, as Locher (2013a: 355) explained, the question of how advice and information are communicated so patients take them up is crucial for health practitioners. Even though there are several linguistic studies that deal with how health information/advice are communicated online (e.g. Armstrong et al. 2011; Eichhorn 2008; Kouper 2010; Morrow 2006; etc.), communication on health websites is under-researched from a linguistic perspective (e.g. Koteyko 2009; Locher 2006; Richardson 2005, etc.). In this chapter I focus on discursive activities in a selected website sample and their link to persuasion, laying emphasis on logos. While the discursive composition of arguments (as well as the semantic nature of the latter) is one important factor for persuasion, the visual appeal and branding of websites are also factors to be taken into account (Sillence et al 2006: 699; Sillence & Briggs 2015: 472). As Pauwels (2012: 255) points out: "Website design and layout features are essentially tools used to attract, direct and invoke the desired effect on, or response from, website visitors". Therefore, I also consider how specific sub-sites (or modules) are visually arranged and how they are embedded within the larger context of the websites. I tackle the following research questions in this chapter, which centre on the top-down working principle logos and how it can be teased out by a bottom-up discourse analysis of linguistic patterns:

- What characteristic discursive moves are employed in the website sample? What is their linguistic realization?
- What is the visual arrangement of selected sub-sites and how are they embedded in the larger context of the practices?

The first set of research questions deals with how the working principle of logos translates into a discursive structure of information, which can be linked to the aim of persuading readers to quit smoking. To begin with, I analyse what discursive moves are used in the sub-samples, giving me insight into what a passage contributes to the larger context or to “the ongoing interchange” (Miller & Gergen 1998: 192). Secondly, I focus on how these discursive moves are linguistically realised and how their patterns can be related to the persuasive purpose of the websites. The analysis of discursive activities in the website sample is complicated by “the non-sequential format of websites” (Koteyko 2009: 113) and thus more complex than in the forum data (see Ch. 9). To tackle the technical affordances of the website sample, I concentrate on selected themes that have emerged in my content analysis to analyse logos. Hence, I investigate the themes “addressing common questions/worries” and “listing practical tips”. These are also bottom-up, pre-given structures on the websites, which has the advantage of the themes being clearly delineated as modules on their own sub-sites.

The second research question is an attempt to take the multi-modal format of most websites into account when discussing persuasion. In the context of monologic websites, the structure of sources is doubly important since website authors need to make sure readers (potential clients) remain interested and are guided to relevant pieces of information. Further, they need to prevent misunderstandings as they cannot directly react and amend misconceptions in the same way as advice-givers on peer-to-peer sources can. To get a glimpse into how website authors try to pre-determine reading paths, I look at how the selected modules are embedded within the overall website. This allows me to deduce how authors conceptualise the respective module, shedding light on its function. Moreover, I consider the immediate contexts and (co-text) of modules. Introductory texts are investigated which give clear pointers regarding the position of website authors as well as regarding how readers should interpret the modules without being part of the text body. As a third step, I look at the visual arrangement of the individual modules, which lets me draw conclusions on how readers are expected to interact with the text provided. Finally, my research questions are always answered in view of their link to persuasion.

In the following, I provide more details regarding the data selection and the methodological steps used for this chapter. When discussing my analytical findings, I adhere to the order of my research questions. I start out with discursive activities in the website sample, comparing how the two types of sub-sites (modules) are structured respectively (Sections 7.2.1 - 7.2.2). Further, I focus on the linguistic realization of two common discursive moves (Section 7.2.3). The second part of my analysis concerns the embedding of modules and the effect of visual arrangement. I start out by looking at how the modules fit into a larger context before I analyse how the text body itself is designed, which will help me hypothesize on how readers are expected to approach the texts (Section 7.3.1). As a next step, I concentrate on one part of embedding, namely the function of introductory texts and how they contextualize content and are strategically employed to position readers as well as website authors (Section 7.3.2). At the end, I will sum up my insights and return to my research questions (Section 7.4).

7.1 Data and Methodology

7.1.1 Selection and description of the sub-sample

I established a sub-sample for closer analysis based on my content and cluster analyses in Ch. 6. They showed that some sources can be grouped together based on the topics discussed and their multi-modal structure. I selected one cluster group, Covering all aspects (Cluster III), for my closer analysis. One of the main reasons is that Covering all aspects distinguished itself by having the highest diversity index. Thus, the sources belonging to this group are characterized by providing a wide range of information around quitting smoking, by trying to address a broad audience and by moving the readers to stop smoking with help from the websites themselves. This promised to give interesting insights into persuasive mechanisms. Therefore, the members of this group were chosen for a detailed linguistic analysis, listed in Table 7.1 in alphabetical order:

Table 7.1 Members of cluster (III), Covering all aspects, in alphabetical order

Name	**Source number in overall corpus**
Netdoctor.co.uk	(S16)
Nhslocal.nhs.uk	(S29)
Nhststopsmokingiow.co.uk	(S18)
Nicorette.co.uk	(S04)
Niquitin.co.uk	(S03)
Smokefree.nhs.uk	(S17)
Westsussex.nhs.uk	(S26)

It is noteworthy that cluster (III) is composed of websites with different interests at stake, having commercial (e.g. S03, S04) or governmental backgrounds (e.g. S17, S18, etc.), which influences how information is conveyed and involvement and expertise is created. Moreover, the super-categories [Facing quitting] and [Inform on quitting] are strongly present. I argued in Ch. 6 that the high occurrences of these categories point to the fact that these sources cater to all types of smokers. It also indicates that authors are interested in response-changing persuasion (see Miller 2002: 12) since I argue that [Facing quitting] includes strategies of structuring information in a persuasive manner. Further, the fact that [Inform on quitting] is frequent implies that website authors give information on how to proceed once readers have decided to quit. This suggests that authors position the readers as having made the decision to quit (possibly even with their help).

To further fine-tune my sub-sample, I have decided to focus on the super-category [Facing quitting]. I selected this super-category because it reflects how information is structured. By focussing on two codes/categories, I am able to address one of the analytical challenges of website analysis; namely the non-linear nature of websites (see Janoschka 2004; Koteyko 2009; etc.). According to Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 208), websites are not structured syntagmatically but are organized paradigmatically in the sense of being ordered into "self-contained" modules. To ensure the comparability of my analyses, I have chosen the codes "addressing common questions/worries" and "listing practical tips". On the one hand, these two codes promise the greatest interface with other topic codes. Thus, I gain insight into how e.g. lifestyle and bio-medical reasons are discursively established without having to analyze entire websites. On the other hand, the two codes occur as self-contained informational modules bottom-up on the websites, which facilitates drawing boundaries for analysis within these hyperlinked sources[46]. However, there is a small caveat: since the modules are not necessarily called the same way on individual websites, their categorization and segmentation into "addressing common questions/worries" and "listing practical tips" are ultimately still based on my subjective judgement. I used the qualitative research software NVivo to code the sub-sites of websites belonging to "addressing common questions/worries" or "listing practical tips". Therefore, I was guided by the definitions I established in Ch. 6. One of the advantages of using NVivo is that it helps to calculate how much words were coded. Thus, it was possible to retrieve how many words were used in each code by cross-referencing sources withcoding in a Matrix coding query. This was useful to gauge the size of each code on every source. Table 7.2 illustrates the distribution of the two codes in the Covering all aspects group in numerical order, featuring the corresponding number of words. The numbers 0/1 indicate either the absence or presence of the respective category.

[46] My focus on relative frequencies for the content analysis of the overall corpus meant that I could determine the absence/presence of codes without segmenting each website according to categories in Ch. 6.

Table 7.2 The distribution of "addressing common question/worries" and "listing practical tips" in the Covering all aspects group in numerical order of the sources.

Source number ↓	**Addressing common questions/worries**		**Listing practical tips**	
	Presence	Number of words	Presence	Number of words
(S03)	0	-	1	1262
(S04)	1	662	1	857
(S16)	0	-	1	1726
(S17)	1	3010	0	-
(S18)	1	2530	1	537
(S26)	0	-	1	548
(S29)	1	872	0	-
Total	4	7074	5	7083

Table 7.2 indicates that each source features at least one of the two categories with the exceptions of (S04) and (S18), which feature both. Thus, this makes them suitable codes to get (a fragmented) insight into persuasive strategies in the entire group.

The code "addressing common questions/worries" has been applied to sub-sites that feature dyadic information, mimicking the presence of other voices besides the website authors. The main goal of sub-sites belonging to "addressing common questions/worries" is to discard any doubts readers may have regarding the quitting process or with respect to products offered. Thus, readers are targeted who are considering quitting smoking but are not entirely sure whether to go through with it. In the case of (S17) and (S18), "addressing common questions/worries" appears in the format of *Frequently asked questions*, called as such in (S17) and *Ask the experts* in (S18). The concerns are dealt with in adjacency pairs of questions-answers, apart from further being categorised according to topics (e.g. *Health issues related to smoking and secondhand smoke, Smoking and pregnancy,* etc.). The larger number of words attests to the comprehensive information provided in these sections. On the other two sources, the headings are more evocative—*Nicotine Myths* in (S04) and *Overcoming excuses* in (S29)—pointing overtly to their persuasive purpose of moving readers to adopt the same perspective as website authors. In (S04), the bipartite statements are designated as *Myth* and *Fact,* which means website authors make unmistakably clear what the correct information on nicotine is. In (S29), we find an opposition between *excuses* (by the readers) and counter-arguments by the website authors. Similar to (S04), the term *excuses* labels ensuing opinions as not valid, guiding readers to what attitude they should adopt. These two cases are not prototypical FAQs as declarative statements and not questions-answers are juxtaposed. In terms of identity work and persuasion, "addressing common questions/worries" is a highly fascinating category since readers (or others) are granted a (albeit fabricated) voice.

The code "listing practical tips" refers to sub-sites giving instructions on how to go about quitting or on how to cope with withdrawal, which are explicitly flagged as quitting advice by the website authors. For instance, this code is presented as *Help & Advice* in (S18), whereas the lexeme *Tips* is used to denominate the hyperlink to these sub-sites on two other sources: *Stop Smoking tips* in (S04); *Tips for quitting* in (S16). In the case of (S26), "listing practical tips" is introduced by the header *Top tips for pregnant women going smoke-free* as part of a sub-site dealing with smoking and pregnancy. The website (S03) sticks out as the headings of the relevant sub-sites consist of actual pieces of advice (*Quit one day at a time; Quit one cigarette at a time; Manage your cravings*) subsumed under the heading *Ready to Take Control.* In all five sources, the names of these sub-sites already signal to readers that they should interpret the sub-categorised text as advice or as the website authors telling them what is best for them (see Searle's 1969: 67 definition of advice). Therefore, we can hypothesize that the purpose of "listing practical tips" is to guide readers who have made the decision to stop smoking or even have already stopped smoking and are willing advice-seekers. As the name of the category indicates, "listing practical tips" is organized into lists, which are segmented into bullet points or even sub-sites. It is noteworthy that the non-governmental sources (S03), (S04), (S16) are longer with respects to the amount of words used. This could be linked to governmental sites strongly encouraging visits to local smoking cessation support groups where readers will receive plenty of help whereas non-governmental sites give advice primarily on their websites.

7.1.2 Analytical procedure

In the introduction I have outlined how by selecting similar modules I dealt with non-linearity and the difficulty of drawing boundaries of analysis, which are two methodological challenges particularly relevant to websites. To answer the research questions above, I have undertaken the following methodological steps. First, to address the research question of what characteristic activities are employed in this website sample, I have conducted an analysis of discursive moves (cf. Ch. 9). Discursive moves help me to assess "the kind of contribution that the entry made to the ongoing interchange" (Miller & Gergen 1998: 192). They have been adapted in various studies about advice online to get to the informational structure of different practices. Discursive moves are helpful to look at how information is structured beyond topic on a discursive level. In contrast to my analysis of forum interaction (cf.Ch. 9), I have not analysed websites exhaustively due to the fact that it would have been impossible to reach inter-coder agreement for each individual practice within a reasonable timeframe. However, the analysis of discursive moves serves as a scaffolding to compare the structure of information within and across the modules, shedding light on how logos or reasoning is built up in the modules[47]. Further, it enables me to draw tentative comparisons to other advice practices, i.e. to the smoking cessation forums as well as to previous studies. Therefore, it will allow me to speculate on how medium and situational factors affect the discursive activities used to persuade (see Herring 2007).

Moreover, I looked at the linguistic realization of the most frequent discursive move of each module (*general information* and *advice*) to get insight into how linguistic patterns are linked to persuasion overall. For that purpose, I performed word frequency queries in NVivo, choosing to comment on the ten most common content words. To tackle my interests in the embedding of modules and their visual arrangement, I conducted qualitative close readings. I have considered how modules are categorized hierarchically and to what extent their content has been cross-referenced on the websites. These steps enable me to assess the embedded functions of entire modules in the context of website practices. Further, I analysed how the module texts are structured—whether they are organized into pop-up versus scroll-down segments and to what extent information is repeated—to determine how website authors guide reading paths and how they expect sections to be accessed. Finally, I have continuously tried to draw the link to persuasion wherever possible.

7.2 Discursive activities in the website sample

7.2.1 The catalogue of discursive moves

As mentioned in Section 7.1.2, discursive moves give insight into "the kind of contribution that the entry made to the ongoing interchange" (Miller & Gergen 1998: 192). Therefore, they are helpful to look at how argumentation (logos) is structured beyond topic on a discursive level. Discursive moves are developed bottom-up and their definitions are based on my qualitative analysis and knowledge of the practices. Thus, the catalogue of discursive moves

[47] I will elaborate in more detail on what discursive moves emerged from a bottom-up analysis and how I coded the modules in a systematic way in Section 7.2.1.

found is at the same time a first result. I used Locher's (2006) list and the codebook I elaborated for the forum interaction to conduct a pilot study of two examples, one of "addressing common questions/worries" and one of "listing practical tips". The reduced interactivity, participation structure and the specific purpose of the modules (see Herring 2007 on "medium and situational factors") resulted in discarding some discursive moves from the initial catalogue (e.g. *own experience*) while others had to be added (e.g. *prediction*). The facts that I used one catalogue of discursive moves to code the individual modules across all sources and have not coded the entire sources exhaustively imply that I cannot comment on the setup of the whole practices. Nonetheless, my analysis enables me to get a sense of the structure of the chosen modules, which clearly shows that there are similar "intra-modular" tendencies across sources.

After the initial coding cycle, the whole sub-sample was systematically coded, and I re-checked my own coding once to ensure a consistent procedure. In analogy to my analytic work in the forums, I established sentences as minimal coding segment for discursive moves. However, discursive moves often extended over several sentences in the websites sample, in which case the whole section was coded as one discursive move (e.g. a list of pieces of advice). The numerical results should be viewed as indicating patterns [48]. Table 7.3 lists the types of discursive moves that occurred in the two modules "addressing common questions/worries" and "listing practical tips" in the website sample in alphabetical order. For comparative reasons, I added two columns, showing the discursive moves used in Locher (2006) and in the forum interaction (Ch. 9). I only included the discursive moves used by advice-givers in these settings—i.e. Lucy the advice-giver and the forum respondents—since the voice of advice-givers is at the forefront in the websites sample as well. To ease comparison, I highlighted discursive moves in grey, which occurred in website modules as well as in Locher (2006) or in the forum interaction analysis.

[48] It should not be taken at face value due to the absence of inter-coder agreement. Nonetheless, since I have already used these labels in my forum data and have re-checked parts of my coding, it still warrants a certain degree of reliability of analysis.

Table 7.3 Types of discursive moves used to analyze website modules compared to types of discursive moves used in Locher's response letters (2006) and by respondents in forum interaction (see Ch. 9) in alphabetical order (discursive moves in grey are shared by the respective dataset and the website modules)

Discursive moves in website modules	**Discursive moves in Locher (2006)**	**Discursive moves in forum interaction (Ch. 9)**
Advice	Advice	Advice
Assessment	Assessment	Apology
Explanation	Disclaimer	Assessment
General information	Explanation	Farewell
Header	Farewell	Greeting
Metacomment	General information	Official forum welcome
Prediction	Metacomment	Open category
Other voice	Open category	Own experience
Referral	Own experience	Quote
	Referral	Welcoming
		Well-wishing

Table 7.3 points to the influence of the expert-lay dimension and of the degree of interactivity on the discursive activities in the online practices studied. The discursive moves used in the two website modules overlap in great parts with the ones used in the online advice health column, which is carefully composed by a group of health experts (see Locher 2006; Ch. 5). Moreover, like in Locher (2006), entirely interpersonal moves (e.g. *well-wishing, welcoming*) are absent in the website practices which firmly situates them in a professional online health advice-giving context. In addition, the websites practices are clearly uni-directional as they do not use discursive moves related to interaction in contrast to Locher (2006) and the forum practices (*greeting, farewell, quote, welcoming*). I will now explain each discursive move used for the website practices in more detail, for which I group them together thematically. First, I start out with *advice*, *referral* and *explanation*. Then, I discuss *assessment, prediction, general information*, thus moving away from advising to informing. Finally, I will comment on *header, other voice* and *metacomment*, which reflect the specific text-structure of the modules.

Advice. I coded text passages as *advice* that feature an element of guidance, or in which website authors tell the readers what they should do or think. *Advice* can feature specific recommendations for future actions often to deal with the physical aspects of quitting. Alternatively, *advice* can consist of suggestions inviting introspection from the readers to cope with the psychological challenges of quitting and to bring them to the right mind-set. In some instances, *advice* can also be employed to establish a connection with the reader to reassure them when speaking of relapse and urging them to keep going. These cases include an evaluative or informational part within the same sentence to which the advisory move refers back. In (7.01), website authors suggest action alternatives for how to manage feeling hungrier after quitting (*Try eating*). Example (7.02) illustrates how website authors invite readers to modify their mental attitude in the quitting process, additionally guiding them by using bold print. In (7.03), website authors normalize relapses (*can happen*) before they encourage readers not to give up (*don't despair*).

(7.01) Try eating low-fat options and take up an activity instead of replacing cigarettes with food. (S29)

(7.02) Focus on what you **gain** from giving up smoking rather than the things you **miss.** (S16)

(7.03) Relapses can happen, so don't despair. (S04)

Referral. As in Locher (2006: 66), *referral* (as a special type of advice) emerged as a frequent category, which suggests that knowing one's limits of help-giving online is part of professional online health advice practices. It is used when website authors recommend that readers consult with their doctors or that they contact the stop smoking services advertised on the websites. Further, *referral* also includes hyperlinking; that is when readers are referred to other parts of the website. In example (7.04), readers are advised to seek help from a medical professional or another supportive service if they need more information than what is on the website (*Ask your doctor…*). Example (7.05) displays how readers are delegated to another sub-site, containing more information about the underlined keyword (*nicotine replacement products*).

(7.04) Ask your doctor or your local Quit Smoking service for more information. (S16)

(7.05) More information on using and getting access to <u>nicotine replacement products</u> (S17)

Explanation. This discursive move was employed to designate passages that are directly linked to the preceding move (e.g. *assessment, advice, gen.info*.). As Locher (2006: 67), I used *explanation* when a point just made was further elaborated. Linguistically, the link to the previous move is often indicated by the use of pronouns (*this, it, they*) and explanatory phrases like *the idea is*. To illustrate how e*xplanation* works, the preceding discursive moves are also shown. *Explanation* in (7.06) refers to *advice*[49] whereas the one in (7.07) is connected to *assessment*.

(7.06) **Advice** Make a list of the reasons you want to stop smoking and put it somewhere you will see it. **Explanation** Keeping a record will help you get through those times when your resolve to stop or cut down weakens. (S04)

(7.07) **Assessment** Research has shown that the more attempts you have made in the past, the more likely you are to succeed in the future. **Explanation** This is because every time you are getting more experienced in how to quit. (S17)

Assessment. Text passages that contain information specifically targeted at readers were coded as *assessment*. *Assessments* feature an element of evaluation of readers' (supposed) situation. In many instances, *assessment*s are linked to encouraging readers as website authors use it to reassure or to signal support to readers. If the piece of information is of general nature (for instance by listing possible health damages from smoking) but is linguistically realised with second person singular pronouns, I coded it as *assessment*, for which (7.08) is a case in point. In example (7.09), the encouraging dimension to *assessment* is nicely illustrated.

(7.08) Champix works by reducing your craving for a cigarette and by reducing the effects you feel if you do have a cigarette. (S17)

(7.09) But we believe you can reach your goal. (S03)

Prediction. This discursive move refers to a special kind of *assessmen*t, as it includes an evaluation of the reader's future. *Prediction* was coded separately since outlining the future consequences of quitting (or continuing smoking) emerged to be a frequent rhetorical means. The discursive effects of *prediction* vary from being encouraging (painting a bright future if

[49] The category name of the preceding discursive move is indicated within the examples.

readers quit smoking), explaining symptoms to warning about potential pitfalls when stopping. In (7.10), *prediction* is used to outline the financial benefits of quitting smoking whereas it describes the physical changes after quitting in (7.11).

(7.10) One of the really noticeable things about stopping smoking is you'll have some extra money. (S04)

(7.11) As your body adjusts to the lack of nicotine, you will experience cravings. (S16)

General information. Passages that contained pieces of knowledge or facts about smoking and quitting without a personal link to readers were categorized as *general information*. Information is made relevant to readers by topic but not by personal address (see Locher 2006: 67).

(7.12) Nicotine products such as patches and gum are often called Nicotine Replacement Therapy, or NRT for short. (S18)

(7.13) Fact: Cigarettes are a well-known cause of cancer, chronic lung disease, heart disease, and other disorders. It is the myriad of toxins in cigarette smoke, rather than the nicotine content, that is responsible for the majority of the harmful effects. (S04)

Header. This discursive move includes passages that have a text-structuring function as headers. Within the module of "listing practical tips", it is either employed to succinctly summarize the gist of subsequent advice or of the topic covered. Therefore, *headers* mostly consist of pieces of advice, single key words or noun phrases. The discursive moves *header* are given saliency (see Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006: 201) by being detached from the text body, being written in other colours or being put in bold font. Thereby, if *headers* are used throughout, they result in shaping the entire appearance of a module. They establish a bullet point format even if there are extensive explanations below *headers*. The side-effect of presenting advice in list-form is that it conveys the impression of there being many options, one of which will be helpful to readers[50]. In (7.14), the *header* consists of the piece of advice that is elaborated in the text body whereas in (7.15) it announces what content readers are to expect.

[50] See also Locher (2006: 99) who pointed out that there was an element of optionality when she discussed an example where the advice-giver presented an entire list of suggestions *for a natural way to get high*.

(7.14) Keep your ear to the ground (S03)

(7.15) Top tips for pregnant women going smoke-free: (S26)

Other voice. This discursive move is a peculiarity of the module "addressing common questions/worries" since it was utilized to code text passages representing the voice of someone else than the website authors. As outlined in Section 7.2, these *other voices* include requests for information/advice (or questions) (ex 7.16), first-person or detached third-person statements (ex. 7.17).

(7.16) Where can I get NRT? (S18)

(7.17) Excuse 6: I can't quit because I'm addicted (S29)

Metacomment. Sometimes website authors explicitly guide readers on how to access the text or module presented in the form of *metacomments*, which is similar to the fictional advisor Lucy who uses *metacomments* to "structure her response" (Locher 2006: 68). Interestingly, this discursive move does not occur in "addressing common questions/worries", which could be due to the text-structuring effect of the discursive move *other voice* as well as other means that are guiding readers (see Section 7.4.1.1). Based on the small number of occurrences, there is the valid question whether this category would withstand inter-coder agreement. However, it is still insightful to see that four out of the five sources with the module "listing practical tips" feel the need to explicate content or to guide readers when accessing their webpages, as shown in (7.18) and (7.19) respectively:

(7.18) Here are some ideas. (S03)

(7.19) Use the left and right arrows to navigate through the Top Tips above or select a category below. (S04)

In the following, I will explain how discursive moves structure "addressing common questions/worries" and "listing practical tips" individually but also compare the distribution of discursive moves across both modules.

7.2.2 Comparing the number and distribution of discursive moves in “addressing common questions/worries” and “listing practical tips”

Table 7.4 displays the percentages of discursive moves used in the two website modules, giving me insight into their discursive structure. It reveals that the two most common discursive moves in “addressing common questions/worries” (highlighted in dark and light grey) are *general information* (20.8%) and *assessment* (19.9%) making out over forty per cent together. If we add the number of *prediction* (3.9%), nearly half of all discursive moves are used for information-giving in “addressing common questions/worries”. The frequent use of *other voice* (19.7%) can be explained by considering the genre of FAQs, which are set up as interactions between experts and lay people. Interestingly, *advice* only amounts to 13.3 per cent whereas *referral* makes out 16.9 per cent of all discursive moves in “addressing common questions/ worries”. It appears that help-seekers are referred to other experts or to other sub-sites on the websites if they are interested in more directive instructions (see also Section 7.4.1.1). Thus, sub-sites that belong to “addressing common questions/worries” are concerned with conveying facts from an expert position and not necessarily about giving explicit guidance.

Table 7.4 The percentages of discursive moves used in the two modules “addressing common questions/worries” and “listing practical tips” (dark grey= most frequent dm; light grey = second most frequent dm)

Modules → Discursive moves↓	**Addressing common questions/worries**	**Listing practical tips**
no of dm 100%*=	361	286
Advice	13.3	39.9
Assessment	19.9	15.7
Explanation	5.5	9.4
General information	20.8	4.9
Header	-	17.8
Meta-comment	-	2.1
Other-voice	19.7	-
Prediction	3.9	5.6
Referral	16.9	4.5
Total	100	99.9

* Due to rounding the percentages may not add up to 100 % in this and other tables

In “listing practical tips”, the discursive move *advice* is by far the most common, making up 39.9 per cent (indicated in dark grey). This is not surprising if we consider that all five sources index in the links that readers will encounter advice in these sections. Compared to “addressing common questions/worries”, *referral* is rare with only 4.5 per cent. As I will show in Section 7.4.1., this can be attributed to the embedding of the individual sub-sites, with the ones “addressing common questions/worries” often redirecting readers. The high age of *headers* (17.8%) indicates that imparting advice occurs in a structured fashion in “listing practical tips”. There are two further aspects to utilizing *headers*: First, as mentioned in the previous sections, many *headers* are also pieces of advice (35 out of 51 occurrences). Therefore, their use allows website authors to emphasise succinct advice in list form while mitigating and giving a step-wise entry to advice in the corresponding paragraphs. Additionally, *headers* are made salient through various means (colour, bold font, being detached). Thereby, selective reading is facilitated as readers can quickly skim the text to find what they are interested in.

Further, the discrepancy between *assessment* and *general information* is noteworthy, making out 15.7 per cent and 4.9 per cent respectively. Thus, there is a stark contrast to the sites dealing with “addressing common questions/worries”. We can deduce that informing takes place in the shape of personalised evaluations of readers’ situation in sub-sites that are “listing practical tips”. In particular, *assessment* is employed to signal that information and advice is specifically targeted at readers and that their individual situations are understood. The discursive move *explanation* is employed twice as much in “listing practical tips” than in “addressing common questions/worries”. If we take a closer look at the occurrences, it becomes clear that *explanation* is tied to *advice* in many instances, usually following the latter. Locher (2006: 84) has observed the same tendency in Lucy online; pointing out that the discursive move explanation was mostly used after advice. This leads me to hypothesize the following: First, the speech event advising includes explanations-- making advice-seekers more likely to comply since they can see behind the rationale of advice. Secondly, as a circular conclusion concerning my dataset, the lower percentage of *explanation* in “addressing common questions/worries” is linked to the fact that there is less advising taking place. In both modules, the discursive move *prediction* is mostly about outlining the (positive or uncomfortable) effects of quitting on readers. Since “listing practical tips” centres around giving active help to quit, it also accounts for the slightly higher percentage of *prediction*. Indeed, even the instances of *prediction* in “addressing common questions/worries” occur when discussing the benefits of quitting. *Meta-comments* are completely absent in “addressing common questions/worries" and are only scarcely employed in "listing practical tips" (2.1%). However, it occurs in five of six sources (as outlined above), which may indicate that there is more need to navigate readers in "listing practical tips" compared to the FAQ- like structures from "addressing common questions/worries".

The discursive moves analysis has shown that there are different discursive foci in both modules at large. The discursive set-up suggests that persuasion through information-giving is at the forefront in "addressing common questions/worries". In other words, website authors give out facts to readers, so they can make the right decision. At the same time, the use of *referrals* indicates that website authors are interested in further involving readers, who are guided to more directive or personalised website sections and are invited to get in contact. In contrast, website authors engage in more straightforward persuasion in "listing practical tips": They offer a range of action alternatives and are directive (at least in *headers*) in terms of what readers should do. Based on the functions of the modules, I argue that the discursive structures pay tribute to the imagined readers. As I hinted at in Section 7.2.1, "listing practical tips" appears to be addressed to readers who want to quit but need further help while "addressing common questions/worries" also reaches out to readers in the decision-making process. In the latter case, website authors could risk as appearing as imposing if they engaged in advising. Since there are different practices subsumed within one module, there is a degree of generalization to the observations outlined above. To show what the discursive structures of individual websites are, I have compiled Tables 7.5 and 7.6. They illustrate the percentages of discursive moves used in "addressing common questions/worries" and "listing practical tips" respectively in the individual sources. Thereby, it allows me to identify sources that have potentially skewed the conclusions drawn from the overall comparison. The most and second most frequent discursive moves are highlighted in dark and light grey for each source.

Table 7.5 reveals that the use of discursive moves in individual sources does not uniformly correspond to the overall picture. For instance, (S04) shifts between *general information* and *other voice*, which implies that website authors place value on listing incontestable facts independent from individual readers' situation. In contrast, (S29) barely uses *general information* but relies mostly on transmitting knowledge in the personalized form of *assessments* (42.9%). Moreover, it features a comparatively high percentage of *advice* (21.4%). In (S17), the high number of *referrals* sticks out, suggesting that it is a peculiarity of this particular source. The use of discursive moves in (S18) is the one that corresponds most to the discursive structure outlined for all sources together, exhibiting a preference for discursive moves that are closer to information- than advice-giving. In sum, the emphasis on informing can still be observed across sources, whether in detached or personalised manner in the use of the discursive moves *general information* and *assessmen*t.

Table 7.5 The use of discursive moves in percentages in individual sources of "addressing common questions/worries" (dark grey = most frequent dm; light grey = second most frequent dm)

Source→ **Discursive moves↓**	**S04**	**S17**	**S18**	**S29**
no of dm: 100%=	21	163	135	42
Advice	5	11.7	14.1	21.4
Assessment	5	15.3	20.7	42.9
Explanation	5	6.7	5.2	2.4
General information	43	19	24.4	4.8
Header	-	-	-	-
Meta-comment	-	-	-	-
Other-voice	43	16	22.2	14.3
Prediction	-	3.1	3.0	11.9
Referral	-	28.2	10.4	2.4
Total	101	100	100	100.1

Table 7.6 The use of discursive moves in percentages in individual sources of "listing practical tips" (dark grey = most frequent dm; light grey = second most frequent dm)

Source → **Discursive moves↓**	**S03**	**S04**	**S16**	**S18**	**S26**
no of dm: 100% =	76	60	96	29	25
Advice	47.4	33.3	35.4	51.7	36
Assessment	22.4	11.7	16.7	-	20
Explanation	9.2	8.3	9.4	10.3	12
General information	-	5	9.4	-	8
Header	13.2	30	13.5	31	4
Meta-comment	1.3	1.7	3.1	-	4
Other-voice	-	-	-	-	-
Prediction	6.6	5	8.3	-	-
Referral	-	5	4.2	6.9	16
Total	100.1	100	100	99.9	100

In Table 7.6 we can observe that individual sources reflect the overall use of discursive moves shown in Table 7.3 with only a few outliers. *Advice* is also the most common discursive move in the single sources, even if to more varied degrees. Secondly, *assessment* is the second most frequent discursive move in three of five sources, indicating that the high percentage of *header* in (S04) and (S18) skews the numbers in Table 7.4. Therefore, I can confirm the co-occurrence of *assessment* and *advice* as part of the speech event advising, which previous studies have established in other online advice contexts (e.g. Locher 2006; Morrow 2012; Placencia 2012; Rudolf von Rohr 2015). Moreover, the higher use of *header* in (S04) and (S18) points out structural specificities of these sources, highlighting the list-like nature of advice imparted.

In (S26) it is striking that *referral* makes out 16 per cent of (four out of twenty-five) discursive moves, which is clearly higher than in the other four sources. Since advice is directed at pregnant smokers in (S26), the situational factor topic might have come into play (see Herring 2007). The four occurrences of *referral* do not include hyperlinking but are recommendations to get in contact either with medical professionals or the NHS quit smoking helpline, suggesting that time is essential with pregnant smokers. Finally, the sources (S04) and (S18), which feature both modules, show that different discursive moves can be emphasized in separate sub-sites. For example, both sources manifest a shift from information- to advice-giving from “addressing common questions/worries” to “listing practical tip”’ respectively.

7.2.3 The linguistic realization of *general information* and *advice*

In this section, I investigate the linguistic realization of the most frequently utilized discursive moves, which are *general information* in “addressing common questions/worries” and *advice* in “listing practical tips”. I have conducted word frequency analyses for both discursive moves with the help of NVivo. These analyses focus on content words, revealing what is happening on a semantic level. Thereby, we get another impression of how arguments are structured as we get insight into what aspects are semantically emphasised. Table 7.7 lists the ten most frequent content words[51] (≥ 3 characters) according to how often they occur in all *general information* moves (N = 75; N= 1,995 words) in “addressing common questions/worries”. Similarly, Table 7.8 details the ten most common content words (≥ 3 characters) that are employed in all *advice* moves (N = 114; N = 2,342) in “listing practical tips”.

Table 7.7 The 10 most common content words in *general information* in "addressing common questions/worries"

Lexical item	**Stemmed form**	**(N = 1,995) Occurrences n↓**
Smoking	*smoke, smoked, smoking*	59
Nicotine	*nicotine*	36
Cigarettes	*cigarette, cigarettes*	27
Risk	*risk, risks*	25
Nrt	*nrt*	21
Cause	*cause, caused, causes, causing*	20
Poisons	*poison, poisonous, poisons*	17
Chemicals	*chemical, chemicals*	17
Use	*use, used, using*	16

[51] Stemmed words have been subsumed within the same category.

Table 7.8 The 10 most common content words in *advice* in "listing practical tips"

Lexical item	**Stemmed form**	**(N = 2,342) Occurrences n↓**
Smoking	*smoke, smoked, smoking*	36
Quit	*quit, quitting*	24
Cigarette	*cigarette, cigarettes*	22
Need	*need, needed, needs*	17
Time	*time, times*	15
Think	*think, thinking*	14
Cravings	*crave, craving, cravings*	13
Keep	*keep, keeping*	13
Try	*tried, try, trying*	12
Help	*help, helpful, helping*	12

The most common lexical item is s*moking* in both discursive moves, which shows that the overall topic is never lost out of sight. In the same vein, *cigarette* is ranked as third most used lexical item in both discursive moves. However, both lexical items collocate differently in the respective modules. In *general information, smoking* is realised as the noun *smoke* in the majority of the cases (n = 29). Additionally, the noun *smoke* is the second part of compounds in twenty of these twenty-nine instances, being preceded by nouns, such as *cigarette* or *tobacco*, or by adjectives (e.g. *second-hand*). In *advice*, *smoking* is mostly used in the gerund form (n = 21), appearing in nominalized position in seventeen cases (n = 17). Alternatively, it is also realised in the infinitive form *smoke* (n = 9). The lexical item *cigarette* tends to be used in the plural (n = 16) in *general information* whereas the singular form is preferred in *advice* (n = 15). Further, the preposition *in* precedes *cigarettes* in eleven cases in *general information*, which does not occur in *advice*. Moreover, *cigarette* is used as the first part of a compound, mostly as *cigarette smoke,* in eight instances (n = 8) compared to one occurrence (*cigarette break*) in *advice*. In the case of *advice*, the indefinite determiner *a* is employed to precede *cigarette* in nine instances (n = 9).

This initial comparison points to important aspects regarding persuasion and the discursive structure of arguments in these specific discursive moves and the sub-sites at large. In *general information*, the technical or scientific dimension of smoking is emphasised, as manifested by the focus on the by-product *smoke* and the use of the preposition *in* used to talk about the composition of cigarettes. In contrast, smoking as an activity is at the centre in *advice*, indexed by the gerund *smoking* and by talking about how *a cigarette* affects readers' lives. Examples (7.20) and (7.21) nicely illustrate the contrast between focusing on the effects of smoking from a detachted, scientific perspective in *general information* an on smoking as an activity in *advice*.

(7.20) Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas in cigarette smoke. (S17)

(7.21) A good place to start is to keep a smoking log for a couple of days in which you note the time of each cigarette, where you smoked it and what your mood was like. (S16)

If we consider the rest of the list of the most frequent words in *general information*, it points to the fact that the composition of cigarettes (*chemicals, nicotine, poisons*), negative effects of the consumption of cigarettes (*risk, cause*) and potential medical aids (*nrt, use*) are the main issues. Also, only three verbs are among the most frequent words, of which *smoking* is mostly nominalized. Thus, de-agentised nature of *general information* is highlighted (see Ch. 3; Ng & Bradac 1993: 161). The topic smoking is detached from individual readers, as it is represented as an event it is own right with its own effects. Example (7.22) is a case in point as both the activities of *using NRT* and *smoking* have become nominalized events, which hide and conceal the agency of readers.

(7.22) Using NRT is safer than smoking because it doesn't contain poisons like tar or carbon monoxide. (S18)

Regarding *advice*, there are seven verbs listed among the ten most common content words (compared to only three in *general information*), which stresses that the reader is directly moved to become active. Readers are reminded that they need to be mindful of their motivation to be successful, which is indicated by combining the verb *quit* (n = 6) with *want to, determined to* or *determination to*. The importance of the right mind-set is also reflected in the use of the verb *need*, which collocates with verbs that invite introspection in eight cases (n = 8) (e.g. *remember, think about*). Similarly, the verb *think* (n = 14) is employed to recommend that readers consider their reasons for or the advantages of quitting as well as encouraging them to come up with their own coping strategies. It is used in the imperative form in eight cases, which is a straightforward attempt to guide readers' attitude. In example (7.23), readers are invited to ponder on how they would react if co-quitters relapsed. By using the verb *need*, website authors emphasize that playing through this train of thought is indispensable for readers. Moreover, as website authors urge reader to *think about* their feelings, they try to impact readers' future action environment in an attempt to prevent slip-ups.

(7.23) But if you're quitting with others, you also need to think about how you'll feel if one of the group starts smoking again […] (S16)

The frequency of the lexical item *cravings* (n = 13) indicates that they are considered the biggest obstacle on readers' way to becoming smoke free. The consensus is to let cravings *pass* (S16), as three out of five websites argue that they *only last a couple of minutes* (S04). Thus, the lexical item *cravings* collocates with verbs that are related to the semantic field of diversion, such as *distract you from* (n = 2), *take your mind off* (n = 2) or *switch off* (n=1). Further, cravings are presented as inevitable occurrences, for which websites authors give the right tools to handle them. In example (7.24), readers are warned that they are bound to experience cravings (*when they occur*), for which they should prepare some coping strategies (*you need to take your mind off*) such as the ones suggested (*you could go...*):

(7.24) You will get cravings, you need to take your mind off your cravings when they occur, you could go for a walk or call a friend […] (S18)

The verb *keep* is also used to talk about techniques of distraction as it is combined with *busy* (n=4), *occupied* (n = 2) and *active* (n = 1). Moreover, the verb *keep* is followed by a noun phrase in four instances, providing specific coping strategies[52]. In (7.25), website authors suggest how to deal with hunger pangs after quitting (*keep plenty of fruit…*):

(7.25) If you feel hungrier than usual or worry about putting on weight, avoid snacking on high calorie foods such as chocolate. Instead, keep plenty of fruit and vegetables handy. (S04)

With respect to the verb *try*, it is followed by the gerund in six cases, by the particle *to* in four instances and finally by noun phrases in two. The use of the gerund and of the noun phrases indicates that website authors focus on coming up with particular tips for readers to put into practice. If *try* is combined with the particle *to*, it is followed by *give up* or *quit* in three out of four instances, thus acknowledging that stopping smoking can be successful or not. In exam-

[52] Cf. Section 9.4.2.1, when looking at the linguistic realization of *advice* in forum interaction, I discuss that the imperative form of *keep* is frequent in motivational advice.

ple (7.26), website authors utilized *try* to suggest a coping strategy tailored to pregnant smokers (i.e. readers) for how they can distract themselves from cravings.

> (7.26) Cravings are hard, but they last only a few minutes. Try writing down ten possible baby names for a boy and a girl. (S26)

Finally, the lexical item *help* is mostly employed as a verb (n = 10 out of 12), pointing to the fact that it is used to explain why or how the advice given is useful. Interestingly, the modal verb *can* precedes *help* (or *helpful*) in five instances, indicating that website authors do not want to be held accountable if advice given is not fruitful, see example (7.27):

> (7.27) Nicotine Replacement Therapy can help you manage this [physiological side of cravings], and NiQuitin offers a variety of products so you can use the type of treatment that works for you. (S03)

In (7.27), readers are presented with a solution for the physiological aspects of quitting, for which NRT is recommended (*help you manage*). Since the modal verb *can* precedes *help*, this piece of advice remains tentative. On the one hand, it mitigates the responsibility of website authors in case NRT would not be successful, on the other; it has the effect of highlighting the individuality of readers.

7.3 The embedding and visual arrangement of the sub-sites and the interpersonal function of introductory texts

7.3.1 The embedding of modules in context and their visual arrangement

In the context of websites, the multi-modal format influences how persuasion is attempted. Hyperlinking, non-linearity, the modularity of and the nesting of content are different aspects that affect how arguments are set up to persuade. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006: 204-205) point out that despite non-linearity and the possibility of multiple reading paths the composition of websites is not random, which is why I argued it should also be taken into account for a multi-faceted picture of persuasion. My second set of research questions regarding how sub-sites are embedded in the co- and context of websites as well as how sub-sites are visually arranged are essential. In order to assess the embedded function within the website structure, I analyse how sites belonging to the respective sub-samples are hierarchically ordered or categorized within the larger websites. This will give me insight into how website authors position the codes in question and how they want readers to perceive and approach said themes. Further, I comment on how both codes, "addressing common questions/worries" and "listing practical tips", are structured as modules. The visual design points to how readers are supposed to engage with the material presented and to where the topical foci lie. Thus, despite the fact that these are not linguistic concerns as such, they are necessary aspects to get a grasp of how argumentation is built up on the websites.

In the topic "addressing common questions/worries", the question of how the modules are structured is especially important since it establishes pre-given identities of web-sources as experts and outside voices as lay interactants by "[…] simulat[ing] a discussion between insiders and outsiders" (Turnbull 2013: 298). The bi-partite structure works to grant a position of expertise to website authors, which is boosted in the cases of (S04) and (S29) by claiming that their responses are providing *facts* or are exposing *excuses* respectively. Similarly, the lexeme *expert* is explicitly used to designate answers in (S17) and (S18). All of these linguistic means reinforce the hierarchy in knowledge inherent to the genre of FAQs. Further, the internal structure of FAQs pinpoints how readers are expected to engage with information and the embedded function of FAQs in the overall practice. In this respect, the strategic placement of FAQs and how they fit into the organization of the websites is important to consider.

As explained before (see Ch. 6 and Section 7.2.1), I used "listing practical tips" as a label to indicate that websites feature designated areas of explicit advice-giving. In other words, the advice-giving frame is unequivocally present, including the asymmetry in knowledge between the roles and the relational dimension that come with advice-giving. Thus, this makes sections featuring the code "listing practical tips" interesting for a study persuasion. The face-threatening potential of advice and the pre-distribution of expertise also poses challenges to website authors in terms of how to position themselves and readers. In contrast the theme "addressing common questions/worries", website authors abstain from explicitly labelling themselves as *experts*, using more subtle identity strategies to signal expertise. Further, as I will show, the categorisation of "listing practical tips" on the entire website and the name of the modules can have a mitigating effect, announcing to readers that they are about to become advice-seekers. The internal structure of the theme "listing practical tips" is more varied than "addressing common questions/worries": from listing advice to working with hyperlinks, all of which guides readers' attention in different ways. In the following two subsections, I will elaborate on the embedding of and the internal arrangement of modules. I will begin with “addressing common questions/worries” and then move on to “listing practical tips”.

7.3.1.1. Addressing common questions/worries

Even though thematic modules of websites need to make sense on their own, where they are integrated, how the content of modules connects to the rest of a website as well as their visual arrangement is meaningful in terms of persuasion. As already indicated in Section 7.2.1, my analysis showed that the two sources with the larger number of words, (S17) and (S18) are also similar in terms of how the sub-sites dealing “addressing common questions/worries” are visually arranged and their embedded function within the practices. Therefore, I will first discuss (S17) and (S18) before moving on to elaborate on the embedded functions of (S29) and (S04). Their order is deliberately reverse to do justice to the continuum of typicality on which the modules can be placed with (S04) being the most distant from typical FAQs.

Figure 7.1 shows a screenshot of how "addressing common questions/worries" is realised as *Frequently asked questions* in (S17):

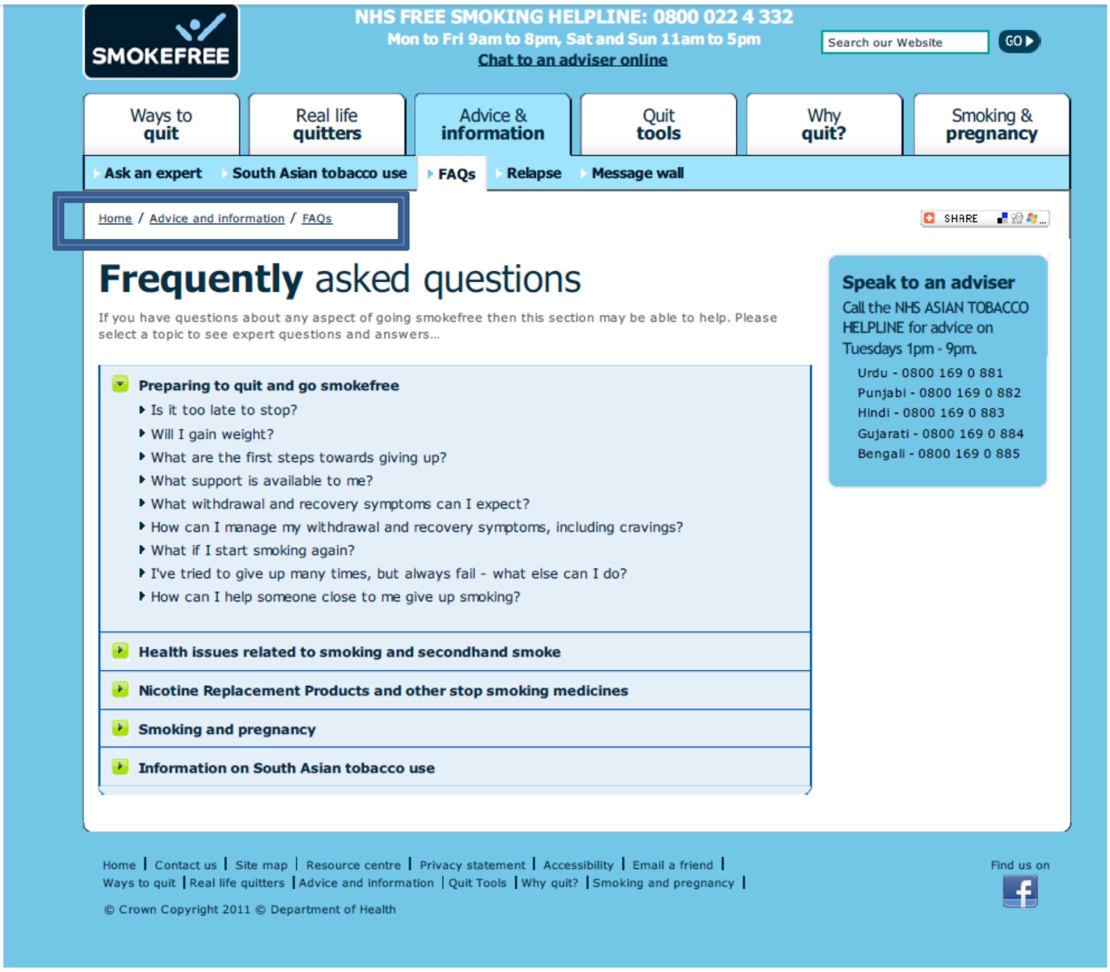

Figure 7.1 Screenshot of the thematic module "addressing common questions/worries" in (S17); (blue frame added)

The category *FAQs* is subordinate to *Advice & Information* (blue frame), which points to the purpose of FAQs of conveying facts, showing options and suggesting action alternatives for readers to become active. Additionally, this explicit sub-categorization to *Advice & Information* sets the ground for the pre-established asymmetrical identity positions of lay-questioner and expert-respondent typical of *FAQs*. This aspect of setting up a frame of expectation is especially important since advice-giving is by no means restricted to the tab *Advice & information* in (S17). In other words, if readers click on *Advice & Information,* they are willing to adopt the role of advice-seekers and expect the speech-event advice to take place. In (S17) the question-answer pairs are grouped into super-categories (e.g. *Preparing to quit and go smokefree*, etc.), which facilitates the navigation of the website (Fig. 7.1). Readers can click on the topic of their interest, resulting in the questions popping up. At that point, they can select whatever question they identify with or regard as most pertinent for them. Janoschka (2004: 111) has called this "customization", which is a type of individualization that enhances the attractiveness —and ultimately the persuasiveness— of the website. This type of structure indicates that the FAQs are not meant to be consumed exhaustively, but that readers can cherry-pick whatever snippet of information they find interesting.

This assumption is corroborated by the fact that there is a redundancy of information across questions. In example (7.28), the overlap in content is illustrated with two passages from separate questions dealing with relapse. The first question addresses first-time quitters whereas the second question is directed at more experienced quitters. Both questions belong to the category *Preparing to quit and go smokefree* and are listed in sequence on the website:

(7.28) **What if I start smoking again?**

[…]

If you start again, don't worry. You haven't failed. You have improved your chance of success next time.

[…]

I've tried to give up many times, but always fail - what else can I do?

If you've tried before and it didn't work out don't worry. You haven't failed, you have just given yourself more practice for the next time you quit.

[…] (S17)

If we look at the answers to both questions, it becomes clear that the paragraphs display similar content, in parts even featuring the same wording (*don't worry, you haven't failed*). It is reasonable to assume that website authors expect readers to click on what is relevant to their identity—either as a first time or as a more experienced quitter.

The observation that website authors anticipate readers to go through the questions selectively can be further supported in other sections. The super-category *Smoking and pregnancy* is especially prone to repeat content from other super-categories. For instance, the question *Can I use NRT while I'm pregnant?* is raised and answered in the exact same form in the previous super-category on *Nicotine Replacement Products and other stop smoking medicines.* Similarly, questions dealing with the dangers of smoking and how it affects children and unborn babies are discussed multiply with few alterations in content. Thus, pregnant women are most likely to head to the category *Smoking and pregnancy*, where they can expect to find information targeted at them. However, by reiterating content under several headings and categories, website authors make sure that important items of information can be found by the intended readers in several places regardless of their reading path.

Moreover, my close-reading analysis of the embedding and the visual arrangement of the FAQs in (S17) reveal that one of their main functions is to regroup information from other sub-sites on thesource. Figures 7.2 and 7.3 are both screenshots of (S17); one depicting the FAQs question dealing with *the effects of second-hand smoke* and the first page under the tab *Secondhand smoke* linked to reasons for quitting. The content presented in both sections overlaps, with the blue frames highlighting two near- identical pieces of information.

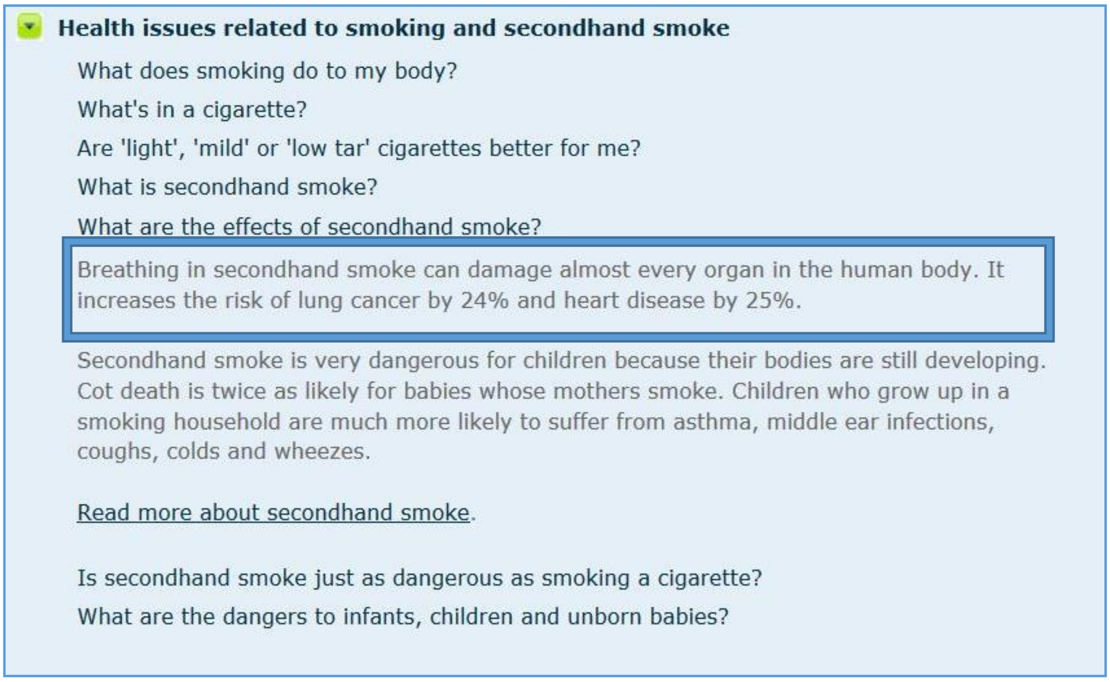

Figure 7.2 Screenshot of the question discussing the effects of second-hand smoke in the FAQs in (S17)

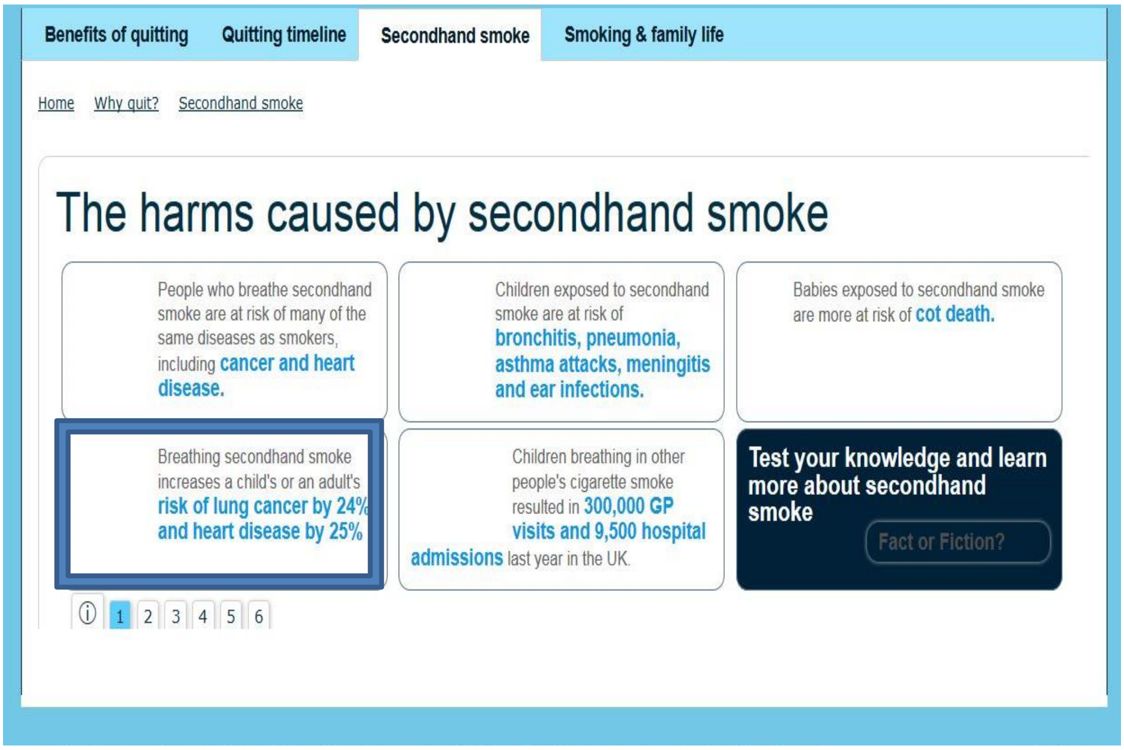

Figure 7.3 Screenshot of the first sub-site under the tab *Secondhand Smoke* in (S17)

Since FAQs cover a range of topics (as indexed by the super-categories), their function seems to be to provide concise summaries of information that is distributed on the entire website. Further, if we compare the layout of the screenshots, it is noteworthy that FAQs are still primarily text-based and are intended to be read vertically without many text-enhancing effects. In contrast, important facts are given more weight by making them more "salient" with the help of colour and turning the font bold in in the sub-site about second-hand smoke (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006: 201). This relative visual bareness is part of the FAQ genre: It reinforces the impression that readers encounter expert answers, which contributes to ethos construction. In terms of persuasion, the function of regrouping information in FAQs helps to emphasize important points and leads readers to information they would not have clicked on otherwise. Finally, the FAQs in (S17) work as a navigation/information centre, guiding readers to other sub-sections of the website. The discursive move *referral* occurs most often in "addressing common questions/worries", featuring 46 occurrences in 32 questions in (S17). Every question ends with a hyperlink to another sub-section in (S17), which highlight the fact that the FAQs are seen as providing an opportunity to further involve readers by redirecting them to other sub-sections.

In (S18), the theme "addressing common questions/worries" is realised as *Ask the experts*, which is one of many topics from which readers can choose in the sub-menu on the left-hand side (highlighted by a blue frame in Fig. 7.4). The topic *Ask the experts* is set between hyperlinks to *Help someone stop* and *Help & advice*, which places it among the explicit advice- and information-giving sections of the website. As pointed out for (S17), if readers select this section, they expect to engage in the speech event advice, in which they will be presented with action alternatives and information. Further, the name of the module itself sets up the hierarchy of knowledge form the beginning, which may affect how advice is rendered and information is given.

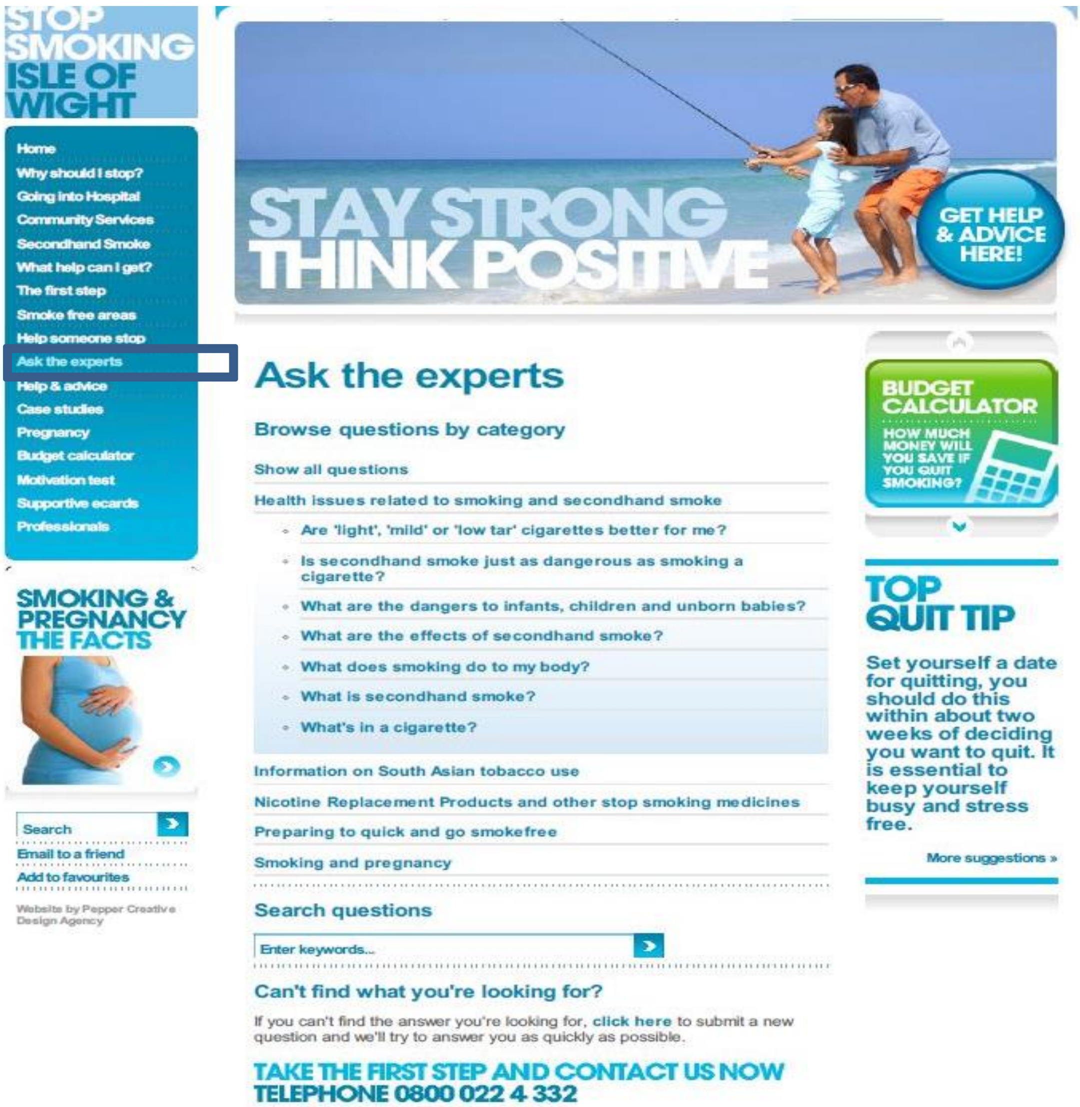

Figure 7.4 Screenshot of "addressing common questions/worries" in (S18)

The question-answer pairs are categorized according to topics, which have the same headings as in (S17) but appear in different order[53]. Readers can select the topic of their interest and choose the question they would like to know more about. By selecting a specific question, readers make a text pop up. As argued above for (S17), the customization of content has a persuasive effect since readers individualize the content of the website according to their needs (Janoschka 2004: 113). It also suggests that readers make their way through the FAQs in a selective fashion, being their own agents in terms of what topic they select.

However, website authors use the strategy of repetition to increase the likelihood of readers finding relevant information. In example (7.29), I collated three passages containing the argument of how cigarettes are filled with toxic chemicals. I conducted a word search for *toxic* in NVivo in "addressing common question/worries" in (S18), which produced seven results, three of which featured the exact same phrase (*over 4.000 toxic chemicals*):

(7.29)

- Cigarettes contain over 4,000 toxic chemicals and around 50 of these cause cancer. […]

  (S18; *What's in a cigarette?*)
- […] Damage to the health of a smoker is caused by the tar, carbon monoxide, and over 4,000 toxic chemicals found in cigarette smoke. […]

  (S18; *Are NRT products just as dangerous as smoking cigarettes?*)
- […] Cigarettes contain over 4,000 toxic chemicals and around 50 of these cause cancer.

  […] (S18; *What does smoking do to my body?*)

If we consider that the seven occurrences of the toxicity of cigarettes are distributed across the total of thirty-three questions, it shows that there is a good chance that readers get across that particular argument at some point. Similar to the FAQs in (S17), *Ask the experts* is used to reinforce content of other sub-sites in (S18), providing succinct summaries of important information. Moreover, the *search questions* bar at the bottom of the site underlines that

[53] The large amount of informational overlap between (S17) and (S18) can be attributed to the fact that both websites have a governmental background with (S17) being the country-wide website. Nonetheless, they differ in terms of discursive structure (see Section 7.3) but also in terms of the embedded functions of their FAQs.

readers should consider *ask the experts* as an archive of information that can be accessed according to their needs. This impression is further stressed by the fact that readers are invited to submit a question if they do not encounter a satisfactory answer (*Can't find what you're looking for?*). Additionally, system-generated suggestions of *Other questions that may be useful...* (see Fig. 7.5) once the reader selects a question bolsters the archive-like function of *Ask the experts*.

In Figure 7.5 two screenshots are depicted that deal with the dangers of smoking during pregnancy: one is from the sub-section *Pregnancy* whereas the other is the answer to one of the questions in the super-category *Smoking and pregnancy*. While there is an overlap in information (examples are highlighted with blue frames in Fig. 7.5), the information presented on the sub-site specifically designed for smoking in pregnancy is more elaborate. In fact, the sub-site lists more potential health dangers (e.g. *congenital defects*) and is textually more explicit when talking about health risks of smoking. In contrast to (S17), the summaries of information in *Ask the experts* in (S18) are more succinct than what can be encountered in the specific sub-sites. In other words, *Ask the experts* represent the digested versions of information within the sub-sites. The larger amount of text in the specific sub-site on *Pregnancy* seems to go hand in hand with an increased effort to convince readers of the information presented. For instance, *slower growth* is presented as an isolated health risk in the FAQs whereas the same health risk is additionally linked to developmental issues (*lower achievements*) and respiratory illnesses (*developing asthma*). The implications of a slower growth are thus made more pressing to readers.

Finally, one further idiosyncrasy of *Ask the experts* is the request to rate answers after each question, inviting readers to judge *how useful* they found single answers. The possibility to evaluate content is not particular to the section *Ask the experts* but also appears in *Help & Advice* in (S18) (see Fig. 7.12). This type of user-site interactivity makes the speech-event advice appear less one-sided, handing back some expertise to readers by giving them the opportunity to influence other readers' reading path (see Warnick 2007: 76 on types of interactivity and Ch. 2). However, this is only an ostensible reduction of the lay-expert hierarchy as authorial control remains entirely with website authors.

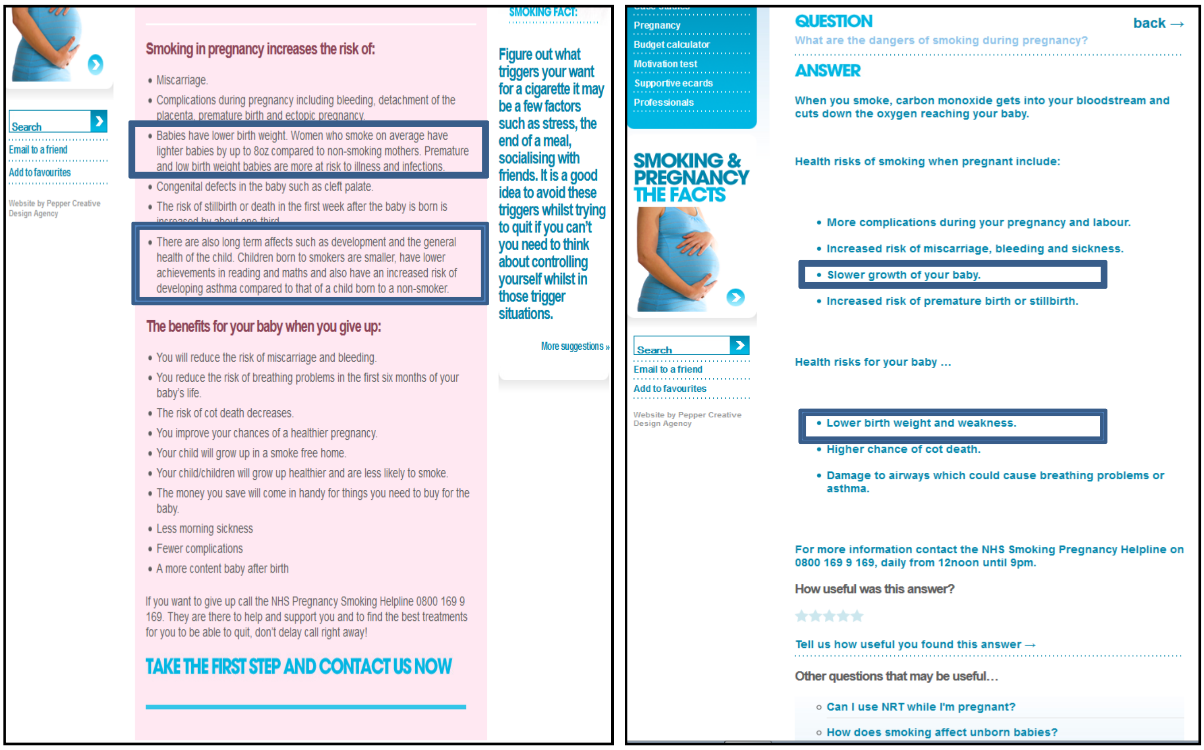

Figure 7.5 Screenshots of two sub-sites dealing with smoking and pregnancy in (S18): from the sub-site Pregnancy and from dangers of smoking during pregnancy in *Ask the experts*

In (S29) the issue of smoking is just one of many lifestyle issues that have an effect on readers' health that are discussed, such as *exercise* and *eating well.* As shown in in Figure 7.6, the structure and the overall purpose of the website differ from (S17) and (S18), which are entirely focussed on smoking cessation. The thematic module "addressing common questions/worries" is realized as *Overcoming excuses to quit smoking* (blue frame in Fig 7.6) and is listed below hyperlinks to sub-sites detailing the benefits of quitting per se and during pregnancy. The location of *Overcoming excuses to quit smoking* suggests that it acts as a final spur for readers after all arguments have been put on the table. If readers want to know more about how they can *overcome excuses,* they click on the heading leading them to hyperlinked content.

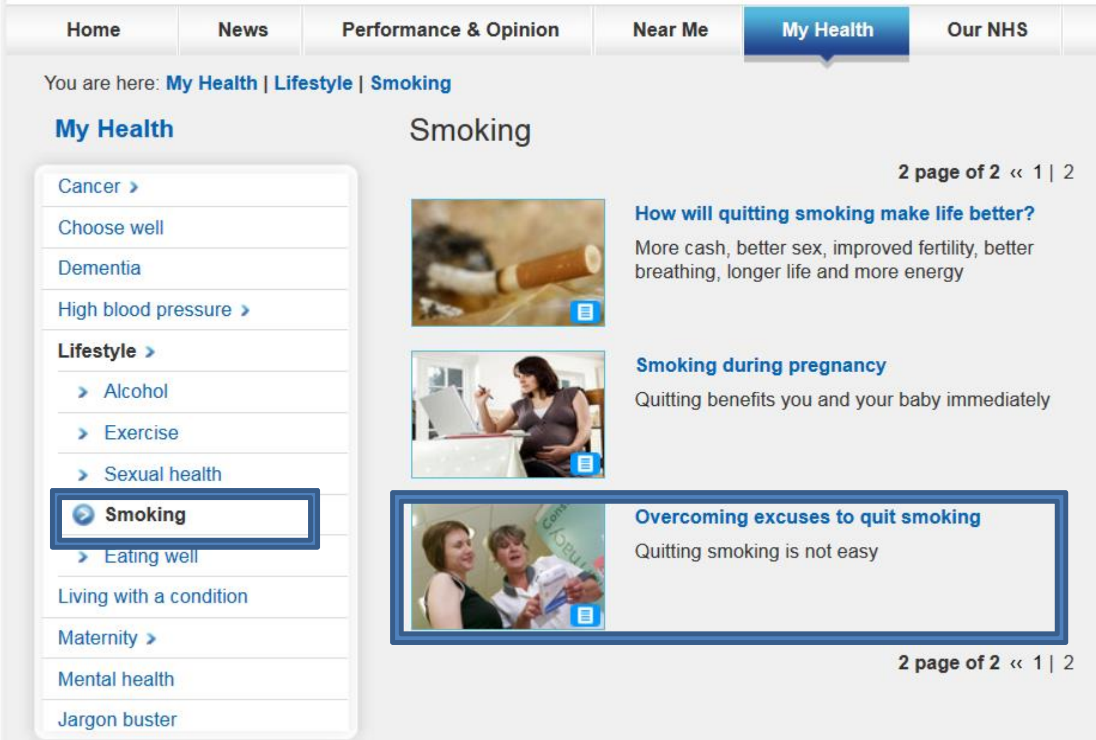

Figure 7.6 Screenshot of "addressing common questions/worries" in (S29)

The sub-site itself is text-based (Fig. 7.7) and lists the different excuses in a vertical sequence (see blue frames). In contrast to the FAQs discussed earlier, the entire text is visible without requiring additional interaction, such as clicking on a link to open a sub-topic. This pre-determined reading path implies that readers are supposed to make sense of the document in its entirety, highlighting that each piece of information is relevant. This assumption is further supported by the ascending numbering of *Excuses*[54]. If we examine the rest of the smoking section on the website, it becomes clear that *Overcoming excuses to quit smoking* presents new information. This could account for the editorial decision to guide readers through the whole subpage. Hence, the embedded function of the dyadic module within the entire website structure differs from the two other sources (S17, S18). While the latter two offer a platform for readers to look up information in a independent way, the website authors from (S29) use the dyadic format to enhance the rhetorical effect of their arguments. Readers are expected to recognize themselves in the *Excuses*-statements, which should make them more willing to accept ensuing advice and information to become smoke-free. In other words, website authors want to persuade readers *to quit making excuses and go for it,* as phrased in the introductory text.

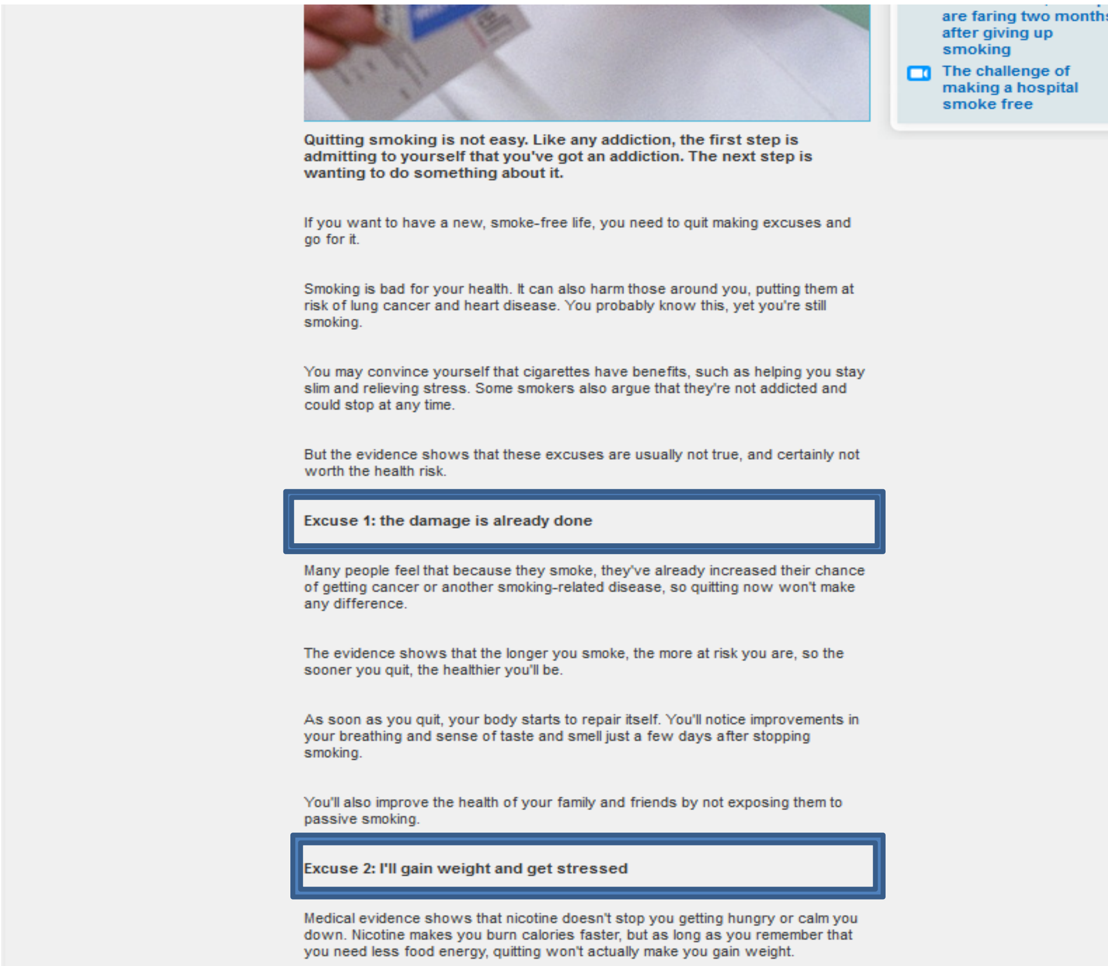

Figure 7.7 Screenshot of the module "addressing common questions/worries" in (S29)

[54] Nonetheless, due to the fact that *Excuses* or the first parts of the dialogic structures have been made salient by turning the font bold (see Kress& Van Leeuwen 2006: 201), readers can skim and pick tesxts selectively to some extent.

In (S04), the thematic module “addressing common questions/worries” is realized as *Nicotine Myths*, which is part of the super-category *Quitting* (Fig 7.8). This super-category is presented as the more neutral, product-independent section, giving dis-interested information on this otherwise commercial website. The other main headers either entail product presentations or stop smoking programmes based on the use of the medication of the company (*ActiveStop, Cut Down to Stop*).

The information-giving character of the super-category *Quitting* is reinforced by mimicking charity and governmental smoking cessation websites in terms of structure and issues addressed, such as the dangers of smoking during pregnancy and strategies to limit weight gain after quitting. Moreover, the website authors abstain from referring to their products in the sub-headings. To enhance the trustworthiness or the ethos of their website, it is worthwhile to establish a section dedicated to information-giving for website authors, convincing readers of their “benevolence” (see Sillence & Briggs 2015: 472).

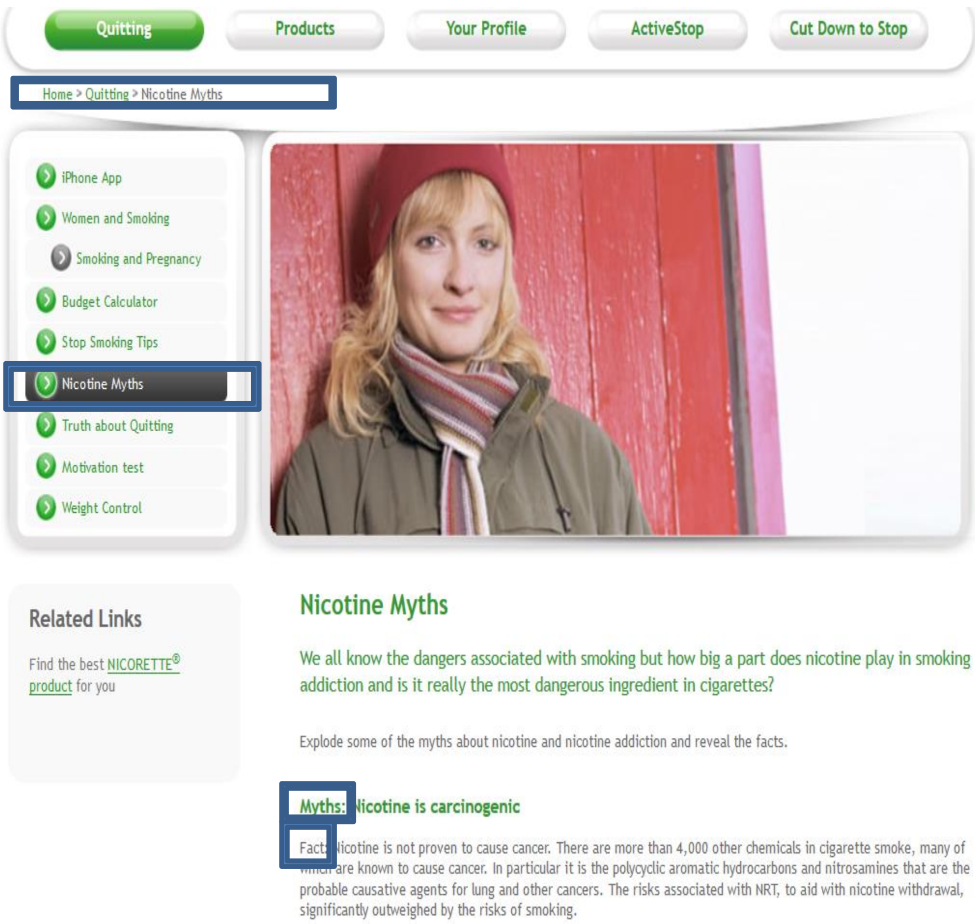

Figure 7.8 Screenshot of the module "addressing common questions/worries" in (S04)

In the side-bar on the left-hand side, *Nicotine Myths* is located between *Stop Smoking Tips* and *Truth about Quitting,* which are sub-topics that are linked to advice-giving. Thereby, the ominous sounding *Nicotine Myths* is positioned into the same realm, setting up a frame of expectation for readers to find help for when they have decided to stop smoking. The purpose of *Nicotine Myths* is to enlighten readers regarding the dangers of consuming nicotine as a substance to their health, giving important background that legitimises their own product line. Since the information about nicotine is located under the header *Quitting* and is not introduced as side information to *Products,* website authors distance themselves from being driven by economic motivations. This finding resonates with earlier research, as Koteyko (2009: 114) put forward that online advertising shifted from directly pushing customer to adopting a more indirect style having a range of functions that convey information, entertainment or education. The visual arrangement of the sub-site containing the dyadic structure in (S04) bears several similarities with (S29): It is text-based and is presented in a vertical fashion without further hyperlinking, which implies that readers are supposed to go through the entire page from top to bottom. Secondly, as in (S29), the sub-page presents new information that should be read exhaustively, as suggested by the absence of hyperlinking. Finally, the dyadic structure is used for rhetorical effect since it allows the labelling of misinformation as *Myths* that readers can overthrow themselves (*reveal the facts;* see also Section 7.4.2.1).

7.3.1.2 Listing practical tips

Following my procedure in the previous section, I will pinpoint how the thematic module is categorized in the entire website structure, comment on its visual arrangement and draw the link to its embedded function and expected reading paths in view of persuasion. I structure my discussion the following way: I begin with (S16) and (S26), which are sites on which smoking is one topic amongst many and whose relevant sub-sites are arranged in a similar manner. Secondly, I look at (S18), which is hosted by a governmental institution, like (S26), but is entirely dedicated to smoking cessation, like (S03) and (S04). Thirdly, I turn my attention to (S03) and (S04) respectively, both of which are sources that centre on smoking cessation and have been set up by pharmaceutical organizations with commercial interests.

Figure 7.9 shows a composite[55] screenshot of how the thematic module "listing practical tips" is embedded within the website structure of (S16). The tabs at the top of the website

[55] It is composite since the scroll-down nature of the website made it impossible to fit the entire page in one screenshot.

indicate that it is not specifically dedicated to smoking cessation, but that *smoking* is just one of many topics. It is sub-categorized to *Healthy living*, which implicates that stopping smoking is viewed as a lifestyle issue. Since smoking is inarguably unhealthy, readers can expect information on its disadvantages and advice to alter their lifestyles from the beginning. The breadcrumb (navigation elements at the top of the website—see blue frame) reveals that smoking is categorized alongside other substances that can potentially be abused (*alcohol and drugs*), thus belonging to addictions.

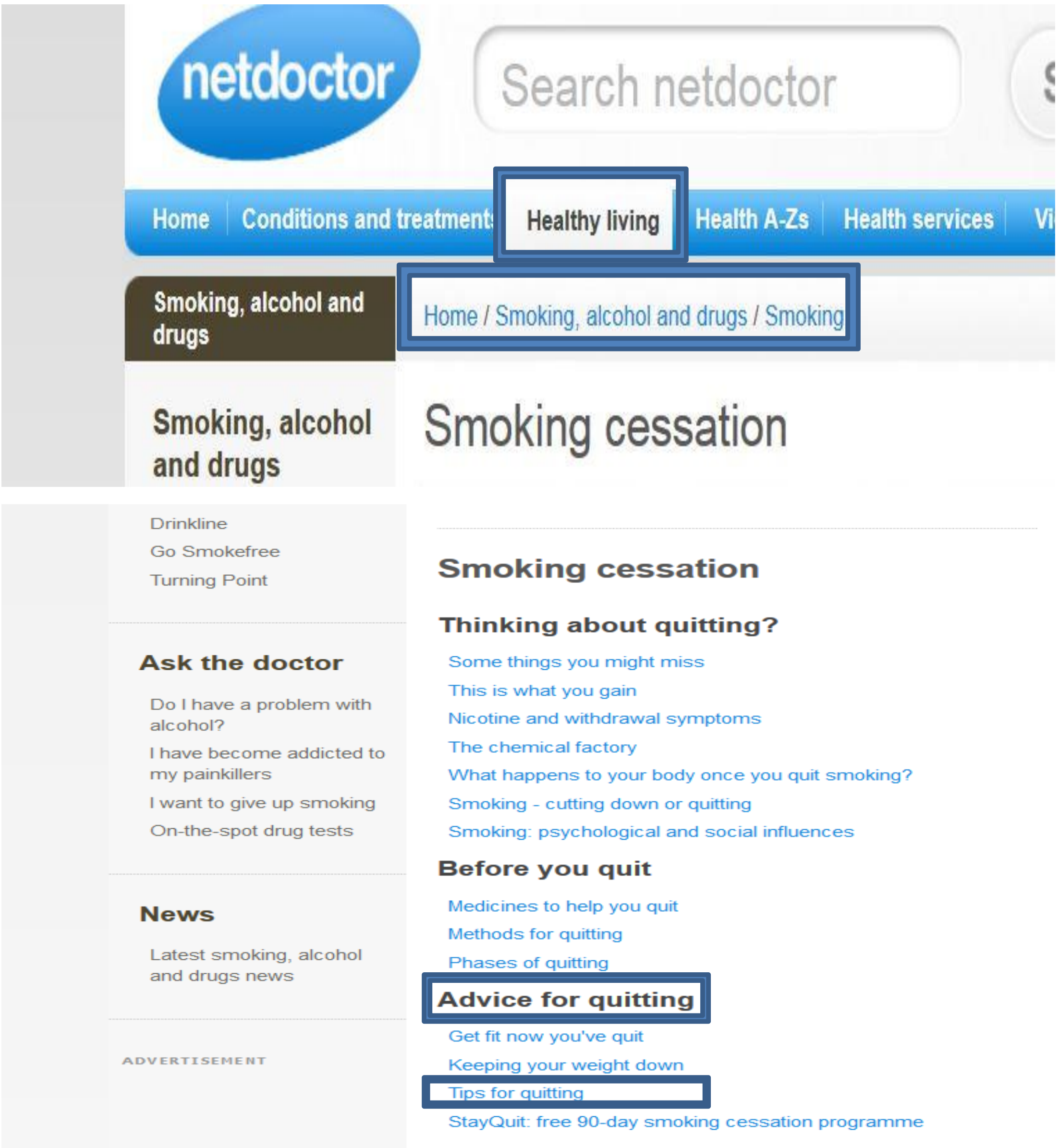

Figure 7.9 Composite screenshot of how "listing practical tips" is embedded within (S16)

The sub-site featuring the thematic module “listing practical tips” appears in the form of *Tips for quitting* and is hierarchically subordinate to *Advice for quitting* (highlighted in blue frames). Thus, right from the start readers are made aware that they are engaging in advising if they click on the respective links. Figure 7.10 shows an excerpt of how “listing practical tips” is realised on the website. The *Tips for quitting* are presented as read-on text, which indicates that readers are supposed to go through the text from top to bottom. However, the use of headers in bold and of a larger font facilitates a more selective reading. Moreover, as nine of those headers are pieces of advice themselves (which is elaborated in the small-print text), readers can also view the text as a list from which they can choose among a range of options.

Figure 7.10 Screenshot "listing practical tips" in (S16)

Website authors use visually enhanced boxes on the right-hand side, which softens the impression of readers having to read an article-like text. The purpose of these boxes is to summarize text (as in Fig. 7.10) or to provide examples for how to realize recommended coping strategies. The saliency of the boxes may draw readers' attention to them and could motivate them to read the entire text.

In (S26) "listing practical tips" is part of the topic *smoking and pregnancy*.[56] Since (S26) is the official website of the regional NHS services in West Sussex, it is not only concerned with smoking cessation. Further, like in (S16), the issue of smoking and pregnancy appears alongside topics dealing with lifestyle issues, which is also indexed by the name of the super-category *Live well* (see blue frame in Fig. 7.11). Again, we can assume that readers expect to encounter information or advice on how to improve their daily lives. Advice is imparted in the form of scroll-down text, implying that readers are to consume it in its entirety. Additionally, the use of actual bullet points to list advice creates the impression of there being many options for pregnant women to stop smoking. At the same time, the textual density of the list could result in readers understanding advice as step-by-step instructions to become smoke-free, which is further reinforced by using the imperative form to start the first four pieces of advice (*Throw, Start, Tell, Work out*).

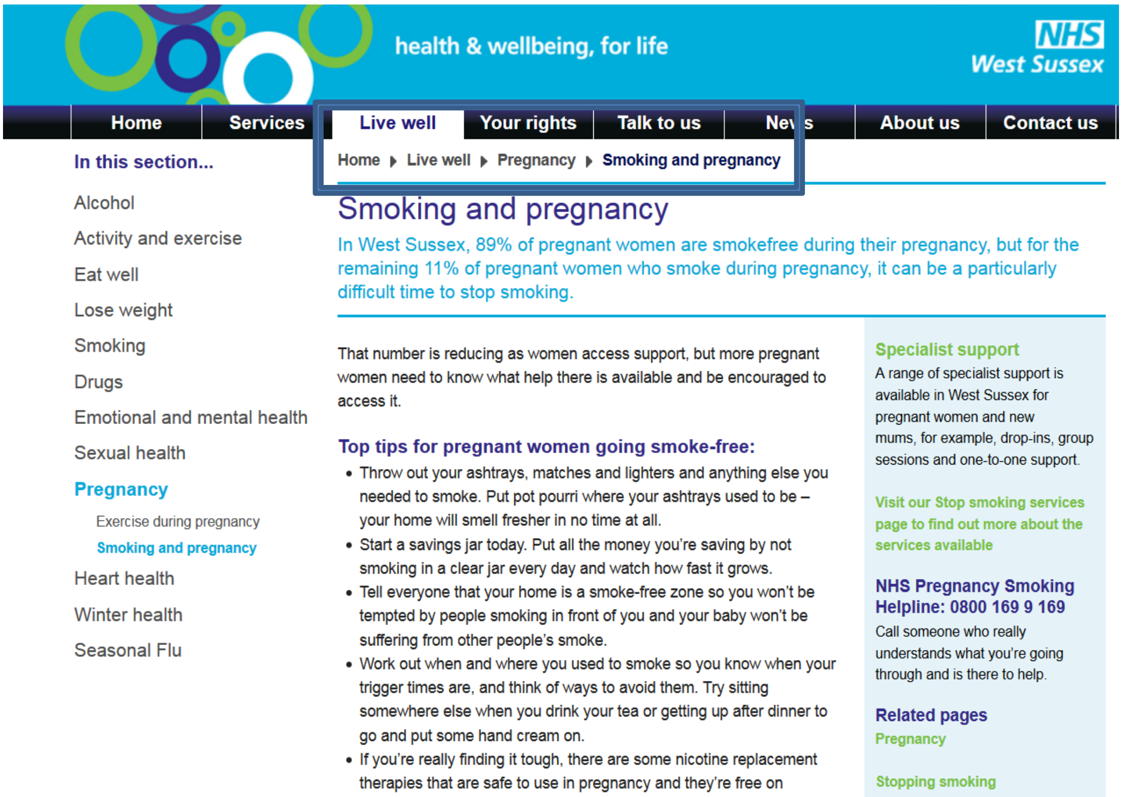

Figure 7.11 Screenshot of "listing practical tips" in (S26)

[56] Interestingly, the tab *smoking* (see Fig. 7.11) does not feature practical tips but consists of listing lifestyle and health benefits when quitting.

While (S18) is also maintained by a governmental entity, it is entirely dedicated to smoking cessation. The code "listing practical tips" is located under *Help & Advice,* which is set between *Ask the experts* and *case studies* in the sub-menu (see blue frame in Fig. 7.12). The categorization suggests that the *Help & Advice* section can be put somewhere in-between expert informing in the FAQs section and lay advising in the testimonials (*Case studies*). Indeed, if we have a first look at advice offered, it appears that former smokers have prepared tips. On the one hand, the language is conversational style with no clear syntactic boundaries. On the other, the tag *suggested on* [date] below each suggestion conveys the idea that previous website visitors have contributed to the website[57] (see blue frame in Fig. 7.12). Readers could be more likely to comply with advice or at least to stay on the website if former smokers were to give advice since previous research indicated that the likeness between communicative parties could benefit persuasiveness (Wright 2015: 492). In terms of the visual arrangement of "listing practical tips", the possibility to sort suggestions according to one's own needs makes clear that they are not intended to be read in sequence. Instead, the purpose of enabling the customization of content is to involve readers, as the latter can access information catering to their needs. Further, as discussed when looking at *Ask the experts,* readers are encouraged to rate advice, which also results in involving readers by establishing user-document interactivity (Warnick 2007: 76).

[57] However, no call for contribution of suggestions can be found when going through the website.

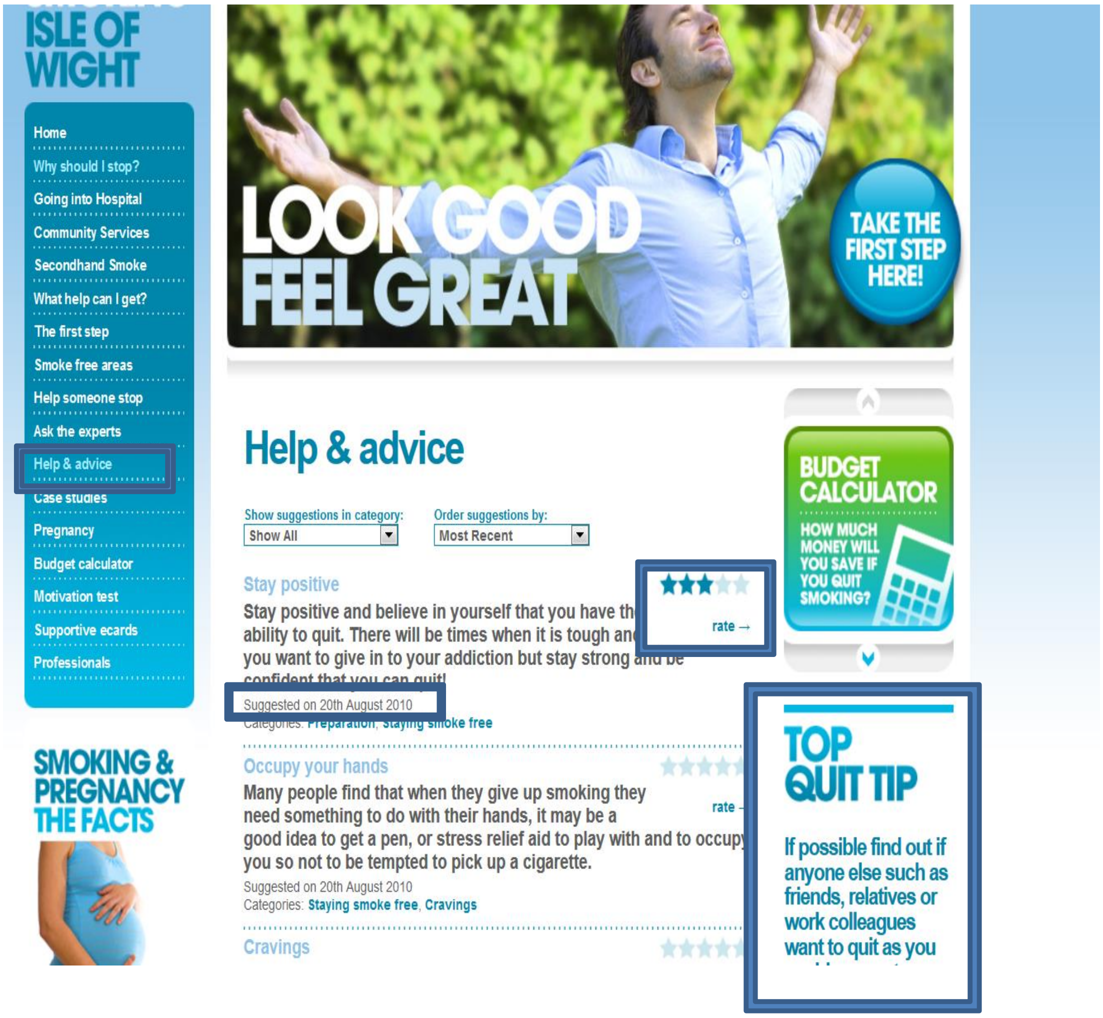

Figure 7.12 Screenshot of "listing practical tips" in (S18)

Additionally, the *Help & advice* section is actually a collection of *TOP QUIT TIPs* (see also blue frame in Fig. 7.12) that readers encounter throughout the website, which is always put in the right-hand site column. In other words, all suggestions readers find in the *Help & advice* section are also individually distributed across other sub-sites. Regarding persuasion there are two aspects to this strategy: Firstly, the repetition of content may enhance its chance of being remembered or being read at all. Secondly, since *TOP QUIT TIPs* feature a hyperlink (*More suggestions»*), they offer alternative routes to access the content of *Help & advice*. Again, this could improve their chance of being read. Finally, it is striking that within the *Help & advice* section, pieces of advice are preceded by headers, which are absent when appearing as *TOP QUIT TIP* on other sites. The discursive moves analysis has shown that headers are a generic feature of the sub-sites "listing practical tips", representing digested versions of the more detailed advice in the text body.

In (S03) the thematic module “listing practical tips” is located under *Ready To Take Control,* which is set between *The Benefits of Quitting and Products* (see Fig. 7.13). The sequential order of topics listed in the menu imitates the chronological decision process a reader experiences when quitting (from health disadvantages of smoking to *Support Tools).* Thus, when readers click on *Ready to take Control*, it is assumed that they have made the decision to quit smoking, are interested in finding practical help and expect to be given advice. As mentioned in Section 7.1.1, the module is spread out over three sub-sites in (S03).

Figure 7.13 Screenshot of "listing practical tips", first sub-site of (S03)

Figure 7.13 shows the visual arrangement of the first sub-site, which more or less remains the same in all three sub-sites. Further, the top-down arrangement of the sub-sites of *Ready To*

Take Control indicates that they are supposed to be read one after the other (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006: 204-205; 211). Nonetheless, the sub-sites do not build up on each other but can be consumed independently. Moreover, there is considerable repetition between the first two sub-sites, which might have to do with the type of advice of breaking quitting down into smaller units. Additionally, it can be argued that repetition reinforces the message. For instance, example (7.30) shows two cases of partial repetition of passages with strong interpersonal effects, which is boosted by being repeated in two sections.

(7.30)

- Quitting smoking can be one of the hardest things you'll ever do.
- Every day you manage to resist smoking, celebrate a win!

(S03: Quit one day at a time)

- Quitting smoking or reducing the number of cigarettes you smoke per day can be one of the hardest things you'll ever have to do.
- Every time you say no to a cigarette, celebrate a win!

(S03: Quit one cigarette […])

Repetition is also an important means of structuring advice within and across sub-sites. The article-like presentation of the sub-site (Fig. 7.13) suggests that readers should go through the entire text from top to bottom. However, website authors repeat the main gist of advice in several sections, such as in the header and footer (see blue frame in Fig. 7.13); in case readers could be deterred by the amount of text on the website. Moreover, the footer consists of the same icon and text as in the main site leading to the sub-articles (see Fig. 7.15), acting thus as a cohesive device and a neat summary of what readers should keep in mind.

Figure 7.14 shows an excerpt of how "listing practical tips" appears as *Stop Smoking Tips* in (S04). They are located under the super-category *Quitting* (see breadcrumb framed in blue) alongside other categories in a drop-down menu on the left-hand side, covering the whole gamut of aspects readers need to consider when they want to stop. As argued in Section 7.4.1.1, the *Quitting* section is dedicated to information- and advice-giving, in which few references to the products of the company are made in order to be perceived as trustworthy source. The visual arrangement of *Stop Smoking Tips* is characterized by being divided into two parts: First, the introductory text in the upper section is fixed, thus reminding readers of how much website authors care throughout. Second, the actual *Tips* are placed in the lower part of the website and appear in the design of a file featuring tabs. The names of each tab summarize the main point of advice in these respective sections (*Stay positive, Avoid Temptation, Reward yourself*). The fact that the names of tabs are the main pieces of advice is further emphasised by being repeated as headers in larger font than the rest of advice in the main text body. Similar to the other members of the sub-sample, the advisory text is structured by using headers that stand for ensuing advice or announce the next topic. Sub-ordinate paragraphs are used to elaborate and provide more detail.

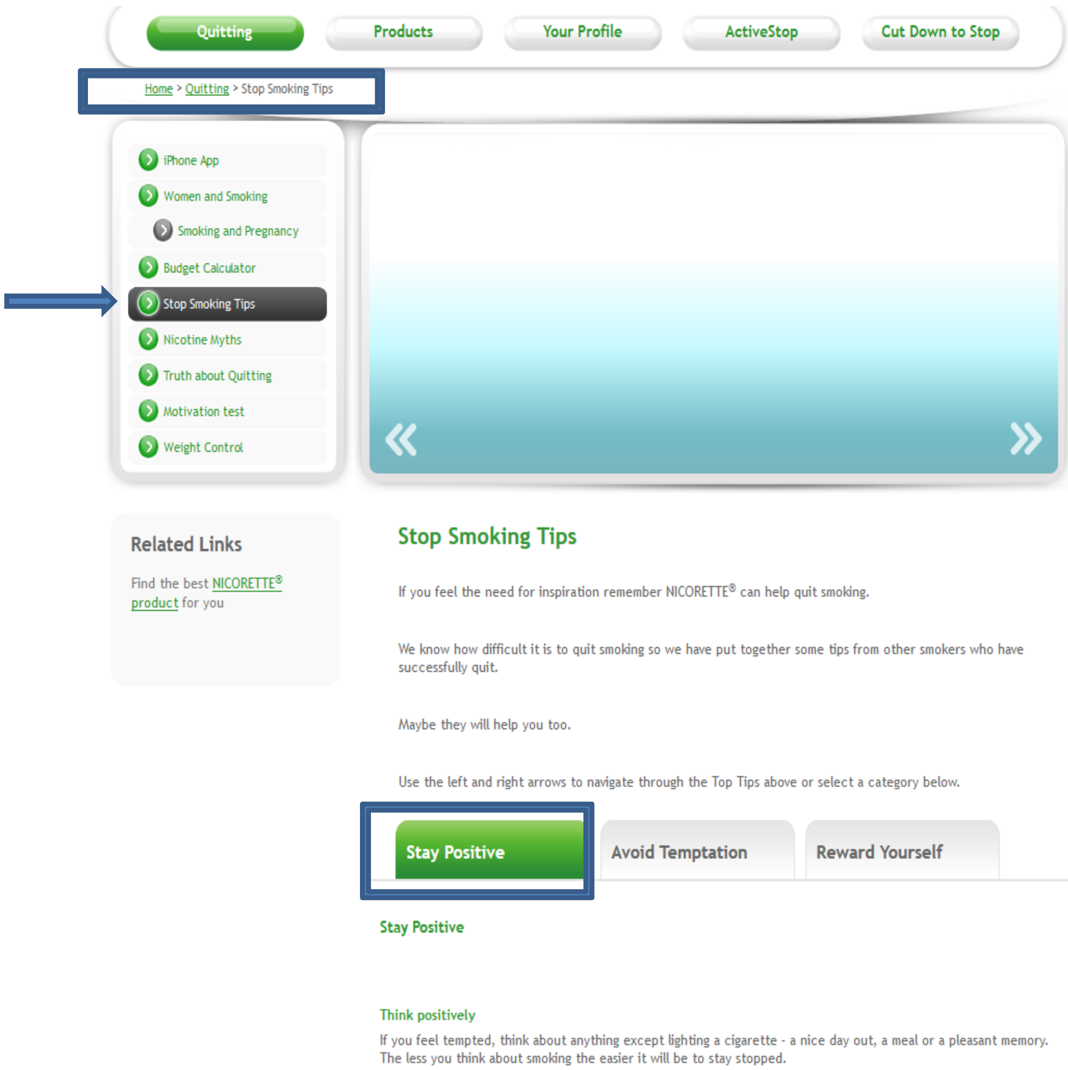

Figure 7.14 Screenshot of "listing practical tips" in (S04)

In view of the common usage of headers by provider in "listing practical tips", I want to emphasize their double function again. On the one hand, since headers are usually made salient in consistent ways, they give a bulletin-points layout to sub-sites. This creates the impression of readers being able to choose from a list of option when trying to stop smoking. On the other hand, the same visual saliency facilitates selective reading as readers can skim texts more easily and focus on what they find appealing.

7.3.2 The relational function of introductory texts

Both thematic modules are contextualized by introductory texts, which guide readers with respect to how they are supposed to engage with the modules. These introductory texts help embed the modules in the website structure as they provide a meta-level to information and advice given in the modules. Introductory texts remain visible throughout, which is an important aspect to consider, especially if we take into account those FAQs with pop-up information. In the case of "addressing common questions/worries", website authors show awareness of the face-threatening potential of imposing a division between expert and lay in introductory texts. Introductory texts are used to carry out face-enhancing relational work while also positioning readers with respect to the FAQs. In "listing practical tips", introductory texts frame ensuing advice, announcing to readers what they can expect. They establish a meta-level of communication, providing a discursive space where writers can explicitly share their rationale for why readers need to stay on page. In other words, introductory texts are used to involve or establish a connection with readers. Also, introductory texts can feature instructions on how to access advice given, for instance, with the help of the discursive move *metacomment*. In the following, I will delve deeper into the relational dimension of introductory texts and their link to persuasion.

7.3.2.1 Addressing common questions/worries

As mentioned above, introductory texts act as upper layer that contextualizes "addressing common question/worries", indexing how readers should approach the dyadic structure typical of this thematic module. Moreover, website authors use introductory texts to carry out relational work, which may have to do with the generic set-up of FAQs imposing an expert-lay division. Website authors use introductory texts to either mitigate the subsequent asymmetry of knowledge or to connect with readers. In the following, I will discuss the introductory texts of the sub-sample by starting again with the more prototypical FAQs (S17), (S18) after which I will move on to the two examples where the dyadic structure has a strong rhetorical effect (S29), (S04).

Example (7.31) is the introductory text to the *Frequently asked questions* section in (S17):

> (7.31) If you have questions about any aspect of going smokefree then this section may be able to help. Please select a topic to see expert questions and answers… (S17)

Website authors use the second person singular *you* to address readers, which conveys the impression of speaking to individuals, contributing to "synthetic personalization" (see Benwell & Stokoe 2006: 180). Moreover, it makes clear that the prospective reader should take up the position of the questioner in the following FAQs. Nonetheless, the website authors use an *if*-clause to index the optionality of taking up the questioner identity for readers, which mitigates the pre-established structural division of expert versus lay. Additionally, the use of the modal verb *may* highlights that website authors do not claim to be able to cover all possible issues, which also down tones their expertise and leaves it to readers to be the judge of the usefulness of content. In the second sentence, the imperative of *select* is used to move readers to engage in the question-answer exchange. The position of the noun *expert* before *questions* diffuses the hierarchy of knowledge as it gives the impression that both questions and answers are given by experts. However, my close-reading analysis reveals that questions are asked from the lay perspective of a smoker, which is indexed through linguistic means such as the use of first person pronouns in questions.

In (S18) the introductory text is straightforward. Readers are directly addressed, requesting them to take up the identity of questioners through the use of the imperative *ask.* Simultaneously the respondents are categorized as *experts*, as shown in example (7.32). While the heading *Ask the experts* gives the illusion of readers being able to directly interact with *experts*, the sentence below modifies this expectation, indicating that interaction is reduced to user-medium interactivity (Warnick 2007: 75). Even so, websites authors keep addressing readers individually by using the verb *Browse* in the imperative:

> (7.32) Ask the experts
> Browse questions by category
> [Question-answer sections]
> If you can't find the answer you're looking for, click here to submit a new question and we'll try to answer you as quickly as possible. (S18)

The final sentence is located at the bottom of the page. I also considered it to be part of the introductory text since it frames the question/answer sequence, remaining visible throughout.

By encouraging readers to engage in author-user interactivity (*click here to submit…*), website authors give the impression of updating the website regularly. They position themselves as caring about individual reader's worries, endeavouring to cater to each reader (*try to answer you as quickly as possible*).

In the case of (S29) there is a longer introductory text before the six common *excuses* are listed that smokers need to *overcome.*

(7.33) Quitting smoking is not easy. Like any addiction, the first step is admitting to yourself that you've got an addiction. The next step is wanting to do something about it.

If you want to have a new, smoke-free life, you need to quit making excuses and go for it.
Smoking is bad for your health. It can also harm those around you, putting them at risk of lung cancer and heart disease. You probably know this, yet you're still smoking.

You may convince yourself that cigarettes have benefits, such as helping you stay slim and relieving stress. Some smokers also argue that they're not addicted and could stop at any time.

But the evidence shows that these excuses are usually not true, and certainly not worth the health risk. (S29)

First, website authors acknowledge that quitting is difficult which lets them display empathy (*is not easy*). Secondly, they construct readers as *addicts,* arguing that they need to embrace that identity in order to act on it (*admitting to yourself…*). In the second paragraph website authors employ the conditional clause to hedge their subsequent, potentially face-threatening, advice that they *need to quit making excuses*, making alignment optional. Next, website authors share widespread knowledge on how smoking is bad for one's health and on the effects of second-hand smoking. They position readers as being aware of the information using the adverb *probably* to mitigate the identity they created in the unlikely case that it does not hold true (*you probably know this*). Further, they point out that knowing about the dangers of smoking has not made readers stop (*yet you're still smoking).* This assessment legitimizes the ensuing paragraph in which website authors hypothesize why readers still smoke despite the health-damaging effects (*You may convince yourself…*). Website authors are careful not to appear too imposing when they refer to *some smokers* who deny their addiction. Even though this phrasing does not exclude readers entirely, it is left up to them to take up this particular positioning. In the final paragraph website authors explicitly label the reasons given in the previous paragraph as *excuses* that are *not true* (mitigated by *usually*), which they warrant by referring to research (*evidence shows…*). Website authors use face-saving and face-enhancing relational work strategies to convey advice and general information, which helps them construct their identity as having readers' best interest at heart and as gently nudging them in the right direction. This long introduction leading up to the bi-partite structure is necessary discursive work as it reduces the face-threatening aspect of positioning readers as using *excuses*

As pointed out before, website authors of (S04) use the bi-partite structure to dispel concerns around using nicotine replacement therapy for smoking cessation. In example (7.34), website authors use a *we* inclusive when talking about the dangers of smoking, which has a bonding effect as it enhances the "proximity and involvement of the audience" (Ferrarotti 2013: 120). Website authors signal that they are on the same page while constructing readers also as knowledgeable. Thereby, website authors prepare the grounds for readers to accept their subsequent argument of nicotine not causing the main damages when smoking. As the first sentence shifts from declarative to interrogative, the use of the intensifier *really* in the alternative question hints at the fact that the answer is going to be negative (*is it really the most dangerous…*). Thus, website authors are already guiding readers towards taking up the same standpoint as they are. Moreover, readers are constructed as the main agents who *reveal the facts* about nicotine by using directives (*Explode, reveal*), while website authors diminish their own role in presenting and structuring information. Thus, readers are not positioned as being the voices behind the *Myths* --the first part of the bi-partite structure-- but are encouraged to adopt the position of the experts who share information. Interestingly, even though website authors engage in face-enhancing relational work and try to build a common basis in the introductory text, the myth-fact exchange is focused on the informational level with little attempt to create a relationship with readers (see Ch. 8). Similar to (S29), the introductory text functions as an outer layer of the bi-partite structure. It helps circumvent potential face-threatening pitfalls by making sure that readers perceive content in the right light and are not positioned as the source of *Myths*.

(7.34) We all know the dangers associated with smoking but how big a part does nicotine play in smoking addiction and is it really the most dangerous ingredient in cigarettes?

> Explode some of the myths about nicotine and nicotine addiction and reveal the facts.
> (S04)

To sum up, in the more elaborate modules, (S17) and (S18), the introductory texts are short, mainly outlining the expert-lay division. In (S04) and (S29) the introductory texts are used to carry out extensive relational work, reducing the face-threatening potential of labelling the content of the outsider voices as *excuses* and *myths.* Additionally, they also make sure that readers engage with the bi-partite structure in the right way. In (S17), (S18), (S29) readers are constructed as being the outside voices, which is indexed with directives and terms of address in the introductory texts. In contrast, in (S04), the outside voice is constructed as belonging to someone unknown who is dispersing myths with which readers themselves should do away.

7.3.2.2 Listing practical tips

In "listing practical tips", introductory texts are used to frame subsequent advice, announcing to readers what they should expect. As pointed out in Section 7.4.2, website authors use introductory texts to explain why readers need to stay on the sub-site in "listing practical tips", attempting to involve them. In some cases, they feature explicit, technical instructions on how to go about accessing advice provided. In contrast to "addressing common questions/worries", the boundaries between introductory texts and main text body are less obvious, which made careful close-reading on my part necessary. In (S16), a *metacomment* indexes that readers are about to be confronted with advice. In (S26) the introductory text is separated from the advisory section with the header *Top Tips..,* indexing that advising is about to take place below. In (S18) the introductory text is reduced to technical instructions on how to filter advice whereas (S04) has a fixed text passage that remains unchanged despite the possibility to navigate between three different pop-up sections.

Finally, (S03) has an entire introductory sub-site, which includes three hyperlinks to articles proffering specific advice. Each hyperlink consists of the gist of advice represented in the sub-sites. Moreover, the texts of the hyperlinks are repeated in a slightly altered form to introduce advice once a sub-site has been opened. I follow the same order of discussion as in Section 7.4.2.1, beginning with the websites where smoking is one topic among many, moving on to the website entirely dedicated to smoking cessation. Example (7.35) is the introductory text to *Tips for quitting* in (S16):

(7.35) Whether you're thinking about quitting and want some tips to get you started, or you've already quit and are struggling – we've put together some information to help you through the early days and beyond. (S16)

First, website authors establish what kinds of readers they are addressing through the use of the conjunctions *whether* and *or* (*whether you're thinking about...*). Thereby, website authors signal their awareness of readers having different needs depending on what stage of quitting they are in. However, they also leave it to readers to decide whether one of the suggested positions is suitable for them. Additionally, the use of the second person pronoun is once more employed to personalize interaction, giving the impression of website authors speaking to individual readers. Instead of taking up the position of expert advice-givers, website authors construct their identity a caring help-givers, which is boosted by the personalizing effect of the first person pronoun plural (*we've... information to help you...*). Ensuing advice is qualified as useful through *the early days and beyond* in the last sentence, which encourages readers to scroll on.

Example (7.36) is the introductory text preceding *Top tips for pregnant women going smoke-free* in (S26). It consists of two parts, which is highlighted through graphical means. The first section is highlighted in light blue and in a bigger font[58], presenting readers with figures on smoking and pregnancy in West Sussex. The second part appears in black and in a smaller font, setting the ground for advice to follow:

(7.36)

Smoking and pregnancy
In West Sussex, 89% of pregnant women are smokefree during their pregnancy, but for the remaining 11% of pregnant women who smoke during pregnancy, it can be a particularly difficult time to stop smoking.

That number is reducing as women access support, but more pregnant women need to know what help there is available and be encouraged to access it.
(S26)

Website authors introduce general information in numbers to set the ground for discussion, which implies that the majority of pregnant women is not targeted with advice that follows (89% […] *are smokefree*). Then, they turn to the minority of pregnant smokers and express their understanding for how hard it is to stop smoking (*particularly difficult time*), displaying

[58] I attempted to reflect the original layout, for a screenshot see (Fig. 7.11).

empathy. It is striking that website authors abstain from using the second person pronoun in these otherwise highly personalised contexts. Instead they prefer to use a neutral identity label (*pregnant women who smoke*), which is vague in terms of whether readers are addressed. Moreover, the following sentence does not bring clarity regarding addressees since the agent of the verb *encourage* is opaque. It could refer to website authors or be considered an appeal to readers to become active (*be encouraged to*). The fact that advice is directed at readers only becomes clear in the list of *Top Tips* where imperatives and *you* are employed. Additionally, the final introductory sentence is geared to building common ground: the conjunction *but* combined with the boosting effect of *need* stresses that despite the decline in number the necessity of making support visible remains unchanged (*women need to know*).

The next example (7.37) consists only of minimal technical instructions in the form of drop-down fields, introducing the list of advice at the top of the website in (S18). Readers can choose content according to topic or according to other parameters such as time, rating or randomly. Thus, readers can customize the content of the website depending on their own needs. In other words, involvement and individualization are created through user-medium interactivity without investing much discursive work in establishing an interpersonal connection.

(7.37) Help & advice

Show suggestions in category:	Order suggestions by:
- Show All	- Most Recent
- Cravings	- Most Rated
- Preparation	- Random
- Staying smoke free	
- Support	(S18)

The source (S03) is also a special case as the thematic module "listing practical tips" is distributed across three separate sub-sites. Readers encounter introductory texts on the super-categorized website (called *Ready To Take Control,* see Fig. 7.15). The headings of the introductory texts simultaneously act as hyperlinks to subordinate websites. Further, these texts are already part of advice-giving, reproducing the gist of information readers are going to find when they select theses subpages. Therefore, they function as a sort of teaser, supporting the decision process of readers.

Figure 7.15 Screenshot of the main page leading to "listing practical tips" in (S03)

The headings of all three introductory texts are pieces of advice in the imperative form (*Quit one day...; Quit one cigarette…; Manage your cravings*), on which website authors further elaborate in the subordinate text. In the first introductory text website authors display empathy, highlighting that they understand the difficulty of quitting (*can be daunting*). Their subsequent assessment has an encouraging function (*doesn't have to be all or nothing*), as they point out that there is a remedy. Moreover, the assessment sets up the frame for advice in the next sentence, which is mitigated by using the modal verb *can* and the declarative form. The second introductory text also softens the directive nature of the header. The use of the modal verb *can* and of the interrogative form make clear that website authors are offering suggestions that are optional to follow (*why not try approaching...*). The third introductory text follows the style of the previous ones: its realization in the declarative sentence including the mitigating modal verb *can* has the effect of presenting advice as one additional aspect that readers might want to take into account.

Example (7.38) is the introductory text to the *Stop Smoking Tips* on (S04):

(7.38) If you feel the need for inspiration remember NICORETTE® can help quit smoking.
We know how difficult it is to quit smoking so we have put together some tips from other smokers who have successfully quit.
Maybe they will help you too.
Use the left and right arrows to navigate through the Top Tips above or select a category below. (S04)

Website authors start out by reminding readers that information provided may be useful to them (*can help quit smoking),* inviting readers to stay on the website. The use of the *if*-clause has a mitigating effect as readers can decide for themselves whether they are in *need for inspiration*. Interestingly, website authors use their brand name to refer to themselves (*NICORETTE*®), which is ambiguous since it can refer to their role as information-givers or to their products. Thus, the assessment that *NICORETTE® can help quit smoking*, can equally be understood as invitation to interact with the website as well as a recommendation to use the products offered. In the next sentence website authors shift to the first person pronoun plural *we*. They personalize their understanding of how challenging quitting smoking can be, involving readers on an interpersonal level (*We know how difficult*). Further, the conjunction *so* is used to present the following advice as a consequence of website authors wanting to help readers (*so we have put together*). Website authors also highlight that the list of advice does not stem from them but from former smokers *who have successfully quit*. Thereby, website authors boost the credibility of advice and might motivate readers to remain on the website since people like the readers are the source of advice. Next, website authors encourage readers cautiously and indirectly to have a look at advice as they point to the possible usefulness for readers (*help you too).* Finally, website authors use imperatives to instruct the individual readers on how to interact with the website, which can be understood as directive to become active.

To conclude, the introductory texts to "listing practical tips" are about engaging readers; be it through linguistic or technical means (as in S18). Introductory texts outline who is targeted by advice and are used to encourage readers to remain on the website. Further, face-enhancing relational work strategies (bonding, empathizing) are employed to connect with readers. Overall, introductory texts are used to construct website authors as selfless helpers, which contrasts with introductory texts in "addressing common questions/worries" where the expert-lay division is emphasised.

7.4 Summary

In this chapter, I studied how the working principle of persuasion logos can be linked to discursive activities and linguistic patterns in the website sample. Logos is concerned with the persuasive message itself, consisting of the "the issues at heart of a debate" (Cockroft &

Cockroft 2005: 15). As I have argued before, I consider discursive moves and their linguistic realization that make up the arguments used to be a part of logos, which especially profits from a linguistic approach. My focus lay, on the one hand, on the discursive moves making up different practices. On the other, I have considered the multi-modal context of websites and its potential effect on persuasion by analysing the embedding of selected websites as well as their visual arrangement.

To be able to look in depth at these issues, I used the content and cluster analysis from Ch. 6 to determine a sub-sample of websites for further analysis. Therefore, I chose the Covering all aspects group, which had the highest diversity index. In other words, members of this group provide a wide range of information, addressing a broad audience and actively trying to get readers to stop with help from their websites. Further, I fine-tuned my sub-sample by choosing two codes for in-depth analysis: “addressing common questions/worries” and “listing practical tips”. These codes are evenly spread throughout the cluster and indicate how information is structured on the websites in question. They have the advantage of being bottom-up categories, which facilitates the drawing of boundaries for analysis. In view of the non-linearity of website and hyperlinking, concentrating on these system-given thematic modules proved a good way to limit analysis. The thematic module “addressing common questions/worries” referred to sub-sites featuring dyadic information, belonging to the genre of FAQs. “Listing practical tips” is a thematic module in which instructions on how to go about quitting or on how to cope with withdrawal are given. These tips are explicitly flagged as quitting advice by the websites and are usually presented in list-form.

To answer my first set of research questions regarding characteristic discursive activities and their linguistic realization, I conducted a discursive move analysis of both sub-samples. This helped me to show how argumentation is built up on a discursive level beyond topic. The catalogue of discursive moves is characterized by the degree of interactivity on websites and the expert-lay dimension. Compared to Locher’s study (2006) and my analysis of forum interaction (see Ch. 9), it revealed that interpersonal and interactional discursive moves are absent. Further, comparing the use of discursive moves across the two thematic modules (i.e. the two sub-samples) showed clear, discursive foci in each module. “Addressing common questions/worries” is concerned with information-giving with *general information* and *assessment* together resulting in over forty per cent of all discursive moves. Thus, the characteristic activities suggest that persuasion is carried out through information-giving in an attempt to empower readers to make the right decision. In comparison, “listing practical tips” is about advising with *advice* making out forty per cent of discursive moves. Thus, website authors try to impact readers' decisions and behaviour in a straightforward manner, offering a range of action alternatives. Further, the word frequency analyses of the two most frequent discursive moves of the two sub-samples supported the emphasis on technical aspects and on readers becoming active in "addressing common questions/worries" and "listing practical tips". The ten most frequent words in *general information* of the former module are mostly nouns that are connected to the scientific dimension of smoking. In contrast, seven out of ten of the most frequent words in *advice* of the latter module are verbs, showing that readers are expected to become agents in quitting.

Secondly, I dealt with the question of how thematic modules are embedded within the larger website structure while also taking into account their visual arrangement. These steps were necessary to get a comprehensive insight into persuasion, especially in view of Kress and Van Leeuwen's (2006: 204) argument of the strategic set-up of websites as well as previous research emphasizing the importance of visual design (e.g. Koteyko 2009: 113; Pauwels 2012: 252; Sillence & Briggs 2015: 472; Warnick 2007: 42; etc.).

In the case of "addressing common questions/worries", the close reading analysis revealed that the more prototypical FAQs, (S17) and (S18), also had similar embedded functions and visual arrangements. In both cases, FAQs were categorized as part of advice-giving (indicated by co-text or the breadcrumb), which signalled to readers to expect the speech event advice. Further, both allow for a customization of content since readers can choose and select information by clicking on pop-up text. The internal structure of the two FAQs additionally revealed their functions as a navigation centre where readers could be redirected or as an archive in (S17) and (S18) respectively. The other two members of the sub-sample (S29, S04) differ in that they are not typical question-answer exchanges but are claims and rebuttals. They use the dyadic structure to enhance the rhetorical effect of dismantling wrong assumptions. By reacting to the other-voice (belonging to the reader or someone else), the rebuttals gain strength and appear livelier. It is telling that both sources use the same text-based structure, encouraging vertical reading from top-to-bottom.

Regarding "listing practical tips", I found that the two sources not entirely dedicated to smoking cessation (S16) and (S26) had similar embedded functions and visual arrangements. In both cases, stopping smoking is part of a lifestyle issue, in which the speech event advising is clearly indicated by the sub-categorization and the names of tabs. Further, both sources rely on run-on text to convey advice, only broken up by the use of headers. Additionally, the two commercial sources resembled each other in terms of set-up. Both work with hyperlinking and divide advice on several sub-sites, enabling readers to have more autonomy in selecting what to read. The use of headers is striking in “listing practical tips”. They re-structure read-on text as bulletin points, highlighting the wealth of options to readers. Moreover, headers facilitate selective reading since readers can pick out what they find interesting.

As part of the question of how thematic modules are embedded, I analysed the function of introductory texts. My analysis showed that they can be sites where extensive relational work is carried out. In the case of “addressing common questions/worries”, I again observed a difference between the more and less typical FAQs. While (S17) and (S18) mainly introduce the expert-lay asymmetry, the other two sources (S04, S29) engage in face-enhancing relational work (bonding, empathy). This is to ensure that readers take up information in the right light and are assured of common ground between them and website authors. In “listing practical tips”, introductory texts are used to involve readers, encouraging them to remain on the website. Therefore, face-enhancing relational work is also carried out to establish a connection to readers. Hence, introductory texts are used to signal the benevolence of website authors (see Sillence & Briggs 2015: 472), positioning them as caring helpers.

Finally, my focus on two sub-samples revealed that persuasive strategies vary depending on the thematic modules analysed (in terms of discursive structure, embedding, etc.). Thus, this points to the importance of qualitative close-reading analyses to take into account the complex, paradigmatic structures of entire website practices.

8 Identity construction, relational work and the link to persuasion in the website sample

8.1 Introduction

In Ch. 7, I looked at the working principle logos in a specific sub-sample of the websites, illuminating what discursive activities are used to structure the arguments employed. Further, I described the role of embedding and visual arrangement in terms of persuasion. In this chapter, I work with the same sub-sample that consists of the thematic modules "addressing common questions/worries" and "listing practical tips". I will zoom in on the interpersonal dimension of persuasion, elaborating on how identity construction and relational work can be connected to persuasive strategies. As mentioned in Ch. 4, I argue that interpersonal pragmatics is useful for a study of persuasion, especially regarding the working principles ethos and pathos . While ethos is connected to the expertise and credibility of speakers or writers, pathos is linked to the emotional engagement and involvement of an audience. Hence, it makes sense to use identity construction and relational work to analyse these aspects of persuasion from a linguistic point of view.

Sillence and Briggs (2015: 472) have argued that in order for readers to engage with website content, websites need to establish their trustworthiness. The trustworthiness of health websites is built up in stages out of a composite of factors, such as the visual appeal of the website, the brands of organizations that appear, "the quality of information" and the personalization of advice (Sillence et al. 2006: 699; Sillence & Briggs 2015: 472). The latter two factors are negotiated in and through language, relating to the question of how to communicate advice and information so it is taken up. They are also linked to ethos and pathos construction: on the one hand, the quality of information is linked to expertise and credibility, which is also indexed through linguistic means. On the other, the personalization of advice has to do with pathos construction, i.e. it is about involving the audience. As Locher (2013a: 355) pointed out, while the question of how to communicate advice and information is crucial for health organizations, it is constrained by organizational ideals and principles (e.g. "non-directiveness"), which result in specific linguistic patterns.

Even though there are several linguistic studies that deal with how health information/ advice are communicated and how its trustworthiness is established (e.g. Armstrong et al. 2011; Eichhorn 2008; Kouper 2010; Morrow 2006; etc.), communication on health websites is under-researched from a linguistic perspective (noteworthy exceptions are Koteyko 2009;

Locher 2006; Richardson 2005, etc.). My focus lies on the following research questions, which allow me to combine the top-down working principles of persuasion ethos, pathos with a bottom-up discourse analysis of linguistic strategies and their interpersonal effects:

- How are relational work and identity construction used to establish expertise and credibility in discourse?
- How are relational work and identity construction used to create personal involvement and emotional appeal in discourse?

Both my research questions deal with my main theoretical interest in how persuasion can be studied from an interpersonal pragmatic perspective, using identity construction and relational work as analytical tools. It is connected to my analysis in Ch. 7 as I examine the relation between patterns of discursive activities and identity construction/relational work in view of persuasion. I have operationalized my general theoretical interest by asking two research questions. The first question is designed to tease out what positioning strategies are employed by website authors to signal their expertise and credibility in an attempt to boost their trustworthiness. The second question is raised to find out what kind of relational work website authors carry out to emotionally engage readers. Therefore, I have conducted qualitative close-reading analyses to get to linguistic patterns and their link to identity construction and relational work strategies. As mentioned above, I have used pre-given structures that emerged as themes in the content analysis in Ch. 6. These thematic modules, as I call them, have the advantage of making websites, which differ in size and outlook, comparable and let me deal with the problem of the paradigmatic and non-linear structure of websites (Kress & Van Leeuwen 2006: 208). It also means that I can link the findings from my qualitative close readings with my discursive moves analysis. Answering these research questions will enable me to draw direct comparisons to the forum sample (see Ch. 10). Since I follow the same analytic steps, it will make it possible to show parallels but also differences in the creation of trustworthiness (ethos) and involvement (pathos) in lay and professional contexts.

After briefly discussing the set-up of the data sample as well as the rationale for data selection, I will comment on the methodological steps used for this chapter. Then I will introduce my findings from my close reading analyses. I present my findings according to the two sub-samples making up my data set, which does justice to their different foci when constructing ethos and pathos. In "addressing common questions/worries", I show how website authors invest much discursive work in building up ethos while the construction of pathos, i.e.

the involvement of readers, is less emphasised and seems to take up a secondary place (see Koteyko 2009; Locher 2006; Richardson 2005; etc.). These findings contrast with the results for "listing practical tips", where I illustrate how connecting with readers is at the forefront while strategies to construct ethos are less stressed. Finally, I will sum up important insights and return to my research questions.

8.2 Data and Methodology

I have explained in Ch. 7 that I chose the sub-sample for my in-depth analysis of websites based on the content analysis I performed (see Ch. 6). Based on this content analysis, I was able to divide the 30 sources of my overall corpus into clusters according to how I coded them. Thus, websites with similar topic and multi-modal codes were grouped together. I decided to focus on Cluster III, the Covering all aspects group for an in-depth analysis, reducing the sample to seven websites. As I explained in Ch. 7, the rationale for choosing Covering all aspects is based on the fact that it has the highest diversity index, thus presenting the highest number of topic and multi-modal codes. In other words, the group members distinguished themselves by providing a wide range of information and by addressing a broad audience, attempting to get readers to stop smoking with the help provided on the websites. Nonetheless, the group members are not identical, differing in thematic foci and set-up. This posed the challenge of how to further prepare the sub-sample to be able to perform meaningful qualitative analyses. The content analysis also revealed that the super-category [Facing quitting] is prominent in the Covering all aspects group. I pointed out in Ch. 6 that the codes from [Facing Quitting] refer to how information is structured or presented in order to persuade. Thus, the codes from [Facing Quitting] reflect themes that emerge bottom-up, which implies that the limits and boundaries of said themes are system-given.

Therefore, I decided to focus on the themes (or as I call them 'thematic modules') of "addressing common questions/worries" and "listing practical tips", making it possible to compare website sections across sources in a sensible way. Moreover, it also rendered the qualitative close reading analysis feasible; especially if we take into account that website practices can feature extensive text and hyperlinked documents, going beyond the capacities of one analyst. In the Covering all aspects group, "addressing common questions/worries" occurred in four sources while "listing practical tips" was used in five. However, the codes were evenly spread across all group members, ensuring that my analysis gives a fragmented insight into persuasive strategies of the entire group. Hence, my sub-sample consists of two parts, which are both about the same size: the first one ("addressing common questions/worries") is made up of 7,074 words whereas the second one consists of 7,083.

In two sources of governmental background (S17 and S18), the thematic module "addressing common questions/worries" is very similarly structured. The other two group members both use the thematic module for rhetorical effect—either to effectively overthrow *Nicotine myths* in the commercial source (S04) or to help readers *overcome excuses* in (S29). In "listing practical tips", the structure of thematic modules is more alike if the organizational background is also similar. The two sources which deal with smoking cessation among other topics, (S16 and S26), both present advice as run-on text with no possibility to customize content. The governmental source (S18) focuses entirely on smoking cessation. It relies heavily on user-medium interactivity to involve readers, representing advice from former smokers. Finally, the two commercial sources (S03 and S04) present advice in hyperlinked form, giving greater agency to readers in selecting their reading paths[59].

To address my overall research questions of how persuasion can be linked to identity construction and relational work, I conducted discourse-analytical close-readings of both parts of the sub-sample. This allowed me to establish discourse strategies and interpersonal effects that were connected to the creation of expertise and/or credibility. In the same vein, I linked discourse strategies and interpersonal effects to emotional engagement and/or personal involvement. Based on these findings, I have come up with labels that synthesize recurring identity positions, emerging from linguistic strategies and interpersonal effects linked to expertise and personal involvement. I argue that despite the fact that these labels are my interpretation of the data, they help to grasp how the working principles ethos and pathos are put into action. As an addendum, I want to point out an important difference to Ch. 10, where I look at ethos and pathos in the forum sample. In the website practices with limited interactivity, all the positioning work is carried out by the website authors. Nonetheless, and unsurprisingly if we follow Bucholtz and Hall's interactional notion of identity (2005; see Ch. 4), they also create identities for readers, which often are linked to the overall persuasive purpose of the websites.

In the following, I outline the identity labels I have developed for each of the two parts of my sub-sample, starting with "addressing common questions/worries" before moving on to "listing practical tips". For each identity label, I will explain what discourse and interpersonal strategies it encompasses, also pointing out how it links to persuasion. In that course, I will

[59] Go to Ch. 7 for a more detailed data description.

point to typical linguistic patterns, discursive moves, etc., making up particular strategies. Finally, I will summarize my most important findings and return to my research questions.

8.3 The construction of ethos and pathos in addressing common questions/worries—the creation of expert help-givers and responsible help-seeker identities

I argue that the construction of ethos and pathos can be examined by conducting qualitative close reading analyses of how identity construction, relation work and their linguistic realisation have been strategically used in context. My analysis of the thematic module "addressing common question/worries" shows that a range of strategies can be linked to creating credibility, expertise and involvement. These strategies are located on various levels: from discursive moves, the juxtaposition of identities, relational effects, to linguistic form. I created identity labels for clusters of discourse strategies that I deemed to contribute to similar identity positions. The linguistic strategies and consequently the identity positions occur to different degrees in the four sources, on which I will comment when looking at examples. However, none of the identity labels are exclusive to a source but are spread across all four members in most cases. This suggests that the labels found are characteristic of online smoking cessation sources in general. Even so, there is no one-to-one relation between strategies and positions but the latter emerge from the combination and reiterated occurrence of certain discourse patterns.

Table 8.1 lists the identity positions found in this thematic module. The positions are split up according to whether they are predominantly concerned with help-givers (website authors) or with help-seekers (readers). Separating labels according to help-givers and help-seekers is to some extent artificial since all identity work is carried out by website authors (cf. Ch. 9 / 10). Moreover, the relationality principle suggests that identity construction always only becomes meaningful in relation to other identities (see Ch. 4; Bucholtz & Hall 2010: 23), implying that the positions of help-seekers/ help-givers are interlinked in any case.

Table 8.1.1 Identity labels resulting from discourse strategies linked to ethos and pathos construction in "addressing common questions/worries"—divided according to role in alphabetical order

Website-authors = expert help-givers	**Readers = responsible help-seekers**
1. cater to all kinds of readers	4. should look on the bright side
2. empower readers	5. want to do the right thing
3. have done their research	6. want to find help

Firstly, the labels for website authors all point to how they establish themselves as expert sources, feeding into their ethos construction as trustworthy help-givers. The first position has to do with the uni-directionality of the websites, which means that targeting information is challenging. Website authors indicate their awareness of no size fits all, highlighting the optionality of taking up advice and information. At the same time, website authors try to address information to all kinds of readers through the linguistic personalization of content, which has also been observed in earlier research on online mass communication (Ferrarotti 2013; Janoschka 2004; Locher 2006). The second position refers to how the thematic module "addressing common questions/worries" is characterized by discursive moves that are connected to information and advice-giving, which are ultimately invitations to become active and is supposed to help facilitate the decision-making processes of help-seekers. This corresponds to the ideological current of how providing quality information establishes the basis for health consumers to make responsible health choices (see Henwood et al. 2003: 590; Rudd et al. 2010: 279; etc.; see also Ch. 5). In this vein, I call website authors help-givers and not, for instance advice-givers, since informing is the most common activity presented as scaffolding for decision-making. The third position is linked to constructing website authors as expert help-givers, which is important, so readers accept information presented as evidence-based accounts (see Locher 2006; Richardson2003/2005; Rudolf von Rohr 2015; Silence2010; Thurnherr et al. 2016; etc.).

Secondly, the identity labels for readers can be connected to pathos creation as they appeal to readers as responsible help-seekers (see Johnstone 2009; Ch. 4). The fourth position in Table 8.1. must be viewed within the overall persuasive function of the websites, as website authors motivate readers to make a lifestyle change. The fifth position relates to the strategic use of pronouns, modal verbs and address terms to construct readers as being ready for a change. Finally, the sixth position is connected to getting readers to interact, either through user-medium or author-user interactivity (see Warnick 2007: 75; Ch. 3). In the following, I will explain in more detail how each position emerges from different clusters of discourse strategies. Therefore, I will illustrate each position with specific examples and comment on how the positions are distributed across the four sources.

8.3.1 Help-givers cater to all kinds of readers

The uni-directional and pre-established set-up of the websites means that website authors cannot directly interact with readers. Thus, website authors do not exactly know who reads their content apart from the fact that readers are likely to be smokers with a range of needs and interests. Unsurprisingly, the goal appears to be to communicate as inclusively but still as individualized as possible, which previous research also found to occur in other mass-mediated content (see also Benwell & Stokoe 2006: 180,181; Fairclough 2001: 52; etc.). Website authors construct themselves as catering to all kinds of readers as they indicate the optionality of complying with advice or accepting information. In other words, website authors index that they are aware of different types of readers, leaving it up to the latter whether they choose to take up the position of the addressee. They reduce the potential imposition on readers' action environment, by mitigating content through the following three linguistic strategies (used in combination or individually) (see Schneider 2010: 256; Ch. 3): the use of (1) if-clauses, (2) modal verbs and hedges, and (3) strategic shifts between terms of address.

First, website authors employ *if*-clauses to customize content, highlighting that readers are only to take up information or advice if they meet the condition outlined in the sub-clause. Locher (2006: 98) observed the same mechanism in her study, putting forward that *if*-conditionals are employed to make sure advice suits the addressee in the case of the uni-directional online advice column. Interestingly, the use of *if*-clauses to adapt information is completely absent in *Nicotine myths* from (S04), which has to be put down to its purpose of wanting to convey incontestable facts about nicotine that are detached from readers' personal lives. As also found by Locher (ibid.), *if*- clauses can be used where questions would be utilized in a face-to-face advisory context, such as in example (8.01) where the *if*-clause clarifies previously given information. In example (8.02) the *if*-clause is employed to set up a hypothetical emergency scenario, in which website authors give impromptu advice.

(8.01) Nicotine Replacement Therapy is suitable for most people, but you should check with your doctor if you are pregnant, have a heart or circulatory condition, or if you take regular medication. It is not suitable for under 12s. (S18)

(8.02) If you do have a cigarette, you should stop again immediately. (S17)

The two examples are typical of the sub-corpus as it is signalled that whether information or advice given is appropriate depends on the identity of readers. Thereby, website authors position themselves as knowing that there are different kinds of addressees, which I argue enhances their trustworthiness as advisors and contributes to ethos construction. In two instances in (S29), website authors play around with the fact that *if*-clauses create optionality to make a rhetorical point (see ex. 8.03).

(8.03) Smoking also makes your complexion dull and prematurely ages your skin. So if you don't want to look old before your time, it's a good idea to quit. (S29)

The subordinate *if*-clause creates a pseudo-option, which makes taking up the recommendation to quit inevitable to readers.

Secondly, website authors use modal verbs (*may, can, need)* and hedges when predicting future developments, giving advice and evaluating the personal situations of readers. They are careful to point out that their assessments may not be suitable for all readers, also making sure not to overstep their boundaries and to impose on readers. In example (8.04) website authors describe withdrawal symptoms after quitting. They use the modal verb *may* to modulate the probability of the content presented (*You may notice*), thereby acknowledging that not all readers have the same side effects when quitting. Mis-positioning readers would result in a loss of credibility, which highlights the face-saving aspect of using the verb *may*. Example (8.05) is the introduction to a list of advice for how to help someone else stop smoking. As the hedge *perhaps* and the modal verb *might* are employed, the subsequent advisory part is constructed as containing non-directive suggestions, which readers can take up according to their best knowledge.

(8.04) […] You may notice that you still have the urge to smoke, feel a little restless, irritable, frustrated or tired; some people also find that they have difficulty sleeping or concentrating. (S17)

(8.05) There are lots of brilliant reasons for going smokefree. Perhaps some of these might be helpful: […] (S18)

(8.06) You may class yourself as a social smoker, who only has a cigarette when you're with

> friends who smoke or during nights out. You may also have bonded with colleagues during cigarette breaks.
> Although social smoking may seem better than smoking 40 a day, any cigarette smoking will damage your health. (S29)

Example (8.06) illustrates how website authors tackle the tricky business of personally evaluating readers in the monologic context of the websites. The use of the modal verb *may* leaves it up to readers of whether to identify with the label *social smoker* in the first two sentences. Once readers have accepted this identity position, website authors argue that social smoking is also harmful (*will damage your health*). Again, website authors are careful when positioning readers in terms of what the latter know or think, circumventing mis-alignment through the use of a modal verb (*may seem better*).

Finally, website authors strategically shift between terms of address to navigate identity claims. They move from noun phrases[60] to *you* (or vice-versa) to transmit face-threatening pieces of information and advice as well as to normalize feelings or habits readers might have, showing them that others are going through the same. The shift to the second person pronoun has the additional function of involving readers and "enhance[ing] proximity" (Ferrarotti 2013: 120), which has been observed in other promotional texts (see also Janoschka 2004: 139). In the first example (8.07), the shift to a more specific address term occurs across the question-answer adjacency pairs. The question is phrased using a general identity category without explicitly linking it to readers but leaving it up to them to self-categorize. In the second part of the adjacency pair, the second person pronoun *you* substitutes the noun phrase *pregnant smokers*, which results in disambiguating the addressee as the reader. Moreover, raising the question from a third person instead of a first-person perspective helps website authors negotiate the face-sensitive issue of smoking and pregnancy. The potentially face-threatening issue of being categorized as a pregnant smoker is further reflected in the answer sentence: Website authors display empathy when signalling their awareness of the difficult situation (*understand the issues*) and try to bond with readers by promising *confidential advice*. In example (8.08), the consumption of tobacco in paan is normalized as wide-spread custom by referring to the experience of others (*Many families*). As the next sentence shifts to *you*, it results in establishing relations of similarity, positioning readers as also belonging to the more general identity category of *Many families*.

[60] Ng and Bradac (1993: 159) describe the use of "broad person categories" to avoid being specific about referents.

(8.07) What specialist support is available for pregnant smokers?
Our trained advisers understand the issues involved during pregnancy and can give you confidential advice. […] (S17)

(8.08) Many families enjoy chewing tobacco in paan at home. You don't need to spoil this tradition by stopping the ritual altogether - try chewing paan without the tobacco in it. […] (S18)

(8.09) […] Cigarette smoke sticks to your hair and clothes long after you've had your last cigarette of the day. Some people think kissing a smoker is like 'kissing an ashtray'. If you'd prefer to smell fresher, now's the time to quit. (S29)

In example (8.09) the olfactory side-effects of smoking are first discussed in a personalised manner: the disadvantages are made directly relevant to readers by using the possessive determiner *your* and the personal pronoun *you* . When website authors bring up the personal matter of kissing, they move from a matter-of-fact level to framing it as personal taste as suggested by the noun phrase *Some people*. Website authors do not disclose what their stance is by assigning the statement entirely to the subject *Some people* and further distance themselves by setting the simile apart with quotation marks. Moreover, the focus shifts from *you* to *a smoker*, which avoids making the direct connection to readers. Since it allows readers to detach from the category *smoker,* it has a face-saving effect. However, in the next sentence the switch back to *you* indicates that the comment about kissing and smoking have indeed been aimed at the readers.

8.3.2 Help-givers empower readers

In all four sources website authors construct themselves as giving agency to readers and helping readers to make the right decision, which is why I created the label help-givers empower readers. The notion of empowerment is linked to the pervasive paradigm in current Western health discourse of trying to establish a symmetrical relationship between health providers and health consumers (see Ch. 5; Henwood et al. 2003: 590; Seale 2002: 13, etc.). The consensus is that in order to empower health consumers or for them to make responsible health choices, they need quality information, which is viewed as “pre-requisite to action” (Rudd et al. 2010: 279). The notion of how information is empowering comes across in the most straightforward manner in (S04), where readers are encouraged to *reveal the facts* in the introductory text (see Ch. 7). If we remember the discursive moves analysis in Ch. 7, it emphasised the strong informational purpose of "addressing common questions/worries" with the discursive moves *general information* and *assessment* occurring most frequently in all four sources. Website authors endeavour to communicate their knowledge (see OED, *information*, sense 2) to readers in the form of (1) detached or (2) personalised information, (3) advice, which they (4) explain in more detail to ensure readers' understanding.

In the sub-corpus giving detached information implies the absence of direct address terms as well as of the website authors as agents. Further, discursive strategies such as generalization, nominalization and passivization are employed, which Ng and Bradac (1993: 143) consider masking devices that dis-encourage a more critical reading of texts. Therefore, it could possibly enhance the uptake of information by readers. Interestingly, giving detached information is near-absent in (S29) where a personalised tone of information-giving is preferred. In the other three sources giving detached information is more common, even being the main discursive activity in (S04). Examples (8.10) and (8.11) illustrate typical ways for how detached information is given on the health effects of nicotine and smoking. In (8.10) the information provided is additionally labelled as *fact.* On the one hand, it acts as a counterpart to *myths*; on the other, it boosts the presented content as being factual. The informative character is transmitted strongly through the syntactic structure with the repeated use of the passive voice (*is not proven to cause; are known to cause*) and of expletive constructions (*there are more; it is the polycyclic aromatic...*). Further, the lexical choices also place the example into a scientific context, which is what the source (S04) aspires to achieve.

(8.10) Myths: Nicotine is carcinogenic
Fact: Nicotine is not proven to cause cancer. There are more than 4,000 other chemicals in cigarette smoke, many of which are known to cause cancer. In particular it is the polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons and nitrosamines that are the probable causative agents for lung and other cancers. (S04)

(8.11) Smoking causes many serious and fatal diseases including lung cancer, heart disease, bronchitis and emphysema. It also causes many other cancers, respiratory diseases, strokes and can affect fertility. (S18)

Example (8.11) illustrates a piece of detached information typical both for (S17) and (S18), talking about the health damages of smoking. The lexical choice of the verb *cause* and the use of technical terms (*bronchitis, emphysema*) indexes that the reader is confronted with health information. It is noteworthy that the use of the active voice designates *smoking* as the agent of the sentence and consequently also as the origin of side effects. Overall, all four sources tend to use active constructions when talking of health damages, clearly assigning agency to smoking.

Website authors also emerge as trying to empower readers when giving personalised information through *assessment* and *prediction*. In contrast to giving detached information, website authors establish a connection between the readers and the facts presented, using the personal prounoun *you* or the possessive determiner and *your,* which contributes to simulating individualized communication (Benwell & Stokoe 2006: 180). Due to this personal link, information is framed as highly relevant to and as having a direct impact on readers. Thereby, website authors try to involve readers and encourage them to take information to heart. Example (8.12) shows part of the reply of how the excuse of weight-gain is refuted in (S29). The chemical side-effects of nicotine on the processing of calories are personalised with the second person singular pronoun *you* as if this was particular to or could be influenced by the addressee, which involves the reader from the beginning. In the first clause the use of *you* facilitates the shift to the more personal level of how this physiological process directly affects readers. The conditional clause mitigates the final verdict on how quitting and weight gain are interconnected (*as long as you remember*), pointing to the personal responsibility of readers in choosing action alternatives. By making the prediction dependent on the addressee, website authors are appealing to and are reeling readers in.

(8.12) Nicotine makes you burn calories faster, but as long as you remember that you need less food energy, quitting won't actually make you gain weight. (S29)

(8.13) What is Zyban and who can use it?
Zyban is a medicine that alters the way your body responds to nicotine. You start taking Zyban a couple of weeks before you quit and then continue the treatment to help you through the withdrawal cravings. (S17)

Example (8.13) shows how a general question is answered in a personalised fashion, directing the piece of information at the reader. Similar to the previous example, the general description of how the medicine affects the body is framed as an individualized process (*your body responds*). Next, website authors explain how Zyban should be used when quitting, for which they employ the second person pronoun singular *you* in a general sense. Due to the use of *you* whose referent is not explicitly determined, the objective instructions also have the effect of involving readers, outlining future actions that should be undertaken.

Moreover, website authors sometimes elaborate on information and advice, which positions them as wanting readers to understand and make the most of what is written. Therefore, the strategy can bring about a bonding effect. Since (S04) completely desists from elaborating on information, we can speculate that it may be due to the danger of being perceived as chummy with readers, which could be damaging their trustworthiness as a commercial site (Sillence & Briggs 2015: 472 call this factor "benevolence"). Website authors explain technical terms by contextualizing them in a meaningful way, they exemplify broad categories and they bring up an additional layer to consider. In example (8.14) website authors illustrate the hypernym *poisons*, which helps readers get an idea of what they are inhaling but also boosts the toxicity of smoking. The next example (8.15) is also concerned with one of the toxic ingredients of cigarettes, elaborating on what tar is and how it affects the body. In the first sentence website authors make their remarks comprehensible by referring to the reader's context instead of opting for a technical explanation (*stains your fingers and teeth*). This helps to indicate common ground in combination with the attributive adjectives (*sticky brown*). In the final sentence website authors try to visualize what they mean by damages to the lungs, so readers fully understand the impact that tar has on their health (*making tubes narrower…*).

(8.14) NRT is safer than smoking because NRT doesn't contain poisons like tar or carbon monoxide. (S18)

(8.15) Tar is the sticky brown substance which stains your fingers and teeth. Tar causes cancer and damages your lungs. It stays inside your lungs, making tubes narrower and reducing your protection against infection. (S17)

(8.16) Acetone - Nail polish remover
Ammonia - Toilet cleaner
Arsenic - Rat poison Benzo(a)pyrene […] (S17)

Example (8.16) is part of a list, containing a selection of harmful ingredients in cigarettes. Website authors try to make the abstract chemical terms graspable by indicating where they occur in readers' everyday life. On the one hand, this juxtaposition of terms leads to boosting the shock effect the list of ingredients is supposed to have on readers. On the other, it shows that website authors want readers to be fully aware of what they are consuming, motivating them to stop in the long run.

Finally, website authors offer readers a basis to make responsible decisions by giving advice. The discursive moves analysis revealed that in “addressing common questions/worries” the use of *advice* is mostly restricted to when the quitting process is discussed. For instance, if we consider the distribution of *advice* within the system-given categories in (S17) and (S18), it shows that the majority of *advice* moves occur within responses to *Preparing to quit and go smokefree*. If we have a closer look at the corresponding questions, we find that the first-person perspective is more frequently used than in other sections (seven out of nine questions in both instances). Moreover, questioners are more likely to require specific input for actions in this category. Consequently, the role of readers as active help-seekers is highlighted, which legitimizes ensuing advice-giving. While the connection between *advice* and quitting cannot be supported by system-given categories in (S29), the content of advisory moves also indexes their link to the quitting process. In (S04) *advice* only occurs in the introductory text, encouraging readers to engage with the *Myths-Facts* about nicotine. Since website authors aim at presenting the truth about nicotine, using advice in that context would be counter-productive given their commercial interest in selling nicotine-based medication. The thematic connection between the use of *advice* and the quitting process suggests that giving advice in other areas is avoided because of face-sensitivities of readers and to protect website authors’ identities as trustworthy advisors. For example, website authors could be perceived as imposing when giving unwarranted advice on smoking and pregnancy, which is a delicate matter. Further, when talking about nicotine replacement therapy, website authors would damage their identity as un-biased governmental advisors if they gave specific advice to take a brand-specific medication.

If advice is given, it occurs in the form of coping strategies for withdrawal symptoms or as step-by-step instructions to help quitting or to deal with relapsing. It is striking that imperatives are employed in most *advice* moves whereby the carefully selected thematic context seems to make the imperative acceptable—i.e. the textual context functions as mitigation. In the context of online health support groups, Morrow (2006: 541) suggested that the use of imperatives indicated a “relationship of closeness” between advice-givers and advice-seekers. Similarly, I argue that website authors use imperatives to present themselves as caring for readers and as giving advice as a friend. They try to connect with readers and bring them to action, creating the illusion of personalized interaction (see Benwell & Stokoe 2006: 181).

Nonetheless, website authors use *if*-clauses to signal the optionality of advice, which also down tones imperatives.

In example (8.17) the questioner is positioned as advice-seeker who wants instructions on how to start quitting (*first steps*). Website authors construct themselves as giving tools for self-help by coming up with a five-step action plan (*Take time, plan*, etc.), which has an engaging effect. The division into two paragraphs indexes that readers should comply with advice in stages: only if readers have gone through the first part, they should move on to the next recommendations (*choose a quit date and commit to it*).

(8.17) What are the first steps towards giving up?
[…]
Take time to make sure that you are physically, mentally and emotionally ready and plan how and when you will give up.
Choose a quit date and commit to it. Think about how to deal with tempting situations like going to the pub, or a stressful day. […] (S17)

(8.18) […] If you want a cigarette, wait for 10 minutes and the craving will usually pass. Take some deep breaths or go for a walk to relieve the stress and distract you from those cravings. (S29)

In example (8.18) website authors employ the *if*-clause so readers can decide whether advice-given is suitable for them. They suggest alternative options for how to cope with cravings, leaving it up to readers to decide what is best for them. These two aspects result in constructing website authors as emphasising the agency of readers. At the same time, the use of several successive imperatives creates a sense of immediacy and positions website authors as being there for readers in a time of need, which involves readers on an emotional level.

8.3.3 Help-givers have done their research

Website authors signal that they have done their research in order to increase their trustworthiness, making the link to ethos construction patent. This identity position is heavily present in all four sources of the sub-corpus. It points to the importance of being perceived as expert source whose piece of information should be taking seriously. Following Richardson (2003: 172), I call discourse strategies that are used to build up expertise "warranting strategies", which she argued were "designed to give fellow participants reasons to take the information seriously" in the context of an Internet newsgroup. Previous studies about online health discourse have described a range of warranting strategies such as using numbers to support facts, employing a technical lexicon, referring to other sources or referring to one's professional status (e.g. Armstrong et al. 2011; Koteyko 2009; Locher2013a; Richardson 2003; Sillence 2010, etc.). In her study of websites promoting probiotic yoghurts, Koteyko (2009: 120) found that "arguments appealing to the authority of science" were common, by which she refers to the use of article references and of figures but also to employing phrases such as *research shows*, *experts suggest* and *studies have found*. Koteyko (2009: 121) puts forward that, due to their commercial interests, websites strive for expertise by association to establish their own trustworthiness, linking it to Fairclough's (1989) notion of "conferred expertise". Similarly, website authors from (S04) invest much discursive effort into adopting a scientific voice to assure readers that the information presented is factual and disinterested. In the case of *Myths and Facts* from (S04), the identity position of help-givers having done their research is prevalent, which suggests that website authors lay special emphasis on ethos construction because of their commercial interests. Overall, three warranting strategies were repeatedly employed to index expertise: (1) referring to numerical evidence, (2) using a technical lexicon and (3) referring to research. Since these three strategies are used in combination in all four sources, it points to the importance of framing information as medicalized, evidence-based and as situated in science in this thematic module. While a reliance on numbers and facts to make a case for stopping smoking can be observed in the entire website practices, the density of warranting strategies may be an idiosyncrasy of "addressing common questions/worries". As pointed out above, FAQs are set up as hierarchical interactions between questioner/lay and respondent/expert, which is additionally reinforced trough these linguistic means.

Website authors refer to numerical evidence to quantify the benefits of not smoking and the risks of smoking, which backs up and highlights the fact-based and scientific nature of their claims. Numerical evidence is weaved into texts in several forms, all of which are also typically employed in health risk communication in general (Linell et al. 2002: 202; Sarangi & Candlin 2003: 119). First, authors use numbers and percentages, they qualify the likelihood of events using the modal adjective (*likely*) and they employ comparative structures to juxtapose the status-quo identity with the desired non-smoker identity. Example (8.19) illustrates how the dangers of tobacco in paan are made palpable to readers by mentioning the increased numerical risk of experiencing adverse health effects (*five times more likely*).

(8.19) Chewing tobacco in paan makes you five times more likely to get oral cancer. (S18)

(8.20) - More complications during your pregnancy and labour.
- Increased risk of miscarriage, bleeding and sickness.
- Slower growth of your baby.
[…] (S17)

In (8.20) the potential health risks of smoking during pregnancy are communicated using comparative structures (*more, increased, slower*). The quantification of health risks is used to indicate that by smoking these undesirable outcomes are a probable part of readers' action environment.

Further, the use of a technical lexicon indicates to readers that they are dealing with specialist texts produced by health experts. The terminology is from the medical field, particulary concerning addictions, as well as from the field of chemistry. In (S17), (S18) and (S29), the use of terminology increases when health drawbacks of smoking are discussed. Example (8.21) shows how several warranting strategies are at interplay and jointly establish the medical expertise of the source. First, specific terms such as *low abuse liability* and the compound *addiction risk* mark the passage as belonging to specialized health risk communication. Further, the phrase *has proved* grounds the piece of information in scientific, empirical research, which is supplemented by including quantifying structures (*very low; low*).

(8.21) The addiction risk of nicotine in medications has proved to be very low compared to the risk posed by tobacco products. NRT has low abuse liability compared to tobacco products. (S04)

(8.22) The chemical addiction causes physical symptoms when you quit, such as tiredness, irritability and poor concentration. (S29)

In (8.22) the physical symptoms are exemplified by using diagnostic nouns instead of verbs to describe the states which quitters may experience (*tiredness, irritability*). Thereby, the passage is flagged as expert health discourse, featuring side effects like in patient information leaflets.

Referring to research is another common warranting strategy used to support information, even though these references are generic (as in *evidence/research shows*) without providing bibliographical references to actual studies. It appears that the mere mentioning of evidence/research is proof enough to mobilize the authority of the scientific realm and to boost the credibility of the facts presented. In the case of (S29), referring to research is used as a strategic rhetorical move to counter excuses. Apart from positioning arguments as evidence-based, it also allows website authors to defend their criticism of smokers as scientific truth, which has a face-saving effect. Example (8.23) demonstrates how referring to research introduces the counter-argument, refuting the preceding excuse (*Medical evidence shows*). It makes unmistakeably clear that the information given is not a personal opinion but is based on research, which also softens the impact of contradicting the imagined reader in the first part.

(8.23) Excuse 2: I'll gain weight and get stressed
Medical evidence shows that nicotine doesn't stop you getting hungry or calm you down. […] (S29)

(8.24) Research has shown that the more attempts you have made in the past, the more likely you are to succeed in the future. (S17)

In (8.24) website authors refer to research to support their claim that relapsing and re-trying brings quitters closer to success. Moreover, referring to research also implicitly encourages readers not to give up.

8.3.4 Help-seekers should look on the bright side

While the first three positions were concerned with website authors as help-givers, the following positions emphasise the role of readers as help-seekers. In the sub-corpus readers are continuously encouraged to look on the bright side, which has an involving and motivational effect connecting it to pathos. While this is an identity position that emerges throughout in (S17), (S18) and (S29), it is completely absent from (S04). The latter mostly focuses on establishing its credibility as a source of information despite the commercial setting in its *Myths-Facts* section. Thus, the communicative purpose of explaining the role of nicotine when smoking is fulfilled. In view of the many detrimental health effects that are displayed in "addressing common questions/worries", it is not surprising that readers are reminded that they can still turn things around—or as it is aptly put in (S17) and (S18): *It's never too late!*. Website authors turn negative events or pieces of information into something positive and/ or promise improvement, which tends to overlap with or occur within *assessment* and *predic-*

tion—two discursive moves of personalized nature. Turning negative events into something positive and promising improvement often have an affiliative or face-enhancing effect, resulting in reassuring or motivating readers (see also Placencia 2012; Ch. 10).

In example (8.25) the way both questions are phrased suggest that a negative answer is expected. In her study of corporate FAQs, Turnbull (2013: 301) found negative interrogatives to be used for rhetorical effect, which entail a negative answer. Similarly, I argue that the response that it is not too late to stop is implied even though website authors do not explicitly mention it. Further, the fact that readers ask the question whether *the damage is already done* mitigates the face-threatening potential of website authors' response, in which the latter assert that readers harm their babies by smoking. Even so, website authors immediately soften their statement and point to an upside when they highlight that stopping is always beneficial for babies (*will be better*). In the next paragraph website authors bring up another argument for readers to look on the bright side, which they call *good news*, as they indicate that smoking affects babies most after the first trimester. Readers who are in the early stages of pregnancy are thereby encouraged to take up this information as motivation to quit. In (8.26) website authors show their understanding of how difficult it is to quit smoking, which is boosted by the adverb *undeniably*. In the next sentence they add a positive spin to their initial evaluation (*not impossible*); expressing their confidence in readers' abilities (*you can do it*).

(8.25) Is it too late to stop? Isn't the damage already done?
Smoking is harmful throughout your pregnancy and stopping at any stage will be better for your baby.
The good news is that the most damaging affects [sic!] of smoking happen in months four to nine, so if you quit within the first three months of your pregnancy, your baby is likely to be a healthy weight. (S18)

(8.26) Smoking is an addiction that's undeniably tough to quit. But it's not impossible and with a lot of determination, you can do it. (S29)

(8.27) I've tried to give up many times, but always fail - what else can I do?
If you've tried before and it didn't work out don't worry. You haven't failed, you have just given yourself more practice for the next time you quit. (S17)

Example (8.27) deals with readers who have tried to quit smoking before without success (*always fail*). Firstly, website authors reassure readers (*don't worry*), which establishes a bond. Afterwards, they turn around the identity position for readers (*you haven't failed*), re-shaping the negative experience of relapsing into something positive as *practice for the next time*.

8.3.5 Help-seekers want to do the right thing

Previous research has discussed the moral dimension of public health discourse, highlighting the fact that people are expected to make responsible health choices (Burgess 2008; Gwyn 2002; Mayr 2008; Lupton 2013a/b). In the same vein, website authors construct readers as responsible help-seekers who take initiative to become non-smokers and who want to avoid harming their surroundings with their smoking. Indexical means to create this identity label include (1) using first person pronouns singular in questions, (2) implicatures in contexts where readers affect others with their actions and (3) presuppositions in terms of help-seekers wanting to protect their family (see Bucholtz & Hall 2005: 595). In (S17) and (S18), all three strategies are used whereas only presupposition is utilized in (S29). Since *Nicotine Myths* focus on ethos construction in (S04), this identity position is completely absent.

The first-person perspective is strategically used in questions to construct readers as help-seekers who want to make the responsible health choice to stop smoking. Fittingly, first person pronouns singular occur most often in the *Preparing to quit* section (seven out of nine questions)[61], which is where readers are motivated to take the first steps. As the use of the first-person pronoun encourages readers to identify with questioners in a straightforward way, readers are positioned as having made the decision to quit smoking. In (8.28) the questioner is constructed as someone who wants to take ownership of and wants to be an active agent in the quitting process, as indexed by the verb *manage* and the possessive determiner (*my withdrawal and recovery symptoms).* Similarly, the possessive determiner *my* is used to personalise the general health question while it also positions the questioner as being aware of the negative effects of smoking in (8.29):

(8.28) How can I manage my withdrawal and recovery symptoms, including cravings? (S17)

(8.29) What does smoking do to my body? (S18)

[61] As mentioned in Ch. 7, (S17) and (S18) have the same super-categories or sections of questions.

Website authors sometimes use implicatures, which are "[...] implications which can be deduced from the form of an utterance"[62] (Crystal 2008: 238), to discuss the adversary effects of second-hand smoke and of smoking in pregnancy. They employ neutral identity categories such as *smokers, mothers, people* to dissociate undesirable actions from readers, suggesting that the latter would not want to identify with the health consequences presented. At the same time, the second person singular pronoun is abundantly used in the overall context of the FAQs. Therefore, it is self-evident that website authors are addressing readers, indirectly appealing to them not to let negative consequences happen. Ng and Bradac (1993: 123; see also Ch. 3) talk of being *misleading* with regards to addressees in equivocal messages. They explain that by avoiding directly addressing receivers, senders are reducing communicative conflict. Alternatively, while the term misleading sounds negative, I agree that being vague about receivers has a face-saving effect. In (8.30) website authors use a copular sentence to discuss second-hand smoke, which allows omitting the readers/smokers as agents. Moreover, the noun *children* is not further qualified, thus no explicit link to readers is made. In the next sentence, instead of opting for the possessive determiner *your,* the defining relative clause is used to modify *babies,* which detaches this piece of information from the prospective reader who could be a mother who smokes.

(8.30) Secondhand smoke is very dangerous for children because their bodies are still developing. Cot death is twice as likely for babies whose mothers smoke. (S17)

(8.31) What are the dangers to infants, children and unborn babies?
Tobacco smoke contains thousands of toxic chemicals. These poisons get into the bodies of children who live with smokers. (S18)

Similar to the previous example, website authors employ a defining relative clause in (8.31), abstaining from directly addressing readers (*who live with smokers*). Nonetheless, the overall context implies that readers are likely to self-categorize as smokers, which turns this piece of information into a warning directed at readers.

Apart from using implicatures to deal with the tricky topics of pregnancy and second-hand smoke, website authors work with the presupposition[63] that readers care about and want to do what is best for their family (and themselves). This presupposition is mobilized as a

[62] This definition refers to "conversational implicatures".
[63] Crystal (2008: 384) explains that it refers to "[…] (in relation to language) what a speaker assumes in saying a particular sentence, as opposed to what is actually asserted.

rhetorical move to enhance the force of some counter-arguments to overthrow excuses presented in (S29). Interestingly, we can observe a pattern of whether implicatures or presuppositions are used when discussing the effects of smoking depending on the superordinate topic in the two larger FAQs (S17) and (S18). While implicatures are employed in *Health issues related to smoking etc.*, presuppositions are mobilized in *Smoking and Pregnancy*. We can only hypothesize why this is the case: one explanation is that the more dissociated way of communicating negative effects on others is supposed to highlight the factual and non-judgemental nature of the category *Health issues etc*. In contrast, if readers select *Smoking and Pregnancy,* they are framed as wanting to become non-smokers because of the baby. In (8.32) website authors employ the dangers of second-hand smoke as an argument in favour of quitting (*improve the health*). They appeal to readers' sense of responsibility, working with the presupposition that readers want to protect their family.

(8.32) You'll also improve the health of your family and friends by not exposing them to passive smoking. (S29)

(8.33) My partner smokes - will this affect my unborn child?
If your family or friends smoke near you, you will breathe in thousand [sic!] of toxic chemicals.
Your baby will be at increased risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, under development and cot death. Your partner, family and friends can all help you by making sure that they don't smoke when you are around. You could even ask them to go smokefree too! (S17)

In (8.33) the question is asked from a first-person perspective, positioning the questioner/reader as being worried in terms of second-hand smoke and her pregnancy and having the baby's best interest at heart. Correspondingly, website authors personalize negative consequences with second person singular pronouns and possessive determiners (*near you, Your family, ,* etc.)*,* confirming the questioner's sorrows (*at increased risk of...).* The presupposition of readers wanting to protect their family frames the ensuing sentence, in which several recommendations are detailed for how to avoid these negative impacts (*can all help you..., ask them to go smokefree*).

8.3.6 Help-seekers want to find help

In three of the four sources —(S17), (S18) and (S29)— website authors construct readers as wanting to find help and themselves as assisting in the help-seeking process. The strategies employed for that matter correspond to the use of the discursive move *referral*, which consists of (1) re-directing readers to find more information (also hyperlinking), (2) inviting readers to get in contact and (3) referring readers to medical experts. In (S17) the position of help-seekers wanting to find help is strongly emphasised since every answer features a *referral* move, either encouraging readers to interact with NHS support groups or to continue reading other parts of the website (see Ch. 7). Hyperlinking and encouraging users to get in contact contribute to establishing user-medium or user-user interactivity. Warnick (2007: 71) argues that the rhetorical potential of interactivity lies within its possibility of furthering identification between producers and users. In this context website authors endeavour to involve readers in a continued interaction on or offline, ultimately in view of persuading readers to stop smoking. Further, the use of the discursive move *referral* with its different aspects can be considered to have a warranting function, highlighting that the websites provide professional health advice (see Locher 2013a: 348).

Website authors repeatedly recommend that readers check out and make use of other parts of the website to continue interaction. Thereby, they position readers as being interested in finding out more while they literally become help-givers. Website authors use the imperative *see* to draw readers' attention to other sections of the website in (8.34), implying that readers are interested in finding out more. The title of the hyperlink (*what suits me*) suggests that readers will find *advice and support* targeted at their own needs. In fact, the hyperlink redirects readers to a section called *ways to quit smoking*, where different means such as NRT, group and home support are introduced. Example (8.35) is part of the answer to *what support is available to me?*. Website authors posit that the website is a valuable source of assistance, proposing that readers explore other sections to find instructions for self-help (*useful tools on this website*).

(8.34) See <u>what suits me</u>? for further advice and support. (S17)

(8.35) There are also lots of useful tools on this website that can help you get started on your journey towards becoming smokefree. (S18)

In (S17) and (S18) the emphasis on author-user interactivity indicates that website authors endeavour to transform the monologic into a dialogic interaction, either offline or in an online medium featuring a one-to-one structure. Thus, they aim to move communication into more personal surroundings, where they can cater more specifically to readers' needs without losing authorial control on the website. In (8.36), on the one hand, readers are referred to downloadable information online (*leaflets are available*), which positions them as wanting to be properly informed and to find help. On the other, website authors offer their telephone services to transfer interaction to an offline personal scenario. Website authors promise customized support in readers' preferred language (*specialist language helplines*), bolstering identification with smokers of South East Asian descent. Since the *referral* move is realised as a declarative sentence, it is presented as a non-directive option or 'suggestion' (see also Locher 2006: 64 and 109), leaving it to readers whether they want to get in touch. In (8.37) readers encounter two alternative options of continuing interaction about issues of withdrawal. Website authors present themselves as eager to assist by offering different means of getting in contact while also constructing readers as looking for help. Moreover, website authors use *if*-clauses to personalise referrals (*if you want to talk*), which positions them as catering to all kinds of readers (see also Section 8.3.1). In both sentences, the imperatives invite future actions, which guide readers in a straightforward manner (*please call; click here, chat online*). However, as imperatives are preceded by *if*-clauses, the frame of optionality has been set up from the start. Additionally, the invitation to *chat online* simultaneously works as a hyperlink, which opens a chat window.

(8.36) Specialist language leaflets are available to download and our specialist language helplines are open from 1pm until 9pm every Tuesday. (S18)

(8.37) If you would like further information or to speak to someone about your own recovery and withdrawal symptoms please call the NHS Smoking Helpline on 0800 169 0 169.
If you want to talk to an expert about the best way to manage your symptoms, click here and chat online now (S17)

Finally, website authors advise readers to consult their health professionals (*doctors, midwives*) when bringing up stop smoking medication. Thereby, readers are encouraged to seek medical advice as well as to pursue becoming non-smokers. Moreover, website authors enhance their ethos by referring to external medical professionals. Since they clearly signal what their limits of expertise are, they increase their credibility as a source of information. In example (8.38) website authors suggest turning to health practitioners (*Your GP*) to receive medication that eases the feeling of addiction and going to a support group to become proactive (*give you extra motivation*). The declarative form and the use of the modal verb *can* frame this referral as a piece of information that also works as a non-directive suggestion.

(8.38) Your GP can prescribe medication to replace the nicotine, and counselling and support groups can give you extra motivation to help you ignore your cravings. (S29)

(8.39) It's important to talk it [the use of NRT when pregnant] through with your doctor or midwife first. They can help you to weigh up the risks of continuing to smoke against the benefits of stopping using NRT. (S18)

In (8.39) website authors refer readers to health professionals, using the declarative form to give non-agentive advice. The it-construction combined with its complement *important* have the effect of boosting the referral on top of highlighting that its propositional content is widely accepted (see also Locher 2006: 95).

8.4 The construction of ethos and pathos in "listing practical tips"—the construction of concerned advice-giver identities

As in "addressing common questions/worries", I performed discourse analytical qualitative close readings to shed light on how identity construction and relational work are connected to aspects of ethos and pathos in "listing practical tips". As for the other sub-corpus, I subsumed different discourse strategies under one identity label if I considered them to contribute to similar identity positions. Again, discourse strategies do not necessarily occur to the same extent across all five sources. Nonetheless, all five identity labels emerge in the five sources to some degree and I will point out if a position is more emphasized in a source in the discussion. While I will go into more detail later, I want to point out two striking differences between both sub-corpora: First, the role of readers as help-seekers is less emphasized in "listing practical tips", which is surely an effect of the format of the individual corpora[64]. Even

[64] "Addressing common question/worries" allows for readers to have a voice and supposedly speak for themselves

so, the constructionist approach to identity stresses its relationality—applied to this data this implies that the identity of website authors emerges in relation to the identity of readers (see Bucholtz & Hall 2005: 598). Moreover, I argue that it can also be partly attributed to the different communicative purposes of these sub-sections of websites, in which the thematic module "listing practical tips" is geared towards readers who are determined to quit. In other words, the task of website authors is to reinforce this decision by giving supportive advice. In contrast, readers emerge as not necessarily having reached that stage in the decision-making process yet in "addressing common questions/worries". Thus, they may be strategically positioned as active help-seekers in this case, attempting to move them to make the decision to stop smoking. Secondly, it is striking that discourse strategies which contribute to expertise (i.e. warranting) are highly present in "addressing common questions/worries" but are near to absent from "listing practical tips". Further, we can observe that face-enhancing relational work is extensively used for relationship management in "listing practical tips", which is not the case in "addressing common questions/worries".

Table 8.2 displays the identity labels I have developed to bundle discourse strategies together, which construct website authors in a similar way in terms of persuasion. Readers—i.e. advisees— are not given their own voice, thus their identies are carved in relation to the authors' positions. Therefore, these labels are discussed along with authors' labels. Taken all identity labels together, website authors emerge as *considerate advice-givers, w*hich is why this term is used as header in bold. Readers, in turn, are depicted as *advisees in need of help*. These identities result from the fact that giving advice is the main discursive activity (See Ch. 7). They also signal how much effort website authors put into engaging readers by using face-enhancing relational work.

Table 8.1.2 Identity labels resulting from discursive strategies linked to ethos and pathos construction in "listing practical tips"—in alphabetical order

Website authors = considerate advice-givers	**Readers = advisees in need of help**
1. care and look out for readers	in need of care
2. cater to all kinds of readers	in need of specific information
3. encourage readers	in need of encouragement
4. help readers coping	in need of help for coping
5. know quitting is hard	suffers when quitting

The first identity label emerges from discursive strategies website authors use to signal that they care about readers' wellbeing as well as to urge them to self-reflect or act. Involving readers and building up a connection stands at the forefront, which is why I argue that it feeds into pathos construction (Cockroft & Cockroft 2005: 15). Moreover, the second identity position also occurred in the other sub-corpus, which is concerned with making advice and information relevant to a diverse audience in uni-directional sources. The same discursive strategies were used in "listing practical tips" to signal the optionality and limits of advice except for the strategic shift in address terms (see Section 8.3.1). Since this identity position seems to be linked to the customization of content, it suggests that the former is not idiosyncratic to the two sub-corpora but is common within entire website practices. As pointed out above, catering to a range of readers is linked to the trustworthiness of website sources, which give out careful and measured information.

The third identity label refers to the motivational work in which website authors engage. It nicely reflects the role of website authors as considerate advice-givers, who support readers on their way to success. Moreover, the fourth identity label gives more information on what kind of advice is imparted in the sub-corpus, which frequently consists of assisting with overcoming the obstacles of quitting smoking. Finally, the last position contributes to pathos construction. Website authors attempt to emotionally involve readers by highlighting that they understand readers' experience. In the following sub-sections, I use examples to illustrate how different discursive strategies lead the identities mentioned above. Further, I will draw comparisons between the two sub-corpora whenever possible. I will go through each identity position separately –also illuminating how the readers are portrayed-- and in the sequence presented in Table 8.2. Since the second identity position occurs in very similar shape in the other sub-corpus, I will not elaborate on it again (see Section 8.3.1).

8.4.1 Advice-givers care and look out for readers

In the thematic module "listing practical tips", website authors emerge as advice givers who care and look out for readers. Firstly, website authors engage in bonding (face-enhancing relational work) throughout the sub-sites, thus connecting with readers on an interpersonal level. Secondly, this position also emerges when website authors give advice that invites introspection. Website authors involve readers by making them think, pointing out "aspects of the problem at hand that are important […]" (Locher 2006: 102). In this sub-corpus, this type of advice requires from readers that they re-evaluate their behaviour and assume responsibility for their journey to quit smoking. Therefore, website authors boost their pieces of advice to indicate how important it is that readers comply. Locher (2006: 120) described boosting as a face-threatening strategy that emphasizes the asymmetry in knowledge between the expert advice-giver and the lay advice-seeker. In this context, boosting has as face-enhancing effect for readers—it conveys a sense of urgency as if imparted from a concerned friend. I identified the following four linguistic patterns that are used for bonding and to give advice inviting introspection, which I associated with this particular identity position: the use of (1) mental verbs in the imperative, (2) verbs expressing necessity, (3) first person plural pronouns and (4) structures associated with oral conversation.

Firstly, website authors employ mental verbs in the imperative form to invite readers to introspection. As the name suggests, mental verbs are linked to cognitive matters, indicating "[…] activities and states typically attributable to humans" (Ferrarotti 2013: 123; see also Biber et al. 2000: 472). Examples are verbs like *know, think, want, hope, decide,* etc. The imperative of the mental verbs can be used for a boosting effect or to directly guide advice-seekers' thought processes, i.e. what attitude they should adopt. In both instances, website authors emerge as looking out for readers since they position themselves as wanting readers to find success and providing necessary assistance for self-help. In (8.40) website authors use the verb *remember* for emphatic purposes, supporting their advice. Thereby, they place the main responsibility with readers, constructing their own identity as helpfully reminding readers of what they already know. Moreover, the modal verb *must* works as a booster since it reinforces the importance of being in the right state of mind (see Holmes 1995: 76). While website authors could give the same piece of advice using another verb (e.g. *should*), the use of *must* tinges it with a personal note from their side, signalling that they want readers to succeed. In example (8.41), website authors first verbalize their intention to assist readers (*help you come up*), before they recommend that readers illuminate their smoking habits (*What situations, etc.*). The request to *think about* the list of questions stresses the agency of readers but it also positions website authors as taking care of readers.

(8.40) Remember, that you must be determined to quit, if you want your NRT to work.

(S04)

(8.41) To help you come up with a list of strategies that tackle the psychological aspects of your habit, think about the following.
-What part does smoking play in your daily life?

-What situations make you want to smoke? […] (S16)

Website authors frequently utilize the modal verb *must* and the semi-modal *need* to point out what attitude readers should adopt or what aspects they should consider when embarking on their journey to quitting smoking. Since the use of these verbs is linked to necessity and to giving strong recommendations, it has an appealing effect to readers to comply. At the same time, it positions website authors as caring for and having readers' best interest at heart. In example (8.42) website authors highlight the importance of the right attitude in several ways. For one thing, they repeat their piece of advice twice, even though it is slightly paraphrased (*fully committed* vs *determination*; *make sure* vs *you must ensure*). After their initial suggestion, website authors acknowledge that quitting is going to be difficult (*will be tough*) which serves to display empathy with readers. From this position of mutual understanding, website authors repeat their initial advice, which is boosted by the verb *must.* In the next case (8.43), website authors use an *if*-clause to make subsequent information and advice relevant to a whole range of readers (those who want to quit or to cut down). Further, they construct readers as having some experience in quitting (*you'll know*), on which they base their ensuing piece of advice. The conjunction *so* has the effect of presenting advice as some additional aspect readers may not have considered, which positions readers as being cared for.

(8.42) Firstly, make sure you are fully committed to stop smoking, it will be tough but you must ensure you have the determination to quit. (S18)

(8.43) If you've tried to quit before or cut down on the number of cigarettes you smoke, you'll know that the habit of smoking is psychological too, so you need some tricks up your sleeve. (S03)

Face-enhancing relational work, especially in the form of bonding, is common in "listing practical tips", which points to the importance of establishing good rapport between website authors and readers. It appears as if website authors want to down tone their status as expert advice-givers while emphasizing their relationship with readers. Bonding is not restricted to a linguistic form in this corpus. However, the strategic use of the first person plural pronoun *we* is striking, especially since the focus is otherwise entirely set on the reader. It is noteworthy that the two commercial sources (S03, S04) are more prone to bond with readers by using exclusive *we*. We can hypothesize that it is a means of creating benevolence (see Sillence &

Briggs 2015: 472), as it highlights the human (over the commercial) interests in readers. In example (8.44) website authors first refer readers to outside medical help for further questions (*always available for advice*). Next, they use an *if*-clause to construct a hypothetical emergency scenario (*if you're ever feeling…*), for which they could be of assistance. The negated imperative of the mental verb *forget* is employed to boost their advice to get in contact, framing it as a long-standing offer of which readers are aware. Moreover, as website authors utilize the first person plural pronoun, they create a personal voice to address readers (*we're only…*). It suggests that they take an interest in the individual reader's well-being, which creates a connection between both communicative parties. Similarly, website authors use the pronoun *we* to create a relationship between themselves and readers, taking on an identity of coaching the latter on their way to success (*we want you*).

(8.44) Your Doctor or Pharmacist is always available for advice and if you're ever feeling tempted, don't forget we're only a phone call away. (S04)

(8.45) Ultimately, we want you to go from one little win to another till you've reached your goal. (S03)

Finally, website authors use conversational structures to bond with readers, such as questions, quotations and colloquial phrases. Thereby, website authors construct themselves as being like readers, which implies that the former know what the latter is going through. Moreover, website authors give advice from a friendly and caring position. In (8.46) website authors advise pregnant smokers to get in contact with their specialist helpline in case of need. They use the idiom *get back on track*, which visualizes quitting as a journey—an image that is favoured among lay quitters as well (see Ch. 9/10). They emphasize that readers will be treated with understanding, using the intensifier *really* and emphatic *do.* These boosters are associated with a more colloquial register (Biber et al 2000: 433; 565), supporting the impression of an interaction between friends instead of the traditional practitioner-patient setup. The colloquial phrase *Go on* is employed to encourage readers to comply with initial advice, reinforcing website authors' status as concerned friends instead of expert advice-givers. In example (8.47) website authors position themselves as sharing common ground with readers in their *assessment*. Therefore, website authors employ the determiner *that*, which is used to refer to something the other already knows in spoken contexts (see Macmillan Dictionary 2016: Sense 1b). Further, they use quotation marks to make it seem as if they were directly citing from a previous conversation with readers. Both strategies result in emphasizing the mutual basis between readers and website authors.

(8.46) […] the special NHS Pregnancy Smoking Helpline can help you get back on track. Its specialist advisers really do understand what you're going through and are there to help
Go on, give them a call on 0800 169 9 169. (S26)

(8.47) It's a great feeling when you've passed on that "cigarette with a coffee" or that "cigarette with a pint". (S03)

(8.48) Remind yourself of all the reasons you decided to stop smoking in the first place. Do you really want to throw all your hard work away now that you've got this far? (S04)

In example (8.48), website authors advise readers to re-evaluate why they want to stop smoking. They use the imperative form of a mental verb (*Remind yourself*), which stresses the agency of readers in the process. Next, they ask a rhetorical question to make clear to readers that it is a moot point to even consider. The use of the question format creates a sense of immediacy and direct interaction, drawing readers into the conversation (Benwell & Stokoe 2006: 181). Moreover, the intensifier *really* emphasizes how much of a waste it would be for readers to start over as well as it underlines the colloquial tone.

8.4.2 Advice-givers encourage readers

Website authors emerge as advice-givers who encourage readers to stick to quitting. This identity position is linked to involvement and pathos construction as it features an emotional appeal to readers (Cockroft & Cockroft 2005: 4). Moreover, website authors again position readers as being cared for due to their encouragement. Encouraging statements can consist of website authors explicitly expressing their confidence in readers, of motivational advice or promising improvement. Additionally, website authors appeal to readers' strength or explicitly motivate readers in the face of relapse or other challenges. Interestingly, Eichhorn (2008: 75) points out that "positive affect", which she defined as "encouragement and positive feedback", was one of the most frequent themes in the online eating disorder groups she analysed. Furthermore, she highlights that her findings are consistent with previous studies. Similarly, motivational advice and reassuring assessments materialized as frequent discursive activities in the smoking cessation forums corpus (see Ch.10; Rudolf von Rohr 2015: 283). We can hypothesize that since website authors use support strategies that are frequent in peer contexts, they aim to enhance the bond with and the involvement of readers. The close readings revealed that three linguistic patterns can be associated with constructing advice-givers as encouragers: (1) the use of the negated imperative form of *be* + adjective, (2) the use of words linked to the lexical field *determination*, (3) boosting (imperatives, exclamation marks), (4) the use of the *will*-future.

First, website authors employ the verb *to be* as a negated imperative combined with a negative adjective to encourage readers. They remind them not to become demoralized by quitting, especially in relation to relapsing. This strategy is unique to (S03), which underlines additional efforts commercial sources have to put in to demonstrate their genuine interest in readers. In example (8.49) website authors begin by acknowledging how challenging stopping smoking can be, which displays empathy (*not saying it's going* ...). Further, they enhance their identity as trustworthy advice-givers, since they do not make false promises. In fact, the impression of not making false promises is reinforced when they predict the occasional bump in the road (*You might slip up...*). As a next step, they explicitly encourage readers not to lose hope considering the challenges they are facing (*don't be discouraged*). They back up their encouragement by normalizing relapses as *part of the journey* as well as using the topos of quitting as a learning experience (also common in the smoking cessation forums; see Ch.10). In example (8.50) website authors begin by creating a emergency scenario with the use of the conjunction *whether*, which signals what type of readers are addressed with their subsequent advice to be kind to oneself (*don't be too hard...*). As in the previous example, they support their recommendation by normalizing relapses, which leads them back to giving reassuring advice to readers in a circular fashion (*so there's no need...*).

(8.49) Of course, we're not saying it's going to be easy. And you know what? You might slip up every now and then, but don't be discouraged. It's part of the journey and it's something to be learnt from. (S03)

(8.50) Whether you've had one or two cigarettes or even started smoking again, don't be too hard on yourself. Many ex-smokers tried to give up several times before they succeeded, so there's no need to worry. (S03)

Secondly, website authors encourage readers by appealing to their strength, for which they refer to readers' determination or use other lexemes in the same semantic field. Thus, the success of quitting attempts lies clearly within the responsibility of readers and their intrinsic psychological qualities. Website authors construct readers as capable quitters, even though they acknowledge the work it takes. In (8.51) website authors guide readers on how they should face quitting, indicating that the right attitude will already get readers halfway (*Stay positive; believe*). This recommendation positions website authors as supportive of and as believing in readers, which is highlighted with imperatives. Further, website authors predict that readers are likely to encounter challenges (*it is tough; you want to give in*). Thereby, they point out the difficulty of becoming smoke-free, which positions them as honest advice-givers. At the same time, it gives website authors the opportunity to repeat their initial appeal to readers' strength. They construct readers as being able to quit using the verb *stay* and the modal verb *can,* which has an encouraging effect on a secondary level.

Example (8.52) is also concerned with quitters' attitudes during challenges. However, website authors place the main responsibility with readers, suggesting that they should self-reflect on what they find encouraging (*mantra that motivates you…*). As website authors offer an example for what readers could find motivating, they indirectly appeal to readers' strength and encourage them to remain smoke-free. Since they appropriate the voice of readers through the first-person perspective and quotation marks, they construct readers as having absorbed a strong quitter identity (*I'm determined; I have the strength*). Thus, website authors signal that they believe in readers by creating their identities as strong quitters, which has an involving and encouraging effect.

(8.51) Stay positive and believe in yourself that you have the ability to quit. There will be times when it is tough and you want to give in to your addiction but stay strong and be confident that you can quit! (S18)

(8.52) You may also want to come up with a mantra that motivates you during difficult times, e.g. 'I'm determined to be a non-smoker, and I have the strength to see this through. (S16)

Thirdly, website authors boost encouraging statements through various means. For instance, they use imperatives to impart motivational advice to keep going, which they may further supplement with exclamation marks (see also ex. 8.51). Additionally, website authors of (S03) use the mental verb *believe* twice to explicitly reinforce their *assessments* of readers' abilities. In (8.53) website authors use the mental verb *remember* to appeal to readers' knowledge, which they urge readers to use to cope with cravings. Further, website authors verbalize the request implicit in the first clause as they appeal to readers to continue with quitting (*don't give in!*). Thus, website authors adopt an encouraging identity, through which they also signal that they care about readers' success.

(8.53) Remember the craving will only last a couple of minutes, don't give in! (S04)

(8.54) Not only are you fighting a physical addiction to nicotine, you're also battling a psychological dependence on the habit. But we believe you have the power to overcome the addiction. (S03)

In example (8.54) I show one of the two instances where the mental verb *believe* is used in (S03). Despite the few occurrences, it is worth discussing since it nicely illustrates how website authors try to connect with readers on an interpersonal level. Firstly, the two main challenges to stopping smoking are outlined, which positions website authors as understanding how difficult quitting is. Further, the use of the correlative conjunction *not only but also* has a boosting effect since it presents the psychological aspect as additional, unexpected, factor to be dealt with. In a second step, website authors use an *assessment* to position readers as strong enough to quit (*you have the power*). When website authors bring in their own perspective (*we believe*), they explicitly encourage and emphasize their personal interest in readers.

Website authors also promise an improvement of readers' quality of life due to quitting, which has an encouraging effect (see Section 8.34). Therefore, they use the *will*-future to present their promises as predictions that are certain to occur. In example (8.55) website authors reassure readers that negative side effects diminish within a month after quitting (*will lessen*). Since they promise that withdrawal will become easier within a reasonable time frame, they implicitly encourage readers to persevere quitting. Nonetheless, they are careful to hedge their assessment (*for most*), showing their awareness of exceptions.

(8.55) For most, these cravings and other withdrawal symptoms will lessen after three to four weeks. (S16)

(8.56) Put pot pourri where your ashtrays used to be – your home will smell fresher in no time at all. (S26)

In (8.56) website authors give a suggestion for how to adapt living spaces when quitting smoking *(put pot pourri*), which positions them as giving options to readers. Moreover, they add how readers will benefit from their recommendations (*will smell fresher*), which encourages them to comply with advice.

8.4.3 Advice-givers help readers coping

This identity position is linked to the main discursive activity of giving advice and to what effect it is used in the thematic module "listing practical tips". As mentioned above, website authors give advice, for instance, which invites introspection in terms of how readers should visualize quitting. However, most of the advice moves are connected to suggesting specific coping strategies to assist readers in dealing with the reality of quitting, including withdrawal symptoms, cravings, etc. Therefore, website authors may give step-by-step instructions on how to go about quitting. Further, they suggest specific alternative actions to substitute smoking or to help readers quitting. The discursive move *explanation* indicates that website authors expect readers to be reflective and critical, which is why they legitimize and elaborate on advice. These different aspects linked to advice-giving lead to positioning website authors as supportive advice-givers who offer input on how to cope better with quitting. Moreover, website authors present their advice with different degrees of directness—from the lists of imperatives, over conditional sentences, to hedged declaratives. The use of mitigation strategies and the strategically located use of imperatives highlight that website authors do not want to impose on readers or over-emphasize their own expertise (see Locher & Limberg 2012: 6). I argue that this points to how advice-giving is conceptualized in "listing practical tips": website authors take on the role of quitting assistants whose task is to proffer tips and tricks without taking away from the main responsibility of readers. In sum, the following linguistic patterns are associated with giving alternatives, providing step-by-step instruction and explaining in understandable terms: (1) the use of adverbs indexing alternatives and mitigating strategies, (2) the use of imperatives as well as the use of (3) the verb *mean* or (4) variations of the lexeme *help.*

Website authors support readers' quitting endeavours by giving alternatives to smoking and by giving options for how to deal with challenges. This type of advice is presented as non-directive recommendations, with which readers can choose to comply. The use of adverbs such as *instead, alternatively, rather than, normally, usually* emphasizes this impression of website authors offering optional action alternatives. Moreover, website authors employ the verb *try* to suggest coping strategies (see Ch. 7). Hampel (2015: 114) pointed out that the semantic meaning of *try* has a mitigating effect on advice, which, I argue, highlights the optional character of advice in this context. Optionality is further stressed by employing several mitigation strategies, such as expletive constructions, conditionals and modal verbs (*can, may, might*). They help construct website authors as disinterested, non-directive advice-givers who show alternatives to readers. If imperatives are used to impart un-mitigated advice, the layout of the subpages "listing practical tips" has a down-toning effect. For instance, if advice in the imperative form is listed in bulletin-points format, it implies that it is up to readers to select what they find suitable.

In example (8.57) website authors use the conjunction *when* to create the proper frame for giving advice, as it indicates that readers need only consider it in this instance. Further, they use the verb *try* to present their piece of advice as one among other strategies to cope with the urge to smoke. In the next example (8.58), the first piece of advice is rendered in a non-agentive sentence, which makes the two coping strategies the grammatical subject (*Chewing ordinary gum or...*) and mitigates the role of advice-seekers (see Locher & Limberg 2012: 4). Further, the use of the conjunction *or* and of the modal verb *can* constructs this piece of advice as optional. The second piece of advice introduces yet another option (as indexed by *alternatively*), where readers can choose between two equivalent solutions (as signalled with *or*). Interestingly, we can observe a shift from coping strategies to advice-seekers in grammatical subjects in the second sentence. This has an involving effect as it may motivate readers to become active and consume the products offered by this website.

(8.57) When you feel the urge to smoke, try this relaxation exercise instead. […] (S16)

(8.58) Chewing ordinary gum or sucking a hard boiled sweet can help you to resist that urge to smoke. Alternatively substitute these dangerous cigarettes with NRT in the form of NICORETTE® Gum or NICORETTE® Inhalator. (S04)

(8.59) It's a good idea to start an exercise program like going to the gym, fitness classes or swimming as this will keep you busy. (S18)

In (8.59) website authors use an expletive construction to introduce advice (*It's a good idea*), which simultaneously qualifies and mitigates advice. The expletive construction clearly makes advice less directive while the noun *idea* stresses that it is just a suggestion. This impression is further corroborated by the fact that website authors provide another list of equal options for exercising.

Apart from offering alternatives to smoking, website authors also give detailed, step-by-step instructions on how to start quitting, how to handle cravings and how to avoid triggers. In other words, this type of advice consists of several actions that readers need to undertake. In most cases, the imperative is preferred. On the one hand, the imperative highlights the different actions and links them together, which makes advice easy to follow. On the other, imperatives result in creating a sense of immediacy and have an involving effect, positioning website authors as guiding and assisting readers in the moment. In (8.60) website authors help readers to ponder on their motivation. Instead of just telling readers to self-reflect, website providers instruct them step-by-step on how to go about it, whereby the imperatives emphasise the sequential nature of advice (*Take, write*). Paragraphs are employed to signal what clusters of actions belong together, which also imposes a chronological order. The third paragraph (second one not shown) builds up on the earlier paragraphs; urging readers to self-reflect based on the preparatory actions (*Now look at the two lists*). The series of advice positions website authors as assisting readers along the way and making sure readers understand each action.

(8.60) Take a sheet of paper and rule a line down the centre. On one side write all your pros for quitting, on the other, your reasons for continuing to smoke.
[…]
Now look at the two lists of reasons for and against quitting, and think about the difference between what's important to you here and now, and what will be important to you in the future. (S16)

(8.61) Work out when and where you used to smoke so you know when your trigger times are, and think of ways to avoid them. Try sitting somewhere else when you drink your tea or getting up after dinner to go and put some hand cream on. (S26)

In (8.61) website authors first suggest that readers contemplate their smoking habits (*Work out when and where*). Secondly, they employ the mental verb *think* to invite readers to hatch a plan for how to reduce triggers, positioning readers as being the main agents in their quitting process. Finally, website authors utilize the verb *try* to introduce a couple of alternatives, exemplifying with what kind of actions readers could circumvent triggers.

Website authors explain advice or information in understandable terms (see discursive move *explanation*). This can have a legitimizing function since it ensures that readers know why advice is helpful. Readers may be more likely to comply with advice if they are convinced of its usefulness. Thus, website authors give explanations to support—while not imposing on—readers in their decision-making process. Usually, website authors complement advice with an explanation afterwards, often containing the verbs *help* or *mean* and the adjective *helpful*. In (8.62) non-agentive advice in declarative form is imparted to readers (*it is essential...*), which is supplemented with an explanatory sub-ordinate clause as indexed by the conjunction *as*. In the sub-ordinate clause, the verb *help* is used to convince readers of the effectiveness and utility of advice, featuring a promise of improved well-being if readers comply.

(8.62) […] it is essential to keep busy as this will help you take your mind off your cravings […] (S18)

(8.63) Get in touch with your friends or workmates. It might sound simple but taking the time to have a chat helps to break up your day and keeps you away from cigarettes. (S03)

In (8.63) the piece of advice is explained in a separate sentence. Firstly, the explanatory sentence starts by considering criticism on the part of readers (*It might sound simple*), which has a face-saving effect. Secondly, the conjunction *but* is used to emphasise the effectiveness of advice given regardless of its simplicity. Further, the use of the verb *help* stresses the fact that advice provided is intended as a coping strategy that readers should try out.

8.4.4 Advice-givers know quitting is hard

In the final identity position, website authors construct themselves as being aware of how quitting smoking can be a struggle. While this position is especially pertinent for the introductory texts, it also emerges in the advisory sections. Website authors display empathy, which creates pathos by emotionally involving readers (see Cockroft & Cockroft 2005: 4, 15). They signal that they understand what readers are experiencing, which boosts their stance as trustworthy advice-givers as a side effect. Moreover, website authors warn readers about future obstacles they might envisage. On the one hand, this also results in positioning them as knowing that quitting is hard, forging a connection with readers. On the other, website authors boost their ethos as trustworthy advice-givers since they offer comprehensive and honest information and do not only point out the benefits of quitting[65]. This identity position often co-occurs with discourse strategies that construct website authors as encouraging readers. By positioning themselves as knowing that quitting is hard, website authors cushion and legitimize their preceding or subsequent encouragement. To show their understanding and to point out specific future challenges, the following linguistic patterns emerged: (1) the use of the modal verb *can* and the verb *be* to evaluate readers' situation as well as the use of *can* to predict future events, (2) the use of adjectives, indexing difficulty or struggle (e.g. *hard, daunting, not easy*), and (3) the use of the *will*-future.

Website authors construct their identity as knowing that quitting is hard by showing that they understand the difficulties that come with quitting, through which they display empathy. They try to connect with readers, signalling that there is a basis of identification between them. Thereby, website authors may increase the persuasiveness of information overall (see Ch. 3; Wright 2015: 492). Showing understanding of difficulties occurs in the discursive move *assessment*, which has an evaluative element. In other words, website authors reassure and indicate their support of readers to show their understanding of difficulties (see Ch. 7). Nonetheless, website authors are careful not to impose on readers since their display of empathy is often mitigated. This is in line with Locher's comment (2006: 133) that mismatched empathy could be perceived as "patronizing or condescending". Example (8.64) illustrates how encouraging advice can be combined with displays of empathy. First, website authors normalize relapses (*can happen*) through which they offer reassurance and prepare their ensuing recommendation not to give up. The use of the verb *despair* indexes that website authors understand that readers may feel frustrated. Secondly, website authors continue to reassure readers by referring to the generalized experience of others (*Many ex-smokers*). By using the adverb *usually*, website authors hedge their *assessment*, thus being careful not to exclude exceptions. Since website authors refer to the multitude of attempts necessary to quit (*try several times*), they position themselves as knowing that quitting is hard—which indicates that they understand readers' struggles.

(8.64) Relapses can happen, so don't despair. Many ex-smokers usually try several times before being successful. (S04)

[65] See Sillence & Briggs (2015: 472) who highlighted the quality of information as one factor in generating trust online.

(8.65) Quitting smoking can be stressful. Chill out by taking a soak in the bath whenever you can. (S26)

In (8.65) website authors acknowledge the difficulty of quitting smoking by evaluating it as *stressful,* which positions them as understanding and which has an involving effect. The modal verb *can* mitigates the display of empathy, indicating that it is optional for readers to agree with the assessment given. Website authors have set up a frame for their ensuing piece of advice by showing empathy in the first sentence, which they impart as a friend-like advisor (*Chill out*).

Website authors also adopt a position of knowing that quitting is hard by outlining specific future challenges that readers may be facing, which often occurs in the discursive move *prediction*. There is a certain overlap with the previous strategy since it can also feature the display of supportive relational work. However, the reference to a future point in time clearly distinguishes both strategies in these instances. In linguistic terms, the reference to future events becomes apparent with the *will*-future as well as ith wthe modal verb *can*, the latter also alluding to future possibilities. In (8.66) website authors inform on the development of cravings, promising improvement (*will lessen after three to...*). Secondly, they move on to mitigate their statement, as they point out that the individual reader may find it more challenging (*can take up to 12 weeks*). Thereby, website authors implicitly acknowledge that quitting is a difficult process, normalizing longer periods of craving. At the same time, it positions readers as advisees, who suffer when quitting. Thus, the resulting reassuring effect gives an entry point to advice, in which readers are encouraged to persevere (*you need to aim to get through*). To make encouraging advice more powerful, website authors personalise the first clause by using *switch off* in a metaphorical sense (as signalled by quotation marks) as well as the possessive determiner *your*, which has an involving or bonding effect.

(8.66) For most, these cravings and other withdrawal symptoms will lessen after three to four weeks. However it can take up to 12 weeks for the nicotine receptors in the brain to calm right down and 'switch off' your craving, so you need to aim to get through that early period. (S16)

(8.67) There will be moments when you feel like throwing it all in and reaching for a cigarette if you've stopped straight away, or smoking more than your limit if you are cutting down. Perhaps a personal crisis such as an argument at home or pressure at work. Your determination is the key to success. (S04)

In example (8.67) website authors prepare readers that they need to anticipate struggles at some point in their quitting journey (*There will be moments*). With the *will*-future this prediction is portrayed as a matter of fact, which gives it additional weight. Further, website authors guide readers regarding what these *moments* could be, using the hedge *perhaps* to indicate that these are just some of the possible scenarios. Website authors outline challenges to boost their subsequent encouragement, which is presented as a tool overcome difficult times (*key to success*). The relationality principle suggests that readers, as an effect, undergo the reverse positioning as needing encouragement.

8.5 Summary

In this chapter, I had a closer look at discourse strategies employed to realise the working principles ethos and logos in the website sample. Therefore, I worked with the concepts of identity construction and relational work to illuminate these clearly interpersonal aspects of persuasion. As Engelstad (2009: 217) explained, ethos refers to how speakers (or writers) make the audience acknowledge their credibility. Pathos, on the other hand, is about how the emotional involvement of the audience is created (Cockroft & Cockroft 2005:15). Thus, I suggest that these working principles are linked to relationship management, lending themselves for an analysis from an interpersonal pragmatic perspective. My overall research question is concerned with how analysing relational work and identity construction can be used to discuss persuasion. To operationalize this large theoretical question, I divided my interests in two questions that deal with the creation of expertise/credibility and the establishment of emotional involvement respectively. My dataset consisted of the thematic modules "addressing common questions/worries" and "listing practical tips", thus adding another layer to my analysis of logos in Ch. 7.

To answer both my research questions, I conducted these analytical steps: I carried out qualitative close readings, focussing on discursive strategies and interpersonal effects that could be connected with identity positions of expertise, credibility or to emotional engagement/involvement. In order to make my analysis accessible and to point out overall tendencies, I created labels, subsuming discourse strategies and interpersonal effects that contributed to similar identity positions. I ordered my analysis according to sub-samples instead of ethos and pathos , especially because of the frequent co-occurrence of both principles. However, I will now elaborate on how these two working principles are constructed in both parts of the dataset. In the course of this discussion, I point to similarities and differences across the two parts of the sample.

In terms of my first question of how expertise and credibility are discursively established, several discourse strategies emerged. In both sub-samples website authors used mitigation strategies, such as modal verbs, if-clauses and hedges to illustrate the limits of advice and to signal the optionality of complying with advice. I argue that these strategies index that website authors are aware of the diversity of their audience and only want to give relevant advice, which makes them credible and trustworthy advice-givers. Further, I detected a clear difference in foci in the two samples: While ethos is strongly emphasised in the thematic module "addressing common questions/worries", pathos takes precedence in "listing practical tips". For instance, warranting strategies (see Richardson 2003) have been frequently employed in the first module. I put forward that their use positions website authors as 'having done their research', contributing to expertise and credibility and trustworthiness. Furthermore, website authors abundantly utilize the discursive moves *general information* and *assessment* in "addressing common questions/worries", creating their identity as empowering readers with information. Moreover, website authors try to actively involve readers in a continued interaction with the help of the discursive move *referral* in "addressing common questions/worries", positioning readers as 'wanting to find help'. The endeavour to engage readers in interaction can lead to identification of readers with the source, contributing to pathos (see Warnick 2007: 71). However, I also argue that the use of *referral* enhances ethos construction as it highlights the status of websites as professional health practices. In "listing practical tips" website authors use the discursive move *advice* to help readers coping. They foster their ethos as professional and disinterested advice-givers by leaving the main responsibility with readers and by showing alternative options to reach the goal of becoming smoke-free. In the same vein, advice-givers contribute to their credibility as advice-givers on a secondary level, when they acknowledge that quitting is hard by pointing out challenges on readers' way to stop smoking.

Regarding my second question of how emotional and personal involvement is discursively created, I again found a bundle of discourse strategies and interpersonal effects. The bipartite structure of "addressing common questions/worries" resulted in there being a clear focus on the identity of readers as help-seekers, which were linked to pathos. Discourse strategies—such as promising improvement, turning a negative fact into a positive one—have a motivational function, which encourages readers to look on the bright side. Further, readers are strategically positioned as wanting to do the right thing for their families and themselves using implicatures, presuppositions and the use of pronouns in “addressing common questions/worries”. Website authors engage readers by appealing to their sense of responsibility, exploiting the emotional ties of smokers to their loved ones. In “listing practical tip” most of identity positions I created could be linked to pathos. Advice-givers emerged as ‘caring and looking out for readers’ as they boosted advice and bonded with readers through the strategic use of certain linguistic patterns, such as personal pronouns and conversational structures. Advisees, as a result, were portrayed as being cared for, which had a face-enhancing effect. Website authors express their confidence in readers, promise improvement and give motivational advice in “listing practical tips”, which is also linked to encouragement and has an affiliative effect, reversly constructing advisees as being motivated and being catered to. Finally, website authors signal their sympathy with readers, taking on a position of ‘knowing that quitting is hard’. Therefore, they outline future challenges and acknowledge the difficulty of quitting smoking in general.

In sum, my analysis of relational work and identity to discuss interpersonal aspects of persuasion has revealed two main findings: Firstly, it supported the claim by previous research that ethos and pathos are intertwined and cannot be looked at discretely on an empirical level. Since ethos and pathos each refer to one side in the communicative process, they are bound to be interlinked. At the same time, it stresses the relational dimension to persuasion, which, of course, is also a main tenet of a constructionist approach to identity. Nonetheless, my analysis also showed that there were different foci in the two parts of the dataset. While the ethos of website authors was stressed in “addressing common questions/worries”, emotional engagement, or pathos, was at the forefront in “listing practical tips”. I argue that this points to the advantage of looking at thematic modules within websites, which provides us as analysts with fine-grained insights into the use of persuasive strategies.

9 Discursive activities in the forum sample and their link to persuasion

As explained before (see Ch. 3; Ch. 6; Ch. 7; Cockroft & Cockroft 2005: 15), logos is commonly defined as appeals to reason or the arguments used to persuade. Therefore, I argued that logos can be analysed on three main levels: (1) themes or the semantic level, (2) discursive moves (discursive activities) and (3) their linguistic realisation. The semantic content of arguments of the overall corpus was examined in Ch. 6. It showed that one cluster, the help-yourself group, is characterized by its emphasis on the experience of quitters, who give each other mutual help. For instance, they suggest coping strategies for withdrawal, they give and ask for support/advice and they highlight the positive psychological effects of quitting. Hence, advice and information-giving are key activities in these peer-to-peer contexts, where reinforcing each other's determination and continuously persuading each other to keep going is at the forefront. Previous research has emphasised and shed light on the structure of advice-giving in online health support groups (see Harrison & Barlow 2009; Kouper 2010; Morrow 2006; Sillence 2010; 2013; Stommel & Lamerichs 2014; etc.; Ch. 5). It is noteworthy that many of these studies emphasise the interpersonal dimension to advice-giving, pointing out the potentially face-threatening character of the speech act and speech event advice for all communicative parties[66] (Stommel & Lamerichs 2014: 207). In this respect, Locher (2013a: 340/341) rightly argues that the ways in which the content of advice is imparted is influenced by how interactants evaluate the face-threatening potential of the speech act at large. Moreover, several researchers point out that, in the contexts of mostly anonymous online forums, participants need to invest discursive work into establishing their authenticity or legitimacy as advice-seekers and advice-givers (e.g. Galegher et al. 1998; Harvey & Koteyko 2013; McKinlay & McVittie 2011). These are also crucial aspects for the study of persuasion, indicating why the linguistic form cannot be disregarded.

Common patterns of advice-seeking and giving in online health support groups have been established in earlier studies, in which it has been signalled that, among many other things, there need not be an explicit request for advice for the speech act advice to occur in the following interaction (e.g. Armstrong et al. 2011; Kouper 2010; Morrow 2006; Veen et al. 2010). Furthermore, the importance of personal experience accompanying or even substituting more direct advice has been indicated (Armstrong et al. 2011; Morrow 2006; Page 2012; Sillence 2010/2013; etc.). At the same time, it has been shown that directive advice in the

[66] These studies are all set in a Western, Anglo context. Locher (2013a: 340) refers to studies in other cultural contexts where advice-giving may have different associations.

form of imperatives is frequent and seems acceptable in certain contexts, carrying out face-enhancing relational work (e.g. Morrow 2006; Kouper 2010). Locher's (2006) study of an online health advice column provides the methodological basis and serves as inspiration for the analysis of the forum practices. She analysed discursive moves used in response and problem letters, which allowed her to identify the set-up of the entire advice-giving practice. Since I am interested in how interactants reinforce their determination to achieve their common goal of stopping smoking, I investigate how participants discursively organise their contributions by looking at discursive moves. This allows me to point out recurrent discursive features that structure interaction and the set-up of argumentation beyond the semantic level of topics. Therefore, I have established the following set of research questions that will guide my analytic steps in this chapter:

- What characteristic discursive moves are employed in the forum sample?
    - What are the most frequent activities?
    - How are these activities commonly sequenced?
- What is the linguistic realisation of these discursive moves?

My main research question refers to my interest in how the working principle of persuasion logos is established on a discursive level, for which I analyse discursive moves. While answering the initial questions informs us about the entire informational structure of the forum practices, the sub-questions give more us more detailed insight into discursive foci and how the practices are sequentially built up (see Locher & Limberg 2012). This is an important step since the perlocutionary effect is not tied to specific speech acts alone (see Ch. 3). Secondly, based on this analysis, I will analyse the linguistic realisation of the two most frequent discursive moves, *assessment* and *advice*, pointing out the most common words used in these moves as well as singling out sub-types within these discursive moves. All these steps are continuously evaluated regarding their link to persuasion. Thus, I begin this chapter by describing the data more specifically, followed by expounding the steps and rationale for my further sub-sampling (Section 9.1). Further, I will point to the methodological steps undertaken before moving on to my first results where I discuss the spectrum of discursive moves used and how they interact (Section 9.2). In the next section, I will comment on the frequency and the sequencing of discursive moves (Section 9.3) before discussing the linguistic realisation of assessment and advice (Section 9.4). Finally, I return to my research questions and summarise my findings (Section 9.5).

9.1 Data and Methodology of discursive moves

9.1.1. Data description

As already mentioned in Ch. 6, one of my analytical foci lies on cluster five, or the Help-yourself group, which is characterised by peer-to-peer interaction and user-generated content. Even though this cluster consists of four sources (S06; S08; S12; S23, see Ch. 6), my analysis centres on the two forums, which is due to ethical reasons. Both forums (S06) and (S12) were publically available and open access at the time of downloading in 2012. The other two sources were more restricted: while (S08) prohibited the analysis of users' contributions for research without explicit written consen as one has to register to view interaction in (S23). Therefore, both sources were excluded for a detailed linguistic analysis (see Ch. 2). Even though the forums also facilitate extensive user-to-user interactivity like (S08) and (S23), they differ from the other two sources regarding their persuasive purpose. Forum members are already persuaded of the necessity of stopping smoking and have started quitting smoking. In the case of (S08) and (S23), there seems to be more communicative effort to get website readers to start quitting in the first place. Persuasion takes place in the form of response-reinforcing persuasion in forum interaction (Miller 2002: 9), which consists of strengthening each other's determination by giving support and advice. Thus, participants also have to overcome rhetorical challenges, such as conveying that they are authentic and credible contributors on an interactional level (McKinlay & McVittie 2011; Harvey & Koteyko 2013).

Both forums can be described as communities of practice (CofP) since members mutually engage with each other to tackle their joint enterprise of stopping smoking (see Wenger 2008). In this course, they have developed a shared repertoire of "resources of language, styles and routines" (Barton & Tusting 2005: 2), for example, regarding how to ask for advice and how to react as a member to relapse confessions. Stommel (2009: 35) argues that the notion of CofP provides a dynamic understanding of community, which is accomplished in interaction. The community frame is relevant to the forums in question since members explicitly orient to the group or the forum as a community space—e.g. when welcoming new members or encouraging relapsed members not to lose hope. Further, the initial analyses of forum threads have shown that there are core members within each forum community who post more regularly, whose words may thus acquire more weight but also whose styles of posting influence the entire community.

(S06) and (S12) are similar in terms of their purpose, which is to provide people who have decided to quit smoking a platform to support each other, give each other advice and motivation. In (S06) this is underlined by subtitles located below the main forum header on the homepage (e.g. *stop smoking help*, *quit smoking cigarettes*) and the names of sub-forums such as *THE HELP ROOM*. The latter is advertised as follows, epitomising the main function of this particular online support group[67]: *If your struggling, having a tough time, losing your quit, feel you can't carry on, need help and support right now, use this room!!*. Similarly, (S12) provides sub-forums that already index the advisory and supportive function of the group on the homepage, e.g. *Help to Stop* and *Quitting Tips*[68]. While (S06) is a public forum with no ties to a larger institution, (S12) is associated with the British Heart Foundation, which organizes the No-Smoking Day in the UK. In both cases, posted content is openly accessible to non-registered readers, but only members can contribute new messages and view other members' profiles. Further, (S06) is a small online community with 2,379 members and 162,975 posts overall at the time of sampling in 2012. In terms of member numbers, (S12) is a large online support group with 48,043 members and 256,437 posts at the time of sampling. If we calculate the average of post per thread, the forums are similar again, with (S06) having 12.4 and (S12) having 10.1 posts per thread. Table 9.1 lists the main sub-sections that appear on the homepage in (S06) as well as how many posts were contributed to these respective sections. Hence, the column posts per section points to where the centre of posting activity lies. The sequence of sub-sections replicates how they appeared in the original forum.

Table 9.1 The main sub-sections and posts per section (S06), replicated in the original sequence

Main sub-sections on the homepage[69]	**Total (N) posts per section**
WELCOME TO STOPSMOKING	23,342
YOUR QUIT SMOKING JOURNEY	55,955
THE HELP ROOM	3,398
OFF TOPIC FORUMS	78,590
STOPSMOKING LINKS	545

Table 9.1 reveals that (S06) is organized into five main sub-sections. In the *WELCOME SECTION*, members can introduce themselves, share inspirational quotes, give tips or *pledge* not to smoke. *YOUR QUIT SMOKING JOURNEY* is the core section of the forum, as it features most sub-forums and has most smoking-related posts. The sub-forums accompany members in their quitting process as they are divided into time units. In the first week, each day is granted a separate sub-forum (*Day 1, 2, 3, etc.*), whereas the rest of the first month is split up

[67] Any material quoted from the forums appears in its original spelling.
[68] In the meantime, both forums have ceased to operate (see Ch. 2, for more comments).
[69] The capitals of sub-sections are in the original.

into weeks (*Week 2, 3, 4*). After having stopped for over a month, participants can post monthly threads (*Month 2, 3, 4, 5, 6*) until reaching half a year. There are only two more sub-forums—*The Halfway House Inn* (for having surpassed 6 months) and *The Penthouse 1 Year +* (for having stopped for over a year)—the names of which indicate the great achievement of reaching these stages by drawing on a metaphor of real estate in rising monetary value. In *THE HELP ROOM* section, members can request support and advice if they are experiencing any (quitting-smoking related) emergency. Finally, members can exchange anything that is not smoking related in the *OFF-TOPIC FORUMS* and get useful addresses of other sites in the *LINKS* section.

Table 9.2 lists what sub-sections appear on the homepage in (S12) and how many posts were contributed per section. As in the previous table, the sequence of sub-sections reflects the original one.

Table 9.2 The main sub-sections and posts per section in (S12), replicated in the original sequence

Main sub-sections on the homepage	**Total (N) posts per section**
Quitting Experiences	170,617
Quitting Tips	5,941
Reasons for Quitting	4,133
Help to Stop	6,869
Health & fitness	284
Off Topic	67,929

Table 9.2 shows that (S12) is arranged into six sub-sections. *Quitting Experiences* is similar to *YOUR QUIT SMOKING JOURNEY* in (S06): On the one hand, it is the main section in the forum, featuring most posts and most sub-forums. On the other hand, the sub-forums are also ordered time-wise according to the quitting process. In the first week, the first three days receive their own sub-forum (*Day 1, 2, 3*) while day four to seven are already subsumed into one sub-forum (*Day 4-7*). Afterwards, participants can post in sub-forums organized according to the week of the quitting journey they are in (in *Week 2* and *3*) up until to the end of the first month. From then onwards, sub-forums are organized into the second and the third month of a quitting journey (*Month 2,3*) and the fourth and the fifth month are organized as one sub-forum (*Months 4 & 5*). The sub-forums *6 Months+* and *1Year+* accommodate participants who have stopped for over a half year or a year respectively. The last sub-forum in *Quitting Experiences* sticks out as it is geared towards members who are *Quitting other forms of tobacco*. However, at the time of data sampling in 2012, it was newly established with only

two threads. In *Quitting Tips*, participants are encouraged to share tips and tricks that helped them and to reflect on some unexpected symptoms of quitting smoking. The next sub-forum, *Help to Stop,* is reserved for participants who give advice or who want to be an inspiration to others. In turn, *Health & fitness* is open for people who comment on how their health has improved and how they try to keep off any extra-weight due to quitting smoking. The last section is where members can post on issues other than quitting smoking, for instance share jokes or gossip.

The sections about the actual quitting process (i.e. *YOUR QUIT SMOKING JOURNEY* and *Quitting Experiences)* are the most relevant ones to stopping smoking in both forums, which is evident from posting numbers. Within these sections, the initial quitting days are given more weight since they are granted separate sub-forums. Thus, we can assume that it is in the early stages of quitting for which members need and seek most support and advice. Therefore, I have selected the sub-forums dealing with the first three quitting days (*Day 1, 2, 3*) as well as *Week 2* for analysis in both sources. There are two additional reasons for this decision: (1) posting activity and (2) top-down health considerations. First, posting levels are the highest for the first three days in both sources: *Day 1-3* feature 8,466 posts in (S06), corresponding to 15.3% of all posts in *YOUR QUIT SMOKING JOURNEY*. In (S12) *Day 1-3* have 45,696 posts, corresponding to 26.8% of all posts in *Quitting Experiences*. Additionally, the *Week 2* sub-forums exhibit the second-highest posting activity both in (S06) as well as (S12): 7,226 or 12.9% in (S06) and 19,905 posts or 11.6% in (S12). Secondly, I have taken top-down health aspects of quitting smoking into account. According to (S17) (and other sources in the corpus), the main detoxing of the body occurs within the first 72 hours (i.e. *Day 1-3*). Further, the end of week 2 marks the beginning of another period as blood circulation starts to improve, making feel quitters more energetic.

In terms of establishing a corpus for analysis, I sampled by time to develop an accurate idea of what is occurring in the forum practices, as time samples are “rich in context” (Herring 2004: 349). I downloaded all threads that started between March and April 2012 in *Day 1-3* and *Week 2*. The threads had to feature at least 10 posts since I was interested in threads of typical (which I defined as average) length. (S12) had 10.09 posts and (S06) even had 12.35 posts per thread on average. To ensure that no uncharacteristically long threads were included, I set an upper limit of 20 posts per thread. During the timespan of March and April 2012, there were 107 threads started[70] in (S06) and 232 in (S12) in the four sub-forums con-

[70] Any registered member can start a thread in either forum.

sidered. Table 9.3 shows how many threads corresponded to my sampling parameters in each sub-forum and overall.

Table 9.3 The number of threads fulfilling sampling parameters in each sub-forum and overall

Sub-forums	**(S06)**	**(S12)**	**Total**
Day 1	10	16	26
Day 2	4	4	8
Day 3	7	7	14
Week 2	18	12	30
Total	39	41	80

Table 9.3 indicates that both forums had a similar amount of threads that fulfilled the sampling condition of 10 to 20 posts. Between March and April 2012, 39 threads were started in (S06) and 41 threads in (S12). If we look at these threads in more detail, it becomes clear that they are distributed in similar proportions across the selected sub-forums in (S06) and (S12). *Day 2* and *Day 3* receive fewer posts in both cases. While (S06) has most contributions in *Week 2* (18 threads), (S12) has most contributions in *Day 1* (16 threads). Further, I calculated the total number of posts for each sub-sample to arrive at the average number of posts per thread for each forum. (S06) features slightly more posts (N = 546) than (S12) (N = 358), which results in a higher post number on average (14 vs 13.1 posts).

Moreover, both forums differ regarding their participation structure and interactivity in the selected sample (see Herring 2007; "medium factors"). Table 9.4 lists how many participants were active in each sample, distinguishing between contributors who posted only in a single thread and contributors who were active in ten or more threads.

Table 9.4 Participation activity in the sample according to both forums

	(S06)	(S12)
Total (N) of participants	52	99
Participants (N) posting in one thread only	18	41
Participants (N) posting in ≥ 10 threads	9	9

The numbers in Table 9.4 indicate that forum (S06) is more interactive than (S12) in the selected sample. In 39 threads, there were 52 participants, of which nine (17% of all participants) were highly active members, posting in 10 threads or more. 18 participants (34.6%) posted only in one thread. In contrast, there are 99 participants in 41 threads in (S12). As in

(S06), there are nine highly active members, but it results in 9% in relation to the overall participant number. Finally, 41 participants (41.4%) posted only in one thread. Thus, on the grounds of the selected sample, it seems that (S06) is a more tightly knit community than (S12) as participants engage more repeatedly in forum interaction. Admittedly, this impression is based on a snapshot in time within a reduced sample. Nevertheless, it is helpful for data analysis since it shows that interactants are more likely to be familiar with each other in (S06).

9.1.2. Analytical procedure

Previous research has shown that interactants resort to a variety of linguistic strategies in different online practices to give advice, show support and legitimise their contributions (e.g. Locher 2006; Morrow 2006; Kouper 2010; Sillence 2010/2013 etc.). Even though the overall frame of most online health support groups is one of giving help and advice, participants usually do not restrict themselves to that (Morrow 2006; Harvey & Koteyko 2013; Locher 2013a). To establish how interactants in the smoking cessation forums reinforce their determination to achieve their common goal of stopping smoking, it is relevant to find out how interactants structure their contributions and in what discursive activities they engage. Therefore, I conducted an analysis of discursive moves (see Ch.7), which is useful to get to the informational structures of practices (see Locher 2006: 61). In other words, by looking at discursive moves in forum interaction, I will be able to examine how participants set up their contributions through discursive means; i.e. what they do with language apart from semantic content itself, which will also help me to identify recurrent patterns.

Part of the sub-corpus of was initially coded with a catalogue of discursive moves based on Locher's (2006) and Morrow's (2012) studies. This first coding cycle showed that one catalogue of discursive moves (codebook) could be employed for both forum practices. To do justice to these online practices, the catalogue of discursive moves was revised extensively to fit the specific topic and medium factors of the forums. Thus, several discursive moves categories were developed bottom-up based on the data itself and were added to the codebook. The pilot phase made clear that it was necessary to distinguish between people who start a thread (initiators) and people who react to initial posts (respondents). In most instances, the discursive behaviour differed between initiators and respondents since often being an initiator equalled being (and remaining in the role of) help-seekers. Therefore, the posts of contributors were additionally coded according to whether they acted as initiators or respondents. Moreover, the distinction between initiators and respondents also influenced some definitions of discursive moves. Although the discursive moves *background information* and *own experience* are similar in terms of what content they entail, their functions differ in the larger thread context, which is why they are associated with either initiators or respondents respectively. Sentences were established as minimal coding segments for discursive moves. However, a discursive move can also contain more than one sentence if it makes sense content-wise (e.g. the discursive move *advice* can consist of several items, or one's *own experience* can be shared over several sentences). Further, discursive moves were usually not coded across paragraph boundaries since new paragraphs normally introduced new ideas. However, since forum interaction can differ from other more carefully edited written texts (c.f. Locher 2006); new paragraphs did not always introduce new ideas. For instance, one contributor posted every new sentence on a new line regardless of content. In such cases, discursive moves were also coded across paragraph boundaries. During the pilot phase, the catalogue of discursive moves was continuously tested and revised to ensure inter-coder agreement with the help of the qualitative research software NVivo. Due to the detailed and exhaustive nature of this type of coding, 75% was deemed to be an acceptable percentage for agreement. The extensive testing phase meant that half of the entire corpus was double-coded at one point by the author and either a student assistant or a fellow researcher before the final discursive move catalogue was established.

In the sixth coding cycle, 12 threads (15%) of the corpus were double-coded which led to a percentage agreement of 77 per cent or higher for 10 out of 14 codes with an overall agreement of 79 per cent. To resolve coding discrepancies, problematic codes were revised. Further, a small corpus with typical threads was established to re-apply problematic codes in a final coding cycle. For three out of four of the problematic codes[71], a percentage agreement of 86 per cent and more was achieved, which means the overall agreement was 89 per cent in the final coding cycle. Finally, the entire corpus of 80 threads (1,084 posts) was exhaustively and systematically coded in NVivo with the 14 discursive moves previously established (see Table 9.5).

[71] Since the code that did not get an acceptable agreement rate was *open category*, no further revisions were necessary.

9.2. The spectrum of discursive moves and their interplay in interaction

9.2.1 The catalogue of discursive moves

As mentioned in the previous section, discursive moves derive from the kind of speech actions that were used in the dataset. In other words, the list of discursive moves is a first result, as the discursive moves reveal what people do in interaction. Thus, the catalogue of discursive moves already shows how semantic arguments are structured on a discourse level. Table 9.5 lists and explains the discursive moves employed in the forum sub-corpus in alphabetical order. A more detailed codebook that also lists inclusive and exclusive criteria, as well as exmpamples is available in Appendix II.

Table 9.5 Discursive moves used in forum sub-corpus, ordered alphabetically

Discursive move	**Explanation**
Advice	Telling someone what they should do or think, what is best for them, which includes a recommendation of future action or a suggestion that invites introspection; includes referrals in the form of pointing out useful web-links
Apology	If participants express sympathy for someone by telling them they feel sorry for them; if participants say they are sorry for something.
Assessment	Situation of someone else is mentioned and evaluated; can feature an element of prediction, complimenting, normalizing; often support of the initiator
Background information	Is restricted to initiators; provides history and background information about initiators, can include self-praise and problem statements
Farewell	Saying farewell— (optional) closing move; signals the end of post
Greeting	Greeting or salutation; (optional) first move
Official forum welcome	Moderator officially welcomes a “newbie” to (S06)
Open	Moves that do not fit any other category (e.g. meta-comments, general information); sub-titles in (S12); two equally balanced discursive moves
Own experience	Is restricted to respondents; a narrative sequence

	of how respondents dealt with situations initiators describe; can be an indirect form of advice-giving
Quote	Technical feature of automatic quoting of a post
Request advice or information	Asking for guidance, help, support or (personal or non-personal) information; not restricted to interrogatives
Thanks	Thanking for advice or support
Welcoming	If a poster is welcomed to the community; also, if someone is welcomed to the next day of their quitting journey.
Well-wishing	Wish someone well with respect to their quitting/ their health or other endeavours; often projects a positive thought toward the future

Table 9.5 shows that 14 discursive moves suffice to describe the interaction in both forum practices, which is a number comparable to previous studies—Morrow (2012: 263) established a catalogue of 13 discursive moves whereas Locher (2006: 60) found 10 types of discursive moves both in response and problem letters respectively. Further, it indicates that the discursive move *official forum welcome* is a peculiarity of (S06), not occurring in (S12). Similarly, the discursive move *open category* reveals that (S12) enables participants to give subtitles to their posts, which is absent in the other forum. Moreover, it is noteworthy that, apart from the discursive moves related to the speech event advice at large (e.g. *advice, assessment, own experience, request for information*, etc.) and the ones linked to interaction (e.g. *greeting, farewell, thanks*), there are three discursive moves with a predominantly interpersonal function (*apology, welcoming, well-wishing*).

Since my analysis of discursive moves builds up on Locher's study, it facilitates the comparison between both practices, which is another exciting advantage of this analytical procedure. Therefore, in Table 9.6, I juxtapose the discursive moves found in the forum sample alongside Locher's (2006) catalogue. As in the forums, both advice-seekers and advice-givers are present, I added two columns for Locher; one represents the catalogue of discursive moves in response letters while the other column depicts the catalogue used to describe problem letters. All discursive moves appear in alphabetical order. To ease comparison, I highlighted discursive moves in grey which are shared by this study and Locher's (2006).

Table 9.6 The catalogue of discursive moves compared to discursive moves in response and problem letters in Locher (2006) (grey = discursive move, which also occurs in Rudolf von Rohr)

Discursive moves in forum sample*	**Discursive moves in Locher (2006)**	
Initiators (-) and Respondents (+)	**Problem letters**	**Response letters**
Advice	Apology	Advice
Apology	Background information	Assessment
Assessment	Comment on previous record	Disclaimer
Background information (-)	Compliment	Explanation
Farewell	Explanation	Farewell
Greeting	Metacomment	General information
Official forum welcome (+)	Problem statement	Metacomment
Open category	Question	Open category
Own experience (+)	Request advice	Own experience
Quote	Thanks	Referral
Request advice or information		
Thanks		
Welcoming		
Well-wishing		

* Discursive moves that are exclusive to intiators or respondents are highlighted with (-) or (+), respectively.

Table 9.6 indicates that the forum sample and Locher's response letters share five discursive moves, of which three are linked to advice-giving (*advice, assessment, own experience*). The comparison also reveals an interesting absence as *general information* does not occur in my dataset, suggesting that detached information-giving is not appropriate in these practices with a help-giving frame. Similarly, the discursive moves *referral* and *disclaimer* do not occur either. These discursive moves may be associated with professional health-advice contexts in general, considering that they were also common in the website sample (see also Ch.7). Using *Referral* and *disclaimer* indexes professionalism as it imitates best practices by health services. The forum sample and the problem letters have four discursive moves in common, three of which are a sign of the (partly) interactional nature of both datasets (*apology, background information, request advice, thanks*). However, there are five discursive moves that are unique to the forum sample. The difference in use regarding *greeting* can be easily explained since Locher (2006: 60) considered greeting sequences to be part of "address", which were not specifically coded. The remaining four discursive moves can be attributed to the peer-to-peer setting and its technical affordances. *Official forum welcome, welcoming* and *well-wishing* pay tribute to the symmetrical set-up of the forums, in which participants need to invest in relationship management. In the case of the online advice-column, this type of interaction might come across as unprofessional and undermine the expert-lay hierarchy. Finally, the discursive move *quote* points to the technical set-up of forums, which allows participants to directly invoke the content of a previous post.

Each discursive move of the forum sample will now be explained in more detail (Table 9.5). For that purpose, I have grouped the discursive moves more thematically, following the order in which discursive moves are likely to occur in the course of a thread. I begin with discursive moves that typically (but not necessarily) occur in the first posts initiators (*greeting, background information, request advice/information, thank, farewell*[72]). Afterwards I comment on discursive moves that are likely to be featured in responses to initial posts (*welcoming, apology, assessment, advice, own experience, well-wishing*). Finally, I describe discursive moves that can occur at any later stage of the thread (*official forum welcome, quote*) and look at the *open category*.

Greeting. This category refers to an act of saying hello to other forum members. It is an optional first move in a post. Disregarding the minimal segmenting unit of sentences applied otherwise, *greeting* was always coded if it occurred. *Greetings* can be realised as formulaic utterances, consisting of just a word (e.g. *Hi*) or two (ex 9.01), an introductory meta-comment (ex 9.02) or an indented direct address separated from the main text body.

(9.01) **greeting** Morning all, (S06, t18)

(9.02) **greeting** Well here i am on day three!! (S06, t21)

Background information. This discursive move includes passages in which initiators reflect on their own situation. This may consist of initiators sharing their problem or success, telling a story, describing symptoms or simply relating their day. Only narrative passages by initial posters have been coded with this discursive move due to the fact that narrative passages by respondents usually emerge as reactions to initiators whereby they acquire different pragmatic functions. *Background information* tends to make up the bulk of initiators' contributions, sometimes being the only discursive move used in a post. Examples (9.03) and (9.04)

[72] *Farewell* is a common closing move regardless of position, thus it is also occurring in initial postings (see also Section 9.3)

are taken from the very first post of initiators in which the main reasons for posting are established. In comparison, examples (9.05) and (9.06) are from follow-up posts, in which initiators add further information or keep respondents up to date.

(9.03) **background information** recently diagnosed with copd and after yet another virus and chest infection and picking up a prescription for champix on monday. i've tried patches, hynotherapy, electronic ciggies etc and never managed to stop. i'm starting to think i havn't any willpower left now as i enjoy that first morning ciggie. (S06, t9)

(9.04) **background information** Just had to share my accomplishment with all you lovely people...Today is exactly 14 days for me that I have been a non smoker and I feel good! No cravings and I dont miss it, Never felt better!!! (S12, t29)

(9.05) **background information** I'm happy to report that I am aching slightly less today so hopefully this problem may be easing a bit...everything else is great. (S06, t28)

(9.06) **background information** Sorry not updated last few days, but good news...I am now into day 4 of my quit....Had some really tough moments but that is to be expected....each craving beaten makes me stronger (S12, t13)

Request advice or information. This discursive move designates explicit requests for advice, support or further information. Initiators tend to use this discursive move at the end of their posts just before *farewell*, through which they open up the floor and invite reactions by other members. If respondents employ this discursive move, they use it for relational purposes; asking initiators to elaborate on how they have been getting on or wanting to know more about initiators' background before imparting advice or assessing initiators' situation (see also Sillence 2010 or Fage-Butler & Nisbeth Jensen 2013 who observed that participants asked follow-up questions not unlike in a medical exam). Further differentiation between request information and request advice did not reach inter-coder agreement, which is also why *request advice or information* is not distinguished according to posting roles. Example (9.07) shows how initiators may ask for help whereas (9.08) is a request for further information by a respondent.

(9.07) **request advice or information** Is it usual for the time to 'drag' on like this..... (S06 t20)

(9.08) **request advice or information** Do you have anything to use with the patches? (S12, t29)

Thanks. This discursive move refers to when participants thank other members for support, advice or information offered. The lexeme *thank* is employed in most instances even though sometimes the British colloquialism *cheers* is preferred (OED online 2015: sense 4). *Thanks* can consist of a short formulaic utterance (e.g. *Thanks guys*) or it can feature a compliment directed at the one who gave advice. Alternatively, it can also provide an explanation for why the particular member is grateful. *Thanks* moves typically occur at the beginning of a post (after *greeting*) and rarely in the very first posts of initiators. In final position, *thanks* moves exert a farewell function, closing the post. Therefore, I only coded *thanks* in final position if it was clearly marked (i.e. was more elaborate than a formulaic thanking). Example (9.09) shows a *thanks* move in first position, in which an initiator directly reacts to a previous post by another member. Example (9.10) displays a marked *thanks* in final position, which closes the post but also highlights how much the community is appreciated and invites further interaction.

(9.09) **thanks** Yes, thanks for the change of perspective. (S06, t34)

(9.10) **thanks** Thank you everybody for your support, it is invaluable. (S12, t9)

Farewell. This category refers to optional closing-moves through which participants signal the end of their contribution and say goodbye. In most cases, *farewell* moves are graphically detached from the main text body, not unlike in letters. However, *farewell* can also just be attached to the final sentence, especially in the case of formulas such as *xx* or *bye*. In terms of their realisation, *farewell* moves can be "sign-offs" (see Spilioti 2011: 72), consisting of just the name of the poster and of affective expressions, such as *hugs*. (Other *farewell* moves are "call-offs" referring to future interaction (ibid.), formulaic utterances such as *bye* or meta-comments. Example (9.11) is an instance of a call-off while example (9.12) shows how posts can be closed by meta-comments.

(9.11) **farewell** Looking forward to seeing you in the quit rooms, as we all battle on with our quits (S06, t4)

(9.12) **farewell** ramble over!! haha xxx (S12, t16)

Welcoming. This discursive move was only used by more experienced forum members who welcome another poster either into the community or into a new sub-forum—

corresponding to the latter's next "day" in their quitting journey. In many instances, respondents explicitly mention to where they are welcoming initiators, such as *the forum, Day2*, etc. *Welcoming* has a ritualistic function and can additionally comprise elements of praise or expressions of affection (i.e. compliments, well-wishing, advice). Sometimes, respondents congratulate initiators to their decision or progress while *welcoming* them. As long as the lemma "welcome-" appeared as a main part of the sentence, I coded it to belong to this category. *Welcoming* is employed in respondents' first contribution. Further, it occurs in initial position after *greeting*. *Welcoming* has a stronger relational function than *greeting,* thus the two moves can easily co-occur. Detached initial moves that feature "welcome" have been coded as *welcoming* instead of *greeting* if they were further emphasised through adjectives or exclamation marks. In example (9.13) a respondent welcomes a newbie to the community, wishing him well. Example (9.14) nicely illustrates the interpersonal function of *welcoming* since it features the affective expression *hun,* the interjection *WOOHOO* and motivational advice.

(9.13) **welcoming** welcome to the forum and good luck with your quit. (S12, t13)

(9.14) **welcoming** WOOHOO welcome to week twoo hun you're doing great just hang in there and keep going. (S06, t36)

Apology. This category designates utterances in which forum members say that they are sorry for something they have done or in which they express their sympathy for someone else by writing that they feel sorry for them. *Apology* moves consist of singles sentences, which include the lexeme *sorry.* Sometimes apologies introduce larger *assessment* moves within a sentence. Since the evaluative part of *assessment* carries more discursive weight, these sentences have been coded as *assessment* moves. *Apology* can occur as a first move after *greeting* or as an introductory sentence to a new paragraph. It has a bonding function in both cases, setting up a friendly tone with the addressee. In few instances, *apology* appears towards the end of a post where it has a conclusive function. While *apology* moves tend to express sympathy towards someone in introductory positions, they seem to be used to appeal to others' understanding or their empathy if they are employed at the end of a paragraph or of a post. In example (9.15), a respondent starts off his post by expressing his sympathy for the initial poster who has had a rough time. In contrast, example (9.16) is at the end of an initiator's post. She apologizes for being contradictory in her post as she is simultaneously craving cigarettes while also never wanting to smoke again.

(9.15) **apology** Sorry to hear you are down in the dumps today. (S06, t19)

(9.16) **apology** Sorry if this makes no sense (S12, t22)

Assessment. This discursive move describes when a contributor mentions and evaluates someone else's situation, often offering support on an interpersonal level. Self-reflection or self-evaluation has been excluded from *assessment* as addressing someone else is central for this label. Since evaluation can comprise a broad spectrum, *assessment* moves include elements of prediction, normalisation and compliments (cf. Locher's 2006 and Morrow's 2012 definitions of *assessment*). Additionally, participants sometimes praise the forums and explain how posting has helped them, which has also been coded as *assessment*. If participants take something up and comment on something that has been previously posted, it was categorised as *assessment* as well despite the fact that posters may not directly evaluate the previous poster's situation per se. Even though this is a broad understanding of *assessment*, the coding process showed that getting coder-agreement with a more fine-grained distinction is not possible. *Assessment* proved to be extremely important in the forums, pointing to the weight that is put on helping and supporting each other in the form of personalised information/evaluation. Examples (9.17) and (9.18) both appear in the initial paragraph of a post, offering support to initiators. While (9.17) complements a preceding *welcoming* move, (9.18) is a reaction to an initiator who listed several personal tragedies that had led to her relapse.

(9.17) **assessment** you know you have made the right decision. (S06, t10)

(9.18) **assessment** You're having such a bad run of things. (S12, t14)

However, *assessment* moves are not restricted to a specific position in a post: example (9.19) shows an occurrence where *assessment* is couched between two *advice* moves. The respondent consoles the initiator by predicting that she will overcome her cravings but also warning her from giving in. In example (9.20), *assessment* makes up the entire second paragraph (out of three), containing the main informational passage. The respondent normalises the initiator's declaration of feeling anxious and predicts better times to come.

(9.19) **assessment** the crave will pass, and you'l be so glad you hung on, you know giving into it, will send you spiralling down again, and be so mad at yourself, and back to day 1 in a few days. (S06, t32)

(9.20) **assessment** It is really common to get increased feelings of anxiety when you quit - but in the long run you will feel so much better, and not just physically - it is so empowering to know that you are NOT a slave to addiction, you CAN make positive changes. (S06, t24)

Examples (9.21) and (9.22) illustrate some of the less straightforward *assessment* moves. The first example (9.21) shows how an initiator reacts to a previous post and comments on it. In the second one (9.22), a respondent praises the forum as a useful platform while also indirectly complimenting the newbie-initiator for joining the community.

(9.21) **assessment** [name] - was reading your reply and thought it was me wrote it lol yeah you totally get where I am at right now... (S06, t7)

(9.22) **assessment** This board is fantastic for advice, support and info. I'm in the middle of day 3 and people have been brilliant on here so you've come to the right place. (S12,t13)

Advice. This code refers to passages in which participants tell someone else what they should do or think. It can take shape as recommending a future action or invite further reflection (see also Locher 2013b: 347)). *Advice* does not always consist of a hands-on piece of instruction but can also be more of supportive or motivational character, encouraging addressees to persevere. In this case, *advice* occurs as pre-closing move before *farewell*. Otherwise *advice* is not restricted to a specific position within a post. When participants refer others to external websites, applications or health professionals, it has also been regarded as a subtype of advice (Locher 2006 created specifically a separate category for this phenomenon, calling it “referrals”). Since *advice* includes getting the other to align with one’s point of view (see Ch. 3), it has been given emphasis in the coding process. For instance, *if-* sentences have elements of *assessment* and *advice*, it has been categorized as the latter, because the take-away message inherent in *advice* is more important in the context of reinforcing each other’s determination. Despite the fact that the pragmatic function of sharing a narrative may be to administer advice, *own experience* without explicit guidance has not been coded as *advice.* Further, the neat distinction between *advice* and *assessment* can be difficult. The help-giving frame of the forums implies that *assessment* can sometimes be interpreted as indirect advice (see also Locher & Limberg 2012: 7). To avoid too much overlap between the two discursive moves, *advice* has only been coded if there were some linguistic pointers that indicated guidance, such as modal verbs, imperatives or interrogatives, etc. Examples (9.23) and (9.24) are *advice* moves where respondents give specific instructions for how to deal with the quitting process. While the respondent suggests how to cope with cravings and withdrawal in (9.23), the respondent advises the initiator to work on her mind-set in (9.24).

(9.23) **advice** Keeping distracted is the key, and keeping yourself happy, lots of treats to yourself, helps loads and it's good to spend the money, you would have otherwise sent up in smoke... on something nice for yourself, I love the little treats I went without before (S06, t29)

(9.24) **advice** Wanting something is not enough... You also need to have the courage and conviction that you can achieve that end-goal. Thus I believe you need to have an on-going dialogue with yourself, exploring what, why, where, when etc. until you get to the point where you feel strong enough to give it another try (S12, t16)

Examples (9.25) and (9.26) are *advice* moves with a more interpersonal function. Participants try to involve initiators by advising them to return to the community (9.25), but they also reinforce each other's determination by posting advice in the form of motivational "pep-talk" in (9.26). In example (9.27), the respondent refers the initiator to a useful link.

(9.25) **advice** keep yourself busy and keep determined on your quit, posting lots helps, it's good to talk to others in the same boat. (S06, t13)

(9.26) **advice** Stay strong everyone. (S12, t8)

(9.27) **advice** Have just had a look on the net and not much there really but I did find this which may help [link] (S06, t28)

Finally, example (9.28) illustrates why it can be difficult to distinguish between *assessment* and *advice*[73]. The respondent evaluates the initiator's decision to immediately start quitting again after having relapsed. In this case, *assessment* can easily be interpreted as indirect advice; however, since it is followed by an explicit *advice* move, it has been coded as *assessment*.

[73] The limits of each discursive move are indicated by diamond brackets.

(9.28) **assessment vs advice** <*assessment* I think you are putting a bit too much pressure on yourself, the goals you are setting while not unachievable are large and hard.> <*advice* Maybe try to give yourself a few easy wins, get your confidence up.> (S06, t8)

Own experience. This discursive move encloses narrative passages by respondents in which they share their background or reflect on their personal experience. Further, respondents sometimes refer to the experience of the entire community to validate their point rhetorically, which has also been regarded as *own experience*. Respondents mostly share their *own experience* as a direct reaction to situations described by initiators. Since respondents rarely self-report on their biographical background without elicitation, I view *own experience* as a counterpart to *background information*. Even though both *background information* and *own experience* designate narrative passages by posters, they differ in terms of their pragmatic function. Sharing one's *own experience* can be an indirect form of advice-giving. It can also be used to make claims or normalise worries from a position of authority (i.e. personal experience) or to signal solidarity. Due to this warranting function of *own experience* (see Richardson 2003), it has been given more weight in the coding process. For instance, if *own experience* is one of two discursive moves in the same sentence, the whole sentence has been coded as *own experience* unless the other move is *advice*. This discursive move is not limited to a specific position, it can appear as confirmation of *advice* or *assessment* (ex. 9.30), it can lead up to *advice/assessment* or stand on its own entirely (ex. 9.29). Example (9.29) illustrates how sharing one's *own experience* is an indirect means of advice-giving, whereas it is used to normalise having bad days in (9.30). Example (9.31) shows how a respondent invokes the collective experience of the group to validate her final evaluation.

(9.29) **own experience** What I did for 3 or 4 days before stopping was write down how much I had really enjoyed each and every cigarette I smoked. Just before stopping I read that list and realised there was NO pleasure in there. That really helped in that stopping doing something I didn't actually enjoy became easy... (S06, t5)

(9.30) **own experience** I had a terrible day yesterday and was so close to lighting up a ciggie to make all the horrible feelings go away, in the end around 8pm I went out for a 30 minute fast paced walk, it helped a great deal. Much better day today and tomorrow is another day. (S12,t22)

(9.31) **own experience** I think we've all been where you are now hun with not eating but smoking and then feeling ill and it;s not a nice feeling at all (S06,t10)

Well-wishing. It describes passages where participants wish another interactant well with respect to quitting, their health or other endeavours. Thus, *well-wishing* often implies projecting positive thoughts toward the future. Even though this discursive move can occur in any position of a post, it is more likely to be in first (after *greeting*) or pre-closing position, which can be attributed to its relational function. In first position *well-wishing* sets up a friendly frame of interaction, making clear that anything that follows should be understood in a benevolent way. In pre-closing position, *well-wishing* can be understood as a bonding attempt, inviting further interaction. In several instances, *well-wishing* appears with another discursive move in a sentence, but it has only been coded if it occurs as an independent sequence. If *well-wishing* appears in final position and is detached from the main text body, it is regarded as having a *farewell* function and is categorised as such. Examples (9.32) and (9.33) are *well-wishing* moves in first and pre-closing position respectively.

(9.32) **well-wishing** hope you're feeling better. (S06, t28)

(9.33) **well-wishing** I would just like to wish all fellow quitters the very best in beating this habit.
(S12, t5)

Official forum welcome. This category refers to when the moderator of (S06) officially welcomes a newbie to the community. Therefore, she recycles the same text and even comments that it is her *standard welcome and advice*. The text passage consists of a range of discursive moves, including *welcoming*, *advice, assessment* and *farewell*. Since it is always exactly the same text chunk, it has not been broken down into single discursive moves. Example (9.34) illustrates the first paragraph of an *official forum welcome*.

(9.34) **official forum welcome** WELCOME to the forum and well done on the decision to quit possibly one of the most important you will ever make and you will be losing nothing but you will regain control of your life and that has to be good […] (S06, t2)

Quote. This code comprehends passages that have been technically generated by participants, using the quoting function in the forums. In both sources, these types are introduced by an automatically generated meta-comment such as *X wrote* in (S06) or *originally posted by X* in (S12). Further, they are textually marked either by being framed and in italics or with quotation marks. Even though the content of *quotes* is not of interest from a linguistic point of view, they have been coded to see how often this feature is used. It is an important means of referring to earlier posts, enabling participants to react directly to something previously written.

Open. This category refers to passages that do not fit the description of any of the other discursive moves or there are two equally balanced discursive moves (for which there is no rule). If contributors share de-personalized, general information or if they use meta-comments with no other discursive function, it has been categorised as *open.* These particular cases occurred not often enough to justify additional codes. Also, if two discursive moves are equally balanced in a sentence and if there is no particular rule for which one should receive more weight, it has been put into *open*. Finally, if contributors use sub-titles at the beginning of their posts, which is a technical possibility in (S12), it belongs to *open* as well.

(9.35) **open** Sorry you had a rough patch, hope you made it through ok. (S06, t14)

In example (9.35), the sentence features two equally balanced discursive moves (*apology* and *well-wishing*), which is why it has been coded as belonging to *open*.

9.2.2 The interplay of discursive moves in interaction

So far, we have looked at isolated discursive moves that make up the content level of forum interaction. However, to understand how participants reinforce each other's determination to quit smoking by giving advice and support, it is necessary to look at the how the interplay of discursive moves works in interaction. For instance, the reactions to initial posts tell us how other participants understood and interpreted certain discursive actions—e.g. as requests for advice, requests for motivational boosts or bonding attempts. I have selected three passages from three different threads to show how posts can look like when categorised into discursive moves. These examples only show small sections of each thread by necessity. Nonetheless, since I always add the initial post, it should give an impression of how participants interact and how the meaning of a single discursive move arises in the interplay with other discursive moves.

In the first example (Fig. 9.1), the initiator shares that she is feeling depressed after having relapsed and does not feel ready to start again with quitting smoking—both of which are topics that are frequently discussed in the forums (see Ch. 10).

[Initial post]

<*open* no where near starting>

<*background information* Just popped in to say that still no light at the end of my gloomy tunnel. And that i wish the 8th may would hurry up so i can feel ok. Today has been a rant day of moodiness and not sure if i can stick this depressive state of mind thats slowing driving me mad. Not thinking of quitting again anytime soon.><*farewell* Jenny>

[post 4]

<*Greeting* Hey Jenny,>

<*advice* Don't keep beating yourself up about this.><*assessment* You will quit when you are ready. I know everyone says that but they say it because it's true.> **<***advice* Just don't give up on giving up but choose the best time for you to quit again...><*assessment* it's no use quitting whilst major stuff is going on or you feel down/depressed. You will just fail and this in turn will make you feel more down and catch 22 just keeps happening. ><*advice* Concentrate on getting your head straight and feeling better about yourself, you'll have a much greater chance of quitting the tabs then.>

<*advice* Take care and keep posting.>

<*farewell* linda x>

[post 6]

<*advice* As others have said, do keep visiting/logging on.><*advice* And again similar to what Sherry, Linda and Silvia have said...do wait to quit until it feels less stressful. > <*assessment* Linda has hit the nail on the head by saying that it could become a Catch 22 situation at the moment.>

<*assessment* No-one ever said it was a race to quit but we do say that we all can. And that means you too.><*advice* Get yourself into a better place in yourself and try again...><*assessment* as ever there will be folk here to support you along that journey>

Figure 9.1 Entire answers, topic *depression* (S12, t16)

The initiator's post consists of a subtitle that introduces her problem, one paragraph made up of *background information* moves used to update other community members on her current state and a short *farewell* move. It becomes clear that she has posted before as she is drawing on previous interaction (*still no light, the 8th*). While there is an appealing tone to the message, she neither asks for help nor support (the lack of a specific request is common to many initial posts). However, the respondents clearly understand the initiator's post as request for help, which can be seen by their abundant use of *advice* and *assessment.* Post 4 by Linda follows an e-mail or letter structure, being divided into three paragraphs: the main message is surrounded by *greeting* and *farewell*. I argue that support is established through the careful shift between *advice* and *assessment* throughout Linda's post. The first and last *advice* moves have interpersonal functions, framing the more information-centred passage in between. The latter is divided into two *assessment/advice* sections, where *assessment* pre-sequences *advice* to signal understanding and common ground. Post 6 nicely shows that it is important to include the interactional context of the entire thread. It is divided into two paragraphs without address or signature. In the first paragraph, the respondent refers to points made in the course of the thread before adding a new aspect to the discussion in the second paragraph (*No-one ever said it was a race*). Repeating previous statements strengthens the poster's ties to the community by reinforcing the point of view of other respondents while it also mitigates his own contribution. Afterwards, he adds his own piece of *advice*, which is preceded by *assessment*. He closes his contribution by invoking the community frame and promising support to the initiator.

Discussing the physical and psychological drawbacks to quitting is one of the main themes in forum interaction. The second example (Fig. 9.2) deals with being depressed and having cravings as a result of withdrawal. The initiator outlines her current situation in several *background information* moves. While there are four paragraphs, the poster has not neatly divided her thoughts according to text breaks, which is why the boundaries of the discursive moves have been drawn according to content.

[Initial post]
<*background information* I am craving really badly this morning. It's day 10.
I keep feeling like I am always going to feel like this. Always a niggle of something missing. I guess this is the nicotine talking, the addicted brain.>
<*background information* don't think I'm thinking positive enough this morning, nothing is ever easy if you don't have the right attitude. I get tired of trying to be strong. Is it so tiring to be strong all the time. I'm going to try and pretend that I'm happy see if this changes my mood. You know like smiling even if you don't feel happy can cheer you up?>
<*background information* I'll let you know after I've dosed up on positive, uplifting inspiring thoughts.>
(<*apology* Sorry if ii can hear my sircasm>)
<*background information* Like helga says I will quit my never putting one in my mouth.>

[Post 11; final post]
<*greeting* Hi Cecilia>
<*assessment* I really can sympathise with the way you're feeling>

<*own experience* This time around I went cold turkey after 28 years of smoking - doubt I could even remember what 'normal' was since I was 15 when I started>

<*own experience* First couple of weeks I wasn't anyone I could recognise....grumpy, irritable, short tempered and difficult (although everyone at work said they didn't notice the difference)>

<*assessment* I can honestly promise you that it does get better. As each day goes by the mood swings, grumpy feelings and craves get less and less.> <*advice* But do be very good to yourself. Take it a day at a time and accept that some days will not feel as good as others.> <*assessment* But every day without smoking is a good day>
<*farewell* harriet>

Figure 9.2 Entire answers, topic *depression* (S06, t34)

The initiator describes how she is feeling and self-evaluates her current state of mind in the first two *background information* moves, which constructs her as feeling distressed. As in the previous example, the initiator does not ask for help. However, she invites reactions from other posters by using the second person plural *you* and by requiring confirmation of the commonality of how she is feeling (*You know like smiling…*). The last three moves have a bonding/appealing function since she promises further interaction in a humorous-sarcastic way and invokes her identity as a regular poster/community member, by mentioning previous exchanges (*like helga says…*). Despite additional contributions by the initiator, Post 11 is a reaction to her initial post. It is structured into six paragraphs, featuring an address and a signature like in a letter. The *assessment* move establishes common ground with the initiator, which is illustrated by the respondent's *own experience.* At the same time, *own experience* also positions the respondent as an empathetic experienced quitter, thus enabling the respondent to employ *advice* and *assessment* moves afterwards without additional legitimation.

In some cases, initiators explicitly request advice or support. Nevertheless, they often do not ask for specific instructions but are interested in others' experiences or want to know whether what they are going through is normal (Fig. 9.3; see also Ch. 10).

[Initial post]
<*background information* I have just past 3 days and 10 hours since mt last smoke but it seems more like 3 months!><*request advice/information* Is it usual for the time to 'drag' on like this.....>
[Smiley holding a sign "I'm new here"]

[Post 2]
<*own experience* I'm also on day three Barry.>
<*advice* Yes it does seem slow but try to busy yourself and dont get bored whatever you do.>
<*advice* Do things to keep your mind off the fags and take each hour and day as it comes.>

<*advice* You will have lots of support on here if you can log on regularly but stay strong and positive!>

<*assessment* You can do this!>

[Post 6]
<*greeting* Hi Barry,>

<*welcoming* Well done on 3 days and a huge welcome to the forum.> <*assessment* As others have said its perfectly normal to feel like times crawling.><*advice* I noticed it quite a lot when I first quit and found it dificult but stick with it and occupy yourself and you'll soon feel like times flying by nicely.>
<*advice* There's loads of info on the forum to help with your quit and post often and let us know how you're doing.><*own experience* We're all here doing the same thing and support you.>
<*farewell* Max>

Figure 9.3 Entire answers, topic *requests for help* (S06, t20)

In his initial post, the initiator shares some statistics on his quitting journey in *background information,* which sets the ground for his *request for information/advice* while simultaneously introducing him to the forum. In Post 2 the respondent uses *own experience* to establish a link between himself and the initiator but also to legitimize his two subsequent *advice* moves. Even though he answers the initiator's question right away (*Yes, it does seem slow*), he does not restrict his answer to normalising but also suggests how to deal with the phenomenon. After recommending some specific coping strategies at first, the respondent turns to *advice* and *assessment* moves that are more of a motivational character at the end of the post. Post 6 is divided into an address, a main text and a signature. The respondent reaches out to the initiator by *welcoming* him into the community. In his *assessment*, he reiterates other respondents' perspective to reassure the initiator that his perception is normal. He also illustrates this claim in his next *advice* move, in which he shares how he experienced the beginning phase of quitting. The two discursive moves *advice* and *own experience* before *farewell* are attempts to actively integrate the initiator into the community—again making him feel welcome by signalling interest and referring to collective experience.

9.3. Composition patterns in the forums: a quantitative analysis of the occurring discursive moves

I present the numerical distribution of discursive moves in this section, thus finding out more about the composition patterns of forum practices. First, I present the distribution of discursive moves in both sources separately in order to facilitate understanding. The quantitative analysis of discursive moves revealed that the members of the two practices emphasize different discursive moves, which I will comment on when describing (S12). Secondly, the sequencing of discursive moves in both forums is analyzed, indicating how often each discursive move occurs in first or last position of posts. This step will allow to support some of the observations made when defining individual discursive moves with numerical data. Finally, the use of discursive moves varies according to posting roles (i.e. initiators vs. respondents) and what it tells us about communicative practices in the forums.

9.3.1. Distribution of discursive moves in (S06)

In Table 9.7, the percentages of discursive moves are presented in alphabetical order for each sub-forum and overall in (S06). It shows that there is a total of 2,207 discursive moves in (S06). I have highlighted the percentages of the most frequent discursive moves in each sub-forum in dark grey and the percentage of the second most frequent one in light grey. *Assessment* moves are the most common ones, making up 23 per cent (n = 518) of all moves, followed by *advice* 15 per cent (n = 330), farewell 14 per cent (n = 306) and *background information* 12 per cent (n = 275). This pattern is mostly maintained within the single sub-forums, (*background information* supersedes *advice* in Day 2 and *farewell* in *Week 2*). The three moves *assessment*, *advice* and *background information* add up to 51 per cent (n = 1,123) of all discursive moves, making up the main bulk of interaction in (S06). Further, 25 per cent (n = 558) of the rest of discursive moves consists of the formulaic *farewell* and *greeting.* Thus, nine of the fourteen discursive moves only make up 24 per cent (n = 526) of the overall total of discursive moves.

Table 9.7 The percentages of discursive moves within each sub-forum and overall in (S06), in alphabetical order (light grey = second frequent dm in column; dark grey = most frequent dm in colum)

Sub-forums → **discursive moves ↓**	**Day 1** (N = 639)	**Day 2** (N = 225)	**Day 3** (N = 426)	**Week 2** (N = 917)	**Total** (N = 2,207)
Advice	14	13	16	15	15
Apology	0.3	-	0.5	1	1
Assessment	20	20	24	26	23
Background information	12	16	15	11	12
Farewell	14	13	10	16	14
Greeting	13	10	10	12	11
Official forum welcome	0.6	0.4	0.5	-	0.3
Open category	2	4	3	2	2
Own experience	10	7	10	8	9
Quote	0.5	1	1	0.4	1
Request advice or information	3	3	2	3	3
Thanks	3	6	4	3	4
Welcoming	6	4	1	1	3
Well-wishing	2	3	3	1	2
Total*	100.4	100.4	100	99.4	100.3

*Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100 in this and other tables.

The percentages reveal that the use of discursive moves remains fairly similar in the different sub-forums. The main exception is the discursive move *welcoming,* the use of which clearly decreases after Day 2. Thus, even though *welcoming* can also be employed to admit someone in a new sub-forum at a later stage, such as in Week 2, it is more common to either accept someone entirely new to the community or to welcome someone who has relapsed to a new beginning of their journey to quit smoking. Further, the use of *official forum welcome* illustrates that newcomers tend to start posting within the first three days. The prevalence of *assessment* and *advice* highlights the main purpose of this forum of giving each other support and advice to achieve the common goal of becoming smoke-free. *Assessment* moves are a means of analysing someone else's situation, facilitating a personalised evaluation of what the other is going through. Moreover, participants often establish an interpersonal connection in *assessment* moves, showing support, giving praise or consolation. The use of *advice* (instead of plain informing, for instance) also stresses that participants actively strive to have an impact on each other's decisions since *advice* moves include the recommendation of a future action per definition.

9.3.2. Distribution of discursive moves in (S12)

Table 9.8 shows the percentages of discursive moves in alphabetical order overall and within sub-forums in (S12). The most frequent discursive moves are marked in dark and the second most frequent one in light grey in each sub-forum and overall. Table 9.8 depicts that there are 1,919 discursive moves in (S12). As in (S06), *assessment* is the most frequent discursive move, resulting in 22 per cent (n = 427). In contrast to (S06), *own experience* is the second most employed discursive move, making up 16 per cent (n = 306), which is followed by *advice* 13 per cent (n = 256). Similar to (S06), the totals of first three discursive moves together (*assessment, own experience, advice)* make up around half or 52 per cent (n = 989) of forum interaction. This order of frequency shifts slightly in the sub-forums as *advice* is more common than *own experience* in Day 1 and *own experience* supersedes *assessment* in Day 3. *Open category* moves figure prominently with 7 per cent (n = 132). However, this is due to the possibility of adding sub-titles within posts in (S12), which has been coded into *open category*. Interestingly, the discursive moves *farewell* and *greeting* are less prominent than in (S06), especially with *greeting* mounting up to only 5 per cent (n = 90). Together, these formulaic address and signature moves make up 17 per cent (n = 319) compared to 25 per cent in (S06).

Table 9.8 The percentages of discursive moves within each sub-forum and overall in (S12), in alphabetical order (light grey = second most frequent DM per column; dark grey = most frequesnt DM per column)

Sub-forums → **discursive moves*↓**	**Day 1** (N = 826	**Day 2** (N = 225)	**Day 3** (N = 312)	**Week 2** (N = 556)	**Total** (N = 1,919)
Advice	16	12	13	10	13
Apology	1	0.4	1	0.4	0.8
Assessment	20	19	18	30	22
Background information	11	12	13	15	12
Farewell	13	15	13	9	12
Greeting	6	6	5	2	5
Open category	6	7	8	8	7
Own experience	15	16	19	16	16
Quote	2	3	4	5	3
Request advice or information	2	3	2	3	2
Thanks	3	2	4	2	3
Welcoming	2	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.8
Well-wishing	4	4	1	1	3
Total	99	99.8	101.3	101.6	99.8

* *Official forum welcome* did not occur in (S12), which is why it is not represented in this table.

As in (S06), *welcoming* is more often employed in Day 1 than in other sub-forums, thus also highlighting its function of accepting someone to the community or to the journey to quit smoking. Further, *well-wishing* is emphasised in Day 1 and Day 2, which is likely to be because forum members announce their new quitting attempt in either of these forums. It is remarkable that the use of *farewell* and *greeting* clearly decreases in Week 2, which could be because members become more acquainted with each other, making formulaic address and signature less necessary. Also, *assessment* moves increase by 10 per cent in Week 2 while *advice* drops to 10 per cent. We can only hypothesise as to why this is the case, but it might be that motivational *assessments* or *assessment moves* to compliment progress become more frequent in Week 2. *Assessment* and *own experience* predominate, which indicate that personalised evaluation of others, giving support and relating one's quitting experience are at the forefront in (S12). Exchanging thoughts on going through the same process seems to be more important than giving personalised advice, even though telling one's *own experience* can be a means of giving indirect advice. The higher use of *own experience* in (S12) implies that forum members are more willing to share what they have been going through than in (S06).

9.3.3. The sequence of discursive moves in both forums

Table 9.9 shows how often each discursive move occurs either in initial or final position in (S06) as well as providing the overall percentage of their use for comparison. Thus, the table gives us clues regarding whether there are typical opening or closing moves. Since *greeting* and *farewell* are fairly fixed in their positions, they have not been taken into consideration. However, it has to be mentioned as a minor caveat that this traditional sequence of *greeting* as an opening and *farewell* as a closing move has not been adhered to in a small number. Corresponding to the number of posts in total, there are 546 discursive moves in initial position. The number of discursive moves in final position is lower with 410 discursive moves because if posts only contain one single discursive move they have been categorized as initial moves.

Assessment moves add up to 37 per cent (n = 201) of all initial moves but only to 22 per cent (n = 90) of final moves. In contrast, *advice* only makes up 9 per cent (n = 48) of initial but 32 per cent (n = 131) of all final moves, where it becomes the most frequent move. These findings correspond with results from previous studies that have worked with discursive moves, in which it has been outlined that *assessment* tend to precede *advice* (see Morrow 2012; Locher 2006/2013a). Morrow (2012: 267) stresses that if posters to an online support forum about divorce start with an *assessment*, they signal their grasp of a previously described problem, setting the ground for giving *advice*. In turn, Locher (2013a: 340) views *assessment* as an element of advising at large, arguing that it is provides a step-wise entry to advising. Further, the percentages reveal that *welcoming* and *thanks* are typical opening moves, as their percentage is higher in initial position compared to in final position as well as to their overall total. Their face-enhancing functions make them ideal moves to establish a positive communicative atmosphere from the beginning. Despite their low overall frequency, *apology* and *quote* can also be considered typical opening moves since *apology* appears doubles in percentages in initial position (2%) and *quote* is entirely absent in final position (2% in initial position). *Request advice or information* also is a typical final move, making up 8 per cent (n = 31) of all final moves. This can be attributed to the fact that *request advice or information* helps continuing interaction, providing the first part of an adjacency pair. The percentages also show that *background information* is more frequent in final than in initial position, which may be due to the fact that initiators starts with one of the typical opening moves (e.g. *thanks, apology*, etc.).

Table 9.9 The percentages of discursive moves in initial and final positions as well as overall in (S06), in alphabetical order

Position within post → Discursive moves↓	**Initial (N = 546)**	**Final (N = 410)**	**Total dm in all positions (N = 2,270)**
Advice	9	32	15
Apology	2	0.2	1
Assessment	37	22	23
Background infor-mation	14	19	12
Farewell	-	-	-
Greeting	-	-	-
Official forum wel-come	-	1	0.3
Open category	3	4	2
Own experience	8	8	9
Quote	2	0	3
Request advice or information	2	8	3
Thanks	10	2	4
Welcoming	10	0.2	3
Well-wishing	3	4	2
Total	100	100.4	75.3

Table 9.10 illustrates the number of discursive moves in initial or final position in (S12). 538 discursive moves occur in initial position, which reflects the total of all posts analysed. The number of discursive moves in final position is lower (n = 405), indicating that about a quarter of all messages only contain one single discursive move[74]. As in (S06), *assessment* is the most frequent move in initial position, making up 28 per cent (n = 150). Table 9.10 shows that the difference in use of *assessment* in initial and final position is less pronounced than in (S06), only dropping to 24 per cent (n = 96) in final position. The most frequent moves in

[74] *Farewell* and g*reeting* are not included in the calculations.

initial position besides *assessment* are *open category* (19%; n = 100), *own experience* (13%; n = 68) and *quote* (10%; n = 54), which differs drastically from (S06). The high percentages of *open category* and *quote* are a result of different technical possibilities as well as different posting practices in (S12). In terms of *open category*, the members of (S12) can add sub-titles to their post, which appear at the very beginning. While the quoting function is also available in (S06), it is simply more frequently employed in (S12).

Nonetheless, we can observe similar tendencies as in (S06) for the rest discursive moves. For instance, like in (S06), *thanks*, *welcoming* and *apology* also are typical opening moves in (S12), which I again relate to the interpersonal nature of these discursive moves. Moreover, *advice* and *request advice or information* are discursive moves that tend to be employed in final position in (S12). Further, the increase in use of *background information* from initial to final position is more pronounced than in (S06). Finally, *advice* makes out 20 per cent (n = 83) of all final but only 9 per cent (n = 48) of initial moves. The trend of *assessment* being employed before *advice* is also confirmed in (S12) since the use of *assessment* decreases while *advice* increases in final position (see Locher 2006/2013a; Morrow 2012). Thus, respondents also provide a step-wise entry into giving advice, mitigating the potentially face-threatening nature of the activity.

Table 9.10 The percentages of discursive moves in initial and final positions as well as overall in (S12), in alphabetical order

Position within post → Discursive moves↓	**Initial (N = 538)**	**Final (N = 405)**	**Total dm in all positions (N = 1,919)**
Advice	9	20	13
Apology	2	0	0.8
Assessment	28	24	22
Background information	6	19	12
Farewell	-	-	-
Greeting	-	-	-
Open category	19	5	7
Own experience	13	20	16
Quote	10	0	3
Request advice or information	2	4	2

Thanks	6	3	3
Welcoming	3	0.5	1
Well-wishing	4	4	3
Total	102	99.5	82.8

9.3.4. The use of discursive moves according to posting roles in both forums

In this section, I focus on how discursive moves are distributed according to posting roles in both forums. Table 9.11 and 9.12 depict the percentages of discursive moves according to initiators and respondents in (S06) and (S12) respectively. Initiators are nearly always also help-seekers and respondents most of the times equate help-givers, which is mirrored in their posting patterns. The discursive moves *background information* and *own experience* are by definition restricted to a particular posting role. Thus, the tables illustrate the true extent to which they are employed: *background information* makes up about half of all discursive moves by initiators in both forums (S06 = 48%; S12 = 46%). While *own experience* adds up to 12 per cent of all discursive moves in (S06), it makes out a 22 per cent in (S12), highlighting its weight in this group. Further, initiators thank respondents for advice and support administered. In (S06), *thanks* makes up 13 per cent of all discursive moves used by initiators compared to 0.1 per cent by respondents. In (S12), this difference is less pronounced as initiators employ *thanks* in 7 per cent compared to 1 per cent by respondents. Still, the fact that it is mostly initiators who use *thanks* signals their corresponding identities as help-seekers.

Similarly, *request advice or information* is associated with initiators in (S06) as they use it in six per cent of all discursive moves opposed to two per cent by respondents. In contrast, initiators employ *request advice or information* only slightly more often in (S12); three per cent by initiators compared to two per cent by respondents. *Welcoming* is entirely restricted to respondents in both forums—three per cent in (S06) and one per cent in (S12)—which is undoubtedly linked to the norms and obligations each role entails in the two practices. If *welcoming* occurs, it is a reaction to initial posts by new members, who have contributed for the first time. *Welcoming* moves signal that respondents accept a new member into the sub-forum or the community. There is no corresponding practice of established members posting in initial position to welcome potential new members. Respondents to the early sub-forums are already part of the entire community. They may be long-time members who post in the early days to help beginners at quitting smoking. Alternatively, they may be at the same stage as initiators and support peers in the same situations.

Table 9.11 The percentage of discursive moves used according to posting roles in (S06), in alphabetical order

Posting roles→ Discursive moves ↓	**Initiators**		**Respondents**		**Total**	
	(S06) (N= 573)	**(S12) (N= 518)**	**(S06) (N= 1,634)**	**(S12) (N= 1,401)**	**(S06) (N= 2,207)**	**(S12) (N= 1,919)**
Advice	1	2	20	18	15	13
Apology	1	0.8	1	1	1	0.8
Assessment	7	10	29	27	23	22
Background information	48	46	-	-	12	12
Farwell	12	10	15	12	14	12
Greeting	9	3	12	5	11	3
Official forum welcome	-	12	0.4	5	0.3	7
Open category	2	-	3	22	2	16
Own experience	-	3	12	3	9	3
Quote	1	3	0.4	2	1	2
Request advice or information	6	7	2	1	3	3
Thanks	13	0	0.1	1	4	1
Welcoming	0	2	3	3	3	3
Well-wishing	1	98.8	2	100	2	99.8
Total	101	2	99.9	18	100.3	13

Respondents employ *assessment* and *advice* overwhelmingly more often than initiators in both forums. Initiators employ *assessment* in 7 per cent or 10 per cent compared to respondents' use of 29 per cent and 27 per cent in (S06) and (S12) respectively. In the case of *advice*, the chasm between initiators and respondents is even more marked: initiators only use *advice* in 1 per cent in (S06) and 2 per cent in (S12) of all their discursive moves whereas respondents use *advice* in 20 per cent in (S06) and 18 per cent in (S12). These numbers highlight that *assessment* and *advice* are discursive obligations of respondents, which points to their function as help-givers. It is interesting that these situational identities are quite stable within each thread since initiators barely give *advice* or use *assessment* moves, indicating that they retain their identities as help-seekers.

9.4. The linguistic realization of two frequent discursive moves

After analysing the content structure of the (S06) and (S12), I now focus on the form level of logos and discuss the linguistic realisation of two discursive moves. Example (9.36) illustrates how the two common discursive moves, *advice* and *assessment*, can occur in combination. Two *assessment* moves pre-sequence *advice*, which is a typical setup in terms of *advice* being introduced after an initial *assessment* move that set the tone of interaction.

(9.36) <*assessment* Well done you day three>
<*assessment* Sorry you still feel rough hun but all these things are normal at the start of a quit and they will pass fairly rapidly> <*advice* I would suggest a walk in the fresh air as it would help I think and may even get rid of that headache and also take some deep breaths both would also help with the craves […]> (S06, t19)

This use of *assessment* and *advice* is fairly typical for the two forums. Both *assessment* moves start by tending to the initiator's interpersonal needs, featuring praise for the quitter (*Well done you*) and displaying empathy (*Sorry you still feel rough*). Next, the respondent's *assessment* adds to the informational side, when the initiator is reassured by normalization (*these things are normal*) and prediction with great certainty in the *will*-future (*they will pass fairly rapidly*). After having de-problematized the initiator's situation through *assessment* (see Placencia 2012: 299), the respondent moves on to suggest specific courses of action to tackle the initiator's problems in *advice,* hedging her suggestions with modal verbs (*would, I think, may*).

Based on the results of my quantitative analysis, I will start the following sections with *assessment*, which was the most frequent move in both forums. Afterwards, I illustrate *advice*, the second most frequent move in (S06) and third most frequent in (S12). In the course of discussion, I will point to how different functions and realizations of the respective discursive moves can be linked to persuasion.

9.4.1. The assessment moves

Assessment moves are used to evaluate another participant's situation, sometimes featuring elements of prediction, normalization and complimenting. My previous discussion of sequencing has shown that, on the one hand, *assessments* often occur in first position or as sole discursive move in a post. On the other hand, although both initiators and respondents use *assessment*, they are more frequent for respondents, highlighting the supportive character of the forums (see Locher 2006—where *assessments* had similar functions). To get a further sense of how *assessment* moves are linguistically realized and how they are linked to persuasion, I will proceed the following way. First, I discuss the results of a word frequency analysis, which lets me identify main foci within *assessments*. Second, I concentrate on different types of *assessment* moves, which can be located on a continuum from bringing informational or relational aspects to the fore.

9.4.1.1. Word frequency analysis of assessment moves

I have conducted a word frequency analysis in the *assessment* moves with the help of NVivo. It only focuses on content words, centring on what is happening on a semantic level. Table 9.13 lists the 10 most frequent content words[75] (≥ 3 characters) according to their frequency of occurrences in all *assessment* moves (N = 938 discursive moves; N = 14,768 words) of the entire forum sub-corpus.

Table 9.12 The ten most frequent content words in assessment moves in the entire forum sub-corpus, ordered according to frequency of occurrences

Lexical item	**Stemmed forms**	**Occurrences↓ n =**
well	Well	183
days	day, days	171
quitting	quit, quit', quits, quitting	137
done	Done	133
get	get, gets, getting	127
smoking	smoke, smoked, smokes, smoking	114
great	great, greatly	87
good	Good	85
really	Really	77
know	know, knowing, knows	76

[75] Stemmed words have been subsumed within the same category.

Table 9.13 shows that *well* is the most frequent content word (n = 183) used in *assessments*. It is often employed in combination with *done* (fourth most common content word; n = 133), indicating that praising is commonly expressed when assessing someone. In fact, there are 118 occurrences of the collocation *well done* overall. *Well done* can stand on its own or is followed by an explanation, in which participants either refer to a particular action (e.g. *for deciding to quit*) or to the initiator having reached a specific stage in their quitting journey, as in (9.37):

(9.37) Well done on your day 13 […] (S12, t19)

Example (9.37) shows how participants often praise each other on having reached certain milestones, which are measured in *days*. The frequent employment of *day(s)* (n = 171) highlights that participants talk about quitting as a chronological journey that can be absolved in steps. This interpretation is boosted by the fact that *day(s)* is followed by a number in 65 instances (such as *1, 2* or in its spelt version *one, two*). Also, the lexeme *day(s)* is preceded by prepositions that signal movement (i.e. they index progress); for instance, the directional *to* (n = 11) or *through* (n = 4). The frequency of *quitting* (n = 137) is to be expected considering the context. However, it is striking that the verb *quit* can be nominalized (n = 55) in *assessment* moves (*your quit, this quit,* etc.). Talking about the quitting journey as *a quit* turns it into something tangible, which participants can master together. However, it also stands for quitting attempts since participants use *quit* as a countable noun and explicitly refer to *this quit* (opposed to previous ones) (see also Rudolf von Rohr 2015). Interestingly, Hillyer and Brown (2014: 51) also observed the nominalized use of *quit* in the context of an American online smoking cessation group. They suggest that *your quit* stands for "the goal for most members" and is "a process that must be carefully considered" (ibid.).

In example (9.38), the respondent praises the initiator on how she has been coping with quitting after evaluating her quitting strategies so far.

(9.38) All those things you doing will really help you to be distracted and walking is on of the best, good for both you and [dog's name].Huge well done with the quit, you have the right attitude.[…] (S06, t1)

When the respondent congratulates the initiator on her *quit*, she rounds off her previous *assessment*. In the latter she has predicted the success of the initiator's steps (*will really help you*) while simultaneously reassuring her that she is on the right track (*the right attitude*).

The use of the verb *get* (n = 127) is versatile in *assessment* moves, but it is striking that it is employed in verb phrases that emphasize quitting as a (challenging) process in several cases. For example, participants talk about how initiators *get through* (n = 8) difficult periods. They employ *get* in a directional sense (n = 10) when they promise each other that they will *get there*, *get to* single days or *get where* they want to be. Impersonal constructions with *get* can entail promises in terms of how stopping smoking will eventually become less burdensome. In these instances, *get* can be preceded by the auxiliary *does* (n = 10) —which adds extra emphasis— and/ or is followed by adjective complements, such as *easier, better*, *less and less* (n = 16). In example (9.39) the respondent predicts that the initiator's situation will improve in time, underlining her point by using the auxiliary *does* and the adjective *honest*.

(9.39) It does get easier, honest. I can say I've found it easier this time […] (S12, t17)

The respondent supplements her generalized promise by continuing to relate her own experience immediately afterwards (*I've found it easier*). Similar to the lexeme *quitting*, the high frequency of *smoking* (n = 114) can be attributed to the overall topic. Participants refer to smoking in a range of contexts but talking about smoking in the negative emerges as a pattern. Thus, smoking is preceded by prepositions, prefixes or particles (n = 16) (*without, not, no, non-*) as well as verbs (n = 6) (*quit, stop*) that index the absence of smoking.

In example (9.40) the respondent motivates an initiator, who is already in her second week of quitting but misses smoking, to continue on her path. The respondent uses a general *you* to predict how the initiator (and any other quitter at a similar stage) will become accustomed to life without cigarettes:

(9.40) Life goes on and you adjust quickly to your new life as a non-smoker and you are not missing out on anything because when you quit smoking you never gave up anything or made any sacrifices because smoking did nothing for you.. […] (S12, t40)

The negation of (*non-*)s*mokers* and *smoking* (*nothing*) helps reinforce the initiator's new identity and is a means of diminishing the influence of the addiction on her life.

Similar to the collocation *well done*, the frequent use of *great* (n = 87) points to the importance of complimenting as a motivational strategy in forum interaction. Respondents refer to initiators' progress, evaluating the latter as *doing great* or *doing a great job* (n = 25) and encouraging them to keep going. Alternatively, respondents assess an action or reaching a milestone as *great*. In these instances, they use the verb *to be* with *great* as a complement (n =

23), often in the form of impersonal *it*-constructions, such as *it is great*. The respondent compliments an initiator on how he has been coping with not smoking while experiencing heartache in (9.41):

> (9.41) Like others have said you're doing a great job with everything that's going on recently, well done. (S06, t24)

When the respondent refers to the initiator as *doing a great* job, he tries to shift the initiator's attention to the positive aspects of the latter's journey to quitting smoking.

The adjective *good* (n = 85) is often employed with a predicative function in similar constructions like *great*; i.e. impersonal or third person constructions with the verb *be* (n = 17). Participants also use an abbreviated form of *it's good to* (leaving the copula away entirely) and an additional verb clause (n = 13). These phrases are employed for bonding purposes. Further, *good* is used as an attribute, especially with the nouns *day*, (n = 6) *idea,* (n = 4), *luck* (n = 7) and *news* (n = 4). The combinations point to how important giving positive feedback or keeping a positive outlook is in these communities to achieve the common goal. Example (9.42) illustrates how *assessment* moves can have an entirely relational function:

> (9.42) [name], glad you had a good day yesterday. (S06, t37)

The respondent comments on the initiator's previous days, expressing that he cares about her.

The adverb *really* is used to intensify verb or adjective clauses (n = 77). While its use is diverse, one pattern that emerges is its co-occurrence with *well* (n = 13)—mostly in combination with the verb *do* in the 2nd person present continuous (n = 11). The positive side of the quitting process is thus again emphasized. Example (9.43) illustrates how the *assessment* of the initiator's progress serves a motivational purpose:

> (9.43) It'll be easier tomorrow, you are doing really really well. (S06, t15)

The respondent predicts improvement for the next day, which he complements by a praise intended to keep the initiator going. By duplicating *really,* he tries to further strengthen its intensifying function.

Finally, the verb *know* (n = 76) occurs mostly either in the second person present simple *you know* (n = 32) or in the first person present simple *I know* (n = 24). The first combination is used to appeal to the other participant's strength and previous experience. As such, when participants remind others of what they *know*, it tends to have an unmistakably motivational character. On the one hand, the verb *know* from a first person perspective is used to establish common ground and understanding, involving other participants (*I know what you mean*). On the other hand, it can also be used to appeal to someone's capabilities and to express confidence in participants (*I know you can do it*). Example (9.44) shows how a respondent motivates an initiator who wants to try to stop smoking again after having relapsed.

(9.44) […] you know you can do this, you've done it before. (S12, t7)

The respondent employs the *you know* structure to indicate that the initiator can draw on his intrinsic knowledge since he has undergone the process before. Interestingly, this particular argument "you are in a better position because you tried to quit before" is a common topos in both forums. It highlights nicely how participants try to centre on positive aspects in order not to lose sight of the goal of quitting smoking.

9.4.1.2. Different types of assessment moves

In Rudolf von Rohr (2015) I worked with a small forum sample and described how *assessment* moves can be located on a continuum in terms of their interpersonal dimension, ranging from being entirely relational to being more informational in a small sample. This observation also holds true for the entire forum corpus as most *assessment* moves can be categorized the following way: (1) praising-assessments, (2) reassuring-assessments or (3) normalizing-assessments. However, the differentiation is not always clear-cut since praising-assessments and normalizing-assessments can also have a reassuring function depending on context.

Praising each other is a core activity in *assessment* moves. Respondents praise initiators to acknowledge their efforts, to bond with them, trying to encourage them to stick to quitting and to being part of the community. Examples (9.45 - 9.47) illustrate different types of praising-assessment moves, which are common in both forums. Example (9.45) depicts an entirely interpersonal 'praising-assessment', which has a similar function as Pudlinski (2008) described for compliments in his study of a peer telephone support line. Pudlinski (2008: 809-810) claimed that compliments, i.e. assessments that feature "a positive evaluation", furthered bonding and allowed to create common ground between callers. The respondent welcomes a new member to the forum by praising her steps, thus motivating her to go forward. In example (9.46) it becomes clear how praising can also be connected to reassurance. After positively evaluating the initiator's progress, the respondent expresses her understanding for struggles. Jones (1997: 126) argued that people who offer assessments (implicitly or explicitly) claim “to have access to specific knowledge or information”. In this case, the respondent draws on her experienced quitter identity, positioning herself as someone who can offer valid reassurance.

(9.45) Huge well done for stopping, fantastic decision. (S06, t2)
(9.46) Well done [name] the early days are the hardest. (S12, t19)

(9.47) This is a really supportive forum and I’ve used it when I’ve needed it along the way. (S12, t13)

Example (9.47) is a special case of praising-assessment since it targets the community at large, only indirectly praising the initiator. By praising the usefulness of the forum, the respondent strengthens his own ties to the community as he signals his involvement. At the same time, while the praising-assessment invites the initiator to keep posting and to become an established member, it also compliments the initiator on recognizing how useful the forum is.

The main function of reassuring-assessments is to assert to other members that they are on the right track, making sure that they stay committed to quitting smoking and believe in their abilities. Their interpersonal function tends to be linked to empathy, which, according to Pudlinski (2005: 267), is about “demonstrating an understanding of another person’s situation and/ or feelings and communicating that understanding back to the person so they feel understood […]”. Reassuring-assessments often feature some explanation for why reassurance is warranted and accurate (see examples 9.48 and 9.49). Example (9.48) is a reaction to the initiator announcing that she relapsed but wants to start trying again right away even though *it might seem early to start another quit*.

(9.48) You do right to embrace the quit and try again if you feel you want to as this bit is about you and how you feel. You really want to quit smoking, and I can completely relate to not wanting to spend several more months prepping yourself again for another big quit day. You already want to quit, so thats enough I think. (S06, t8)

(9.49) It is ok to have a good cry sometimes, it releases a lot of pressure and gives a little calm after a storm. (S06, t27)

In (9.48), the respondent reassures the initiator (*you do right*) and supports her decision by emphasizing that her intuition is what is most important (*this bit is about you*). Moreover, after verbalizing her understanding of the initiator's situation (*I can completely relate to*), the respondent returns to offer support for quitting right away again (*You already want to quit*). The respondent in (9.49) offers consolation to an initiator who struggles with quitting after having broken up with his girlfriend, worrying that his stop smoking medication *might be causing [him] to deal with this worse*. She argues that crying is cathartic (*gives a little calm*), thus implying that the initiator should not worry about his medication. Here, we also nicely see how reassuring can verge on normalising.

Respondents also reassure initiators by expressing their confidence in their judgement and willpower (9.50 - 9.51). Example (9.50) is a reaction to an initiator who has relapsed and is planning *on getting back on the wagon* but does not feel ready yet. The respondent affirms that only the initiator knows what is best for her (*You'll know*), even warning her against not trusting herself (*you're probably setting yourself up*).

(9.50) You'll know if you want to quit or not again. If the times not right you're probably setting yourself up for failure which will just stress you out some more. (S12, t14)

(9.51) The day's nearly over and here you still are, if you can survive a day like that what possibly can tomorrow throw at you. Things will get easier soon, you doing great (S06, t19)

In the interaction leading up to (9.51), the initiator announced that she feels horrible but hopes that *it's just GOT to be worth it*. The respondent expresses her belief in the initiator's willpower with a conditional clause, turning the difficulty of the particular day into something positive (*survive a day like that*). The respondent promises that the initiator will feel better (*Things will get easier soon*) and that she is on the right way (*you doing great).*

Reassuring-assessments can also be used to promise improvement in the future as in example (9.52) and (9.53). In (9.52), the respondent first shows that she understands why the initiator feels that he is just getting by for now (*its been really tough for you*). She suggests that even though he cannot see it now (*may feel like you are just surviving at the moment*), not smoking is a great achievement (*so much more than surviving*), of which he will reap the benefits in the future.

(9.52) i know its been really tough for you [name]..and yes you may feel like you are just "surviving" at the moment...but by stopping smoking you are doing so much more than surviving, you really are. (S06, t26)

(9.53) […] basically your not alone and are doing really well and these feelings do get better (and from reading others post go away all together) (S12, t40)

Example (9.53) also starts off by empathising with the initiator (*your not alone*). Afterwards the respondent goes on to promise that cravings and withdrawal symptoms will improve or disappear (*do get better; go all away*). The respondent adopts an experienced quitter identity through his promise and uses an additional warranting strategy when he refers to second-hand knowledge from even more experienced community members.

Finally, *assessment* moves can also have a normalizing function, in which respondents qualify initiators' feelings, reassuring them that their experience is not out of the ordinary. In other words, normalizing-assessments are employed to "deproblematiz[e] the situation", which is a function Placencia (2012: 299) also found for assessments in her study. Normalizing-assessments tend to involve the display of empathy like reassuring-assessments. Despite overlaps with reassuring-assessments, I find it useful to treat normalizing-assessments separately. They feature a stronger informational side, often including predictions of how the quitting process is going to evolve. Examples (9.54) and (9.55) illustrate typical instances of normalizing-assessments, including a verb phrase with the copula verb *to be* and an adjective complement. In (9.54), the respondent reacts to an initiator who explained that, when she was six days into quitting, she had a feeling of *something missing*. He speaks about what smoking does to one's routine in generalized terms, normalizing missing cigarettes when quitting in his final sub-clause (*no surprise*). In (9.55), the respondent normalizes that the initiator has the sensation of having a cold after stopping smoking (*quite normal*), explaining the reasons for it in detail.

(9.54) When you build something like smoking into your routine.. seemingly allowing a smoke in before every task 'for courage' 'for calm' 'for just about any reason why want', its no surprise to find you miss it to fall back on when quitting. (S06, t10)

(9.55) The getting a cold feeling is quite normal, as your body is adjusting to the higher levels of oxygen, flushing toxins and getting used to not having to deal with nicotine.. (S12, t19)

While respondents display their understanding of the initiators' problems in normalising-assessments, they also construct themselves as expert quitters by using a general *you* and by qualifying what counts as *normal* or *common*.

Examples (9.56) and (9. 57) show realizations of normalizing-assessments that use the verb construction *can be* and an adjective complement. In contrast to the examples before, respondents do not explicitly evaluate something as normal or common in (9.56) and (9.57) but provide a hedged *assessment* of initiators' situation. Nevertheless, the normalizing function of the *assessments* becomes clear in context. In the post preceding (9.56), the initiator describes having really vivid dreams and asks other members whether anyone else has had a similar experience or whether she is out of the ordinary (*going loopy*). The respondent appeases her worries (*Dreams can be really vivid*) even though he does not share his own experience. He still indexes his expert quitter identity when predicting that her dreams may become even more impressive (*wait until…*).

(9.56) Dreams can be really vivid when you quit, wait until you get the smoking ones, they are so real. (S12, t23)

(9.57) Day 3 can be a bit difficult with cravings for some, the last of the nicotine should be leaving your body tho. (S06, t15)

Example (9.57) is a reaction to an initiator who is worrying that she is a special case in only getting cravings on her third day (*I guess I don't function properly and my cravings are later than other people's*). Even though the respondent does not explicitly disagree with the initiator's self-assessment, he suggests that her experience is normal (*Day 3 can be a bit difficult*). He displays his expertise by giving her some information on what is happening in her body (*the last of the nicotine*).

9.4.2. Advice moves

Advice moves are used to tell someone what they should think or do, what is best for them, which can take shape in recommendations of future actions or suggestions inviting introspection (see also Locher 2006: 62). As my quantitative analysis has shown, *advice* is among the most common moves used, and occur typically in final position, pointing to a step-wise entry to advice-giving (see also Heritage & Sefi 1992; Locher 2006, 2013a; Morrow 2012; etc.). Further, *advice* moves are almost exclusively used by respondents, which indicates that initiating a post equates to becoming a help- or advice-seeker. In the following, I will look at the linguistic realization of *advice*. I start discussion with the results of a word frequency analysis, which helped to determine key issues. Afterwards, I discern different types of *advice* moves, which range from being of entirely motivational nature to providing specific suggestions or instructions for actions.

9.4.2.1. Word frequency analysis of advice moves

A word frequency query for *advice* moves has been performed in NVivo. As for *assessment* moves (Section 9.4.1.1), I conducted a query that concentrated on content words, which led me to derive semantic foci. Table 9.14 lists the 10 most frequent content words[76] (≥ 3 characters) according to their frequency of occurrences in all *advice* moves (N = 586 moves; N = 11,788 words) of the entire forum sub-corpus.

Table 9.13 The 10 most frequent content words in advice moves in the entire forum sub-corpus, ordered according to frequency of occurrences

Lexical item	**Stemmed forms**	**Occurrences n↓**
keep	keep, keeping, keeps	178
Just	just, 'just	141
Day	day, day@, days	138
getting	get, gets, getting	129
Time	time, times	94
quitting	quit, quits, quitting	81
taking	take, takes, taking	78
Help	help, helped, helpful, helping, helps	66
posts	post, posted, posting, posts	59
good	good	57

Table 9.14 shows that the verb *keep* (in its different forms) is the most frequent content word (n = 178) in *advice* moves. It is often used in the imperative combined with *going* (n = 30), such as in *keep going* or *keep it going*, which highlights the importance of motivational pieces of advice but also the fact that quitting is conceptualized as ongoing process. Other frequent collocations with *keep* equally point to the encouraging function of many *advice* moves. For instance, the verb phrase *keep up* (n = 23) is employed to refer to *the good work*, *the quit*, etc. Similarly, the collocations *keep on* (n = 10), *keep at* (n = 9), or *keep strong* (n = 8) all refer to how initiators should uphold their resolution to quit smoking. Interestingly, participants seem to consider contributing to the forum as a means of staying determined, which is reflected in

[76] Stemmed words have been subsumed within the same category.

the combination *keep posting* (or *keep reading and posting*) in 19 cases. Example (9.58) displays how the phrase *keep going* can be used to motivate initiators:

(9.58) Keep going like this & you'll sail into the penthouse. (S12, t29)

The respondent promises that if the initiator continues with her efforts, she will easily reach the one-year-mark (called *the penthouse* in this particular practice). The adverb *just* (n = 144) is employed before verbs, in the sense of *merely, simply*. It is used to emphasise the suggested action or invitation for introspection, i.e. to draw initiators' attention to it. The most frequent verbs that are preceded by *just* are *keep* (n = 17), *take* (n = 16), *remember* (n = 9) and the auxiliary *don't* (n = 8). In example (9.59), the respondent advises the initiator to *just* break up her quitting journey into days.

(9.59) Whether you go cold turkey or with NRT [Nicotine Replacement Therapy], there are no easy options. So, just take it one day at a time. (S06, t2)

After having assessed that there is no shortcut to quitting, the respondent advises the simple coping strategy of tackling each day on its own. As in the *assessment* moves, *day* is frequently employed (n = 138), which points to the fact that quitting is viewed as a process. We find the verb *take* (n = 32) with a set of determiners (*a, one, each*) preceding *day*. Following *day,* the phrase *at a time* (n=31) and different numbers (n = 27) are frequent. The collocation *take it a day at a time* is often used to reinforce the coping strategy of breaking quitting down into units (ex. 9.59). Numbers following *day* can also be used to reiterate said coping strategy or simply to refer to each stage of the process. Both lexical items *time* (n = 94) and *take* (n = 78) are among the ten most frequent words in *advice* moves. This is due to how prevalent the coping strategy advice to *take it a/one day at a time* is (n = 31). Example (9.60) illustrates how talking about days is a means of establishing milestones in the quitting journey, where the respondent tries to motivate the initiator (*keep it up*) by promising that it will become easier the next day.

(9.60) once your in day 2 things can only get better keep it up! (S12, t21)

The verb *get* (n = 129) is the fourth most common word in *advice* moves. Similar to its employment in *assessment* moves, *get* is characterized by its variability. It is most frequently used as the phrasal verb *get through* (n = 16), which is followed by adverbial or noun phrases linked to time (*tomorrow, today, Day 2*). The verb *get* can be followed by a possessive determiner (n = 7) and a noun (e.g. *head, mind*), which result in explicit pieces of advice on how to cope with the challenges of quitting. Further, if *get* collocates with *easier* (n = 7) or *there* (n = 7), it is used to boost motivational advice such as *keep going*. In these cases, it is either preceded by *it* or *you,* the auxiliary *does* or the *will*-future. In example (9.61), the respondent advises the initiator to be particularly good to herself.

(9.61) Do whatever you need to do to get through these early days, be extra nice to yourself, you deserve it! (S06, t17)

As in *assessment* moves, *get* highlights the difficulty of quitting in *advice* moves. *Quitting* (n = 81) in its different forms is the sixth most frequent content word in *advice*. The most employed variant is the nominalized use of *quit* (n = 36), which is combined with a verb that encourages forum members to endure in eleven instances (*keep*, *stay with, stick at/with, carry on*). In example (9.62), a participant promises to a newcomer that, as long as she does not start again, she will eventually think less about cigarettes.

(9.62) You'll get there, but you must stick at the quit and resist the temptations. (S06, t13)

On the one hand, the modal verb *must* signals that this piece of advice provides a non-negotiable instruction for action. On the other hand, as the participant uses the verb *stick,* he acknowledges the challenge of staying smoke-free. The word *help* (n = 66) mostly occurs in verb form (n = 36) and is followed by the pronoun *you* (n = 11) and the preposition *with* (n = 7) (but also other verbs or nouns). Moreover, *help* is often employed in the infinitive *to help* (n = 11) or is preceded by an auxiliary or modal verb (n = 17) (e.g. *do, will, may, might*, etc.). The participant in (9.63) refers the initiator to further information in the forum archives, which he may find useful.

(9.63) There's loads of info on the forum to help with your quit and post often and let us know how you're doing. We're all here doing the same thing and support you. (S06, t20)

The participant recommends that the initiator should regularly interact with the forum, trying to make him an involved member of the community. Similarly, *post* (n = 59) tends to be used as a verb in the imperative, which can be followed by an adverb of frequency (n = 9) (*often, a lot*) or a prepositional phrase *in Day 2, on here/the forum* (n = 9). These collocations indicate that suggesting to other participants that they become involved in the community is a recurrent piece of advice (ex. 9.63). Finally, the adjective *good* (n = 57) can occur in motivational phrases, such as *keep up the good work* (n = 10) or *be (very) good to yourself* (n = 5). It can also appear in the well-wishing phrase *good luck* (n = 13) alongside the advice to stick to quitting or to come back to the forum. In few cases (n = 6), *good* is used in an impersonal construction *(it's) good to + verb* to give mitigated advice. In example (9.64), a participant gives advice on how the initiator should proceed after having managed not to smoke for over a week.

> (9.64) Keeping distracted is the key, and keeping yourself happy, lots of treats to yourself, helps loads and it's good to spend the money, you would have otherwise sent up in smoke.. (S06, t29)

Although the piece of advice concerning money is indirect and mitigated by the declarative form, the second person pronoun in the relative clause indicates that it is clearly intended as an instruction for action.

9.4.2.2. Different types of advice moves

The word frequency analysis has hinted at the fact that certain pieces of *advice* are recurrent in the two practices. In fact, *advice* moves can be divided into four broad categories (see also Rudolf von Rohr 2015): (1) motivational advice, (2) advice to be an active community member, (3) advice to break quitting down into units and (4) explicit guidance (suggestions for alternative actions or introspection). The linguistic realisations of *advice* moves differ according to the category to which they belong. Further, the boundaries between categories are not always clear-cut and there is certain overlap. For instance, *advice* moves can feature motivational *advice* as well as *advice* to keep posting. Nevertheless, the four categories are useful since they give a good impression of what is happening thematically in the *advice* moves.

Firstly, participants show their support, signal their belief in the interactant's abilities and try to bolster each other's determination in 'motivational advice'. Advice-givers do not provide specific steps on how to deal with quitting in motivational advice, but appeal to advice-seekers to stay committed to quitting—e.g. by trying again, by continuing not to smoke, by being proud, etc. Thus, motivational advice has a face-enhancing function through which participants try to involve each other. The interpersonal function is sometimes highlighted by an accompanying sub-clause, in which praise is expressed or bonding takes place. Motivational advice is mostly realised in the imperative form with verbs such as *keep, stick, stay, hang,* which can all index endurance. In examples (9.65) and (9.66), participants tell advice-seekers not to give up, promising that quitting will become easier.

(9.65) Keep to it and the days will add up quickly! (S12, t21)

(9.66) So hang on in there cos it does get really better soon and its worth it. (S12, t27)

While advice-givers implicitly speak from their own experience in both examples, the advice-giver in (9.66) emphasizes her expertise more strongly when she uses the auxiliary *does* in the declarative and adds an additional incentive (*its worth it*). The advice-giver tries to bond with the advice-seeker before giving motivational advice in example (9.67).

(9.67) Glad your doing so well, keep up that positive spirit it really honestly does help (S06, t1)

In (9.67) the advice-giver first establishes a connection by expressing that she cares about how the advice-seeker is faring. Afterwards she encourages the advice-seeker to maintain her positive attitude, which is necessary to succeed. Further, the advice-giver boosts her advice by reassuring the advice-seeker, for which she uses two intensifiers and inserts the auxiliary verb (*it really honestly does*). Examples (9.68) and (9.69) illustrate how motivational advice is employed to animate quitters who have relapsed.

(9.68) Anyways. Try, try and try again if thats what it takes. (S12, t16)

(9.69) Keep trying and you'll get there (S06, t8)

Advice-givers in both examples stress that advice-seekers need to attempt to quit until they manage to remain smoke-free. The absence of the idea to give up quitting is similar to Veen et al.'s (2010) findings regarding an online support group for celiac disease, in which lapses from the diet were normalized. Here, relapses belong to the quitting process and the only response is to *try again.*

Secondly, the main function of 'advice to be an active community member' is to involve participants tightly into the group, thus adding to the interpersonal side of interaction. Being active in the online community is portrayed as being an efficient means to stop smoking. This type of *advice* is mostly realised by a variant of the collocation *keep posting*. In some instances, participants suggest that advice-seekers read up on tips that have been discussed in the forum before, that they rely on community support or that they let the group know how they are progressing. Interestingly, advice to be an active member is imparted to new or recently returned members (i.e. people who have relapsed and are trying again). Hence, this type of advice is also a way of making newbies and returners feel welcome and socializing them into the group. Examples (9.70), (9.71) and (9.72) are all instances of advice to be an active member given to newbies. Example (9.70) is a prototypical instantiation of this type of advice. It is in pre-closing position, signalling the end of the post. The respondent's piece of advice is warranted by an evaluative sub-clause, which is not presented as personal opinion but as factual. In example (9.71), the advice-giver refers the newbie to previous interactions that could be helpful as well as pointing out the support the group can offer her as a community. Thereby, she uses an inclusive *we* and appropriates the voice of the community (*we'll be here*). Similarly, the respondent in (9.72) acts as a representative of the community, pointing out the wealth of experience available within the group (*there's nothing we havent been through*).

(9.70) Keep posting here, the support of this site is invaluable (S12, t15)

(9.71) Huge welcome to the forum, you'll find plenty of help here. Lots to read and as others have said, we're all here doing the same thing so please do yell if you need help and we'll be here. (S06, t2)

(9.72) remember there's nothing we havent been through, so dont go through anything alone. logon and ask the questions, witter, winge, scream, shout whatever you feel like. (S12, t13)

The examples above nicely illustrate that there is a strong sense of community in both practices, which is especially brought to the fore when new members start posting. The forums are presented as genuine sites of interest and support, which are accepting of and helpful for new quitters.

Thirdly, 'advice to break quitting down into units' seems to be one of the favoured coping strategies. Participants advise each other not to look too far ahead into the future, but to focus on each day (or even each hour) as it comes. Advice-givers prototypically do not provide additional explanations as to why it is important to take one day at a time, but the promise of feeling better the next day is implicit. Also, it appears that this type of advice is part of accepted community wisdom as it remains unchallenged and is reiterated. Nonetheless, advice-givers sometimes explain the coping strategy in more detail or promise improvement, using the *will*-future. The most frequent collocation used is *take [time unit] at a time* in the imperative form. In example (9.73), the advice-giver tries to motivate an initiator who is feeling bad on her third day and who has read that the first week is the hardest. The advice-giver positions the initiator as already applying the coping strategy (*keep taking*), which makes further input in this respect moot. In example (9.74), the advice-giver promises that by breaking quitting down into units the initiator will attain success, explaining in detail how applying this particular coping strategy works (*each time…*).

(9.73) Just keep taking it a bit at a time, don't think past the day you're in, and be very good to yourself. (S06, t11)

(9.74) You'll be fine, just take it 1 hour at a time. Each time you get a crave just promise yourself you will wait an hour. Keep doing this and before you know it you will have done a day, then a week, then a month. (S12, t12)

An impressionistic analysis of where 'advice to break quitting down into units' occurs reveals that it is frequent with new starters or people who have relapsed (like advice to be an active member) but also if initiators have stated that they are experiencing cravings. As described for a smaller dataset (Rudolf von Rohr 2015), these first three advice groups are characterized by the overwhelming use of the imperative form. However, imperatives do not index directiveness but are a sign of connectedness and expressing support in these communities (see Morrow 2006 for similar findings).

Finally, 'explicit guidance' includes any suggestions for alternative actions or introspection regarding how to cope with the challenges of quitting. This type of *advice* is the most varied one in comparison to the other three. The topics covered range from suggestions on what food can help keep weight gain down to how to deal with loved ones while stopping. Although the imperative form is also frequently used in this final group of advice, it is linguistically more complex overall. This can be attributed to the fact that there is face-threatening potential when giving advice on personal issues or on how to behave in everyday life (despite being connected to stopping smoking). Since there advice-givers tread on more delicate territory than in the case of the three other types of advice, they may desist from using an unhedged directive form (see also Kouper 2010 on how topic influences the realisation of advice). Therefore, it is more difficult to identify specific linguistic patterns in this group. However, the use of the verb *try* is noticeable. It occurs with the particle *to*, its negated version *not to*, or an object, thus offering concrete coping strategies or general tips. In example (9.75), the respondent offers a strategy on how to face quitting psychologically. In contrast, the respondent provides a tip for a physical problem in (9.76), suggesting how to reduce bloating caused by quitting smoking.

(9.75) Try not to envisage a life without cigs as being a sentence, the difficult days will pass and you will have found freedom from niccotine. A new you and a new healthier life (S06, t26)

(9.76) have you tried teaspoon of linseeds a day to help the bloating, just swallow them with water, they'll swell in the gut and clean out (S06, t33)

While the coping strategy is general and not explained in detail in (9.75), the advice-giver adds why linseeds are effective in (9.76). The interrogative form of *try* helps mitigate advice, leaving the option open that the advice-seeker is already familiar with the tip. When giving explicit guidance, advice-givers are more prone to use sub-clauses with the conditional *if*. On the one hand, such sub-clauses tailor *advice* to concrete situations. On the other hand, they leave the option for advice-seekers to accept or reject whatever advice is imparted. In (9.77) the respondent reacts to an initiator who has announced that she wants to quit without medication. Since the respondent offers unsolicited advice, she uses the conditional and the modal verb *can* to downtone any potential imposition.

(9.77) If you do however want some help with it ie NRT then you don't need a doc you can always ask a pharmacist for advice most places will advice you or you can of course just buy it over the counter or at most supermarkets (S06, t2)

The group of advice featuring explicit guidance is more likely to feature mitigation than the rest of advice. Mitigation occurs in the form of lexical hedges or through syntactical structure. In the following two examples, both advice-givers soften their advice through mitigation. In (9.78) the respondent reacts to the initiator's insecurity in terms of whether her doctor will prescribe her some NRT medication again since she did not succeed when she first tried quitting. In this case, the respondent uses the hedge *maybe* to recommend further action.

(9.78) Well I think your doctor should prescribe them to you again as you are obviously serious about quitting and need the help, maybe make an appointment and have a chat with them (S12, t24)

(9.79) Have you read Alan Carr? It really could help with your way of thinking about giving up....as in what are you giving up? (S12, t16)

In (9.79) the advice-giver comments on an initiator's previous statement who explained that she does not feel ready to quit again after having relapsed. The advice-giver first relies on the interrogative form to suggest Alan Carr's book, indicating that this might not be new to the initiator. When the advice-giver continues, she keeps her careful tone using the modal verb *could,* still indexing that this action alternative might not be right for the initiator. Finally, when using declaratives, advice-givers simultaneously mitigate and boost the content of advice. The advice-giver in (9.80) reacts to two posters' confession of having relapsed whereas the respondent in (9.81) offers help when the initiator has severe cravings.

(9.80) It's vitally important to be aware that there's no such thing as "just one won't hurt". (S06, t4)

(9.81) Another technique is to take long hot baths. (S12, t27)

In both examples, the non-agentive declarative form gives a factual or informational tone to the piece of advice, enhancing its credibility. At the same time, the depersonalised realisation of advice minimizes the face-threat in (9.80), which could otherwise be understood as criticism, and it leaves the option of accepting or rejecting advice to the initiator in (9.81).

9.5. Summary

In this chapter I analysed how the working principle logos can be analysed to discursive activities and linguistic patterns in the forum sample. As mentioned multiple times, logos refers to the arguments used for persuasion. I have suggested that these arguments can also be analysed on a discursive level apart from purely thematic content. Therefore, I was interested in finding out the characteristic discursive activities (discursive moves) employed in the sample. Further, I set up two sub-questions regarding the frequency and sequence of discursive activities. Moreover, I analyzed the linguistic patterns used in the two most common discursive activities. Finally, when answering these specific research questions, I tried to make the connection to the study of persuasion.

As in the website sample (see Ch. 7; Ch. 8), I chose the Help-yourself group based on the previous content and cluster analysis in Ch. 6. It showed that this cluster was characterised by its focus on peer support, allowing extensive user-user interactivity. Thus, I chose this group due to my interest in the negotiation of quitting smoking among peers. Due to ethical reasons, I focused on the two forums in this group, for which ethics was unproblematic, setting up a data sample according to time (see Herring 2004). This resulted in a total of 80 threads for analysis.

To answer my first research question regarding characteristic discourse activities, I worked with the notion of discursive moves, which is based on Miller and Gergen's (1998) study and has been widely adopted in recent literature on advice (see Hampel 2015; Locher 2006; Morrow 2012; Placencia 2012; etc.). Discursive moves or "the kind of contribution that the entry made to the ongoing interchange" (Miller & Gergen 1998: 192) allow uncovering the informational structure of the threads at the beginning of the quit smoking journey in both forum practices. My analysis showed that both practices could be described with a catalogue of 14 discursive moves, revealing what interactants do discursively in these practices. This catalogue of discursive moves showed a great deal of overlap with an earlier study by Locher (2006) on an online advice health column, which firmly situates the forums among online advice health practices. Similar to Locher's (2006) findings, *advice* and *assessment* were commonly employed discursive moves. However, the forums differed from this professional practice and from my website corpus regarding the presence of interpersonal discursive moves, such as *well-wishing, welcoming* and *official forum welcome*, which I argued points to the more symmetrical set-up of these online health support groups. In the same vein, the forums did not feature the discursive move *general information* at all, which occurred frequently in Locher's study as well as the website sample (Ch.7). Participants in the forums appear to prefer transmitting knowledge in a more personalized form, using *assessment* and *advice*. This observation is boosted by the frequent use of *own experience*, which indicates that tinging evaluation and support with a personal touch is of utmost importance in these practices. Finally, the discursive move *quote* in the forums can be attributed to the technical idiosyncrasies of the practices, highlighting the extremely interactive nature of interaction.

After having established a catalogue of 14 categories, the discursive moves were systematically applied to the sub-corpus of 80 threads, which made it possible to get numerical insight into the nature and the sequencing of discursive moves employed (Section 9.3). As such, it has shed light on logos, in terms of how topics are packaged and in what form they are brought up. It has shown that *assessment, advice* and *own experience* predominate in these practices, which resonates with Morrow's (2012) study of an online support group about divorce. *Assessment* has been found to frequently precede *advice* moves, setting the ground before moving on to giving *advice* (see Heritage & Sefi1992; Locher 2006/ 2013a; Morrow 2012). Thus, the step-wise entry into advice, which has been observed in other online health studies, is followed in these corpora. Moreover, the frequency of *assessment* and *advice* underline that giving support and reinforcing each other's determination are key projects in both forums. *Assessments* imply that writers indicate their involvement and display their awareness of the assessed person's situation (see also Locher 2006: 104). Further, Jones (1997: 126) points to how *assessments* can help reorganize "the perception and interpretation of the object […] being talked about", acting as "guides for hearers illustrating one possible viewpoint […]". Therefore, *assessment* moves are connected to persuasion as they can be employed to make the hearer consider action alternatives. Similarly, Locher (2006: 110 - 111) also found that *assessments* make ensuing *advice* relevant and make it more credible. *Advice* occurs in the form of "informational support" used to "examine the source of stress and to present alternative courses of action" (Jones 1997: 121). Further, advice-givers often try to involve and establish an interpersonal bond with advice-seekers (see also Locher & Limberg 2012: 1). Thus, *advice* is linked to persuasion as forum members strategically use *advice* to motivate and help each other to stay committed to quitting. A further finding of the discursive moves analysis has been the emergence of communicative roles depending on participants' posting identities in both forums. Initiators of threads adopt the identity of help or advice-seekers, including the asymmetry of expertise associated with these positons. In turn, respondents to threads become help or advice-givers, sharing their insight and wisdom from their experienced perspective.

In the final section of this chapter, I focussed on the linguistic form of the two frequent discursive moves *assessment* and *advice*. In order to find thematic foci, word frequency analyses of content words were conducted for both discursive moves. The analysis of *assessments* highlighted that respondents often praise initiators, for instance, on reaching certain milestones or their general progress. Further, respondents support initiators by appealing to their strength and determination, both pointing to motivational strategies. Actually, the word frequency analysis suggested that there are three main types of *assessment* in the practices (confirming results from a pilot study in a smaller dataset, Rudolf von Rohr 2015). *Assessments* can be placed on a continuum according to their interpersonal functions. 'Praising-assessments' are entirely relational, exerting a bonding function. 'Reassuring-assessments' include the display of empathy: respondents show that they understand what the initiators are going through while suggesting that initiators are on course and should remain committed to stopping. While 'normalizing-assessments' are also employed to empathize, they feature a strong informational core, which includes predictions in terms of how the quitting process of initiators is going to continue. They are used to categorize initiators' experience as common, which mitigates the severity of issues (see also Placencia 2012: 299).

The word frequency analysis of *advice* has revealed that quitting is conceptualised as a process that should be divided into days. Further, it made clear that motivational *advice* is frequent in the practices. As was the case for *assessment* moves, the word frequency analysis pointed to different types of *advice.* 'Motivational advice' is used for face-enhancing purposes instead of presenting genuine action alternatives. 'Advice to be an active community member' is imparted in order to bind members to the community and to show advice-givers' involvement. At the same time, it is a testament to the perceived effectiveness of online support groups. 'Advice to break quitting down into units' refers to a commonly accepted coping strategy in these two quitter communities. These two types of advice are imparted to new and relapsed members, indicating that they are employed to socialise newbies or returners into the community. The first three types of advice are mostly realised in the imperative mood, thus representing a direct form of giving advice. In this context, imperatives seem to boost the motivational or encouraging function of advice. Thus, far from being face-threatening, they appear to index solidarity. Previous studies on online peer groups have come to similar findings; e.g. Kouper (2010) described that imperatives are normally used for trivial subjects (see also Morrow 2006). 'Explicit guidance' is used to present genuine action alternatives to or invite introspection by initiators. There, advice-givers tread on much more delicate ground since their pieces of advice impact the action environment of advice-seekers. Therefore, mitigation strategies are employed more frequently in order to make advice acceptable. Linguistically, this is reflected in the use of lexical hedges, non-agentive declaratives, interrogatives or preceding advice with conditional sub-clauses.

Finally, looking at the linguistic realization of discursive moves emphasized the importance of the interpersonal dimension to assessment and advice and how the use of these discursive moves is connected with the overall persuasive purpose. In Ch. 10, I explore in more detail how the analysis of relational work and identity construction helps to investigate the discursive negotiation of emotional involvement and credibility / trustworthiness.

10 Persuasion from an interpersonal pragmatics perspective in the forums

After analysing logos on a discursive move level in Ch. 9, pathos and ethos are investigated in a more fine-grained analysis in selected threads of both forums. Ethos and pathos are linked to the interpersonal side of communication: ethos is tied to the credibility of speakers (but also to expertise and authority) while pathos is connected to how an audience becomes emotionally involved. The creation of expertise and trustworthiness, especially, are pressing issues in health discourse online as well as in face-to-face interaction (Bigi 2011; Locher 2006; Prestin & Chou 2014; Richardson 2005; etc.). In the forum practices the focus lies on how lay people position themselves as credible and authentic help-seekers or how they write their expertise into being (see also Armstrong et al. 2011; Harvey & Koteyko 2013; McKinlay & McVittie 2011; Sillence 2010; Veen et al. 2010). To tackle the relational dimension of ethos and pathos, I combine these two working principles with the relational notion of face and a discursive conception of identity. I am interested in how the analysis of persuasion can benefit from an interpersonal pragmatic approach. Therefore, the following research questions guide my analysis:

- How are relational work and identity construction used to establish expertise and credibility in discourse?
- How are relational work and identity construction used to create personal involvement and emotional appeal in discourse?

Both research questions are linked to my larger theoretical interest of studying persuasion from an interpersonal pragmatic perspective. Both questions do justice to my bottom-up discourse analytical approach to persuasion, as I take what participants do in interaction as a starting point and build on insights from Ch.9. I conduct qualitative discourse-analytical close readings of a selection of threads to gain a holistic insight into patterns of linguistic strategies and interpersonal effects. I focus on how identity construction and relational work are subtly used to negotiate pathos and ethos, linking these findings to the initially established patterns. By focussing on two recurrent topics in the forum corpus, requesting help and relapse, I show how the patterns of relational work strategies and identity relations vary according to context, bringing about different facets of pathos or ethos.

After outlining data and methodology used for this chapter, I present the results of the close reading analyses, discussing topic individually. In the topic of requesting help, I investigate how initiators ask for help, accepting potential face asymmetries. I am also interested in how respondents become advice-givers and what strategies they use to make their advice trustworthy (see Galegher et al. 1998; Morrow 2006; Richardson 2003/2005; Stommel & Lamerichs 2014; Veen et al. 2010 etc.). In the topic of relapse, I analyse how initiators fabricate credible relapsed identities and how respondents position themselves as understanding help-givers, trying to encourage initiators to continue. Comparisons between the two topics are established along the way. Finally, I summarize my findings and give pointers to how an interpersonal pragmatic approach has been beneficial for my interest in persuasion.

10.1. Data and Methodology

The discursive moves analysis of the entire forum corpus (discussed in Ch. 9) showed that there are a range of issues that re-emerge. To get an idea of the distribution of topics, I systematically categorized the corpus using descriptive coding, which "[…] summarizes […] the basic topic of a passage of qualitative data" (Saldaña 2013: 88). The results reveal that there are broadly seven topics that come up in this initial stage of quitting smoking. In Table 10.1, the topics are listed in alphabetical order, featuring a short description and how many threads belonged to said topic.

Table 10.1 Overview of topics discussed and their number of occurrences in forum sample in alphabetical order

Topic	**Description**	**Number of threads (N= 80) ***
Dealing with withdrawal	Talk about symptoms	10
Depression	Talk about feeling low/down because of quitting smoking	9
New members – new quitting journey	Newbies announce that they have begun their journey to quitting smoking	9
Relapse	Participants share that they have relapsed and want to start over	12
Requesting help / support	Explicit request for help / support on a range of matters	15
Sharing success	Participants share having reached certain milestones	10
Updates	Participants update the group on their progress	11

* There is a miscellaneous category, which has not been listed as there are only four threads that do not belong to the seven topics mentioned (telling a joke, change from summer to winter time, etc.).

While the topics are self-explanatory, it is necessary to point out that they are not mutually exclusive[77]. More than one topic can potentially be discussed, in which case the thread has been categorized according to what seemed to be the most important issue overall. Also, requesting help threads can be about any of the other topics, but they document that initiators explicitly verbalize that they want or need advice.

I selected two topics to carry out my qualitative close-readings: (1) requesting help and (2) relapse. There are several reasons for this choice. Requesting help is the most frequent topic in the corpus, occurring in all sub-forums to a similar extent. Additionally, it is especially interesting in terms of persuasion, since an explicit request for help implies that help-seekers accept an asymmetry in knowledge (Heritage & Sefi 1992; Locher 2006/2013a; Morrow 2006/2012; Sillence 2010/2013; etc.). Initiators grant ethos to respondents from beginning, putting their own face needs at stake. *Relapse* is the second most common topic in the

[77] The goal of this analysis was to arrive at an impressionistic overview of what is discussed by participants without intending to quantify beyond an approximate distribution of topics, which is why I have not pursued distinguishing the categories any further.

corpus. In the topic relapse, initiators have some experience in quitting and often have already been part of the community before. Their knowledge of the community impacts how they position themselves vis-à-vis the group but also how respondents create involvement. Both topics, requesting help and relapse*,* amount to 27 threads in total, which is a third of the entire corpus. The requesting help sample consists of fifteen threads, it has between three to fourteen interactants per thread and it is made up of 22,011 words. The relapse sample consists of twelve threads, features between six to thirteen interactants per thread and comprises 8,056 words. The discrepancy in the amount of words between the two sample hints at the fact that participants perform different discursive actions depending on topic. In terms of additional methodological steps, I first draw on my discursive moves analysis to evaluate what discourse activities participants employ in each sub-sample and how they can be linked to the construction of credibility and involvement. Secondly, I have performed discourse-analytical close readings of both topics to identify specific discursive strategies that are connected to identity positions or relational work strategies contributing to ethos or pathos.

10.2. The use of discursive moves in the sub-samples and their link to interpersonal effects

A fifth of the entire forum corpus features explicit requests for help in the first post (15 out of 80; see Table 10.1). If we compare the use of discursive moves in the topics requesting help and relapse (Table 10.2), it becomes clear that there are different discursive foci. The table suggests that participants focus on taking up initiators' requests in the topic requesting help (highlighted in dark grey). In contrast, participants emphasize the relational side more actively in the topic relapse, which is manifested by their increased use of highly interpersonal discursive moves (highlighted in light grey), such as *well-wishing, welcoming*.

Table 10.2 Percentages of discursive moves used in both samples, ordered alphabetically (dark grey discursive moves linked to advising; light grey = discursive moves with a strong interpersonal element)

Name of discursive move	Requesting help sample in % (N = 850)	Relapse sample % (N = 627)
Advice-giving	15.3	12.4
Apology	0.1	2.2
Assessment	18.5	21.1
Background information	10.7	12.0
Farewell	11.8	13.9
Greeting	9.6	7.8
Official forum welcome	0.4	0.2
Open	5.5	4.6
Own experience	14.4	10.5
Quote	2.2	1.4
Request advice or information	5.4	1.9
Thanks	2.9	4.1
Welcoming	1.8	4.1
Well-wishing	1.4	3.7
Total	100	99.9*

* Due to rounding numbers do not amount to 100%

In the topic requesting help, the discursive moves *advice, own experience* and *request advice or information* comprise 35.1 per cent of all discursive moves, which suggest that advice as a speech event is at the centre. Even though the same discursive moves also amount to 24.8 per cent in the relapse sample, this number needs to be viewed with caution since *own experience* has different interactional and relational functions: *own experience* works as a warranting device or a means of advice-giving in the topic requesting help whereas it is mobilized as a bonding strategy in the topic relapse. The discursive moves tending to the relational side of communication such as *apology, thanks, welcoming, well-wishing* make up 13.7 per cent of the discursive moves used in the relapse sample compared to 6.2 per cent in requesting help. Thus, at a first glance, respondents use discursive moves that are typically face-enhancing to re-motivate initiators. In turn, initiators react to their efforts by thanking (also face-enhancing). However, the story is more complex since more informational discursive moves can also have varying interpersonal effects, as described for *advice* and *assessment* in Ch. 9.

There is no one-to-one correspondence between single discursive moves and ethos and pathos construction, but ethos and pathos emerge in the combination of or as part of discursive moves.

10.3. The construction of ethos and pathos in the requesting help sample–a focus on expertise and trustworthiness

Requesting and giving help in forum interaction include the rhetorical challenges of constructing authenticity and trustworthiness by participants on both ends of help-giving (as described by Galegher et al. 1998; Harvey & Koteyko 2013; see also Rudolf von Rohr 2015). Help-seekers have to present themselves as authentic if they want their request to be taken up. At the same time, requesting help (be it in the form of advice, support or information) poses a threat to help-seekers' face as they display vulnerability (see Locher 2013a). Previous studies discussed how help-seekers deal with the face-needs at stake when asking for help in online health support groups. Findings showed that explicit requests for advice are dis-preferred and that help-seekers opt to ask for indirect advice by wanting to know about others' experience (e.g. Harrison & Barlow 2009; Kouper 2010; Morrow 2006; Rudolf von Rohr 2015; Sillence 2013). Another strategy to mitigate the face-threat by explicit requests for advice is using "or"- questions, which presents help-seekers as partly in control (Morrow 2006). Alternatively, even though help-seekers may ask explicitly for help, they can just be looking for a confirmation of a decision already made (as discussed in Sillence 2010). Thus, help-seekers still position themselves as in charge and competent, reducing their vulnerability to a minimum. Help-givers face similar challenges as they have to qualify themselves as trustworthy and experienced quitters. In this context, previous research highlighted the importance of short narratives since they can be a mitigated form of advice and can foster solidarity and credibility (Harvey & Koteyko 2013; Kouper 2010; Rudolf von Rohr 2015; Sillence 2010/2013; Thurnherr et al. 2016., etc.). Other warranting strategies (Richardson 2003) that have been described for online health support groups are invoking one's professional status, referring to informational sources, or sharing health statistics (Armstrong et al. 2011; Locher 2013; Sillence 2010, etc.; see also Ch. 5).

In this sample, most requests for help and advisory posts are taken up unchallenged, indexing that all parties successfully create their advice-seeker and advice-giver identities. In two threads, the initiator is unsuccessful in creating a help-seeker identity, which results in a change of discursive activities, resulting in insults, warning and talking past the initiator. My focus, however, lies on how participants succeed in involving each other by constructing experienced and trustworthy identities. In the following two sections, I will discuss typical discourse strategies for ethos and pathos construction in the requesting help sample.

10.3.1. Strategies to create legitimate help-seeker identities

My discourse-analytic close readings showed that seven strategies are employed to create help-seeker identities, as listed below. Initiators do not necessarily employ all but use a mixture of strategies to position themselves as trustworthy and deserving help. Even though there is no set sequence in which strategies are mobilized, some patterns can still be detected: the first three strategies (describing symptoms, sharing aspects, reflecting on one's quitting smoking journey) are likely to precede any requests for help. Strategy four and five (showing insecurity, requesting help) tend to co-occur, with the latter usually occupying the final position. Strategies one to five can appear in any posts of initiators whereas strategies six and seven only come up in later posts. The following list might suggest that the strategies are neatly separable. However, there can be overlap, as strategies can be used jointly within the same passage:

(1) Describing symptoms linked to smoking or quitting smoking
(2) Sharing aspects of one's quitting smoking journey
(3) Reflecting on one's smoking and quitting history
(4) Showing insecurity and/ or indexing struggle
(5) Requesting help
(6) Agreeing with or taking up advice
(7) Thanking — appreciate advice

The first three strategies are strongly linked to ethos construction. Initiators signal that they belong to the quitting smoking community by describing how smoking or quitting smoking affects them with strategy one. The second and third strategies are used to warrant the identity of initiators as authentic quitters: initiators share what means they use to quit, how they deal with challenges and where previous quitting attempts have gone wrong. Moreover, the first three strategies also contribute to pathos on a secondary level, for instance, through bonding when sharing success or appealing when describing failed attempts or withdrawal symptoms. The fourth strategy has an interpersonal dimension—it boosts strategy five and helps establish a connection with other participants. Strategy five is the most indexical since initiators explicitly self-categorize as help-seekers. When initiators employ strategies six and seven, they work towards creating and maintaining a relationship with other participants. They show that they not only appreciate their support or advice but also align themselves with previously imparted help. In the following, I will describe the first six strategies in detail[78].

10.3.1.1. Describing symptoms linked to smoking or quitting smoking

In previous research, it has been found that advice-seekers share symptoms or describe the history of their illness in order to highlight their legitimacy as contributors. It has been argued that sharing one's symptoms is employed as opening move used to relate to other community members, allowing initiators to position themselves as part of the group (Harvey & Koteyko 2013: 169). In this sample, initiators also describe their symptoms as an introductory move, immediately indexing their identity as quitters of smoking. Additionally, describing symptoms is also an involvement strategy as it provides grounds for identification and works as an appeal for empathy, which encourages further interaction. Content-wise the description of symptoms can include ailments resulting from smoking or how quitting smoking is affecting the initiator's body or psyche in the form of withdrawal symptoms. Initiators describe their symptoms in a near-diagnostic tone, employing a more technical lexicon and the verb *feel (like).*

In example (10.01), the initiator begins his post with a disclaimer, in which he signals that he is not familiar with community rules yet. He legitimises his presence in the forum when he recounts his deteriorating health (*diagnosed with COPD* [79]). Thus, he constructs an identity as a heavy smoker in urgent need of quitting who has had enough (*after yet another virus…*). While the initiator shares his serious diagnosis, he is also appealing for empathy and is boosting his sub-sequent request for help. Example (10.02) is not the initiator's first post but it is an update on how she has been faring on her second day. She constructs herself as feeling overwhelmed by withdrawal symptoms, creating an opposition between earlier and now. The verb construction *feel + adjective* is used to contrast *dandy* with a whole list of states, which emphasizes how much the initiator is suffering. She continues to hypothesise why she is suddenly feeling worse (*would account for some...*). Finally, she closes her post by reiterating her struggling identity, which is boosted by quadrupling <o> in *so* and the use of a metaphor (*biting the bullet*). Since this is how she closes her post, she clearly appeals to other participants to comment and to be empathetic (also signalled by the suspension points).

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[78] For comments on the strategy thanking, go to 9.2.2 and the description of the discursive move *thanks*.

[79] COPD is an alphabetism for chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, which is a lung disease mostly associated with smokers.

(10.01) this is my first post so not sure if it’s in right place.recently diagnosed with copd and after yet another virus and chest infection and picking up a prescription for champix on Monday. (S06, t9)

(10.02) i was feeling dandy earlier, then went for a nap and have woke up feeling like s**t, v cranky, heart racing, irritable, thank goodness i am home alone
have also stopped soda's so would account for some irritability, and caffeine, they all have an extrememly strong association for me
soooo irritable, biting the bullet now, craving... (S06, t14)

(10.03) Now it's only been 3 days but I'm feeling as though something inside me is on the move.
[…]
My dreams are vivid, of animals, adventures, so much so that I want to roll back to sleep in the morning.
My pupils are huge so there must be more brain activity than normal - prob due to oxygen actually reaching it - and apart from the occassional urge to fulfill what was a lifelong habit, this is a really creative phase to being ciggy-free methinks. (S12, t23)

In example (10.03), the initiator adopts a diagnostic lens, appearing to take a step back and analyse herself (*I’m feeling as though…*). Therefore, she first uses a depersonalised sentence (*My dreams…*), which already creates some detachment. Secondly, she employs a near medical jargon (*brain activity, oxygen*) and a modal verb of certainty (*must be*) to position her as a close observer of herself in the process of quitting. Example (10.03) differs from the previous ones with respect to the relational work the initiator is carrying out. She is not looking for empathy but shares her symptoms in order to bond with other members (*a really creative phase*). Thereby, she prepares her ensuing request for experiential advice (*Is anyone else having heightened..awareness .. whatever or am I just going loopy?*).

10.3.1.2. Sharing aspects of one’s quitting smoking journey

Initiators comment on a range of aspects of their quitting smoking journey. They communicate on what day they are, what nicotine replacement therapy they use, what landmarks they have reached, what challenges they have overcome or they update respondents on how quitting is going in general. These aspects all make up a quitter identity, helping attest to initiators’ authenticity. As such, sharing aspects of one’s quitting journey is not idiosyncratic to initiators in the requesting help sample, but happens throughout the forum practices. However, it receives more weight here than in the relapse sample, where it only occurs in the form of updates in later posts by the initiator. This suggests that there might be more need to position oneself as a legitimate quitter when explicitly asking for help. With respect to language, initiators use numerical structures to talk about the technical details of nicotine patches (e.g. how many milligrams of nicotine) and to make their success visible by indicating how many hours have passed since they last smoked or on what day of quitting they are.

In (10.04) the initiator constructs himself as successfully starting his quitting journey since he has reached his first goal (*reached my first set landmark*). He follows the forum norms of breaking down quitting into units (*12 hours without a ciggie*), thus signalling his understanding of community practices. Moreover, he boosts his achievement with four exclamation marks, through which he indexes his exhilaration. In example (10.05), the initiator relates that she has successfully mastered a difficult situation (*one of my triggers, out of the way*), constructing herself as being on the right track. She reaffirms this positioning when she assesses her state of mind (*Not feeling too bad…*).

(10.04) I decided on Monday that my quit date would be today and at the time of posting I have reached my first self-set landmark
12 hours without a ciggie!!!! (S12, t12)

(10.05) I have just finished my tea, and had no smokey with cuppa. Thats one of my triggers, out of the way. Not feeling too bad at the moment, but will be keeping you updated. (S06, t3)

(10.06) So i had my last cig at 11:30 pm, Put patch on at 11:45pm woke up this morning wanted a cig, had breakfast (Dont usually eat it) still needed a cig so just jumped in shower and done myself a refreshing drink, the needing feeling has gone, i am thinking of going to get some inhalers just to help me through the next few days (S12, t1)

In example (10.06) the initiator shares in detail how she has gone about quitting on her first day (*Put patch on…*). As she recounts how she has dealt with initial cravings, she creates an identity as having overcome first hurdles (*the needing feeling has gone*). When she mentions that she has changed her morning routine (*Dont usually eat it*), she is also aligning herself with common advice on how to tackle cravings within the community. Finally, she shows awareness of further challenges awaiting her when she contemplates taking an additional type of nicotine replacement therapy (*inhalers just to help me through...*).

10.3.1.3. Reflect on one's smoking and quitting history

Sometimes initiators offer insights into their smoking and quitting history to other community members to position themselves as experienced in quitting, to boost their request for help and to align with respondents. Therefore, initiators recount their quitting history, sharing what quitting means they have tried and how long they have managed to stopped. Similarly, they may relate how many cigarettes they used to smoke per day to bolster their authentic quitter identity. This strategy is characterized by the use of the verb *stop* alongside prepositional phrases of time, usually indicating a period of time such as in *for …days/ months/years*.

In example (10.07), the initiator describes her quitting smoking history to boost her request for help, trying to involve as well as to get members to react to her initial post. As she lists different quit smoking aids she has tried, she constructs herself as desperate to stop smoking in want of the others' help. The next example (10.08) shows how several strategies can overlap even within one sentence. After appreciating advice and motivational support she has received, the initiator indexes her insecurity, for which she accounts by her quitting history. She positions herself as having struggled badly, which she warrants by the vignette of her non-smoking boyfriend urging her to smoke. Nonetheless, she signals that she is more confident now, mentioning the financial benefits of quitting, which aligns her with the community discourse of money not spent as motivation.

(10.07) I've tried patches, hypnotherapy, electronic ciggies etc and never managed to stop. (S06, t9)

(10.08) Thankyou, im a little excited but really scared at same time, i went cold turkey 2yrs ago and after 3 days my boyfriend (None smoker) told me to smoke, But this time I want to do it im thinking of th £210 I'll be saving every 30 days :-D (S12, t1)

(10.09) I was off them for near 5 weeks last year , just over a week last month think im doomed lol! Ihate these patches lol i have used Champix every other time !Thanks for the help though! ☺ (S12, t27)

In (10.09) the initiator reacts to respondents who have suggested that once he has gone through the third day he will be feeling better. Subsequently, he dis-aligns with advice given when he shares his quitting history, through which he indexes that he has some experience in quitting well beyond day 3 (*was off them for near 5 weeks*). Finally, he mitigates his rejection of advice when he expresses his gratitude for previous comments (*Thanks for the help though! ☺)*.

10.3.1.4. Showing one's insecurity and / or indexing one's struggle

Since showing one's insecurity or indexing one's struggles encourages other members to respond, it can be considered an involvement strategy. This strategy is used in initial posts right before the actual request for help. While showing one's insecurity helps emphasize initiators' request for help, it is part of the ethos of help-seekers. Showing one's insecurity is often combined with a display of humility, which appeals to help-givers to share their insight. In the few instances in which initiators show their insecurity in later posts, it works to uphold interaction and to ask for further support. At the same time, if initiators show insecurity in later posts, they tend to come across as more confident than before, signalling that they are determined despite their struggles. Initiators use graphic means to boost their display of insecurity, such as different types of emoticons (angry, newbie, SOS), suspension points and the use of capitals, which has been described as intensifying means in forum interaction (e.g. Fröhlich 2015). When initiators employ an emoticon that labels them as newbies, they indicate that they are not familiar with forum rules, which mitigates any potential breaches with posting customs and appeals to other members' understanding. Initiators also use adjectives that describe their state of mind in a negative way, such as *rough, scared, stressed, worried,* etc., as linguistic means to show insecurity or to index their struggle.

Example (10.10) is the first post by the initiator, in which she announces that she is planning to quit smoking the next day. She expresses her concerns of whether she is able to pull through quitting smoking (*im worried I will let them and myself down*). Thereby, she is preparing her subsequent general request for help (*Any tips?*) and her appeal for support (*Pray i can do it*) while also constructing herself as a legitimate help-seeker. In (10.11), the initiator indexes his struggles in several steps. Firstly, he points out that the patches are not helping, moving on to adopt a position as *well stressed,* where the qualifier *well* enhances the meaning of the subsequent adjective *stressed*. Secondly, he repeats the qualifier *really* to highlight his craving for a cigarette before he emphasises his wish to remain smoke free (*dont wanna give in again*). He finishes all his sentences with one or even two exclamation marks to give weight to his frustration and to appeal to other members. At the end, he literally cries for help (capitals being the written equivalent to shouting), using an angry emoticon to summarize how he is feeling.

(10.10) I have only told a handfull of people (Mom,Boyfiend,His parents,Boss) everyone is being supportive but im worried I will let them and myself down I cant seem to find any willpower just yet
Any tips?

Pray i can do it (S12, t1)

(10.11) On the patches but feel like its not doing anything today! Im well stressed with it really really want a fag! But dont wanna give in again !! HELP (S12, t27)

(10.12) I've scared myself witless reading loads of horror stories by dramatic Americans slagging off Champix. I've felt great on it but starting to have doubts now. So determined not to smoke but don't fancy feeling this rough for months...a few weeks is manageable though (S06, t28)

In the interaction leading up to (10.12), the initiator posted that she was worried about the physical pain she was experiencing. One of the respondents then reassured her that this pain was a normal side-effect of quitting smoking. In the initiator's second post, she constructs herself as still insecure (*scared myself witless*) when she refers to sources that implicitly contest the normalization by the other respondent. She invites respondents to reassure her again since she categorizes her external sources (possibly on another forum) as *dramatic Americans,* thus expressing her doubts with respect to their credibility. Further, she contrasts her determination to stop with the pain she is going through, implying that she will not be able to endure it for a longer period (*don't fancy feeling this rough…*). The consequences of not being able to persevere (i.e. smoking) are so unspeakable that they are only implicit in the suspension points, which emphasises how much she is struggling. Finally, she signals that she willing and confident enough to try a little longer, which constructs her identity as a true quitter.

10.3.1.5. Requesting help

This strategy refers to how initiators explicitly request other members' input, in the form of advice, support or information. It clearly categorizes initiators as help-seekers while also being a defining criterion for this particular sub-sample. Some initiators, mostly newbies, request further help with respect to handling technical details within the forum in later posts, through which they signal their willingness to become a full-fledged member. Since requesting help and support can be potentially face-threatening, the way in which initiators ask for help is especially telling. Previous studies have pointed out that there are several strategies of requesting help, such as looking for confirmation or experiential advice and using *or*- questions, which all minimize the risk to a contributor's face (see Harrison & Barlow 2009; Locher 2013a; Morrow 2006; Sillence 2013; Stommel & Lamerichs 2014 etc.). In this sample, initiators request general, specific or experiential advice. They also ask for support, information, normalization and confirmation of their self-diagnosis. Initiators may explicitly require *tips, ideas* or *support.* If they look for experiential advice, they employ the structure *anyone else;* the adverb *else* indicating that initiators are not interested in experiences in general but for similar experiences. It is striking that while most requests are interrogatives, there is a preference for *yes-or-no* and *or*-questions with only one *wh*-question. This could be due to the fact that *wh*-questions invite specific guidance on how initiators should behave, which is more face-threatening to initiators. When initiators use declaratives to request help in two of three cases, it is accompanied by anticipatory thanks, which is also the only times initiators explicitly use the term *advice*.

In (10.13) the initiator asks for general advice (*Any tips for me*) after having announced that she has just quit smoking, which is a type of request used by several new quitters. It functions as an involvement strategy since it positions initiators as opening the dialogue with more experienced quitters but at the same time does not require input on specific personal matters. The initiator from (10.14) is asking for experiential advice, which Sillence (2013: 484) has called an advice solicitation of "being in the same boat". In other words, the initiator is interested in bonding with other members and normalizing her experience. In (10.15), the initiator is looking for information when he wonders whether other members can confirm his friend's assessment (*Is this likely to be the case?*). The initiator points out that if his friend is right, he would be in trouble, thus inviting respondents to disagree. He finishes his post by thanking in advance for advice, further minimizing the face-threatening nature of requesting advice through the use of the passive form (*Any advice would be appreciated*).

(10.13) Any tips for me, for next days? (S06, t3)

(10.14) Well I made it to day 2 and already I feel so much better - did anyone else have trouble sleeping after day 1 - had an awful night's sleep last night? (S12, t20)

(10.15) I am using Champix to quit smoking and a friend raised the concern that it might be causing me to deal with this worse than I otherwise may have. Is this likely to be the case? I'm afraid if I come off the Champix I'll lose my quit. Any advice would be appreciated. (S06, t27)

In (10.16) the initiator requests advice on the use of nicotine patches: she used up her patches but received a different type from her neighbour. She asks an *or*-question (*or should I just …*), which lets her present two valid action alternatives. Therefore, she is saving face as she positions herself as having some competence in the matter (see also Morrow 2006: 540):

(10.16) My question is should I use that tomorrow and then just go back to my own on Tuesday morning or should I just hold out and keep the one I have on till I get to the chemist tomorrow night. (S06, t38)

(10.17) […] I am now on day 3 without one. I am not used to forums and to be honest, I went to a couple of unhealthy chatrooms before I found this one. Do I go to day three now or just keep posting like this? (S06, t13)

Example (10.17) shows how initiators who are only recent members ask for help in terms of manoeuvring the forum. The contribution displayed is the initiator's fourth post to sub-forum Day 2, to which she technically does not belong anymore, as indexed by the initiator herself (*now on day 3*). She expresses her insecurity in terms of what is appropriate (*am not used to forums*). Finally, she asks an *or*-question with respect to how to behave, which constructs her as having thought through what could be appropriate.

10.3.1.6. Agreeing with or taking up advice

Initiators explicitly align with or accept advice they have received, which has the effect of bonding or creating a link with respondents but also accepting the latter's more experienced status. In some cases, they indirectly signal that their uptake, describing having done what was suggested earlier without linking it to the advice-giver. These findings contrast with Morrow's study (2006) from an online support group about depression, in which advice-seekers thanked advice-givers but never explicitly evaluated advice as useful or acknowledged having followed through advice. Other studies argued that advice-seekers mainly wanted to have their decision confirmed (Sillence 2010: 392) or were interested in a platform to "externalize their thoughts" (Kouper 2010: 16). Thus, in these two studies, advice-seekers were looking to bond rather than to receive guidance. Even though connecting with others is also an important aspect in both forums, initiators seem to be interested in receiving instructions for actions beyond laying out their thinking process (cf. Kouper 2010). This might be due to the fact that initiators overtly request help. Alternatively, it could also be due to topic since initiators are interested in getting help to cope with quitting. Initiators employ verbs that index their alignment (*make sense, agree*) or use positive evaluative statements (*be + adjective*).

In (10.18), the initiator openly accepts the respondent's advice of how changing one's routine can be useful to deal with cravings (*i firmly take on board your observation*…), which grants the respondent expert status. She further aligns with the respondent when she promises to integrate her advice into her life (*am gonna work on it*). As a side note, this excerpt is part of a larger post, which is why the initiator uses the respondent's first name to signal that she is reacting to the respondent's earlier post. Apart from its text-structuring function, using the respondent's first name also reinforces the bonding effect of taking up advice. The initiator in (10.19) puts forward that she has acted as the respondent suggested, thus creating alignment. She uses the respondent's first name[80], on the one hand, to disambiguate the pronoun *that* despite the fact that she is directly posting after the respondent, making clear that she talks about the respondent's piece of advice. On the other hand, the use of the respondent's first name can again be seen as means to intensify the connection created by taking up advice.

(10.18) Maggie i firmly take on board your observation that changing routine helps some people-acess i am one of those, am gonna work on it (S06, t14)

(10.19) That's what I've decided Maggie and I also have my spray so will be fine […] (S06, t38)

(10.20) I agree with the comments that putting a spin on it being a positive thing rather than a negative one is the way to go. Sadly, I'm a bit more of a pessimist than an optimist but hey ho! (S12, t6)

In (10.20) the initiator responds to previously given advice to view cravings as something positive since they are part of becoming smoke-free. By agreeing with advice-givers, the initiator positions herself as in alignment with their point of view (*I agree… way to go*). However, she qualifies her agreement when she self-categorises as *pessimist*, which would imply that this advice might not be fit for her. She mitigates her reservations by using the adjective *sadly* and the interjection *hey ho*[81], indicating that she would rather follow respondents' advice.

10.3.2. Strategies to create trustworthy help-giver identities

My qualitative close readings suggested that ten strategies were used to create help-giver identities in the requesting help sample. Several strategies (e.g. 'referring to self', 'providing personalised information') have been previously described for online health support groups (see Armstrong et al. 2011; Eichhorn 2008; Harvey & Koteyko 2013; Stommel & Lamerichs 2014 etc.). However, the specific topic of requesting help and the overall topic of smoking

[80] It happens to be the same respondent as in (10.18) who is a very active member.
[81] According to the OED online (2016), *hey-ho* can be a variation of *heigh-ho*, which is defined as "exclamation usually expressing yawning, sighing, languor, weariness, disappointment".

cessation leads to this particular combination of strategies to create expertiseAs in Section 10.3.1, the strategies are listed according to how they might appear in a post, with the exception of strategy ten (referring to self), which, due to its multi-functionality, is hard to categorize in terms of sequence.

(1) Praising
(2) Normalizing struggles
(3) Providing personalized information
(4) Promising improvement
(5) Giving guidance/advice
(6) Explaining advice or information
(7) Suggesting interacting with forum
(8) Promising support
(9) Referring to links/forum archives
(10) Referring to self

The first four strategies are all linked to the different types of *assessment* (see Ch. 9). Praising is common beyond the requesting help sample, pointing to the fact that respondents as help-givers are expected to positively qualify help-seekers' progress. In this sub-sample, praising occurs in a generalized fashion at the beginning of a post as an opening (sometimes closing) move in order to establish a connection. In contrast, praising often also has a reassuring function in the relapse sample. If we recall the interpersonal continuum on which different types of *assessment* can be placed (see Ch. 9), strategies two to four are realizations of *assessments* towards the informational end—especially considering that they are about respondents imparting their knowledge to help-seekers. Nonetheless, the interpersonal dimension is never absent, since strategies two to four feed into ethos construction through the creation of expertise so help-givers comply and into pathos through their face-enhancing function. When respondents use strategy five, they explicitly enact their identities as help-givers, exhibiting their more experienced status by giving instructions. In that context, they are expected to justify or explain their advice by providing additional background (strategy 6), which also positions them as knowledgeable.

Strategies seven and eight are connected with help-givers being a part of a community and how the community is viewed as a (discursive) resource. With strategy seven, respondents try to tie initiators to the group, which is common throughout the forum (as described for *advice* to be an active community member in Ch. 9). When employing strategy eight respondents try to motivate initiators to come back, often appropriating the voice of the entire community. Strategy nine is a special type of advice, which also builds up the ethos of help-givers — either by backing their statements and/or positioning help-givers as informed. Finally, while strategy ten has several socio-pragmatic functions, respondents mostly use it to give advice from an experienced position or to back up their information/tips. Thus, the use of 'referring to self' differs from how this strategy is employed in the topic relapse, where it is overwhelmingly utilized for bonding purposes. In the following sub-sections, I will elaborate on strategies two to six and eight to ten (see Ch. 9; Sections 9.4.1.2; 9.4.2.2, for more input on strategies one and seven).

10.3.2.1. Normalizing struggles

As illustrated above, initiators are interested in comparing their experience to other community members in order to have their worries dismissed or their self-diagnoses confirmed. Respondents are happy to oblige by categorizing initiators' withdrawal symptoms or fears as a normal part of quitting smoking. Normalising struggles often occur as the second part of an adjacency pair, which was opened by initiators, making it an opening move. With respect to the interpersonal dimension of interaction, there are several facets coming into play. Respondents reassure initiators by "de-problematizing" the latter's' situation as belonging to the quitting process while they often simultaneously bond with or display empathy for initiators (Placencia 2012: 299; see also Locher 2006). Thereby, respondents adopt the position of expert quitters who have gone through the same issue or who have taken the same medication[82], which means that they need to invest linguistic work to legitimise their contributions. In order to reinforce their position as legitimate help-givers, they employ a range of linguistics devices that help boost their expertisewhen normalizing. Firstly, respondents use impersonal constructions *it is* + *adjective* to convey their evaluation in a detached way as general information. Secondly, they refer to collective experience by using pronouns in the first person plural to give their evaluations more weight. Thirdly, they establish the comparability of their own and initiators' experience by using adverbs like *also* and *too*. Interestingly, respondents are aware of their responsibility as help-givers since they are careful to point out if some aspects of the initiators' question (e.g. the effects of medication) are not within their area of knowledge by using disclaimers.

If help-seekers ask *yes-or-no* questions of whether their experiences are common, respondents usually start out by agreeing, thus quickly building common ground. Example

[82] As mentioned in Ch. 9, respondents who are at more advanced stages of quitting also contribute to threads in the early sub-forums.

(10.21) is a response to the following question *thinking about ciggys a lot, is that natural lol?*[83]. After greeting, the respondent immediately completes the adjacency pair, providing the preferred answer (*yes it's normal…*). She continues to explain her normalisation by referring to the collective experience of the community (*many of us have smoked for years…*), which helps back up her statement but also lets her bond with the initiator as she establishes like-you identity relations. In (10.22), the respondent reacts to an initiator who is worried that Champix is making him feel depressed (see ex. 10.15). Firstly, the respondent qualifies his expertise, indicating that he has no knowledge regarding the medication itself. Afterwards, he constructs his experienced-quitter identity by sharing the quitting means he used before going on to normalise the initiator's emotional turmoil (*very similar to all the ups and downs...*). In view of his initial disclaimer, the respondent is still careful not to be over-assertive as he mitigates his evaluation with the verb *sound*.

(10.21) Hi Noobie, yes it's normal to think about them a lot in the early days, many of us have smoked for years, so not something we forget in 2 days unfortunately. (S06, t13)

(10.22) I've not been on Champix myself...patches with inhalator and nasal spray as needed. But the emotional side sounds very similar to all the ups and downs of quitting. Sounds like part of the journey we're on. Good days, bad days, ecstatic days etc etc. (S06, t20)

(10.23) Hey,day 3 is the worst for most of us on this quit!! (S12, t27)

In example (10.23), the respondent answers to an initiator who indexed her struggles on her third day of quitting (see ex.10.11). Despite the fact that the initiator has not explicitly asked for it, the respondent normalizes the latter's despair by mobilizing the group's collective experience (*for most of us*). At the same time, the respondent displays her understanding of how the initiator is feeling as she signals that the initiator is not alone. This example nicely shows how relational work emerges in interaction since the initiator has displayed insecurity in her post, which is taken up by the respondent who empathises with her.

[83] In this case, the acronym *lol* (laughing out loud) nicely points to the fact that requests for normalization by initiators often are not mere requests for information but are attempts to connect with or appeal to other members.

10.3.2.2. Providing personalized information

Part of being an experienced help-giver is providing personalised information about what help-seekers are to expect in the course of quitting, about how to navigate the forum as well as aiding initiators to make sense of how they feel. Respondents often give personalised information preceding advice, which allows them to position themselves as experienced and knowledgeable before telling initiators what to do. Further, it facilitates establishing a connection with or showing their understanding of initiators (bonding, empathy), pointing to the fact that this strategy is nestled within the discursive moves *assessment* or *own experience* (see Ch. 9 where I showed that *assessment* tends to precede *advice*). Respondents use the *will*-future to predict developments and the verb *be* as a copula to explain and to inform.

In the interaction leading up to (10.24), the initiator announced that she is quitting with her partner and is asking for tips in general. The respondent (who has also stopped smoking with her husband) explains what the initiator and her partner are to expect during the first few days. She hedges her information with an *if*-clause (*if you are anything like us*), which indicates that her individual experience may not be applicable to the initiator. She strives for an objective tone to index her expertise: she uses a *will*-clause to predict the initiator's psychological state and the verb *be* to present the facts of the early stages of quitting, abstaining from employing the personal pronoun *I* entirely. Even so, the reduplication of the letters in *ssllllooooowwwww* adds an interpersonal tinge, stressing how difficult the beginning of quitting is as well as showing her knowledge of it. In the case of (10.25), the respondent starts by instructing the initiator on how to view cravings, masking her advice as general information through an expletive construction. Secondly, she explains her advice in more detail, employing the *will*-future to highlight that she is talking about factual, involuntary reactions. Additionally, she boosts her explanation by using bold print and by finishing her sentence with an emoticon showing shock as a substitute for an exclamation mark. Thirdly, the respondent lays out why the initiator should not succumb to smoking (*wont change you being upset*), reiterating her piece of information on how cravings emerge in the first place (*its just an automatic response*).

(10.24) if you are anything like us, the first week is not nice, specially on cold turkey. those 7 days are so sssllllloooooowwwwwyou will be exhausted, which in a way is good. (S06, t3)

(10.25) its the association to smoking you have to change **ie when you get upset, angry or**

> **stressed apart of your brain will automatically think ciggie**  [emphasis in original]
> smoking that ciggie wont change you being upset, angry or stressed
> its just an automatic response to those feelings and before a ciggie was what you thought would help (S12, t1)

Finally, respondents instruct newbies on the workings of the forum, which they usually do per request of initiators. In the case of (10.26), the initiator had asked how to install a timeline in her signature, which shows how long she has quit:

(10.26) […] 5 posts before you can have a ticker hun at the same time your PM system will also be available to you (S06, t20)

The respondent explains that the initiator needs a certain number of posts, adding unsolicited information on how it will activate the personal messaging function, which clearly positions her as experienced community member. In fact, informing on how the forum works is not restricted to the topic requesting help but happens in any newbie thread (which is why it is absent in the topic relapse).

10.3.2.3. Giving guidance/advice

Giving guidance or advice is the central discourse activity in the topic requesting help regardless of whether initiators ask for information or are interested in the experience of other members. Respondents give advice on how to cope with a range of withdrawal symptoms (cravings, fatigue), on organizing the quitting journey, on the use and effects of medication or NRT as well as on what mental attitude initiators should adopt. In the larger forum sample, I have identified four different thematic types of advice, of which three have a supportive or encouraging function with only the fourth including specific recommendations for action (see Ch. 9; Rudolf von Rohr 2015). In the topic requesting help, even though all four types of advice occur, the fourth type ('explicit guidance') is predominant. Thus, this underlines the fact that initiators turn to the practices for help beyond support and motivation, seeking and receiving guidance tailored to their needs from more experienced participants. As mentioned above, respondents take their responsibility or the effect their input may have seriously. Thus, they encourage initiators to consult health practitioners if initiators are insecure about physical or psychological symptoms, which, at least for these practices, should dismantle worries about user-generated content expressed in earlier research (see Prestin & Chou 2014; Ch. 5). Respondents adapt the way they impart advice, depending on how initiators request help. If initiators ask for general advice (e.g. *Any tips?*), respondents are likely to provide a list of recommendations, using unmitigated imperatives. If initiators request support, use an alternative *or*-question, or ask for normalization, respondents are less directive; e.g. using introductory subclauses, interrogatives, declaratives, etc. Further, the use of the verb *try to*, which sometimes occurs in combination with *help* or *work,* is noticeable, which is a common pattern to give advice on coping strategies throughout the practices (see Ch. 9; Rudolf von Rohr 2015).

In example (10.27), the respondent comes up with an entire list of suggestions for the initiator, who just started quitting and asked for general tips. To introduce her list of advice, the respondent refers to herself, which attests to the effectiveness of her suggestions and positions her as expert quitter. Further, the mere number of recommendations (sixteen bullet points in total) helps boost the respondent's expertise. By referring to herself, the respondent also hedges the ensuing list of advice. Even so, it does not result in the respondent making her advice less direct afterwards since she uses imperatives (e.g. *spend every single penny*) and addresses the initiator with *you* instead of referring to herself again (*when you have a bad crave*). In (10.28) the respondent suggests a course of action to an initiator who presented two action alternatives regarding the use of patches (see ex. 10.16). The respondent begins with the hypothetical *would* to index what alternative he would select. Thereby, he mitigates the directness of his advice, respecting that the initiator may still choose the other option. When the respondent shifts from the first person pronoun *I* to *you* in the second part of the sentence, he subtly positions the initiator as heeding the given advice (*go back to your own*). Before (10.29), the initiator asks whether it is normal for her whole body to ache, explaining that she was told that this was her body detoxing. The respondent advises her on how to accelerate the detoxing process. Therefore, she uses an impersonal declarative sentence, which renders her advice authoritative. Further, the respondent suggests that the initiator seek offline counsel, which works as a disclaimer but also shows that the respondent cares about the initiator.

(10.27) things that helped us...

1/put a list up in the kitchen and every day add to it the amount of fags not smoked between you, and the amount of money not spent on fags.add up the totals every day.
2/sleep lots.
3/buy different food and drink just to make things not as they were when you smoked.
4/plan a treat for you both asap after week one.
5/spend every single penny that you would have spent on fags, on something special for yourselves.

6/when you have a bad crave, go outside and take long slow deep breaths till it passes.[…] (S06, t3)

(10.28) I would use the 16-hour one tomorrow morning and then go back to your own on Tuesday morning. (S06, t38)

(10.29) […] drinking lots of water will help flush the toxins out faster though but if you're worried about this go see your GP hun (S06, t28)

In various instances, respondents give advice on how to face quitting psychologically or to be more precise what perspective initiators should adopt to be successful. One of the recurrent suggestions is that quitting and all the withdrawal symptoms it entails should be viewed as something positive because they are a necessary step to becoming smoke-free. Similarly, in their study of an American online smoking cessation forum, Hillyer and Brown (2014: 55) discussed that advice-givers highlighted the importance of referencing psychological changes quitters need to undergo when quitting smoking. Hillyer and Brown (2014: 56) called this the "Retrain your Brain fantasy type", which was used to convince advice-seekers of the benefits and the "transformative power" of adapting one's mental attitude.

In (10.30) the respondent recommends breaking down quitting into units to an initiator who is in doubt of her willpower. She positions the initiator as having agency over her success, which she boosts by writing *you* and *choosing* in capitals.

(10.30) don't put too much pressure on yourself. Take it one hour at a time telling yourself that YOU are CHOOSING not to smoke in that hour (S12,t1)

(10.31) The right mental attitude is IMO the key, rather than looking on quitting as making a sacrifice and denying yourself as great pleasure, try to see quitting as a positive thing regaining health, wealth and control. (S12, t6)

Finally, the respondent in (10.31) gives advice to an initiator who wants tips on how to deal with *unbelievable cravings*. Before he introduces his actual piece of advice, he uses a depersonalised sentence structure to construct his initial assessment as factual (*The right mental… is key*), which positions him as experienced. Nonetheless, he inserts the abbreviation *IMO* (in my opinion), which mitigates his contribution. With the voice of an expert, he employs the verb *try* to indicate how the initiator should view his quitting attempt in order to be successful.

10.3.2.4. Explaining advice or information

Explaining advice or information provides a platform for respondents to construct themselves as knowledgeable and trustworthy help-givers. Respondents justify why their pieces of advice / information are valid and why it is sensible for initiators to comply, which positions the former as experienced advice-givers. Moreover, explanations are used to enhance initiators' face as they are also used to show understanding of initiators' situation. Previous studies on online advice practices have also found explanations to be part of the speech event advice. In this sample, explanations occur embedded within the discursive moves *advice* or *assessme*nt as they are not independent enough to be a discursive move on their own (cf. Locher 2006; Morrow 2012; Placencia 2012). Even so, the use of explanations suggests that the speech event advice within the practices takes similar shape to other online advice practices. Respondents mostly employ *it*- constructions, either referring back to the previous clause or as an independent expletive to explain advice or information. In any case, the linguistic construction helps respondents adopt a neutral, informative voice, which is fremoved from personal experience.

In (10.32), the respondent advises the initiator to stick to quitting with the help of the community. She uses the *it*-construction to explain her advice (*it's good to*)*,* which gives her explanation more weight since it is presented as a general fact. Her explanation constructs her as experienced and in the know of what the initiator is going through, pointing to her own history as quitter and displaying empathy. The respondent in (10.33) suggests that the initiator should get enough rest, justifying subsequently why this piece of advice is appropriate. As in (10.32), the *it*-construction renders the explanation authoritative beyond the individual experience of the respondent. Further the use of *you* allows the respondent to speak in general terms while still accommodating her explanation to the initiator.

(10.32) keep yourself busy and keep determined on your quit, posting lots helps, it's good to talk to others in the same boat. (S06, t13)

(10.33) try to sleep as much as you can... its tiring when you first stop. (S06, t20)

(10.34) The way I look at it, it will take X number of cravings until they disappear […]
Each craving is X-1. If it takes 500 cravings (for example) to stop having cravings, then when that first one on day one comes on, if I handle it, I only have 499 to go. […]
It's almost like reframing a craving as a good thing, because it's a visible sign that you're that much closer to being done with all this forever. (S12, t6)

In example (10.34), the respondent gives a lengthy piece of advice on how to face cravings, before he explains and reiterates the gist of his recommendation. He uses the construction *it is like* to guide the initiator's interpretation in an authoritative manner.

10.3.2.5. Promising improvement

As shown above, initiators index their insecurity when asking for help, signalling that they are in a state of need. Consequently, respondents reassure initiators when they promise that the side effects of quitting will improve or that quitting will become easier in the future in general, which usually occurs within *assessment* moves (see Ch. 9). Promising improvement helps ease initiators' worries but also motivates them to persevere, binding them to the community and clearly having an interpersonal effect. These observations align with previous research by Placencia (2012: 299), who found that offering reassurance or encouragement were affiliative strategies on the *Yahoo Respuestas* site. Further, she suggested that encouraging was linked to predictions; that is, participants also promised a better future.

Since promising improvement is linked to the future, its grammatical realisation frequently features the *will*-future. Alternatively, respondents use the present simple to promise improvement, which lets them present their statements as facts. In terms of lexical patterns, the graded adjectives *less, easier, better* and the adverb *soon* are frequent. The lexical choice highlights that respondents acknowledge the intensity of what initiators are experiencing, forecasting that the situation will be looking up in a short period of time. In example (10.35) the respondent shows that she understands and identifies with the quitter when she mobilizes the collective experience of quitting (*hard and long for most of us*). Before she promises improvement (*things will be ok*), the respondent uses a conditional clause to downtone her statement (*if you know in your heart*). Thereby, she signals that these circumstances need to be met for her promise to hold true, which both construct her as experienced in quitting but also as a trustworthy person who gives warranted help.

(10.35) The first week can be hard and long for most of us,but if you know in your heart this is what you want, and you are doing it for you, and stay positive, things will be ok […] (S06, t13)

(10.36) The morning crave soon passes, its the rest of the day that gets me into trouble  but it does get easier. (S12, t12)

In (10.36), the respondent appeases the initiator's worries of missing his first cigarette, warning him that there are bigger dangers. As she uses the present simple in the first sentence (*morning crave soon passes*), she gives her statement a factual and technical tone, indexing her experienced quitter identity. From that experienced position, the respondent guides the initiator to what he should be paying attention through the cleft sentence, mitigating her warning by referring to herself and by using emoticons that signal doubt and shock. She ends on a positive note since she points out that even these aspects improve over time, reinforcing her more experienced status. She boosts her promise with the empathic (*but it does get easier*), which appeals to the initiator to believe her.

10.3.2.6. Referring to links/forum archives

In some instances, respondents complement their advice or information by referring initiators to outside links or to the forum archives. This type of referral has been found to be a common warranting strategy in online advice settings, adding to the trustworthiness and legitimacy of advice-givers (see Armstrong et al. 2011; Locher 2013a; Sillence 2010). In the topic requesting help if respondents advise initiators to go through the forum archives, they try to involve initiators into the group. This impression is boosted by the fact that referring to forum archives mostly co-occurs with suggesting that initiators interact with the forum, which is another popular involvement strategy. Further, referring to links/forum archives frequently appears in closing position, which attests to its function of trying to sustain interaction. In that context, it is worth noting that this strategy seems to be more commonly employed with new members. Respondents either existential sentences with the dummy subject *there* or imperatives when referring to links/forum archives, which they qualify in relative clauses featuring the verb *help*. In (10.37) the respondent refers to the forum archives in the closing position of his post while also inviting the initiator to continue interaction. Thus, the respondent indexes his status as established community member in a double manner, by suggesting that he knows what can be found in the forum (*loads of info*) and by being the spokesperson of the community (*let us know*).

(10.37) There's loads of info on the forum to help with your quit and post often and let us know how you're doing. (S06, t20)

(10.38) Have a browse through the links in my signature there is a load information there to help get your mind in the right place. (S12, t6)

In (10.38) the respondent also refers to links to finish his post, constructing his identity as experienced quitter in various ways. Firstly, the links can be encountered in his *signature*, which is part of posters' more static identity. Thus, he signals that he has stopped smoking for a while. Further, he boosts his referral, employing the quantifier *a load*, which implies that he knows an entire gamut of useful sources. Finally, as he promises that reading this information will help the initiator get *her mind in the right place*, he positions himself as knowing what the 'right' state of mind is.

10.3.2.7. Promising support

Promising support is a common motivational strategy in this sample especially when respondents reply to newbie initiators. Respondents either praise the forum as a useful space or promise support on behalf of the entire group. It often occurs in combination with encouraging initiators to further interact with the community, which point to promising support as a community-building strategy. Respondents are interested in establishing a relationship with initiators and including them into the group, which makes promising support a primarily face-enhancing strategy. However, there are also aspects of trustworthiness and expertise that come into play. For instance, if respondents appropriate the voice of the community to promise support, they position themselves as being experienced members who have enough knowledge to instruct new members. Further, if respondents praise the forum as a useful space for support, they reinforce the authority and expertise of the entire community while also strengthening their own ties to the group. Additionally, when respondents promise support from the entire group instead of just themselves, they engage in face-saving behaviour since it reduces their personal responsibility. Respondents employ pronouns in the first-person plural to index that they are speaking for the group, they praise the forum by speaking of *a/the great/best place* or they use the adverb *here* to situate promises of support.

In example (10.39) the respondent replies to an initiator expressing thanks for the encouragement received (*You're welcome*) before she promises continued support. She identifies as a community member through the use of the personal pronouns *we* and *us,* which positions her as an experienced quitter who is familiar with community practices (*as long as you need us*). The respondent boosts her commitment by adding the formulaic *promise* to emphasise the truth of her statement, signalling that the connection with the initiator is important. In (10.40) the respondent starts out by praising how helpful members of the forum are (*great place to be, and so supportive*), implying that the initiator will receive help but also enhancing her own link with the group. Simultaneously, the respondent constructs herself as having received such support and having gone through the ups and downs of quitting (*good days, bad days, cry days…*)*,* thus adopting an experienced quitter identity. She continues to warrant her praise by referring to collective experience (*NEVER thought we could be non-smokers*)*,* which gives her statement more weight than if she only talked about herself. It is noteworthy that the respondent does not include herself in the initial praise of the community, but later clearly constructs herself as community member (*many of us on here*), thus circumventing the face-threatening potential of self-praise.

(10.39) You're welcome Andy we'll be here for as long as you need us promise (S06, t3)

(10.40) This is a great place to be , the poeple here are really great and so supportive, thru good days, bad days, cry days, happy days, weird days, crazy lady days and any others. So many of us on here, NEVER thought we could be non smokers... but we are and so will you.... (S12, t1)

(10.41) You will have lots of support on here if you can log on regularly but stay strong and positive! (S06, t20)

The final example (10.41) nicely shows how promising support is an involvement strategy on a community (and not on a personal) level in this sample. The respondent detaches himself from any individual commitment (*You will have lots of support on here*) when he uses the *will*-future to promise support from the community as long as the initiator continues his interaction with the forum (*if you can log on regularly*). Further, the absence of his personal voice gives the promise an informational tone, signalling that the respondent is familiar with posting practices of the community.

10.3.2.8. Referring to self

As the frequency of the discursive move *own experience* indicates, referring to oneself is common in the two practices (see also *relapse,* Section 10.4). This finding confirms previous research, which put forward that mobilizing one's own experiential world is a common phenomenon in online health support groups (e.g. Armstrong et al. 2011; Harrison & Barlow 2009; Locher 2013a; Sillence 2010, Thurnherr et al. 2016). Locher (2013a: 343) explained that "many peer support sites [...] thrive on the benefits of sharing experience, which can sometimes be construed as advice for action or non-action". Earlier studies have discovered that sharing personal experience in online health contexts is multifunctional, describing its uses as a warranting strategy, as an indirect form of advice, as a bonding strategy or even as a face-threatening strategy (Kouper 2010; Page 2012; Richardson 2003; Sillence 2010, etc.). In the topic requesting help, if respondents refer to themselves, they want to give advice, to identify with initiators or to back up their statements (see also Thurnherr et al. 2016 for a detailed analysis). Frequently, these pragmatic functions are sequenced within the same post or even overlap within the same section. The interpersonal effects of referring to oneself overlaps with findings from other studies (e.g. Harrison & Barlow 2009; Kouper 2010): respondents index their expertise, they hedge their advice-giving and they show empathy towards initiators. The emphasis of referring to oneself lies on warranting or on giving advice while bonding is secondary, which makes sense given the explicit request for help by initiators (cf. relapse sample). Thus, referring to oneself is linked to transmitting advice or information from an experienced but also personal position, showing that respondents carefully invest discursive work when intervening in initiators' lives.

The linguistic form of referring to oneself varies according to its pragmatic function in context. In the case of warranting, referring to oneself occurs in the form of a short sentence featuring verbs like *help* or *work.* Respondents also tell short narratives of how they dealt with a challenge to give advice. In terms of bonding, respondents sometimes employ adverbs such as *also, too* or *like you* to establish the comparability of experiences as an indirect form of advice, as a bonding strategy or even as a face-threatening strategy (Kouper 2010; Page 2012; Richardson 2003\; Sillence 2010, etc.). In the topic requesting help, if respondents refer to themselves, they want to give advice, to identify with initiators or to back up their statements (see also Thurnherr et al. 2016 for a detailed analysis). Frequently, these pragmatic functions are sequenced within the same post or even overlap within the same section. The interpersonal effects of referring to oneself overlaps with findings from other studies (e.g. Harrison & Barlow 2009; Kouper 2010): respondents index their expertise, they hedge their advice-giving and they show empathy towards initiators. The emphasis of referring to oneself lies on warranting or on giving advice while bonding is secondary, which makes sense given the explicit request for help by initiators (cf. relapse sample). Thus, referring to oneself is linked to transmitting advice or information from an experienced position, showing that respondents carefully invest discursive work when intervening in initiators' lives. The linguistic form of referring to oneself varies according to its pragmatic function in context. In the case of warranting, referring to oneself occurs in the form of a short sentence featuring verbs like *help* or *work.* Respondents also tell short narratives of how they dealt with a challenge to give advice. In terms of bonding, respondents sometimes employ adverbs such as *also, too* or *like you* to establish the comparability of experiences.

In example (10.42), the respondent gives advice on how to circumvent triggers in the early days of quitting (*try to change other habits*), promising that it is useful with an evaluative sentence (*things like that will help*). The fact that she considers herself *now a tea addict* positions her as complying with her own advice, which has successfully turned her into a non-smoker. This interpretation is additionally backed up by the respondent's use of two exclamation marks, which underlines the respondent's success. In (10.43) the respondent recommends a coping strategy for cravings (*deep breaths when you get a crave*), which she warrants by referring to herself (*worked a treat for me*). By mobilizing her own experience, she fosters her expertise while also appealing to the initiator to believe her (which she additionally emphasizes using an exclamation mark).

(10.42) Oh a third,from someone else,try to change other habits..eg.If you associate cigs with coffee...change to tea. Little things like that will help. I am now a tea addict and I never liked it before!! (S06, t3)

(10.43) deep breaths when you get a crave,long slow breaths till its gone.. worked a treat for me! (S06, t13)

Examples (10.44) and (10.45) shows the versatility of referring to oneself as respondents navigate from identifying with initiators to giving advice and positioning themselves as having overcome the hurdles of the beginning stages of quitting. The respondent in (10.44) posts after an initiator expressed doubts about being able to get by without her first cigarette in the morning. Firstly, the respondent points out she was in the same situation as the initiator (*I missed my morning cigarette*), establishing like-you identity relations, which increase the acceptability of the ensuing advice. Secondly, she uses a warranting clause (*what worked for me*) to precede her advice, framing it as effective beforehand. Thirdly, her actual piece of advice is embedded in a short personal narrative, which has a hedging effect but also manifests her experience. Finally, she reaffirms the usefulness of her advice, indexing her transformation by using the adverb *now* in contrast to the beginning.

(10.44) I missed my morning cigarette for ages what worked for me was going outside ,walk around the block then just get on with the day. each morning i would acknowledge how much better my breathing was becoming ,no matter how small. After a few wks i was waking and thinking 'thank god i dont have to smoke today'... Now its 5 mths and i dont miss the morning smoke at all iv just realized. (S12, t12)

(10.45) I was the same with cold turkey, although I didn't even make 1 day before my cigarette-hating, severely asthmatic boyfriend told me to smoke (I was crying in the middle of the street).
I found NRT to be much more useful. This time round it's been 6 months so far
(S12, t1)

Before (10.45), the initiator indexed her insecurity regarding quitting since she failed in her previous attempt quitting cold turkey and is now trying to stop with the help of patches. The respondent explicitly identifies with the initiator (*I was the same with cold turkey*) before telling her own, similar story. She reassures the initiator as she explains that she succeeded when she used NRT like the initiator, (*much more useful*). She further backs up her statement of reassurance by sharing how long she has quit (*it's been 6 months so far*).

10.4. The construction of ethos and pathos in the relapse sample–a focus on authenticity and empathy

Within the forum practices, relapsing to smoking is viewed as the norm not the exception, which is illustrated by the following example (10.46):

(10.46) I wouldn't worry about it, I think most of us have had more quits than we have fingers to count
(S06, t10)

The respondent consoles the initiator, who has been embarrassed to post again after smoking (*I wouldn't worry about it*), normalising relapses as a part of the journey to quitting smoking, which is highlighted by the use of the collective *we*. Veen et al. (2010: 36) described how participants of a celiac disease forum normalized eating lapses as being part of their diets, rejecting them as reasons to stop their diets altogether. Therefore, Veen et al. (ibid.) concluded that "quitting [the diet] is not an option" for forum participants. Similarly, the participants in the smoking cessation forums do not view relapses as a reason to go back to smoking but see them as normal part of the quitting process. In other words, and alluding to Veen et al.'s conclusions, quitting smoking is the only option in these forums.

Relapses are a frequent issue that is discussed in the practices, making up fifteen per cent of the topics discussed in the forum corpus (see Table 10.1). Relapse threads are started by initiators who are already part of the community, which implies that they have deviated from the common goal of stopping despite the support they had previously received. Therefore, it poses the challenge to initiators of how to account for their relapse in a convincing way. The nature of such accounts depends on whether initiators are returning to the forum after having stayed away for a while or whether they have relapsed as active community members. Respondents react positively to relapses, which is in line with the discourse that several attempts are necessary to stop. They focus on connecting with initiators on an interpersonal level, trying to motivate initiators and to boost their determination, for instance, by welcoming quitters back into the community.

10.4.1. Strategies used to create authentic relapsed identities

I have identified eight strategies that are used to establish credible and authentic relapsed identities in my close-readings. The strategies are listed according to the order in which they are likely to appear. The first four strategies occur in the first post (announcing one's relapse, being self-deprecating, referring to history with community, sharing relapse story). Strategies five and six (being self-reflective, expressing confidence / motivation) can appear in the beginning but also later on whereas strategies seven and eight (commenting on progress, thanking) only occur after initial posts:

(1) Announcing one's relapse
(2) Being self-deprecating
(3) Referring to history with community
(4) Sharing relapse story
(5) Being self-reflective
(6) Expressing confidence / motivation
(7) Commenting on progress
(8) Thanking

The first strategy involves a self-categorization by initiators who label themselves as having stumbled on their quitting smoking journey, contributing to their ethos construction. The second and third strategies have clear interpersonal aims, as they are used to establish a connection with other community members (linking them to pathos). Initiators position themselves with respect to how the relapse could occur with the help of the fourth strategy, which is employed so respondents view initiators favourably. Strategies five and six relate to how quitting is conceptualized within the community. Since quitting is considered an ongoing process, initiators need to show that they have learnt from previous experience and to signal their continuous commitment to quitting. Finally, strategies seven and eight are connected to how initiators construct their identities once they have been accepted into the community again. Initiators update respondents on how they are faring and thank them for their input to show that they appreciate the support they have received. I will illustrate the first seven strategies in detail[84].

10.4.1.1. Announcing one's relapse

Initiators flag themselves as having relapsed, which seems straightforward but is an important part of creating a relapsed identity. If we remember Bucholtz and Hall's (2005: 594) indexicality principle of identity construction, initiators "overtly mention" that they have relapsed, categorizing them as having slipped from quitting smoking. Initiators announce having relapsed at the very beginning to make sure that their posts are received in the right light. In several threads initiators already use the thread titles (or the subtitles within posts, in the case of S12) for that matter. Announcing one's relapse often involves a variation of *back on (at/to) day one*, which is optionally accompanied with *again*. This may be due to the fact that *day one or two* invokes the beginning of any quitting smoking journey, as in (10.47):

(10.47) I'm on day two now (Again!!) so I'll see how it goes with this quit! (S06, t12)

In (10.47), the initiator indexes his relapse by using the adverb *again*, which he boosts by using exclamation marks. Holmes (1995: 76) argued that "boosting devices intensify the force [of an utterance]". In this case, the exclamation marks combined with the disappointed emoticon emphasise that the initiator views his relapse critically, which can be seen as a way of pre-empting negative comments.

Announcing one's relapse can also occur by explicitly referring to the activity of (stopping) smoking in combination with the adverb *again*, as in examples (10.48) and (10.49):

(10.48) Going back to day one…..
…..Tomorrow… as I have smoked again. (S06, t5)

(10.49) sheepishly posting that I am stopping smoking..again…today (S06, t10)

In both examples, initiators employ suspension points as a boosting device as they build up momentum for announcing their relapse, just like pauses in oral interaction. Actually, the ini-

[84] For comments on thanking go to 9.2.1 and the description of the discursive move *thanks*.

tiator in (10.48) presents her announcement as a cliff-hanger since *Going back to day one* is the thread title while the second line is part of her post. The suspension points (as well as the textual break) emphasize that it is hard for the participant to confess to having smoked, positioning herself as struggling to come to terms with relapsing. In (10.49) the initiator also uses suspension points to indicate that announcing her relapse is difficult. By additionally employing the adverb *sheepishly*, she positions herself as being embarrassed of her relapse, which mitigates potential criticism but can also be seen as an involvement strategy, appealing to other participants' understanding.

10.4.1.2. Being self-deprecating

As we have seen above, initiators take a stance on their relapse, usually being very critical about having abandoned their journey to quitting smoking. At times, they even become self-deprecating. Previous research described self-deprecating comments as a means for establishing legitimacy and asking for support in online health support groups[85] (Harvey & Koteyko 2013: 169). This holds also true for the relapse sample. Since this strategy barely occurs in the topic requesting help, it seems to be tied to the fact that initiators have not reached the common goal. Being self-deprecating is a way of negotiating face. It is a face-saving strategy since initiators pre-empt overt criticism by judging themselves critically. Further, it is a face-enhancing strategy because initiators make respondents feel sorry for them being hard on themselves. For her advice column data, Locher (2006: 212) has called this type of relational work "appealing", on which she comments: "'Appealing' is in some sense a counterpart to 'empathizing' […] in that it may act as an invitation to the advisor to feel sympathy for the advice-seeker". She adds that appealing is used to reveal emotions, which, of course, in the case of being self-deprecating equals to revealing negative emotions. Being self-deprecating often overlaps with other strategies used to create a relapsed identity, which also means that it is not tied to a specific sequence of where it occurs in a post. The strategy of being self-deprecating overlaps with announcements of relapsing in (10.50) and (10.51). In (10.52) the strategy is nested in a relapse story.

(10.50) [Visigoths] aren't too smart. Hello Day 1 tomorrow. (S12, t10)

(10.51) I have been avoiding this forum because I have been smoking for over two months. I can't begin to tell you how disgusted I feel. […] (S06, t4)

[85] I use the label 'self-deprecating' for that reason.

(10.52) […]I just grabbed one without thinking, then realized but thought why not and bought a pack. Idiot I know. […] (S12, t14)

In (10.50) the initiator (his nickname being *Visigoth*) criticizes himself in the subtitle of his first post (*aren't too smart*). His self-deprecating comment qualifies his announcement of having relapsed from the very beginning. Similarly, the initiator in (10.51) takes a clear stance towards her relapse (*how disgusted I feel*), through which she signals that she still wants to quit and is aware of how bad smoking is (an insight, which is often taken up in both forum practices). Moreover, by addressing a collective *you*, she attempts to actively involve respondents (*can't begin to tell you*). In (10.52) the initiator evaluates her relapse story while echoing potential opinions of respondents (*Idiot I know*). The appealing note in self-deprecating statements seems to trigger strong reactions in respondents (see Section 10.4.2.3).

10.4.1.3. Referring to history with community

Initiators who share having relapsed have been part of the community before, which they take up in their initial posts. They indicate that the support they previously received was not in vain, for which they use the relational work strategies appealing and praising. Appealing can be done by expressing self-consciousness or by apologizing to the group whereas praising involves telling the group that they have been helpful, see examples (10.53) and (10.54):

(10.53) […] i was too embarrased to come to the forum after i'd smoked, i had such great support which I really don't take for granted, it actually left me feeling more like a failure that I had let you all down (S06, t10)

(10.54) […] I am throwing all my embarassement about restarting out the window as I loved what this site did for me years ago. Its nice having a place to rant, to complain, and to have people around that have my back. […] (S12, t7)

In both examples, initiators begin by appealing to respondents when they share that they have been feeling embarrassed about relapsing. They move on to praise the forum (*such great support; I loved what this site did for me*), which can be seen as backing up their initial appeal. Both relational work strategies construct pathos as they work towards involving respondents. In (10.53), the initiator returns to appealing when she constructs her identity as feeling so strongly connected to the community that she has suffered from disappointing the group. In contrast, in (10.54) the initiator elaborates on how he appreciated the group before, which boosts his praise. If initiators have not contributed to the group for a longer while, they may downtone or even abstain from appealing to respondents, as in (10.55):

> (10.55) […] Haven't posted in a long time and back on day one again. […] Have been following posts and looking at all the information. Thanks for the support in the past and hope I can contribute again. (S06, t5)

The initiator refers to his history as a group member before announcing his relapse. He indexes that he is accustomed with the norms of the forum when he describes that he observed what had been going on before posting again (*Have been following posts...*). In a next step, he tries to involve respondents by appreciating previous help he had received (*Thanks for the support*) and by wishing to be fully integrated back into the group (*hope I can contribute*).

10.4.1.4. Sharing relapse story

After initiators announce their relapse, some of them tell their story of how it came about. Previous studies also have described sharing one's own experience as a strategy to involve other participants to come across as authentic or to create common ground in online health support groups (see Harvey & Koteyko 2013; Page 2012; Sillence 2013). In the forum practices, relapse stories are sites of identity construction, in which initiators raise understanding for their situation, try to bond with or establish common ground with respondents. They always feature but an implicit element of justification or appeal for understanding. Several stories allude to the piece of community wisdom that smoking just one cigarette is enough to get addicted again. The group in (S12) even has an acronym for this called *NOPE*, meaning *Not One Puff Ever*. In (10.56) the initiator had abstained from smoking for a longer period until he succumbed to trying another cigarette:

(10.56) […] This place did it for me before, and after a couple of years, I started back up, first on walks to work, and then at work, and then secretly as much as possible. I have to lose a bunch of weight and i hate myself for getting rehooked… yes it was just one puff to find myself smoking all out very quickly […] (S12, t7)

Example (10.56) tells the typical relapse story of how one cigarette turned into many. The initiator positions himself as unhappy with relapsing (*i hate myself for*), which has an appealing note and sets the ground for respondents who have gone through the same before, too. In the last sentence, the initiator forestalls potential questions, confirming that he has not followed the *NOPE* mantra advocated on the forum. By using the verb construction *to find myself smoking all out* the initiator constructs himself as self-critical who knows where he went wrong (*just one puff*), which can be seen as face-saving.

In the following example (10.57), the element of justification and appeal for understanding stands at the forefront:

(10.57) Well this week was officially a nightmare, and I fell of the wagon.
First on Monday, SO was in hospital with chest pain, looks like a heart attack […]
Second, on Tuesday, […], he decided it was stress living with me, and he wants to end it. […]
Finally, I received a phone call this morning that my 8 month old niece was rushed to hospital […]
On top of all my health issues this year, stress of school, I just thought **** it. […]
Am very disappointed in myself, but equally it gave me the time out to calm down I needed […] (S12, t14)

Example (10.57) represents the shortened version of a long relapse story. After the initiator announces her relapse, she recounts what major life events occurred that led up to her smoking again (illness of partner, separation from partner and illness of niece). She builds up the sequence of events by using discourse markers (*First, Second, Finally*), which helps construct her as facing too many obstacles (*On top of all my health issues ...*). It also justifies how she could get to this point. On an interpersonal level, the narrative has an appealing effect, working towards eliciting the others' understanding of her difficult situation. Finally, she positions herself as *very disappointed* in herself but as having no other options (*it gave me the time out to calm down ...*), which is a means of preventing criticism or other face-threats.

10.4.1.5. Being self-reflective

After having relapsed, initiators reflect on their attitude towards stopping smoking. They often show that they have gained some insights, which they can use for their next attempt. Self-reflective comments indicate that stopping smoking can also be learnt, thus relapses are re-conceptualized as profitable experiences. This attitude may be not specific to smoking but could be typical of health matters that involve lifestyle changes in general (see Veen et al. 2010). Initiators display self-reflectiveness not only in the initial post but also when they further engage in interaction. It can feature some self-criticism in terms of what when wrong with previous quitting attempts. Initiators construct their identity as evolving in the quitting process, which can be indexed by the verb *learn* (or the noun *learner* as in 10.58):

(10.58) [...] I see this now as a disease something only I can cure myself of. That I have a choice. (Stress shouldn't have got the better of me – but like people have said…only human).

1. I must not drink.

This always breaks me.

I always seem to do the hard work, first week and then never get past week 3. A hard learner. (S06, t8)

The initiator in (10.58) implicitly establishes a contrast between her current mind-set and before, signalled by the adverb *now*. She ascertains that it is in her power to overcome the hurdles of quitting smoking (*I have a choice*), through which she also echoes the discourses of self-responsibility (see Ch. 5). Thereby, she positions herself as a determined quitter who has not been demoralised by relapsing. She signals that she knows the cause of her relapse by criticizing herself (*Stress shouldn't have got…*), which she simultaneously justifies by her comment (*only human*). Next, the initiator shares insights she gained from her last attempt (*I must not drink)*. Finally, she evaluates herself as being a *hard learner*, which corresponds to how community members conceptualise quitting smoking as an ongoing process with the occasional setback (ex 10.46).

The initiator in (10.59) also puts forward that she is in charge of being successful in quitting smoking, when announcing that she has made the conscious decision of not smoking again:

(10.59) today ive made the choice not to smoke again

i know ive been here before, as many of us have been

Got my patch on and my mind set- this is not a battle, just a different way my choice (S12, t3)

In the example (10.59), the initiator presents her new approach to stopping smoking, viewing it as a *choice*. She verbalises her thinking process when she argues that quitting smoking *is not a battle*, thus indexing that she has drawn her conclusions from her previous attempts.

10.4.1.6. Expressing confidence / motivation

Initiators indicate that they are still motivated or that they feel confident about quitting, which can occur in initial as well as later posts. Expressing confidence / motivation often takes place in a pre-closing position right before *farewell,* which has an involving function. By signalling their confidence / motivation at the end of their posts, initiators let respondents know that they deserve support, which encourages further interaction. Several initiators use a grammatical future form (*going to, will*) to index the longevity of their plans and their determination, which alternatively can also be signalled by the use of adjectives. Further, most initiators use a boosting device when they express confidence / motivation to highlight that they are serious about this quitting attempt.

In (10.60) the initiator implicitly establishes a contrast to his previous failed attempts (*This time*), positioning himself as having a strong enough will to stick to quitting. He emphasises his determination by qualifying smoking as *stupid* in capitals (which equals shouting in CMC) and by using two exclamation marks.

(10.60) This time I’m determined to stop this STUPID habit!! (S06, t12)

(10.61) I’m going to be ending posts with NOPE now to. NOPE! (S12, t10)

(10.62) Tomorrow is the new quit date, and feeling ready – already noticed the annoying cough and breathlessness after a few days so that is my incentive! (S12, t14)

The initiator in (10.61) expresses his motivation by explicitly wanting to adopt the community mantra NOPE (*N*ot *O*ne *P*uff *E*ver), which is also a means to relate to other group members since he signals that he finds their approach effective. He immediately puts his plan into action, using an exclamation mark as boosting device. Examples (10.60) and (10.61) occur right before *farewell*. Example (10.62) is in final position rounding off the post. The initiator constructs her identity as motivated for another attempt at quitting by calling herself *ready* and listing how her health has already suffered. When she writes about *the annoying cough*, she assumes that other members are familiar with it, thus she clearly tries to connect with other members.

10.4.1.7. Commenting on progress

Some initiators keep group members updated after having received support. Therefore, commenting on progress only occurs in second and later posts within the topic *relapse*. In terms of content, initiators share how much time has passed since they started their new attempt, how they deal with cravings, what withdrawal symptoms they are experiencing and how they are feeling. Previous research also found that initial posters describe their improvements, statistics or symptoms as a means of establishing their legitimacy and of soliciting support (however, it is not always clear whether these findings refer only to initial postings) (see Harvey & Koteyko 2013; Morrow 2006; Sillence 2013; Stommel & Lamerichs 2014; etc.). Apart from establishing legitimacy and soliciting support, commenting on progress is a way of showing that respondents' efforts have not been in vain, which is an involvement strategy in the *relapse* sample.

In his first post, the initiator from (10.63) had announced that he is *back on day one again*. According to the forum clock, he posts again right before midnight to inform respondents as to how he has been doing. The use of the determiner *this* indicates that he refers back to his initial post, which marks his post as a follow-up. He constructs him as successfully starting over when he describes how he dealt with cravings, employing coping strategies that are frequently recommended in the group (*healthy snacks, busy and distracted*).

(10.63) …Made it through this first day..Stuck with healthy snacks, but lots of them! Kept myself busy and distracted. Had a few craves but managed to weather it out .. Will post again tomorrow. (S06, t5)

(10.64) 1 hour, 15 minutes and I'll be past the 24 hour mark. One more stretch this long and those blips' traces of nicotine will be out of my system.. (S12, t10)

Example (10.64) illustrates how participants orient towards time milestones as a measure of success when stopping smoking. Similar to (10.63), the initiator posts close to midnight to let respondents know that he has managed to get through his first day.

10.4.2. Strategies used to create empathetic help-giver identities

My close-reading analysis showed that nine strategies help construct empathetic help-giver identities in the topic relapse. Some of these strategies have been described for expert identity creation in other online advice settings, such as praise efforts, show awareness of a difficult situation or refer to self (e.g. Armstrong et al. 2011; Locher 2006, 2013; Sillence 2010; etc.). However, help-giver identities are characterized by their own particular pattern of discourse strategies in the topic relapse. The strategies are listed according to how they appear. Respondents do not necessarily use all nine strategies in their posts but may use a combination or also just one of the strategies. The first four strategies are featured in immediate reactions to posts announcing relapses, whereas the other six can occur both in reactions to initiators' first or later posts:

(1) welcoming
(2) praising
(3) wishing someone well
(4) feeling sorry for someone
(5) suggesting interacting with community
(6) referring to self or community
(7) showing awareness of a difficult situation
(8) expressing confidence in quitters' abilities
(9) giving advice (on quitting; to get back on track)

Strategies one, three and four are also discursive moves (*welcoming, well-wishing, apology*), which illustrates the importance of respondents constructing an empathetic and understanding identity in the topic relapse. The second strategy, praising, often co-occurs with welcoming as respondents praise initiators for returning to the community (see 9.2.1 for examples on *welcoming*). The first four strategies are involvement (i.e. face-enhancing) strategies, which epitomize how important it is for participants to connect with each other and to give support. Strategy five and six are closely linked, showing that the community is viewed as a (discursive) resource, which is common in all forum interaction (see the topic requesting help, in Section 10.3.2.). However, in the relapse sample, respondents tend to refer to themselves or to the community to show empathy and to bond and only secondarily to back up statements and construct expertise, which differs from the requesting help sample. Strategy seven is again face-enhancing when respondents display empathy for initiators' relapsing. After having established a good rapport with initiators, respondents attempt to motivate initiators to get back on track (strategies 8 and 9). For instance, respondents argue that initiators can profit from their previous experience with quitting smoking. This argument can be mobilised as a booster in strategy eight or as an admonition in strategy nine, reminding initiators to learn from previous mistakes. Strategy nine can also be entirely motivational, pointing to the belief in the communities that one should never give up trying to stop smoking. The importance of perseverance is a key tenet in the two forum practices, (S06) and (S12), at large (which is part of motivational advice, as described in 9.4.2). In what ensues, I will describe strategies two and six to nine in more detail (for comments on strategies one, three, four and five, see Ch. 9, where the discursive moves *welcoming, well-wishing, apology* and advice to be an active community member have been thoroughly discussed).

10.4.2.1. Praising

Praising is common throughout the forum practices, as it is an effective way of connecting with other participants. In the requesting help sample, praising occurs as a generic opening move. In the relapsesample, respondents praise initiators for trying to stop smoking again, which is why it is often used in combination with welcoming. Respondents construct their identity as accepting and understanding by combining welcoming and praising. Hence, they create a positive environment and bond with relapsed members, which is a means of furthering pathos . Since relapsed initiators tend to be very self-critical, this is especially important. Additionally, respondents praise initiators for their perseverance, for how they are tackling obstacles or for reaching initial milestones (see also 9.4.1, praising assessments).

In example (10.65) the initiator previously expressed embarrassment about disappointing the community and being *a failure*. The respondent dismantles the initiator's worries by praising her return, positioning her as a determined quitter (and not a failure). He rounds off his praise by welcoming the initiator back into the community, through which he assumes a position of an established member (building ethos construction).

> (10.65) the fact that you are back says more than any words could, welcome back (S06, t10)

> (10.66) CONGRATULATIONS DONNA!
> We are all so very proud of you!... and you should be so proud of yourself too!
> (S12, t3)

Example (10.66) is an entire post made up of praising, amounting to a virtual cheer for the initiator. The respondent expresses her happiness over the latter's fresh attempt, boosting her good wishes by using an exclamation mark and writing in capitals. She positions herself as a community representative when she appropriates the collective voice (*We are all*) and expresses that the entire group feels *so very proud* of the initiator. This collective opinion sets the ground for the respondent's final piece of advice, in which she urges the initiator to see her new attempt in a positive light. Respondents often refer to how they are proud of initiators for re-starting. On the one hand, it can be seen as a reaction to initiators who are embarrassed over having relapsed. On the other hand, it feeds into the ideology of quitting as the only option.

10.4.2.2. Referring to self or community

Respondents refer to themselves or to the community to express that they understand what initiators are going through, to indicate that they all have had similar experiences, to offer the support of the whole group or to present themselves as a motivational example. Referring to oneself or to the community often acquires a consoling tone as respondents signal that relapsing is a normal part of quitting smoking. Additionally, respondents establish a relation of similarity (*like you*), which signals that respondents are empathetic with initiators and feel connected to them. Thus, they are predominantly engaging in face-enhancing relational work (empathy, bonding), which boosts pathos construction. Referring to oneself (or the community) also contributes to ethos construction. However, this function comes secondary to its face-enhancing effect in this context. Thus, regarding its interpersonal effects, referring to self is used differently than in the requesting help sample, where it tends to be used for its warranting function.

If respondents liken their personal experience to the one of initiators, they often use the verb *happen* to talk about whatever led up to relapsing and the adverb *too* to make the explicit link between their and the initiators' quitting smoking journey. In (10.67) the respondent reacts to an initiator who relapsed on her third day. She bonds with the initiator by writing that she has also previously relapsed on the third day (*got me a few times to*). The use of the word *pesky,* the onomatopoetic growl and the angry emoticon further indicate that she feels empathetic with respect to the initiator's relapse. Finally, the respondent expresses her confidence in the initiator's ability to quit (boosted by two happy emoticons). In this case, referring to her own story also indirectly warrants her assessment since the respondent's forum statistics indicate that she is past day 3 at the moment.

> (10.67) Hi Suzie, that pesky Day 3 has got me a few times to grrr but you can do it
>
> (S12, t26)

(10.68) snap… this happened to me, exactly the same. Look back through my threads. I'm now 5 months quit after restarting again. (S12, t10)

Example (10.68) is the reaction to an initiator who had just tried to start over but relapsed because he convinced himself that he was not ready to stop. The respondent first likens their quitting journeys by using the interjection *snap*, which is an exclamation used to index that two events are similar (OED online 2016). By pointing out that she went through *exactly the same*, she establishes a connection to the initiator, positioning herself as truly understanding of what he is feeling. Afterwards, the respondent gives hope to the initiator as she has managed to remain smoke-free since her relapse.

Apart from referring to themselves, respondents speak on behalf of the entire community, either invoking the experience of or promising the support of the group. Respondents refer to the experience of the entire group as a bonding strategy, which indexes connectedness as they all understand what is disturbing initiators. At the same time, respondents normalize relapses as an integral part of anyone's quit smoking journey by reiterating that all community members have gone through it, which is idiosyncratic to the topic relapse. In turn, offering the support of the entire group is a means of making initiators feel welcome and of involving them into the community, which is a common strategy throughout the forums (see Section 10.3.2.7) Respondents use a variation of *we've all been there* to liken the initiators' and the group's experience and employ some form of *we're all* to offer community support. The pronoun *all* appears to boost the fact that the pronoun *we* represents the whole group. In (10.69), the respondent shows her understanding for the initiator who hesitated to come back to the forum because she felt embarrassed (*I know what you mean*). The respondent consoles and bonds with the initiator by likening the latter's relapse story to the experience of the entire group, signalling that the initiator is a part of the community (*we have all been there*). In the next example (10.70), the respondent expresses that he feels sorry for the initiator who relapsed after a longer period. He indicates that several community members (including him) have also had fall-backs after longer stretches of time (*But several of us...*), which has the double-effect of bonding with the initiator and of normalizing her experience. Finally, he assures her of the help of the entire community, constructing the forum as a safe place (as indexed by the deictic *here*).

(10.69) I know what you mean about coming back to the forum – we have all been there and done the same thing hon, but thats the great thing about the forum it is not judgemental (S06, t10)

(10.70) So sorry to hear about what you are going through, But several of us have been there – I broke a six month quit and like Joan realised that it wasn't the answer to anything. As soon as you feel ready, jump back in the water again. We will all be hre to support you. (S12, t14)

Sometimes respondents refer to themselves as positive examples, which should motivate initiators to continue trying. In these cases, respondents liken their story to the initiators', often adding their smoking statistics, and reassure initiators that stopping smoking is feasible. In (10.71) the respondent positions herself as having been in the same situation (*like yourself*), which she makes her current success relevant to the initiator as well as rendering her final promise trustworthy.

(10.71) Like yourself I tried to quit two years ago and lasted a month last time. I'm on month 5 at the mo and it really does get better with time. (S12, t7)

(10.72) […] you will make it. I didn't think I would ever give up, after 38 years of between 30 and 40 a day, and lots of failed attempts of days, sometimes weeks, I know that this one is my final quit and that I will not smoke again – so it acn be done. (S06, t10)

The respondent in (10.72) uses her own story to back up her assessment (*you will make it*) and to encourage the initiator. Firstly, she connects with the initiator, who feels like she has failed, by establishing a relation of similarity (*I didn't think I would ever give up*). Secondly, she points to how she has overcome her addiction despite its severity (boosted by her smoking statistics), which works to reinforce her final assessment (*so it acn be done*).

10.4.2.3. Showing awareness of a difficult situation

Respondents show that they are aware of how difficult a situation can be, offering empathy to initiators. Pudlinski (2005: 267) points out that empathy "[…] involves demonstrating an understanding of another person's situation and/or feelings and communicating that understanding back to the person so that they feel understood". When respondents acknowledge how hard relapsing is on initiators, they position themselves as caring and understanding, which is necessary identity work to be a legitimate help-giver in the relapse sample. As discussed above, respondents may display empathy in combination with bonding when they refer to themselves or to the community. They can also state that initiators have it tough or that giving up smoking is hard. Moreover, they can recommend to initiators that they go easy on themselves or remind them that quitting takes several attempts. In many instances, respondents display empathy as a reaction to initiators' appealing. To show their awareness of a difficult situation, respondents often use the adjectives *tough*, *hard*, or *bad* (in connection with the verb *feel*).

Before (10.73) the initiator tells the community that even though it *might seem early to start another quit*, she wants to give in another go, confiding that *things have been tough* for her. The respondent picks up on the initiator's appealing tone as she suggests that she should not feel bad (*Don't beat yourself up*). Further, the respondent shows consideration of the initiator's personal situation, echoing the initiator's own words with the adjective *tough*. As a next step, she indicates her alignment with the initiator when she agrees that there is no *right time*. Finally, she switches to a collective *we* to signal that tenacity is the key to success for all of them, indexing that all participants are in the same position. Before (10.74) the initiator has been self-denigrating (*Idiot I know*) and apologized when finishing her post (*sorry to let everyone down*), which had an appealing effect. The respondent reacts to these cues since she shows empathy by feeling sorry (boosted by the orthographically enhanced adverb *so*) and by acknowledging that the initiator has it difficult (*how tuff life is*). Further, she eases the initiator's worry about disappointing the community (*you dont need bashing from anyone off here*). Thus, in both instances, respondents engage in face-enhancing strategies, which strengthen their attachment to initiators but also to the entire group.

(10.73) Don't beat yourself up you're going through a tough time right now so be kind to yourself you're right there is never a right time we just have to keep trying till we find that sticky one (S06, t8)

(10.74) Ohh im sooo sorry too read about how tuff life is for you at the moment, just do what you need too do and come back when you are ready doll, you dont need bashing from anyone off here youre getting enough already. (S12, t14)

(10.75) sometimes it takes a few attempts to get where u want to go. If you keep trying you'll get there in the end. i did so can everyone, just give it a chance. (S12, t4)

Example (10.75) illustrates how entangled strategies to create help-givers identities can be. The respondent reacts to an initiator who relapsed after just having started a new quitting attempt, putting forward that quitting smoking is difficult (*it takes a few attempts*). Thereby, he normalizes relapsing, which is face-saving for the initiator. He encourages the initiator by urging the latter to continue, predicting eventual success. Thus, the respondent takes up a position of being confident in the initiator's abilities. Then, he refers to himself both to warrant his preceding assessment and to set himself up as an example.

10.4.2.4. Expressing confidence in quitters' abilities

Respondents express that they have confidence in initiators' abilities to encourage them to keep going. This strategy is often part of the main body of arguments. Respondents try to turn the negative event of relapsing into something positive by highlighting that initiators are in a better place to quit now since they are more experienced, which is a powerful motivating strategy. Respondents can use the verb phrase *you know* to appeal to initiators' strength and experience (as explained in Ch. 9) and / or the verb phrase *you can* or *will do it* to index certainty. Example (10.76) nicely illustrates how the event of relapsing is reshaped into something positive as the respondent positions the initiator as being in an advantageous situation due to her previous experience (*one good solid quit*). He employs the verb *know* in capitals to boost his appeal to the initiator's strength. Further, he explicitly reiterates that the initiator's experience will be a useful weapon (*armed with all the knowledge*), using battle imagery to conceptualize quitting smoking (see also Hillyer & Brown 2014: 53, who found the "Battle fantasy type" to be common in an American smoking cessation forum).

> (10.76) As others have said, having had one good solid quit you KNOW you can do this and you'll be able to start your next quit when you're ready, armed with all the knowledge and experience you've gained from this one. (S12, t14)

> (10.77) I also think that it's important that you remember that although you fell into that evil trap of 'just one' and although you may have been back on the cigs for while, neither of you are back to 'square one'. […] In many ways you are in a much, much stronger position than someone who has never tried to quit before […]. It doesn't require any blind faith that quitting smoking is a positive experience that gets easier all the time, because you KNOW that's true from personal experience. Which is why I think both of you are going to rock your quits! (S06, t4)

In example (10.77) the respondent reminds two participants who have relapsed that they do not have to start from scratch, positioning them as having more expertise than someone completely new to quitting smoking. By repeating this argument various times (*neither of you are back to…, much stronger position*), the respondent makes it more powerful, setting the ground for her final assertion that both participants will be successful in quitting smoking. As in (10.76), the respondent boosts the verb phrase *you KNOW* to emphasise her point of the two participants having some experience. Finally, her choice of the lexeme *rock* and the exclamation mark index the respondent's positive attitude towards the participants' new attempt, acting as an additional motivational spur.

10.4.2.5. Giving advice

Even though giving advice is not the main concern in the relapse sample, respondents sometimes give unsolicited advice. For instance, they give advice on how to behave when cravings come up or on how initiators should approach their new quitting journey in general by suggesting initiators take into account their previous experience. Further, respondents try to (re-)motivate relapsed quitters by giving advice to keep going or to get back on track, which mobilizes the prevalent ideology that perseverance leads to success. Giving advice to get back on track has a face-enhancing function since it is used to show support and to involve initiators, which positions respondents as supportive and interested in initiators' journeys. The imperative form predominates when respondents give advice on coping, which is common to most advice moves in the two practices (S06) and (S12) (see Ch. 9). If respondents instruct initiators on how to tackle cravings, they tend to use a sequence of imperatives. Thereby, respondents turn cravings into something manageable as long as initiators take it step-by-step.

In (10.78) the respondent gives advice not to be scared of reaching those days on which the initiator had previously relapsed in her quitting journey. When the respondent admonishes the initiator to view this attempt independently (*forever will crash on that day*), he positions himself as worried and looking out for her best interests. Afterwards, he ends on a positive note since the adverb *just* indexes that there is a simple solution.

(10.78) I don't what to suggest but try not to let day whatever spook you or you're forever will crash on that day. Just keep in mind how important getting free is & go from there. (S06, t8)

(10.79) Don't give in to the craves, just breathe long and slow through every one of them. Go outside for 5 mins and breathe very slow… it helps… each crave is taking you a step closer to being a non smoker, remember that when they hit you. (S06, t12)

In (10.79) the respondent warns against succumbing to cravings with an imperative form (*don't give in*). She provides specific action alternatives for how the respondent should behave in such case, which she precedes with the adverb *just,* constructing it as simple to apply. When she assures the respondent that it is useful advice (*it helps*), she constructs her identity as having gone through such cravings. Thus, she signals her understanding of the initiator's situation and her expertise at the same time. From her position as an experienced quitter, the respondent suggests that the initiator should view cravings as something positive, which bring the initiator closer to becoming a non-smoker (see also Hillyer & Brown 2014: 56).

In (10.80) the respondent establishes how common relapsing is when trying to quit smoking (*we've all been there*), empathizing with the initiator's setback. Then, she encourages the initiator not to lose confidence and to keep trying by establishing an analogy between quitting smoking and learning how to ride a bike—which also needs perseverance and includes falling down in the beginning. The respondent introduces the bike analogy with *they say*, indexing that her argument is common knowledge.

(10.80) I'm sure we've all been there more times than we care to remember, but, you know what they say- "You've got to get back on that bike and keep peddling, cos if you keep on trying eventually you won't fall off again" (S12, t10)

(10.81) As soon as you feel ready, jump back in the water again . We will all be here to support you. (S12, t14)

The respondent in (10.81) advises the initiator to return to quitting smoking once she feels up for it, assuring her that she will be supported by the community. He treats her relapse as a momentary slip, which does not mean the initiator has stopped giving up smoking

10.5. Summary

In this chapter I have looked at the question of how interpersonal pragmatics (relational work and identity construction) can be linked to persuasion in the forum practices. My focus was on how lay people negotiate involvement, trustworthiness and expertise —which are all aspects of ethos and pathos construction— when helping and giving advice to other community members. To operationalise my guiding research question of how relational work and identity construction are linked to persuasion, I analysed three sub-questions in two samples: (I) requesting help and (II) relapse. I chose two samples to have the possibility of comparing whether strategies remained the same or whether they changed depending on topic and participant structure, as there are no newbies in the topic relapse.

Firstly, I addressed the question of the relation between patterns of linguistic strategies and interpersonal effects in general. I based my analysis on my findings in Ch. 9. Zooming in on these two samples revealed that the speech event advising is central in the topic requesting help, whereby the frequency of the discursive move *own experience* indicated the importance of creating expertise or common ground based on respondents' experiential world. In the topic relapse, discursive moves that have a clear, interpersonal purpose were frequently used (e.g. *apology, well-wishing*, etc.), which suggested that establishing a relationship with initiators is of main concern to respondents.

Secondly, I analysed the questions of how expertise / credibility and personal involvement are discursively created according to posting roles (see Ch. 9), which showed that the foci differed according to sub-samples. Initiators invest discursive work to establish the legitimacy of their request or their own authenticity as new posters in the topic requesting help. They describe the symptoms they experience because of (quitting) smoking, share their path of their quitting journey and reflect on why previous quitting smoking attempts have not worked out. All of these strategies help position initiators as trustworthy contributors who deserve to be taken seriously and to receive input from others. Further, initiators index their insecurity or their struggles, they explicitly ask for help and they thank or agree with respondents. While these strategies are also part of constructing legitimate help-seekers' identities, their main function is to involve respondents. In the relapse sample the main challenge for initiators is to draw a balance between asking for support from others and positioning themselves as having some experience in quitting and as community members. Initiators share their relapse story, often telling the all-too-well-known tale of smoking just one, which, I argue, signals that they are experienced. Some initiators are self-reflective, or they update the community on their progress, which signals to others that they are taking their previous attempts into account. These discourse strategies can be viewed as enhancing their credibility as relapsed posters. Further, some intiators are self-deprecating, they may refer to their history with the community, thank respondents or express their motivation—which are strategies that endeavor to establish a link to respondents and to get support.

In the topic requesting help, I suggest that respondents spend most discursive effort into creating authority, using strategies that are linked to the speech event advising—such as normalizing, providing personalised information and promising improvement. Further, they refer to outside sources and give specific action alternatives, which they explain in detail. Since the involvement strategies used are about binding initiators to the community in general, respondents show support by providing information or advice in the requesting help sample. For instance, respondents engage initiators by praising their decision, suggesting they interact with the forum, or by promising support from the group, which could hint at the fact that several initiators are newbies. In contrast, creating a supportive atmosphere is the central goal in the relapse sample. Respondents focus on connecting with initiators by welcoming them, praising their fresh start, feeling sorry for them or by displaying empathy in various ways. Also, they are encouraging initiators by expressing confidence in their abilities. Even so, respondents mobilize their expertise when they generalize quitting experiences and give advice.

Several of the strategies I identified also occurred in previous studies. For instance, 'describing one's symptoms' understandably seems to be a wide-spread way of constructing an authentic help-seeker identity in online health support groups (see Armstrong et al. 2011; Harvey & Koteyko 2013; Morrow 2006; Sillence 2013; etc.). Similarly, initiators invoke common background or set the ground for advice by sharing aspects of their quitting history or relapse story, which Kouper (2010) and Page (2012) both also observed in their data. Further, several of the warranting strategies identified here—such as sharing one's own experience, referring to outside links, explaining information—have been observed in a range of online health advice settings (see Harrison & Barlow 2009; Kouper 2010; Locher 2006; 2013a; Richardson 2003; etc.). The difference to earlier research is the fact that I compared two sub-samples distinguished by topic and participant structure within the same communities through the specific lens of persuasion. It showed that the composite of strategies to construct help-seeker or help-giver identities shifted in the two samples; including the use of the same discourse strategies with different relational effects (e.g. 'refer to self'). Moreover, it highlighted that even though the overall supportive frame was always present, the communicative emphasis changed from being informationally bound in the topic requesting help, which resulted in increased attention to ethos construction, to being interpersonal in the relapse sample (favouring involvement and pathos). Finally, my discourse-analytical close-readings brought some ideological undercurrents of the forums to the fore: such as the laudability of perseverance, the advantage of having previous quitting experience and viewing several attempts to quit as the norm.

11 Conclusions

My focus in this thesis has been on analysing discursive patterns of persuasion in smoking cessation online, using an interpersonal pragmatic perspective. My definition of persuasion grounds on the rhetorician's Kenneth Burke (1950: 41) understanding as "the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents". It pinpoints that persuasion can be viewed as an interpersonal process that takes place in and through discourse. Thus, using an interpersonal pragmatic approach, with its interest in "the interpersonal side of language use" (Locher & Graham 2010: 2), is a sensible step. Locher and Graham (2010: 2) provide the following explanation for the term interpersonal pragmatics, which they argue comprehends different theoretical strands:

> [It] is used to designate examinations of the relational aspect of interactions between people that both affect and are affected by their understandings of culture, society, and their own and other's interpretation. (Locher & Graham 2010: 2)

Moreover, my thesis can be placed within the development of (im)politeness research to widen research to include the whole spectrum of relational work and its resulting linguistic variation (see Locher 2015). In order to operationalise persuasion for an empirical, linguistic analysis, I drew on Aristotle, who pointed to three important aspects—or working principles—of persuasion: ethos, pathos, logos. These principles provided an entry point for combining persuasion and an interpersonal pragmatic perspective, as they emphasised the interpersonal dimension to persuasion. Analysing the working principles ethos and pathos especially (the principle logos is more easily situated on the informational side of discourse) gives insight into pragmatic variation caused by interpersonal aspects of persuasion. Ethos is first and foremost linked to the identity of senders/speakers as it is connected to the credibility and trustworthiness of speakers. Pathos is tied to the identity of the audience and how the audience can be involved on an emotional level. The concepts of identity construction and relational work were useful to shed light on all working principles in an empirical, linguistic analysis.

In the preceding chapters, I discussed how the three working principles are realised in the overall corpus and two selected sub-samples, consisting of a set of website sections and of forum interaction. Thereby, I took the idiosyncrasies of persuasion in smoking cessation online in the UK into account. For instance, I examined logos on a broad level (and to a lesser extent ethos and pathos), for which I described the online smoking cessation landscape and determined common topics and multi-modal features and their link to the overall persuasive purpose. In the selected sub-samples, I focussed on the discursive structure of texts (and of persuasive arguments) and on how interpersonal effects and identity positions were subtly mobilized in view of persuasion. I will not repeat individual findings here but refer to the summaries in individual chapters, which list the detailed results of this study. In the following Section 11.1, I will return to my initial hypotheses I had established after an extensive literature review of persuasion across different fields and some initial data viewings. Thus, I will be able to revisit and shed light on some findings on persuasion gained through my analysis from an additional perspective. In Section 11.2 I share some general observations regarding my use of a mixed methodology, the impact of conducting a discursive moves analysis as well as how utilizing relational work and identity construction helped me illuminate the interpersonal dimension of persuasion. Finally, I will give an outlook, pointing out areas for further research.

11.1 Revisiting initial hypotheses

After having completed my literature review on persuasion across different field in Ch. 3 and after initial bottom-up analyses of my data, I developped four hypotheses to which I will return in this section. In these hypotheses I took important theoretical aspects of persuasion into account and how they could come into effect in the different practices under scrutiny. I speculated about how appeals to credibility, reason and/or emotion would be realised linguistically as well as about how using an interpersonal pragmatic approach could be useful to study persuasion in a non-effect-oriented way. I will go through and comment on each hypothesis individually.

In the first hypothesis I reflected on how ethos construction—that is appeals to credibility of senders—takes place in a UK context of smoking cessation online. It stated the following:

> **H1**: More diverse discursive effort will be invested into credibility (ethos) on peer-to-peer sites than professional sites. For instance, governmental sites are prone to profit from their institutional status and therefore might focus more on pathos and logos. Contributors on peer-to-peer sites may prefer to refer to and draw on their personal experience to create expertise whereas professional sites potentially rely more on research findings to warrant claims. Linguistically, this results in different realisations with personal accounts featuring structures that establish the comparability of experiences “like you” and referrals to research being likely to be characterised by numerical structures or nominalised sentences.

My initial assumption stated in the first hypothesis proved to be too general in nature. While contributors on peer-to-peer sites invest much discursive effort into building up credibility, for instance by referring to their own or collective experience as well as by referring to forum archives, professional sites regardless of their institutional background also work heavily on their ethos and with a variety of discourse strategies (such as through mitigation, informing, advising, referrals, etc.). However, my analyses in Ch. 8 suggest that ethos construction (and pathos for that matter) may receive different emphasis depending on the sub-sites in question. Nonetheless, as suggested in my hypothesis, contributors on peer-to-peer sites prefer drawing on and referring to their personal experience to create expertise instead of referring to scientific research. Compared to other studies (see Armstrong et al. 2011; Richardson 2003; Sillence 2010; etc.), referring to scientific research actually seems to be conspicuously absent in both forum practices. This may be due to sampling as I specifically selected sub-forums dealing with the initial days of quitting smoking, which I argue is a personal experience. Thus, referring to outside research might be of little effect. In contrast, referring to scientific research is a common warranting strategy in the websites. However, this assertion again depends on the situated context of the website practices. Sub-sites presenting FAQs signalled that their claims were grounded in research through the use of numerical evidence, a technical lexicon or explicitly invoking research. At the same time, sub-sites presenting practical tips for smoking cessation (in parts in the same practices) did not show this discursive pattern. In terms of linguistic realisation, contributors to forums who drew on their personal experience in fact established "like-you" connections through the use of adverbs or used evaluative verbs to state the effectiveness of their approach in the topic requesting help. My analysis also confirmed the versatility of referring to experience, as in the topic relapse contributors invoked their experience to face-enhancing effect and only secondarily to index experience.

In the second hypothesis I contemplated how pathos construction was going to be distributed in different practices and in what linguistic patterns it was bound to result.

> **H2:** Personal involvement (pathos) is prone to be heavily supported by multimodal elements in monologic websites and to be mainly discursively realised in peer-to-peer sites. Further, relational effects such as "bonding" and "empathizing" will be abundantly used to create personal appeal in both monologic and interactive sources. Similar to print mass-mediated communication, monologic sources will rely on strategies that belong to "synthetic personalization" to individualize and customize their content. Shifts between second person pronouns *you*, inclusive *we* and passivized sentences are strategic changes that give interesting hints at what is at stake interpersonally.

The assumption that personal and emotional involvement is extensively boosted by multi-modal elements in monologic websites can be confirmed with certain modifications. The use of multi-modal elements to establish emotional involvement depends on the websites in question and cannot be considered uniform. Based on my findings from the overall content analysis as well as the investigation of a sub-sample, I can assert the following: The use of images depicting happy and successful quitters to stir emotions in receivers is a common means on websites that move towards platforms in the Web 2.0 sense (see Herring 2013). Websites that are built up in a Web 1.0 fashion tend to use images less strategically in this respect but more as a means to reinforce content. Graphic means, such as highlighting in the form of bold print, italics and the use of different colours, have been used in all practices, however, without exhibiting a necessary link to pathos in particular. One interesting way of combining the technical possibilities with discursive strategies of involving users was observed in the FAQs of (S17). In this case, appeals to further interact with or to stay on the website were enhanced by including hyperlinks. Thus, website authors provided an immediate way to react to their invitation to prolong interaction. In the forums, contributors also used a range of images and emoticons, especially to signal concern and empathy or for bonding purposes (e.g. when welcoming relapsed or new quitters). Due to my focus on the discursive structure of contributions, I only touched on these aspects in Ch. 10, but it would deserve further and more detailed study.

The relational work strategies of bonding and empathizing were indeed commonly used to create personal, emotional involvement in both sub-samples. It needs to be pointed out, though, that face-enhancing relational work was more or less emphasised depending on the topic. For instance, the topic relapse was mainly dedicated to bonding and the display of empathy whereas the creation of expertise was in more prominent position in the topic requesting help. Similarly, the subsites presenting the code "listing practical tips" was characterized by its use of face-enhancing relational work, whereas it was secondary in "addressing common questions/worries". Thus, while all working principles of persuasion have been found to be present, the situated context influences which principle receives most weight. Finally, my speculations regarding the linguistic structure on monologic sources can be confirmed. Website authors frequently used synthetic personalization to individualise their content. However, instances where they desisted from doing so, gave interesting pointers to the interpersonal dimension of communication; e.g. in the case of discussing delicate topics such as pregnancy and smoking. Similarly, my analysis showed that the shift between address terms and passivized sentences could both be face-enhancing or face-saving (for readers) depending on context.

In the third hypothesis, I pondered on how the working principle logos was going to be realised in the corpus, reflecting on the distribution of topics (arguments) as well as the discursive activities employed to structure the discussion of these topics in discourse.

> **H3:** For argumentative appeals (logos), the content of arguments will overlap to a great extent on all websites. However, monologic websites might focus more on the benefits of quitting while peer-to-peer sites will also tackle the disadvantages of quitting (such as withdrawal effects) and actively negotiate the pros of quitting. Speech activities such as "warning" and "advising" might prevail on monologic as well as more interactive sites in order to influence future actions of non-experts. While warnings describe "undesired alternative courses of action" (van Dijk 2008: 38), advice is a speech act used to tell the hearer what is in the latter's best interest (Searle 1969: 67). Regarding differences between professional websites and peer-to-peer forums; contributors to the latter will have to present their arguments after having established their credibility.

In terms of the content of arguments, there was a large overlap between different sites. Some general aspects related to smoking—such as the fact that it damages one's health and that it is expensive—were present in all sources. However, other aspects—such as its effect on the environment and the fact that all kinds of tobacco consumption are unhealthy—could be linked to the aim of reaching a specific group of audience (adolescents and people of South Asian descent in these particular cases). My second assumption has to be relativized as not only peer-to-peer sites tackled the disadvantages of quitting but there were also several monologic websites discussing withdrawal symptoms and strategies to deal with them. Similarly, both uni-directional and peer-to-peer sources acknowledged the difficulties of quitting and its challenges while trying to motivate readers to persevere by promising improvement in the near future. In other words, my detailed analysis revealed that the advantages of quitting were discursively negotiated in both sub-samples; on the one hand, by promising improvement, on the other hand, by re-framing and normalizing the negative experience of quitting. With respect to the speech activities used in the corpus, my discursive moves analysis of selected sub-samples confirmed the importance of giving advice in these practices. This is not surprising if we go back to the definition of advice as "telling you what is best for you" (Searle 1969: 67). Interestingly, warnings, which entail making someone aware of a detrimental effect of an action in the future, were not common. Instead, negative side effects of smoking were presented in the form of general information as declaratives. Thus, this finding suggests that these sources desist from straightforward fear appeals but prefer to present the dangers of smoking in a more mitigated form. Finally, the clear separation of establishing one's credibility and presenting one's arguments did not always hold true, turning out to be a simplification of what was happening in peer-to-peer sites. For instance, certain discourse strategies, such as normalizing events and referring to one's own experience, could simultaneously construct the contributor's position as an experienced quitter and also present arguments. Thus, it highlighted the premise that there is always an informational and interpersonal side to communication. Moreover, as shown in my close-reading analysis of the forum sub-sample, the construction of ethos could be secondary in certain contexts (e.g. the topic relapse) where the emotional connection with the other interactant stood at the forefront.

My fourth and final hypothesis summarized my theoretical interest in employing an interpersonal pragmatic perspective to the study of persuasion. I specifically considered what the advantages of adopting such a perspective is for a bottom-up analysis of persuasion.

> **H4**: The empirical, qualitative linguistic study of the working principles of persuasion profits from an interpersonal pragmatic approach. It allows me to operationalise concepts like ethos, pathos, logos in terms of identity construction and relational work. Thus, this approach facilitates the data-based analysis of persuasion as a process and not as a result or perlocutionary effect. Moreover, drawing on Hymes' notion of the hierarchical distribution of speech acts as taking place within speech activities, linguistic patterns can be described according to which working principle they contribute and how they are used to navigate interpersonal concerns.

My analysis indicated the usefulness of an interpersonal pragmatic approach to persuasion. As suggested, the theoretical top-down working principles of persuasion could be operationalised because I linked them to how they contribute to identity construction of interactants and how they transform the relationship between interactants. By looking at identity construction and relational work, I could show the intricacies of persuasion as a process on a discourse level. For instance, the comparison of the patterns of identity positions and relational work strategies in different sub-sites or forum topics showed that the persuasive foci had shifted. Furthermore, looking at speech acts (or discursive moves) in their larger context was an indispensable step in order to make sense of the discursive structure of practices and their link to the persuasive purpose. I will discuss the implications of using an interpersonal pragmatic perspective to persuasion in more detail in the Section 11.2.

11.2. General observations and outlook

In this section I will share some general observations regarding the methodological and the theoretical approach adopted in this study. Further, I will point out future areas of research. With respect to general observations, I re-examined my findings on a meta-level, which stressed two inter-related aspects: (1) the advantage of a mixed methodology and (2) the use of relational work and identity construction for a nuanced, situated interpretation of persuasion.

Firstly, I argue that my mixed methodology approach—combining a thematic content analysis and discursive move analyses with qualitative close-readings of discourse—facilitates a comprehensive study of persuasion as a process on different levels. It enabled me to look at persuasion in terms of semantic content, discursive structure and linguistic form. Further, my multi-levelled approach meant that my analysis of the interpersonal dimension to the discourse used could be cross-referenced with my findings from my content and discursive moves analysis, which helped paint a multi-faceted picture of persuasion. Mixing methodologies also meant that I could complement and gradually build up my analyses in fruitful ways. My thematic content analysis, for instance, proved to be especially useful for handling a large data set as I could show what the most frequent topics were and what the typical multimodal features were at large. Further, the results of this content analysis were the basis for my discursive moves and my close reading analyses as I could group sources together with the help of a cluster analysis. This provided a more refined grouping of sources drawing on content instead of relying on situational factors (such as institutional background), which would have divided the corpus in a superficial way.

The next step in my analytical procedure, the discursive moves analysis, answered a part of my research question regarding the discursive structure of sources (linked to logos). Also, it allowed me to comment on the influence of situational and medium factors on the practices in question and established the scaffolding for focussing on aspects related to ethos and pathos. For instance, the catalogue of discursive moves used for the sub-corpus of websites showed the effect of the lay-expert dimension as the categories exhibited a large degree of overlap with the ones used in the online advice health column described by Locher (2006), which is carefully composed by a group of health experts. Moreover, interactional categories were non-existent, which clearly differed from the discursive moves catalogue for forums. In contrast, de-personalized information-giving was non-existent and interpersonal discursive moves were conspicuous, suggesting that the relational dimension is a key factor in these online health support groups. Additionally, the analysis of discursive moves facilitated the comparison to previous studies, which highlighted that the sources investigated belong to advice-giving practices. In the same vein, in terms of the sequencing of discursive moves, I found similar structures in the forum practices as in other online support groups focussed on advice-giving (e.g. Morrow 2012; Placencia 2012).

As mentioned above, my discursive moves analysis provided an important layer to my analysis of ethos and pathos construction—it supported my close-reading analyses of interpersonal aspects. In the forum sub-sample, the topic requesting help was characterized by its use of discursive moves related to advising; e.g. *advice* and *own experience*. This indicated the importance of displaying expertise and establishing common ground based on contributors' own experiential world. Similarly, discursive moves with an interpersonal function were more frequent in the topic relapse compared to the use of discursive moves in the entire forum sub-sample, suggesting that relationship management (or establishing a bond with initiators) is of great concern to contributors. These findings were further corroborated by my qualitative close readings of the data. In the case of the website sample, the discursive moves analysis revealed that there were different discursive foci to persuading readers in the two sub-sections ("addressing common questions/worries" and "listing practical tips") studied. The extensive use of *general information* pinpointed that there was a preference for persuasion through information-giving in "addressing common questions/worries", which also corresponds to the genre-specific setup as FAQs of the latter as simulated exchange between lay and experts. In contrast, *advice* was by far the most frequent discursive move in "listing practical tips" sections, indicating that persuasion was carried out through explicit advice-giving.

A second important insight is related to my aim related to theory: the use of an interpersonal pragmatic perspective to study persuasion. I found that by employing the concepts of identity construction and relational work I was able to conduct a nuanced bottom-up analysis of interpersonal variation linked to persuasion (see Ch. 8 & Ch. 10). On the one hand, it showed that emotional involvement was emphasised in the topic relapse in the forums as well as the "listing practical tips sections in the websites. On the other hand, it revealed that ethos construction—that is an emphasis on stressing the website authors' expertise and the respondents' experience—was paramount to "addressing common questions/worries" and the topic requesting help. Moreover, my analysis revealed that similar identity positions emerged in the forum and website settings in order to establish expertise and involvement; the differences are actually a matter of degree. For instance, both contributors to forums as well as website authors want advice-seekers to find help—within the communities in the former, online or offline in the latter case. Similarly, advice-givers in all settings take on the identity of encouragers whether it is by promising improvement in the topic requesting help and in "addressing common questions/worries" or by expressing their confidence in advice-seekers in the topic relapse and in "listing practical tips". Thus, in other words, participants employed context-specific discourse strategies, which could result in comparable identity positions linked to the persuasive purpose of practices. Finally, even though these discourse strategies could result in similar identity positions, they could be accompanied by different interpersonal effects. The construction of expertise in the websites was likely to feature mitigation whereas it tended to be combined with face-enhancing relational work in the forum interaction. In the case of the identity as encourager, website authors of sub-sites "addressing common questions/worries" appealed to readers' sense of responsibility and displayed empathy. In the topics requesting help and relapse, contributors praised, bonded and displayed empathy when motivating initiators.

To conclude, my project contributed to the study of persuasion as a part of interpersonal pragmatic variation of language in a written computer-mediated health context. It has shown that relational work and identity construction are fruitful tools to discuss the interpersonal dimension of persuasion from the bottom-up. Further, it has also taken up Locher and Limberg's (2012: 23) call for more research on written (advice) practices, responding in parts to their suggestion of health campaigns as ideal sites for combining research into advising and persuasion. While my study has shown a range of patterns of persuasive strategies used in smoking cessation online in the UK, there are still a lot of aspects to be investigated by future studies. At the time of data collection in 2011/2012 several of the institutional and organizational sources only partly used social media. In the meantime, it seems that Facebook, Instagram and Twitter have taken up an important role in health communication on smoking cessation online in the UK—a development that surely deserves more research. Similarly, the fact that both forums in my data corpus are no longer active in their original form may be an indication of peer-to-peer support on smoking cessation having moved to both social media groups or to platforms typical of Web 2.0. It remains to be seen whether this move away from the forum format is a singular occurrence idiosyncratic to my dataset or whether it is a signal of a more general development in online health support groups. A further caveat regarding my study pertains to my, by necessity, incomplete examination of the corpus. In order to conduct fine-grained analyses of communication, I had to create sub-samples that only can provide glimpses of the entire picture, leaving other interesting sources as well as interaction on forums aside. Further, to deal with the non-linearity and modular nature of websites, I made the methodological decision to focus on codes that emerged bottom-up on the websites. Future research should try and tease out additional, systematic ways of researching persuasion in health websites since they continue to be an important element of health communication at large.

I chose the topic smoking cessation due to its status of being a well-established health risk, which is viewed as needing lifestyle changes. Further, communicative interventions are seen as an important means to reduce smoking rates. I hope to have shown how discursive measures to incite lifestyle changes are intricate endeavours, far from either simply presenting information or resorting to scare tactics. Instead, most website authors carefully navigate interpersonal concerns, attempting to boost the necessity of quitting smoking while indexing the connection with their readers. Moreover, I hope that I have highlighted how interactants in forums, who mostly do not know each other in an offline context, engage in supportive behaviour and positively reinforce each other's project to quit smoking in a smooth and overwhelmingly conflict-free way. I also envision that my study will contribute to previous linguistic studies on health discourse online. Furthermore, I hope that my analysis has highlighted the fruitfulness of studying the entire gamut of interpersonal variation and encourages further studies of persuasion in a range of online discursive practices. Persuasive processes are ingrained into our daily lives (whether on an ideological or interactional level) and as language often plays an important role in these processes, I hope that my study has shown that they merit further investigation from a linguistic perspective.

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Subject index

Author index

Appendix I: Detailed codebook used for the content analysis of topic and multi-modal features of entire corpus

Code name	Definition	Example	Inclusion and exclusion criteria
Topic codes			
Facing quitting: aspects to consider (super-category)	Preparing smokers for a quit Making smokers aware of aspects that should move them to quit		
Addressing common question/ worries	With respect to quitting. Maybe in form of FAQs or myths; often in some sort of question-answer format	- *Nicotine Myths* - *Overcome excuses* - *FAQs*	Simulates a kind of interaction; be it in opposing statements or in adjacency pairs of question/answer
Listing practical tips	Explicit tips to deal with withdrawal/ quitting Often in bullet points	- *Help & Advice* - *Top Ten tips*	Mostly in list form (bulletin points) features guidance regarding quitting in particular (not general advice)
Testimonials of quitters	Quote or story by ex-smoker	- *Case studies* - *Diaries* - Introductory picture to sub-sites (top of website)	Pictures with captions; use of quotation marks as index of another voice
Toxic ingredients in cigarettes	Toxins in cigarette are listed on source	- *What's in cigarette?* - *What's in my cigarette?*	Features chemical ingredients, possibly illustrated by images or comics
Inform on quitting (super-category)	On physical/psychological changes and challenges during a quit		
Coping strategies for withdrawal	How to go about physical or psych. side effects of quitting	- *Manage your cravings* - *When you stop*	Give ideas for how to overcome side-effects of any kind
Different phases of quitting	Explicit talking about "different stages" of quitting	- *Phases of quitting* - *The five iCoach phases are:*	From thinking about quitting to setting a quit date, etc. in order to target infor-mation
Quitting: influence on weight	Talks about food cravings because of quitting Also includes tips for the prevention of weight gain	- *Will I gain weight?* - *Hunger/Weight gain*	Highlight that gaining a little weight is preferable to smoking; recommending healthy snacks and exercise when quit-ting
Quitting whilst pregnant	Talks about quitting while pregnant, how it is hard but beneficial	- *Pregnancy* - *Smoking & Pregnancy*	Mentions the dangers of smoking to the unborn baby (often with picture of preg-

Code name	Definition	Example	Inclusion and exclusion criteria
Topic codes			
			nant woman)
Recovery of the body	How the body recovers: often detailed physical description	- *Quit & Win* - *Quitting Timeline*	Features a timeline of recovery; always the same time periods (20 mins; 8 hrs; 24 hrs; etc.)
Point out bio-medical reasons to quit smoking (super-category)	Any mentioning of health benefits of quitting and health disadvantages of smoking		
All kinds of tobacco are unhealthy	How snuff, shisha is not healthier than cigarettes	- *What about roll-ups and herbal cigarettes?* - *South Asian Tobacco use*	Showing and highlighting dangers of consuming tobacco alternatives
Second-hand smoke affects others	Effects of second-hand smoke on family/pets	- *What smoking does to your loved ones* - *Smoking & family life*	Focus is set on loved ones (relatives, pets); own damages secondary in these sections
Smoking affects sense of taste and smell	Often phrased positively: senses improve after quitting	- *Food can taste better. Smells could be more intense*	Often part of an entire list of health benefits when quitting; link to food
Smoking and reproduction	How smoking affects fertility, is harmful during pregnancy	- *Improved fertility*	about smoking when trying conceive during pregnancy; possibly mentioning early menopause,
Smoking is bad for your health	General reference to how smoking damages one's health	- *Help feel better*	can occur without mentioning a list of health drawbacks
Smoking is linked to lung disease	Explicit mentioning of how smoking leads to lung cancer or COPD	- *Lung Health*	Includes symptoms of lung disease
Smoking increases risks during surgery	Mention how smoking slows down wound healing	- *Going into Hospital* - *Hospital Patients*	Mention risks of complications
Point out lifestyle reasons to quit smoking (super-category)	Explain why smoking is bad or quitting is good with respect to lifestyle		
Quitting benefits employers	Point out why it is lucrative for employers to provide quit smoking services for employees	- *Workplace scheme* - *Corporate Health*	Sites mostly also provide workplace schemes
Quitting boosts self-esteem	Link quitting with an increase in self-confidence	- *Feel attractive and confident* - *... and feel better about yourself*	say it is a great achievement, possibly link to greater confidence because no smoking smell

Code name	Definition	Example	Inclusion and exclusion criteria
Topic codes			
Smoking affects beauty	Comments on how smoking leads to premature ageing, wrinkles, a bad smell, yellowing of teeth	- *Help look better* - *Younger looking skin*	Can include demonstrations of premature aging Often part of a list of lifestyle benefits
Smoking affects the (ecol.) environment	Explain how smoking is bad for forests or the environment	- *What the tobacco industry really thinks*	Link to deforestation; sometimes link to tobacco industry as well
Smoking is bad for your sex life	How it can effect men's stamina or the libido in general	- *Smoking and impotence*	Explain link between the damaging of blood vessels and sex
Smoking is expensive	Point out how much money one can gain by quitting or how much one wastes by smoking	- *Financial benefits* - *Cost Calculator*	Often supported by cost calculators, so people can visualise better; can be part of a list of lifestyle benefits
Quitting and nicotine substitutes (medication)	On NRT		
Medical alternatives to replace smoking	Talking about different medical treatments in detail	- *Aids to Quitting (Nicotine)* - *Patches, gum and more*	Specific products are mentioned: Champix, Zyban, as well as other nicotine-based quitting means
Support: involving potential quitters (super-category)	Offering support on site or pointing out programmes		
Offer personalised support/contact	Possibility to contact someone and get feedback	- *Ask an adviser*	if sites offer e-mail support or offer number to get in touch linked to author - user interactivity
Quitters ask for help support	Quitters ask for support and help	- *Any tips?* - *Is it usual for the time to 'drag' on like this.....*	requires user – user interactivity
Quitters comment on how they are doing	Quitters comment on their physical state, their motivation	*i am now on day 8 of the champix and don't feel any different at all*	Restricted to peer-to-peer sites
Recommend stop smoking programmes	Recommend going to a local service or provide an online programme	- *Where do I find support?* - *Support*	NHS stop smoking services, or possibility to log in on the website
Support is helpful	Mentioning the importance of support from friends and family as well as the usefulness of stop-smoking services	- *[...] you're up to four times more likely to quit smoking successfully if you go to your local NHS Stop Smoking Service [...]*	Often features warranting strategy, giving numerical evidence (4 times more)
Multi-modal codes			
Interactivity	Possibilities of interaction with source		

Code name	Definition	Example	Inclusion and exclusion criteria
Topic codes			
(super-category)			
Author— user interactivity	Website producers encourage users to interact with them by text, phone, e-mail or having them join an online programme	- *Contact us* - *Take the first step now*	Interaction is controlled and restricted by transferring communication
User —document interactivity	Possibility to make permanent changes to a source	- Rate advice - Publish comments - Share pledges	Users can change website/source inde-pendently
User—medium interactivity	The use of hyperlinks or any temporary customization of a source	- link to most popular sections, terms - cost-calculators - tests	Users can change website/source while on the website
User—user interactivity	Possibility to directly interact with other users/ readers	- Chats - Forums - blogs - Message walls	Users can engage in synchronous or asynchronous interaction with other users
Links (super - category)	Shows network of a source		
Links to other websites	Links to other mono-directional stop-smoking sources	- *Useful Links*	Links have to be hyperlinked
Links to Web 2.0 sites	Links to social media account, e.g. Face-book, Twitter, YouTube, etc.	-	Symbol for social media platforms Live-tweets on the website
Multi-modal elements (super - category)	Semiotic channels other than language		
Highlighting	Noticeable use of italics/colour to high-light certain aspects	-	bold print, italics, colour, ,font size that is noticeable, can also be hyperlinked
Pictures	Use of pictures	- Full ashtray to illustrate toxicity of smoking	Picture may be integrated in text, may support content in text;
Pictures with people	Pictures with people (is linked to the code above as it specifies whether pictures featured people)	- Woman checking her appearance in mirror when describing effects on appearance	One or more people are represented
Use of cartoons or symbols	Support of content through symbolic means	- post-it format to share pledges - lottery stub - comics to symbolize quit journey	No photographs, but other graphic means
Videos	Testimonial or informative videos as downloads, links, or on source	- *Black magic* whimsical film se-quence to illustrate dangers of	Links to YouTube, or the video can also be on the side

Code name	Definition	Example	Inclusion and exclusion criteria
Topic codes			
		smoking	
Possibility to obtain material online (super-category)	Downloading or shopping of items		
Commercial	Ordering items against payment, buying apps for money	- E-cigarettes/posters	Means of payment are indicated
Informative	Free downloading or ordering of documents or other items	- Quit smoking kit, pdf leaflets	Possibility to order without any indication of payment

Appendix II: Detailed codebook for discursive moves analysis in forum corpus (including coding instructions)

Coding instructions:
Code exhaustively: once you've finished coding, check if everything is coded by using view-function and clicking on discursive moves.
Segmenting:

- Minimal segmenting unit: Sentences➔ if several moves are featured in a sentence and you can't decide, then code as *open category*. Unless there is a rule in the codebook!! Put into memo how you would split the sentence up
- A discursive move may be larger than sentence boundaries but not smaller.
  - Go for content, i.e. if there are three sentences containing advice on one issue, code as one discursive move
  - If a single sentence only makes sense with a preceding/subsequent move, include the sentence into said discursive move.
- Exceptions are *greetings*: always code them separately, even if they are part of a larger sentence.
- Coding between paragraphs: Code moves separately even if you have the same move in both paragraphs ==> paragraphs are maximal segmenting unit. However, this can change if a poster has a one sentence-one paragraph style (each sentence on a new paragraph; then code according to content)

Punctuation:

- Code punctuation that frames a sentence (for coding comparison)
- Dashes count as "sentence breaks". The dash counts as ending of the first move.
- Several dots can be (but don't have to be) sentence boundaries

Greetings/Farewells:

- Code name and punctuation➔ If there is a space between *farewell* and name; code as *one discursive move.*

On Metacomments: ➔ *not a coding category anymore*

- if meta-comments, have other discursive functions, than just the "meta-"function, code the other. Otherwise put into *open* and make a note in memo
- include text-structuring comments in preceding or subsequent move if possible (e.g. case of "*official forum welcome*") (➔ add note)
- If there are two equally balanced discursive moves, *meta- comment* and something else, go for the other discursive move.

On roles (especially in NSD forum): only the very first poster counts as **initiator**.

Name	Definition	When to use (inclusive criteria)	When not to use (exclusive criteria)	Example(s)	Association with role
Greeting	Greeting, salutation, (optional) first move, directed at other participants (ex.4 also included)	• Always code *greeting*, even if it is part of a larger sentence • Can be typical "HI", or just an address by using someone's name (ex 1-	• Don't code as *greeting* if *well-wishing* is in initial position • Don't code as *greeting* if *assessment* (e.g. in the form of a compliment) is in initial position • Don't code direct addressing in	(1)"Hi Neriee," (2)"hello kenny." (3)"Hey cheekey chavyn." (4) "Well, I'm back again ☺"	Both

Name	Definition	When to use (inclusive criteria)	When not to use (exclusive criteria)	Example(s)	Association with role
		3) • Initial move • If it has a “meta”-function, still code as *greeting*. (ex. 4)	sentences as greetings.		
Background information	• Provides information about poster • includes self-praise and problem statements • May add history to request for advice	• Narrative background provided by **initiators** • Only use for **initiators’** descriptions (be especially careful in nsd forum)	• Do not code narratives by **respondents**: then *own experience*	(1)“same routine, stayed in bed late as, had smoothie, radio 6” (2)“Before I went to work, I used to top up with about 5 then practically chain smoke in the evening. I am parttime at the moment and on days off I would smoke loads.”	Initiators
Request advice/information	• Asking for guidance/help/support/ information (personal or non-personal) • Linguistically: these can be in the form of interrogatives or declaratives.	• If there is an explicit request for guidance/support • always code explicit *requests for information* even if it occurs with other discursive (*background, own experience, etc.)* • If there is an explanation in a sub-clause, code entire sentence as *request.*	• Do not code indirect requests for advice • Do not code rhetorical questions as *request for advice/information* (see what makes sense in context)	(1)“What do you guys do when the depression kicks in... ” (2)“any-one else tried champix or hopefully can offer any support”	Both
Thank	Thanking for advice or support	• Code if lexeme “thank-“ is explicitly mentioned • If a sentence features *thanking* and an explanation or compliment, code as *thanking* as well (2), (3) • If it’s in initial position	• Do not code if it is unmarked and in a *farewell* position (always code marked *thank,* as *thank*) • If *thank* is just formulaic and another dm is more prominent, in the same sentence, go for the other dm.	(1)“Thank you for your support” (2) “thank you, well done to you also.” (3) “Thanks for the kind reply, nice to know it happens.”	Mostly initiators

Name	Definition	When to use (inclusive criteria)	When not to use (exclusive criteria)	Example(s)	Association with role
		code as *thank* not as *greeting*			
Farewell	• *(optional)* closing move; signals end of post (sentence +name; just name) • Often formulaic utterances (5) • Can also have meta-function • is graphically detached from main text body (signs like "xx" or formulaic utterances, such as "bye" can be in main text body)	• Use if there is a last move that closes the main message. • If there is a formulaic expression and name, code both (ex. 1-2) • If closing move has meta-function, code as *farewell* (ex. 3). Such a closing move can also precede a more typical *farewell* (pre-closing function) • call-offs: referring to future interaction (4)	• If the final discourse move is *advice*, then code as *advice* not as *farewell* • If the final discourse move is a mixture of *advice* and *farewell,* code as *advice*	(1)"Love and Hugs Marg xx" (2) "hugs di and mark xx" (3) „.... day 1 it is then :-)" (4) "Looking forward to seeing you in the quit rooms, as we all battle on with our quits" (5) "Take care"	Both
Welcoming	• Specifically welcoming a poster to the community/the forum, but also welcoming someone on the next "day" in their quitting journey. • Seems to be highly relational and stronger than *greeting* • *Welcome* can also occur at the end of a sentence	• Code if it appears as part of main post, and if <u>lemma "*welcom-*" is used</u> • often appears after *greeting* • Always code marked *welcome* (e.g. <u>***welcome to the forum***</u>; <u>***welcome!, huge welcome)***</u> • often features several moves with a relational function: i.e. compliment, well-wishing and *advice* to hang in there <u>(code the whole sentence as *welcoming* then)</u>	• Do not code if it just has an opening function like *greeting* (mostly signalled by being detached from main message of the post, e.g. "Hi and welcome") • Do not code at the end of messages, where it has a *farewell* function ➔but if there is another *farewell* clause, code as *welcome*	"Welcome back and it's great you're starting a new quit, post often and we'l be here to support you, hope all go's well today for you" "welcome back hun and well done restarting your quit and glad that you've realised that for the most part there is no such thing as a weekend smoker"	respondents

Name	Definition	When to use (inclusive criteria)	When not to use (exclusive criteria)	Example(s)	Association with role
Apology	• Express sympathy for someone by telling them you feel sorry for them • Or just saying you are sorry for something	• Code if it is an independent "sorry" sequence.(single sentence) • Often features lexeme "sorry"	• Do not code as *apology* if it is only a first clause of a larger *assessment* (e.g. "sorry, but") ➔ then code as *assessment*	"Sorry you're feeling so rubbish at the moment." "[…]so sorry to hear that things are tough."	Mostly respondents
Assessment	• Particular situation of someone else is mentioned and evaluated (mostly initiator). Often offering support • Normally used by "respondents", rarely used by initiators, only if the latter evaluates ***someone else's*** situation • In the case of reformulations, initiators are likely to use *assessments* • The process of making a judgment or forming an opinion of someone else, can feature an element of **prediction, complimenting, normalizing** • After reading: one would think: **"yes that's me"**	• Code if it features praise or evaluation of other. (1), (2) • Code as *assessment* even if there is a *general information* clause attached to illustrate a point • code when users praise the forum and explain how it helped them (even if it often overlaps with *own experience*) (3) • Code as *assessment* if a segment features both *apology* and *assessment.* (4) • Code reformulations of what someone else mentioned in the same thread as *assessments*, even if something else is added in a sub-clause (e.g. background) (probably initiators) (5)	• Don't code as *assessment* if it is part of a *welcoming* sequence ➔then code as *welcoming* • If a segment features in parts *assessment*, in parts *advice*, go for *advice*. Even if advice makes out a smaller part of the overall sentence. • **Do not code as *assessment* if respondents relate to their own situation when assessing.** Then: *own experience*, even if an obvious narrative element is absent.	(1) "Anyway, good for you deciding this is it." (2)"Wise words mate, and I will do!" (3) "this forum has been the best help I have had. " (4) "Sorry you're back to day one though hun and also that you felt you couldn't come and post before but you're home now and that's great hun." (5) maragreth, i firmly take on board your observation that changing routine helps some people- acess i am one of those, am gonna work on it	Mostly respondents, may also be used by initiators
Disclaimer DOES NOT	• Special kind of *assessment.* Clear link to the other's concern.	Code as *disclaimer* if it stands on its own, prefacing other discursive moves	• Do not code if there is another discursive move, then code the latter	(no example yet; previously coded are always part of assessment or advice)	Both

Name	Definition	When to use (inclusive criteria)	When not to use (exclusive criteria)	Example(s)	Association with role
COUNT FOR AGREEMENT➔ SUB-CATEGORY of *assessment*	• Even though it is a sub-category of assessment, code if it occurs on its own. • May function as "hedge" saying that knowledge of something is insufficient or that info/advice may not match expectations		• Do not code if it is an opening clause for *advice* or *assessment.* ➔ Then code the latter two.		

Advice	• Telling someone what they should do or think, what's best for them
	• **Suggestion (1-3)**
	  ○ Inviting an action
	  ○ Inviting introspection
	• Includes a recommendation of a *future* action
	• After reading, there's a **walk away message.**
	• **referrals** (pointing out links; include link in move) (4)
		• Code as *advice* even if the sequence features *disclaimers*
		• Code as *advice* if people refer to "**collective experience**" as well as giving *advice* (e.g. "we've all been there, but stick with it")
		• Code as *advice* if there are elements of *own experience* and *advice* in a sentence.
		• Code as *advice*, if a sentence features both *assessment* and *advice.* (3), (2)
			• Don't code as *advice* if the entire segment is *own experience*. Even though its purpose may be to give advice.
			• Do not code as advice if it is part of a *welcoming* sequence
				(1)"keep calm and carry on"
				(2) "Keep posting here, the support of this site is invaluable."
				(3) "well done hun and into week two you go you're doing great hun just hang in there and keep going"
				(4) Have a look at this. [link]
					Mostly respondents

Own experience	• An narrative sequence of how a **respondent** dealt with a situation an advice seeker (initiator) describes • Can be an indirect form of advice-giving • Often has <u>a normalizing</u> function	• <u>If a respondent tells background story (1)</u> • Even though it features an *assessment* element, code as *own experience* if respondents narrate or relate to their <u>**own experience** (2), (3)</u> • code as *own experience* if it is part of two dis-	• Do not code narrative sequences by ***initiators*** • Do not code if it occurs alongside *advice.* Then go for *advice* • Do not code "If I were you" advice as *own experience,* put into *advice*	(1) "me and hubby did the same as you, minus the smoothie! We quit 2 weeks apart, but when each of us quit we spent the whole week 1 in bed […]" (2) "You know, it hasn't been as hard as some of my previous attempts."	**Only respondents**

Name	Definition	When to use (inclusive criteria)	When not to use (exclusive criteria)	Example(s)	Association with role
		cursive moves (unless the other move is *advice*) • Code references to collective experience as *own experience,* even if these passages strongly overlap with *assessment; e.g.* comparing an initiator's experience to community experience (4), (5),	• Do not code *as own experience* if the forum is praised (*assessment)* • Do not code references to collective experience if it features *advice:* ➔ then code as *advice*	(3) yeah and exercise does help to reduce stress, I walked a couple of miles this morning. (4) "Sorry you are feeling rough, we all know how you are feeling" (5) i don't know much about Champix, but it does sound like the way your feeling is the same ups and downs we all experience when first stopping.	
Well-wishing	• Wish someone well with respect to their quitting/ their health or other endeavours. • often projecting of a positive thought toward the future	Code independently if *well-wishing* is a new sequence (own sentence) and not just introductory to other DM (1), (2) If *well-wishing* is in a pre-closing position (i.e. a farewell move such as "best wishes" follows) code as *well-wishing* *if well-wishing* is the only move in a post (or the only move after *greeting),* then code as *well-wishing*	• If it is part of an *assessment* structure, then code as *assessment* • If it is part of an *advice* structure, then code as *advice* • Don't code congratulating • Do not code if it is in a closing position, then code as *farewell;* also consider as *farewell* if only a name or "xxx" follow after *well-wishing.*	(1) "Hope you're having a good day." (2) "hope the week is managable."	Both
General information **DO NOT CODE BUT**	• Providing of additional information **with no personal link** to the questioner's individual situation other than topic. • Make a note into memo if it	If the sequence adds information that is **NOT PERSONALLY ADDRESSED** to the initiator and **is not told from a personal per-**	• Does not feature personal pronoun **YOU or I**. If it features **you**, then code as something else (*advice* or *assessment*)	(1)"There's some great links to information here which really help to explain nicotine addiction - knowledge is pow-	Probably: respondents

Name	Definition	When to use (inclusive criteria)	When not to use (exclusive criteria)	Example(s)	Association with role
PUT INTO *OPEN*	occurs and put into *open.*	**spective** by the respondent e.g. "on the nature of addiction" (1)	• <u>Do not code illustrative sub-clauses, collapse with accompanying move</u>	er" (seems to be rather rare on forums)	
Official forum welcome	• Welcomes a "newbie" on the forum • Contains some links and pointers.	• Is posted by moderator • Is explicitly introduced by a *meta-comment (include* into the code) • Code the whole text that belongs to the welcome under this move (including *farewell*)	• Not for "regular" *welcoming* • This *official welcome* is marked as such	"Below is my standard welcome and advice post which I try and give all new members. WELCOME to the forum and well done on the decision to quit possibly one of the most important you will ever make and you will be losing nothing but you will regain control of your life and that has to be good […]"	Moderators
Quote	Technical feature of automatic *quoting* of a post	Code technically generated *quotes* that are textually marked	Do not code hand-made "quotes"; i.e. repetitions typed by contributors➔ put into *open*	--	both
open	• Anything that does not fit anywhere • Two equally balanced dms, for which there is no rule • Sub-titles in nsd- forums • If the same post, is posted twice immediately after each other. Put the entire second post into *open*. • Hand-made (graphically detached) quotes • meta-comments with no other discursive function • *general information*	• If you can't categorize the segment (1) • If the discourse moves in one sentence are equally balanced (2) • Put titles within forums (nsd) in here (at the beginning of a post, highlighted in bold) • general information sentences (make note in memo)	<u>If there is a rule in the codebook, saying how to go about it.</u>	(1)"What, where, why!?! :P" (2)"Sorry you had a rough patch, hope you made it through ok." (two moves)	both

Persuasion in smoking cessation online analyses persuasive discourse strategies from an interpersonal pragmatics perspective within a range of online public smoking cessation sites in the UK. The book employs a mixed methodology approach to study persuasion on multiple levels, comparing professional, institutional websites with peer-to-peer sources. It shows how a content analysis can be successfully combined with a discursive moves analysis, laying the ground for in-situ, qualitative close-readings of relational work, of linguistic patterns and their link to persuasion. In this vein, the book provides a comprehensive picture of how the persuasive intent pervades the selected sources, ranging from the choice of topics, discursive moves to the relational work used. It reveals how persuasion is an intricate linguistic and relational endeavour, far from simply presenting information or resorting to scare tactics. Instead, interpersonal concerns take a centre stage in these sources, where the necessity of quitting smoking is boosted while the connection with addressees is always maintained. With its detailed linguistic analyses and its interdisciplinary treatment of persuasion, this book is interesting for researchers in discourse analysis, interpersonal pragmatics as well as health communication in general.

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