

WHOSE LANGUAGE?

METAPRAGMATICS AND ENTEXTUALIZATION IN CITIZEN SCIENCE

Our main question:

How is science discursively constructed in two collaborative projects on air quality?

Extract 1 – Context

In a meeting, several scientists discuss how they believe citizens will react to the inherent uncertainty of science. They then go on to voice their opinion on how they should communicate these uncertainties, if at all.

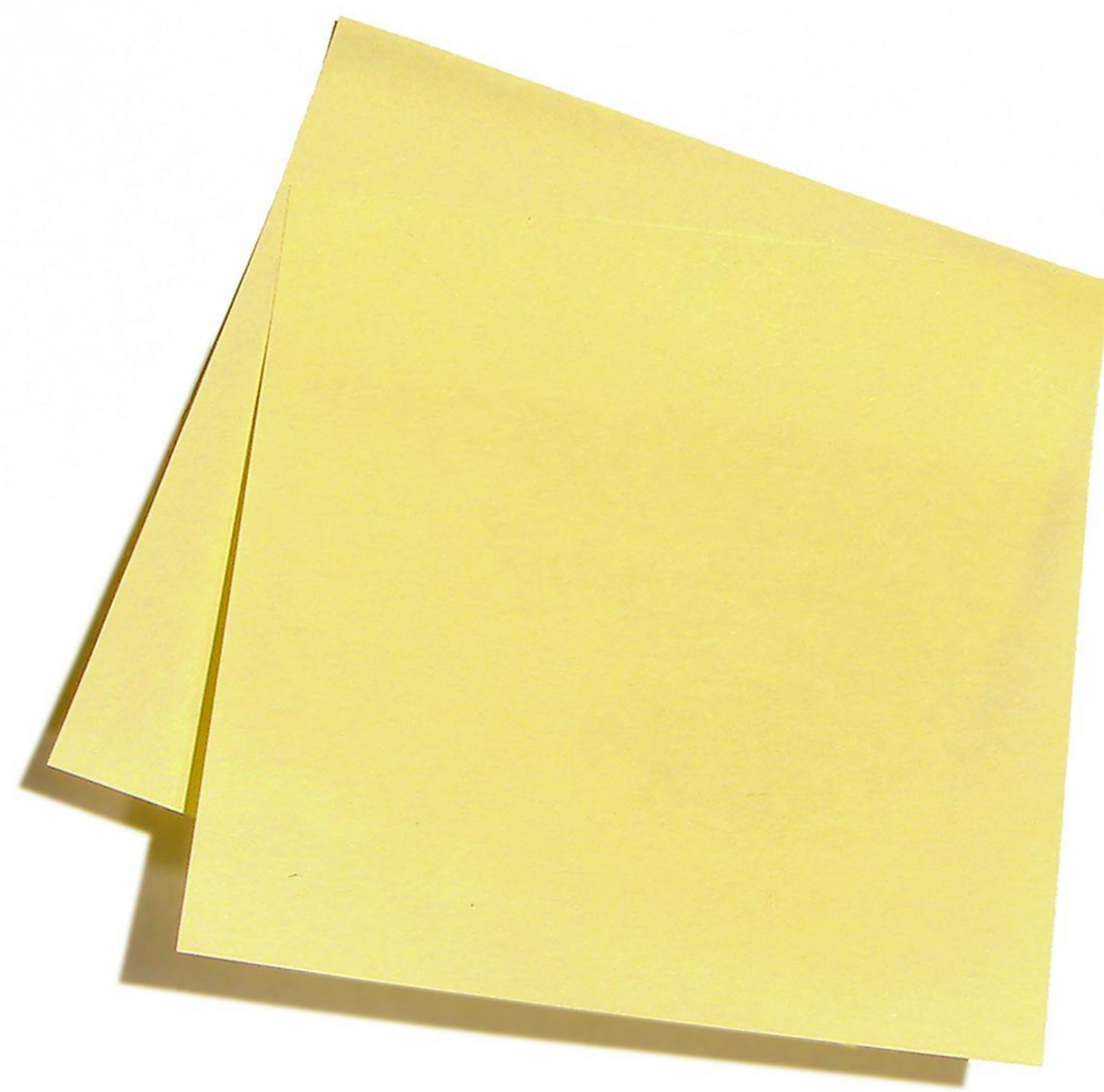
Scientist 1 those uncertainties are inherent to science so you have to say something about these uncertainties how you communicate that is a different question [...]
 Scientist 4 I think we all want to say something about it in the report [...] but to say in your first communication towards the citizen <that does not seem useful to me> [...] you'll get press articles again that zoom in [...] and then the message will be watered down right why would you
 Scientist 3 a minister can put that to the side very easily right

Extract 2 – Context

Two teacher trainers are asked in an in-depth interview about trust in science and whether this is a political issue after the participants and interviewer had just talked about the COVID-vaccines.

Interviewer is trust in science a political problem?
 Teacher Trainer 2 it's a ma- problem of information the information of of of the population it's it is in particular the way in which it is received is in connection with the sociocultural level of people information is never uhh received in the same way there are people who want to study information and analyze it and auto-critique it to position themselves in the situation and there are those who have less of those intellectual capacities and they more uh let themselves uh
 Teacher Trainer 1 get mixed in
 Teacher Trainer 2 get mixed in with other theories that are opposed to to to what is presented on a political level

What concerns have you had when you presented your findings to a non-scientific public?



Findings

Perspectives on science

Science is rhetorically constructed (Gieryn, 1999) as the scientists and teacher trainers recognize the epistemic authority attributed to it is given on the individual level.

Because of the constructedness, scientists and teachers struggle with conveying uncertainty as they presume people might view it as a weakness.

Science and language

Scientists and teacher trainers use **metapragmatic** speech to performatively construct themselves as citizens who value the role of science in a democracy and as authorities with the skill to speak scientifically.

They engage in **entextualization** as they anticipate people's opinions, behaviour and cognition in order to address socioscientific issues.

Potential for more research

Identity

How do actors in the field of science discursively construct their identity in terms of authority, markedness and other linguistic axes of identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005)?

Resources

How do they use "linguistic means and communicative skills" as resources within the production of (mis)information (Blommaert, 2001)?

Boundary work

How do they negotiate boundaries with other sciences, including the humanities (Jasanoff, 2019)? How do humanities researchers negotiate boundaries in relation to other sciences?