# Selves and Identities in Narrative and Discourse

Edited by Michael Bamberg,
Anna De Fina and Deborah Schiffrin

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**Volume 9**

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# in Narrative and Discourse

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# Introduction to the volume

Michael Bamberg, Anna De Fina, and Deborah Schiffrin

Over the last two decades, self and identity have moved into the center-stage of the social sciences. Publications with '*self*' or '*identity*' in their titles, including monographs, edited volumes, and even new journals (*Identity* – first published in the year 2000, *Self & Identity* – first published in 2001) have sprung up in a number of disciplines. However, what exactly these terms denote has remained somewhat ambiguous. While it seems to be commonly agreed upon that neither 'self' nor 'identity' should be mere synonyms for 'person' and 'personality' (as suggested by Leary, 2004), it is debatable whether the terms self and identity should be preserved to refer to processes that are organized *within* a (coherent) self-system (as suggested by Morf, 2005). And while metaphors of self that view the self "*as-knower*", "*as-known*", or "*as-decision-maker and doer*" (see Leary, 2004) have a wider appeal, they leave out a vision of the self "*as-speaker/narrator*", a view that has become increasingly popular under the headers of the 'narrative' and 'discursive turn'. And although discourse-based approaches to self and identity have resulted in an explosion of recent books and special issues, they by no means represent a unified and harmonious field.

This is partly due to the fact that these kinds of approaches to self and identity have emerged and developed within different traditions and disciplines. In the case of the present volume, the different traditions that have inspired the contributors to this volume can be divided, in broad strokes, along three different orientations, one that is rooted predominantly in *sociolinguistics*, a second that is *ethnomethodologically informed*, and a third that came in the wake of *narrative* interview research. All three share a commitment to view self and identity not as essential properties of the person but as constituted in talk and particularly in social practice. Moreover, since self and identity are held to be phenomena that are contextually shaped, they are defined and viewed in the plural, as *selves* and *identities*. Below, we will elaborate on how these three approaches converge and differ in their emphasis on narrative.

### Sociolinguistic traditions

To begin with, within the traditions of sociolinguistics, issues of identity are not intrinsically tied to narratives. The analysis of variations across particular populations starts from the basic conviction that speakers have choices: They can deviate systematically from some standards in terms of their lexical, syntactic, prosodic and even phonetic choices of formal devices. These preferences usually characterize speakers along regional or socio-cultural dimensions, marking them in terms of particular group (social) identities. Work by Le Page and Tabouret-Keller (1985) on processes of pidginization and creolization has taken speakers' choices of linguistic varieties to be tokens of the emergence of social identities. Repeated choices in language use and changes of these choices over time are taken to be "acts of identity in which people reveal both their personal identity and their search for social roles" (Le Page & Tabouret-Keller, 1985, p. 14). John Gumperz's more interactional approach to sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982a, 1982b) also oriented along similar lines to the close relationship between language choices and speakers' gender, ethnic, and class identities as communicatively produced. His analyses of face-to-face verbal exchanges focused on the inferential processes that result from situational factors, social presuppositions and discourse conventions, establishing and reinforcing speakers' social identities.

It is interesting to note that sociolinguists like Le Page and Gumperz, who displayed an explicit interest in identity and who often worked with narratives as their empirical data, did not attempt to link narratives to identity in a more direct way. Other sociolinguists, in contrast, had already established this link relatively early. William Labov explicitly analyzed narrative forms and contents. However, this move was more of a by-product of his sociolinguistic study of variable rules in Black English spoken in the Inner cities. And Labov's early attempts to use "narratives as a method of recapitulating experiences by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which had actually occurred" (Labov, 1972, p. 360) have become widely discussed and critically evaluated (cf. Bamberg, 1997). They nevertheless, over the years, turned into a "*theory of … the narrator* as an exponent of cultural norms" (Labov, 1997, p. 415, our emphasis), where the narrator became a more explicit target for the analysis of social and personal identity.

In contrast to Labov's more traditional sociolinguistic framework, Dell Hymes (1981) established a close link between sociolinguistics and narrative and theoretically elaborated it in more recent writings (1997, 2003). Following in the footsteps of Boas' 'ethnography of speaking', Hymes made narratives the central object of ethnographic analysis. His program of ethnopoetics explicitly suggested the analysis of speech patterns in the forms of verses and stanzas, taking fuller account of the performative aspects of language use as narrative performance.

In recent articles and edited volumes that address more directly the central themes of identity and identity analysis, these different schools of thought that emerged from more traditional sociolinguistics (e.g., Labov) and interactional sociolinguistics (e.g., Gumperz) in overlap with ethnographic traditions (e.g., Gumperz and Hymes) have been reworked and partly transformed in order to develop tools for the analysis of narratives as a special genre for identity analysis (cf. Blommaert, 2006; De Fina, 2003; Johnstone, 1996, 2006; Schiffrin, 1996, 2006; Thornborrow & Coates, 2005); and a number of contributors to the current volume are operating within these traditions. While some of them explicitly frame their chapters as studies of sociolinguistic repertoire (e.g., Davies, chapter 3), others more implicitly draw upon variationist and interactional frameworks (cf. Gordon, chapter 6; Korobov & Bamberg, chapter 10; Moissinac, chapter 9) or position themselves within a more ethnographic tradition (Minks, chapter 1).

## Ethnomethodologically informed traditions

Although a number of sociolinguistic approaches to the exploration of identities and selves make use of the terms 'discourse' and 'discursive' in their self-descriptions and align themselves closely with interactional frameworks, we reserve these terms here for three different – though related – approaches. All three are somewhat ethnomethodologically informed, though in different ways.

The first is an offspring from Sacks early work on 'category bound activities' (Sacks, 1972, 1995). Authors within this tradition (see especially the work of the late Carolyn Baker, 1984, 1997, 2002; and the collection of chapters in Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998a) have explored identities by use of *membership categorization analysis* (MCA), a branch of conversation analysis and ethnomethodology that pays close attention to the commonsense knowledge which speakers are invoking in the conduct of their everyday talk. Sacks who had proposed that categories may be linked to form classes or collections, which are termed membership categorization devices (MCDs) (Sacks, 1995) tried to tie these categories to the kinds of local and situated activities that go along with them, "category bound activities." Two contributions to this volume frame their work squarely within this tradition exploring how mothers and daughters project their identities (Petraki, Baker & Emmison, chapter 5) and how Australian women of Italian descent project a sense or ordinariness in the interviews conducted (Paoletti & Johnson, chapter 4).

*Critical discourse analysis* (CDA), the second framework to be mentioned in this context, bears a number of resemblances to MCA insofar as critical discourse analysts attend to categories within which, and by use of which, identities are framed; though, in contrast to MCA, not as locally established, but as aspects of

larger political and ideological contexts (cf. Fairclough, 1989). Typically, within this framework, identities are explored as spaces in which the articulation of voice is 'repressed', and several contributions to this volume analyze identities as positioned along these lines. For CDA researchers the properties of speakers' gendered or racial identities may play an important role in the discourse that is under construction, contributing to the discursive reproduction of racism or sexism. Thus, while CDA is primarily interested in the reproduction of power and the abuse of power in discourse, the identities that participants are said to bring to the interactive encounters or materialize in texts may play important roles in this.

In contrast, traditional *conversation analysis* (CA) disprefers the analysis of conversational patterns as aspects of broader social situations and focuses instead on discourse and interaction as more autonomous concepts. Consequently, CA researchers argue that it is necessary to "hold off from using all sorts of identities which one might want to use in, say, a political or cultural frame of analysis" (Antaki, & Widdicombe, 1998b, p. 5.), and begin to ask "*whether*, *when*, and *how* identities are used" (Widdicombe & Antaki, p.195, emphasis in original). According to this view, identities are locally and situationally occasioned, and they only become empirically apparent, if participants in interaction "orient" to them. Deppermann's analysis of adolescent peer group interactions (chapter 11) and Fasulo's analysis of video-recorded psychotherapy meetings (chapter 13) are excellent demonstrations of this type of conversation analytic work.

All three approaches share a commitment to the empirical study of mundane practices through which particular social orders are coming to existence. Consequently, the emphasis is on the analysis of naturalistic data, the way discourse and interaction take place in often very mundane, everyday settings, displaying the participants' ways of making sense in these settings. A number of contributors to *Selves and Identities in Narrative and Discourse* are claiming these principles as most relevant to their work on identities.

**Narrative traditions**

Before turning to a brief overview of a type of identity analysis that explicitly takes recourse to narrative, we would like to note that what we have discussed thus far under the headers of *sociolinguistic* and *ethnomethodologically informed* approaches does not exist in clear-cut, separate and differentiated forms of, or approaches to, identity analysis. Rather, the boundaries are often transient and fluid, which may partly be due to the unfortunate tendency to apply the terms 'discourse' and 'discourse analysis' to all kinds of different forms of language-in-use and their analysis. However, it should have become clear that neither identity analysis within the

sociolinguistic tradition, nor within an ethnomethodologically informed discursive tradition is driven by any particular 'narrative approach'. Narrative often just happened to be the data researchers in these traditions work with, but in general there is no specific interest in narrative as a privileged locus for the expression or the analysis of identity.

In contrast, narrative approaches to selves and identities start from very different assumptions. While narratives can be said to be just one kind of discourse genre among others (e.g., description and argumentation), they have moved into the privileged mode for tying together existent analogies between life, biography, and story. And although lives are lived and stories told, and although there is a general openness to lived lives, 'narrative coherence' is seen as the guiding post for how lives are actually lived (Ricoeur, 1992) and made sense of in meaningful ways (Bruner, 1987, 2001). Coherence serves as the structural glue that is added on to life and history (White, 1980), or even the "fabric" with which life is imaginable (Freeman, 1998, 2004), enabling to locate a self with a beginning, a middle and an end (MacIntyre, 1981). While there are different assumptions as to where this glue is "located", either *before* the story-telling activity (as an internal, experiential, and basically cognitive, attempt to plot raw events into meaningful patterns) or in the actual act of plotting, i.e., the situated *telling* of 'the experience', narrative is the ordering principle that gives meaning to an otherwise meaningless life. In short, narrative functions as the glue that enables human life to transcend the natural incoherence and discontinuity of the unruly everyday (and the unruly body – see Punday, 2003) by imposing a point of origin and an orientation toward closure, and thereby structuring the otherwise meaningless into a meaningful life.

Identity research that rests on this tradition has opened up possibilities to study the recounting of lived experience along the dimension of lived time, and how, by way of reflecting on the past, a (more or less) coherent sense of self is recreated. Biographic, narrative analysis (cf. Wengraf, 2006; Fischer & Goblirsch, 2006) and *big story* research (cf. Freeman, 2006), mainly by means of interviews as elicitation techniques, have revealed a good deal of ruptures and continuities in peoples' lives and contributed widely to theoretically account for both the transformations and stabilities in human lives, attempting to reconcile how humans can see themselves as same in the face of constant change (see Bamberg, in press). A number of contributions to *Selves and Identities in Narrative and Discourse* actually start off from this tradition, but wrestle with how the narrative tradition may actually constrain more productive turns, in particular when it comes to a potential merger with other traditions such as sociolinguistic and ethnomethodologically informed approaches on topics of identity research.

### The current volume

*Selves and Identities in Narrative and Discourse* brings together chapters that attempt to connect these three traditions in new and innovative ways. While a number of chapters start off from a sociolinguistic tradition, others adopt a more interactional, and ethnomethodologically defined orientation, and finally others take a more explicitly designed narrative vantage point. However, all chapters share a general orientation toward the use and the analysis of narratives. Rather than cementing an identity as an ontology of the person by use of language varieties, or by use of discursive repertoires or narrative inscriptions of the self, all contributions start from the assumption that narratives form something like a playground – a ground that allows us to test out identity categories (most explicitly Gordon, chapter 6; and also, though to a lesser degree, Korobov & Bamberg, chapter 10; and Moissinac, chapter 9). This orientation is in stark contrast to traditional identity research that aims to fixate these categories by turning them into 'ontologies of the person'. Thus, the contributions to this volume treat narratives as territories where 'identity ontologies' are allowed to be questioned, and the analysis of the narrative/discursive data is oriented toward the contextual and situational manifestations of different identities.

A second characteristic that unifies the contributions to *Selves and Identities in Narrative and Discourse* is the conviction that these narrative and discursive play- and testing-grounds, where individual and social identities are explored, are communal grounds. They are parts of interactive and communal practices with others whose actions range from support to challenge. These collaborative aspects of discursive/narrative practices, whether taking place and captured in one-to-one interviews (e.g., Fasulo, chapter 13; Guo, chapter 8; Sorsoli, chapter 12), group discussions (e.g., Korobov & Bamberg, chapter 10; Moissinac, chapter 9) or in observations and recordings in the field (e.g., Deppermann, chapter 11; Minks, chapter 1) are resulting in contextual and situated displays of identities, or even 'multiple identities' (as argued by Guo, chapter 8).

Overall, *Selves and Identities in Narrative and Discourse* comprises chapters that attempt to show how identities are constantly and continuously in the making. Thus defined, the contribution of this volume consists in a close documentation of the discursive and narrative processes that so-to-speak *generate* identities in the form of local and situated senses of ourselves. In the attempt of moving closer toward a process-oriented approach to the formation of selves and identities, this volume sets the stage for future discussions of the role of narrative and discourse in this generation process and for how a close analysis of these processes can advance an understanding of the world around us and within this world, of identities and selves.

## Acknowledgement

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# "Goblins like to hear stories"

## Miskitu children's narratives of spirit encounters

Amanda Minks

On Corn Island, off the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua, indigenous Miskitu children tell interactive stories about encounters with a variety of spirit beings. This chapter presents transcriptions of some of these narratives, focusing on their poetic features, rhetorical organization, and social effects in the context of a migrant community. As tools of socialization, stories about spirit encounters interweave the natural-spiritual world with children's own social networks. Natural landscapes are brought to life in accounts of known individuals' journeys and interactions with the spirit beings who animate them. The practices of listening to and telling stories about spirit encounters contribute to the social construction of reality and the articulation of children's emplacement in the natural/social/cosmological world.

On the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua, Miskitu people have long told stories about the supernatural beings – both good and evil – that animate the natural landscape and meddle in human affairs (Bell, 1862, p. 254; Roberts, 1827/1965, pp. 267–68). The efforts of Moravian missionaries in the late nineteenth century and more recent Christian evangelism have impacted, but not destroyed, indigenous Miskitu cosmologies. At least since the seventeenth century, Miskitu people have been in close contact and formed conjugal unions with cultural outsiders, in particular British buccaneers, escaped African slaves, Jamaican settlers, and Euro-American venture capitalists. However, Miskitu people's cosmopolitanism – reflected in a language with many loan words from English as well as Spanish – does not preclude processes of cultural continuity. For example, the partial reconciliation of Miskitu and Christian cosmologies is found in the common practice of referring to indigenous supernatural figures – above all the evil ones – with the generic term *setan nani* ("satans").

In a discussion of traditional Miskitu cosmologies, Avelino Cox has written:

> Many who are unfamiliar with what is for us history, have seen from outside as mythology, [but] for the peoples of TULU WALPA [it is] practice and essential transmission about the entire living environment. The subordinate spirits, who are not myth, who are among us, have an historical foundation based in the stories that our people tell when they refer to those themes that were real, lived events, not simply invented myths. (Cox, 1998, p. 20 [my translation])

Stories, Cox suggests, are a primary medium for the transmission of Miskitu historical and cultural knowledge, and they provide an epistemological basis for negotiating and interpreting everyday life. As an overarching discourse genre, stories also enable children's participation as social interlocutors and actors. When an infant is learning to speak, the Miskitu phrase commonly used to describe this activity is *turi aisisa* – translated literally, the young child "tells stories."

Stories about spirit encounters, in particular, seem to have a powerful capacity to encode and socialize Miskitu forms of knowledge and experience.[1] The socializing process begins with young children listening to older speakers tell stories, but children eventually learn to tell their own stories among peers and other interlocutors. Stories about spirit encounters interweave the natural-spiritual world with children's own social networks, bringing landscapes to life in accounts of known individuals' journeys and interactions with the spirit beings who animate them.[2] By mediating between material and spiritual realms, the practices of listening to and telling stories about spirit encounters contribute to the social construction of reality.

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1.    I use the term "spirit encounters" in a broad sense to encompass a range of supernatural experiences documented among Miskitu people. The word "spirit" in English and *espíritu* in Spanish have often been used to gloss indigenous Miskitu terms that may be conceptually distinct. According to traditional Miskitu practices, when a human being dies, the "life force" (Jamieson, 2000) of that particular person is transformed from *lilka* (soul or likeness) to *isingni* (shadow or spirit), which stays in the ground at the death site until it is ritually set on its journey to the next world (Cox, 1998; Velásquez, 1980). However, the *isingni* may also take the form of a *lasa* (ghost or evil spirit) that continues to interact with humans, often with mischievous, if not malicious, intentions (Jamieson, 2000). A very different category of spirit being includes figures such as *liwa* (water spirit/deity) and *swinta/duhindu* (dwarf or goblin), who materialize in semi-human forms and are usually recognizable by characteristic physical traits and behavior. Following contemporary practice, my Miskitu interlocutors on Corn Island referred to the Christian Holy Spirit as *Spirit Holikira*, while malevolent spirits and other evil beings were most often referred to as *lasa* or *setan nani* (satans). The missionary and ethnologist George Heath wrote in his Miskitu glossary, "Formerly the word [*lilka*] was also used for the Holy Spirit of God but this led to so much confusion that it has been abandoned in favor of spirit ~ pirit, a word greatly preferred by the Indians themselves" (Heath, 1950, p. 25).

2.    See Karl Offen's work on the sociality of Miskitu landscapes (Offen, 1999, chap. 2).

When traditional genres of narrative are performed in nontraditional contexts, the "narrative construction of reality" (Bruner, 1991) may take on even greater importance in cultural maintenance. The spirit narratives that are the focus of this chapter were recorded in 2003 on Corn Island, about fifty miles off the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua, where Miskitu people have settled relatively recently. Miskitu children on Corn Island are growing up in a setting quite different from those in which their parents matured, yet cultural continuities accompany transformations.

This chapter illustrates the cultural and communicative competence that Miskitu children on Corn Island display in narratives of spirit encounters.[3] Ultimately, I suggest, the children's co-constructed narratives articulate senses of emplacement in the natural/social/cosmological world. Before presenting transcripts of spirit narratives, I provide a sketch of their social context and a general description of their rhetorical structures.

## Miskitu people on Corn Island

Corn Island historically has been populated primarily by English-speaking Creole people who form one of six ethnic groups in the northern and southern autonomous regions of Nicaragua's Caribbean coast. Before the 1980s only a few Miskitu families lived on the island. After the 1979 Sandinista-led Revolution, many Creole islanders left Nicaragua while Miskitu people began moving to the island in greater numbers, seeking refuge from the war being fought in and around their mainland villages and finding work in the island's fishing and coconut industries. After a hurricane destroyed the coconut plantations in 1988, the island economy shifted to an almost exclusive dependence on marine resources, which have since become increasingly scarce. The local demography continues to shift due to a greater number of Spanish-speaking mestizos making their home on the island and to the fluctuations of the fishing industry that draws new Miskitu migrants from the mainland for shorter periods of time. All island residents confront the central problems of property rights, marine resources, theft, drug use, and drug trafficking, but political battles are often fought along ethnic lines, with the Miskitu-Creole relation being the most tumultuous.

Neighborhoods on Corn Island tend to be somewhat segregated, with Miskitu people and other recent migrants concentrated in the most densely populated areas near the fishing companies. However, children have ample opportunities for cross-ethnic interaction at school and sometimes in outdoor play, and their expressive repertoires tend to be expansive. Miskitu children who were born and

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**3.**    The notion of "communicative competence" was formulated by Hymes ( 1972).

raised on Corn Island as well as those who have arrived more recently often develop some competence in Creole English (indeed, some speak it as their first language) as well as in Miskitu and Spanish. These languages are not strictly compartmentalized but are fluidly interchanged and fused in daily use.[4] The particular linguistic competencies and preferences of Miskitu children vary according to different family and school environments, as well as distinct personal histories of migration and social interaction.

Not only linguistic but also cultural practices vary among Miskitu people, especially when comparing families from different regions and with different educational experiences. Miskitu people on Corn Island – like most people in the modern era – have diverse, complex, and variable frameworks for interpreting natural and social phenomena. Some may dismiss stories of spirit encounters as the folklore of elders and young children. Others draw selectively from traditional practices such as those designed to protect young children from physical and spiritual harm.

One such perspective is illustrated by the explanation of a well-educated, trilingual professional and mother in her 30s who was born and raised on Corn Island. After several months of friendship, I asked her about the spirits that were often blamed for children's illnesses. We had been speaking in Spanish, but she switched to Miskitu – an intimate language of the home – to describe some of the spirit beings believed to inhabit the region. She commented, "Yes, that is a *creencia* [belief] but well, a few parts well, this time are turning out true, what the old people said."[5] Using the Spanish word *creencia* suggested the viewpoint of a skeptical outsider, and in some social contexts, my friend may have taken this position towards the topic. However, in the intimate conversations we shared, she explained how her own children had been afflicted by illnesses caused by spirits, which required a combination of herbal medicine and hospital injections to cure. She also explained that rampant theft and more horrendous crimes were sometimes committed by people who were affected by evil spirits, or who intentionally acquired the ability to transform themselves into supernatural beings through incantations at the cemetery.[6]

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4.    Mark Jamieson (1999) discusses a more dramatic case of Miskitu-Creole linguistic fusion in the Miskitu village of Kakabila and describes particular mechanisms for cross-linguistic borrowing that are also used among Miskitu people on Corn Island.

5.    The exact quote in Miskitu: "Au, baha ba *creencia* kuna wel, pis kum kum wel na taim rait takisa, baha almuk nani dia aisan ba."

6.    Many people suspected some kind of supernatural involvement in the brutal rape and murder of a girl on a commonly travelled pathway located in the Miskitu area of the island. Of course, they recognized the culpability of a physical human being in the crime, but who could guess his motivations other than possession by evil spirits? Other crimes were committed in roughly the same place, and some children who walked through the area later became ill.

The discourses of Miskitu children on Corn Island may be more heterogeneous than those of their cousins and siblings living in Miskitu villages on the mainland (particularly in the northern coastal region, where many communities are largely monolingual in Miskitu). Nevertheless, most Miskitu children and their families on Corn Island still identify as Miskitu, and even minimal competence in the Miskitu language, as well as familiarity with Miskitu cultural practices, enact ties of affiliation with their Miskitu brethren in other communities. Of course, the possibilities of language shift and cultural transformation in some families should not be entirely dismissed. However, linguistic and cultural maintenance is supported by the special circumstances of the Miskitu population on Corn Island, for example, their marginalization from the Creole community and their continued interaction with short-term Miskitu migrants from traditional villages.

### Rhetorical structures of spirit narratives

In addition to elaborating the social and cultural contexts indexed by spirit narratives, my analysis presents a view of their mediating form or rhetorical structure, which I address in terms of two aspects.[7] First, I point out ways in which spirit narratives are poetically structured by evocative shifts in pitch, stress, and rhythm. The poetic function of language, as developed by Roman Jakobson (1960) and Dell Hymes (1962), entails a focus on "the message" for its own sake, that is, a focus on *how* something is said as opposed to *what* is said. Jakobson (1940/1968) observed that the poetic function was already in force in early childhood, because "sound play," he suggested, was aesthetically structured and experienced (cf. Garvey, 1977; Ochs, 1983). In an important sense, the poetic function is not entirely divorced from referentiality because the style and form of an utterance often crucially affect its meaning. Poetic uses of language may be especially important in multilingual situations, facilitating (or thwarting) communication across cultural and linguistic boundaries, as well as playing a significant role in second language acquisition.[8] In

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7.   My use of the term rhetorical structure is more general than that of Anthony Woodbury, who proposes a systematic investigation of rhetorical structure as the "prosodically and intonationally signalled phonological phrasing along with whatever other significant formal features consistently pattern or interact with it..." (Woodbury, 1985, p. 153). My fusion of formal and ethnographic approaches is based on the trajectory of research outlined by Bauman and Briggs (1990).

8.   Consider, for example, the cross-cultural mobility of poetic texts such as song games (Minks, 2002; forthcoming) and the documentation of poetic forms of code-switching (Kulick, 1992, pp. 112-13; Woolard, 1999, p. 17). Gumperz (1982) provides analyses of the role of rhythm and prosody in interethnic communication as well as in conversation more generally.

narrative, poetic techniques transport listeners to another place, time, and situation, making them see what narrated characters have seen, and feel what they have felt.

The second aspect of rhetorical structure on which I focus in this chapter is the fitting together of two kinds of information: a) narration of a specific incident that calls for explanation, and b) a general framework of interpretation. Following Van Dijk (1976) and Ochs and Capps (2001), I refer to a coherent set of narrated events as the *narrative episode* (a). This is the relating of a specific past happening – often dramatically re-enacted in narrative performance – in which supernatural figures enter into familiar social networks. The narrative episode becomes intelligible through an overarching cosmological narrative about what spirit beings are and how they are known to behave, which I call *narrative background* (b). The narrative background provides an interpretive framework for experiences of the social and natural world. This kind of information is usually conveyed in the present tense and is not sequential in the form in which narratives are usually defined (Labov & Waletzky, 1967).

The narrative background is a flexible framework that can be adapted to new social contexts of witnessing, interpreting, and recounting in narrative episodes. Thus, although the landscape of Corn Island is significantly different from Miskitu villages on the mainland, Miskitu migrants have found some of the spirit beings who inhabited their home villages to inhabit the island as well. As illustrated in the transcripts below, events witnessed on television can also be interpreted using narrative background about spirit beings. In this way the typical rhetorical structure of spirit narratives may facilitate cultural maintenance in the midst of social change.

Narratives of spirit encounters are fundamentally interactive, often explicitly multi-authored and co-constructed. They have a more open, dialogic structure than some other genres of narrative produced by Miskitu children on Corn Island. For example, certain children were skilled tellers of unique fantasy stories they called *kisi*. These were set off from everyday discourse by linguistic and paralinguistic conventions of formal performance, and they consisted of extended monologues with rare interruptions. The human characters in these stories were not known individuals, and listeners made explicit reference to their metaphorical nature.

In contrast to fantasy stories, spirit narratives generally were considered to be grounded in concrete and contemporary reality. On one hand the status of spirit narratives as representations of lived experience made them vulnerable to challenge, but on the other hand, it may have increased their power as media of socialization. Children were not left to construe abstract lessons about appropriate behavior, as might be the case with fables; rather, they developed expectations about concrete consequences of action. Straying into unfamiliar territory could result in encounters with ill-intentioned spirits, which in turn could result in disappearance, physical or mental illness, and even death (cf. Dennis, 1981). Strong

affective messages were conveyed through poetic and gestural techniques of performance, socializing fear or attraction.[9]

The transcribed narratives that follow were initiated by children but expanded through my interest and questions. In these interactions children often reproduced stories told by older siblings, parents, and other relatives, but in doing so they took on the role of authority or expert, while I occupied the role of novice. Rather than breaking up the narratives into tiny fragments, I have tried to preserve extended segments, interspersed with my explanations. The narratives presented here were produced by two groups of children. My focus is on the interactive unfolding of these particular stories and their social and cultural meanings.[10]

### Demons of the Bush and Swamp

One bright morning during the dry season, when the sea and sky mirrored various shades of the clearest blue, I was walking with 13-year-old Leyla and her younger brothers Kori (6 years old) and David (12).[11] They were born in different locations but raised principally on Corn Island by a mother from Kum, a culturally conservative Miskitu community on the Río Coco, and a father (who lived separately) from Tasbapauni, a mixed Miskitu and Creole community in the southern region. The dominant language of their household was Miskitu. They were accustomed to explaining to me the myriad details of their natural and social environments, and as we passed an area with thick underbrush, Leyla pointed out some plants that were used in cooking and herbal medicine. The Miskitu word *sika* refers to both

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**9.**    Miller and Moore (1989, p. 441) write, "Even before the child can fully understand the spoken language in the story, he or she may pay attention to the paralinguistic and nonverbal features that are abundantly available in storytelling – the rhythmic contour of the story, the shifting voice quality of the narrator, the exclamations of the listener, and the accompanying gestures, facial expressions, and postural changes." Also see Shirley Brice Heath's discussion of "story-poems" (Heath 1983, pp. 170-81).

**10.**    Following the language socialization paradigm (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986), the audio-recordings of children's interaction were transcribed and translated in collaboration with Miskitu co-interpreters. Our objective in transcription was to provide an easily comprehensible representation of speech that captures some of the nuances of individual variation in style and pronunciation. Contemporary Miskitu orthography facilitates bilingual literacy in Miskitu and Spanish while representing important differences between the phonological systems of these languages. Although I generally tried to follow current Miskitu orthographic conventions (Salamanca 1995; 2000), I used non-Miskitu graphemes to represent loan words not fully incorporated phonologically (e.g., *kolika*, where the long vowel *o* comes from Spanish *cola*). A simplified guide to pronunciation and interpretation of the transcripts can be found in note12.

**11.**    The names of Miskitu children given here are pseudonyms.

medicine found in the pharmacy and to medicine found in the bush. *Sika* is used to cure both physical and spiritual ailments, which are generally intertwined (Velásquez, 1980). I include this introductory segment to illustrate the way that narratives of spirit encounters emerge from mundane activities, in this case walking to a somewhat distant beach area.[12]

| **Transcription conventions:** | | |
|---|---|---|
| Brackets | [ | Simultaneous utterances |
| Single Parentheses | ( ) | Unclear or unintelligible utterance |
| Double Parentheses | (( )) | Transcriber's contextual comments and insertions |
| Equal sign | = | Interlocking utterances |
| Repeated colon | :::: | Extended utterance |
| Repeated period | ((...)) | Ellipsis |
| Capital letters | SIka | Increased stress for emphasis |
| Arrows | ↑↓ | Raised or lowered pitch |
| Apostrophe | ' | Abrupt break in speech |
| Dash | - | Interruption or hesitation |
| Question mark | ? | Raised intonation at the end of a phrase |
| Italics | | Miskitu utterance |
| Underlined italics | | Spanish utterance |

1  Leyla:    *Baha sopa ra mangkaia ba?* ((pause))
That ((plant)) is for putting in soup? ((pause))

3            *Sopa ra mangki ba, kulantro, baha wal.*
That's for putting in soup, cilantro, with that.

4            *An sika kaira kat.*
And also sika kaira. ((another medicinal herb))

5  Amanda:   *Sika?*
Medicine?

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12.   For readers attempting to reproduce the pronunciation of the Miskitu transcripts, it is best to keep in mind that the Miskitu vowels *a*, *i*, and *u* are pronounced somewhat similarly to the same vowels in Spanish, although the precise length of the vowel sounds varies according to context. As mentioned above, I use non-Miskitu graphemes such as *e*, *o*, and *f* (pronounced as they would be in Spanish) when these sounds are evident in loan words. Like Spanish, the *r* in Miskitu is rolled slightly, but unlike Spanish, the *h* is aspirated. The prosodic stress or accent in Miskitu is almost always on the first syllable of a word.

| 6 | Leyla: | *Aha, ba SI:ka, baha? Tuktan siknis taim,*<br>Aha, that's SI:ka, that? When a child is sick, |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | | *mai mangkaia setan mai-mai ambuk mai munbia apia dukia.*<br>to put it on you, satan, it's to keep him/her from bothering you. |
| 8 | Amanda: | *Ah.* |
| 9 | Leyla: | *Ba dukia.*<br>That's what it's for. |
| 10 | Amanda: | *An setan ambuk mai munisa?*<br>And satan bothers you? |
| 11 | Leyla: | *Mhm.* |
| 12 | Amanda: | *Ahkia?*<br>When? |

In the dialogue that follows, Leyla begins to answer my question by relating an episode that occurred in her house, but she interrupts herself in the middle of line 13 with the interjection "aha?" and shifts into an episode involving a neighborhood boy, now grown. She first establishes the principal character of the story, placing him in a social network known to both of us, and describes the time and place of the account (the setting). To facilitate our imagining of this character when he was small, she holds out her arm to approximate the height of a child. Drawing on particular expressive resources of the Miskitu language, Leyla brings us back to the scene and places us into the boy's sense of time. The continuous feeling of the past progressive tense *auya kan* ("was going") is heightened through the elongation and raised pitch of the second syllable: *au↑ya:: kan* (line 18).[13] She ascertains my understanding of the social and physical emplacement of the narrative, eliciting my affirmations in lines 14, 16, and 20.

| 13 | Leyla: | *Yu kum. Yu kum. Waitla-waitla ra, aha? Tuktan kum, Tanya nusma?*<br>One day. One day. In my house, aha? A child, do you know Tanya? |
|---|---|---|
| 14 | Amanda: | *Au=*<br>Yes. |
| 15 | Leyla: | *=Tanya, Ricardo?* ((Tanya's husband)) |
| 16 | Amanda: | *Aha?* |

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**13.**   The emphasis placed on the second syllable of a word through heightened pitch and elongation is particularly striking because the norm in Miskitu is to stress the first syllable of a word or phrase, creating a typical downward contour. In a study of Miskitu song practices in Honduras, Terry Agerkop (1977, pp. 15-16) linked this conventional pattern of stress in Miskitu speech to descending melodic contours in Miskitu traditional song. Also see Heath (1913, pp. 55-56) for a discussion of the effects of pitch shifts on affective and semantic meaning in Miskitu speech.

17    Leyla:    *Ricardo tuktika waitna kum, NAku sirpi lupia kan taim,*
One of Ricardo's sons, when he was little, small, like THIS, ((holding out her arm in front of her))

18    *mm, witin, au↑ya:: kan, faiv aklak, siks aklak, baku, au↑ya kan,*
mm, he, was go↑i::ng, five o'clock, six o'clock, like that, he was go↑ing,

19    ((faster)) *yang nusna yang nani waitla unta kum bara ba?*
((faster)) I know our house a bush area is there?

20    Amanda:    *Au=*
Yes=

21    Leyla:    *=bahk sika au↑ya: kan tuktika. Tubika waitna au↑ya kan taim,*
=through there he was go↑i:ng, the kid. When the boy was go↑ing,

22    *kaikan [urus TAra tara kum=*
he saw [a BIG big monkey=

23    Kori:        [*Chen kum (brikan).*
[He had a chain.

24    David:    *=TAra apia! Baha, Tanya's ur-uruska=*
=Not BIG! That's, Tanya's monkey=

25    Leyla:    *=Wet, wet=*
=Wait, wait=

26    David:    *=An kolika ba, kolika ba YAri.*
=And the tail, the tail was LONG.

*Urus* is the name of a large spirit monkey, originally a human man who has acquired supernatural powers through communication with evil spirits at the cemetery.[14] However, the word *urus* can also denote a small, normal monkey, and in line 24 David challenges Leyla's narrative by interjecting that it was this kind of monkey, not

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14.  The *urus* is distinct from the *ulak*, a long-established, giant ape-like figure who lives in remote areas and pursues humans of the opposite sex (*Tininiska*, 1996; Heath, 1950, p. 33). Neisy Theodore Schwartz and Mark Jamieson (p.c.) point out that in the Pearl Lagoon basin, *urus waitnika*, or "monkey man," is considered to be a "thief who is found mainly in urban areas like Corn Island (in the minds of many Miskitus in traditional villages), Bluff, Bluefields, and Port [known as Bilwi in Miskitu and Puerto Cabezas in Spanish]." One of my adult interlocutors on Corn Island said that malicious people secretly emerged as *urus nani* (monkeys) most abundantly during June and July, when heavy rains kept most people inside, and in December, when they were motivated to rob the money and goods that others stored in anticipation of Christmas. She said it was impossible to know the identity of an *urus*, although people who suddenly acquired wealth were suspected. Her grandmother had warned her that the only way to protect oneself in a direct encounter with an *urus* was to throw salted lime in its face.

the supernatural kind, that the boy saw. Tanya, in fact, has a small pet monkey with a long tail, which lends credence to David's claim. Kori, however, next provides counterevidence (line 27) that it had a chain of some kind, which distinguished it from a normal monkey. In line 31, Leyla draws on the Miskitu convention of repeating a progressive verb stem (*pa:li pali pali*) to iconically convey continuous action. In line 32, the raised pitch and rhythmic break of the phrase *Unta ti↑lak' dimi wan sa* also provides an iconic dramatization of the vanishing *urus*.

27  Kori:    [*Kuna, kuna chen kum brikan.*
             [But, but he had a chain.

28  Leyla:   [*Urus, uruska ba, uruska tubika bila, na:ku kan wisa, naha kan wisa.*
             [The monkey, the monkey the kid said, was like thi:s he said, this he said.

29           *An chen brikan, an ba ( ), witin KAIkan taim, baha,*
             And he had a chain, and that ( ), when he SAW, that,

30           *SEtan upla takisa urus, raiti ra wih kan. Naha naku baui kan taim,*
             the *urus* was becoming a SAtan person, he was going to the cemetery. When he was bending down like this,

31           *WALpa lupia kum lulka apia, naku, pa:li pali pali.*
             a little STONE it wasn't thrown, like this, fly:ing flying flying.

32           *Unta ti↑lak' dimi wan sa.*
             Going ↑through' the bush he disappeared.

33           *Ba mihta witin sip sa bak luras, bika baha waitla ninara lika,*
             That's why he can't pass through there, because behind our house is,

34           *setan ailal bika baha swamp-swamp-swamp dawanka lika YAri tara,*
             a lot of satans because that swamp-swamp-swamp owner is TALL ((and)) big,

35           *↑↑yari ↑↑yari ↑↑yari YAri tara. Tihmia taim=*
             ↑↑tall ↑↑tall ↑↑tall TALL ((and)) big. When it's night=

36  David:   *=Waitla ba ba bili (ka ra sa)=*
             =My house he's inside=

37  Leyla:   *=Lamya ba ini:sa.*
             =The ((water)) tiger is cry:ing.[15]

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15.  As Mark Jamieson (p.c.) suggested, *lamya* could be simply the third person possessive form of *limi* (tiger or jaguar), or it could be an abbreviated reference to the supernatural *li lamya*. I have translated it as the latter. Heath (1950, p. 25) defines the *li lamia* as a "*water tiger* said to be a web-footed tiger, living in the water, able to attack and eat a horse." Velásquez (1980, p. 290) describes it more precisely as an aquatic jaguar that guards the realm of the sirens (*liwa nani*).

Line 33 is a pivotal line in which Leyla connects the narrative episode to the imperative of avoiding a dangerous area. This line represents the summary *evaluation* of the story about the boy who saw the urus (Labov, 1972). It is linked (through the English loan word *bika*/because) to a new narrative background – the presence of many spirits and in particular one very large spirit being who is master or "owner" of the swamp behind the children's house. This narrative background becomes the setting for a new narrative episode, this one told in the historical present tense as a set of events that has recurred over time.

By this point Leyla has successfully re-established the authenticity of the story, and her authority as principal teller. As she continues dramatizing the nocturnal wandering of the swamp owner, David provides supporting details. In this dramatic narrative, the heavy footsteps of the spirit being are animated with the sound effects "plap, plap, plap," and his immense size is conveyed through raised pitch, repetition, and increased stress (lines 35, 39, 52). In the reported speech of her non-Miskitu brother-in-law (underlined, lines 41–42), Leyla switches to Spanish to animate the deeper voice of a male Spanish speaker from León.[16]

38    Leyla:    *An ba taim* ((softer)) *plap, plap, plap*=
                And then ((softer)) plap, plap, plap=

39    David:    =[*YAri tara*
                =[TALL ((and)) big

40    Leyla:    [*Mui-muihki, MUIhki maya ba WALuya taim,*
                [My sister, my SISter's husband when he's HEARing,

41              ((lowered pitch)) "*Ahí va-ahí va el, el*" *nina dia wisa,*
                ((lowered pitch)) "There goes-there goes the, the" what's it called
                he says,

42              "*Ahí va el hombre que, que sale del swampo,*"
                "There goes the man that, that leaves the swamp,"

43              *setan ka ( ) naku, plap, plap, plap, takuya taim, taki auya taim,*
                *a::pu sa,*
                the satan ( ) like this, plap, plap, plap, when he's going out, there's
                no::thing,

44              *kuna bin takisa, plap, pliki auya taim, plap, plap. Li laiki::sa.*
                but ((the satan)) makes a noise, plap, when he's coming looking,
                plap, plap. He's pou::ring water.

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16.  Summarizing Goffman (1974, pp. 518-23), Marjorie Goodwin defines the animator as one "who both enacts the talk and the speaker being quoted, and simultaneously comments on them" (Goodwin, 1990, p. 233).

45    *An ba taim, muihki maya taki auya taim, ↑a::pu sa, jas, ai (sruki-sa),*

And then, when my sister's husband is going out, there's ↑no::thing, just, (covering) himself,

46    *sibrin wan daukisa, baha taim, baku taim TAki wama taim sip sa, ↑mai brihwaia,*

we get scared, then, when it's like that when you're GOing out he can, carry ↑you away.

47    *ai swamp ka bilak ba taim mai tikaia sip sa.*

when going into his swamp he can make you disappear.

48    *Ba setan lika, mai tikaia sip sa, mai brihwaia.*

That satan is, he can make you disappear, carry you away.

49    *An TIHmu tara, NA dusa pitka (ra), ↑KAU yari tara. Witin ( ).*

And DARK big, THIS tree's height, ↑EVEN bigger. He ( ).

50  David:    *An nahki (tawisa).*

And how he (turns).

51  Kori:    *Ay, witin mihta yari tara, ent?*

Ay, his hand is huge, isn't it?

52  Leyla:    *↑Mihta YAri tara, na:ku.*

His ↑hand is HUGE, like thi:s.

53  David:    *An lal ba, ( )*

And the head, ( )

54  Kori:    *Nahki pitka? Na wina, na wina, hebn kat.*

How big? From here, from here, up to the sky.

In the preceding narrative the poetic techniques of extended vowel sounds, raised pitch, and repetition are flexible and multifunctional. In line 44, the extended syllable in *li laiki::sa* ("he's pou::ring water") conveys a continuous action. In line 45, the extended syllable and raised pitch of *↑a::pu* ("↑no::thing") – also a common poetic technique in Miskitu – heightens the sense of total absence.

Leyla has concentrated her substantial narrative skills on the task of vividly describing the patterns of the swamp owner's actions and her brother-in-law's physical response – that is, his commenting on the movements of the spirit and his going out to investigate.[17] In line 46, however, Leyla shifts to the psychological re-

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sponse of the family as a whole ("we get scared"), and the overall evaluation or point of the narrative (if the swamp owner catches children or adults in his path, he can carry them away).[18] She reinforces this point by repeating it twice (lines 47 and 48). In line 49 Leyla returns to the narrative background in describing the appearance of the swamp owner. She facilitates a mental image by comparing his size to a nearby tree (line 49), and the "participant structure" (Philips, 1972) opens up as her younger brothers David and Kori co-narrate the image of the massive spirit being. Tracing the pathways of the swamp owner, the children inscribe the local landscape with the potentiality of danger.

### Learning from goblins, good and bad

The following transcript excerpts come from a recording made with a different group of children, sitting in the common area of their grandmother's house one evening before bed. In this lengthy interaction, the two kinds of narrative material were more evenly distributed than in the previous transcript. To reiterate, the two kinds of narrative material are (a) accounts of particular encounters with spirit beings, either experienced by the teller or by someone in the teller's social network (narrative episodes), and (b) general descriptions of spirit beings, their appearance and known manners of comportment (narrative background). My principal interlocutors in this transcript were two boy cousins, Nildo (8 years old) and Amos (6). As younger children, their narrative development is not quite as sophisticated as Leyla's, but they still demonstrate considerable skill.

Along with an older sister and an older girl cousin, Nildo had been raised on Corn Island principally by his grandmother, who was originally from the mainland Miskitu village of Awastara, but who had lived on the island for over 20 years. Nildo's first languages were Spanish (the only language spoken by his mestizo grandfather) and Creole English (the language in which he was addressed by his trilingual Miskitu grandmother). Amos was raised by his Miskitu-speaking mother and great-grandmother in Awastara, and he only began to learn some Spanish and Creole English when he arrived on Corn Island for an extended visit a few months before this recording. Nildo and Amos, as reunited cousins, became close friends,

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of her brothers was attending school at the time when this recording was made, and soon afterwards, Leyla stopped attending as well. See Freeland's (1995) work on the history and development of Miskitu bilingual education in Nicaragua.

**18.** Ochs and Capps (2001, p. 173) include physiological and psychological responses as two of the major building blocks of personal narrative, along with setting, unexpected event, object state change, unplanned action, attempt, and consequence.

learning quickly from each other. In accommodating Amos's Miskitu dominance, the entire household (with the exception of their grandfather) shifted towards Miskitu as the dominant communicative norm.

In the narrative excerpts that follow, Nildo and Amos began telling me about a goblin figure known as *swinta* or *duhindu* in Miskitu, and *duende* in Spanish.[19] This figure was not often encountered on Corn Island, but he was known to inhabit the bush around Awastara (among other places). Around Awastara there were good goblins, who were black, as well as bad ones, who were red, and both had special interests in human children.[20]

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Amanda: | *Anira duende iwisa?* |
| | | Where do goblins live? |
| 2 | Nildo: | *Awastara bara. Kuna ba, ba nani ad-upla ba,* |
| | | There in Awastara. But those, a person, |
| 3 | | *mihta naku brih nara kuna BA nani NAku brisa, kuna,* |
| | | has a hand like this here but THOSE ((goblins)) have it like THIS ((no thumb)), but, |
| 4 | | *man naku yabuma kaka mihtam dakbisa kuna,* |
| | | if you give like this he cuts your hand but, |
| 5 | | *duende wal sat brisa kum ba pain kum ba saurika, kuna pain ba,* |
| | | there are two kinds of goblins one good and one bad, but the good one, |
| 6 | | *diara SUT wan wisa, saurika dauki ba, ent?* |
| | | he tells us EVERYthing, what the bad one is doing, right? |
| 7 | Amos: | [*Dia dauki ba baha.* |
| | | [What that one is doing. |
| 8 | Nildo | [*Bara, dia wan=* |
| | | [So, what we= |
| 9 | Amos: | =*Dia dauki ba baha, wisa=* |
| | | =What that one is doing, he says= |

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19.  Conzemius (1932) translates *duhindu/swinta* as "dwarf," but my Miskitu interlocutors on Corn Island who spoke Creole English used the word "goblin."

20.  Cox (1998) describes *duhindu* as a diminutive man who serves as protector of four-legged animals in the forests and plains and who antagonizes hunters when they do not respect his laws. People captured by *duhindu* may simply disappear forever, or they may reappear with their mental faculties deranged. Cox writes that the *duhindu* "can carry away children as well as adults, but if the children are well behaved they are returned to their families after three or four days. On the other hand, if they behave badly, they are never returned and they are enslaved generally to care for his animals" (Cox, 1998, pp. 33-34 [my translation]).

10   Nildo:   *=Au, pain ba baku wan wisa. Wala ba dia wan muna want kaka, apia kaka man,*
=Yes, the good one tells us like that. If the other one wants to do something to us, if not you,

11   *samtaim swinta pain kum wal taukma, ent? An saura wala mihta bal takbia kaka,*
sometimes you go around with a good goblin, right? And if the other bad one comes to take you away,

12   *su-nahki saurika nani pain bara sibrin sa. Bara, ba nani pain bara kaikuya taim,*
how the bad ones are afraid of the good ones. So, when they see the good ones there,

13   *ba nani PLApisa bika, pain bara SIbrin sa.*                [*Bika*
they RUN because, they're afRAID of the good ones. [Because

14   Amos:                                                       [*Pain ba*
*uba aiklabi lan sa, mihta.*
                                                               [The good
ones know a lot about fighting, that's why.

15   Nildo:   *Aha, am, aha ba nani, nahki pain ba aiklabi lan ba bara,*
Aha, um, aha those ones, the good ones know how to fight so,

16   *duende wala saura nani ba bara sibrin sa, pain nani bara.*
the other bad goblins are afraid of them, the good ones.

The high level of co-narration in this participant structure is evident in the overlapping speech (represented by brackets, lines 7–8 and 13–14) and the interlocking turns (represented by equal signs, lines 8–10). The impact of the age difference between the boys on the role of "tellership" (Ochs & Capps, 2001) may be minimized because Nildo, the older boy, is speaking in a second language and Amos, the younger boy, has had more direct experience with goblins. Although Nildo is more verbose, he invites the participation and evaluation of Amos, in particular with the tag question *ent* (used in Creole English as well as in some varieties of Miskitu), which may be translated as "isn't it?" or "right?" (line 6).

In the previous segment, Nildo has been using the first person plural object pronoun *wan* ("us") as the object of the goblins' actions (lines 6 and 10). In the next segment (line 18), it becomes clear that he has not directly encountered a goblin, but he has indirect experience through accounts given by his grandmother. Although Nildo's poetic uses of Miskitu are somewhat limited, he emphasizes the

diminutive adjective ↑*chi:rpi* with raised pitch and an extended vowel sound.[21] Both boys emphasize certain words through increased stress.

17   Amanda:   ((to Nildo)) *Mm. An man duende ra kaikram?*
             Mm. And did you see a goblin?

18   Nildo:    *Apia, kuna mamiki bila, waitna ↑chi:rpi lupia kum sa.*
             No, but my ((grand))mother said he's a ↑li:ttle small man.

19   Amanda:   ((to Amos)) *Man kaikram?*
                       Did you see?

20   Amos:     *Aha, pat kaikri.* ((...))
             Aha, I already saw. ((...))

21             *Unta ra, unta ra witin baman tauki na laka witin, TIHmia taim ba witin TAUki sa.* ((...))
             In the bush, only in the bush he's going around this way he, when it's NIGHT he's GOing around. ((...))

22             *Sam tuktan nani ba, pain nani ba wal, AIsisa aiklabi lan takisa pain nani ba WAL.*
             Some children, with the good ones, they TALK learning to fight WITH the good ones.

23   Nildo:    *Au.*
             Yes.

24   Amos:     *Sam nani ba=*
             Some of them=

25   Nildo:    *=Ba, pain, pain ba, tuktan wala [aiklabi lan apu ba, nahki aikla-baia ba.*
             =The good, the good one, the other child [who doesn't know how to fight, ((he teaches him)) how to fight.

26   Amos:                       [*Tuktika nani ba ra lan munisa, lan muna, aiklabi lan takbia,*
                             [They teach the children, they teach them, they'll learn to fight,

27             *aiklabi lan takbia mihta.*
             they'll learn to fight that's why.

In the dialogue that follows, Nildo continues his background narrative, explaining the nature of good goblins and bad, but then in line 33, he shifts into a specific episode recounting a goblin's encounter with his older sister Alicia during a visit to

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**21.**   The standard form of this adjective is *sirpi*, but many Miskitu children on Corn Island pronounced it as *chirpi*.

Awastara. This set of events occurred when Alicia was a baby, thus neither Nildo nor Amos was born at the time. Moreover, Amos has grown up isolated from his cousins, with family visits once a year at most. Nevertheless, the story is common property of the family, told by Amos's mother and great-grandmother in Awastara, and by Nildo's grandmother on Corn Island. Nildo initiates the story, but Amos provides supporting details (line 35), clarifications (line 47), and a more expansive setting (lines 38–40, 42–44) of a faraway place, Awastara, for the benefit of a listener (me) who had never travelled there.

28   Nildo:   *Kuna, SAURika nani ba laik apu, tuktan ra lan munbia pain ba.*
But, the BAD ones don't like, for the good one to teach the children.

29   *Kuna, pain ba lan muna want taim, kuna, saurika laik apu kuna,*
But, when the good one wants to teach, but, the bad one doesn't like it but,

30   *pain ba BAN lan wan munisa, an witin PAIN ra kaikuya taim witin SIbrin sa,*
the good one ALWAYS teaches us, and when ((the bad one)) sees the GOOD one he's afRAID,

31   *PAUni nani ba bika, pauni nani ba, diara siksa kaika laik apu sa.*
the RED ones because, the red ones, don't like to see something black.

32   *Bika, siksa nani ba PAIN ra, ba nani SIbrin sa, pain nani bara.*
Because, the GOOD black ones, ((the red ones)) are aFRAID of them, the good ones.

33   *Ba mihta, em, ba nani plapisa mami- Alicia ra duende pat takan na. Au.*
That's why, em, they run- a goblin already came out to Alicia. Yes.

34   *Kuna, ba taim Alicia sir=*
But, then Alicia ((was)) lit=

35   Amos:   *=Bibika=*
=A baby=

36   Nildo:   *=Alicia ↑suap lupia kan. Janis, baha ba aula ba,*
=Alicia was a ↑tender little thing. Janis ((her mother)), she was coming,

37   *witin auya kan unta ra krabu dakba bara diara ↑sat sat [ailal brisa bara*
she was going to the bush to pick nancite ((a fruit)) there ↑all kinds of things [a lot they have there

38   Amos:                                                    [*Awastara kaikram*
                                                             [Awastara you see

39            *krabu, mango, sukar mango ailal bara na laka,*
             nancite, mango, sugar mango lots are there,

40            [*ba witin dauka laik sa,*
             [she likes to do that,

41   Nildo:   [*Witin dakbaia auya kan.*
             [She was going to pick.

42   Amos:    ((...)) ((faster)) *Samtaim uplika nani bui am, sukar wal miks muni dauki ba,*
             ((...)) ((faster)) Sometimes the people themselves um, mixing it with sugar making it,

43            *ba wina kapi kapi am, atol baku daukisa ba yawan piba baku.*
             then grinding grinding um, like porridge they make it our food is like that.

44            [*Baha.*
             [That one.

45   Nildo:   [*Kli, aha? Witin aula auya kan taim, ba nani bukit kum brih auya kan.*
             [Again, aha? When she was going, they were carrying off a bucket.

46            *Kuna,*   [*ba wina kli*
             But,      [then again

47   Amos:                [*Bukit tara kum.*
                          [A big bucket.

48   Nildo:   *Duende, duendeka, kaikan taim, diara daukras kan, Alicia ra,*
             The goblin, the goblin, when she saw him, he didn't do anything, to Alicia,

49            *kuna na yak luan nani Alicia, ba luan taim, em, respirar munan bara kli,*
             but those passing through here ((with)) Alicia, when they passed, em, they were breathing ((the evil substance)) so again,

50            *ba sikniska brih na? Alicia kli, waitna kum Awastara ra,*
             they got sick? Alicia again, a man in Awastara,

51            *duende sikniska lan ba baha pain daukan Alicia ra.* ((...))
             he knows about goblin sickness he made Alicia better. ((...))

As Nildo and Amos explain, Nildo's older sister Alicia fell ill as the result of her proximity to a goblin, but she was cured by a healing specialist in the village.[22] This encounter with a goblin had material effects that were significant enough for the children's grandmother and great-grandmother to tell and retell the story as the children grew up. Stories of spirit encounters clearly involve actors from the most intimate and most distant webs of the teller's social network, and one need not have experienced an encounter directly to be authorized as a teller.

**Water spirits**

Later the same evening, the conversation shifted to the topic of the *liwa mairin* and *liwa waitna* – female and male water spirits (translated here as "sirens") who inhabit oceans, lakes, and rivers and who can capture children's souls (*lilka*, also the word for photograph) and carry them away. Sometimes the drowned bodies of these captured children (as well as captured adults) are eventually found by their families. Amos de-emphasizes this dark side of *liwa* encounters in the following narrative background.

> 1    Amos:    *Aha, liwa mairin ba upla ra diara ↑munras sa, kaikaia jas witin*,
> Aha, the siren doesn't ↑do anything to a person, she just looks,
>
> 2    *tauki baman sa li bilara* [*witin.*
> going around inside the water [she is.
>
> 3    Nildo:                    [*Aha, naku sa, liwa mairin ba em, sam ba,*
> [Aha, it's like this, the siren em, some of them,
>
> 4    *tuktan luya taim an man, karmam kisbaia saura KAbu bilara, ka witin LAIKsa an,*
> when a child is passing and you, you yell something bad in the SEA, because she LIKES and,
>
> 5    *man kisbuma taim witin, wan lil-wan pat wan waluya ansara ba an,*
> when you yell she, our (soul)-already she hears us wherever she is and,

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22.  Cox (1998), Chow Espinoza (1987), and Velásquez (1980) provide more details about the work of Miskitu *sukias*, specialists in natural and supernatural phenomena who treat physical, psychological, and spiritual ailments emerging largely from direct or indirect contact with spirits.

6    *wan lilkika alkuya bara? Kli pas ba, witin nani balki em, mam-mamikam but,*
    she's taking our soul? Again the first one, they were coming em, ((to)) your mother's boat,

7    *ya luhpia nani ent, ba nani luhpia brih na ra? Ma-mamika ra wisa ba nani,*
    whose children right, ((the sirens)) they have their children? They tell their mother,

8    *lilkika alkuya taim wisa bara laiksa bara, mamika mihta taki bal AUbisa,*
    when she takes the soul they say there they like ((that child)) there, the ((siren)) mother comes out and HAULS him/her away,

9    *kuna wait-em, tuktan waitna kaka, mairin bal aubisa,*
    but boy-em, if it's a boy child, a woman comes to haul him,

10    *an mairin kaka, waitna bal aubisa. Kuna ba nani ba, n-na kat ba upla,*
    and if it's a girl, a man comes to haul her. But those, to here ((gesturing from head to waist)) they're people,

11    *an maisa ba, maisa ba wina na kat ba, em, inska waika baku. ((…))*
    and their waist, from their waist to here they're, em, like a fish tail. ((…))

In the following segment, Amos continues the narrative background of what sirens typically do, then signals the beginning of a narrative episode with the phrase *yu kum* ("one day") and sets the scene for a story about an encounter his mother experienced with a siren in the sea near Awastara. In conveying the temporal aspect of setting in line 13, Amos uses repetition as an intensifier; *let let* means it was "very late."

Nildo's contributions in this segment are less collaborative with Amos's account and more in the nature of a separate track of general description. Amos then shifts into another account, but this is not one he or anyone he knows experienced directly; rather he witnessed it on television. He uses the same rhetorical convention (*yu kum*) to signal the narrative account from television that he used to signal the narrative account of his mother's experience.

12 Amos: *Liwa mairin, am, untika tara kau sa, kau-ah, ah mahka? Brihwi auya taim ba?*
    The siren, um, has a big hole, more-ah, ah then? When they carry away ((the child))?

13    *Unta tara kum wal, ta:ra tara bahara mamiki tihmia yu kum tih-*
      *mia let let kan.*
      Two big holes, bi:g big there my mother at night, one day at night
      it was very late.

14    *TIHmia ALkan, tihmia alkan taim, liwa mairin kum, aihtabi kan*
      *an na kat klauhwi kan,*
      It got DARK, when it got dark, a siren, was bathing and up to here
      was burning,

15    *nakra ba INGNI taki kan. Lebn aklak ba kaikaia klauhwa laik ba?*
      her eyes were LIGHTING up. Eleven o'clock you see they like to
      burn ((light up))?

16    *Kaiki, jas, witin KLI dimwan ai lal wal. DIman, kli mamiki bal*
      *luan?*
      Watching, just, she went in AGAIN head first. She went IN, again
      my mother came past?

17    *Diara ↑munras kan mamiki ra.*
      She didn't ↑do anything to my mother.

18    Nildo:    *Aha, ba nani, ba nani kabu ra [bilara ba?*
      Aha, they, they are in the sea?

19    Amos:                                    [*An kuku brihwi swiuya,*
                                               [And carrying a coconut they leave it,

20    *kuku upla want kan na laka, ba mihta brihwi swin.*
      a person wanted a coconut this way, that's why they carried it and
      left it.

21    *An witin flaslaitka, flaslaitka apu kaka witin ban daukan.*
      And her flashlight, if she doesn't have a flashlight she made it like
      that.

22    Nildo:    *Bara, ba nani laik apu sa em, upla ai waika kaikbia upla dauk brib-*
      *ia ba,*
      So, they don't like em, for people to see that they have tails,

23    *witin nani ba upla. Kuna upla, pat nu sa [ba nani*
      they're people. But people, already know [about them.

24    Amos:                                              [*Witin samtaim ba, witin?*
                                                         [She sometimes, she?

25    *Samtaim ba witin prak dimisa samtaim witin prak taki?*
      Sometimes she ((the siren)) puts on a dress sometimes she comes
      out in a dress?

26    *Yu KUM yang tele ra KAIkri, tele ra. Tele ra kaikri taim, tele ra
      kaikri taim,*
      ONE day I SAW on tv, on tv. When I saw on tv, when I saw on tv,

27    *waitnika? Sin waitnika li bilara dimui taim baha mairka,*
      the man? When the same man was going in the water that wom-
      an,

28    *mairin wal wasata baha wal prias ra WAN.*
      with the woman he left with her, they WENT to church.

29    *An bal kahwan taim liwa mairin kan. ((...))*
      And when she came and fell she was a siren. ((...))

At this point Nildo is attending more carefully to Amos's narrative. In line 30 of the following excerpt, he begins to challenge the details of Amos's narrative episode, but Amos cuts him off. In line 32, Amos uses the poetic technique of repeating the present progressive verb stem (*wapi wapi wapi*) to convey continuous action. In line 34 Nildo takes up the narrative and continues through Amos's overlapping turn (line 36), but in line 39 Amos makes a much stronger challenge concerning the sex of the story's principal character, the siren.

30    Nildo:    *Baku apia kan. Li. ((...)) Aha? [Witin-*
                It wasn't like that. Water. ((....)) Aha? [She-

31    Amos:              [*Witin, min- upla baku takisa kaikuya taim,*
                         [She, ( )- when they see her come out like a person,

32              *WApi kan, wapi wapi wapi kan ra laka?*
                she was WALking, walking walking walking she was this way?

33              *Kli ba wina prias ra wan? Kli ba wina aihtaban?*
                Again then she went to church? Again then she went to bathe?

34    Nildo:    *Kli li laikan witin ra li laikan, upla kaikaia want kan, nahki aisi
                banghwikan nara,*
                Again they threw water on her, they threw water, people wanted to
                see, how they were talking together here,

35              *ba [ba liwa mairin.*
                that [that was a siren.

36    Amos:              [*Li laikan-*
                         [They threw water-

37    Nildo:    *Bara, ai- aisi banghwikan. Ba wina kli, li, manguera li wal laikan
                taim,*
                So, they were talking together. Then again, water, when they
                poured water on her with a hose,

| 38 |  | *waitnika bal kahwan taim, [waitnika-* |
| | | when the man came and fell, [the man- |
| 39 | Amos: | [*Ah-ah, mairin kan! MAIrin.* |
| | | [Ah-ah, it was a woman! WOman. |
| 40 | Nildo: | *Ba lika waitna kan. Bal kahwan taim, em, waika, waika pawan.* |
| | | That was a man. When he came and fell, em, his tail, his tail grew. |
| 41 | | *Kan kabu ra lulkan taim, mai-mairin kum, kuna witin laik apu kan,* |
| | | Because when they threw him in the sea, a woman, but he didn't like it, |
| 42 | | *upla ai waika kaikbia. Kli em, ba-ba-ba-* |
| | | for people to see his tail. Then em, that-that-that- |
| 43 | Amos: | *Liwa wait-liwa mairin waitna nani ba, upla laik apu ai waika ba KAIKbia.* |
| | | The men and women sirens, they don't like for people to see their tails. |
| 44 | | *Ba apia kaka, lilkika alki? Laik TAKbia. ((...))* |
| | | If not, they take the ((person's)) soul? They will WANT it. ((...)) |

In the previous excerpt, events witnessed on television by Amos and Nildo become a co-constructed, sometimes contested narrative episode. These events are interpreted through the boys' knowledge about the sirens' characteristics, which is articulated through the narrative background. In lines 41–42, Nildo says that the televised siren was displeased at being thrown in the sea because he didn't like for people to see his tail, which emerged through contact with water. In line 43, Amos expands this specific evaluation of the episode to a more general evaluation of a central characteristic of sirens (part of the narrative background): Sirens don't like for people to see their tails, and unwanted surveillance may prompt them to capture the souls of the offenders. In this linking of the specific and the general, the narrative background makes the narrative episode intelligible, while at the same time the narrative episode reinforces and may potentially reshape the narrative background.

Amos's and Nildo's narrative suggests that humans' and sirens' histories are intertwined not only because of a mutual fascination they have with each other, but also because of the possibility of crossing the boundary between modes of being. However, while sirens who pass as humans are eventually returned to their siren state once submerged in water, humans who become sirens cannot return to a human state, as Nildo explains in the following segment. His excitement is illustrated most dramatically in lines 52–53, where raised pitch and intensifying repetition ("↑deep ↑deep") convey the expansive profundity of the sirens' powers.

45 Nildo:  *Samtaim, samtaim ba, man mai-baha mai alkbia kaka ah mai bri-wabia kaka ba,*
Sometimes, sometimes, you-if that one catches you ah if it carries you away,

46  *ba kat mai swiaia, em, kli man LIwa mairin takaia.*
up to there it will leave you, em, again you'll turn into a SIren.

47  *Man kli sip ba wina takras, bika ↑laiuhra man pat em,*
You can't turn back from there, because you're already ↑far away em,

48  *liwa mairin takram bara kli sip balras kli baha sin uplika?*
you turned into a siren so you can't come back again to be the same person?

49  *Liwa mairin takan ba kli sip takras, jas taukaia an upla ra bal au-bisa.*
Once you turn into a siren you can't turn back, ((you)) just go around and come to haul people away.

50  *Baku kaikatma liwika ra? Kli, aha? Ba nani ent?*
Like that you saw a siren? Again, aha? Those ones right?

51  *Tuktan mairin nani ba pas im-li ra em, karmam kisma apia kuna,*
The girls first in the water em, they don't yell but,

52  *yawan ↑diara ↑bin kum sin daukras. Witin ↑pat wan kaikisa KAbu wina?*
we don't make a ↑single ↑sound either. She ↑already sees us from the sea?

53  *Em, ↑kabu, ↑tihu ↑tihu wina ↑pat wan kaikaia auhya ra kaka, [ba win-*
Em, the ↑sea, from ↑deep ↑deep if she ↑already sees us in the sand, [from there-

54 Amos:                                                    [*Witin,*
                                                    [She,

55  *witin laih-nap lika lupia sip na wan kaikaia witin nakra ingni na?*
she ( ) is a little she can see us with her lighted eyes?

56 Nildo:  [*Witin na-*
[She-

57 Amos:  [*Witin tasba munhta wina, tasba munhta wina, wan kaikisa ent?*
[From under the ground, from under the ground, she sees us, right?

58 Nildo:  *Witin wan kaikisa.*
She sees us.

Whether playing in the sand or in the sea, Miskitu children know that their proximity to an otherworld of living beings may potentiate a meeting with spirits who are both similar to and different from humans. Through overlapping and interlocking co-narration, fluctuations in pitch and rhythm, and intensifying and progressive repetitions, Nildo and Amos collaboratively construct an image of water spirits who are not always visible, but always watching. Nildo's and Amos's narrative, along with other narratives of spirit encounters, encode local and regional landscapes with social and cosmological meanings (Offen, 1999).

### Interaction, narrative realities, and emplacement

By the time they are 6 or 7 years old, Miskitu children manage a wealth of information about the social, natural, and spiritual world. They use that information to narrate their own and others' experiences as well as to interpret new experiences that arise each day. This process begins much earlier, when infants are learning to speak – *turi aisaia* – to tell stories. Narratives of spirit encounters may be especially important in the socialization process because of their interactive nature, their measuring against reality, and their rhetorical juxtaposition of culturally shaped background knowledge and episodes of lived experience. Ultimately, in acquiring culturally intelligible narrative skills, children develop "senses of place" in the natural/social/cosmological world (Feld & Basso, 1996; Schieffelin, 2002).

In a cross-cultural exegesis of personal narrative, Elinor Ochs and Lisa Capps (2001) write that interaction among co-narrators (even those who provide minimal verbal contributions) is a "forum for ordering, explaining, and otherwise taking a position on experience" (Ochs & Capps, 2001, p. 57). If problematic, unusual events are appropriate objects of collaborative sense-making through narrative, as Ochs and Capps suggest, then stories of spirit encounters seem particularly attuned to interpreting the enigmas of the natural and physiological world. On Corn Island, Miskitu children and their interlocutors moved back and forth between the interpretive framework that constitutes narrative background and the recollection of lived experience that constitutes narrative episodes. They challenged, questioned, clarified, affirmed, and evaluated narrated events in the process of interaction. The narrative background encompassing spirit beings and their characteristics was adaptable to new situations and settings, but it was not the only framework available for interpreting unusual events. The process of interaction also made it possible to open up the narrative background itself to challenge and reinterpretation.

Miskitu children are not alone in the "narrative construction of reality" (Bruner, 1991), although "realities" may be multiple and contextually variable. As Jerome Bruner writes (with an implicit reference to Western urban societies), "Just as

our experience of the natural world tends to imitate the categories of familiar science, so our experience of human affairs comes to take the form of the narratives we use in telling about them" (Bruner, 1991, p. 5). Richard Bauman (1986), Michael Bamberg (1997), and others have suggested that narrative is an interpretive filter that divides the flow of experience into "events," making them coherent and intelligible. Of course, narrative is not the only expressive means through which "reality" is mediated, and narrative itself need not take the form of talk (Goodman, 1980; Vila, 2001). However, in most communities talk is the most common medium of communication, and stories are a primary genre for organizing talk.

Kathleen Stewart has written:

> [W]hatever its presumed motives or traceable effects, and whether it takes a relatively authoritative, monologic form or a more open, dialogic form, narrative is first and foremost a mediating form through which "meaning" must pass. Stories, in other words, are productive. They catch up cultural conventions, relations of authority, and fundamental spatiotemporal orientations in the dense sociality of words and images in use and produce a constant mediation of the "real" in a proliferation of signs. (Stewart, 1996, pp. 29–30)

As Stewart eloquently demonstrates in her ethnography of a U.S. Appalachian mining community, the specific form and poetics of a story are central to the way it produces meaning and to the way it *places* both tellers and listeners in a social, physical, and historical web of relations. Narrative is also an important means through which connections are maintained *between* places. Margaret Rodman writes, "one could argue that regional relations between *lived spaces* are developed through infusing experience in one place with the evocation of other events and other places" (1992, p. 644; emphasis in original). On Corn Island, narratives about spirit encounters that have taken place in mainland villages infuse Miskitu children's lives with this kind of trans-local evocation.

As migrants (or children of migrants) near the bottom of the local social hierarchy, far from the villages where their parents were raised, Miskitu children's "place" on Corn Island is constantly vulnerable to challenge. Even those born on the island are not "natives" in the local vernacular. Corn Island – as Miskitu adults sometimes explained to me – is not a Miskitu community like those on the mainland, but it is the place many of their children were born, the place where newborns' umbilical cords have been buried. Interweaving spirits, landscapes, and known social networks, narratives of spirit encounters become performative acts of emplacement for Miskitu children on Corn Island. In telling stories about spirit

encounters – personally lived or vicariously experienced through family and friends – Miskitu children position themselves in a social world that is their own.[23]

## Coda

Towards the end of the same evening spent with Nildo and Amos, the conversation drifted back to the topic of goblins, and Amos again elaborated the intimate relationship between children and good goblins, providing a narrative background of characters and characteristics, a framework for social interaction and interpretation.

| 1 | Amos: | *Pain nani ba pain nani ba. Sam pain nani sam pain nani ba?* |
| | | The good ones the good ones. Some good ones some good ones? |
| 2 | | *Sam pain nani ba sam pain nani ba witin, diara sut ra wan-* |
| | | Some good ones some good ones they, everything to us- |
| 3 | | *diara sut ansa ansa wam-wan mai dauki ba dia daukisa dia dia nani,* |
| | | everything wherever you want to go what they do all the things, |
| 4 | | *witin dia mai wisa swinta saura dia mai daukisa.* ((...)) |
| | | he tells you what the bad goblin is doing to you. ((....)) |
| 5 | | *Witin laik sa turi walaia, laka, ent Nildo swinta laik sa turi walaia? Laka?=* |
| | | He likes to hear stories, ((this)) way, right Nildo goblins like to hear stories? ((This)) way?= |
| 6 | Nildo: | =Au. |
| | | =Yes. |
| 7 | Amos | *Yu kum mamiki, an swinta wal aisan na? Pain ba wal. Saura ba lika apia.* |
| | | One day my mother, she spoke with a goblin? With the good one. Not with the bad one. |

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23. As this last sentence suggests, I am using the notion of emplacement to talk about social belonging, but others have used narratives of emplacement to support more concrete material claims to land and resources. Gurdian's (2001) enlightening study of this process in Alamikang-ban (located in the northern autonomous region), combined with the more narrowly delimited topic I have explored here, suggest that the areas of expressive culture, socialization, and indigenous territorial claims could be productively allied in politically engaged research. On Corn Island, the competing claims to indigeneity and to land rights are so contentious and complex that an informed understanding would require a much broader study of local narrative practices than I have presented here.

8   Nildo:      *Dia kalatka kan?*
            What color was it?

9   Amos:      *Am, siksa. Wal AISAN.*
            Um, black. She SPOKE with him.

In line 5 Amos uses the word *ent* to invite Nildo's confirmation that good goblins "like to hear stories" such as the ones they were sharing. Then he launches into a narrative episode – signalled by *yu kum* ("one day") – of his mother's encounter and verbal exchange with a goblin near Awastara, on the mainland. Nildo requests a clarification of the goblin's color, perhaps to verify that it was a good one, and Amos complies, reaffirming that his mother, indeed, spoke with a good goblin, perhaps telling the goblin some of the same stories she told to Amos.

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# Storying as becoming

## Identity through the telling of conversion

Cecilia Castillo Ayometzi

In the spring and summer of 2000, as part of my dissertation fieldwork, I was living with a group of undocumented[1] Mexican migrants in a small U.S. community that I have named "Texas Town." I wanted to live among this group in order to gain an understanding of how they managed to sustain a living in their community in spite of the difficult circumstances engendered by their undocumented status in the United States. In the course of my activities in this town, I discovered that many members of this immigrant community, who did not initially see themselve as members of any particular group, came to appropriate and sustain an alternative identity that could be described as a 'Christian identity.' This new social identity, which unexpectedly afforded them a sphere of interactive engagement, was brought about through their active participation in a Spanish Southern Baptist mission. In this mission they were encouraged to make use of available resources to participate in certain church-sanctioned activities. In this chapter, I will focus on a story of conversion, which was one such important resource or tool available to members of the migrant group that helped them to construct and maintain this new social identity. I will describe the manner in which members were persuaded to make use of this story and point to the collective identity that was created through its use. In the process of this description, I will attempt to identify the role that this story played in transforming the context of the identity of the mission members.

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1.    Similar to Chavez (1998, p.15), I am using the "nearly neutral" term of "undocumented immigrant" to refer to those "individuals who have crossed the border clandestinely, without permission from the INS, and who reside in the United States." I however, recognize that "no term conveys a lack of position," as Johnston (2001, p.3) explains in her work. Johnston (2001) provides a comparative analysis of how two communities of practice (journalists and academics) preferred certain terms to others to refer to immigrants, restricted in part by their group's practices.

Social identity, the 'selves' that people construct with others, are created and maintained through social interactions and the appropriation of resources, including language, space, time, and routinized practices. During the course of my stay in Texas Town I was able to observe these interactions and appropriations among members of this group within the environment of the mission building and grounds. Here, I will focus on the telling of what seemed like a personal story of conversion. I will argue that the appropriation of this story afforded its tellers the opportunity to acquire and maintain their new 'Christian' identity. Much of what became a transformation of the selves can be explained in terms of first, lack of broad access to resources, and consequently, the appropriation of available resources. The construction and maintenance of said identity for members of this group is extremely focused in time, space, and the range and types of practices and interactions. This narrow focus is the consequence of the mission members' linguistic isolation from the larger community, their social isolation due to their legal status as undocumented immigrants, their insular network of allocation of work opportunities, the familial structure of the mission association, and finally, the *de facto* exclusionary nature of the faith-based community. Deprived of these many social, linguistic, and economic resources, the mission became the site of of the highest importance for their identity maintenance. In order to visualize the setting into which members of this community entered, I will next provide a brief description of Texas Town and the Southern Baptist mission.

**The community in Texas Town**

Texas Town has a booming yet seasonal agriculture and cattle industry. Before I lived with members of its community, I erroneously imagined meeting Mexican immigrants involved in a physically abusive and exploitative working relation with their Anglo bosses. This expectation was in part construed through readings of such cases frequently reported in current academic writing, and newspaper stories on immigrant farm workers. Instead, what I came across was the presence of a Spanish Baptist mission. I further discovered how it created inclusive social relations between the already established members of the Mexican community and affected the new arrivals that were invited to integrate into it.

As part of my fieldwork, I actively got involved in many of the larger community activities. On those occasions I noticed the central role that this Spanish Baptist mission (sponsored by the local Southern Baptist church) had in the lives of some of these Mexican immigrants. I realized that the strength of their relationship with the mission and the level of commitment that each member placed on the mission's goals and activities provided the immigrants with a desirable stand-

ing among its members and access to an alternative discourse and conduct. In fact, I came to recognize the importance of the mission partly because of recurrent types of discourse that set its members apart. I noticed, for instance, that some people would use the address form of *hermano* (brother) or *hermana* (sister) when speaking to one another, thus marking to themselves and to others that they belonged to this particular (Protestant) religious community. I also observed most members' overt dislike for Catholics and any Catholic-related trait or object. I became aware of their frequent discussions about and detachment from the *ills of alcohol* and their discourse on the *need for salvation*. I learned of church-sanctioned behaviors that were demanded and expected by the leaders of the mission. These sanctioned behaviors included the proselytizing of outsiders to become active mission members and an insistence on sustaining their own group identity in society. Finally, I realized that in most cases the community at large perceived members of this group as "good Christian people."

As I interacted more frequently with members of this group, I observed how their membership was created through the appropriation of certain resources found only at the Baptist mission, and I recognized the manner in which the church's sustenance depended on the member's active engagement in the distinct social practices of the mission. In this chapter, I will focus on one of those resources. This resource is a recurrent and structurally distinct story that many of the mission members told to those willing to hear it: a story of conversion. I have labeled this story the *witness story* as the teller bears witness to the presence of God in his or her life through it.

My interest will be in describing the structure of this story and examining how it is used. I will also illustrate how it helped those who appropriated it to sustain a collective identity of having a full-fledged 'Christian' membership. The witness story gave those enacting it the opportunity to fit their individual conversion stories into a pattern that satisfied the sanctioned doctrinal discourse of their religious group. This discourse form was a story of each individual's conversion being fitted within a story line of a new religious profession of evangelical fundamentalism, which they came to adopt as they accepted a new identity within their community. Most importantly, the identity that this story contained was accessible to all members of the community, somehow detached from any particular individual, yet flexible enough to be mastered or appropriated by all of them. The use of this pattern allowed tellers, among other things, to be recognized as full members of this religious community; it also afforded them the alternative of having a valuable and desirable identity of being 'Christians,' and therefore good people. This story provided an alternative identity to that of being an undocumented immigrant, and therefore gave them a more desirable standing within this small Texas community.

I will begin in the next section by discussing briefly the importance of narrative in general and story telling in particular in the analysis of identity. I will also explain my choice of terms when referring to the story of conversion. I will then offer an explanation of the conditions conducive to the presence and appropriation of the witness story. Next, I will describe its basic structure and how members appropriated it in practice. I will also present two cases where tellers have difficulty appropriating this story, and finally, conclude with a brief discussion of its effects on the lives of community members.

**The creation of a collective identity through narrative**

Cutting across disciplinary lines and interested in its various functions in social interaction, the vast literature on narrative provides evidence of the importance of this discursive form for assembling and organizing a teller's conceptualization of who she or he is. Narratives in general, and story telling in particular,[2] have been identified as forms "particularly apt to become the locus of expression, construction, and enactment of identity" (De Fina, 2003, p.11). This expression, construction, and enactment of identity has been understood to emerge either within tellers' organization of their personal experience or through the influence of outside context, thus triggering the salience of certain identities via its teller's situational standing and interactive work.[3] In Polanyi's (1985, p.12) view, "*stories* are told to make a point, to transmit a message –often some sort of moral evaluation or implied critical judgment – about the world the teller shares with other people." Stories, as we will see, may also be used to reorganize one's conception of self through providing a kind of template –a standard and acceptable set of experiences and scenarios – that may or may not reflect what one has actually experienced in one's personal life. One, however, needs to look at the function, if any, that such reorganization has in the teller's life. One compelling answer in the current literature is that at least as a by-product of this reorganization, the creation of a collective identity emerges. And

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**2.**    I am following the distinction between the terms "narrative" and "story" put forth by De Fina (2003. p.12) in that "[t]he prototype of a narrative, both in literary and conversational domains, is the story. Stories can be described not only as narratives that have a sequential and temporal ordering, but also as texts that include some kind of rupture or disturbance in the normal course of events, some kind of unexpected action that provokes a reaction and/or an adjustment."

**3.**    See the work of De Fina (2003), who distinguishes two dominant paradigms in narrative studies; that is, the tradition centered on autobiography and based on psychological theories of identity, and the conversation analytic and ethnomethodological tradition. Mishler (1995) also provides a comparative analysis of different approaches done in the analysis of narrative.

in some cases, as in the one I present here, this collective identity then offers the tellers an alternate and desirable standing in their community.

Personal stories (stories relating tellers' personal experience) have been found to be both a means through which tellers develop differentiated personal identities and a form through which they are led into the construction of a 'collective identity.' On this issue, Mishler (1995), referring to the work of Cain (1991), explains how she found that the telling of personal stories, told by members of the group she was studying (those attending AA – Alcoholics Anonymous – meetings), was a vehicle through which the transformation of their identities was accomplished. This transformation was possible because the members of this AA group meeting were encouraged "to take on the structure and content of a standard 'AA story'" (Mishler 1995, p.109) and make it their own. This study follows the lead of these scholars in that it looks at the presence of certain resources, in this case a recognizable standard story structure, available to and used by members of certain communities, to reorganize their initially dissimilar personal experiences through its telling. That is, through this telling they are *restorying* (Mishler 1995) each of their personal stories, thus jointly fitting them into a shared and collective standard master narrative.

I follow the notion that a master narrative may be used to reorganize one's personal experience in order to explore how mission members witnessing to the presence of God in their lives serves them as a tool to sustain a 'collective identity' (Cain, 1991; Mishler, 1995), thus identifying them as members of a religious community. Specifically, I introduce what I labeled *witness story* to illustrate how this story functions in a remarkably similar fashion to the AA story that Cain (1991) found among members of the AA group she observed. I suggest that the Mexican immigrants who told their witness story were, through such telling, simultaneously accomplishing several tasks. First, they solidified their relation with God through its telling. Second, this telling provided a public acknowledgement of the presence of God in their lives. Third, this telling provided a standard form that reorganized their own (as tellers) understanding of themselves (Cain, 1991). Fourth, it made an identifiable structure available for the current and new members of the community through which they could all share a common identity that made them part of the group.

The availability of the witness story in this community allows us to see it as a resource, ready for appropriation, by all its potential and current members. Whether they realized it or not, it was through their sharing of this story about God's presence in their lives that they were afforded an identity as full-fledged members of the community. Most importantly, this story was in a way available 'outside,' or 'detached' from any particular member of the group, and yet it was available to be appropriated by any of them at any given time. This characteristic

of detachment of the witness story is what allowed it to not be owned exclusively by any particular member of the community, but instead rendered it 'up for grabs' by all members. Also, the reason why most members of the mission appropriated this witness story was because its content and structure offered desirable features of belonging to a group's sanctioned 'Christian' identity, which members of this community learned to value and desire. The characteristics of detachment, availability, and desirability make the witness story easily sharable by all the members who appropriate it through the course of their association with the mission where they first encountered it. Thus, the witness story provides an identity that the speaker can access and use to fit their individual conversion experience within its defined structure, recurrent parts, scenarios, and characteristics. Most importantly, its appropriation makes them acceptable members of this particular group. That is, displaying the expected behavior of being a Christian for the members of this community was accomplished though their active engagement in Christian-defining behaviors such as that of witnessing their faith to others.

In the next section, I will first provide a brief description of what constitutes a witness story; with an explanation of the shared background between the AA support group and religious communities such as the one discussed here. I will also address the conditions under which the appropriations of certain resources, such as the witness story, are likely to occur. Then, I will illustrate through examples the use of the witness story whose telling was appropriated by different members. Next, I will present two cases in which the witness story does not fulfill expectations of its use. The first example shows tellers' awareness of the potential inability of their interlocutors to relate a fundamental scenario of the witness story to their lives, while the second example illustrates how some members struggled with their awareness of having an imposed self-definition. Finally, I will recapitulate my findings and provide a brief explanation of the benefits that the witness story gives to the members of this community, as well as the impact that their appropriation of this story has on their lives. I will now turn to the witness story and introduce some terminology.

**The witness story: definition of terms**

The data from which these stories are drawn include interviews, audio recordings of activities, participant observations, and field notes. My initial interest in collecting these data was to record the everyday experience that members of this Mexican community had in their host country. I soon came to realize the pervasive occurrence of a particular pattern of discourse that appeared in the form of a story some Mexican migrants would tell when talking about their migratory experience.

Upon arriving in Texas Town to meet an initial contact, I did not expect to encounter this religious discourse. I soon understood however that its presence could be explained by the fact that some of the local migrants that I met formed part of a small Spanish mission, which was sponsored by the local Southern Baptist church. One needs to keep in mind that most of these migrants considered themselves to be Catholic before entering this Spanish Baptist mission. I was surprised to find that this pattern of discourse not only appeared while its members were involved in the mission community's activities. One could also identify it in whole or in parts during face-to-face informal interactions members had among themselves, with outsiders, and during interviews I had with most of them. The pervasiveness of this story alerted me to the impact the Spanish mission's teachings had on the lives of its members, and piqued my interest to understand the influence that this particular discourse pattern had on the lives of those telling it. Of course, I also wanted to understand why many of these people were relaying to me and other outsiders largely the same set of scenarios and experiences, repeated within a similar story structure, of their conversion into this evangelical Southern Baptist Church. As I came to understand later, they were fitting their individual conversion within a story line of a new religious profession of evangelical fundamentalism.

In order to have a working definition of the story through which members of this community were organizing their personal experiences of conversion, I combined two different conceptualizations found in the work of Stromberg (1993) on *stories of conversion* and Meigs' (1995) work on *testimonies*, and I labeled this pervasive telling a *witness story*. Stromberg (1993), who has done research on religious conversion, uses the term *stories of conversion*, which he defines as the telling of a person's experience that helps the teller to solidify her or his Christian faith. A similar discourse structure is discussed in the work of Meigs (1995, p.93), who defines it as *testimony* and conceives it to be the tellers' public description of their conversion experience or "walk with the Lord." In the present study, I combined aspects of both definitions, since in the case of the members of this Mexican community the telling of their witness story was at least doing both tasks. It helped them to solidify their Christian faith through their public descriptions of such experiences, and it simultaneously functioned as a reaffirmation of their faith that needed to be done in public.

The function of the witness story for these Mexican immigrants went, however, beyond these two descriptions. Its use also gave rise to a "collective identity"[4]

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4.    I draw this term from the work of Mishler (1995) and Cain (1991). I understand collective identity as that identity that transpires within the interpersonal interactions of a group of people who share a similar understanding of how things work in the world and who engage in identifiably similar use of resources and appropriate mutually sanctioned practices that construct and sustain such understanding, thus creating a collective identity in their group. In the case of the

among those who told the story much in the same way as for the AA support group Cain (1991) reported in her work. The similarity of the function of personal story telling between these seemingly different groups is not totally fortuitous. It can be traced to the fact that in both support groups and religious groups, historically, there has been a parallel conceptualization of alcohol intertwined within a religious perspective. The work of Peterson (1988), as reported in Cain (1991), traces the establishment of AA support groups to a 1930s religious movement called the Oxford Group. The parallelism of Alcoholics Anonymous, which Cain describes, and the group presented here is understandable in that they share a similar historical background regarding the religious undertones of their worldview. That is, the AA standard story and the witness story are both guided by a religious doctrine of evangelism. Peterson traces how AA groups use an illness model to describe alcoholism. As Cain (1991, p.213) reports:

> The Oxford Group, a religious movement in the United States and England used an illness analogy of sin in a program of personal evangelism. Early AA members, including the founders, participated in Oxford Group meetings in New York and Ohio, and were heavily influenced by the oral tradition and terminology, as well as the methods of personal contact, of the Oxford Groups.

As I will illustrate below, members and leaders alike in this mission community exploit this illness analogy of sin. Many of them use the illness/sin analogy to explain the function of the church as a place where believers will be cured, thus conceiving the church's functioning as that of a hospital and seeing themselves suffering from an illness. In both the AA and the mission group, we see a mutually sanctioned construction of an account, which a listener might interpret to be a recounting of a tellers' individual experience. In reality, this telling is a learned form that requires tellers to go through a radical change of self-understanding. Together with this change, it is also demanded that they act upon this new self-understanding.

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members of the Spanish Baptist mission, one of the ways in which they create a collective identity is through the uniformity of their reported experience regarding a particular event in their lives; that is, that of accepting God as their "unique and sole Savior." This uniform telling provides them with a sense of belonging to a group that shares the same experience (given by the set of scenarios and the story line of such witnessing), and an understanding of how things work in the world. Most importantly, the experience (told through the story) that creates this sense of belonging is one that is not brought into the community by each member independently, but one that members of the community find to be sanctioned within their group's environment and are encouraged to appropriate. This leads members to learn the necessary practices and appropriate the resources available to them to maintain a match between *who they think they are* and *what they need to do* to be able to claim what they are.

Before I introduce representative examples of the witness story, I will address an important question that needs to be answered here. What enticed newcomers to appropriate the witness story and participate in the mission community's activities of conversion? It is to this question that I turn next.

## Creating the need for witnessing to the presence of God in one's life

As mentioned before, Texas Town sustains booming cattle and farming industries in need of a certain type of labor force that Latin American immigrants seem, so far, to have filled. As is the case across the Southwestern United States, Texas Town has a visible Spanish-speaking community throughout the year, although during summer and fall the number of Latino immigrants increases due to the greater seasonal demand for agricultural labor across the county. Thus, Texas Town has a consistent, but rather mobile group of Mexican agricultural workers (most of them single, undocumented men) who have already established a network of work connections with the local Anglo community. What members of this Mexican workforce have also established is a very successful Spanish Baptist mission sponsored by a local Anglo Baptist church, and this mission plays a central role in their migratory experience. One can see the mission's impact on its members in both their discourse and behavior which as they would assert, are in many ways distinct from the discourse and behavior of other Mexican migrants.

My entrance into the Spanish Baptist mission community was fully sanctioned by one of its leaders. I made a commitment to the community to offer English as a Second Language classes and Citizenship classes (to those eligible) in exchange for permission to attend, observe, and audio-record mission activities. The mission community played an important role in the lives of this particular community of immigrants since it was the 'gateway' into the larger Texas Town community. It provided a physical space where people interacted socially and created a sense of community. Most importantly, it was also a place where they first encountered an alternative way of seeing themselves and the world around them. From the perspective of any newcomer, it was clear that there were not many physical spaces in Texas Town where these migrant workers could gather to establish a support network, aside from their work places and a Catholic church for those few who attended.

Although most Mexican nationals are Catholic in their home country, many Mexicans in Texas Town did not feel welcome at the local Catholic Church and did not participate in the religious activities sponsored by it. The Catholic Church did not have a Spanish-speaking priest, and members of the parish had an ongoing tense relationship with members of the mission community. In contrast, the Baptist mission offered a friendly, family-like environment where sermons were given

in Spanish, offered a popular musical repertoire of Latin rhythms and tunes re-written with religious lyrics, and sponsored an array of activities, such as soccer matches, bible studies, and social gatherings at least twice a week. These activities, in turn, were conducive to the creation of an informal support network where matters ranging from work to family issues were discussed. In the mission grounds, the members had the perfect space to generate and share resources (discourse and actions) and to engage in shared practices of worship that constituted them members of a particular community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). They had a physical area where members were encouraged to bring newcomers and invite them to participate in their social and religious activities. They had a preacher who, as a recent immigrant himself, understood their situation in society; but above all, they were welcoming, offering friendship and companionship to a group of people that by definition were the most likely to need such an environment.

Still, the fact that the mission had certain resources that could ease some of the hardships of their members' migratory experiences does not completely explain their appropriation of the witness story, through which they created and sustained a collective identity of being "Christian." I will suggest that the ready availability of such tools helps us understand their appropriation, or at least, helps us trace their presence within the mission practices. Although availability was necessary, two important conditions present in the community encouraged members to use these resources. These were, first, the members' perception that their community is a place where people who need help, and are willing to receive it, will find it; and second, the encouragement of their leaders to show others how such positive change can be accomplished with the help of God. Although leaders frequently refer to this as *haciendo la obra de Dios* (doing the work of God), or *predicando la verdad* (preaching the Truth), in practice, members accomplished this demand through learned proselytizing tools (or resources) such as witnessing sessions (an overt attempt to convert others) and the witness story (a recount of their own conversion).

Below, I will give some examples of the use of hospital, sickness, and medicine analogies to illustrate how members and leaders alike perceived the role that their mission played in other people's lives. In the first excerpt, Sara,[5] my interlocutor, is describing how the church functions as a hospital in order to explain how she sees

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5.    All names used in the presentation of data are first name pseudonyms that were chosen by each member of the community or that I have assigned to them to maintain confidentiality. In the case of "Mr. Joaquin," I am using the formal address form of "Mr." to maintain a respectful distance I used in Spanish when talking to him. "Mr. Joaquin" was a leader of the Southern Baptist mission who facilitated my entrance into the community and who was older than myself. Thus, I needed to follow established formal address forms in Spanish when interacting with him. Although, I addressed him as "Señor (last name)" in Spanish, I decided to arbitrarily combine the formal address form and a first name in English to partially convey this respectful distancing.

the role of the church in the lives of its members. Throughout this interaction, Sara and I have been talking about members' similar life experiences regarding alcohol and spousal abuse before reaching out to God to change their lives. She then tells me that in order to understand the role of the mission, one needs to see it as a hospital. As she puts it:

| | |
|---|---|
| Sara: | Eh, uh, yo le voy a poner más fácil. <u>Le voy a describir como, ¿si la iglesia? fuera un hospital aquí.</u> |
| Cecilia: | Uh-huh |
| Sara: | <u>Como si aquí es un hospital</u> |
| Cecilia: | vinieran. <u>La gente que-</u> |
| Sara: | Uh-huh. <u>Enferma</u>. Y, y, y se- y, y es una, un ejemplo el que le estoy poniendo. |
| Cecilia: | Uh-huh |
| | |
| Sara: | Eh, uh, I am going to put it easier [for you]. <u>I am going to describe [to you], as if the church? were a hospital here.</u> |
| Cecilia: | Uh-huh |
| Sara: | <u>As if in here [the church] was a hospital</u> |
| Cecilia: | [they] come. <u>The people that-</u> |
| Sara: | Uh-huh. <u>Sick</u>. And, and, and *se-* and, and this is a- an example what I am giving you. |
| Cecilia: | Uh-huh [ESL88:23] |

Of interest in this excerpt is the conception of the church as a place to be cured, healed, or regenerated, as one would be if one had a physical illness. This conception, of course, is one that Sara may have taken from the pastors' sermons in which this idea was frequently expressed. The following excerpt from one of the sermons illustrates a similar analogy as presented by one of the preachers in the church.

In this segment, one can see a similar metaphor used to describe the function of the mission in relation to its members. This excerpt is drawn from a larger sermon of a visiting pastor, who led the service while the official pastor was on one of his visits to Mexico. Here, the pastor, concluding the sermon and praying the closing prayer, states the following:

| | |
|---|---|
| Pastor: | Vamos a inclinar nuestro rostro. <u>Vamos a orar y así hacemos una invitación para aquellos que: nos visitan por primera vez</u>. Saber que Dios esta a la puerta. Saber que Dios esta [pega en el podium cinco veces como si tocara a la puerta] Él tiene, <u>Él tiene la medicina</u> para, <u>para esa enfermedad</u>. Él tiene (pausa) <u>el remedio</u> (pausa) Él tiene <u>la manera para transforma:r esa vida</u>, <u>que tiene deseos, de se:r renovada</u>, <u>de se:r cambiada</u>. De que ya: no. Muchas de las veces la persona <u>no se siente a gusto</u> de la manera que |

esta viviendo. Pero no sabe, no sabe que hay otra nueva manera de vivir. Cristo, Cristo tiene esa, esa respuesta a su vida. [VPSM86: 15]

Pastor:    Let's lower our heads. Let's pray and that's [how we] make an invitation to those tha:t are visiting us for the first time. To know that God is at the door. To know that God is [hits on the podium five time as if he were knocking a the door] He has, He has the medicine for, for that sickness. He has (pause) the remedy[6] (pause). He [knows] the way to transfo:rm that life, that has the desire, to be: renovated, to be: changed. Of [saying] no: more. Many times the person does not feel happy about the way [the person] is living. But does not know, does not know that there is another new way of life. Christ, Christ has that, that answer to [their] life.

This prayer was drawn from a sermon given on a Sunday morning, and the message encouraged members of the community to share with others their personal experience with God. This is a closing prayer, thus the preacher is making an invitation to first-time visitors of the church to accept God. "Medicine" and "remedy" are God's ways to "transform," "renovate," and "change," visitors' lives, when they "have the desire" to do so, but do not know how. So, for the preacher, God has the "answer" to accomplish this for those who do not know that He can do that. The preacher's choice of words is interesting in that he offers a possibility of betterment. His offer of change (conversion) is, perhaps, different from what first-time visitors (newly arrived immigrants) had in mind before hearing this preaching. I would imagine that newcomers visit church in search of fellowship and friendship without any expectations that they may be labeled as being sick in need of recovery.

In the final example, one can see again, this theme of illness. This time it is verbalized during a preaching of the official pastor:

Pastor:    Muchos de ustedes no vienen a la escuela dominical precisamente por eso (3 sec) Porque tienen una enfermedad muy grave espiritualmente [pega una vez con nudillos en el podium] [SM723: 18]

Pastor:    That is precisely [the reason why] many of you do not come to Sunday Bible school (3 sec) Because you have a very serious spiritual sickness [hits on the podium with knuckles]

It is safe to deduce that the preacher is comparing a sickness of the body, which may be observable at some stage, to the otherwise unobservable sickness of the spirit. Since one cannot see sickness of the spirit, but one can take note of absent bodies in the church, one perhaps deduces that one's failing spiritual life (neglecting the wor-

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6.    In Spanish, the meanings of the word "remedio," include both a "choice/alternative," and the medical terms "remedy," and "cure." This makes the preacher's choice of terms useful for conveying multiple meanings to his audience through ambiguity.

ship of God) can only be observed through one's physical actions (not attending to Sunday Bible school), thus providing observable evidence of a lack of faith.

So far, I have illustrated how members of this community perceive themselves as belonging to a group, the *raison d'être* of which is to help others. However, one may wonder whether this is their only motivation for appropriating the witness story. I will suggest that the emergence of this need to share the witness story with others begins with members' acceptance of having the role of "instrument of God" and through this role, helping others to change. As the reader may have glimpsed from the last example, members of this community are constantly told that they actually *become* who they perceive themselves to be only when in fact they engage *in doing* what they believe themselves to be. In Kenneth Burke's words, as cited in Goffman (1961, p.88) "doing is being." Thus, members of this community show best what they believe to be ('Christians') through their doing. In addition to this conceptualization of "doing is being," I will be looking at moments in which people actually appropriate the witness story and use it in action, and in that I follow a program of research known as Mediated Discourse Theory, which focuses on actions as constitutive of social identities (Scollon, R. 1998, 2001a, 2001b, Scollon, S. 1998).

With this in mind, let me now examine yet another perspective from which actions of the members of the community were guided and encouraged through their leaders, and how this guidance affected their identity transformation. One of the major activities of any evangelical group is their proselytizing, which assures both their continued existence through the inclusion of new members and the maintenance of their own identity. Let me illustrate through the voices of two different preachers the characteristic discourse intended to motivate members to tell others about their experience within the Church and to witness to the presence of God in their lives, thus enacting their Christianity.

First, I will reproduce an example where one of the preachers is telling his audience about the importance of sharing their faith with others. Members are encouraged to do this through proselytizing resources such as witnessing sessions (an overt attempt to convert others) and the witness story (recounting of their own conversion). Although the use of both resources (witnessing sessions and the witness story) frequently resulted in the conversion of others, members used the witness story more frequently *to simply witness* to the presence of God in their lives. It was not necessarily told *to convince* others to accept God in their own lives. When members were most interested in gaining a soul, they would (among other things), use their witness story to engage their listener in what Harding (1987) calls a witnessing session. These sessions contained additional discursive features above and beyond the use of the witness story, such as direct requests speakers made for their interlocutors to change their attitudes and daily life's actions into those that the church sanctioned. The mission leaders, for their part, continuously told their fol-

lowers that the witness story should be used to *proclaim the Word of God*, and that they (as believers) were to serve as *His instrument* in doing so.

To illustrate, in the following excerpt, a visiting preacher tells his audience of the importance of sharing their faith with others in order to maintain a consistency between having faith and meeting God's demands. According to this preacher, one should observe this consistency between faith and the fulfillment of God's expectations through one's actual activities. As he states it:

> Pastor:   Así es que hermanos, aquí entre la congregación ¿quién es hombre de fe? (5 sec) ¿Quién es hombre de fe? <u>Todos tenemos fe.</u> (2 sec) <u>Pero la fe tiene que ir de acuerdo a su manera de ser</u>. <u>Nada más</u>. No hacer (pausa) cosas (pausa) que desagraden la /vida/ de Dios. <u>No hacer cosas que, que pongan en, en, en mal el testimonio de la iglesia con la comunidad</u>. <u>Cuidado hermanos</u>. <u>El testimonio (pausa) de la iglesia en nuestra sociedad es el que damos /uno a Dios/</u> [SM86: 14]

> Pastor:   Therefore, brothers, here among the congregation, who is a man of faith? (5 sec) Who is a man of faith? <u>We all have faith</u>. (2 sec) <u>But faith has to go according to [one's] way of being</u>. <u>Nothing else</u>. Do not do (pause) things (pause) that [are] unpleasant to the /life/ of God. <u>Do not do things that, that put in, in, in bad light the testimony of the church with the community</u>. <u>Careful brothers</u>. <u>The testimony (pause) of the church in our society is the one that we give /one to God/</u>

Of interest in this excerpt is the preacher's encouragement to maintain consonance between one's beliefs and one's actions. This also suggests that each one of the members is a representative of the church and so, personal actions may affect outsiders' perception of the mission community as a whole. Thus, members' actions toward their own group and outsiders should reflect their own personal relationship with God.

Next, the preacher calls for action from the members to give a testimony of their faith in new and different places:

> Pastor:   Así es que hermanos, <u>yo creo en mi corazón que Dios nos da oportunidad en cada, a cada minuto de, de testifica:r</u>. Yo creo en mi corazón, que Dios nos da oportunidad. Fíjese. De /presentarle/ esa /clase de información/. Cuando va usted a la tienda: Les voy a, a decir. Cuando va usted a la tienda. No vaya nada mas a /mercadear/. (2 sec) <u>Si encontraste por ahí un Mexicano</u>. Uno que hable de- tu mismo idioma, <u>platícale /de la palabra de Dios/</u>. Porque esa costumbre tenemos nosotros los Cristianos. Que cuando vamos al mandado, <u>vamos al mandado y nada más</u>. Cuando vamos a lavar, <u>vamos a lavar y nada más</u>. <u>Así pueden andar</u> los, los aquellos, <u>necesitados que le prediquemos la palabra</u>: <u>Se nos fue la obra</u> (2 sec.) [VPSM86: 14]

Pastor:    So brothers, <u>I believe in my heart that God gives us an opportunity in each, at each minute to, to testify:</u> I believe in my heart, that God gives us opportunity. Look. Of /[give]/ that /type of information/. When you go to the store: I'm going to, to tell [you]. When you go to the store. Do not go only to /exchange goods/ (2 sec). <u>If you run into a Mexican around there</u>. One that speaks of- your same language, <u>chat with him /about the Word of God</u>/. Because that is a habit we Christians have. That when we go grocery shopping, <u>we go grocery shopping and nothing else</u>. When [we] go to do laundry, <u>[we] go to do laundry and nothing else</u>. <u>So [it could be that] there are around</u>, the, <u>those, needy for our preaching the Wo:rd</u> <u>The Work (of God) escaped from us</u> (2 sec)

In this excerpt we see a direct request from the leader of the church to actively engage in spreading the Word of God through one's actions. Thus, as the preacher may say, *if you are not doing, you are not being. If you are Christians, you need to engage in Christian actions and practices to fulfill our expectations*. Most importantly it illustrates the encouragement to not "waste opportunities" they may "encounter" to preach the Word, a call for action that the same preacher had himself verbalized in the excerpt given above.

Finally, encouragement to give testimony of faith can also be noticed in one of the songs the members sing at the beginning of the services:

Halle un buen amigo, mi amado Salvador [niñas tocan tamborines]
<u>Contar lo que Él ha hecho para mí</u> [empiezan a aplaudir al ritmo de la canción]
Hallándome perdido e indigno pecador
<u>Me salvó y hoy me guarda para sí</u>

[I] found a good friend, my beloved Savior [girls play tambourines]
 <u>[I] will tell what he has done for me</u> [people start to clap at the rhythm of the song]
 <u>[He] found me lost and an unworthy sinner</u>
 <u>[He] saved me and [He] now keeps me for Himself</u>

What follows after this first verse is a description of how God saves the person from sin, protects him form the devil, and is always present when needed:

 Jesús jamás me falta, jamás me dejará
 Es mi fuerte y poderoso protector

Jesús never fails me, [He] will never leave me
 [He] is my strong and powerful protector

The singers then declare:

> Del mal yo me separo y de la vanidad
> Para consagrar mi vida al Señor [SMM730: 1]
>
> From evil I break away and from vanity
> To devote my life to the Lord

What is most striking about the lyrics of this song is the presence of some features of the witness story in these verses. The person was a lost sinner whom God has saved and for whom He has provided powerful protection. The person breaks away from evil and vanity to devote his or her life to the Lord. Of importance is that most of the songs sung in church have been written by members of the community, thus providing further evidence of the pervasiveness of the witness story's scenarios as they are found within the mission community's actions and practices.

Up to this point, I have illustrated the conditions in which certain tools are conducive to creating and sustaining a Christian identity among members of this community. On one hand, one can note the lack of other resources in the community available to this Mexican migrant group. On the other hand, through belonging to the church group, newcomers are also invited to change their way of life. With unfailing motivation, leaders teach them how to accomplish such change with the help of God. Now that we have seen the discourse of the preachers to encourage witnessing, let us examine how members of the group appropriate for themselves this practice in action. In the next section, I begin by highlighting the key elements of the structure of the witness story. I then present examples in the voice of some of the mission's members to illustrate how identifiable sets of scenarios 'as well as a consistent story line' appear in their telling of the witness story.

**The witness story: the standard structure**

After discovering that there was a story regularly told by members of the religious community, it did not take long to identify that its structure and content contained several parts with recurrent scenarios. They could be described as follows. First tellers usually acknowledge having been an alcoholic in the past. There are often variations on this theme such as the acknowledgement of having neglected the family or engaging in child and spousal abuse. Second, the teller usually tells about the decision to migrate to the United States, how he only found sporadic work upon arrival, and how he continued drinking. Third, an encounter with a group of evangelical brothers or with the pastor occurs. The brothers successfully make the person realize that his life is out of control. The brothers are invariably quoted as saying that only Jesus could help the individual, and that in order for the individ-

ual to be helped he has to accept Jesus as his Savior. There are several variations in this line of the story, including a narration about how there might have been several failed attempts by the brothers to persuade the individual to convert, or how he might have been invited to the mission by family members who had already converted into it. Still a further variation is found in the women's stories. In their case, it is sometimes their husbands who bring them into the church, and after observing a change in their husband's neglectful or abusive behavior, they become members.[7] Finally, a last episode in the witness story is that the person accepts Jesus, and the mission members become a family to him or her. His or her life changes and he or she acknowledges the help of the brothers for this transformation. The life of the teller then becomes committed to serving God.

In practice, most tellers appropriated and adapted this structure faithfully following these several parts and recurrent scenarios as we can see in the following example, the witness story of Mr. Joaquin. Mr. Joaquin was at the time of my fieldwork one of the leaders in the mission. The story occurred within a long interaction I had with Mr. Joaquin, in which he told me about his life in Mexico, the reasons why he migrated to the United States, how he crossed the border, and his experience living in Texas Town.

The witness story of Mr. Joaquin occurred within an interaction lasting 3 hours and 45 minutes. The interaction included an informal interview and a dinner conversation, followed by spontaneous discourse in which we talked about his life story, his and my involvement in the community, and the history of the mission. Mr. Joaquin's witness story tells of the time when he encountered a group of evangelical brothers and a preacher who made him realize that his life was out of control. The witness story of Mr. Joaquin comes about while describing his sporadic work and his moving around the county as he followed available jobs. Previous to his initiation of his witness story he explains that he had found a job close to Texas Town and thus he had moved to an area of dilapidated trailers where

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7.    Although alcoholism was a problem that most male members of the community claimed to have experienced, women did mention it in their witness story to illustrate its impact on their family and as tangible evidence of the work of God in their lives and that of their spouse. Strobele-Gregor (1992), who explores this same subject, finds that the effectiveness of evangelical churches in the conversion of women in Latin America is owned in part to women's recognition that their spouses' change of drinking behavior is due to their religious conversion. Many of the women in Texas Town told me that their husbands' change was noticeable once they actively engaged within the mission community's practices. Some changes they mentioned relate to their husbands becoming better providers since they stopped spending money on alcohol. They also noted a decrease in domestic violence since their husbands no longer drank.

Mexican migrants, prostitution, alcohol, and drugs were prevalent. He then mentions that God saved him at the right time. As he puts it:

Sr. Joaquín:   Uhm. <u>Justamente Dios me salvó en, en momento bien preciso</u>.
Cecilia:       De verdad que lo salvo. Y con eso de Sida, con esto de enfermedades.

Mr. Joaquin:   Uhm. <u>God saved me exactly in, in the precise moment</u>.
Cecilia:       He truly saved you. And with [the existence of] AIDS, [and other] sickness

Here I do not know why Mr. Joaquin had said that God saved him at that precise moment, thus my comment refers to an assumption that God's protection had to do with his safety while living in that place. I was remarking on his safety in terms of health issues pertaining to prostitution and drugs, which Mr. Joaquin was not necessarily referring to here, as we will see. Mr. Joaquin again describes the environment in which he was living at the time as a place where mostly Mexicans lived. He then explains that he and a group of people living there were all sitting and drinking when suddenly some of them saw the mission's van[8] coming into the only driveway of the place. The men started running away as they yelled, "the brothers are coming, the Protestants are here." Mr. Joaquin explains that he was the only one left after everyone else ran away. He then makes a second reference to God as follows:

Sr. Joaquín:   <u>Pero fíjese como, como lo que Dios traía para mí</u>. Ahí me quede sentado. Ya llegaron ahí. El pastor. Y un, y un hermano.
Cecilia:       Uh-huh.

Mr. Joaquin:   <u>But notice how, how what God was bringing to me</u>. I stayed there sitting. They arrived there. The pastor. And a, and a brother.
Cecilia:       Uh-huh

Mr. Joaquin's reference to God is, in a way, guiding his witness story in that through his telling he is witnessing to the presence of God in his life. At this point of his telling one can identify recognizable sequential segments of the witness story. He was a drunk with sporadic work, and his life was out of control. Thus the encounter with the brothers is appropriately placed in his story, since they correspond to the second (migration to the U.S while still having a life out of control with sporadic work) and third (encounter with a group of evangelical brothers) scenarios properly placed in his story. After a brief evaluation in which Mr. Joaquin mentions that the pastor was the person who helped him to find God, he then describes how the pastor greeted him and asked him why others ran away and he did not. He

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8.   The mission community had a van that was used to bring members back and forth from community activities, including worship services. It was also used to drive members to evangelical gatherings that took place in nearby towns.

responds that the other people left because they saw them and knew they were Protestant brothers. "Didn't you get scared?" the pastor wonders, and Mr. Joaquin responds that even though he did not know the difference, he thought that all are children of God anyway. Mr. Joaquin then describes his interaction with the pastor as a memorable one in which he questions him on his alcohol consumption.

Of interest to us is Mr. Joaquin's recollection of how the pastor's words affected him, his awareness that the pastor was guiding him, and his acknowledgment that at the time he was open and willing to listen to the preacher. All of these elements are recognition of the event itself as one of listening to the Word of God. The segment also shows his present awareness of being open to the preacher's subsequent description of how God could help him, should he need help. Thus, at this point, Mr. Joaquin provides a lengthy description of the pastor's witnessing to make him realize that his life is out of control and that only Jesus could help him. The pastor then invites him to visit the mission if he is willing to believe that God loves him, thus encouraging him (although this is not overtly verbalized) to make a decision and accept God in his life. As Mr. Joaquin reports:

| Sr. Joaquín: | "<u>La única cosa que yo quiero decirle es que Dios le ama. Y si cree que Dios le ama. Simplemente necesita creer.</u>" Dice, "¿y sabe que? (2 sec) En este mismo momento si usted quisiera," dice. "Usted puede hacer una decisión," dice. "Pero yo no lo voy a obligar a nada," dice. "¿Sabe que?" dice. "<u>Este, piénselo. Piénselo bien. Y piense. Medite en eso y piense en esta situación, y vera como, este, el Señor va a cambiar su vida.</u>" "Mire," dice. "Si quiere" (2 sec) Uh, "<u>si quiere y de veras tiene deseos de conocer a Dios. Trate de componerse,</u> trate de este, de parar en esta cosa," dice. |
|---|---|
| Cecilia: | Uh-huh. |
| Mr. Joaquin: | "<u>The only thing that I want to tell you is that God loves you. And if you believe that God loves you. You only need to believe.</u>" [He] says, "and you know what?" (2 sec) <u>Right this moment if you would like,</u>" [he] says. "<u>You can take a decision,</u>" [he] says. "But I am not going to force you to do anything," [he] says. "You know what," [he] says. "<u>Eh, think. Think carefully. And think. Meditate on that and think in that situation, and [you] will see how, eh, the Lord will change your life.</u>" "Look," [he] says. "If you want," (2 sec) Uh, "<u>if you want and you truly have desire to know God. Try to fix yourself up</u>[9], try to eh, to stop this thing," [he says. |
| Cecilia: | Uh-huh. |

9.    I am choosing to use the translation "try to fix yourself up," although this can also mean, "try to recover" (as from drinking alcohol) or "try to get better" (as in feeling better) because it also implies to fix one's physical appearance. I imagine that the preacher wanted Mr. Joaquin to look appropriately presentable to visit the church, which is the invitation he makes to him next.

The invitation of the pastor to believe, and his suggestion to Mr. Joaquin to think carefully, or as he puts it, "meditate," on believing that God loves him, is a recurrent line that many members of the community mention in their witness stories and that they imitate when convincing others "to think about" accepting God in their lives.[10] In Mr. Joaquin's reporting of what is a witnessing session, the preacher conditions his desire to know God by requesting him to fix himself up and to stop drinking. As Joaquin further reports:

Sr. Joaquín:    "Deténgase," dice. "Párele. Pare esta cosa," dice. "Nosotros vamos a orar por usted. Vamos a pedirle a Dios para que Dios le dé, eso, esa decisión." Dice, "pero usted necesita poner de su parte." Dice, "mire, ¿qué le parece si puede ir en la tarde a la iglesia?

Mr. Joaquin:    "Stop yourself," [he] says. "Stop it. Stop this thing," [he] says. "We will pray for you. [We] will ask God to give you, that, that decision." [He] says, "but you need to help." [He] says, "look, what do you say if you go to the church in the afternoon?"

Although this is beyond the scope of what I intend to show here, Mr. Joaquin is being engaged in the construction of an embedded scenario that contains a witnessing session within a witness story. His reporting of the witnessing session is, however, crucial to his witness story. Witnessing is an important practice, as is the use of the witness story, in the social process of identity transformation for members of the mission community. As we have already glimpsed from the appeals of their leaders, for evangelical Christian groups like the Southern Baptists, witnessing the gospel to others is a major responsibility of a Christian person. The previous segment, where the preacher encourages Mr. Joaquin to believe and meditate in and about God's love to see how it can change his life, is an important piece. It describes how Mr. Joaquin encounters a member of the community who is quoted as saying that only Jesus can help him should he accept Him as his Savior. Furthermore, after the pastor tells Mr. Joaquin to stop drinking, he tells him that they (the members of the community, including the pastor) will pray for him, so that God will furnish him with the decision he needs to make. After that, the pastor ends up inviting him to visit the church. The invitation to visit the church is combined with an offer of friendship, willingness to help, and a promise to help him find a job:

Sr. Joaquín:    Entonces me dijo, "mire, otra cosa," dice. "Yo quiero ser su amigo," me dijo el pastor. Y::: "Quiero ser su amigo. Si en algo le puedo servir," dice.

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10.  The identification of such recurrent phrases used in similar situations make their intertextual identification easier for an observer of such interactions, especially when trying to determine what is being accomplished in those interactions.

|  | Este, "<u>háblame</u>," dice. "Yo vivo en tal parte. Este es mi número de teléfono," dice. "<u>Si necesita trabajo, dígame</u>. <u>Y yo le ayudo</u>." |
|---|---|
| Mr. Joaquin: | Then [he] told me, "look, another thing," [he says]. "<u>I want to be your friend</u>," the pastor told me. A:::nd "I want to be your friend. <u>If I can be of help</u>," [he says] Eh, "<u>call me</u>," [he] says. "I live in such place. This is my telephone number," he says. "<u>If you need work, tell me</u>. <u>And I help you</u>." |

Mr. Joaquin is reporting on a witnessing session that he had with the pastor, and unlike other interactions I had with other members, he is not appropriating it to convince me to accept God in my life. That is, he is not imposing a witnessing session upon me, but instead through the telling of this witness story, he is describing the time in which the preacher invites him to accept believing in God, so that He can change his life. Also, he reports on how the preacher invites him to visit the church and offers him help to find work.

These segments, as Mr. Joaquin reports them, correspond to three identifiable parts that make up the structural scenario of the witness story. That is, acknowledging to have in the past an out-of-control life due to alcoholism, reporting on the maintenance of such life after migrating to the United States, and then meeting a group of 'brothers' who encouraged him to accept God in his life, and quoting them as saying that only God can help him change. Although we do not have the concluding parts constituting the complete general structure of this witness story, and thus they are untold at this particular telling, Mr. Joaquin's story does end with his acceptance of God in his life and a subsequent commitment to the service of God. As a matter of fact, he is one of the most active leaders in the mission community.

Mr. Joaquin's witness story is a representative example of how this story came about in conversations, interviews, and class discussions in the context of the mission. The repetitiveness and consistent structure (in whole or in parts) of the witness story was what made it uniquely identifiable within the discourse of many community members. Not all witness stories were as fitted to the scenario, however, which led me to question if there were cases where members had problems with their use of this story, notably when not being able to completely match their own personal experience with that afforded by the witness story's main self-portrayal. I found that this occurred sometimes among members of the community, independently of their length of association with the mission or the effectiveness of their leaders when encouraging them to tell others about God.

In the following section, I will reproduce two discourse fragments in the voice of other members of the community to illustrate two interesting aspects that arose while some members were telling their witness story: first, their realization that their interlocutor may not find it compelling, and second, their struggle when not being able to completely match their own personal experience with the aspects of-

fered by the witness story's main self-definition. In the first fragment, there is additional interactive work by the member of the community when she realizes that perhaps I did not recognize one of the scenarios as being plausible in my life. Once she tells me this, she still goes further to complete her initial attempt to proselytize me, which she carries out later in the interaction. The second fragment shows an example of how a newly arrived member (8 months) of the community is still embracing some aspects of his own self-perception that mismatch the expected story line of the witness story he is sharing with me. Let me now turn to these two examples.

**Afterthought: when the story line does not fit**

There are instances in which those telling the witness story find it to be inapplicable in their interlocutor's life. There are also occasions in which members verbalize their feelings when having to appropriate the expected self-definition. Here, I will briefly mention two cases that illustrate such instances. The first case shows tellers' awareness of their interlocutors' inability to relate the witness story to their own lives, while the second example illustrates how some members struggled with their awareness of having an imposed self-definition.

The first example is drawn from a larger interaction that occurred after an ESL class, which included a witnessing event through which Griselda had attempted to initiate me into conversion (Harding, 1987). Before the following excerpt, Griselda had been discussing some of the distinctive practices that I have noticed in the mission, such as the different labels members use to refer to people in church: brother, sister, visitor, and friend. She then talks about her mother, who is a practicing Catholic in Mexico, and condemns her engagement in selling raffle tickets of which prizes include bottles of wine and champagne to raise money for the church.[11] Promoting alcohol consumption is one of the differing practices between Catholics and "Christians," she argues. Then, there is a brief discussion regarding the topic of alcohol and Catholicism. Here, I mention how many members of the community seemed to share a struggle with alcohol and point out that I do not quite understand how all of them could have a similar experience. She suggests the reason for my inability to understand this through a scenario of what my life may

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11.    The particular event to which Griselda is referring is a fundraising activity sponsored by the Catholic Church to which her mother belonged in Mexico. The congregation was selling tickets for a variety of prizes that included bottles of wine and champagne. The fact that alcohol was included as one of the raffle prizes and that the raffle tickets were sold to raise money was enough evidence for Griselda to argue that the Catholic Church in Mexico sanctions alcohol consumption.

be from both her and my own perspective (as she verbalizes my potential thoughts on the issue), and she suggests that independently of whether or not I share this experience, in the end, what matters is that one accepts that one is alive thanks to God. Let me reproduce this excerpt below:

Griselda:   Y quizás, <u>a lo mejor no lo entienda mucho porque, a lo mejor en su familia no lo vivió mucho, una vida con una persona que tomaba.</u> <u>Por eso a lo mejor se le hace un poquito difícil de entenderlo.</u> Su esposo no toma. <u>Pero yo, que sí viví esa vida, sí lo entiendo perfectamente bien.</u> Lo que – <u>Lo que yo viví antes y lo que yo vivo ahora.</u>
[Líneas omitidas donde confirma mi entendimiento]

Griselda:   Pero simplemente aunque usted, aunque usted diga, aunque diga, "no." <u>Aunque usted piense, "no yo no viví esa vida, quizás así</u> – Mi papá no fue así, mis hermanos – No viví una, una vida <u>así tan [pega en la mesa] tan triste</u>, este, y, y, y mi esposo no toma," <u>pero si, si, si tenemos que estar conscientes.</u> <u>Simplemente es que si vivimos, por Dios vivimos.</u>

Cecilia:   Uh-huh

Griselda:   ¿Me entiende?

Cecilia:   Si le entiendo [ESL88: 25]

Griselda:   And perhaps, <u>probably [you] do not understand [it] well because, you probably did not live it in your family much,</u> <u>a life with a person that used to drink.</u> <u>That is why probably [that] for you it is a little difficult to understand.</u> Your husband does not drink. <u>But I, that I [who] lived that life, [I] understand it perfectly well.</u> That- <u>That what I lived before and what I live now.</u>
[Omitted lines where she confirms my understanding]

Griselda:   But even if you simply, even if you say, even if you say, "no." <u>Even if you think, "no I did not live that life, like that</u> – My father was not like that, my brothers – I did not live a, a life <u>like that so [hits the table]</u>
so sad, er, and, and, and my husband does not drink," <u>but we [do, do, do] have to be aware.</u> <u>Simply it's that if we [are] alive, [it is thanks] to God [that we] are alive.</u>

Cecilia:   Uh-huh

Griselda:   Do you understand me?

Cecilia:   Yes, I understand you

Griselda has put together a possible scenario about alcohol consumption in my family, which may affect my ability to understand a life of spousal violence and neglect caused by alcohol abuse. Community members perceived alcohol consumption of any kind (be this the infrequent drink or alcohol abuse) as a sin from which one needs to be rescued and to which the concept of "transformation" was frequently attached. One needs to remember the pervasive alcohol and illness anal-

ogy to sin. Alcohol abuse is a fundamental situation of the witness story. If one does not have an understanding of the effect of alcohol on one's life, this may limit one's ability to value the significance of the change members of this community experienced when stopping alcohol consumption.

Although, Griselda is not overtly attempting to proselytize me at this particular moment (she does it later in the conversation), one can see that she conceives this scenario of the witness story as a truthful and fundamental one. As a matter of fact, she understands it first hand ("But I, that I lived that life, I understand it perfectly well") and knows the difference between "what she lived before" and what she lives now. She understands the core purpose of telling the witness story, in that tellers are providing evidence of the presence of God in their lives, thus witnessing to the benefits that that presence brought to them. My ability, or lack of ability, to understand the value of the story did not matter in the end. For Griselda, my sympathy with this story is irrelevant if I am willing to accept that I owe my life to God. If I accept that, I may be able to see the importance of God's presence and the change it makes in anyone's life. Thus, this example illustrates clearly how some members, such as Griselda, are aware of the presence of the witness story in their community and are capable of identifying and adjusting those scenarios not applicable to their listeners. Let me now turn to the last example to illustrate a case where a member of the church is still struggling with his awareness of having an imposed self-definition.

I was unable to shadow a single member of the community from their first visit to the mission to the moment they converted[12]so as to pinpoint those instances when they started appropriating specific discourse, actions, and practices that defined them as members of this church. Still, my interactions with Chucho, a relatively recent arrival (8 months at the time of this interaction) provided me with the opportunity to observe, through his discourse, an ongoing struggle as he was becoming a full-fledged member of the mission community. He considers himself to be a "Christian," but has not totally accepted all the aspects of the witness story to define his experience in the mission. He does not categorically make the distinction of "Catholic" and "Christian" upon alcohol consumption or lack of it, and he challenges some ideological undertones the church imposes regarding docility and productivity. Among members of the community there was an awareness regarding the importance of two issues: not questioning one's suffering, and tacitly accepting social abuse. Chucho acknowledges the support and companion-

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12.    By "the moment they converted," I am referring to an observable action required from all members to raise their hand when deciding to accept God in their lives. This action, done usually at the end of a worship service, attested to their public acknowledgment that God was their Savior and it was a required action to make public such acknowledgement. This action also redefined them as full-fledged members.

ship migrants find in the mission. As he explains it, "so for now, what people do here is that in any way they can, they give a hand to one another, so one does not feel alone. In here, there is more support [that] comes from people in church."[13] He, however, still overtly recognizes his enjoyment of activities that the church discourages, such as dancing. Dancing was frequently correlated to alcohol and therefore considered to be a sin among the members of this community. My understanding while living in the community is that Southern Baptists have always frowned upon dancing. I presume that it has to do with a suspicion that it leads to sexual temptation. Of course their misconception that people always drink at dances is probably a component of this correlation. As Chucho explains:

> Chucho:    Okay. A mí, la verdad, me gusta la música. Me gusta baila:r. Me puedo echar el /"pironjito"/
> Cecilia:    [Se ríe suavemente]
> Chucho:    Pero el /"pironjito."/ Ya no hay nada de esos –

> Chucho:    Okay. I, the truth, [I] like music. I like to dance: I can do the /"pironjito"/
> Cecilia:    [soft laugh]
> Chucho:    But the /"pironjito."/ There are none of those [anymore] –

First and most important is that after Chucho has previously acknowledged that indeed people in the church are supportive in terms of providing help and companionship, he then mentions his enjoyment of dancing, and elaborates on a type of dance that he jokingly seems to imply he is not able to do anymore. This opens the opportunity for me to question Chucho regarding his feelings about not having certain enjoyments, and he verbalizes what any newcomer might notice in the church, that is, the presence of constant pressure to be someone else:

> Cecilia:    ¿Cómo es que se siente usted con eso? Y ha:y –
> Chucho:    <u>Me siento como u:n, como u:n león enjaulado</u> (pausa)
>            O sea- enjaula- enjau- enjaulado en la cuestión de:
>            <u>Como que todas mis emociones están como: amarradas.</u>
>            <u>O sea: mi forma de ser esta:</u>
>            <u>Como: controlada, no: no: puedo ser yo.</u>
>            <u>O sea estoy como el que "si soy, no soy."</u>
>            <u>Aunque te hagan una personalidad diferente,</u>
>            <u>aunque sea positiva e:s,</u>
>            y yo era- <u>y yo creo la satisfacción sería que:</u>
>            Me liberara. <u>Me liberara, pues de mis emociones.</u>
>            O sea má:s abierto en todos los aspectos,

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**13.**   "Entonces ahorita, pues aquí lo que tiene la gente es que pues como sea: Dan una mano. Porque ya te sientes acompañado. Aquí hay mas (pausa) mas apoyo que son de: Iglesia."

<pre>
          pero no puedo porque el tipo de gente no se presta.
          Para: liberarse,
          para decir, "hay no que onda, ah, esto, ah, wow."
Cecilia:  Uh-huh
Chucho:   O sea: de salirse pues, punto.
Cecilia:  Uh-huh [IC811: 58]

Cecilia:  How do you feel about that? And there i:s –
Chucho:   I feel like a: like a caged lion (pause)
          That is- in cage- cag- caged in terms o:f
          As if all my emotions are tied up.
          That i:s my way of being i:s
          As if it were under control, no: I can no:t be I.
          That is, I am like "I am, I am not."
          Though [they] make you a different personality,
          though [it] is a positive [one] i:s,
          and I was- I believe [that] the satisfaction would be tha:t
          I liberate [myself]. I liberate [myself], [well] of my emotions.
          That is, mo:re open in all aspects,
          but I cannot because [this] kind of people does not [allow]
          To: liberate [oneself],
          to say, "hey what's up, ah, I'm, ah this, wow."
Cecilia:  Uh-huh
Chucho:   That i:s well, to emerge out [oneself], period.
Cecilia:  Uh-huh
</pre>

Chucho shows an awareness of the control that the church has upon its members and the feelings that result from it. This control is due to a constant expectation of being a Christian through the following of Christian precepts. Chucho expresses his sentiment of feeling like a "caged lion," in terms of his "way of being as if it were under control," and shows his awareness that the church gives its members "a different personality." Although considering this different personality to be a positive one, he still believes that he is unable to be the person who he really is within this community. As he put it, "I am like 'I am, I am not.'" This outlook, although not often verbalized by many, is still present among some members of the community, especially the new arrivals. It is an understandable outlook considering that from the moment one enters the mission grounds, one is immediately identified as a visitor and unconsciously marked through one's lack of ability to follow certain practices defining this membership. For members who have belonged to the church a bit longer, as is the case of Chucho, the expectation is for them to have accepted the Lord in their lives. As I have illustrated, that acceptance is accomplished through the use of resources members have access to, such as witnessing sessions imposed

upon outsiders, sermons and callings of the pastors at the end of the worship services, and the appropriation of the witness story, among many others. So, Chucho illustrates the struggle one may expect members to experience when they are aware that as he put it, there is a "different personality" imposed upon them.

In this last section, I have illustrated, through the voices of two representative members of the mission, instances where first, the witness story may be seen as a story line not applicable to the listener, and second, where tellers are aware that the church provides them with an alternative identity through controlling devices. Although Chucho does not elaborate the manner in which the church imposes this "different personality," one knows that he is referring to actions encouraged by the leaders and members alike, including the pressure to appropriate a resource such as the witness story.

## Conclusion

I hope that I have provided evidence for the important role that the mission community had among members of this particular group of Mexican migrants in Texas Town. Increasing numbers of migrants are reaching out to churches as gateways to the larger U.S. society. Many of them reach out to the Catholic Church, which they are already familiar with from their home country. However, as this case study illustrates, evangelical churches are augmenting their proselytizing efforts to include this particular group of people. Texas Town is not an isolated case, and the phenomenon described here is not an unusual one, if one considers the prominence of evangelical Protestant churches in the United States. However, one should pay attention to the consequences of conversion in the lives of this immigrant group. As I hope to have illustrated through the voices of several members of this community, one's appropriation of actions, discourse, and practices does provide one with an alternative view of the world. In this case, members of this community had the opportunity to be "Christians" as opposed to being "undocumented immigrants." This identity, however, required from them their commitment to certain views and not others. They learned, for example, to tell a personal story of conversion that in many cases may have been substituted for their own individual migration experience. They learned the sanctioned scenarios as they encountered them within the mission grounds. They listened to others telling the same story and they appropriated it, thus restorying their own experiences. I have suggested the presence of two conditions that may have helped in the successful appropriation of tools such as the witness story. These two conditions include the ongoing discourse of members who believe that the mission community's environment is one where others may be able to receive help. This concept is further promoted

through the constant calling of their leaders to spread the work of God. How this expression is to take place is also recommended by the leaders and full-fledged members alike.

Through the appropriation of the witness story, members construct and sustain an identity of "Christian." This also gives them the adequate official story of their lives within their community. Members are not mere immigrants here. They are people whose outline of life is defined through a story line in which God plays an important role. So, their telling of this story does not reference their migratory experience, but provides evidence to the presence of God in their lives. There is another important dimension linked to the telling of this story. Through it, these undocumented immigrants are also creating a collective identity that defines them as members of a particular group. This identity arises collectively through the repetition and comparable structure and story line present in each of the members' telling. Even so, it was 'up for grabs,' belonging to everyone, and yet, the accomplishment of this nearly uniform appropriation had its odd cases. This was seen in the last two examples, the first one in which the fundamental premise of the story may not have been understood, and the second one, when the speaker (Chucho) was not completely accepting the self-definition the story line may have given him. Those cases further illustrated that members were aware, to an extent, of the power of the witness story in the co-construction of their identities and the restorying of their lives.

### Acknowledgements

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## Transcription conventions

| | |
|---|---|
| . | indicates sentence final following intonation |
| , | indicates clause-final intonation ("more to come") |
| … | two or more dots indicate perceptible pause (each dot equals the verbalization of "two thousand", "two thousand one", "two thousand two" etcetera) |
| CAPS | indicate emphatic stress |
| ? | indicates a raising inflection, not necessarily a question |

| : | lengthened syllable |
| :: | extra colon indicates longer elongation |
| word- | indicates glottal stop: sound abruptly cut off |
| word— | sound abruptly cut off and what follows is a rephrasing or new topic indicates that speaker's turn continues so look for continuation on succeeding line |
| | Underlining highlights key words and phrases |
| | **Bold** and *Italics* highlights key text |
| [acc] | indicates fast speech |
| /words/ | in slashes show uncertain transcription |
| [inaudible] | indictes inaudible utterance or phrase |
| [words] | indictes writer's comments on interaction. When in the English translation, it represents addes lexical items to facilitate reading, i.e., zero pronouns in Spanish: "¿Fuiste?" [Did you] go? |

# Language and identity in discourse in the American South

## Sociolinguistic repertoire as expressive resource in the presentation of self

Catherine Evans Davies

In this study I show how sociolinguistic repertoire is used as an expressive resource in the presentation of self by self-defined "bidialectal" speakers of Southern American English (cf. Nagle and Sanders, 2003). I use an interactional sociolinguistic methodology that engages speakers in the analysis of their own speech. Data gathered in this way allow confirmation of certain assumptions about style-shifting, that is, that speakers have different degrees of awareness about their shifting and differing degrees of ability to shift consciously outside of a natural context for a shift. The data also reveal a dimension of style-shifting that has not, to my knowledge, been explored to this extent. This is the conscious crafting by a speaker of a dialect in terms not only of typical sociolinguistic features, but also of aspects of different levels of dialect in relation to language ideological beliefs about Southern English.

This study represents a perspective on variation that conceptualizes language use as mediated by the rhetorical and self-expressive choices of individuals. It also points to a reconceptualization of accent/dialect, away from a monolithic characterization and toward a view that takes into account differential contributions from different levels of linguistic organization (i.e., prosody, phonology, morphology, lexicon, syntax, pragmatics) that the speaker may deploy as strategic expressive and rhetorical resources in the situated presentation of self.

This perspective is informed by a concern with the relationships among language ideology, consciousness, and human agency. It challenges the assumption that speakers are captives of a particular language ideology and thus unable to bring it into consciousness. It also challenges the assumption that speakers are linguistic automatons whose ways of speaking are determined by the social cate-

gories to which they belong. Within this perspective, speakers can become conscious of the language ideologies within which they operate and can modify their speech in relation to context for purposes of the projection of identity. In some cases, as we will see, the modification is not under conscious control; in others, the modification is highly conscious, and is crafted in relation to the assumed language ideology of the projected listening Other.

### The data and theoretical framework

The study is based on data from audiotaped ethnographic/sociolinguistic interviews with native American English speakers who claim to be bidialectal in forms of Southern English and audiotaped language data of the interviewees speaking in other contexts, together with joint linguistic analysis by the sociolinguist and the interviewee concerning contextualization cues that signal shifts in dialect associated with a different self-presentation. The data collection focused on the perspective of the bidialectal speakers but also included the perspectives of other speech-community members and non-members. The ethnographic interviews include (1) a personal sociolinguistic history; (2) a discussion of personal role models for speech; (3) assessments of the personal effects of mass media; (4) the origins and development of any motivation to expand sociolinguistic repertoire; (5) the techniques used for such expansions; (6) specific linguistic modifications (in terms of phonology, morphology, lexicon, grammar, and/or pragmatics) of which the consultant/subject is aware; and (7) intentional use of sociolinguistic repertoire to project different identities.

The study uses the analytic framework of interactional sociolinguistics (Blom & Gumperz 1972; Goffman 1974, 1981; Gumperz 1982a, 1982b, 1992; Tannen 1993) and is inspired by Johnstone's (1996, 1999) research focusing on the "linguistic individual." This approach conceptualizes identity as negotiated in situated interaction, language as resource, and context as shaped in part by language. I see this approach as complementary both to work that identifies features of dialects and frequency of use, and also to work that examines perceptions of and attitudes toward accents and dialects.

### Identity and discourse context

An evolving vision of identity and context is articulated in Schiffrin (1997). She identifies three views: the first suggested within Labov's early work on narrative discourse (1972), the second assumed by variationist studies, and the third associ-

ated with discourse analysis. Schiffrin locates Labov's view in commonly-held assumptions about the nature of language and communication. Language is treated essentially as a means of transmission, a conduit (Reddy, 1979) through which one individual sends representations to another. The focus is on the speaker and the speaker's use of language as an instrument to encode information. Thus, even though language is seen as social behavior, the focus is on the individual speaker's states of mind. In Schiffrin's critique of this perspective in terms of the relation between identity and context,

> people are said to communicate needs and emotions (internal states) and ideas (internal representations of the world); nothing is said or implied about a self in interaction with others, a self in society, or a self in relation to symbol systems that are socially constituted. (p. 51).

In other words, this approach does not concern itself with identity, either in terms of social categories or in roles in interaction, or reflectively in relation to language itself. Neither does it concern itself with context---institutional, social interactional, or linguistic. In striking contrast with this first view of identity and context, Schiffrin sees variationist studies as conceptualizing both identity and context as essentialized and self-evident. They are treated as categorical variables which can be coded and then correlated; neither is conceptualized as problematic or subject to change. Context is treated as a kind of fixed frame within which data can be collected, and identity is assumed to be a fixed characteristic of an individual. Schiffrin notes that "neither are easily open to intentional control by an individual or to change by another" (p. 52). Both of these static views are contrasted by Schiffrin with the vision suggested by studies of discourse (adumbrated in Labov & Fanshel, 1977), in which there is a dynamic view of both identity and context which are seen as central to the analytic approach. In this view, language is not only part of the notion of context as fixed frame, linked to by schematic expectations, but also a means by which speakers can transform the context itself. Identity is not "given" in the variationist sense, but rather projected through language, such that different dimensions of identity may be emphasized or de-emphasized by a speaker in relation to a particular context. Within this view, the interpersonal dimension of communication is highly significant in relation to both identity and context as emergent in discourse. An important implication of this view of both identity and context is that "both are open not only to intentional manipulation by self, but to interpersonal negotiation between self and other. (pp. 52–3).

### Identity as performance

In the case of the Southern speakers in this study who are crafting a dialect for themselves, there is "intentional manipulation," in Schiffrin's terms, as well as projection in a kind of negotiation between the Southern-speaking self and the imagined Southern and also non-Southern Other. If we assume that identity can be projected in a conscious way through language (cf. the "acts of identity" of LePage & Tabouret-Keller, 1985), then we need to rethink the explanatory framework of Labov's original "attention to speech" paradigm for style-shifting, as well as Bell's (1984) "audience-design" model. As discussed in Eckert and Rickford (2001), such rethinking must include other motivations for shifts (again, as adumbrated in Labov, 1963), and it must also challenge the idea that a "style" is monolithic. In the data presented here, we will see that style-shifting cannot be defined as shifting from one dialect of English or level of formality to another, but rather as the selective production of certain features of a dialect and the exclusion of others. The focus of attention is on creating a projected linguistic identity. Goffman's dramaturgical metaphor is perennially relevant.

The shift of focus to human agency is evident in both empirical research and in the rethinking of a theoretical model of style. Schilling-Estes (1998) analyzes an extreme linguistic projection of identity on Ocracoke Island that she calls "performance speech," in which "self-conscious" style-shifting that selects certain features of Ocracoke English is primarily proactive rather than reactive. Some of my consultants seem to conceptualize what they are doing as a performance, something that requires conscious awareness at first but that then becomes automatic. A related phenomenon in which British adolescents select certain features of another's dialect for use in projecting a particular identity across ethnicities is analyzed by Rampton (1995) under the heading of "crossing." Such studies, as well as the classic Coupland (1988) of the use of linguistic features to project local identity by a Cardiff disc jockey, have prompted Bell (2003) to revise his original essentially reactive "audience design" model for style-shifting, based in speech accommodation theory, to highlight what he calls "referee design" as much more important than previously believed. These modifications open up a place for a new sense of human agency that is consistent with Schiffrin's analysis discussed above. The present study builds on Johnstone's (1999) analysis of "uses of Southern-sounding speech by contemporary Texas women," which shows that "Southernness" can be indexed in various linguistic ways, used for different purposes, and projected with differing degrees of awareness. The present study attempts to go further in exploring the conscious crafting, from among different linguistic features and dimensions of levels of dialect, of a linguistic presentation of self in relation to what speakers believe both about fellow Southerners' and about non-Southern speakers' ideological judgments about them.

## Ideology, consciousness, and agency

The imagined non-Southern Other, as well as the fellow Southerner, are assumed to have typical negative stereotypes about both Southern American speech in general and African American Vernacular English (cf. Lippi-Green, 1997; Preston, 1997). A version of this Other is apparently present for each of the speakers examined in this study, but their responses are individual. Ambivalence about vernacular varieties is differentially present. Each of the speakers in this study has been successful enough in school to achieve admission to the highest status state university, and each claims to be "bidialectal" between a home vernacular variety and the standard English required in school. Such a claim is worth exploring in light of Lippi-Green's (1997) assertion that true bidialectalism is in fact a rarity if not an impossibility, and that even changing one's accent is problematic. Lippi-Green's motivation is to challenge the standard language ideology, which includes the belief that the standard dialect is superior to non-mainsteam varieties and the assumption that people are easily able to change their accents/dialects, if they only choose to do so. The conviction that change is easy and under conscious control by the average person lays the groundwork, according to Lippi-Green, for a form of discrimination that we are loathe to recognize, that is, discrimination on the basis of language against accents and dialects that are not considered "standard." Thus, the discovery that speakers are in fact able to consciously change their accents or dialects in the service of projecting a different identity would undermine her argument.

The fact that these speakers define themselves as "bidialectal" means that they have already broken through an interesting dimension of the standard language ideology. It would seem that many monolingual American English speakers who define themselves as speaking "standard English" are reluctant to acknowledge the existence of the universal phenomenon of style-shifting. They may recognize that bilinguals change languages through code-switching, but they resist recognizing a comparable intra-language phenomenon in their own language use across contexts. It seems to me that this resistance to the acknowledgement of sociolinguistic reality is grounded in ideological issues of identity. The American ideology of individualism and social equality would suggest that it is somehow dishonest to change across contexts or in dealing with different individuals. The speakers in this study have had to deal with their own awareness of the stigma attached by the Other to their own home varieties.

Concerning conscious awareness and agency, sociolinguistic researchers have been skeptical – with good reason – of speakers' reports of their own usage. It would seem that most speakers, perhaps because of the power of language ideology, are unable to give an accurate report concerning frequency or situational context when they use particular linguistic features. Expansion of research into dis-

course has led to the recognition (based partly in the experience of those of us who do playback methodology) that speakers may in fact have some insight into how they use language strategically. Recent work that draws on insider knowledge in relation to style-shifting is Mishoe's (1998) article analyzing Southern speakers within their own community who style-shift in interaction between home style and local standard to project different dimensions of their identities. This study draws on the researcher's knowledge of the speech community as a participant observer, but it doesn't mention the inclusion of the perceptions of the speakers themselves. Another important study using insider knowledge, discussed above, is Johnstone's (1999) analysis of the uses of Southern-sounding speech by contemporary Texas women. It includes commentary by speakers on the strategic use of Southern forms, and clearly presents regionally-marked speech forms as rhetorical resource.

Whereas we may assume that speakers' claims about their own strategic language use are legitimate, we need to be aware that they may not be accurate in their assumptions about how others perceive them. My consultants' testimony indicates that they have been acutely aware of reactions to their linguistic projection of identity and have clearly learned from their interactions with others, modifying their speech until they get the responses that they want or no longer get the responses that they found problematic. On the other hand, in the case of Jimmy, we will see that his own assessment of the degree to which he monophthongizes [ai] is inaccurate according to other Southern speakers, but it may be the case that he attributes greater stigma to that pronunciation among fellow Southerners than actually exists in his social milieu.

In this paper, the focus will be on the reflectivity (as a cover term for consciousness and awareness) of speakers and the agency of speakers. In terms of reflectivity, we will see differing degrees of awareness, differing metalinguistic capabilities for commentary, and differing degrees of ability to shift styles out of context. In terms of agency, we will see differences not only in shifting styles for presentation of self, but also in crafting a style by selecting particular features for intentional effect, based on language ideological assumptions about the typical perceptions of Southern speech among other Americans. For all of the speakers considered here, language ideology was a framework within and against which they were operating.

### The speakers

*LaToya.* My first example is an African-American speaker from Alabama who is aware in a general sense that she shifts in relation to context, but who cannot do so at will. LaToya may represent the prototypical "bidialectal" speaker who operates

between AAVE and "standard English." She knew that she switched in relation to the roles that she was enacting, but she wasn't comfortable switching in my presence from the standard English that she uses with professors and in her job at the formalwear store, to the AAVE that she uses with friends. In order to gather some authentic data, she took a tape recorder and taped herself in contrastive situations that she judged to be informal and formal in which she was aware that she presented herself differently through language. LaToya expressed surprise at the strong linguistic contrast between the two styles.

Example (1) below is LaToya at home with her girlfriends, and example (2) is LaToya talking on the phone in her job in a formalwear store. In the informal segment we find use of "ain't", a double negative, very wide intonational range, and expressive prosody. In the formal segment we find standard grammar, elaborated syntax, controlled prosody, and careful enunciation.

Example (1) Informal: (with girlfriends at their apartment)

| | |
|---|---|
| B: | somebody has a crush on you |
| L: | who has a crush on me |
| B: | Monny knows |
| L: | who IS it |
| M: | his name is Jarvis |
| L: | Jarvis Jarvis I don't know Jarvis |
| M: | I don't know if you would know him |
| L: | do I know Jarvis? I don't think I know Jarvis |
| M and B: | [unclear] |
| L: | is he CUTE |
| M: | he's nice |
| L: | that ain't what I asked you |
| M: | he's nice |
| L: | I said is he cute I ain't said nothin' about his personality |
| M: | [ ] |
| L: | I asked the important question |
| B: | Oooh |
| L: | Is he cute |
| M: | He's nice |
| L: | bm bm (in time to music) |

Example (2): Formal: (on telephone at her work in a shop that rents formalwear)

The basic black tux starts at fifty-five dollars
And they- ahm the shoes are twelve dollars
And depending on whether or not you get a vest or a cummer-
A vest or a cummerbund
It'll be ten dollars

> So, usually you end up spending about seventy dollars on the basic black tux
> But if you decide to get a ahm more expensive tux
> Then it'll just depend on which design that you get

LaToya is aware of language ideology and prejudice against AAVE (cf. Rickford & Rickford 2000). She volunteered the information that she used to say "aks" instead of "ask" until she became aware of the stigma attached to that pronunciation. At the same time, she has apparently internalized a form of acceptance of AAVE that she formulates in an instrumental way:

> I'm not ashamed that I speak vernacular language [note: that she also calls "Ebonics" and African American Vernacular English] when I'm not in the classroom, because I know when to speak correct English. I believe that vernacular English is necessary in my life because it allows me to communicate with other African-Americans that haven't had as much formal language education

It is striking, however, that she describes her attitudes toward AAVE in negative rather than positive terms ("not ashamed" rather than "proud") and that she contrasts "vernacular language" unfavorably with "correct English."

*Jimmy*. The next speaker is Jimmy, a white Alabamian who moved to Iowa when he was a child and chose to return to Alabama as an undergraduate. His Southern speaker father is a strong role model for Jimmy, and Jimmy struggles to deal with his conflicting allegiances: he is proud to be from the South and he wants to sound like a Southerner, but he doesn't want to take on the judgments that he believes will be assigned him by the non-Southern Other, and with which he had direct personal experience as a child in Iowa. At the time of taping, Jimmy was about to graduate and start medical school. In contrast with LaToya, Jimmy is highly conscious of attempting to craft his speech – in relation to his assumptions about language ideological judgments concerning stigmatization of certain aspects of the Southern accent and dialect. His stated goal was to have a general Southern accent but to signal his intellectual status through careful word choice. Thus he was conscious of trying to balance the language ideological judgment of "stupidity/lack of education" associated with a Southern accent by the non-Southern Other against an educated vocabulary. He had also formed definite ideas about particular linguistic features identified with a Southern accent or dialect: "Ya'll" was something he was willing to incorporate, but not "fixin' to" or monophthongization of [ai]. These decisions would appear to be based in language ideological judgments in relation to Southerners as well as non-Southerners. "Ya'll" is a form that is used by virtually all Southerners, in the informal standard as well as the vernacular, whereas "fixin' to" is associated with the vernacular. Monophthongization of [ai] has long been a shibboleth within the standard language ideology within the South, but is in fact present to some degree for most Southern speakers. This

latter fact may explain why Jimmy has rejected the monophthongization of [ai] explicitly, but in fact does have a degree of it in his speech as judged by Southern speakers listening to the tape. Another significant aspect of Jimmy's case, as will be seen in Example (3), is that he used evidence from his interlocutors' responses to him as indications of his progress toward his goal. Whereas they used to ask him "Where are you from?", now they ask him where he went to high school (presupposing that he is an Alabamian).

Example (3) Jimmy talking with researcher

    R:    Do you remember ever deciding that you wanted to change your accent
         and/or way of speaking?
    J:    Yes
    R:    Oh heheh OK
    J:    I do
    R:    Yeah
    J:    When I- when I moved back down here
         It was-
    R:    um hm
    J:    I had- still had-- you know when I came to school here freshman year
         I still had my northern accent
         And it stuck out like a sore thumb in social atmospheres
         When I'd be-- you know
         People of both sexes, guys and girls,
    R:    um hm
    J:    It was just always like
         Oh
         Where are YOU from?
         And it was just kinda like
    R:    negative
    J:    negative, and I got sick of explaining where I was from
         And the fact that I-
         Well I am a son of the South
         And I was born here
         But I did have to live-
         And it really was just annoying
         In social atmospheres and you know
         And I got sick of it
         And I really remember
         It was what- only three years ago
         That I was- I was really tryin' to get the Southern accent back
         And I would-
         I would CONSCIOUSLY try to talk Southern

R:     OK
J:     and eventually within like six months the effect took over
       And now it's just natural

Jimmy could no longer imitate his Iowa accent, except with certain set phrases, as in the following example, in which the vowels in "betcha" are clearly raised:

Example (4) Jimmy talking with researcher
J:     it's "you betcha" 'cause that's the first thing that
R:     you betcha
J:     I remember my Dad- and
       we got up to Des Moines and we went to Sears
       we had to go get some attachment
       we had to get-
       actually we had to go buy a snowblower
R:     um hm
J:     for our driveway
       And the salesguy sat there and he's like
       "Oh you bet Mr. Smith"
R:     heheh
J:     I mean "You bet……you betcha"

Whereas Jimmy had defined himself to me as a "bidialectal" speaker, in fact it would appear that he is no longer bidialectal. He can no longer shift back into the Iowa dialect of his childhood. He appears to be crafting his own special hybrid Southern dialect.

*Joyce.* Our next speaker is Joyce, an African American born and raised in New York State of parents originally from Mississippi who have retired back to the South. Joyce is a graduate student currently living in Alabama, and her case represents a language-ideological dilemma for African-Americans. Like LaToya, Joyce is not able to switch consciously, but when she taped herself in multigenerational family settings and analyzed the tape, she realized that there were interesting switches occurring in terms of discourse frame of which she wasn't consciously aware. She conceptualized this phenomenon as different "voices" and suggested that the voice that is "first" can shift over time. In particular, she noted the accommodation of the well-educated children more toward home language AAVE in the presence of their native Mississippian parents, whereas in extended discussions among themselves they would use standard English. In example (5), Joyce is able to remember very vividly an experience that led her to try to change her way of speaking for purely instrumental purposes. She had come from New York State to a historically black college in Mississippi as a freshman. There are a couple of important dimensions of this excerpt that need to be highlighted. One is that Joyce

comments at the time that she didn't recognize the dialect dimension of the situa-
tion, noticing only that she was being made to feel different in a negative sense and
that she was uncomfortable about that. The response to Joyce's phatic question, as
remembered by the speaker over fifteen years, is a powerful comment on language
and its relation not only to identity but also to context. By translating from one
dialect into another in such a fashion, the speaker seems to suggest that the very
activity of playing cards is different if described in the other dialect. Joyce's re-
sponse is predictably strong. Her ambivalence is clear in the juxtaposition of being
"in the middle of Timbuktu," a New Yorker's strongly negative judgment about
being removed from "civilization," even though her location is an institution of
higher learning. In coming up against language-ideological judgments from Afri-
can-American Southerner peers against her Northern accent and dialect, she de-
scribes herself as having three options, none of which appears to be desirable to
her in the moment. The first is to allow herself to be silenced. This would appear to
be the least desirable as Joyce presents it. Moving along the continuum of options,
the next is to talk like her peers. The third option, and the one which would seem
to be placed in the most desirable position in the sequence, is to talk like her own
mother who is a native of Mississippi. In the latter two cases, however, it is striking
that Joyce uses a minimizing qualifier in the form of "a little bit more"; she is clear-
ly not interested in a full-scale imitation that might compromise her own sense of
identity, but rather in figuring out how to accommodate enough to get along in the
new context.

Example (5): Joyce talking with researcher

      J:    But anyways the very first time I walked into the dorm
            Ahm and I didn't re- I didn't-
            I remember this, but I didn't remember it until somebody else
            At a class reunion
            Brought it to my attention
            I went to my fifteenth year class reunion
            From undergrad
            A couple a years ago
            And one of my classmates said to me
            "I remember the first time you walked in that dorm
            you said 'Are you guys playing cards?'
            hahaha
      R:    heheheh
      J:    and I looked at you – "
            And she's from Mississippi –
            "and I said [emphatic] 'Girl we playin cards'"
            ah heheheh

R:   ah hah
J:   and I said "you know what
     I remember that
     I hadn't thought about it since that day"
R:   you really did remember that
J:   I remember that exact same con-
     It was the very first day I walked into my dorm
R:   wow
J:   And I didn't recognize it then as a dialect thing
R:   uh huh
J:   but now I realize that it was
     And I realized how different
     And not a good different
     I felt about it
     It was like, "OK, here I am
     In the middle of Timbuktu
     And I've got to
     Either not talk a lot
     Or talk a little bit more like them"
R:   really
J:   "or talk a little bit more like Mom would"

Whereas Joyce shifts styles in the presence of her parents, in formal contexts in Alabama she maintains her Northern dialect.

   *Adam.* Our next speaker is Adam, a white, upper middle class Alabamian from a small town who is now in graduate school in communications. He is interested in language issues but not aware of consciously shifting, although when he visits his small Alabama hometown, he gets feedback that he does in fact shift. In the following example he is talking about fraternity members from big cities who do a bad job of trying to imitate a Southern country gentleman accent. Adam is aware of others' attempts to acquire a particular accent for symbolic purposes, and he has a very negative reaction to inauthenticity in accent.

Example (10): Adam talking with researcher
     A:   It- somethin' to do with, like, there's a whole Southern Gentleman thing
          That goes through the fraternities
     R:   OK
     A:   um you try to, like-
          When- I remember when I was a pledge
          They would tell us
          "You know you have to be a Southern Gentleman
          and open car doors

> ah things like that"
> and I think one of the by-products of that
> is ah- is gettin' this- this kind of Southern drawl
> and it makes you seem more a Southern Gentleman quote unquote
> ahn

R: interesting wow

A: and it always used to bother me so much
> Because there would be guys that had come from big cities
> And ah they would speak with these HORRIBLE Southern accents
> You know?

R: ah heheheheheh

A: and you'd just be like
> What are you talkin' about?
> you know, and they would obviously be shittin there sittin' there tryin' to
> tryin' to speak this- like a really Southern accent
> it just so stood out
> and you're just like
> GAA, you know, SHUT UP haha

R: hahahahah

A: I can't listen to that
> It's ter-
> It's like Keanu Reeves tryin' to do one

Adam is included here because he is the coveted authentic rural upper middle class Southern male Other toward which the urban Southern fraternity member speakers are projecting their exaggerated versions of a Southern country gentleman accent. Clearly in this case there is prestige associated with a particular kind of Southern accent, one that may no longer exist in actuality. From that point of view, such an accent would be a form of "performance speech" with strong ideological dimensions. Such ideological dimensions, as in the case of the Confederate flag, may have different ramifications depending on the audience, both within the South and outside of the South.

*Mary*. Our next speaker is Mary, a white Alabamian from the small town of Jonesville, who is a graduate student. She is highly conscious of her language use and is able to switch at will. In the first taped excerpt she is imitating her father speaking Jonesville English. She says that she doesn't have to consciously think about the performance anymore.

Example (6): Mary imitating her father speaking Jonesville English in a phone message:

M: but he'll- I mean he really does
> He'll say, you know

"Mary
this is your Da[ɛ]ddy[ɪ]
just wanted to call [æʊ]
and tell [eyə] ya I love [lowered ʌ] ya
and an- call me back when you get a chance" [æə]
and it's – you know, I mean, that's exactly how he sounds

When Mary was asked to comment on the way she shifts, the first things she mentioned were politeness routines and social rituals, as can be seen in Example (7) in which she shows how she changed the way she was speaking to interact with her professor. In the lines in which she quotes herself style-shifting, it is also clear that her phonology matches a General American pronunciation and that her enunciation is very precise. The final lines of this example illustrate the power of language ideology over this highly intelligent and accomplished Southern speaker. In this case, however, the non-Southern Other is literally embodied in the form of English professors who are not from the South.

Example (7) Mary demonstrating her style-shifting to speak to professors of English literature:

M:   I did try to-
     I mean, I remember consciously
     you know talking to [professor of English literature]
     And changing the way I was speaking
R:   um hm
M:   I did it at the party we went to just a little while ago
R:   um hm
M:   you know, "Oh, hello Dr. Thompson
     My name is Mary Smith.
     It's so nice to see you again"
     You know, I sound entirely different
     Than I really do
     when I'm talking to- to them
     and so
     and that was because I thought that they would perceive me as unintelligent if I spoke Jonesville English

The final example has Mary commenting on her change of heart as she reclaims her Jonesville English as part of her repertoire. The powerful link to identity is clear.

Example (8): Mary commenting on her change of attitude about language:

M:   And so I've- I've kind of decided that I can be in-
     I- you know I- I'm in- I'm intelligent
     I think I've proven that by- by this point

R:     um hm
M:     and so I don't have to- you know
         I'll use-
         OK I'll use Standard English when I- know you
         If I'm making a presentation in front of a class
R:     uh huh
M:     or something like that
         But-- I don't have to do it all the time
         I don't have to- you know
         Throw that other part away
         (heh) is kind of how it feels
         you know?
R:     uh hah

*Carol.* Our next speaker, Carol, probably represents an extreme of awareness and reflectivity – and also possibly of accuracy in matching her attempts at self-presentation with the perceptions of her audience. Carol grew up in a university town in Mississippi and says that she learned early on from watching television cartoons that a Southern accent was stigmatized. As a child she set about changing her accent. She graduated recently and set off to find a job in another part of the country. Carol talked about her conscious management of different linguistic elements of her speech, trying to keep everything "under control" at once and the cognitive challenges involved. She talked about trying to pronounce a velar nasal for –ing rather than "dropping her g's" in typical Southern style and described it as difficult to keep her attention on that aspect of her speech without losing track of other linguistic features. She was also aware of a range of levels of dialect (Wolfram & Schilling-Estes, 2006) and assigned them different importance. On the one hand, phonology was important to change because she wanted an accent that was not identifiably Southern and thus stigmatized by the non-Southern Other. On the other hand, she was very clear about wanting to maintain her Southern discourse conventions which she described as "manners." She said that she valued them and that she was sure that they would work to her advantage outside of the South. Thus she was crafting her linguistic self-presentation in relation to a specifically non-Southern Other with whom she wants to be able to interact effectively outside of the South.

Example (9) is Carol's commentary on friends not thinking that she sounded like she was from Mississippi – and then meeting her mother from Birmingham, Alabama, who has a strong Southern accent. Judgments from others listening to the tape concur that Carol does have the Southern shift in mid back vowel, but it is also true that a comparable fronting occurs in other regional accents as well among younger speakers.

Example (9): Carol talking with researcher

> C:   and then Mom's from Birmingham
> And I mean-
> Some friends of mine met her, you know, this week
> And they told me before [ ] "Carol, why do you talk like that?
> You don't sound like you're from Mississippi."
> And they met her
> And said, you know, after lunch
> They just kinda looked at each other
> And went "She talks nothing like Carol.
> They talk nothing alike, you know
> Where did Carol get this?"

Just as with Jimmy, we can see with Carol that style-shifting cannot be defined as shifting from one dialect of English or level of formality to another, but rather must be seen as the selective production of certain features of a dialect and the exclusion of others. The focus of attention is on creating a projected linguistic identity.

## Conclusion

This paper has examined language and identity in discourse in terms of sociolinguistic repertoire as an expressive resource in the presentation of self. It differs from the methodology of most studies in that it incorporates collaborative analysis with the "bidialectal" speakers. I hope to have contributed to the trend toward examining and taking seriously the agency and reflectivity of speakers, the ways that speakers use language as a resource in the projection of identity. I also hope to have contextualized the discussion appropriately in terms of the complex relationships among ideology, consciousness, and agency. In relation to Jimmy and Carol in particular, they seem to be crafting their language selectively from among different levels of dialect, and in relation to an imagined Other who will judge them according to a set of assumed prejudices about Southern speech and its speakers. They also appear to make careful use of feedback from interaction as part of their crafting process.

One question that could be raised is whether what is documented here is simply a form of accommodation to ideological structures of power. Is the "agency" that we see here a form of betrayal of the speakers' linguistic varietal roots? Wouldn't we want to see forms of resistance to the standard language ideology expressed linguistically? In response, I would say that the most active of the speakers seem to be engaged in a form of empowerment rather than resistance. A key here is the fact that they are not style-shifting in a monolithic way or, worse, reject-

ing the Southern forms entirely and trying to become monodialectal. Their self-identification as "bidialectal" clearly indicates that they recognize and value, although perhaps ambivalently as we saw with LaToya, the stigmatized dialect and the identity associated with it. Instead, they are selecting features of Southern speech that they value both for symbolic and for instrumental potential, and incorporating those features into a new idiolect that is a hybrid form.

The question was raised earlier concerning whether these speakers undermine Lippi-Green's claim that changing one's accent or dialect is extremely difficult, the basis for her argument concerning discrimination on the basis of accent/dialect. It seems to me that it does not, because these speakers were self-selected in terms of their awareness of and ability to manipulate their own speech. They may represent a small minority of speakers within the population, perhaps most often found among the percentage of the population who complete higher education. It is also obvious, from the testimony of the speakers who were engaged in crafting a hybrid, that consciously changing one's dialect takes a lot of effort.

A further question that flows naturally from this study is how we should conceptualize the phenomenon identified among these speakers. Is this "bi-dialectalism," "style-shifting," or is it a fluid presentation of self in which sociolinguistic repertoire serves as a pool of resources for the speaker? It seems to me that the discovery that speakers are consciously selecting from features at different levels of linguistic organization moves us toward the third view. Thus, this study also contributes to reconceptualization of dialect, away from a monolithic characterization and toward a view that takes into account differential contributions from different levels of linguistic organization (e.g., prosody, phonology, morphology, lexicon, syntax, pragmatics) that the speaker may deploy as resources in the service of presentation of self.

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# Doing "being ordinary" in an interview narrative with a second generation Italian-Australian woman

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This chapter reports on the construction of women's identities by examining an interview with an elderly Italian-Australian woman telling about the story of her courtship and marriage. The data are selected from a corpus of 20 audio-recorded interviews of individual stories from the Johnson and Baker materials (Johnson & Baker, 1998). Both the interviewee and the interviewer are Australian women of Italian origin. Through a combination of narrative analysis and membership categorization and conversation analysis within an ethnomethodological framework, we show how a sense of ordinariness is achieved, and how specific identities of the interlocutors, in terms of ethnic, gender, and class membership, are projected in the course of the interview.

According to ethnomethodology, identification processes are a central part of the ongoing inferential process of interpretation in which members are involved in understanding ordinary courses of action and discourses. As Heritage (1984, pp. 139–140) points out,

> [u]nderstanding language is not, in the first instance, a matter of understanding sentences but of understanding actions- ' utterances— which are constructively interpreted in relation to their context. This involves viewing an utterance against a background of who said it, where and when, what was being accomplished by saying it and in the light of what possible considerations and in virtue of what motives it was said. An utterance is thus the starting point for a complicated process of interpretative inference rather than something which can be treated as self-subsistingly intelligible.

Any interactional encounter is inspectionable to document identification processes; that is, actions and discourses are inferent rich in relation to identification processes. In particular, the use of membership categories in identity work has been studied extensively in ethnomethodological research (Baker, 1997; Hester &

Eglin, 1997; Paoletti, 1998a; Sacks, 1972; 1992; Watson, 1997; Widdicombe, 1998). Membership categories can be described as a sort of "package" of culture knowledge (Sacks, 1992, p. 40). As Hester and Eglin (1997, p. 3) specify,

> Membership categories, as defined by Sacks, are classifications or social types that may be used to describe persons. By way of illustrations an occasioned list of such categories may include 'politician', 'gravedigger', 'pimp', 'nerd', 'astronaut', 'skinhead', 'boozer', 'former boy scout leader' and 'grandmother'.

Membership categories are grouped in membership categorization devices such as gender, age, ethnic membership, and so on. Membership categorizations are powerful members' devices that orient their actions and discourses. Political parties are organized around social class categories. Institutions, such as equal opportunities units, refer to gender membership. Age membership is the main organiser of educational institutions, from kindergarten to adult education institutions. Wars are fought in the name of ethnic membership. As Sacks (1992, p. 40) points out, "a great deal of knowledge that members of a society have about the society is stored in terms of these categories."

In identification processes, categories are used flexibly, as a background through which specific personal identities are actively negotiated by interlocutors (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998). Members can align with a category or distance themselves from it, or change it, according to the context and their agenda in the specific situation, in order to produce highly specific personal identity meaningful to the occasion and to the task at hand. As outlined by Widdicombe (1998), "in the business of doing identity, the status of such normative knowledge should be treated as a participant's resource which may be invoked, transformed or rejected" (p. 70). In the course of ordinary activities members project different identity attributions on themselves and others, using membership categories

> The ethnomethodological vision of membership categorization analysis is one which regards categories and devices as indexical expressions, emphasizes the local, contextual specificity and use of categorizations, and sees categorial order as a local accomplishment of the use of categories-in-context. (Hester & Eglin, 1997, p. 25).

Interview narratives about personal experience have become an increasingly popular means of social science research with the potential of the story to provide an understanding about the teller's story world (Flick, 1998; Labov, 1972; Riessman, 2002). Although the analytic aims and treatments of them are varied, particularly in terms of the weight placed on the authenticity (Ochs & Capps, 1997) of the events being recounted in the telling, there is large-scale agreement that they are fertile grounds for identity work. Interview data have been used extensively to

document identity work in ethnomethodological studies (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; Baker, 1984; Garfinkel, 1967; Paoletti, 1998b; Watson & Weinberg, 1982).

In this chapter we explore identification processes in an interview with an older second generation Italian-Australian woman, combining a narrative analysis approach with a membership categorization and conversation analysis approach. We show how, through categorization work-- that is, aligning and disassociating with membership categories--the interactants produce relevant identities to the occasion in terms of gender, age, ethnic and social class membership. Moreover, we show how some narrative aspects of the stories told in the interview contribute to project relevant identities for the participants. In particular we focus on identification processes, in relation to the work of "being ordinary"; we highlight how the interviewee and the interviewer appear to be oriented towards different constructions of the same life events, that is, towards different constructions of "ordinariness". According to Sacks (1984, p. 414), being an ordinary person is not a condition or a quality of a person, but the product of constant work:

> Whatever you may think about what it is to be an ordinary person in the world, an initial shift is not to think of 'an ordinary person' as some person, but as somebody having as one's job, as one's constant preoccupation, doing 'being ordinary'. It is not that somebody *is* ordinary; it is perhaps that that is what one's business is, and it takes work, as any other business does.

A basic function of the "work of being ordinary" is maintaining the intelligibility of what happened and therefore the possibility itself of communicating among members. All members are constantly working at being ordinary in coordinated ways reciprocally witnessable (Sacks, 1984, p. 415). Such work is performed principally in interpretative activities of daily events that are made into "ordinary," "usual" events. As Sacks points out,

> the cast of mind of doing 'being ordinary' is essentially that your business in life is only to see and report the usual aspects of any possible usual scene. That is to say, what you *look* for is to see how any scene you are in can be made an ordinary scene, a usual scene, and that is what that scene is" (1984, p. 416).

The work of being ordinary is particularly evident in cases of extraordinary events. Collecting newspapers articles of hijackings, Sacks (1984, p. 419) noted that in the passengers' stories, the hijacking was initially interpreted, for example, as a passenger showing a gun to the flight attendant or as a television crew filming a hijacking. "Being ordinary" is at the same time the product of members' constant and coordinated work, as well as a resource, a perceptive instrument that members use in order to interpret, structure, and make reportable what is going on around them.

In our study, we work with an interview-generated narrative to show how, at times, the two members, interviewer and interviewee, orient to the telling of the narrative events differently; that is, the interview interaction is played in relation to different constructions of ordinariness of the two interlocutors. Overall we want to argue that both categorial work and narrative qualities of the telling contribute to produce an identity for interlocutors and that different versions of ordinariness are negotiated during the interview interaction.

### The study

The data are selected from a corpus of 20 audio-recorded interviews of individual stories and stories jointly constructed by couples (Johnson & Baker, 1998). The women are described as second generation Italian-Australians in that their parents were Italian-born immigrants and the women were the first generation born in Australia. The project received competitive funding from the Australia Foundation for Culture and the Humanities (Melbourne) on the grounds that these were stories that needed to be recorded and told for future generations to enjoy and learn about the cultural attributes of earlier Australian-Italian communities. The agreed purpose and direction of the interviews was that personal stories of Australian-Italian courtship and marriage would form the materials for a book of short stories (Johnson & Baker, 1998).

The interviews, which were relatively unstructured, began with an invitational narrative question that requested the interviewee to recount what they wished to tell about their courtship and marriage experiences long past. The interviews were guided by a written list of prompts (provided to the interviewees on an informed consent form) of possible topics to cover: how you met your partner; how you came to spend time together; getting engaged; the wedding, reception, and honeymoon; married life after the wedding; children; and family life now. In asking for this information the interviewers were aiming for the collection of stories told by everyday people. However, the researchers were interested in seeking accounts of how courtship and marriage were done according to the cultural morays of people whose ethnic background was Italian. The interviews were carried out by an interviewer who shared the same Australian-Italian ethnic membership with the interviewee, but was about half her age.

The interviewee, whom we call Marietta, is a widow in her eighties, who was born and lived all of her life in a small rural sugar cane farming community in Australia. The names of people and places mentioned in the interviews have been changed for reasons of confidentiality. The demographics of the town are such that it is character-

ized by a mixture of people from a range of ethnic backgrounds. A great proportion of the town is to this day inhabited by the descendants of Italian migrants.

The interviewer is implicitly calling on Italian ethnicity as a resource to use in the business of conducting the interview. The explicit "ethnification process" that Day (1998) explains as "processes through which people distinguish an individual or collection of individuals as a member or members respectively of an ethnic group" (p. 154) has taken place in the preliminary talk in setting up the interview. Because there is a shared cultural understanding, an ethnicity common to both interviewer and interviewee, there appears to be less need to mention the particular ethnic group. As argued by Day (1998), a speaker can categorize someone within a linguistic ethnic group other than by specific naming. An alternative possibility is to perform more "oblique work" by describing "some *other* person or thing" (p. 155, emphasis in original); that is, ethnic membership is used as a background activated through references to cultural particulars.

Through a detailed conversation and membership categorization analysis within an ethnomethodological framework (Garfinkel, 1967; Sacks, 1992), combined with aspects of narrative analysis (Ochs & Capps, 2001), we show how Marietta projects an identity relevant to the occasion in terms of ethnic, gender, and class membership. We also show how a sense of ordinariness is achieved in relation to those specific categorizations. In particular we want to argue that narrative analysis can be relevant to the understanding of identity work; that is, we show how specific narrative strategies contribute to project an identity for Marietta.

Since the first hearing of this interview we were fascinated by its simplicity and its evocative power. Marietta in the first few lines of her tale is able to recreate a social world through detailing the cultural particulars of past event and habits. We were also impressed by her description of personally meaningful events such as engagement, the wedding, and married life with no reference to feelings or emotions, and the absence of descriptions of the relationship with her husband. Marietta describes those events in terms of work: One's job, the work implied in activities, becomes the main describer, the point of view through which important personal life events are framed and narrated. She tells about her wedding by referring to sewing dresses and cooking the wedding meal. She tells about her husband's internment during the war in a camp away from their hometown by referring to baking biscuits for him. There is a social world with no individuals in Marietta's tale: a social world in which each one has a definite role and function according to age and gender. In fact, the social world described by Marietta is deeply gendered: activities, duties, and privileges are clearly divided according to gender membership. Now we begin to analyze some of the segments of the transcript from the interview in detail. We note that the first segments reported here are consecutive and they take place in the first few minutes of the interview.

*Evoking a social world*

At the beginning of the interview, after being given the floor by the interviewer, the interviewee's first follow-up response is extremely lengthy. Marietta starts talking about how she met her husband and began her early married life. She produces a very vivid image of the social world of that time.

Marietta's talk here is related to the agreed to topic (her early courtship experiences) and therefore maintains a degree of "embeddedness in surrounding discourse and activity" of the interview (Ochs & Capps, 2001, p. 36). However, the length of the turn and the territory covered in it serves to increase Marietta's degree of tellership, making her the active teller and thus reducing the chance of the participants collaborating as active co-tellers as seems to be suggested with the interviewer's entrance talk, *We can start whenever*. In fact, Marietta takes control of the interview and starts to tell her story, her way.

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Segment 1: Marietta (1997)

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1  J:  we can start whenever
2  M:  yeah well how I met my husband was well I (↑) was about 14 really ah he used to live
3      in a:a farm house a bit further down the river (.) ah at Millbrook it were called and he used
4      to stay there and then he brought a:::a truck and he used to cart ah you know m:::manure
5      and things and that to the farmers and then he got his truck lorry he put t:::the chairs bolt
6      them down and take them off and he used to take people to church and you know
7      (right) that's where we met each other sort of

---

After repeating the interviewer's question, *yeah well how I met my husband*, and thereby using this as a time to think in order to organize the story, Marietta starts describing how she met her husband. She uses only an age categorization, *I (↑) was about 14,* to identify herself, but in order to identify her husband, she produces a description of his work. Initially she uses a localization, referring to where he lived, *he used to live in a:a farm house a bit further down the river (.) ah at Millbrook*. Although this information is not relevant in terms of localization as such, it is informative in relation to the type of her husband's job: It may indicate that her husband was a worker on the Millbrooks' farm, since he was living there. This categorization, as the following one, is informative in terms of class identification; in fact, manual work can be considered a category bound activity linked to working class membership category. The following information about her husband refers explicitly to her husband's area of work, *he brought a:::a truck and he used to cart ah you know m:::manure and things and that to the farmers*. The truck is not only used to work, but it also is the means of carrying out social activities such as

taking people to Mass, *then he got his truck lorry he put t:::the chairs bolt them down and take them off and he used to take people to church.* It is the truck that is described as the means of meeting him, *and you know (right) that's where we met each other sort of.*

These particulars have the power of evoking a social world: They tell about the distance between the farm houses and the church, which made walking between the two impossible; they tell about a rough world where people go to church in a truck that the day before had carried manure. They also tell about a closely-knit community where people go to church in the same truck and have the chance to meet each other and get engaged. Then Marietta continues to tell the story of her engagement and married life. The following passage is particularly relevant in relation to the production of ethnic identity.

*Association and disassociation with the Italian ethnic membership*

Marietta's story continues with the description of the beginning of the relationship with her future husband and some complications within the family that occurred in relation to some Italian customs. In this context, ethnic membership categorizations become relevant. As we have mentioned already, during the interview Marietta does not describe the relationship with her husband in terms of feelings and emotions. In the following segment, we have what in her whole tale can most resemble a description of her relationship with her husband.

| Segment 2: Marietta (1997) |
| --- |

| 1 | M: | and then stayed in our ( ) for a while and then we sort of just got friendly |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | | we never (.) and then (2.0) after a few years he ah (↓) wanted me to go steady but my |
| 3 | | father:::r said you know (.) Italians (.) that the older one gets married and my sister |
| 4 | | she wasn't going then she was doing with Gianni her husband and then after she married |
| 5 | | but anyway then um (2.5) after she got married and then:::n (he) was allowed to come |
| 6 | | in to the house like well I always used to see him just the same you know go to church |
| 7 | | (.) or:::r town or anywhere (↓) you know |

Marietta describes the phases of a gradual process: the initial encounter, then a period of interest, but maintaining a certain distance, *and then stayed in our ( ) for a while and then we sort of just got friendly.* Then the relationship becomes more serious, *then (2.0) after a few years he ah (↓) wanted me to go steady.* It is just the ordinary procedure to get engaged: you get interested, you get friendly, and then you go steady. No emotional response is expressed. Even the complication related to her father impeding the engagement is told with no drama: just the way it was, *my father:::r*

*said you know (.) Italians (.) that the older one gets married.* The encasing of *Italians* in pauses, before and after the utterance, works to place emphasis on this category.

With the expression, *you know (.) Italians (.),* through the use of the ethnic membership category, Marietta projects ethnic membership for her father but not necessarily for herself. It is a conversational move in which the Italian ethnic membership is claimed and refused. With this expression, Marietta mobilizes the cultural knowledge of the Italian community's customs, habits, and values that she shares with the interviewer, projecting co-membership. As a conversational resource, "you know" typically suggests that what is being referred to is already shared and understood by the recipient (Schegloff, 1980). In this instance the resourcefulness of "you know" is extended. "You know" can be heard also as a move by the interviewee to disassociate herself together with the interviewer from some aspects of this culture. The expression "you know Italians" sounds like a way of accounting, of justifying odd behavior in reference to ordinary "Australian" ways of doing and thinking. Two different "types of ordinariness" are being projected in terms of ethnic membership: the Italian ordinary way of thinking and acting in contrast with the Australian ordinary way of thinking and acting. Moreover, with such an expression, Marietta projects an association with the interviewer, in that they both know such Italian customs but don't share them: They consider them odd. Association and disassociation with Italian ethnic membership is a characteristic identification procedure for second generation immigrants, that is, a display of being in between two cultures. In some ways the participants have to choose between two cultures instead of being able to take their ethnic membership for granted (Paoletti, 2000), and the choices can swing in either cultural direction. The following comment, *well I always used to see him just the same you know go to church (.) or:::r town or anywhere (↓) you know*, shows a partial adhesion to her family rules and therefore to the Italian customs. Nevertheless no disagreement or impatience is expressed from either the storyteller or the listener. The resolution of the difficulties related to the engagement is told with composure, with no emotional participation, *then:::n (he) was allowed to come in to the house.*

In this passage Marietta displays membership "in" and "out" of the Italian culture: She knows it, she accepts it, but she doesn't ultimately share it and she projects this ethnic membership "under certain conditions" for the interviewer too. This ambiguity in relation to ethnic membership appears to be quite significant and characteristic of the second generation immigrants who often feel divided between two cultures, at times in the difficult situation of having to make a choice between the two. The first generation immigrants have no identification problems; they may have integration problems in the new social and cultural context. Problems with cultural identity are present particularly among the second generation im-

migrants, for whom their ethnic membership is a matter of choice in some ways (Paoletti, 2000).

## The production of "ordinariness"

Marietta's tale proceeds with the description of her married life. In these few lines Marietta describes all her married life. In the analysis of the following segment the focus is on the production of ordinariness through the use of typified descriptions of the wedding party, of her married life, and hers and her husband's work.

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Segment 3: Marietta (1997)

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| 1 | | and then ah (2.0) then we had a nice little wedding you know (↑) (.) |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | | at the house i:::in those days you did it at your own house (1.0) and |
| 3 | | then married life after the wedding was ah he used to cut cane (↓) then and ah |
| 4 | | I just (2.0) you know just garden and that we never used to go out much (.) you know |
| 5 | | o:::only when the kids grew older that you take them to the pictures then ththth I mean |
| 6 | | he used to work all day and then at night he'd go and meet his friends sometimes just for a |
| 7 | | pot (↓) you know now and again and he and I used to just work all day almost you know |
| 8 | | you garden and I was always one to have work crochet knit cookings like that you |
| 9 | | know (↓) |
| 10 | J: | yes |

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The resolution of the difficulties related to the engagement and the announcement of the wedding is produced by Marietta with a slightly rising intonation, expressing satisfaction, *then we had a nice little wedding*(↑). There is no other sign of emotion. This expression sounds like a "cultural package" that is self-explicative, that is "an-ordinary-little-wedding" that everybody knows about. Time has not altered its meaning; no further details are necessary. A similar cultural package is used for characterizing her married life, *and then, married life after the wedding*. The only details that are provided refer again to their work. Her husband's occupation is a job in agriculture, cutting sugar cane, *he used to cut cane.* Again, working class membership is implied. Marietta's occupation belongs to the home environment, *I just (2.0) you know just garden and that.* It is a gendered world in which activities are neatly divided according to gender membership. Ordinary images of maleness and femaleness are produced, through the use of category bound activities (Sacks, 1992, p. 333). For the husband it is an image of "the-man-who-works-all-day" (Paoletti, 2001), *he used to work all day,* and spends the evening at the bar with his friends, *and then at night he'd go and meet his friends sometimes just for a pot.* For Marietta it is an image of femaleness produced through the use of category bound

activity linked to gender membership such as knitting and crochet work, *and I was always one to have work crochet knit cookings like that.* It is a social reality strongly gendered and the two worlds seem segregated.

In this account ordinariness is an achievement and a resource. In fact, we have shown how Marietta uses "cultural packages," typified images, in order to tell her story. In just doing this Marietta projects an image of herself as an ordinary person who had an ordinary engagement, an ordinary little wedding, an ordinary married life, and who carried out ordinary female activities and occupations, and whose husband carried out ordinary male activities and occupations. We don't mean to doubt the veracity of Marietta's tale, but rather wish to highlight the particular technologies of her conversational practice.

Marietta is projecting an image of herself as an ordinary working class woman through the use of typified description, but the notion of "being ordinary" can mean different things for different people as we will see in the analysis of the next segment. We can consider the orientation towards producing a sense of ordinariness in accounting practices, in relation to the conduct of ordinary activities, a relevant aspect of human interaction. Nonetheless, what is meant by being ordinary, taken for granted, normative, the way it should be, is not the same for everybody, as we will explicate in the next segment in which the interviewer and the interviewee seem to be oriented towards different constructions of "ordinariness."

### *"Work" as the main describer of the story*

In the next segment the interviewer asks Marietta to describe her wedding; that is, to "unpackage" her resorting to the shared cultural knowledge of a wedding party. Interviews often are about eliciting cultural particulars, in other words, making the ordinary tellable. The interviewer is also resorting to the shared cultural knowledge. By formulating the question, she is trying to elicit what she considers an ordinary description of a wedding, such as the description of the wedding dress or of the wedding party. In this segment, we can notice that Marietta appears to be orienting to a different perception of ordinariness: In fact, she gave a description of work-related activities in preparation for the big day, the work performed in organizing the wedding party. We contend that this difference in the narrative focus is bound to class membership; that is, it is possible to identify specific narrative strategies as category bound activity linked to class membership.

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Segment 4: Marietta (1997)

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1  J:   and can you um (.) tell a little bit about your wedding what (↑) was your wedding like

2  M:   oh the wedding was beautiful even a day like today they were so lovely they were

3        beautiful in those days just the same I had ah two bridesmaids and I did all the sewing

4        except the wedding dress they reckon that the bride should not sew the dress which is (.)

5        I don't think there's anything in that

6  J:   why is that (↑)

7  M:   well a::ah theres superstitious and things I don't know my aunty made my dress but I

8        made the bridesmaid's dress I made my mother's dress (.) and ah I worked even though I

9        was getting married I remember I worked helping with the cooking you know the jellies

10       and that what they had to do with the food

11 J:   what's sort of food  [was that]

12 M:                       [oh: they] had beautiful foods they had this cassatie you know those

13       cassaties like today the sponge they had them but my father ordered them to someone

14       north you know that used to come down and then they'd have the sausages the chicken (.)

15       t:::the ah spaghetti and a:::all the different things like you have now the same thing you

16       know and then they dance like same thing you know (↓)

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The interviewer's question is meant to elicit a description of the wedding party, *and can you um (.) tell a little bit about your wedding what (↑) was your wedding like.* Initially Marietta seems to align with the interviewer's question, producing a general comment, *oh the wedding was beautiful.* Then she produces evaluative comments, *they were beautiful in those days just the same,* and starts providing some details, *I had ah two bridesmaids.* At this point she changes the narrative trajectory, and she produces a description of the topic in terms of work.

Telling about her wedding, Marietta does not describe her wedding dress or the wedding party, but the marriage is told by reference to the activities she performed in that occasion, *I did all the sewing except the wedding dress.* She lists in detail all the dresses she sewed: *the bridesmaids' dress I made my mother's dress.* Marietta underlines the fact, *I worked even though I was getting married*, and continues describing her contribution to the preparation of the wedding meal, *I worked helping with the cooking you know the jellies.* The work in this description seems to have a moral value, a moral connotation. It is a moral tale (Baruch, 1981; Silverman, 1987; 1993) in that, underlining her participation to all the activities related to her wedding party, Marietta projects an image of herself as a skilled, keen, efficient, worker: "a good wife" in terms of working class culture.

The interviewer does not seem satisfied with this description and she asks Marietta to detail the food that was offered at the wedding party, *what's sort of food* [*was that.*] Replying to the interviewer, Marietta produces again a "normalizing" description. She starts with the comment that they had beautiful foods; she uses

the third person plural probably indicating that the decision about what food to have at her wedding was not her decision. Then she goes into a list that is culturally inscribed, in that some of the food is "ethnic food." In this way, Marietta invokes an ethnic identity with her naming of Italian dishes for wedding breakfast food, *they had this cassatie you know those cassaties like today... then they'd have the sausages the chicken (.) t:::the ah spaghetti and a::: all the different things like you have now the same thing you know*. Notice the qualifier of this list *those cassaties like today; like you have now the same thing you know*: nothing exceptional, just ordinary food, for an ordinary little wedding like you have today. We wonder if cassaties and spaghetti are included in an "ordinary" wedding meal in Australia. The point we want to make is that what is ordinary is always specified, or better negotiated locally, in the course of the interaction. In particular, in this narrative move Marietta associates her claim to ethnicity by naming the correct foods for an Italian wedding. Then she repeatedly assesses her wedding as ordinary, *and a:::all the different things like you have now the same thing you know and then they dance like same thing you know*.

Being ordinary can mean different things according to ethnic, class, and gender membership and so on. The interview can be seen to be played out through the discrepancy between the interviewer's and the interviewee's narrative focus. They seem to be oriented to different constructions of the same life events, to different productions of "ordinariness," for example, Marietta's choice of work, rather than romance, as her main descriptor of her relationship with her husband. These descriptions appear to clash with the interviewer's narrative expectations, inferable by her follow up questions. As analysts we can account for these differences in speakers' expectations according to their class membership, although the participants do not use or signal this categorization in the course of the interview.

In the next transcript similar discrepancies in narrative expectations between interviewer's and interviewee's narrative are particularly evident, in that they are sequentially observable.

*No individuals but a social world*

In this tale of personally meaningful events there are no individuals. No relationships among individuals are described by Marietta. It is a social world, a social scene, where all participants act together, each one with a specific place with definite things to do. In the following transcript, Marietta describes her engagement.

Segment 5: Marietta (1997)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | J: | how did you um what sort of things did you um do together when you were going out |
| 2 | | before [you got married] |
| 3 | M: | [w:::well in those] days you ah you were not allowed to go out with your boyfriend the |
| 4 | | family went |
| 5 | J: | (2.0) everyone in the family= |
| 6 | | =the whole family yeah well we never went out much at all because we were a big family |
| 7 | | so we never went anywhere except c:::church or ah dance my father would |
| 8 | | take us to the dance and then we'd meet there see that's how it was see |
| 9 | J: | yes |
| 10 | M: | an even wha- and when my daughter er ha- was engaged to er Stefano that er so h::he |
| 11 | | didn't want to er care either to say he never went only (↑) wh- after they got engaged they |
| 12 | | went out together both the two brothers and that but otherwise it was content they were |
| 13 | | just my three children my husband and I and Stefano we went it was how we'd say we'd |
| 14 | | go to the pictures that how it was everybody did that |
| 15 | J: | yes so Stefano joined the family |
| 16 | M: | the family yeah and we'd go to picnics say Boxing Day the whole family and and the |
| 17 | | boyfriend was there or if they had relations that's how (↓) those days is was all like that |
| 18 | | you know |
| 19 | J: | yes |
| 20 | M: | it wasn't no one talked to say oh look that's how it was (↓) you know |
| 21 | J: | yes |
| 22 | M: | they accepted it as that you know and ah well that's how it was |

The interviewer tries to elicit an account of relationship and a romance, formulating the question, *what sort, of things did you um do together when you were going out before [you got married.]* That question implies a relationship among individuals and activities carried out together as a couple. Answering the question, Marietta restructures the relational context projected by the interviewer's question. She produces a social scene. There are no individuals in Marietta's description, there is a family: *[w:::well in those-days you ah you were not allowed to go out with your boyfriend the family went.*

The short pause that follows *(2.0)* is significant, given the past pace of the interview in which pauses are not frequent. First of all the pause is ascribable to the interviewer. In fact, Marietta has finished her turn and in the context of the interview interaction, the turn is necessarily back to the interviewer. Through this brief hesitation and the partial repeat, requesting confirmation, *everyone in the family=,* the interviewer underlines the fact and makes it noticeable, expressing in this way perplexity, distancing from the interviewee's statement. *Everyone in the family=,* is a disagreement move, characterized by initial hesitation and partial repeat (Pomer-

antz, 1984, p. 70). The critical intention of the interviewer's request for clarification is inferable, particularly by the justificatory tone that Marietta uses in her reply.

Marietta confirms the interviewer's query, =*the whole family yeah*. She then produces a series of accounts and explanations to justify this family practice. First of all she points out that her family did not go out often, *we never went out much at all because we were a big family.* The meetings with her boyfriend always took place in a social scene, *we never went anywhere except c:::church or ah dance my father would my father would take us to the dance, and then we'd meet there.* Marietta characterizes this practice as normal at that time, *see that's how it was see.* Going on with the explanation, Marietta points out that for her daughter the same rule applied--she could not go out alone with her boyfriend. The appeal to credibility of this segment of the tale is heightened in response to the interviewer's query (in line 5) with reference to her daughter's courtship and the family involvement in that. Doing family courtship is seen to be an intergenerational practice. Marietta seems to hesitate a little in telling about her daughter's engagement. The beginning of the story, *an even wha- and when my daughter er ha- was engaged to er Stefano,* is followed by at least four difference false starts of a sentence: 1) *that er so;* 2) *h::he didn't want to;* 3) *er care either to say;* 4) *he never went only (↑) wh,* before she can articulate a clear statement, *after they got engaged they went out together both the two brothers and that.* To get engaged does not mean to create a relationship among two individuals, as suggested by the interviewer's question, but it means becoming part of the family, part of this social scene, *they were just my three children my husband and I and Stefano.* Again Marietta points out the ordinariness of this custom, *that how it was* and she underlines it through an extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) *everybody did that.* To state the ordinariness of such a practice, together with the hesitation in telling it, acts as a justification in relation to the interviewer's question of clarification (line 5). That is, the question was interpreted by Marietta as a criticism of such a practice.

Marietta assesses the family approach to courtship as ordinary and acceptable, at no stage during this last segment of talk is the interviewer's and interviewee's cultural knowledge of courtship and marriage customs invoked explicitly, but a discrepancy is evident at this point. For Marietta there are no individuals, no romance, but a social scene acting in relation to their expected roles in terms of age and gender membership. In contrast, the interviewer pursued a tale of individuals playing out a courtship. In this interaction interviewer and interviewee show discrepancies in the narrative trajectories and expectations that could be seen projecting different social class membership –working class and middle class membership- for the interactants.

## Conclusion

In this chapter we have reported on the identification processes produced in an interview with an Italian-Australian woman. We argue that through categorization work and specific narrative strategies different social identities are produced for the two participants in the course of the interview interaction. In particular we describe how the sense of being second generation Italian-Australian is achieved through showing interviewer's and interviewee's ability to be at the same time "in" and "out" of the Italian culture. Moreover, we have shown how interviewer and interviewee seem to be oriented to different constructions of the same life events. As analysts we account for these differences according to members' social class membership. In particular the discrepancy in the narrative trajectories between the participants is noteworthy. The interviewer asks for a description of a wedding party and of a romantic relationship, and she receives from the interviewee a description of the work done for organizing the wedding party and the description of family activities involving the engaged couple. Narrative analysis and membership categorization analysis can be usefully employed in order to study identification processes. That is, a focus on narrative aspects of the interaction can be very rewarding in understanding the technologies through which personally meaningful identities are projected, managed, and sustained in the talk in interaction.

## Transcriptions conventions

| Symbols | Functions |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | Line number |
| A: | current speaker |
| (.) | Micro-pause |
| (0.2) | Pause in tenth of a second |
| = | Latching |
| yes  [I agree] | Overlapping utterances |
|  | [ye:eah ] |
| Yeeah | Elongation |
| ↑↓ | Rising and falling shift in intonation |
| ( ), (guess) | Transcription doubts |

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# "Moral versions" of motherhood and daughterhood in Greek-Australian family narratives

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This chapter takes a situated, microanalytic approach to the analysis of narrative and identity as observed in interviews with daughters and mothers. The data originate from interviews, held concurrently with two or three generations of Greek-Australian women from the same family, which encouraged storytelling about the meaning and the experiences of the women as daughters.  The stories were told in the presence of the people who are also characters in the narratives. This generated sequences where the detail of the narratives, and the moral versions of the identities concerned, were subject to negotiation over the course of the interview.  Membership categorization analysis (Jayyusi, 1984; Sacks, 1995; Silverman, 1998) and ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967) provide a way of tracing how the identities of the participants are built up and negotiated through the interview talk. We also observe how the identities of mother and daughter are linked. First, we gain insight into the versions of motherhood (Cuff, 1980), displayed through the daughters' accounts about their mothers and, at the same time we gain an understanding of the different versions of daughterhood that the daughters orient to in their stories. Ethnomethodological analyses of narratives show 'the deployment by participants of routine ways of assembling what comes to be seen as rationality, morality or social order, and by extension displays of "culture in action" (Baker, 2002; Hester & Eglin, 1997).

This chapter provides an analysis of family storytelling and identity construction using concepts from ethnomethodology. In particular, we investigate how moral versions of motherhood and daughterhood are produced in the stories elicited

during in-depth interviews with three generations of Greek-Australian women, drawing on the work of Sacks and Silverman (Sacks, 1995; Silverman, 1987). We observe how the daughters in these families produce moral versions of their mothers and how in doing so they simultaneously portray complementary versions of daughterhood.

The analysis of storytelling has attracted a good deal of attention in recent years. Langellier (1989) has identified five approaches to the analysis of storytelling. Firstly is the structural approach (Labov & Waletzky, 1967), which views narrative as consisting of six elements: abstract, orientation, complicated action, resolution, coda, and finally, the evaluation. Second is the idea of narrative as performance, which focuses on the functional and pragmatic aspects of the narrative and how characters are positioned in relation to themselves, the audience, and to other characters in the story (Bamberg, 1997). A third approach investigates how the social and cultural processes are reflected in the narrative. In the fourth approach, a story can be examined as "political praxis" (Langellier, 1989) where the focus of the study is on power, identity, ideology, and knowledge. The fifth approach, which will be used here, views narrative as a co-construction, an interactional achievement, a joint production, and/or collaboration between the interviewer and interviewee (Atkinson, 2002; Langellier, 1989; Schegloff, 1997a).

This fifth approach is the one pertinent to our analysis as its main objective is to investigate how narrators work in producing situated identities. According to Atkinson, stories can clarify social relationships between us and provide insight into the participants' moral order (2002). This approach is also useful in examining family relationships. Gubrium and Holstein (1993) argue that "family is not so much a concrete set of social ties or bonds as a way of attaching meaning to interpersonal relations. Like other social objects, family is a project that is realized through discourse" (p. 655). Within this framework, the use of conversation analysis and membership categorization analysis will highlight the moral identities of mothers and daughters as they are produced in the construction of the narratives.

Our chapter contributes to the existing research on family storytelling, mother-daughter communication, intergenerational relationships, and identity studies. Previous research on family relationships has indicated a need for the study of the interactive and communicative processes by which relationships are produced, rather than on the outcome of relationships (Henwood, 1995). Within this field, mother-daughter storytelling strategies have been examined from a more explicitly feminist communication perspective by Hall and Langellier (1988), employing the feminist communication model. Hall and Langellier maintain that "mothers function as family historians, daughters as storytellers under their mother's guidance" (p. 121). More specifically, mothers monitor the tellability of a family story and also attempt to keep stories accurate and complete. Daughters, however, com-

plement their mothers' roles as family historians, by telling stories on request, listening to their mothers' stories, and collaborating with their mothers to present family history while also challenging family history. Hall and Langellier argue that "by studying how mothers and daughters talk together in a particular situation, we show them responding strategically to the specific constraints of the storytelling, to their own relationship and to the interview setting" (p. 125). Further, they suggest that mothers and daughters are under constraints to present their relationship as "healthy, happy and harmonious for the interviewer" or else put at risk their identities as good mothers and good daughters.

Our research lends support for this as we observe in our data that mothers and daughters strive to present themselves in 'idealized relationships.' We offer an analysis of the ways participants cooperate in generating the versions of motherhood and daughterhood. Moreover, in contrast to Hall and Langellier's study in which the interviewer did not play a significant interactive role, we will demonstrate in the data the role of the interviewer and her contribution to the storytelling.

Our study also draws upon Randall's study of mother-daughter interactions (1996). Randall highlighted the importance of conversation analytic procedure in these relationships in that they "allow the study of mother-daughter relationship as a dynamic, sequentially structured, locally managed accomplishment which participants continually display and orient to in moment to moment interaction" (p. 5). In this chapter we extend Randall's work on mother-daughter interaction and communication. With the use of an additional methodology of membership categorization analysis and with interview data, we examine the cultural and moral practices that constitute the mother-daughter relationship.

Our aim is to study the relationships procedurally as they are constructed in specific settings. In this we rely on notions introduced by Maynard and Zimmerman (1984), who comment:

> Rather than approaching relationships as a reality lying behind and influencing members' face to face behavior, we can investigate them for how, in the course of time, they are accomplished within everyday interaction by various speaking practices, including those involved in the production of topical talk. That is, the phenomenon of relationship can be located as a feature of conversational interaction, reflected in the work done on the occasion of its display and recognition. (p. 305)

Similarly, Goodwin (1987) argues that "an analyst cannot conceptualize social identities and context as static attributes of settings and participants. Rather it is necessary to look at them as dynamic phenomena that emerge and change as the talk in progress unfolds" (p. 119). In other words, identities will not be seen as preexisting fixed categories in the interaction but as negotiated and co-constructed by the participants in the narrative-interviews.

### The data

The data originate from a study of family relationships among three generations of Greek-Australian women. The study involved eight interviews with three generations of women (daughter, mother, grandmother) who were interviewed together in most cases. They were asked to talk about their experiences and relationships among each other. Most interviews were conducted at one of the participant's homes except for one that took place in the interviewer's (Petraki's) home.

The first generation women were between 50 and 70 years of age, the second generation 40 and 50, and the third generation between 20 and 34 years of age. The first generation women were the ones who migrated to Australia, usually married to Greek husbands, and the second and third generation women were born in Australia or brought to Australia very young (the oldest was 4 years of age). It is possible that the interviewer's shared ethnicity with the participants encouraged the participants' involvement; certainly it is possible to see in some segments of interviews that their shared ethnicity was made an explicit or implicit resource for the interview talk.   However, ethnicity in Conversation Analysis (CA) as well as other social categories such as gender or class could not be seen as omnirelevant to the analysis, but they will be examined when invoked in participants' orientations (Schegloff, 1987, 1991, 1992, 1997b).

The participants' knowledge of two languages allowed for code-switching to take place. The first generation (grandmothers) speak mainly Greek in the interview with some English expressions, the second generation speak both languages depending on whom they are talking to and the third generation speak mainly English with some Greek. The spoken Greek in the transcripts was translated into English. To indicate the code-switching in the interview, for the translated parts of the interview- that is those utterances originally spoken in Greek- we used Courier font, and for utterances spoken in English we used Times New Roman. Moreover, all names used in the transcripts are fictitious to abide by ethical considerations. Each segment will be preceded with a picture of the family tree of the family involved in the segment in order to give a clear understanding of the participants' relationships and to aid the analysis. The transcription notations used in the transcripts can be found in Appendix 1.

The interviews were premised on the ethnomethodological notions of "active interview" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, 1997), in which the interviews are sites where interviewer and interviewee are both constructors of knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Mills, 2001). As they stipulate, "interview participants can be likened to participants of everyday life, constantly working to discern and designate the recognizable and orderly parameters of experience" (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995, p. 16). Moreover, as Clandinin and Connelly have noted in research inter-

views, "the kinds of questions asked and the ways they are structured provide a frame within which participants shape their accounts of their experience" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994, p. 420).

## Theoretical perspectives

The methodology used in this chapter draws from the field of ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, and membership categorization analysis. Ethnomethodology, developed by Garfinkel, is concerned with the examination of members' methodical practices to produce accountable features of their local circumstances (Garfinkel, 1967, 1974; Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970). Conversation Analysis (CA), based on ethnomethodological principles and developed by Sacks (1995), is also concerned with members' accountable practices but with a focus on the study of talk in interaction. More specifically, conversation analysis aims at discovering "how participants understand and respond to one another in their turns at talk, with a central focus being on how sequences of actions are being generated" (Hutchby & Wooffitt, 1998, p. 14). As mentioned before, relationships and identities in this framework will be examined as constantly negotiated and molded through the situated and interpretive work of the members and their common sense reasoning.

Membership categorization analysis (MCA) is a branch of conversation analysis and ethnomethodology that was developed from the multiplicity of categories that participants use to describe people (Sacks, 1972, 1995). In this way, the use of MCA directs attention to the "locally used, invoked and organised 'presumed commonsense knowledge of social structures' which members are oriented to in the conduct of everyday affairs" (Hester & Eglin, 1997, p. 3). Sacks also proposed that categories may be linked to form classes or collections, which are termed membership categorization devices (MCDs) (Hester & Eglin, 1997; Sacks, 1995; Silverman, 1998). He maintained that categories are tied to "category bound activities." In particular, he proposed that "many activities are taken by members to be done by some particular or several particular categories of members where the categories are categories from membership categorization devices" (Sacks, 1995; Silverman, 1998). In our data, we will observe what activities are associated with the categories mother or daughter.

Category bound activities offer an understanding of the moral character of activities. Membership can "imply a community of members organized internally and recognizably with respect to moral rules, norms and values of conduct which are community specific, relevant and or demarcative" (Jayyusi, 1984, p. 65). The use of categories from particular collections constitutes the character of reality and

displays a particular version of the teller (Silverman, 1987, p. 241). According to Cuff (1980), "The teller in producing an account of what is happening in the world is also unavoidably producing materials which make available possible findings about characterological and moral appearance as displayed in talk" (p. 35).

Central to our analysis is the notion of standardized relational pair (SRP), a term that describes categories such as mother-child, or mother-daughter in our case, that are part of one collection such as family (Sacks, 1972, 1995; Silverman, 1998). Such relational pairs provide "linked identities" for the parties described and imply expectations about the appropriate behavior and responsibilities of the parties described (Silverman, 1987). In this way, the versions of motherhood and daughterhood are a form of moral identities that describe the mother-daughter relationship. Based on Cuff's (1980, 1994) and Silverman's (1987) data, members appeal to morally specified versions of being a "good" or "bad" wife or husband, or "good" mother or daughter respectively. Within this framework, we will observe the various types of SRPs employed to describe the mother-daughter relationship.

### *"Moral versions"*

The focus of this paper is how "moral versions" are produced in the course of storytelling. The notion of moral version is derived from Silverman's study (1987) on "moral versions of parenthood." His project involved analyzing mother-child interaction in medical settings where he discovered that parents display moral versions of themselves. He also observed the medical setting as a site for mothers and doctors to display their competence as institutional entities. Silverman based his observations on Cuff's work, which claimed that accounts can be treated as mere versions of events (Cuff, 1994). Cuff used the notion of standardized relational pair (SRP) to describe the relationship of husband-wife, which implies expectations about the appropriate behavior and responsibilities of the parties described (Sacks, 1972, 1995; Silverman, 1998). He noticed that members in his data from a radio show, while producing accounts, appealed to morally specified versions of being a "good" or "bad" wife or husband. Consistent with these notions, Silverman shows "how alternative SRPs based on autonomy and responsibility may be used to constitute the discussions of mother/child relations" (1987, p. 242). Moral versions of the parent-child relationship are contradictory, "so that it may be logically impossible to be both a responsible parent and a parent who recognizes a child's autonomy" (1987, p. 243). However, as Silverman reveals, parents "skillfully" manage to assert both norms simultaneously. He shows how mothers display moral versions of parenthood by first asserting their share of responsibility by "talking for the child," conducting "surveillance," being "guardians of the kitchen," and by "seeking out solutions." He also identifies the ways mothers perceive and rebut charges of

both nagging and irresponsibility by appeal to "natural facts," "unintended consequences of rational action," "knowing my child," and "medical mistakes." The mothers in Silverman's data spoke in the presence of their children and the doctor.

Similar work has been conducted by Baker and Keogh (1995), who investigated the moral versions constructed between parents and teachers in parent-teacher meetings where children were present. During these meetings, talk about students' achievements and issues about the teachers' and parents' responsibilities became morally accountable matters. By accounting for their competence, teachers and parents during the course of the meetings produce moral versions of themselves; therefore, interviews provide information about "where and how 'good' parenting and teaching are produced" (p. 276).

*Analysis*

In the following transcripts, we will examine how daughters describe their mothers through membership categorization devices. Through their descriptions, it is observable that the daughters are providing insight into their own identities. The mother and daughter SRP is activated by the stated aims of the interview, which include descriptions of being a daughter as well as the interviewer's questions orienting the participants to answers as mothers and/or daughters.

The following accounts consist of daughters' praises of their mother's identities. In the course of our data, daughters do not always praise mothers; therefore, praise is only one of the ways they talk.[1] Although this paper focuses on the strategies with which the participants construct moral versions of mothers and daughters in praising sequences, other aspects of the participants' relationships are examined elsewhere (Petraki, 2001a, 2001b, 2001c). This includes the dominance of the male participants in the interaction (Petraki, 2001b, 2001c) and the negotiation of disagreements within the families (Petraki, 2005).

Through the daughters' praises of their mothers, the daughters throw some light on what constitutes "good versions of motherhood." The daughters' accounts offer a version of motherhood and, as we will observe, reveal a version of daughterhood. Thus we demonstrate how the categories of mother and daughter are produced as complementary Standardized Relational Pairs (SRPs).

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1.    For a better understanding of the chapter, it is important to offer a broad view of how praising occurs among the three generations. In most of the families interviewed, women praise each other and praising occurs in all directions. Grandmother → mother → daughter and vice versa: granddaughter→ mother → grandmother (→ grandmother's mother who not present). However, there is limited praising between grandmother to granddaughter and usually occurs in the direction from grandmother to granddaughter and not vice versa.

**Busy mother and helpful daughter**

This segment originates from the fifth family that includes Thomai (grandmother, age 75), Yanna (mother, age 57), Nafsika (daughter, age 30), and the interviewer. The participants' initials are used in the excerpt and "I" to indicate the interviewer. The segment is situated in a discussion about the relationship of mothers and daughters. After all of them talked about the word mother and narrated stories about mother-daughter relationships in general, the interviewer goes on to ask Thomai about her relationship with her mum (1–3). In this way, she starts her account about her mother specifically.

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Th
 |
Y
 |
N
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### Excerpt 1

*(MS, F5, 214-220 and 231-250)[2]*

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 1    I:     what do you remember for example what did you do with your
 2           mum (.) or what experiences do you remember with your mum
 3           did you cook for example
 4    Th:    of course we helped a lot
 5    I:     what did you do
 6           [for example?]
 7    Th:    [if it was for help] we helped very much
 8           ((the discussion turns to her school experiences when Nafsika redirects the conversation
 9           towards the main topic, helping the interviewer))
10    N:     grandma what did you do?=
11    Th:    =we helped our mum a lot
12    N:     yes
13    Th:    in all her jobs (.) we helped a lot
14    Y:     we had grape-harvest then=
15    Th:    =we listened to what she said (2.0) word for word what she
16           said to us things we remember still
17    I:     what things? did she beat you?
18    Th:    no word for word what she said to us ((the interviewer misheard the
19           word 'word for word'))
20    I:     oh word for word hahaha
21    Th:    whatever she used to tell us (.) and
22           [we remember them still]
23    I:     [what did she use to tell you]
24    Th:    kneading in reaping in (1.0) washing (.)
25    Y:     she taught them to be good housewives (.) the loom (.) we
26           also had this Eleni (.) this was a big art (.) then (1.0)
27    Th:    she used to wake up very early and we got used to waking
28           up while it was still dark as well (.) then everywhere (.)
29           everywhere (.) °everywhere° (we helped her)
30    I:     by the way did you go out with boys? (.)
31    Th:    °no°
32    ........((explaining why the issue of boys was not important )
```

The interviewer, through her question about Thomai's experiences with her mother, is invoking the SRP mother-daughter. The interviewer's question starts with a general question "experiences with your mum," and continues with some examples, "Did you cook?" In this way, the interviewer is presupposing that the mother-daughter relationship involved cooking or could have involved cooking. The interviewer is proposing an activity bound to the SRP mother/daughter. Thomai's answer constitutes a defense initiated with "of course," which treats this issue as impossible to doubt and taken for granted: of course they helped a lot. She treats the interviewer's question as a way of questioning her competence as a daughter. Thus, she constructs herself as a competent and helpful daughter. The use of "we" possibly includes all her sisters, which sets up an image of a very good cooperative family. It is pertinent that the researcher's question is rather ambiguous and general, in that it gives Thomai the chance to select her own type of mother/ daughter relationship. The interviewer proposed cooking but Thomai turns this into "helping." Therefore, Thomai's description is her own specific selection of motherhood, among a variety of versions available that a daughter could be involved with the mother.

The interviewer goes on to ask for more examples and details of Thomai's relationship with her mother. In line 7, Thomai repeats her account for her being a helpful daughter, this time with an upgrade – "very much." After a small deviation from the topic, Nafsika redirects the conversation by asking her grandmother for specific examples, hence assisting the job of the interviewer (Petraki, 2001b).

```
10   N:    grandma what did you do?=
11   Th:   =we helped our mum a lot
12   N:    yes
13   Th:   in all her jobs (.) we helped a lot
14   Y:    we had grape-harvest then=
15   Th:   =we listened to what she said (2.0) word for word what she
16         said to us things we remember still
```

Thomai repeats her description about herself as a helpful daughter (line 11), to which Nafsika offers an acknowledgement (line12). Thomai, through her repetition of her statement about her help, emphasizes these qualities and adds another feature "in all her jobs" to highlight the extent of the daughters' helpfulness (line 13). Moreover, at this point, the mother's many activities are foreshadowed.

Then Yanna (line 14) forwards the conversation by producing examples of the daughters' contributions, such as in grape harvest, thus assisting her mother's storytelling.

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Y:    we had grape-harvest then=
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The use of "we" is inclusive of Yanna herself indicating that she was a witness to the activities being done at that time. Yanna's witnessing could be seen as an "authorization procedure" (Smith, 1978) which adds credibility and supports the moral

version being constructed by Thomai. At the same time, the use of "then" places these activities within the specific time frame of her mother's generation. The first version of the mother-daughter pair produced thus far consists of a busy mother and a helpful daughter.

In the rest of the excerpt, Thomai continues her production of other aspects of the complementary mother-daughter relationship. In the next lines (lines 15–16), Thomai seems to ignore Yanna's proposal of the grape harvest and produces another dimension of complementarity in the SRP mother-daughter.

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Th:    =we listened to what she said (2.0) word for word what she said
        to us things we remember still
```

Continuing her account about their competence in being good daughters, she constructs herself and her sisters as obedient daughters. At the same time, she constructs her mother as a good advisor, as the things she said are important and they remember them still. Thomai's use of "we" in talking about her sisters still "remembering" what her mother said is an indication of Thomai's emphasis on portraying the long-term success of the mother-daughter relationship. At lines 15–20, there is a misunderstanding about the previous utterance and following that, Thomai continues her talk on her respect for her mum's words. At line 21, she is in fact repeating the sense of line 15 almost exactly.

```
18    Th:    no word for word what she said to us ((I misheard the word 'word for
19            word'))
20    I:     oh word for word hahaha
21    Th:    whatever she used to tell us (.) and
22            [we remember them still]
23    I:     [what did she use to tell you]
24    Th:    kneading in reaping in (1.0) washing (.)
```

The interviewer asks for specific information about her mother's words and Thomai replies not with what her mother had said, but with the activities she was involved in.

Yanna in line 25 produces a formulation, as a way of finding the gist of Thomai's descriptions of her relationship with her mother (Heritage & Watson, 1979). She describes Thomai's mother as teaching her daughters to be good housewives. In this way, she sets up the SRP with her mother as a good and successful teacher and her daughters as helpful and obedient. By implication, Thomai's mother was a good housewife herself, so that she could teach this competence to her daughters. She goes on to add some information about their involvement with the loom, which was another "big" thing thereby enhancing her mother's character as a "good and hard working daughter." Yanna uses "we," again contributing credibility to her mother's version of this mother/daughter relationship. She implies that she

herself was a witness to the qualities of her mother's mother, thus claiming some ownership of her mother's daughterhood experiences.

Up to this time, a list (Jefferson, 1990) is produced of the mother-daughter complementarity, consisting of busy mother and helpful daughters, advising mothers and respectful daughters. Lists will be found in almost all excerpts to display various dimensions of SRPs. They could be seen to heighten the praise of both the mother and the daughter.

In lines 27–29 Thomai adds to her description of her relationship to her mother by constructing her as "waking up early," which in this context is hearable as hard-working.

```
Th:   she used to wake up very early and we got used to waking up
      while it was still dark as well (.) then everywhere (.)
      everywhere (·)°everywhere° (we helped her)
```

She then goes on to complete the SRP, by adding something about herself: She used to wake up early and we did that, too. In this way she constructs her sisters and herself as helpful and hard-working daughters, suggesting that the daughters modeled themselves on their mother. The use of an extreme case formulation (ECF) ("everywhere") three times highlights her identity as a "good and supportive daughter" (Pomerantz, 1986).

The interviewer at this point changes the topic, possibly to elicit a story with regard to "going out with boys." The interviewer's question at this point is interesting, as it follows Thomai's emphasis on "everywhere" and her description of the perfect relationship she had with her mother. It is not impossible to suggest that the interviewer was probably aware that "going out with boys" was not a popular habit of Thomai's generation; therefore, her questions might be a reaction to Thomai's description of an ideal mother-daughter relationship. However, no trouble story came up, thus extending the perfection of the mother-daughter relationship.

In this excerpt, in Thomai's description about her mother-daughter relationship, she constructs complementary versions of the categories mother and daughter. She develops various versions of mother-daughter pair, which consist of mother as good teacher and the daughters as receptive to her model and her advice, the hard-working mother/ hard-working daughters and busy mother/helpful daughters. We have also demonstrated the contributions of her daughter and granddaughter in the construction of items to add to the list, thereby endorsing the version being produced by Thomai and supporting the telling of the story.

**Disciplining mother and obedient daughter**

The following segment is a continuation of Thomai's memories of her mother and follows our discussion about lack of going out with boys, which has not been included here.

**Excerpt 2**

(MS, F5, 255–281)

```
 1   Th:   [some mothers] cared to buy a second and third dress for their
 2         children (.) so that they go out to celebrations for example
 3         ((some noise from outside stops the conversation for a minute))
 4   I:    go on
 5   Th:   but my mum was disciplined from her family more (.) and (.)
 6         she didn't regard it as °appropriate° (1.0) she was disciplined
 7         from her family because she had brothers (.) who just coughed
 8         and the women got scared (.) all the women in the family had
 9         to obey the brother or the father
10   I:    when you say to buy second and third dress what do you mean?
11         To make them more beautiful?
12         [is that it?]
13   Th:   [to make them beautiful] to be able to go out (.) she used to
14         say to us 'come I'll buy you a second dress but let's do this
15         job first we buy this land first and we go for the dress
16         tomorrow (.) another time (.) to milk the sheep she had a
17         problem with her hands because one hand was not entirely
18         functional we were milking I was 14 my sister 12 (.) the
19         youngest was 8 and we used to keep the sheep and milk them we
20         had built something outside the house and we milked them there
21         on our own we did a lot therefore our mum was not unhappy
22   I:    you were good
23         [girls]
24   Th:   [in everything] (.) ve:ry good
25   Y:    which year are you talking now tell us tell us the
26         [year]
27   I:    [year] yes because we talk about three generations now let us
28         see
```

The excerpt also contributes additional moral descriptions of the mother-daughter relationship. Thomai makes a comparison of her mother with the other mothers of the time to advance her mother's moral qualities. Other mothers paid attention to buying dresses for their children, but her mother did not. However, this is not described as a negative aspect of her mother's character; indeed, it could be seen to add to her mother's moral features that describe her as disciplined, coming from a disciplined and serious family (lines 8–10). It is suggested that the care for dress is unimportant or that other mothers wasted their money or were spoiling their daughters. She also provides an account for her mother's disciplinary character due to her family, thereby extending her mother's praise to her family. She also produces a picture of a family where the women were under the thumb of the men,

using an ECF (men just coughed and the women got scared). Another SRP is evident here, that of authoritarian males and dutiful and obedient females. This element of her mother's life however, is not conveyed as oppressive but is regarded as a virtue in this context.

The interviewer's subsequent turn is somehow intriguing; the interviewer asks her to elaborate the point of "buying a new dress," which she perceives as "making them more beautiful" (lines 11–13).

```
I:     when you say to buy second and third dress what do you mean?
       To make them more beautiful? [is that it?]
```

In this way, the interviewer ignores Thomai's point about the discipline in her mother's family and is indicating that Thomai's description about the mother-daughter relationship should not include her presentation of her mother's disciplined family (Baker, 1984). However, the interviewer's reformulation of Thomai's "new dress" as a form of external beauty is contributing to Thomai's implied criticism of other mothers who buy dresses too easily. Thomai agrees with the interpretation and adds that her mother also promised them a second dress, putting her under the category of other mothers in the village but one who was focused on her work more. In a way she provides an account for her mother, thus maintaining her hard working identity.

Thomai then turns into a description of her and her sisters and their immeasurable help towards their mum, producing another instance of them as a cooperative daughters. Thomai cites the ages (line 18) they were, thus highlighting the daughters' efforts in helping their mother. She talks about their contributions as daughters and concludes how her mum could not have been unhappy, hence implying their close relationship. The interviewer then produces a formulation which could be seen to summarize and end the topic (Heritage & Watson, 1979).

```
I:     you were good [girls]
```

Thomai replies with an ECF ("in everything") together with an upgrade of the interviewer's utterance highlighting her role as "very good" daughters (line 24). Yanna then suggests to her mother to talk about the year she is talking about, which places Thomai's story in a specific time frame. The interviewer agrees and provides a reason why this time frame is important: to identify the activities of her generation, constructing her of a different generation than the others.

In this second excerpt, Thomai provides a comparison of her mother to other mothers in order to highlight her mother's moral character. She describes her mother's disciplined and strong character as well as her good (that is, strict) family upbringing. At the same time, she displays herself as a very good daughter, appreciative of her mother's efforts. Another SRP is produced, with a mother who

needed help with all the activities she was involved in, given her dysfunctional hand and her helpful daughters who complemented their mother's incapacity to work by doing their work.
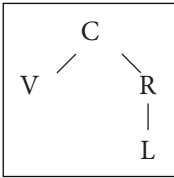
*Discussion*

In these examples, we have treated interviews as sites for the display and construction of identities (Baker, 2002). We have seen that in the course of the interview, the participants produce accounts of themselves and their mothers. By studying these accounts, "we are studying displays of cultural particulars as well as displays of members' artful practices in assembling those particulars" ( Silverman, 1993, p. 114; see also Baker, 1997, 2002).

The first two excerpts evidenced the construction and negotiation of various moral versions of motherhood and daughterhood by focusing on the first-generation woman. Thomai, by describing her mother, painted a specific moral version of her mother. Through this description, she simultaneously invokes a moral version of herself. In this way, she implicates certain forms of SRPs of good mother/daughter. Such relational pairs provide "linked identities" for the parties described and imply expectations about the appropriate behavior and responsibilities of the parties described (Silverman, 1987).

These excerpts have demonstrated the participants' contribution of the moral versions. The interviewer is seen to collaborate with Thomai in the production of moral identities through her questions, summaries, and formulations. Additionally, the other participants, both daughter and granddaughter, contribute to grandmother's moral version by supplying details and examples and supporting her version.

**Strong mother and proud daughter**

This segment derives from the third family involving the second generation Voula (V) 60 years old, talking about her mother Christina (C) 90 years old, in the presence of the interviewer, and Voula's sister, 65-year-old Rea (R), and Rea's daughter Lina (L), 35 years old. While in the previous segment the mother being described is not present in the interview, in this segment, Voula's mother (C) is an audience to the description. Thus, we notice the ways she contributes to the portrayal of the moral version of herself during Voula's description. We also notice the presence of Rea, who says very little although she is Christina's daughter. The interview was difficult to transcribe at times due to three young children playing at a table next to us and speaking to the adults at times. At the same time, we were sitting at the balcony of a very busy street and it was quite noisy.

```
    C
V  / \  R
      |
      L
```

The following segment is quite lengthy and will be examined in sequence below. Although the discussion was on the relationship of mothers and daughters, the interviewer asks both Voula and her sister Rea explicitly about what experiences the word daughter brings to mind.

## Excerpt 3

*(MS, F3, 495-552)*

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | I: | when I tell you the word daughter (.) or you (.) what experience comes to mind? |
| 2 | V: | well as a daughter to our mother |
| 3 | I: | yeah |
| 4 | V: | are you talking about that? |
| 5 | I: | yes |
| 6 | V: | um |
| 7 | I: | which theme just comes to your mind what story [do you remember?] |
| 8 | V: | [yes stories(.)] comfort and security for your |
| 9 | | mother because I was the one to become ill or something (.) she was there (.) she was strong |
| 10 | | when it came to crisis mum was there she was the one that enticed me to go on DAD didn't |
| 11 | | want me to leave home (.) he was the one that hoped that I wouldn't because he didn't want |
| 12 | | me but mum did she pushed me on (.) which was goo:d |

((Christina at this point turns to Voula and Rea and is suggesting to them to go and buy some lunch so that they all eat together, including the interviewer. The interviewer does not hear well and Rea explains to her that her mother is "worried about her" and insists on her staying for lunch. However, the interviewer refuses kindly as she has other commitments))

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 13 | V: | and um she's been very good as a mother under the restrictions she had too because (.) SHE |
| 14 | | was brought up very very strictly and very (.) slightly narrow minded you know (.) and one |
| 15 | | thing was important security and food money and food the two main things and of course um |
| 16 | | because she because they were worried about money um she worries a lot about money she |
| 17 | | worries about all sorts of things it's typically Greek= |
| 18 | C: | =I like to be secure not wealthy but not tight to keep some you know um (2.0) |
| 19 | I: | to save some money |
| 20 | V: | [yes yes] |
| 21 | I: | [to keep something to use for anything that happens] |
| 22 | R: | [to be comfortable] |
| 23 | C: | anything that happens you've got something I like to help people (I sent to Algeria some |
| 24 | | money) I sent little money to help them (.) and I found out that they are not very poor (.) to |
| 25 | | expect you know help from other people but I'm glad I did that (.) I'm glad they have |
| 26 | L: | [(why did you do that?)] |
| 27 | C: | [I sent to Algeria] and I gave to my son 50 dollars to send the people they collect money for |
| 28 | | the Algerian children |
| 29 | R: | (that's what she said [before )] |
| 30 | C: | [I love to help other people] (.) |
| 31 | V: | mum is very compassionate we're very lucky that she's like that (.) she's very compassionate |
| 32 | | and she keeps the family together you can imagine she's the matriarch (.) and we all dance |
| 33 | | around her |
| 34 | R: | ( ) |
| 35 | V: | she's a very good cook (.) so we all eat well and we all have good food |
| 36 | C: | I like (.) to study but I get tired |
| 37 | I: | you become tired |
| 38 | R: | ((to Lina)) the phone is ringing |
| 39 | I: | even now? |

```
40   C:    (  ) (I love it)
41   R:    ((to Lina)) it stopped  ((the phone))
42   I:    oh good
43   V:    and so (.) mum had very ideas very good sense of dress (.) we were always well-dressed she
44         would sew our clothes so we always look good we always had shoes you know you hear
45         people who are poor (.) and didn't have shoes (.) so with mum and dad they and they brought
46         us with this Greek instinct you know DAD was very patriotic and mum too (.) she told us
47         different stories and she taught us to sing (.) she has a very good singing voice to sing and we
48         all learnt to sing our Greeks songs haha
49   R:    that's been wonderful
50   V:    yes (.) yes (.) and little poems we learnt as children (.) so that (.) um we know that she's there
51         she's been a very strong (.) rock for us because it wasn't easy for her (.) and of course um (.)
52         because they restricted each other our parents (.) they did the best for us (.) we respect them
53         (.) I don't know if the next generation will like what we went through and to keep the family
54         together it was a very big thing (.) yes (.) I think it's carried on to this family as well (.) um
55         this strength of keeping everyone together (.) yes we have very good ties (.) between us and
56         OUR FAMILIES in Greece we still write to keep in touch and they miss me oh
57   I:    hahaha
58   V:    they miss me
```

At the beginning of this extract (lines 1–5), Voula replies with a clarification question, which organizes her following talk as talk from a daughter about her mother. Voula explicitly links the category daughter with the category mother, establishing the SRP. After a small hesitation from Voula, the interviewer prompts Voula with another question, "what theme comes to mind what story do you remember?" (line 7). The interviewer asks for experiences in theme or story form. As is the case in other interview-narratives (Baker & Johnson, 2000), the question arises of how the interviewees are to speak. In line 8 Voula confirms her understanding with "yes stories".

Lines 8–12 are Voula's first description of her relationship with her mother:

```
V:                                    [yes stories (.) comfort and security for your
     mother because I was the one to become ill or something (.) she was there (.) she was strong
     when it came to crisis mum was there she was the one that enticed me to go on DAD didn't
     want me to leave home (.) he was the one that hoped that I wouldn't because he didn't want
     me but mum did she pushed me on (.) which was goo:d
```

Through her description she attaches the following list of qualities to her mother, a source of comfort, security, and strength as she took care of her as a daughter, and courage when she encouraged her daughter to further her studies. Through her talk, she produces several portrayals of the mother-daughter relationship. In line 8, we have the first version of SRP, where she constructs her mother as source of security and comfort and herself as the dependent daughter in times of illness. In lines 9–10, we have the strong mother and weak daughter "she was strong when it came to crisis" and in lines 11–12, Voula generates another complementarity, her mother as the encouraging mother and herself as the hesitant daughter. At the same time, she produces a version of her mum who always supports the daughter, contrasting it with her father who is the strict one. The identities of supportive mother and

strict father become a contrastive resource. There is an implication about her father's behavior, in that her father could or should have supported her. A moral version of her father is therefore interwoven into the description. Her comparison of her mother with her father reinforces her mother's outstanding properties. Through this account, Voula also portrays herself as an appreciative and understanding daughter in need of the kinds of support she attributes to her mother.

There is a small interruption from Christina, who insists that the interviewer stays for dinner, and when this is solved Voula continues (line 13). This invitation is interesting in terms of its placement after Voula's description of her mother. The placement of the invitation may or may not be part of the identity being painted.

In lines 13–17, Voula provides a second comparison of her mother this time with her strict and narrow-minded upbringing, which again enhances her mother's competence as a mother.

> V:    and um she's been very good as a mother under the restrictions she had too because (.) SHE
>        was brought up <u>very very</u> strictly and very (.) slightly narrow minded you know (.) and one
>        thing was important security and food money and food the two main things and of course um
>        because she because  they were worried about money um she worries a lot about  money she
>        worries about all sorts of things   it's typically Greek=

In this way, she commends her mother's open-minded, liberal character. She also describes her mother's worry about money and food. She provides a reason for this, that "they" – probably indicating her parents – were worried about money in those days, when they emigrated to Australia and indicates that she still has such worries about "all sorts of things." She also sees these worries as typically Greek. In line 18, Christina enters the conversation and treats Voula's comment about her worries as an implied criticism and provides an account to avoid misunderstanding. First, she suggests that her care for money is ascribed to her care for security for the family, thus dismissing her daughters' possible insinuation at her being voracious. Moreover, she also makes a second clarification; she presents herself as liking to be not "wealthy" but "secure" and "not tight," which dismisses Voula's possible misunderstanding that could present her as stingy. Here then, a moral version is constructed that draws comments from the person being described, comments that are clearly aimed to correct a possible misattribution. Both daughters Rea and Voula bolster the interviewer's support for Christina; therefore, all four are drawn into agreement about Christina's attitude to money. The interviewer, sensitive to the distinction Christina is making, agrees with Christina and provides an account for her, by adding a reason why money is important:

> I:    [to keep something to use for anything that happens]

Following the interviewer's intervention, Christina adduces another money-related element for herself: She likes to help people financially. While her first explicit reference to her own character is made in line 18, as a form of account, here Christina adds another item herself. This could also be seen to continue her account about her care for money, by adding care for people in order to dismiss her possible construction as ambitious in money. She does that by presenting herself as "liking to help people" and offering a story to provide evidence for her character. She gave her son money for the Algerian people and subsequently found out that this money was not so useful. However, her story evaluation suggests that she is "glad she did it" (line 25), portraying her as a "kind soul" (Georgakopoulou & Goutsos, 1997; Labov & Waletzky, 1967; Riessman, 1993). Story evaluations typically summarize the point of the narrative and reveal the narrators' emotions or attitudes towards the events related.

In line 31 Voula sums up her mother's generous quality by offering a formulation: "mum is very compassionate." She then goes on to present herself as a lucky daughter, thereby accounting for her appreciation towards her mother. She then continues her description of her mother's character by talking about her mother as keeping the family together and being the matriarch. In this manner her mother is seen as a strong leader and organizer of the family. Voula also adds in line 35 her mother's excellent cooking abilities and her care for the family by providing healthy food. Christina at this point offers another quite different element that adds to her positive character, her love of reading, which could be considered a noble hobby (lines 36 and 40). Thus, we find Christina quite actively asserting Voula's praise. Rea, who is also a daughter of Christina, says very little. The interviewer replies with "oh good," which could be seen as a standardized assessment with an abstract and laconic quality (Maynard, 1997).

At line 43, Voula continues her praise towards her mum by adding her mum's sense of dress and care for good appearance she had for her daughters.

> V:  and so (.) mum had very ideas very good sense of dress (.) we were always well-dressed she would sew our clothes so we always look good we always had shoes you know you hear people who are poor (.) and didn't have shoes (.) so with mum and dad they and they brought us with this Greek instinct you know DAD was very patriotic and mum too (.) she told us different stories and she taught us to sing (.) she has a very good singing voice to sing and we all learnt to sing our Greeks songs haha

Voula uses plural as in a way she speaks for both her sister and herself. She then switches to talk about both her parents as opposed to her mother, to display her mother as a good parent and wife. Next, she constructs her mother as stylish and caring for fashion and her daughters being well-dressed. She then goes on to praise their ethnic character and patriotism, which her parents instilled in them. By talking about her parent's patriotism, Voula is acknowledging the importance of in-

stilling the understanding of the Greek culture to their children. Rea agrees with her and offers a constructive assessment, "that's been wonderful" (line 49).

In line 50, Voula continues the theme of songs and moves on to the poems they were taught by their parents as children. She goes on to account for her mother's positive values and suggests that these values her mother has should not be taken for granted. Her mother did manage to be who she is and it was not easy. Thus, she gives credit to her mother's characterization. Added to that, another account for her parents' characteristics is their mutual respect, which they have passed on to them as well, thus invoking the SRP good parents/ respectful children. Voula's use of superlatives twice in her assessment, "they did the best for us" and "it was a very big thing," adds to the overall praise towards her mother and her parents. She then describes the mother-daughter relationship as consequential and interdependent:

> V:       …um because they respected each other our parents (.) they did the best for us (.) we <u>respect</u>  them…

In this way, she accounts for her competency as a good daughter in respecting their parents for their upbringing. The SRP mother-daughter holds in both directions. She also talks about the importance of respect and understanding of family values for the next generations. In line 53, stating her uncertainty about the maintenance of family values in the future generations could be perceived as an implicit criticism about Lina's family, as she is the next generation and is present at the interview. Voula goes on to specify this point by suggesting that the family values are carried on by "this family," implying Lina's family, as the interview is taking place at Lina's home. Moreover, she talks about their good ties with the relatives in Greece, in which she constructs herself and her family as patriotic and successful families. Finally, she comments on herself as being missed by her Greek relatives turning at this point the praise about her mother into praise about herself.

In sum, this excerpt displays Voula, G2 and her mother Christina, G3 constructing Christina's moral character. Christina takes an active part in Voula's description, by either accounting for her qualities, correcting possible criticism directed to her, or adducing further positive qualities for her character. At the same time, Voula is constructing complementary versions of her mother and herself. The mother's identity is portrayed as a competent, caring mother providing security and comfort. Through this description, Voula is portrayed as a respectful, dependent, and lucky daughter. It is interesting to point out that Christina's support of her own praise in this segment as well as Voula's self-praise at the end of the segment contradicts Pomerantz's (1978) findings on praise and compliments, where it was found that the participants' preferred response to praise would be a disagreement

to the praise and an effort for "minimization of self-praise" (p. 81). It needs to be taken into account, however, that this phenomenon might be tied to the participants' involvement in producing moral versions and praising each other.

## Courageous mother and admiring daughter

Th
|
Y
|
N

This last segment to be presented in this chapter comes from the interview with the family also seen in the first and second extracts in this chapter. At this point, it is the third generation woman Nafsika who is talking about her mother. What is interesting in this segment is the ways the interviewer gets dynamically involved in producing the praise through the use of formulations.

### Excerpt 5

(MS, F5, 974-1002)

```
 1   N:   I have to say Eleni that (.) those qualities (.) that my mum displays her (.) her strength (.) um
 2        her determination (.) he:r um tenacity (1.0) the fact that she never forgets that something bad
 3        is done to her
 4   I:   or to her family
 5   N:   yeah or to her
 6        [family]
 7   Y:   [mm]
 8   N:   um (.) I think I I have the same (.) qualities but they are the qualities that I respect most about
 9        my mother (.) especially her courage (.) she's not afraid (.) she just thinks well (.) just go (1.0)
10        and one thing that my mother told me when I started (.) was it University? yes it was (.) when
11        I was worried and panicking about (.) doing exams she said (.) "you've got to have" she goes
12        to me ° "you have to have strength and you have courage (.) and you just have to attack she
13        goes attack  the questions"° (.) and to this day I remember
14        [that]
15   Th:  [she is very] bold
16   N:   yeah very very courageous
17   I:   I think because she's gone through a lot
18   N:   yes
19   I:   in her life
20   N:   but I that's what I respect the most about my mother (.) that I admire the most about my
21        mother and I try and emulate her I try and copy her a lot that I often think °what would my
22        mother do in such a situation? ° (1.0)
23   I:   she's a source of courage for you
24   N:   oh yeah absolutely (.) absolutely (.)
25   Y:   We've been through a lot together you know
26   N:   yeah (.)
27   I:   Do you think that (.) your relationship is different from your relationship? Is your
28        relationship different? ((asking about the difference in the relationships of
29        grandma-mother/ granddaughter/mother))
```

After Yanna told a story about her courage to go and complain to the headmaster about mistreatment to her daughter, Nafsika comments on her mother's character,

beginning in line 1. This also could be seen as a form of story evaluation about Yanna's strong character. Moreover, Nafsika is also cooperating with the interviewer in that she starts her talk about her mother and responds to the interviewer's earlier first question about the mother-daughter relationship.

Her description is also a form of praise to her mother's character and attaches the qualities of strength, determination, tenacity, and care for her honor with the identity of her mother (lines 1–2). The interviewer aids the construction of Yanna's identity by adding another element, care for her family, which Nafsika confirms. The interviewer takes that from the story previously told about Yanna caring for Nafsika. Nafsika, by painting her mother's great character, also depicts herself as a respectful and appreciative daughter. She goes on to commend her mother's courage, which is another feature attached to Yanna's immaculate identity as a mother, and illustrates that with an example where her mother encouraged her to be strong in the exams. The use of direct speech (lines 11–12) adds emphasis to the event (Tannen, 1983, 1989) and also solidifies her argument. The utterance of her mother's words in low voice is a second attempt to give prominence to her mother's words.

> N:    …° 'you have to have <u>strength</u> and you have courage (.) and you just have to <u>attack</u> she goes <u>attack</u>  the questions'°

Thomai, Yanna's mother, reinforces Nafsika's argument by agreeing that Yanna is very bold. The use of a story could also be seen to strengthen Nafsika's argument about her mother. In the next line Nafsika offers an upgrade of Thomai's previous sentence from "she's very bold" to "she's very very courageous" to underscore her mother's attributes (line 16).

At this point the interviewer provides an account for Yanna's behavior as "she has gone through a lot," possibly downgrading her qualities and ascribing them to experience. Nafsika seems to leave behind the possibly ambiguous account the interviewer offered and continues about her qualities as a daughter: her admiration towards her mother, her effort to emulate her mother (lines 20–22). The interviewer offers a rephrase of Nafsika's words, which also constitutes a formulation that positions Nafsika's mother as a source of courage. Formulations could be seen to provide a summary of the interactant's position and also at this point are an attempt of the interviewer to cooperate "in developing and consolidating the interviewee's position," what Heritage calls "the cooperative recycle" (Heritage, 1985). Nafsika agrees emphatically with the interviewer's suggestions and Yanna at this point agrees and reinforces their close relationship; "we've been through a lot together you know" (line 25). In this way she accepts the praise, incorporates the interviewer's point about experience in line 18 and also provides evidence of their close mother-daughter relationship.

In this excerpt, Nafsika paints her mother's moral character comprising strength, determination, tenacity, courage and respect, and care for her family. Yanna, similar to previous excerpts, accepts the praise and provides a reason for their close relationship, reinforcing in this manner Nafsika's description. Furthermore, Nafsika completes the SRP by portraying herself as a respectful and appreciative daughter, cherishing and inheriting her mother's qualities, thus completing her mother's good image. In this excerpt, the interviewer gets involved in the production of moral identities through the use of formulations and additions to Nafsika's account.

## Conclusion

This chapter has offered insight into the ways ethnomethodology and membership categorization analysis (MCA) offer a useful dimension into the study of narrative and identity. In particular, we examined the ways moral identities are produced in intergenerational storytelling between daughters, mothers, and grandmothers. Following Cuff's (1980, 1994) and Silverman's (1987) studies, we treated interview accounts as versions of events. With the tools of membership categorization analysis (MCA) and standardized relational pairs (SRPs), we revealed the mother and daughter as complementary identities. As distinct from the previous studies on moral versions, we focused on segments where the daughters praised their mothers. In particular, we examined the alternative SRPs based on 'good mother/good daughter' that constitute the mother-daughter relationship. We have identified the following qualities attached to the role of the mother: responsibility, source of safety, security, hard working, sacrificing, and a good role model. At the same time, we revealed qualities related to the category of daughter such as hard- working, respectful, obedient, and admiring and modeling herself on the mother.

This research has thrown considerable light on what the participants construe as good mother-daughter relationships. It was apparent that the daughters were seen to produce "idealized" versions of mothers as well as daughters. These imply what mothers and daughters should be like. Our analysis illustrated that a good relationship is an interactional and mutual achievement by both daughters and mothers complementing each other in their activities.

We examined the ways in which the mother-daughter versions are produced in the course of storytelling and how praising was achieved. In cases where the mother was not present, we observed the other participants' cooperation and support of the version of motherhood being produced. In the case where the mother was present, we noted the mother's acceptance of the praise and additions to that praise. This contradicted Pomerantz's findings on praise (1978), which suggested

that there is a preference for avoiding or minimizing self-praise. The mother was also seen to support the daughter's version through agreement, thereby producing idealized versions. The role of the interviewer was paramount in contributing to the moral descriptions through the use of formulations, thus summarizing or rephrasing the participants' description for the purposes of the interview. Moreover, the interviewer provided additions to the moral versions provided taken from other examples in the talk and providing accounts supporting these versions.

The paper provided a distinctive approach to studying family storytelling and mother-daughter communication. By applying Baker's comment on interviews to narratives, it was apparent how ethnomethodological analyses of narratives show the deployment by participants of routine ways of assembling what comes to be seen as rationality, morality, or social order, and by extension displays, of "culture in action" (Baker, 2002; Hester & Eglin, 1997).

Future research on mother-daughter identities should be directed towards examining identities as emerging and negotiated within interaction and not necessarily as static attributes existing before the interaction. Moreover, examination of family interaction in different settings and contexts can reveal various aspects of mother-daughter communication. The combination of various approaches to the study of family communication can also contribute to a deeper and more rounded picture of family relationships.

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## Appendix 1

Transcription notations

| | |
|---|---|
| (.) | A small untimed pause, usually less than a second |
| (0.5) | A pause in tenths of a second |
| ( ) | Presence of unclear fragment on the tape |
| . | A stopping fall in tone |
| , | A continuing intonation |
| (( )) | Non verbal activity or transcriber's comments |
| ↑↓ | Marking rising or falling intonation correspondingly |
| ' ' | Speech enclosed in direct speech |
| <u>Under</u> | Speaker's emphasis |
| CAPITAL | Louder fragment in comparison to the rest of the sentence |
| … | Horizontal ellipses indicate that an utterance is partially reported or parts of a speaker's utterance is omitted |
| .<br>.<br>. | Vertical ellipses indicate that intervening turns at talk have been omitted |
| [ ] | Onset and end of overlapping talk |
| She:::r | Prolonged sound |
| a:Yes= b:=it is | Latching / no interval between utterances/Continuation of the same utterance |
| Hahaha | Laughter |
| w(h)ord | Indicates breathiness usually in laughter |
| °yes° | Utterances or words relatively quieter than surrounding talk |
| Wow! | The exclamation indicates animated tone |
| E:→ | Calls the reader's attention to a specific part of the transcript |
| **what?** | **Indicates rising intonation** |

# Repetition and identity experimentation

## One child's use of repetition as a resource for "trying on" maternal identities

Cynthia Gordon*

This chapter brings together Goffman's notion of *footing* and research on repetition in discourse, in particular Bakhtin's discussion of *double-voiced words* and Becker's concept of *prior text*, to consider how one young child (age 2;11) uses repetition to "try on" different aspects of her mother's identity. I analyze excerpts of naturally occurring interactions that were tape-recorded by the mother over the course of one week. I illustrate how, through intertextual and intratextual repetition of her mother's words, the child recreates footings previously taken up by her mother in talk. Repetition enables the child to experiment with different maternal identities in both play and non-play situations: she uses repetition to take up "disciplinarian", "worker", "teacher", "behavior monitor", and "adult daughter" footings vis-à-vis other interlocutors. This study extends prior research that demonstrates how young girls linguistically test out the identity of "mother" by exploring construction of that identity as multifaceted and occurring across a range of contexts. It contributes to our understanding of identity construction in discourse by illustrating how the repetition of specific bits of shared prior text serves as a resource for constructing the footings that constitute identities.

Schieffelin (1990), as part of her study of the language socialization of Kaluli children of New Guinea, notes that "All young children practice or experiment with different ways of talking and acting, trying out what seems interesting to them and resisting what they do not like" (p. 207). Schieffelin and other researchers who have considered the socialization and discourse of children, including Garvey (1982),

Cook-Gumperz (1992, 1995), First (1994), and Kyratzis (1999, 2000), demonstrate how children use language as a means of experimenting with identities, including gendered identities. These researchers suggest that children draw on sociocultural knowledge about gender roles as well as on observations of their parents' language behaviors to role-play or "try out" gendered identities such as "mommy" and "daddy" in interaction. However, how and in what ways children draw upon specific instances of their parents' discourse to experiment with identities, or to "explore possible selves" (Kyratzis, 1999), has been only minimally examined.

This analysis considers how one young child, Natalie (age 2 years 11 months), experiments with maternal identities. I focus on how she draws upon interactions with her own mother, Janet, to do so. Specifically, I illustrate that Natalie repeats her mother's words both within interactions (intratextually) and across interactions (intertextually). I suggest that this repetition enables Natalie to recreate "footings" (Goffman, 1981) previously taken up by her mother, where footings are "the alignments we take up to ourselves and the others present as expressed in the way we manage the production or reception of an utterance" (p. 28). By reproducing Janet's words both within and across conversations, or by recycling her mother's "prior text" (Becker 1982/1995a, 1984/1995b), Natalie is able to recreate some of the basic footings that make up her mother's identity, thereby experimenting with aspects of what it means to be a mother, and in particular, what it means to be *her* mother.

I suggest that in repeating Janet's prior text, Natalie not only recreates her mother's footings, but also layers her mother's voice into her own, thereby creating "double-voiced words" (Bakhtin, 1963/1984), or discourse where (at least) two voices sound simultaneously. Repetition thus enables Natalie to recreate specific footings originally taken up by her mother in her everyday interactions and to signal that these footings are recreations. I illustrate that through repetition, Natalie tries out aspects of her mother's identity, which includes being not only a mother to Natalie, but also a wife, worker, and caring adult daughter.

The analysis thus extends past work that demonstrates how young girls experiment with the mother identity. Whereas past research has identified taking up disciplinarian and/or caregiver footings towards "babies" as means by which little girls try out being "mommies" (e.g., Cook-Gumperz, 1992; Kyratzis 1999), this study incorporates the idea that "doing mothering" involves taking up multiple footings or positions in interaction (following Kendall 1999, 2003). The mother whose identity is "copied" or recreated here acts (1) as a disciplinarian toward her daughter; (2) as a parent who works outside the home; (3) as a teacher toward her daughter; (4) as a "behavior monitor" toward her husband; and (5) as a caring adult daughter or "sympathizer" vis-à-vis her own mother. These are all footings that are recreated through the child's use of intertextual and intratextual repetition in conversation.

I first briefly review prior work on identity experimentation children's, work that has related repetition to Goffman's (1974, 1981) theorizing on framing and footing, and Kendall's (1999, 2003) multifaceted view of what it means to "do mothering" in everyday interaction. Second, I introduce the data on which this analysis is based. Then, I demonstrate how Natalie recreates, through intertextual and intratextual repetition, a number of different footings her mother creates in everyday talk with Natalie and other family members. In so doing, I use Kendall's (1999, 2003) work identifying maternal footings (or what she calls "positions" [Davies & Harré, 1990]) as a model. I examine five different maternal footings as they are taken up by mother and recreated by child through repetition. I conclude by discussing how this analysis enriches our understanding of the identity work children do in everyday conversation and adds to the conceptualization of repetition as a means of manipulating footings in discourse.

## Theoretical background

### Identity experimentation by children

It has been demonstrated that children, like adults, discursively construct and experiment with identities. Bruner (1990, p.54), for example, suggests that both adults and children are able to "try on" identities through narrative discourse. A number of researchers have illustrated that children experiment with identities by telling stories (Kyratzis, 1999; Nicolopoulou, 1997) and/or by engaging in pretend play (Cook-Gumperz, 1992; Corsaro, 1983; Fein, 1981; First, 1994; Hoyle, 1993; Kyratzis, 1999; Sawyer, 1997; Schieffelin, 1990; Snow, Shonkoff, Lee, & Levin, 1986). According to past research, the plots and dialogue of children's narratives and play sequences derive from children's sociocultural knowledge as well as their individual experiences.

Shieffelin's (1990) observations of Kaluli children's everyday interactions and activities suggest that experimenting with identities begins at a very early age and that parents provide a "source" of play plots. She observed one young girl (18 months old), performing an elaborate "play monologue," acting out for her own entertainment a cooking routine she had seen her mother perform many times before (1990, p. 225). In this way, the child practices and tries out a gendered behavior associated with mothers, but not fathers. In fact, Schieffelin observed girls only a year or two older being encouraged by their mothers to help prepare food for the family. In contrast, boys were neither encouraged to help prepare food, nor did they experiment with this gendered activity or the gendered identity of "family cook" through play-acting. Young girls, but not young boys, were also observed

socializing younger children into appropriate language use by prompting them to repeat an utterance (using *elema*, which means "say like this"). Elema routines, like cooking for the family, lie in the mother's domain but not the father's in Kaluli society. In experimenting with gendered activities such as preparing food and socializing their younger siblings into language norms, young Kaluli girls can be seen as experimenting with activities and identities that they will later "grow into" when they themselves become mothers.

Cook-Gumperz (1992, 1995), analyzing children's language use in a very different cultural context, considers the discourse of two 3-and-a-half-year-old girls in Britain playing "mummies and babies." She argues that through language the girls "transform themselves into women by becoming mothers; that is, women with babies for whom they are responsible" (Cook-Gumperz, 1992, p. 189). In pretending to be mothers caring for their babies, the girls draw on sociocultural knowledge about how mothers talk to infants. Cook-Gumperz suggests that the children's "observations on how adults conduct themselves within the social world provides [*sic*] the raw material for their activities" (1992, p. 178).

Similarly, Kyratzis (1999) suggests that the American preschoolers she observed and tape-recorded playing in friendship groups "explored possible selves" through collaborative play narratives, and she also notes that these narratives are constructed with respect to sociocultural gender norms. She argues that the girls in her study "practice what it means to be a grown-up woman in their culture" through this play (p. 441). This includes pretending to have and care for babies and constructing other ideals of femininity (e.g., talking about "looking pretty").

Children, in reproducing discourse such as "the discourse of mothering" (Cook-Gumperz, 1995), or in trying out gendered identities, do not simply reproduce what they hear, but they also make the utterances they produce their own and use them to affect conversational outcomes. In Cook-Gumperz's (1992, p. 179) words:

> When children engage in what are usually called fantasy or role-playing games, they also access the kind of social knowledge which is performative and constitutive of their on-going reality as a discourse occasion. They do not merely copy or repeat routines heard and observed. By engaging in conversational exchanges they experience the universal social parameters of agency and exchange, of power, dominance, cooperation and alliance and gain experience of how to make their social actions effective.

In identifying particular discourse types, specifically narrative discourse and pretend play interaction, as enabling children to try out or experiment with identities, Cook-Gumperz (1992, 1995) suggests that children draw on routines they themselves have experienced. Likewise, other researchers considering pretend play acknowledge that children's personal experiences provide material for play plots and

dialogue (e.g., Corsaro, 1983; Garvey, 1982; Gordon, 2002; Snow et al., 1986). However, these studies (with the exception of Gordon, 2002) have not traced language used in play back to "source" interactions. In the context of family, where there is an ever-growing collection of source interactions or prior texts, it might be expected that specific shared prior interactions would be drawn upon in play as well as non-play interactions through interactional strategies such as repetition.

### Repetition and footing

Johnstone (1987) identifies repetition as a basic structural principal on all levels of language. Repetition occurs on the level of sounds, morphemes, ideas, syntactic structures, and story retellings (among others). It occurs locally in adjacent or near adjacent turns in a single conversation, which has been referred to as *intratextual repetition* or, in Tannen's (1989/2007) words, *synchronic repetition*. Instances of repetition can also be displaced in time and space, occurring across interactions or texts. This type of repetition is referred to as *diachronic repetition* (Tannen, 1989/2007) or *intertextual repetition* (Johnstone et al. 1994)[1]. The idea that repetition occurs both within and across conversations emphasizes that every text (or conversation) is made up of pieces of other (displaced) texts (or conversations) arranged in new ways. This is reminiscent of and related to Becker's (1982/1995a, 1984/1995b) notion of *prior text*, which highlights the idea that all language use consists of "reshaping," in new and creative ways, bits of language drawn from previous experience.

Repetition, or the reshaping of prior text, crucially affects meaning. In Johnstone et al.'s (1994, p. 12) words, "As an element is repeated, a history for it is created; as the context within which elements are used changes, their meaning changes." In a similar vein, Tannen (1989/2007, p. 100) suggests that, "the meanings of individual words" and "the combinations into which we can put them are given to us by previous speakers, traces of whose voices and contexts cling inevitably to them." These views are consonant with Becker's observation that as utterances pass through different voices, or as prior text is shaped and reshaped, new meanings are constructed from old meanings. It is also related to Bakhtin's (1979/1986, p.89) observation that "Our speech, that is, all our utterances (including creative works), is filled with others' words." Bakhtin's conceptualization of "double-voiced words" captures the semantic effects of reshaping "someone else's" prior text: Double-

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1.    Johnstone et al. (1994) is the introductory chapter for Johnstone's edited volumes, *Repetition in Discourse* [1994a, 1994b]. Written by Johnstone, this chapter summarizes discussions between researchers participating at an NEH-sponsored conference on Repetition in Discourse which was held at Texas A&M University in May 1990.

voiced discourse comes to have "a twofold direction – it is directed both toward the referential object of speech, as in ordinary discourse, and toward *another's discourse, toward someone else's speech*" (Bakhtin, 1979/1986, p. 185). Finally, Kristeva's (1967/1980, p. 66) coining of the term *intertextuality* captures the idea that "any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another," and the notion that meaning making in discourse relies on the identification of intertextual links between texts, including repetition.

Researchers including Becker, Bakhtin, Johnstone, and Tannen emphasize the idea that repeating something fundamentally changes its meaning because as an element is repeated it is always recontextualized; repeating another's words layers the voice of that other into one's own voice. This affects alignments between participants and alignments between an interlocutor and the words he or she produces. In other words, it affects what Goffman calls "footings."

In articulating footing, Goffman suggests that a "participant's alignment, or set, or stance, or posture, or projected self is somehow at issue" (1981, p.128). Repetition has been identified as a means for manipulating footings and alignments (though these terms have not always been used). Tannen (1989/2007), for example, identifies turn-adjacent repetition as having a number of possible interactional effects, including creating involvement between interlocutors, showing attentiveness, and creating humor. Couper-Kuhlen (1996), examining turn-adjacent repetition by the host of a radio call-in quiz show, finds that when the host repeated the callers' answers back to them, alignments of mimicry or quotation were created vis-à-vis individual callers, depending on the host's use of pitch. Similarly, Norrick (1994) identifies repetition as a means of mocking a co-present interlocutor's language use, aligning two participants against the offending party. In his words, repetition "skews the frame introduced by the original speaker: In the mouth of a second speaker with a new intonation pattern, the words come out as caricature or a sarcastic comment expressing doubt about the validity of the original" (Norrick, 1994, p. 16).

Prior work on repetition, including that of Tannen (1989/2007), Couper-Kuhlen (1996), and Norrick (1994), demonstrates that repetition does not create particular footings in itself. Instead, these researchers illustrate that the interactive effects of repetition, including the footings created, derive from how the repeated text is treated or evaluated (e.g., marked through the use of pitch register as mocking versus quotation, or by laughter to show humor). This is consonant with Bakhtin's (1963/1984) identification of double-voiced discourse as being *unidirectional* or *varidirectional*. These terms capture the idea that someone else's words can be used in the same way the other used the words (i.e., to pay homage to that other), or in a way opposite to what the other intended (i.e., to mock that other). Thus, Bakhtin too suggests that repetition has a multitude of meanings and effects. The analysis

that follows will demonstrate how repetition is used by one young child as a means of recreating footings that allow her to try out aspects of her mother's identity.

### Mothering and manipulating footings

In her analysis of one working mother's dinnertime interactions with her husband and 10-year-old daughter as well as her work interactions with her subordinates, Kendall (1999, 2003) identifies a number of footings, or what she calls "positions" (Davies & Harré, 1990), that a mother might take up in as she parents her child. In creating these positions, such as "Head Chef" and "Behavior Monitor" in different "frames" (Bateson 1955/1972; Goffman 1974), such as "Dinner" and "Care-giving," the mother in Kendall's study uses a range of directive types, varying her directives linguistically based on the discursive positions she takes up. Kendall's work shows how one mother linguistically creates authority at home and in the workplace, and illustrates that being a mother involves a heavy interactional load. More important for my purposes, her study shows that "doing mothering" or enacting the family identity of "mother" involves using language to assume multiple footings or positions vis-à-vis one's co-interlocutors, particularly one's child, in frames pertaining to activities such as care-giving and socialization.

### Data

I analyze here excerpts involving a 33-year old middle-class White mother, Janet, and her 2-year, 11-month old daughter, Natalie. Other family members who participate in the excerpts include Janet's husband (Natalie's father) Steve and Janet's mother (Natalie's grandmother) Laura. Two additional conversations I analyze take place between Natalie, Janet, and a cashier at K-Mart and between Janet, Janet's friend Jill, and Natalie. These data were drawn from a larger study in which Janet and Steve each carried a digital tape recorder for a week, recording interactions throughout the day.[2] As a research team member for this project, I listened to and logged the entirety of Janet's tapes and transcribed many of them. I also observed her at work and at home for two days. Although child language was not the focus of the larger study, many adult-child interactions were captured on tape. Natalie was a verbally gifted child, and I noted in listening to the tapes that she often tried to "be like" her mother – she wanted to do the things her mother did (e.g., wear nail

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**2.** This project, creating identities and designed by Shari Kendall and Deborah Tannen, examines the role of talk in balancing the demands of work and family for four dual-income couples with at least one child.

polish, try on bras, take prenatal vitamins [Janet was seven months pregnant at the time of taping]). However, more important for my purposes here, Natalie repeated words her mother had already said. Because I listened to the entirety of Janet's tapes, I was able to identify specific instances of both intertextual and intratextual repetition, the former of which is relatively less studied primarily "for methodological convenience" (Johnstone et. al, 1994, p.5), and neither of which has been explored in depth as a strategy for experimenting with footings and identities.

## Analysis

### The footings

Like the mother whose discourse Kendall (1999, 2003) analyzes, Janet, in acting as a mother in her day-to-day life with Natalie and interacting with other family members in Natalie's presence, models a number of different footings. The footings Janet takes up include (1) "mother as disciplinarian" (someone who issues directives and gives time-outs [punishment]), (2) "mother as teacher" (someone who explains how things work), (3) "mother as worker" (someone who works outside of the home, and thus must negotiate logistics between work and home), (4) "mother as wife" (in particular, a wife who monitors the behaviors her husband exhibits in front of their child), and (5) "adult daughter" (specifically, someone who shows sympathy for and builds rapport with her own mother, who, at the time of taping, was very ill). These footings that Janet takes up are recreated when Natalie repeats her mother's words within and across verbal exchanges.

Though prior work on children's identity experimentation has focused on role-play interactions, the footings I examine are (re)created in both play and non-play frames. Although only a subset of the interactions I examine are explicitly defined by the participants as "play" (e.g., in only some interactions does Natalie overtly indicate that she is pretending to be "Mommy") in all cases, adult interlocutors "play along" with Natalie as she takes up adult footings. They also acknowledge the non-literal nature of Natalie's footings through features such as laughter.

### Mother as disciplinarian

This section demonstrates how Natalie intertextually repeats specific bits of Janet's prior text in one role-play episode to create what I identify as the "mother as disciplinarian" footing. (Note that this pair of episodes is analyzed in Gordon, 2002 to illustrate how this mother and daughter use language to embed the multiple play frames that characterize their pretend play; see also Gordon, 2006). This footing is

related to Cook-Gumperz's (1992) finding that the two preschool-age girls whose discourse she analyzes enacted "disciplinary sequences" in their "mummies and babies" play. It is also similar to Kendall's (1999, 2003) position of "Behavior Monitor." Though sociocultural knowledge indicates that part of the mother role involves supervising and disciplining one's child, in the play episode I examine, Natalie's use of repetition shows that she models her enactment of the "Mommy as disciplinarian" footing on one specific interaction where Janet uses language in particular ways.

Janet creates the disciplinarian footing on a daily basis during the week of taping by monitoring Natalie's behavior and punishing her (or threatening punishment) for bad behavior (Note that Natalie frequently threw temper-tantrums). The role-play interaction I analyze that manifests the repetition is a reenactment of a specific episode in which Janet was trying to talk on the telephone to her mother, who was seriously ill, while Natalie repeatedly whined and yelled about wanting cheese and crackers for lunch (though Janet had already made her a grilled cheese sandwich). A representative segment of this episode is shown in Excerpt 1. Utterances in bold include words or strings of words that Natalie subsequently uses in the role-play episode in creating the disciplinarian footing. Transcription conventions appear in the appendix.

Excerpt 1

| 17 | Natalie: | [*<yelling>* Ba ba ba bee] → | |
| 18 | Janet: | [(So you're heading – )] | ((*on phone*)) |
| 19 | Natalie: | cheese and crackers for lunch.> | |
| 20 | Janet: | **If you scream while I'm on the phone,** | ((*to Natalie*)) |
| 21 | | **you will have time-out.** | |
| 22 | Natalie: | No time-out. | |
| 23 | Janet: | Then let's not scream while I'm on the phone. | |
| 24 | | [All right so you're going back when?] | ((*on phone*)) |
| 25 | Natalie: | *<whiney>* [I want cheese and crackers>] | |
| 26 | Janet: | [Oh yeah. And so – ] | ((*on phone*)) |
| 27 | Natalie: | [*<whines/cries, progressively louder>*] | |
| 28 | Janet: | Natalie! | ((*to Natalie*)) |
| 29 | | Natalie, | |
| 30 | | I can't hear when you're crying. | |
| 31 | | Oh boy. | ((*on phone*)) |
| 32 | Natalie: | (Ba bee!) | |
| 33 | Janet: | Sorry. | ((*on phone*)) |
| 34 | | [Um, want me to come with you.] | |
| 35 | Natalie: | [*<cries/whines>*] | |

((*lines 36–51: Janet talks on the phone, Natalie intermittently cries and whines*))

| 52 | Natalie: | *<whines/cries>* |
| 53 | Janet: | Natalie, |
| 54 | | *<louder>* I mean it! | ((*to Natalie*)) |
| 55 | | Stop it.> |
| 56 | Natalie: | No! |
| 57 | Janet: | Then you may go sit and collect yourself. |
| 58 | Natalie: | *<yelling>* No I don't want to go by myself.> |
| 59 | Janet: | Okay, | ((*on phone*)) |
| 60 | | so what now? |
| 61 | Natalie: | *<cries/whines>* |

((*Natalie continues to misbehave, Janet intermittently directs her to stop crying*))

In response to Natalie's misbehavior, Janet issues directives, for example commanding "Stop it," in line 55 and instructing Natalie to sit down and calm down in line 57 ("Then you may go sit and collect yourself."). She also threatens Natalie with punishment (time-out, or having to sit quietly by herself) in lines 20–21 ("If you scream while I'm on the phone, you will have time-out."). This works toward creating the "mother as disciplinarian" footing vis-à-vis a misbehaving Natalie.

Two days later, during lunchtime at home, Natalie introduces a role-play reenactment of this event. Note that in this family, adult-child role-play is quite frequent, and Janet readily cooperates with Natalie's initiations of pretend play (Steve, too, at times engages in pretend play with Natalie). Though these pretend play episodes involve a range of imaginary characters, Natalie frequently initiates play in which she and Janet reverse roles from real life. This enables Natalie to experiment with or "try on" the identity of "Mommy." The interaction shown in Excerpt 1 serves as a source of prior text for the pretend-play reenactment shown in Excerpt 2.

In Excerpt 2, Natalie, playing the role of "Mommy," pretends to be on the telephone and Janet, playing the role of "Natalie" misbehaves and is subsequently threatened with time-out (and actually given time-out). This episode of play began while Janet was trying to eat lunch, and Natalie, trying to engage her, said, "I want to pretend I'm Mommy and you're Natalie." After several minutes where Natalie (as Mommy) pretends to get Janet (as Natalie) ready for school, Natalie introduces the specific plot in which she is going to pretend to be making a phone call by saying "I'm gonna call somebody first, then you can go to school." She also instructs Janet, "Be noisy while I'm on the phone." Then, the disciplinary plot mimicking the events of two days before unfolds: while Natalie pretends to be on the phone, Janet pretends to yell and scream. Natalie subsequently threatens punishment (time-out) and initiates time-out. The specific utterances that include repeated words or strings of words from the prior excerpt appear in bold type. These serve to frame the play as a reenactment of the particular shared prior experience with the participants' roles reversed (Gordon, 2002). They also allow Natalie to try out the

footing of disciplinarian. (Janet's use of high-pitch in this segment, which else-where in the tapes Janet refers to as "using the little voice," indicates that she is playing the role of "Natalie.")

Excerpt 2

    82   Natalie:   I'm on the phone right now!
    83              Shhh!
    84   Janet:     *<high-pitched>No!>*
    85   Natalie:   *<laughing>* Shhh!
    86              [*<laughs>*]
    87   Janet:     [*<screeches, high-pitched>*]
    88   Natalie:   **If you scream,**
    89              **you will have to have a time-out.**
    90   Janet:     *<pretend cries, high-pitched>*,
    91              *<pretend cries, high-pitched>*
    92              *<high-pitched>* Are you done now?>
    93   Natalie:   Nope.
    94              Shhh! .
    95              I'm talking on the phone.
             ((*lines 96–120: play continues during this time, above sequence is repeated*))
   121   Janet:     [*<high-pitched>* Waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa!>]
   122   Natalie:   [*<laughs>*]
   123              You have to stay for time-out till you come back.
   124   Janet:     *<high-pitched>* No time-out,
   125              no time-out!>
   126   Natalie:   You have to come.
   127   Janet:     *<high-pitched>* Mommy I'm eating my lunch!>
   128   Natalie:   *<laughs>*
   129              Come!
   130              Come with me.
   131   Janet:     *<high-pitched, sad>* I need a hug.>
   132   Natalie:   *<louder>* Come with me!
   133              Right now!>
             ((*play continues*))

Janet and Natalie collaboratively use language and draw on prior text to create a play frame wherein each plays the role of the other. Of particular interest here is that Natalie's threatening Janet with time-out allows her to try out the mother-as-disciplinarian footing. Janet's "original" utterance, "If you scream while I'm on the phone, you will have time-out." (Excerpt 1, lines 20–21), resurfaces in a slightly modified form when Natalie tells Janet, while interrupting her pretend phone call, "If you scream, you will have to have a time-out." (Excerpt 2, lines 88–89). In addi-

tion, Natalie's use of directives (e.g., "Come! Come with me.", lines 129–130) echoes Janet's use of directives in the real-life episode, thus further positioning her in the disciplinarian footing. Note that although this instance of play indexes one prior interaction in particular (the interaction two days before between Janet and Natalie) through the repetition of shared prior text, it also echoes other family interactions where, for example, Steve issued Natalie a time-out and disciplined her. Thus Steve's voice may also be layered into this interaction. However, through the specific words she repeats, commonalities in plot, and the naming of the character as "Mommy" at the beginning of the play episode, it is clear that Natalie recycles bits of prior text originally produced by Janet. She thus tries out the disciplinary footing Janet created in that particular interaction, rather than a general disciplinarian footing or a disciplinarian footing as modeled by her father.

*Mother as worker*

Though Janet spends much of her time at home with Natalie, she also self-identifies as a career-oriented person (see Kendall, 2007), working approximately eight hours per week as a therapist as part of a certification program. The "mother as worker" footing is created in interaction by Janet and is reproduced by Natalie in play. Though Natalie does not observe Janet at work, Janet does explain events relating to her job to Natalie. The following excerpt shows this. It is lunch time, and Janet has just finished leaving a telephone message for a woman with whom she works (Julie) saying she would be attending a meeting the next day when Natalie asks about the message. Note that when Janet explains to Natalie at some length that she will be staying for lunch at her preschool the next day (the Burke School), it is because this will be a new experience for her.

Excerpt 3

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Natalie: | Why were you talking to- what were you saying to Julie. |
| 2 | Janet: | *<laughs>* |
| 3 | | I was telling her that **I'm going to the MEETING →** |
| 4 | | **tomorrow,** |
| 5 | | **that they're having at my work.** |
| 6 | Natalie: | Are they having a meeting at your work? |
| 7 | Janet: | Mhm. |
| 8 | Natalie: | And I'm gonna be there? |
| 9 | Janet: | **No you're gonna be having lunch at the Burke School.** |
| 10 | Natalie: | What are you gonna do. |
| 11 | Janet: | **Well I'll pick you up at ONE o'clock.** |
| 12 | Natalie: | (Why am I gonna do when) you pick me up at one o'clock. |
| 13 | Janet: | **Because I have to go to this meeting.** |

| 14 |  | ((*short pause, eating*)) |
| 15 | Natalie: | Mom why will you pick me up at one o'clock. |
| 16 |  | ((*short pause, eating*)) |
| 17 | Janet: | **Because you'll be having lunch at the Burke School**. |
| 18 |  | ((*short pause, eating*)) |
| 19 |  | And I'll have my meeting, |
| 20 |  | and then I'll come get you. |
| 21 | Natalie: | Where are you gonna have your meeting → |
| 22 |  | and where am I gonna have my lunch. |
| 23 | Janet: | **Well my meeting will be at my work,** |
| 24 |  | **and your lunch will be at the Burke School.** |
| 25 |  | ((*short pause*)) |
| 26 |  | **And then we'll see each other at ONE-O-CLOCK**. |
| 27 |  | ((*short pause*)) |
| 28 | Natalie: | What happens after you have your meeting at- have your meeting. |
| 29 | Janet: | Hm? |
| 30 |  | ((*short pause*)) |
| 31 | Natalie: | When are you gonna have your meeting at your meeting. |
| 32 | Janet: | <*laughs briefly*> |
| 33 |  | WHEN am I having my meeting? |
| 34 | Natalie: | When are you gonna have your meeting. |
| 35 | Janet: | Tomorrow sweetie. |

Here Janet describes to Natalie the unusual events that will occur the next day because Janet will attend a work-related meeting instead of having lunch at home with Natalie. Notice the idiosyncratic pronunciation of "one o'clock" in the form of "one-o-clock" (line 26). It is this pronunciation that will be intertextually repeated by Natalie in play.

The next day, after Janet brings Natalie home from preschool (where Natalie had lunch since Janet was at the meeting), Natalie "tries on" the worker identity (note that this is at the beginning of the same pretend-play excerpt where the telephoning play occurs).

Excerpt 4

| 1 | Natalie: | I want to pretend I'm- → |
| 2 |  | I'm Mommy and you're Natalie. |
| 3 | Janet: | Okay. |
| 4 | Natalie: | Natalie you're going to school. ((*as "Mommy" from here on*)) |
| 5 | Janet: | <*high-pitched*>I am?>          ((*as "Natalie" from here on*)) |
| 6 | Natalie: | Yeah. |
| 7 | Janet: | <*high-pitched*>What time will you pick me up Mommy.> |
| 8 | Natalie: | **I'm gonna pick you up at one-o-clock.** |

| 9 |  | **Because I'm gonna have a MEETING.** |
|---|---|---|
| 10 | Janet: | *<high-pitched>*O::h.*>* |
| 11 | Natalie: | Y[ou're – ] |
| 12 | Janet: | [*<high-pitched>*What] will I do.*>* |
| 13 | Natalie: | **You are gonna stay for lunch.** |
| 14 | Janet: | *<high-pitched>*At school?*>* |
| 15 | Natalie: | At school, |
| 16 |  | yeah. |

((*play continues, Natalie pretends to get Janet ready for school*))

Here Natalie reproduces words and strings of words Janet produced in the "original" episode. In the first episode, Janet said, "Well I'm gonna pick you up at ONE o'clock." (line 11) and "And then we'll see each other at ONE-O-CLOCK." (line 26), "Because I have to go to this meeting." (line 13). In the play reenactment, Natalie, playing the "Mommy" role, says, "I'm gonna pick you up at one-o-clock. Because I'm gonna have a MEETING." (lines 8, 9). She then explains to Janet, "You are gonna stay for lunch." (line 13). Thus, Janet and Natalie reenact the basic plot of "Mommy" telling "Natalie" she will have to stay for lunch at school because "Mommy" has to go to a meeting. Through the repetition of the words Janet used, as well as the idiosyncratic pronunciation of "one-o-clock" as she explains the (pretend) situation to her mother, Natalie takes up the "Mommy as worker" footing in play. She uses her mother's words, and her mother's unusual pronunciation of "one-o-clock" to tie the current interaction to the prior and to recreate Janet's prior footing. Note that Janet actively supports Natalie as she takes up this footing by asking questions about the imaginary forthcoming events (line 12, "What will I do."; line 14, "At school?").

First (1994), in her analysis of five 2-year-olds' play in their homes, identifies a similar script occurring in role-play, which she calls "the leaving game." In this game, the child pretends to be "Mommy" and leaves for work, and the mother, playing the baby, pretends to cry. Thus this "Mommy as worker" footing is one that is not unique to Janet and Natalie's play. However, Janet and Natalie's linguistic construction and reconstruction of this footing is unique to their family, as it is based on shared prior text, as evidenced through repetition.

*Mother as teacher*

Another aspect of Janet's identity as a parent is taking up the alignment of teacher (note that the mother in Kendall's [1999, 2003] study also took up this position vis-à-vis her daughter). Across the week of taping, Janet repeatedly assumes teaching footings vis-à-vis Natalie, for example, teaching her how to play the card game "go fish" and how to put toppings on a pizza. The excerpts of this section show one

instance of Natalie repeating specific bits of prior text uttered by Janet to take up the teacher footing. Unlike the excerpts shown in the previous section, the frame in which Natalie repeats is not a play frame. Also unlike those excerpts, Natalie takes up the teacher footing vis-à-vis someone outside of the family.

In Excerpt 5, it is Tuesday early afternoon and Janet and Natalie are at K-Mart shopping for pull-ups, which are toilet-training diapers that are designed to look like underpants (Note that Natalie was toilet-training at the time of taping). Janet has just found a box of pull-ups in Natalie's size. The pull-ups Janet selects are special in that they have flowers on them that disappear if the child wets them, thus encouraging the child to keep the pull-ups dry. In this excerpt, Janet begins to explain to Natalie how they work. Natalie shows interest, asking questions, requesting that Janet talk further about them, and intratextually repeating her mother's explanation of how the pull-ups work. Appearing in bold are utterances containing strings of words repeated in the later interaction where Natalie takes up the teacher footing.

Excerpt 5

| 1 | Janet: | These pull-ups, |
| 2 | | guess what THEY do. |
| 3 | Natalie: | What do THEY do. |
| 4 | Janet: | They are pretty special. |
| 5 | | You know why? |
| 6 | Natalie: | Why. |
| 7 | Janet: | Because . what they do is, |
| 8 | | whoa. ((*something falls it seems*)) |
| 9 | | They. |
| 10 | Natalie: | They what. |
| 11 | Janet: | **Um . they have flowers on them,** |
| 12 | | **and if you keep your pull-ups dry,** |
| 13 | | **then the flowers stay there.** |
| 14 | | **But if you w- make a tinkles,** |
| 15 | | **then the flowers disappear!** |
| 16 | Natalie: | Why if I make a tinkles the flowers will disappear. |
| 17 | Janet: | Because they're trying to- |
| 18 | | they're trying to get you to keep them nice and dry. |
| 19 | Natalie: | Why – |
| 20 | | Can we talk about these? |
| 21 | | Can we talk about these specials? |
| 22 | Janet: | Sure. |
| 23 | Natalie: | **I want to say they- when you make a tinkles in them,** |
| 24 | | **they disappear.** |

25          ((*short pause*))
26   Janet:   Well because the point is to keep your pull-ups DRY,

In this interaction, Janet is teaching Natalie about the pull-ups, with Natalie in the role of enthusiastic learner. However, in lines 23–24, Natalie shifts her footing, showing that she understands how the pull-ups work.

Several minutes later, at the checkout, the teacher footing is recreated. Natalie reproduces the information her mother told her, telling the (female) cashier about the pull-ups. Here Janet is a listener who is ratified but not addressed by Natalie, who directs her utterances to the cashier, using words her mother used previously.

Excerpt 6
 1   Natalie:  Hi.
 2   Cashier:  Hi.
 3   Natalie:  We got those (things) [(from) back there.]
 4   Cashier:                          [You have a one-fifty,]
 5             nice price.
 6   Janet:    <chuckles politely>
 7   Natalie:  **When you make tinkles in those,**                    ((*to cashier*))
 8             the colors will disappear.
 9   Cashier:  They will!?
10   Janet:    <laughs>
11   Cashier:  They do!?
12   Natalie:  Yeah.
13             **When you keep them dry,**
14             **they won't [disappear.]**
15   Cashier:            [Keep them dry,]
16             they don't.
17             You trying to keep them real dry?
18             That's a good girl.
19             One of these days you won't need them,
20             (????)
21   Janet:    <chuckles>

Natalie intertextually repeats her mother's words (though not identically) in this conversation with the cashier. For example, Janet explains to Natalie, "But if you w- make a tinkles, then the flowers disappear!" (Excerpt 5, lines 14–15), and Natalie subsequently tells the cashier "When you make a tinkles in those, the colors will disappear." (Excerpt 6, lines 7–8). In repeating her mother's words, and with the cashier's participation and cooperation, Natalie takes on a role vis-à-vis the cashier similar to the one Janet earlier took towards her. In doing so, she tries out

the "teacher" component of the mother identity. By repeating her mother's words, Natalie layers her mother's voice into her own, making it clear she is recreating her mother's footing. Note Janet's laughter in line 10, which acknowledges and shows appreciation for the cashier's "playing along" with her daughter's taking up of the adult footing. This works to frame the interaction as a type of "play."

### Mother as wife (and monitor of husband's behaviors)

The excerpts I have analyzed thus far show Natalie recreating her mother's footings intertextually, using repetition across interactions to construct aspects of her mother's identity. However, Natalie also uses synchronics, intratextual or repetition as a means of trying out maternal footings. In Excerpt 7, Natalie repeats her mother's words both intratextually and intertextually, and in so doing creates a particular alignment towards her co-present father, Steve. Whereas past work has shown that adjacent or near-adjacent repetition creates alignments of mimicry or quotation in radio-call in shows (Couper-Kuhlen, 1996) and alignments of mocking in adult conversation (Norrick, 1994), I demonstrate here that intratextual repetition serves as a means of trying out a parental footing in conversation between parents and their child.

In this interaction, Janet, Natalie, and Steve are having muffins for breakfast one weekend morning. When Steve eats the chocolate chips in the muffins directly off of the "muffin paper," Janet reprimands (and criticizes) him for modeling bad behavior for their daughter. (Note that the mother whose discourse Kendall [1999] examined likewise reprimanded her husband's mealtime behaviors in the presence of their child.) As the interaction unfolds, Natalie repeats her mother, thereby "trying on" the "same" alignment vis-à-vis Steve as Janet.

Excerpt 7

| 31 | Natalie: | I found a chocolate chip right inside (there). ((*re: muffin paper*)) |
| 32 | | ((*short pause*)) |
| 33 | Steve: | Why don't you just do this? |
| 34 | | ((*apparently eats chocolate chip off muffin paper*)) |
| 35 | Janet: | **Oh God!** |
| 36 | | **Don't do that!** |
| 37 | | **Now look what you're teaching her.** |
| 38 | Natalie: | **Don't put the . paper in your mouth!**              ((*to Steve*)) |
| 39 | Janet: | **Yeah Daddy!** |
| 40 | Natalie: | **Don't put the paper in your mouth.**              ((*to Steve*)) |
| 41 | | **That's not safe!** |
| 42 | Janet: | *<laughs>* |
| 43 | | **You tell him honey!**              ((*to Natalie*)) |

44   Natalie:   [That's not – ]
45   Steve:     [Tell your-] (tell your mother) →
46              should look a little ridiculous like this! ((*to Natalie*))
47   Natalie:   That's-
48   Janet:     *<laughs>*
49              **You tell him honey!**
50              **"That's not safe!"**
51   Natalie:   *<louder>* **That's not safe to put the paper in your mouth Daddy.>**
52   Steve:     Yes,
53              you are right.
54              I'm sorry.
          ((*Natalie continues to reprimand Steve, with Janet chuckling and encouraging*))

In this excerpt, Natalie echoes Janet's criticism and reprimanding of Steve for putting the muffin paper in his mouth with reprimanding of her own that is far more drawn out than her mother's, and which focuses on the safety issue of the action rather than how it might influence Natalie's behavior. (Note that as the interaction continues, Natalie does put the paper in her mouth.) The unusualness (and humorousness) of Natalie reprimanding her father is marked by Janet's laughter and playful encouragement throughout the segment.

By repeating Janet's speech act (of directive) and the word "don't," Natalie takes up an alignment similar to the one Janet models: She monitors Steve's breakfast time behavior. Like in the role-play interactions, Natalie speaks as if she is taking on her mother's family role or identity. Natalie thus tries out Janet's footing and "tries on" this aspect of her mother's identity in this excerpt, here using intratextual repetition to do so. Note that though this interaction is not explicitly framed as pretend play, literal-frame interaction is suspended as Steve "plays along" with Natalie's disciplinary stance, and Janet playfully encourages Natalie's behavior. Thus, as with the pretend-play excerpts and the interaction with the cashier, Natalie's co-interlocutors enable and encourage her to try out an adult footing.

Natalie's language use in this segment where she "reprimands" her father is not only based on Janet's immediately prior utterances, however. It also repeats particular words Janet produced three days prior when Janet and Natalie were shopping with Janet's friend Jill. As the three were leaving the shopping mall, Natalie started walking into the street and Janet and Jill react as shown in Excerpt 8.

Excerpt 8
  1   Jill:      Hold on honey,                                    ((*to Natalie*))
  2              don't pull in the road.
  3   Natalie:   I want to go in the road.
  4   Janet:     [Oh **that's not safe**.]

| 5 | Jill: | [Well cars come,] |
| 6 | | so it's **not safe** to go in the road. |

In Excerpt 7, Natalie told Steve, "That's not safe!" (line 40), repeating Janet's intratextually modeled behavior of issuing directives to Steve in telling her father to not put muffin paper in his mouth. Though this utterance echoes Janet's prior alignment towards Steve, the phrase "that's not safe" is also intertextually tied to the interaction shown in Excerpt 8 in which Janet and Jill tried to keep Natalie from going into the street. In this way, Natalie both intertextually and intratextually repeats her mother to create a maternal footing as someone who monitors the behaviors of other family members.

### Mother as (sympathizing and rapport-building) adult daughter

Natalie recreates footings based not only on how Janet relates to her as a child and to Steve as a wife, but also on how Janet relates to her own mother as an adult daughter. In the following interaction, Janet and Natalie are at the house of Janet's mother, Laura. At the time of taping Laura had been seriously ill for some months and was unable to keep down food or water. (Sadly, shortly after taping she was diagnosed with cancer and she passed away several years later.) When the excerpt begins, Laura had just come downstairs to see Janet and Natalie, who had arrived at her house for an afternoon visit several minutes earlier. Janet inquires about her mother's health, gathering details as a means of building solidarity and rapport with her mother. (Note that this behavior can be perceived as gendered: Tannen [1989/2007, p. 149] has suggested that "women are more inclined than men to value the telling of details about their daily lives and about other people.")

Excerpt 9

| 1 | Janet: | So how are you, | ((*to Laura*)) |
| 2 | | how's- **how are you feeling**. | |
| 3 | Natalie: | **How you** [**feeling.**] | |
| 4 | Laura: | [Pretty good.] | |
| 5 | Janet: | Yeah, | |
| 6 | | [that's – ] | |
| 7 | Natalie: | [**How you**] **feeling**. | |
| 8 | Janet: | How's the pain. | |
| 9 | Laura: | Pretty good. | |
| 10 | | Um, | |
| 11 | | I took um- I took a um- a (??) suppository, | |
| 12 | | I've had two of the new ones now, | |
| 13 | Janet: | Mhm. | |

| 14 | Laura: | and that was good. |
|---|---|---|
| 15 | Janet: | Oh good. |
| 16 | Laura: | Let me see, |
| 17 | | [I'm trying to think (?)] |
| 18 | Janet: | [**That's for the nausea, right?** |
| 19 | Laura: | Yeah. |
| 20 | Janet: | Yeah. |
| 21 | Laura: | [And – ] |
| 22 | Natalie: | [**That's**] **for the nausea, right?** |
| 23 | Laura: | *<laughs>* |
| 24 | | I'm trying to think if I tried – |
| 25 | | No I don't think I took anything in medication yet, |
| 26 | | um I took one last night, |
| 27 | Janet: | [Oh uh huh,] |
| 28 | Laura: | [I didn't take any] today, |
| 29 | Janet: | Hm. |
| 30 | Laura: | yet. |
| 31 | | ((*short pause*)) |

Once again, we see Natalie echoing her mother's words. In so doing, she copies and experiments with her mother's alignment towards Laura. As Janet inquired into her mother's health ("So how are you, how's- how are you feeling.", lines 1–2) as a way of creating rapport and showing support, so Natalie repeats her, creating a similar footing. Note that at first these efforts are ignored, as Natalie repeats her utterance in line 3 ("How you feeling.") again in line 7. However, when Natalie produces the adult word "nausea," Laura laughs (line 23), though she does not respond to Natalie's question, "That's for the nausea, right?" (line 22), which exactly echoes Janet's utterance in line 18. Thus, Natalie's alignment cannot be taken entirely literally; instead she is trying out an adult way of talking modeled by her mother and tries out this aspect of her mother's identity. In some sense this activity takes a "back seat" to Janet's gathering of details about how her sick mother is feeling, but Natalie still uses language to experiment with a footing her mother models.

*Maternal footings: summary*

I have examined how one young child uses the linguistic strategy of repetition as a resource to try out several different footings that comprise her mother's identity. In both play and non-play situations, both intertextually and intratextually, Natalie repeats her mother as a means of recreating footings she observes her mother taking up vis-à-vis her as a child or vis-à-vis other interlocutors.

Kendall (1999, 2003) demonstrates that "doing mothering" entails manipulating a number of different footings or positions. This implies that experimenting with the identity of "mother" also involves creating a multiplicity of footings. Past work has focused on only a few footings as the means by which young girls pretend to be "mommies." These include disciplinarian and nurturer of one's child or baby (Cook-Gumperz 1992, 1995; Kyratzis 1999). This study has drawn on Kendall's analysis of one mother's talk at home, which deconstructs the interactional load a mother bears in her everyday life, as a way of understanding the many ways a child might try out maternal identities, or more specifically, the identities discursively constructed by *her mother* in particular. "Trying on" a maternal identity in this case includes trying out the mother as disciplinarian, worker, and teacher footings; the mother as wife and "behavior monitor of husband" footing; and an adult daughter footing. Natalie, in repeating her mother's words, takes up these footings in interactions across the course of one week, and in doing so, experiments with an identity that is both socioculturally meaningful and one that is particularly meaningful in the context of her own family.

## Discussion

Individuals use a range of strategies to create identities in everyday conversations. This study has focused on one such strategy: repetition. Prior work has shown that repetition has a number of interactional effects, from showing understanding to mocking another person. According to Johnstone et al. (1994, p. 11) in the introduction to Johnstone's (1994a, 1994b) edited volumes, "The functions of repetition probably will be almost infinite." This study has identified repetition as a strategy for trying out or experimenting with identities. "Trying on" footings and identities does not occur simply through repetition in itself, instead this interactive effect depends on the tenor of the exchange and how the repeated text is evaluated by all parties. Natalie's earnest and repeated attempts to "be like Mommy," and the cooperation of Natalie's co-interlocutors in supporting her efforts, lead to positive evaluations of the repeated text. In this way, Natalie "adopts the discourse of an earlier speaker (…) whose way of speaking (…) she regards as essentially correct and in accord with the task to be accomplished" (Morson & Emerson, 1990, p. 150, following Bakhtin, 1963/1984). Agreement is created between the two voices (following Bakhtin, 1979/1986, p. 189). However, because Natalie is a child, she can only playfully experiment with or "try on" adult footings modeled by her mother: Natalie's co-interlocutors do not interpret her repetitions literally, but rather play along and "humor" the small child. Nevertheless, Natalie's conversational part-

ners, including a cashier whom she does not know, assist her in her exploration of maternal footings.

Repeating shared prior text serves a number of purposes in these data. As the analysis has shown, Natalie repeats prior text as a means of "trying on" a gendered identity. Simultaneously, Natalie's repeating of this prior text and Janet's (and Steve's and Laura's) recognition of it binds interlocutors into a family unit. In Becker's (1994, p. 165) words, "Social groups seem to be bound primarily by a shared repertoire of prior texts." In Tannen's (1989/2007, p. 97) formulation, "Repetition is a resource by which conversationalists together create a discourse, a relationship, and a world." Natalie's repetition of Janet's words illustrates that she has heard and absorbed her mother's words, and her reuse of them shows that she has understood them. In reproducing the words of her mother, Natalie's voice and her mother's voice are layered together. Double-voiced words are produced as Natalie's voice is infused with echoes of her mother's. It is thus not a generic mother identity that Natalie is she is experimenting with: Identification of intertextual and intratextual "sources" of Natalie's words reveals that it is the multifaceted identity of her own mother that Natalie "tries on."

This study, through focusing on repetition as a means of trying out maternal footings and identities, has brought together Becker's notion of prior text and Goffman's work on footing. Specifically, I have argued that the repetition of shared prior text serves as a resource for constructing footings. This suggests that in order to understand footings in all their complexity, access to prior text is necessary, especially given the pervasiveness of repetition in all types of discourse (as illustrated in Tannen, 1989/2007 and Johnstone, 1994a, 1994b). Not only children but also adults in all cultures repeat: We tell and retell stories we heard from our grandparents, quote our friends and enemies, and use words given to us by our parents and other "experts" to try out their words and footings. In doing so, we embed the voices of these specific others into our own, creating footings that are not general but particular. In the context of the family, a social group that is bound by shared prior texts and experiences, it is especially important to recognize the pervasiveness of specific prior texts, and acknowledge and explore the role of these in (re)creating footings and identities in everyday interaction.

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**Appendix: transcription conventions**

These transcription conventions were developed by Shari Kendall and Deborah Tannen for use in the research study "Balancing Work and Family: Creating Parental Identities through Talk," at Georgetown University.

((*words*))          Double parentheses enclosing italicized text indicate transcriber's comments

| | |
|---|---|
| (words) | Single parentheses enclose uncertain transcription |
| (???) | Single parentheses enclosing question marks indicate indecipherable words |
| carriage return | Each new line represents an intonation unit |
| → | An arrow indicates that the intonation unit continues to the next line |
| – | A dash indicates a truncated intonation unit |
| - | A hyphen indicates a truncated word |
| ? | A question mark indicates a relatively strong rising intonation |
| . | A period indicates a falling, final intonation |
| ! | An exclamation point indicates an animated tone |
| , | A comma indicates a continuing intonation |
| .. | Dots indicate silence |
| : | A colon indicates an elongated vowel |
| CAPS | Capitals indicate emphatic stress |
| *<laughs>* | Angle brackets enclose descriptions of vocal noises |
| *<manner>*words> | Angle brackets enclose descriptions of the manner in which an utterance is spoken, e.g. *high-pitched, laughing, incredulous* |
| words [words] | |
|      [words] | Square brackets enclose simultaneous talk. |

# I beat them all up

## Self-representation in young children's personal narratives

Richard Ely, Robin Abrahams, Ann MacGibbon and Allyssa McCabe

As vehicles for self-representation, personal narratives offer a rich source of information about young children's developing sense of self. In this study we analyzed children's use of first-person pronouns, particularly *I*, in order to examine the domains children explicitly index in their use of self-referential utterances. Conversational narratives were elicited from 96 predominately white working-class participants between the ages of 4 and 9 (8 boys and 8 girls at each age). All predicates associated with *I* (termed I-predicates) were classified into 12 individual categories subsumed under 4 broad dimensions of the self: active, social, material, and mental. Children made frequent reference to themselves, with more than half of all clauses including a first-person singular pronoun (*I*, *me*, *my*). Children drew I-predicates from the active, material, and mental domains more frequently than they did from the social domain, although they indexed the social domain frequently through their use of *my*. There was an overall decrease with age in the use of first-person singular pronouns, mediated by decreases in the frequency with which children used *I* and *me*. In their use of I-predicates, children also cited the material domain less frequently with age. Girls used I-predicates to index self-expression (*I cried*, *I said*) more than boys. The findings extend our understanding of children's unfolding sense of self and demonstrate the feasibility of using narrative data as a way of assessing self-development.

In telling personal stories about the past, narrators portray themselves and others in a variety of settings and circumstances, influenced, of course, by the narrative practices of their communities (Heath, 1983; Miller, 1994; Ochs & Capps, 2001; Rogoff, 1990). As such, personal narratives are opportunities for self construction (Bruner, 1990; Neisser, 1994; Polkinghorne, 1991). When prompted to share accounts of past experiences, a child can depict herself as a spunky, tough fighter *(I*

*beat them all up*) or depict himself as a frightened witness (*I get scared all the time*).[1] Differences in depictions are likely to be associated with the child's disposition and past personal and social experiences, as well as the child's understanding of those experiences (Reese, 2002). Thus, narrative self-descriptions may reflect the extent to which particular domains of experience are important or salient to the child's underlying sense of self. In this study we focused on children's use of first-person pronouns, particularly *I*, in order to explore the domains children explicitly index in their self-referential utterances.

*Development of Self-concept.* In Western cultures, there is a general consensus that young children (less than 6 years of age) have an appreciation of the self that is more physical than psychological, often focus on routine activities and momentary moods, and rarely locate the self in a social context (Damon & Hart, 1988; Harter, 1983, 1998; Huttenlocher & Smiley, 1990; Keller, Ford, & Meacham, 1978). As children move into the school years (6 years and older), the importance of psychological attributes increases (Secord & Peevers, 1974). Older children have a sense of self that is embedded in more enduring activities and moods and in a larger social world (Damon & Hart, 1988). Older children are also more likely to be aware of the multidimensional nature of the self (Harter, 1998). As such, they may be more sensitive to the notion of multiple selves (the varying selves they can be in varying contexts), and possible selves (the selves they might wish to be, or feel they ought to be) (Higgins, 1989; Manian, Strauman, & Denney, 1998; Markus & Narius, 1986; Oosterwegel & Oppenheimer, 1993; Rubin, Cohen, Houston, & Cockrel, 1996).

However, this characterization of early self-development as a shift from the active and physical to the mental and psychological may be misleading (Richner & Nicolopoulou, 2001; Ruble & Dweck, 1995). For several decades now, researchers and theorists working within the theory of mind paradigm have clearly demonstrated that even relatively young children have a rather sophisticated appreciation of how the mind works (Astington, Harris, & Olson, 1988; Flavell & Miller, 1998; Perner, 1991; Wellman, Phillips, & Rodriquez, 2000). Children as young as 4 years old understand that behavior is motivated by intentions and beliefs. In general, this literature suggests that earlier research on self- and person perception may have underestimated the depth of young children's knowledge of mental processes.

Another reason for interpreting the physical-to-mental shift cautiously is the inherent challenge of investigating the development of self-concept in young children. In general, this population finds talking specifically about the self to be a daunting task (Damon & Hart, 1988; Miller & Aloise, 1989). To circumvent this difficulty, researchers have employed a variety of child-friendly methods. For ex-

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1.   All examples come from the data.

ample, young children have been asked to state whether their behavior is like or unlike that of a puppet's behavior (Eder, 1990) or like or unlike a drawing of a child who is portrayed as being "good at puzzles" or who "has lots of friends" (Harter & Pike, 1984). Children have also been interviewed and asked to describe themselves with prompts such as "I would like to write about you... What's the first thing I should put in what I write about?" (Keller, Ford, & Meacham, 1978, p. 484). However, many young children fail to respond to such questions or produce responses that appear trivial or nonsensical. These "irregular" responses may be more a product of the difficulty children experience when talking explicitly about the self than a true reflection of their sense of self.

*Self-Description.* Nevertheless, young children do talk about themselves and in doing so may reveal something about their sense of self. By the age of two, children have begun to acquire the English pronominal system and are able to mark the self-other distinction linguistically (Bates, 1990; Brown, 1973, Budwig, 1989, 1995; Nelson, 1989). By the preschool years, children regularly use the pronoun *I* in referring to themselves (Chiat, 1986).

There has been longstanding interest in children's early use of personal pronouns and other forms of self-reference, dating back to the turn of the last century (Cooley, 1908; Romanes, 1889). Cooley, in 1908, examined his daughter's use of what he called "self words" in expressions such as "I carry pillow" or "I want bread." Since that time, a small number of researchers have examined self-descriptive utterances (Ames, 1952; Bain, 1936; Budwig, 1995; Cicchetti, Beeghly, Carlson, & Toth, 1990; Coster, Gersten, Beeghly, & Cicchetti, 1989; Goodenough, 1938; Kagan, 1981; Radke-Yarrow, Belmont, Nottelmann, & Bottomly, 1990). This work reveals that by 2 years of age children begin to describe their immediate behavior and activities (Kagan, 1981), and more than 90% of their action verbs are in reference to their own current activities (Huttenlocher, Smiley, & Charney, 1983). At the same time, as noted earlier, children are developing an ability to talk about their own (and others') psychological processes and states (Bretherton & Beeghly, 1982). In line with this, utterances describing volition and self-determination comprise the most frequent class of self-descriptive statements in young children (Bretherton et al., 1982; Ely, Gleason, & Perlmann, 1992; Radke-Yarrow et al. 1990).

In general, these findings are drawn from studies using small samples of very young children talking with parents (mostly mothers). Much of the discourse focused on the here-and-now. As such, children's self-descriptive statements embedded in such dialogues provide little more than "snapshots" of their immediate self as influenced by age, context, and discourse partner. These "spontaneous" self-referential utterances are unlikely to reflect a coherent set of beliefs or theory about the child's sense of self. Nor do they represent the kinds of reflective responses that experimental probes are designed to invoke (e.g., "What are you like?" – Damon & Hart, 1988).

*Narratives and the Self.* In contrast to self-descriptive statements that are a part of here-and-now conversations, personal narratives may reveal features of a more enduring sense of self. Children begin to tell simple stories about the past as early as two years of age, and their stories become more elaborate as they grow older (Engel, 1995; McCabe, 1996; Nelson, 1996). By 4, the age of our study's youngest participants, they are able to provide reasonably coherent accounts of past experiences with little outside support or guidance (Hudson & Shapiro, 1991; Nelson, 1996; Peterson & McCabe, 1983). Children, like adults, are most likely to remember events that are personally relevant (Stein, Wade, & Liwag, 1997). In addition, most autobiographical memories are the result of restatings (Nelson, 1986). Thus, for a particular event to be remembered over time, it probably has some personal meaning and has been talked about more than once.

There is a growing appreciation of the dynamic interaction between memory and self (Brewer, 1986; Bruner, 1990; McAdams, 1993; Neisser, 1988; Singer & Salovey, 1993; Tomkins, 1987; see also papers in Neisser & Fivush, 1994). For example, Neisser (1988) sees the extended or narrative self as an important component of the conceptual self and one that both informs, and is informed by, the conceptual self. Using this general approach, a number of developmental psychologists and child language researchers have examined the connection between personal narratives and children's conceptualizations of the self (Feeny & Eder, 1995; Fivush, 1991, 1994, 1998; McCabe, 1991, 1996; Miller, 1994; Miller, Mintz, Hoogstra, Fung, & Potts, 1992; Miller, Wiley, Fung, & Liang., 1997; Snow, 1990; Sperry & Sperry, 1995; Wiley, Rose, Burger, & Miller, 1998). Their work has contributed to our understanding of how narrative representations of the self are associated with a range of social, emotional, relational, and gendered aspects of the child's developing concept of selfhood. However, much of this research has focused on preschool children in family settings and has involved relatively small samples. Given the potential relevance of narratives to self-concept, we set out to examine self-descriptive utterances embedded in children's personal narratives that were drawn from a large sample of schoolage participants.

## Hypotheses

Using a corpus of personal conversational narratives, we developed a coding scheme designed to capture the range of actions, states, affects, and cognitions young narrators might attribute to themselves. Our overall goal was to catalogue all self-referential utterances and to explore the degree to which these utterances varied by age and gender. Although our study was primarily descriptive in nature, we did begin with a number of hypotheses.

*Comparative frequency of domains.* According to Bruner (1986), narratives take place simultaneously in the "landscape of action," or actual events and in the "landscape of consciousness," or evaluations, beliefs, and desires. We expected that our participants' narratives would index frequently the landscape of action because of the salience of the active and material domains of the self (Damon & Hart, 1988; Keller, Ford, & Meacham, 1978). We also expected to see the landscape of consciousness represented through reasonably frequent citations of the mental domain, based on the large body of theory of mind research and data on young children's self-descriptions that we cited earlier. Finally, because young children infrequently connect the self to social contexts (Secord & Peevers, 1974), we felt that they would cite the social domain relatively infrequently.

*Age effects.* We predicted that there would be a decline with age in the frequency with which children referred to the active and material domains in their I-predicates. This hypothesis is in line with the developmental literature that documents that these domains decrease in importance in children's developing sense of self (Damon & Hart, 1988; Keller, Ford, & Meacham, 1978). We also predicted that the use of all first-person singular pronouns (*I*, *me*, *my*) would decrease in frequency with age. This expectation was based on theoretical and empirical work that conceptualizes young children's development as moving from a singular and primarily egocentric view of the world to a more multifaceted and social view of the world (Damon & Hart, 1988; Erikson, 1950/1963; Menig-Peterson, 1975; Piaget, 1959).

We were also interested in examining the degree to which we could document age effects in the notion of self-complexity, multiple selves, and possible selves. We believed that self-complexity and multiple selves might be reflected in children referring to a greater number of aspects of the self, as assessed in terms of the number of different categories they indexed (Linville, 1985). In this regard, we expected that older children would draw from a greater number of distinct coding categories than would younger children. Similarly, we would argue that the use of modals (*I could have anything*) reflects a sense of possible selves (see Coding). Thus, we predicted that older children would be more sensitive to and more likely to reference the possible self than would younger children by using modals more frequently than younger children.

*Effects of gender.* We predicted that girls would index self-expression more than would boys. This prediction was based on work that describes girls as being more emotionally expressive than boys (Brody, 1999; Buckner & Fivush, 2000; Thorne, 1995), and much more likely to describe what they and others have said or talked about (expressed) than are boys (Ely & McCabe, 1993). We also predicted that girls would index physical attributes more than boys, reflecting girls' greater concern with looks and appearance (Cole et al., 2001; Thompson, Corwin, & Sargent, 1997). Finally, based on the notion that girls are socialized to be connected,

interdependent, and concerned with social cohesion more than boys are (Buckner & Fivush, 2000; Chodorow, 1989; Ely, Melzi, Hadge, & McCabe, 1998; Gilligan, 1982; McAdams & Losoff, 1984; Moskowitz, Suh, & Desaulniers, 1994), we predicted that girls would index the collective or we-self by using the pronoun *we* more frequently than would boys.

Finally, we wanted to explore how children used other first-person pronouns, including *me*, *my*, *myself*, *mine*, *we*, *us*, and *our*, and *ours*. The overall frequency of *my* and *we* allowed us to analyze these two personal pronouns with the same coding scheme used to categorize I-predicates. However, other than predicting a decline with age in the use of first-person singular pronouns, we made no specific predictions regarding how these other personal pronouns would be used.

## Method

### Participants and data

The data for this study were drawn from a cross-sectional corpus of children's narratives (Peterson & McCabe, 1983). Participants were 96 predominately white, rural, working-class children between the ages of 4 and 9 years (8 boys and 8 girls each at ages 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 years). As the goal of the original project for which the data were collected was a psycholinguistic analysis of the development of children's narratives (see Peterson & McCabe, 1983), no additional information about the children was gathered.

The individual interviews were conducted while the participants participated in an art project designed to reduce their self-consciousness. The female interviewers engaged the children in conversation during which a number of verbal prompts were employed. The prompts consisted of brief narratives about specific topics (e.g., doctor visits, travel experiences, bee stings) followed by a query as to whether the child had experienced a similar event.[2] The children were prodded in a non-leading manner to describe "what happened." The interviewer expressed

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2.   The following is a list of prompts that were used: spills, trips/travel, plane/ train/boat trips, car wrecks, party experiences, ripped clothes, fights, doctor visits or shots, hospital experiences, pets, bee stings, future jobs, and miscellaneous. In the original study (Peterson & McCabe, 1983, see Table 3, p. 26), across the entire corpus of narratives, miscellaneous prompts generated more narratives than any other category (average = 45 per age). Next in frequency were trips (21), pets (19), car wrecks (average 18), and doctor visits or shots (17). The least productive prompts included fights (average = 7 per age), plane/train/boat trips (6), and future jobs (2).

In terms of average length, the prompts that generated the longest narratives were car wrecks (12.9 clauses), hospital experiences (11.4 clauses), miscellaneous (10.8 clauses), and parties (10.7 clauses).

interest in the child's narrative by interjecting *uh-huhs* during pauses and encouraged continuity and clarity by occasionally repeating what the child had just said.

It is important to stress that although children were specifically prompted to talk about their own experiences, the interviewers were interested in any talk about past events, whether such talk directly involved the child or not. Some of the narratives analyzed here were in response to specific prompts, while other narratives flowed naturally out of the ongoing conversation. Even narratives generated by the same prompt differed remarkably. A query about a visit to the doctor's office or the hospital might produce a story about the child's own stoic reaction to a painful shot, or alternatively, a story about a sibling's fearful reaction to shots.

All interviews were tape recorded and transcribed, and all narratives were identified. A narrative was defined as two or more independent clauses about a past event (Labov & Waletzky, 1967; Peterson & McCabe, 1983). As with past work, we choose to limit our analyses to the three longest narratives from each child. This gave us a representative sample of coherent and codable data on a variety of topics from all participants, particularly the youngest children, who tended to produce fewer and shorter narratives than did the older children. Thus a total of 288 narratives, 48 from each age group (4-, 5-, 6-, 7-, 8- and 9-year-olds), constitute the data that were analyzed. Narratives ranged in length from 2 to 84 clauses ($\underline{M}$ = 16.0, $\underline{SD}$ = 9.5). The average combined length of the three longest narratives was 47.8 clauses ($\underline{SD}$ = 25.0). For all analyses, the data from all three narratives were pooled. In addition, in order to control for children's developing linguistic complexity (their narratives increase in length with age, McCabe, 1998), all analyses were run on standardized rates (rate per 100 clauses).

### Coding

The use of all first-person personal pronouns was tabulated. For the use of *I* and *we* the associated predicates were coded into one of 12 mutually exclusive categories subsumed under four facets of the self: active/present, social, material/visceral, and mental (James, 1890; Damon & Hart, 1988). A thirteenth category included all predicates that were incomplete (*I had...*), aborted (*I, then she...*), or repetitions. (*I, I said*). The same coding scheme was also used to categorize the noun modified by the first-person singular possessive pronoun *my* (*my Mommy*, *my toes*). Examples of each category are listed in Table 1.

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It is important to note that not every child received all prompts. A child who readily produced narratives, or a child whose narratives were largely self-generated, might have been exposed to only a few prompts.

In addition to coding predicates, we noted if the predicate was modified by a modal reflecting such qualities as ability (*I can remember*), possibility (*if I could have pizza*), or obligation or necessity (*I had to get a shot*). When used in relationship to self-reference, modals can mark the notion of the possible self (Bruner, 1986; Budwig, 1995; Quigley, 2000).

*Reliability.* All data were coded by the first author. In order to assess reliability, 50% of the data were randomly selected and coded by the second author. Cohen's kappa for the coding of I- and we-predicates and the use of *my* was.88. The kappa for the use of modals was.95. Both of these kappas represent nearly perfect agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977).

## Results

Children made frequent reference to both the individual and collective self, with first-person pronouns appearing in more than two thirds of all narrative clauses (standardized rate, 68.1, $\underline{SD}$ = 23.4). First-person singular pronouns (*I*, *me*, *my*) appeared in more than half all narrative clauses, with the first-person singular pronoun *I* appearing in nearly one third of all narrative clauses. In terms of pervasiveness, all children used a first-person singular pronoun at least once, and only one child failed to use *I* (although he did use *my* twice). Table 2 presents descriptive data on the frequency of all first-person personal pronouns.

*Comparative frequency of domains.* Our first expectation was that children would be likely to index the active, material, and mental self more frequently than the social self. When we examined children's use of I-predicates, a repeated measure ANOVA, with domain as a within subject factor, indicated a significant effect of domain, $\underline{F}(3, 285)$ = 34.82, $\underline{p}$ < 0001. As predicted, post-hoc Scheffe F-tests showed that there were significant differences between the social (0.9) domain and each of the other 3 domains, the active (11.1), material (7.0), and mental (9.9), respectively, all $\underline{p}$'s <.05.

However, when we looked beyond I-predicates at children's use of *my*, we found that it was used predominately in the social domain to mark personal and family relationships, as in *my friend*, *my sister* (8.6). When children's use of *I* and *my* is summed, the overall frequency in the social domain rises dramatically. The other major use of *my* was in the material domain, specifically in the category physical attributes (*my fingernail*; 2.7), raising the overall combined (*I* and *my*) frequency of this domain as well. The bottom line is that when children use I-predicates to index domains of the self, they cite the active, mental, and material selves more often than the social self. When I-predicates are combined with the use of *my*, meaningful dif-

ferences in frequencies between domains disappear. Thus, overall, our first hypothesis was only partially supported.

*Age effects across domains.* We had made several predictions regarding age effects. First we had predicted that children's indexing of the active/present and material/visceral domains would decrease with age. MANOVAs, with age and gender as factors, were run on the coding categories in these two domains for I-predicates. In the active/present domain, there were no effects of age or gender. However, there was a significant main interaction, Wilks' lambda =.77, approximate $F(5, 84)$ = 2.28, $p$ <.05. The main interaction was due to a significant univariate interaction effect in the movement/location category, $F(5, 84)$ = 3.25, $p$ <.01. Younger boys (4- and 5-year olds) cited movement/location more frequently than younger girls. In contrast, older girls (6-, 7- and 8-year-olds) cited this category more frequently than 7- and 8-year-old boys.

In contrast to the active/present domain, there was a main effect of age in the material/visceral domain, Wilks' lambda =.59, approximate $F(5, 84)$ = 2.34, $p$ <.005. There was no effect of gender and no interaction. As can be seen in Table 3, the main effect of age was due to univariate effects of age in possessions ($F(5, 84)$ = 2.37, $p$ <.05, physical attributes ($F(5, 84)$ = 4.26, $p$ <.005), and a trend in health/injury ($F(5, 84)$ = 2.16, $p$ <.07). In all cases, the effects were in the predicted direction, with older children using fewer I-predicates in the respective categories than younger children. The frequency of children's use of *my* also allowed us to assess age and gender effects in the category physical attributes. There was an effect of age in the predicted direction, F(5, 84) = 2.64, p <.05, with younger children indexing this category more frequently than older children. There was no effect of gender and no interaction. Thus, our hypothesis regarding age effects in the active/present and material/visceral domains was partially supported.

In our second age-effect hypothesis, we had predicted that older children, being less egocentric than younger children, would index the individual self less frequently than younger children. This proved to be the case, with a MANOVA with age and gender as factors run on the standardized frequencies of the pronouns *I*, *me*, and *my* showing a significant main effect of age, Wilks' lambda =.58, approximate $F(5, 84)$ = 1.92, $p$ <.05. There was no effect of gender and no interaction. The main effect of age was due to univariate effects of age in the use of *I* ($F(5, 84)$ = 3.15, $p$ <.05) and *me* $F(5, 84)$ = 2.62, $p$ <.05). As can be seen in Table 4, the standardized rate at which the youngest children (4-year-olds) used first-person singular pronouns was 73.1; in contrast, 8-year-old children were using these pronouns at a standardized rate of only 40.1. Thus, our second hypothesis was well-supported.

Our third and final age effect hypothesis addressed the notion of self complexity and possible selves. Our prediction that older children would index a greater number of I-predicate categories, reflecting a growing awareness of the multifac-

eted nature of the self, was not supported. An ANCOVA, with age and gender as factors, and narrative length as a covariate (to control for age differences in narrative length), revealed no effects of age or gender, and no interaction. The average number of categories indexed ranged from a low of 4.4 in 4- and 8-year-olds to a high of 5.6 in 9-year-olds.

We had also coded children's use of modals, believing that they reflected aspects of the possible self. We predicted that older children would be more likely to index this aspect of the self than would younger children. Overall, the use modals to modify I-predicates was relatively rare, occurring at a standardized rate of 3.0. Contrary to our expectations, there was no effect of age in the use of modals; there was also no effect of gender and no interaction. Thus, our third age-effect hypothesis was not supported.

*Gender differences.* We had made three specific predictions regarding gender differences. First, as expected, girls ($\underline{M}$ = 3.3, $\underline{SD}$ = 3.7) used I-predicates more frequently in the category expressives than did boys ($\underline{M}$ = 1.7, $\underline{SD}$ = 3.0), $\underline{F}$(1, 84) = 4.99, $\underline{p}$ <.05. Second, although girls ($\underline{M}$ = 1.5; SD = 3.5) did draw more I-predicates from the category physical attributes than did boys (M = 0.6, SD = 1.7), the effect showed only a trend toward significance, $\underline{F}$(1, 84) = 3.55, $\underline{p}$ <.07. Finally, our expectation regarding girls' greater use of *we* was not supported, although the difference was in the predicted direction ($\underline{M}_{girls}$ = 16.8, $\underline{SD}$ = 12.7, $\underline{M}_{boys}$ = 13.4, $\underline{SD}$ = 14.0), $\underline{F}$(1, 84) = 1.60, $\underline{p}$ =.21.

*Other forms of self-representation.* We have already described several of our findings in the use of pronouns other than *I*. These include the decreased frequency of the use of *me* with age and the use of *my* to index personal-social relationships and physical attributes (which together constituted approximately 85% of all uses of *my*; see Table 5). The only other first-person personal pronoun to appear with a high degree of frequency was *we*, which was used primarily to index the active domain (Table 5). In fact, the active domain constituted 55% of all occurrences of *we*. Across all domains, there were no effects of age or gender and no interactions in children's use of we-predicates. All other self-referential pronouns occurred too infrequently to allow for any meaningful analyses (see Table 2)

## Discussion

In this study, we set out to examine self-descriptive utterances contained within children's personal narratives. Using a data set drawn from participants older than those assessed in earlier work, we found that children talked about themselves and did so with a high degree of frequency. In our discussion, we first evaluate our hypotheses in

light of our findings and then move on to consider some of the broader implications of our study.

*Comparative frequency of domains*. The notion that young children's sense of self is primarily active and physical is not well-supported by our data. Assuming that children cite those domains of the self they feel are most salient, the evidence suggests that although the physical and active domains are important, so, too, are the other two facets of the self, the social and the mental. When children's use of *I* and *my* were combined, there were no meaningful differences across domains. Children were as likely to talk about what they did or what they wore as they were about who they were with or what they knew.

There is, however, one word of caution regarding the frequency with which children indexed the mental domain. This domain included a cognitive category encompassing phrases like *I think* and *I guess*, and this category was the most frequently cited within the domain. However, as Shatz, Wellman, and Silber (1983) have pointed out, not all usages of "mental state terms" reflect references to mental states. Phrases like *I think* and *I guess* often serve a pragmatic function. As such, they are employed by children (and adults) to modulate assertions, as in *I had to go to Michigan I think* and *I guess... if the pills won't help you... they got to operate on you*. In both these instances, the "mental state" predicates are hedges rather than indices of mental state processes. An analysis of all cognitive I-predicates using Shatz et al.'s approach suggests that more than two thirds of them could be characterized as pragmatic. Thus, our data may overestimate the salience of the mental domain, although not to such an extent that our claim of relative balance across domains is compromised.

Finally, although we believe that there is a strong correspondence between the frequency with which a domain is cited and its salience, we do not want to imply that children are consciously aware of this salience. We recognize that their sense of self, like their narratives, is likely to be constrained by their cultural milieu. In some communities, boasting (self-aggrandizement) is valued (Labov, 1972); in others, self-effacement is more appropriate (Heath, 1983). In either case, child narrators, particularly young child narrators, are unlikely to be consciously aware of either how they are presenting themselves or how such presentations may affect others (Banerjee, 2002). In this regard, it may be reasonable to treat personal narratives as projective data: Young narrators project their self-constructions into the stories they tell. It is in this way that stories are revealing, as much as for what they are nominally about as for what they tell us about the narrators themselves.

The distinction between salience and conscious awareness may explain why different approaches to the study of self-development generate different results. When very young children are explicitly prompted to produce self-descriptions, their responses focus on concrete, physical, routine, active experiences and at-

tributes. Although these responses can be characterized as spontaneous in that they are "open-ended," they are not spontaneous contextually (McGuire & McGuire, 1988). Rather, they are responses to experimental prompts to talk about the self in a "research" setting. Although our prompts for personal narratives were scripted, they were unlikely to have been perceived as such by our participants, as they flowed naturally out of the ongoing conversation. More importantly, the data elicited by such prompts may have a greater degree of ecological validity than data generated by more directly focused methods, as personal narratives are a normal and frequently occurring genre of discourse in many cultures. In contrast, conversations explicitly about self-concept are rare in young children's discourse, and, as noted earlier, are often experienced as challenging at best (Damon & Hart, 1988).

**Age effects.** Several of our predicted age effects were supported. First, there was a decrease in the frequency with which the material/visceral domain was cited. The decrease in citations in the material/visceral domain, specifically in the categories of possessions, physical attributes, and a trend in health/injury, presumably reflects the degree to which these areas are less salient to older children. This is in line with some of the early findings on self-perception (Keller, Ford, & Meacham, 1978). Likewise, the findings that older children were less likely than younger children to talk explicitly about themselves is in line with the theoretical and empirical work on the age-related decline in egocentricity (Damon & Hart, 1988; Erikson, 1950/1963; Menig-Peterson, 1975; Piaget, 1959).

A somewhat more interesting and admittedly speculative interpretation focuses on the use of *me*. Although the overall frequency of *me* was low in comparison with the other first-person singular pronouns, there were enough occurrences to evaluate age effects. In their personal narratives, older children were generally less likely than younger children to depict themselves using *me*. This could reflect an age-related increase in self-efficacy, as *me* was most often used to place the self in the "object" or "patient" role (*she scratched me*; *it always gets me sick*). We conducted a post-hoc analysis of the use of me and found that over 95% of all occurrences fit the patient or object characterization. The decrease in the frequency of *me* is thus consistent with data suggesting that self-efficacy increases with age, as do the powers to observe, compare, and refine actions for maximum impact on the environment (Bandura, 1997; Morris & Nemcek, 1982; Parsons & Ruble, 1977).

We found no evidence for age effects in self complexity, multiple selves, or the salience of possible selves. It is possible that our way of operationalizing self complexity and multiple selves was too crude. Alternatively, there may be only modest change in these aspects of self over the age range we observed. Models of early self development (e.g., Damon & Hart, 1988) suggest that self complexity increases gradually. In addition, Higgins (1989) proposed that true self-evaluative skills (upon which self-discrepancy depends) only begin to emerge in early childhood.

However, the most probable explanation lies in the distinction cited earlier between salience and conscious awareness. For example, in the flow of describing past experiences, children do index the mental domain. However, it seems unlikely that young children, when prompted for self-descriptions, would describe themselves as "thinkers," "knowers," or "believers," even though they have used these predicates in their self-referential statements. However, by adolescence, characterizing oneself as "thoughtful," "smart," or a "believer" is much more probable (Damon & Hart, 1988). Thus, a portion of self development and developing self complexity may involve becoming more aware of existing manifestations of the self, some of which are present in personal narratives. This is clearly a topic future research should investigate.

*Gender differences.* Girls did portray themselves as more expressive than boys, both in reporting their own speech as well as describing how they screamed and cried, in line with our expectations (Brody, 1999; Buckner & Fivush, 2000; Ely & McCabe, 1983; Thorne, 1995). Other hypothesized gender differences, although in the predicted direction, were not significant.

More generally, our findings offer further support to the notion that narratives represent ideal venues for self-construction. We recognize that by pulling self-descriptive statements out of their narrative context, we may well be distorting the very notion (self-presentation, self- construction) we are attempting to capture. Our decision to go with such a micro view does not privilege our approach over others. In fact, coming up with a more macro method of classifying narrative self-construction is an important task for future research. Our method represents only one of a number of possible ways of capturing self-construction. However, it certainly could and should be complemented by broader and more contextually sensitive analyses.

We are also aware that our data were collected under particular circumstances. The narratives we analyzed were told to adult researchers who, although familiar, were not family, friends, or neighbors. The narratives were elicited under what could be characterized as a neutral context, and the selves constructed therein were likely to be crafted for this same context. Although the children appeared comfortable and engaged in their conversations, as reflected in the high number of spontaneously generated stories they shared (see note 2), the selves they were presenting were selves essentially crafted for an affable stranger. These selves were undoubtedly but one of a number of selves these children could have constructed. Different circumstances would likely have elicited somewhat different self-presentations. Because personal narratives are performances structured for particular audiences (Ochs & Capps, 2001), we need to be cautious about making strong claims about the cross-situation generalizability of our data.

Finally, our study examined self-presentations derived exclusively from narrative data. In doing so, we uncovered theoretically relevant effects of age and gender. However, there were also some notable individual differences, as reflected in the wide standard deviations in both the frequency of self-presentations and in the individual coding categories. Some children spoke frequently, enthusiastically, and forcefully about themselves, presenting themselves as active participants in their narrative worlds (*I couldn't put up with that... so... I just slapped all of them*), while other children were more reticent, more circumspect, and presented themselves in more passive roles (*I sat and sat and sat, that's all there was to do*). We believe future research should explore the degree to which such differences are captured by self-descriptive data derived from other sources including interviews (Damon & Hart, 1988; Keller, Ford, & Meacham, 1978) and structured measures (Harter & Pike, 1984). By connecting self-relevant narrative data with a range of social, emotional, and cognitive variables, researchers could generate a richer and ecologically more nuanced picture of early self development.

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**Table 1.**   Coding categories for I- and we-predicates and for the objects modified by *my*

**Active/present self**

Actions/activities
I hit him
we's playing baseball
I broke the lawnmower

Movement/location/travel
I been on a airplane
when I'm in school
we had to go home

**Social self**

Social role, status, or demographic descriptor
when I was two years old
I was in kindergarten
we live on Faircreek

Personal and family relationships
I was with my friend
my Mommy
I got another boyfriend

**Material/visceral self**

Possessions
I got some candy
I got like a little teddy bear
my lawnchair

Physical attributes, including dress
I had my top on
my toes
we were soaked

Health, injury or illness
I got my tonsils out
I cut my finger
we always get sick

Physiological
I was sleeping
I was so tired
we were really awake

**Table 1.** (continued) Coding categories for I- and we-predicates and for the noun modified by *my*

**Mental self**

<u>Cognitive</u>
I forgot what he was doing
I didn't know she was dead
we thought it was for... my Mom

<u>Perceptual</u>
I heard bells
I peeked downstairs
we saw a rabbit

<u>Expressive</u>
I cried
we told her
I started laughing

<u>Affect, attitude, attributes, volition</u>
we were happy
I liked her
I wanted to go in the... pool

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics for first-person personal pronouns and modals

|         | Total frequency | Mean              | Standardized mean [a] |
|---------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| I       | 1435            | 15.0 (12.4) [b]   | 31.8 (19.5)           |
| me      | 222             | 2.3 (2.8)         | 4.9 (6.1)             |
| my      | 606             | 6.3 (5.2)         | 13.3 (9.6)            |
| mine    | 7               | 0.1 (0.3)         | 0.1 (0.7)             |
| myself  | 8               | 0.1 (0.3)         | 0.2 (0.9)             |
| we      | 700             | 7.3 (7.2)         | 15.1 (13.4)           |
| us      | 38              | 0.4 (0.8)         | 0.7 (1.7)             |
| our     | 78              | 0.8 (1.2)         | 1.8 (3.6)             |
| ours    | 2               | 0.0 (0.1)         | 0.1 (0.5)             |
| modals  | 146             | 1.5 (2.0)         | 3.0 (3.7)             |

Note. [a] Standardized mean is based on rate per 100 independent clauses. [b] Standard deviations in parentheses.

**Table 3.** Standardized frequencies of I-predicates and univariate effects of age and gender

| Category | Standardized rate [a] | Univariate effects of age and gender |
|---|---|---|
| <u>Active self</u> | | |
| Actions, activities | 7.6 (8.9) [b] | trend, boys > girls |
| Movement, location, travel | 3.5 (4.1) | interaction |
| <u>Social self</u> | | |
| Social role, status | 0.5 (1.4) | |
| Personal/family relationships | 0.4 (1.1) | |
| <u>Material, visceral self</u> | | |
| Possessions | 0.8 (1.7) | trend, decrease with age |
| Physical attributes | 1.0 (2.8) | decrease with age |
| Health and injury | 3.9 (6.5) | decrease with age |
| Physiological states | 1.2 (2.6) | |
| <u>Mental self</u> | | |
| Cognitive | 3.7 (5.9) | |
| Perceptual | 2.0 (4.1) | |
| Expressive | 2.5 (3.5) | girls > boys |
| Affect, volition, preferences | 1.8 (2.6) | |
| <u>Incomplete</u> | 3.1 (3.9) | decrease with age |
| <u>Total</u> | 31.8 (19.4) | decrease with age |

Note. [a] Standardized rate is rate per 100 independent clauses. [b] Standard deviations in parentheses.

**Table 4.** Children's use of *I*, *me*, and *my* by age in standardized frequencies [a]

| Age | I | me | my | Total [b] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 47.8 (26.2) [c] | 7.9 (9.1) | 16.3 (13.4) | 73.1 (34.1) |
| 5 | 32.9 (16.0) | 7.4 (7.8) | 14.2 (10.6) | 55.2 (24.1) |
| 6 | 30.6 (19.6) | 2.9 (4.4) | 10.9 (7.7) | 44.5 (21.8) |
| 7 | 26.8 (15.1) | 5.1 (3.6) | 10.4 (8.3) | 42.3 (19.6) |
| 8 | 25.8 (16.6) | 1.7 (3.5) | 12.5 (9.0) | 40.1 (20.6) |
| 9 | 26.8 (14.4) | 4.5 (4.2) | 15.7 (7.5) | 47.3 (19.4) |

Note. [a] Standardized rate is rate per 100 independent clauses. [b] The totals includes *mine* (n = 7) and *myself* (n = 8). [c] Standard deviations in parentheses.

**Table 5.**  Standardized frequencies of *my* + noun and we-predicates [a]

| Category | my + noun | we-predicates |
|---|---|---|
| Active self | | |
| Actions, activities | 0.3 (0.9)[b] | 4.0 (4.9) |
| Movement, location, travel | 0.1 (0.4) | 4.8 (0.6) |
| Social self | | |
| Social role, status | 0.1 (0.3) | 0.2 (0.7) |
| Personal/family relationships | 8.6 (6.8) | 0.4 (1.3) |
| Material, visceral self | | |
| Possessions | 0.6 (2.7) | 1.0 (2.3) |
| Physical attributes | 2.7 (3.8) | 0.1 (0.4) |
| Health and injury | 0.0 (0.3) | 0.4 (0.9) |
| Physiological states | 0.1 (0.5) | 0.6 (1.7) |
| Mental self | | |
| Cognitive | 0.0 (0.2) | 0.2 (0.6) |
| Perceptual | 0.0 (0.0) | 0.7 (1.8) |
| Expressive | 0.0 (0.0) | 0.3 (1.1) |
| Affect, volition, preferences | 0.2 (1.9) | 0.5 (1.2) |
| Incomplete | 0.9 (2.0) | 1.9 (2.8) |
| Total | 13.3 (9.6) | 15.1 (13.4) |

Note. [a] Standardized rate is rate per 100 independent clauses. [b] Standard deviations in parentheses.

# Multiple selves and thematic domains in gender identity

## Perspectives from Chinese children's conflict management styles*

Jiansheng Guo

Taking the middle road on gender identity between the two extreme positions by the strong Emergent Constructivist view on the one hand, and the Essentialist or the Separate Culture views on the other, this chapter argues that people may have multiple selves in their gender identities and gendered behaviors. Although such multiple selves are people's responses to specific types of social situations, they do have stable mental representations that guide people's behaviors. Data from the conflict management styles by 5-year-old Mandarin-speaking children's (from Beijing, China) naturalistic conversations in semi-structured play, show that girls and boys have consistent but complex patterns of linguistic conflict management styles. Both genders are equally ready to get engaged in direct verbal conflicts. However, they behave very differently in different thematic domains. In the Social/Moral Domain, girls seek dominance and prestige, and use aggravated conflict strategies to achieve their goals, while boys are inactive and willing to take a submissive role in this domain. In the Technical/Problem-Solving Domain, by contrast, boys seek dominance and prestige, and use aggravated strategies to achieve their goals, while girls readily assume a subordinate role and actively seek assistance from others. This behavior pattern results in complementary and highly harmonious relationships in mixed gender groups, but highly contentious and competitive relationships in same gender groups. In addition, if children traverse into seeking the dominant role in the opposite gender's domain, the members of the opposite gender will gang up against the perpetrator. These findings not only challenge the strong Emergent Constructivist view and the Essentialist or the Separate Culture views, but also challenge the traditional assumption that same gender relations are more harmonious than cross gender relations.

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### Theoretical positions concerning self identity

The self is one of the most important aspects of one's identity. In Sullivan's (1940) terms, the self is what one "takes oneself to be." It is the self-system that provides meaning to people's experiences. According to Markus and Cross (1990), what one "takes oneself to be" is not achieved by the individual in isolation, but rather, it is "an interpersonal achievement, deriving almost entirely from the individual's relations with others" (p. 576). Achieving one's sense of self and identity requires the participation of others. The others may serve as co-producers of self-feeling and self-understanding, as bearers of the standards, as active monitors, or as partners in ongoing internal dialogues. This position is consistent with the Symbolic Interactionist position (Baldwin, 1911; Bruner, 2003; Mead, 1934; Sullivan, 1940) that the awareness of the self derives from the awareness of the others' awareness of the self. In Bruner's (2003) words, "self-making is based... on the apparent esteem of others, and on the myriad expectations that we early, even mindlessly, pick up from the culture in which we are immersed. (p. 210)" In his view, the self is a social construction, in that "we constantly construct and reconstruct a self to meet the needs of the situations we encounter, and do so with the guidance of our memories of the past and our hopes and fears for the future" (Bruner, 2003, p. 210).

If one's self identity is a product of the influence of the others and the situation, and if it is constantly constructed and reconstructed as we plunge into different situations, we should expect that a constant and uniform self identity across different situations would be no more than a wishful thinking and myth. As Markus and Wurf (1987) suggest, "the self concept can no longer be explored as if it were a unitary, monolithic entity. (p. 300)" However, this theoretical position sometimes could be taken to an extreme. For example, in the research on gender identity, some researchers argue that gender identity is fluid and emergent; it is nothing more than a product that is constructed through on-going performance in local interactions. For example, in Hall and Bucholtz's (1995) collection, one of its three sections is titled "*Contingent* practices and emergent selves." In Bergval, Bing, and Freed's (1996) collection, some authors claim that gender is an illusory, rather than a real and valid, variable in influencing people's linguistic behaviors. In that volume, Freed (1996) argues that it is the tasks and settings, not the subjects' gender, that are the explanatory variables for the observed gender differences in speech. Similarly, Greenwood (1996) in the same volume argues that gender is an insignificant variable among adolescent sibling dinner table conversations. In other words, gender identity is entirely emergent and constructed afresh in each specific social interaction, dependent on factors other than a stable self identity concerning gender.

However, recognizing the social constructive nature and the multiplicity of self identity does not necessarily lead us to abandon the self concept and disregard its stability and continuity. As Jordan (1992) suggests,

> Rather than seeing the individual as lacking personal integration if we posit a contextual, dialogic movement,... we need to learn more about the constancies of these interpersonal interactions and the ways they shape our sense of ourselves... Needed is a move toward a psychology of relationship and exploration of inter-subjective reality, expressed by a relational language which supports relational understanding. (pp. 68–69)

Pointing to a similar theoretical direction, Andersen and Chen (2002) propose in their social-cognitive model of transference that one's "past assumptions and experiences in relationships with significant others manage to resurface in relations with new people," even though "one's sense of self... may vary as a function of relations with significant others. (p. 619)" Thus, there is some cognitive reality of the self with some continuity and stability, which was entangled and shaped by way of interacting with others in specific situations, but which resurfaces and is subject to change in future social interactions. According to Andersen and Chen's model, there is a linkage in people's memory between significant-other representations and the knowledge of the self in relation to each significant other. Once the significant-other representation is activated, the relevant self-with-significant-other is also activated, and this system of self-with-significant-other will guide the behavior of the person. The various selves-with-significant-others stored in one's memory compose a set of possible relational selves – a system of knowledge that comes into play in the context of transference. Thus, not only the on-going context is very important in shaping one's sense of self, but also one's overall repertoire of relational selves is also an influential source of one's interpersonal behavior patterns. From this theoretical perspective, we achieve a balance between fluid contextual factors and a stable sense of self identity.

## Purpose of the study: gender identity and contextual influence

The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the above theoretical position through analyzing conversational data from social interactions among 5-year-old Mandarin-speaking boys and girls. The study will demonstrate that, when using language in negotiating their social relations in conflict situations, those 5-year-old girls and boys do show some consistently different behavioral patterns in a given situation, thus showing stable and deeply entrenched gender identities. However, analysis of the communicative strategy repertoires of the two genders indicates that both girls

and boys have very similar sets of strategies. For example, both girls and boys can be very mitigating or aggravating in their communication. Thus, the behavioral differences could not be attributed to some essential characteristics of the two genders, as often claimed to be due to the biological differences (Moir & Jessel, 1991) or to the separate cultural worlds in upbringing (Maltz & Borker, 1982; Tannen, 1990). What makes the two genders behave differently is the kind of interactive situations, referred to as thematic domains. In a given thematic domain, boys and girls will use very different communicative strategies. If one attempts to cross the gender boundary in their communication, other children will actively safeguard the boundary. In addition, when comparing one gender's behavior across different thematic domains, we observe that the same gender may behave very differently in different thematic domains. For example, one gender can be very aggravating and domineering in one thematic domain, while being very submissive and mitigating in another domain. As a result, we see clearly the multiplicity of the self and the significant influence by social contexts on children's communicative behaviors.

**The concept of thematic domains**

A thematic domain is a set of related activities and concerns as expressed or indexed by discourse. In her structural analysis of children's conflict, Shantz (1987) regarded conflicts as consisting of *issues* (what the disagreement is about), *instigating tactics, oppositional tactics, resolution strategies,* and *outcomes.* The thematic domain is very similar to her first component, *issues.* In this study, I will identify two major thematic domains, the social/moral domain and the technical/problem-solving domain. The social/moral domain is concerned about how people relate to one another, involving issues such as social status, interpersonal relationship, and social images, as well as about matters of being right and wrong, regarding social justice, fairness, and proper social conduct. The technical/problem-solving domain is concerned about possession of knowledge of how to do things, how to solve a problem procedurally, and how the physical world works, and possession of skills and physical ability to solve a practical problem. As will be illustrated in the data, the construct of thematic domain is not necessarily determined objectively, but rather, it can be highly subjective. One particular event can be construed as an issue either in the social/moral domain or in the technical/problem-solving domain. Therefore, whether one social event is viewed as belonging to the social or the technical domain is determined by the way people construe it through discourse, not by its objective physical characteristics.

As will be shown in the data, without using the concept of thematic domains, girls and boys' communicative styles, ranging from being submissive and self-dep-

recating to being controlling and chastising, seem to be in random distribution. However, by adopting the concept of thematic domains, we start to see that girls and boys systematically vary their communicative styles in different contexts. Thus, the adoption of the concept of the two domains will result in a more accurate and deeper understanding of the meanings of the children's behaviors.

## The concept of conflict

The focus of the analysis in this study is on the children's communicative styles in actualized and potential conflict situations. There is a considerable amount of research on children's actualized conflicts. However, there is no clear consensus on an acceptable definition of the construct (Hartup & Laursen, 1993). The disagreement mainly lies on whether a conflict should consist of opposition from one party alone or from both parties involved. The more predominant view is that conflicts should consist of oppositions from both opposing parties (Shantz, 1987; Shantz, 1986). Within this tradition, Eisenberg and Garvey (1981, p. 150) defined conflict as "an interaction which grows out of an opposition to a request for action, an assertion, or an action... and ends with a resolution or dissipation of conflict." Ervin-Tripp (1993, p. 262) defined the concept of dispute, the verbal conflict, as "a disagreement through three turns," namely, an initiation, a negative response, and a counter response. According to these definitions, a conflict episode should contain at least three turns. One person states something, and another person explicitly makes an opposing statement, and then the first person has to respond to this opposition with either a counter opposition or agreement. In contrast to the "Minimum Three-Turn View," Hay (1984; Hay & Ross, 1982) considered adequate for a conflict to merely consist of two turns, with the definition "when one person does something to which a second person objects" (Hay, 1984, p. 2). Laursen and Hartup (1989) argued that the two-turn structure should be sufficient for a conflict. However, they argued that the transient two-turn conflicts and those long-lasting ones involving three turns or more should be treated differently, since they differ significantly in the situations where they occur, the intensity of emotions involved, and the manner in which they are resolved.

Whether conflict is defined in the "two-turn view" or "three-turn view," it is made to define actualized conflicts. As a result, the current study regards this definition as too restrictive because it would exclude an important set of related interactions: the potential conflict episodes. A potential conflict situation includes exchanges in which the first person's initial speech action may pose a realistic potential opposition from the addressee, but such opposition did not occur because the addressee agreed with the initiator (verbally or in action). For example, when a child

makes a put-down statement to the addressee, the addressee would most likely respond with strong opposition if it occurred among the English-speaking children. But it is highly possible that in certain contexts in another culture, the common response is either to accept the put-down, or even to intensify it by way of self-deprecation. For example, Kyratzis and Guo (1996) observe that when scolded by girls, Chinese boys often respond with self-ridicules or escalate the behavior that is being criticized just in order to elicit more scoldings. If such situations are excluded, we will lose a significant amount of data in examining children's conflict management strategies across cultures and situations. In order to include this important set of data, this study will include exchanges involving both actualized and potential conflicts. In general, they are defined as any two-turn exchanges in which the initial turn may elicit an actual or potential opposition, and at least one of the turns must consist of a verbal expression. In this way, we can examine not only children's communicative strategies in actualized conflicts, but also their communicative strategies in potential conflicts that are dissipated.

*Method*

The data were collected from semi-naturalistic interactive play among 5-year-old Mandarin-Chinese-speaking children from a university-affiliated preschool in Beijing, China. Three girls and three boys were grouped in same-sex triads, and then in mixed-sex triads. They were from a senior class (*dàbān*, the highest of the three age levels in the Chinese preschool system) of 33 children. The school teacher helped select these children on the basis of compatibility in play and normal speech abilities.

Each triad of children was taken to a separate classroom and provided with two different sets of toys in different sessions. In one session, a set of playdough machines were provided in which playdough could be placed and transformed into different shapes as toy food. In another session, railway tracks of various shapes (straight, bent, graded, switches, etc.) were provided, which could be joined together for motorized trains with cars to run over them. The tracks are accompanied with railway stations, tunnels, bridges, and human figures, which added interest and complexity. Each triad was instructed to play together and to help each other. The researcher was with the children during their play but tried to avoid involvement with them as much as possible.

Children's interactions and speech were video recorded and later transcribed. The recording was initially transcribed by a native speaker of Mandarin Chinese, and then the transcript was checked by another native speaker for possible transcription errors. When the two transcribers differ in opinion about the content of

the child speech, a third native speaker would make a judgment and the three opinions will be reconciled by discussion.

The design of the study provides us with an opportunity to see the different behaviors across different situations by the same child. Each child plays both in a same-sex group (all girls or all boys) and a mixed-sex group. This enables us to see whether children's communicative styles remain constant across different situations or vary depending on their communicative partners.

*Results*

The results will be reported in two sections. The first section shows that status in the social hierarchy and authority on moral issues constitute the social/moral domain valued and sought after by girls. The second section shows that status in practical problem-solving and authority on "know-how" constitute the practical/problem-solving domain, valued and sought after by boys.

1.      *Gender Differences in the Social-Moral Domains*

*Excerpt 1: Girls fight for social status, while the boy volunteers to take a subordinate position.* Excerpt 1 shows that girls take it seriously and fight for status in social hierarchy, while the boy is willing to take an inferior role in the social hierarchy. In this episode, the two girls are engaged in an extended argument concerning who is older, while the boy, who was not originally involved in the dispute, ended the dispute by claiming that he was the youngest child.

**Excerpt 1**:  (Mixed-sex group)  Girls: Sun, Fu;   Boy: Li
   153   Sun:  (shows a playdough mould to Fu)
                a,     nǐ   kàn  zhèr, hái  yǒu  yíge  dà  líbār.
                hey, you look here, still have one  big pear
                Hey, look at here. There is even a big pear here.
   154   Sun:  hēi. (Sun and Li laugh loudly).
   155   Li:    (laughing)
                júzi      fěn.
                orange  power
                Orange drink powder.
   156   Fu:    (to Sun)
                shì   cǎoméi.
                is    strawberry
                It's a strawberry.

157   Sun:   (picks up the playdough mould, holds it close to Fu)
      zhè shì cǎoméi     ma? zhè shì dà lí.
      this is   strawberry QU? this is   big pear
      How could this be a strawberry? This is a big pear.

158   Sun:   (shows another mould to Fu)
      zhè cái   shì cǎoméi     ne.
      this only is   strawberry SFP
      It's this one that is a strawberry.

159   Fu:   (looks at Sun's playdough mould, low voice)
      zhīdào.
      know
      I know.

☞160   Sun:   nǐ dǒng     ma? xiǎo  bùdiǎnr.
      you understand QU? small little-kid
      Do you know? Little kiddy?               [put-down]

☞161   Fu:   nǐ cái  xiǎo  bùdiǎnr ne.
      you only small little-kid SFP
      It's you who is a little kiddy.        [counter put-down]

☞162   Sun:   nǐ cái  shì xiǎo  bùdiǎnr ne.
      you only is   small little-kid
      It's you who is a little kiddy.        [counter put-down]

☞163   Fu:   nǐ cái  shì   xiǎo bùdiǎnr  ne.
      you only small little-kid      SFP
      It's you who is a little kiddy.        [counter put-down]

☞164   Sun:   nǐ  shì xiǎo  bùdiǎnr.
      you be  small little-kid
      You are a little kiddy.            [counter put-down]

☞165   Fu:   nǐ  shì xiǎo bùdiǎnr.
      you be  small little-kid
      You are a little kiddy.            [counter put-down]

☞166   Sun:   nǐ  shì xiǎo  bùdiǎnr.
      you be  small little-kid
      You are a little kiddy.            [counter put-down]

☞167   Fu:   nǐ cái  shì xiǎo  ne.
      you only be  small SFP
      It is you who is little.           [counter put-down]

☞168   Sun:   (short pause, then turns to Guo)
      shūshu, shéi shì xiǎo  bùdiǎnr, wǒmen sā     zhōngjiānr?
      uncle,   who be  small little-kid, we     three middle?
      Uncle, who is a little kiddy, among three of us?     [seek authority]

☞169   Li:     (quickly and loud)
               wǒ.
               me
               Me.                            [self deprecation]
  170   Fu:     (giggles with Sun)

In Lines 156–159 in Excerpt 1, the two girls Sun and Fu had a dispute about the identity of a playdough mould. Sun blatantly rejected Fu's claim that it was a strawberry mould and stated that it was in fact a pear mould. Fu lowered her voice right away and submitted to Sun's challenge. Up to this point, one might think that girls do not engage in prolonged conflicts and Fu is quite submissive to Sun. However, their following argument indicates that it is not the case. In Lines 160–169, it is clear that girls can engage in extended arguments in order to win the upper hand for social status. They are ready to have direct and escalated confrontations with each other, and Fu is obviously not submissive to Sun on this matter. Although Fu easily gives in to Sun for the argument over the name of the mould in Line 159, she fights back readily and strongly as soon as Sun calls her "little kiddy." The two girls have a tit-for-tat crossfire for several rounds. In order to get out of the gridlock, Sun turns to the adult researcher for authoritative judgment in Line 168.

The girls' willingness to be engaged in extended argument for social status contrasts sharply with their short-lived conflict exchange concerning a technical matter, such as the shape of a mould. It also contrasts sharply with the boy's willingness to take self-deprecation regarding social status. In Line 169, when Sun is asking Guo who is a little kiddy, Li quickly volunteers to be the little kiddy, even though he was not originally involved in the conflict. The girls clearly take the label "little kiddy" as seriously humiliating (as age seniority is a big deal in the Chinese culture in ranking peers). However, the boy is perfectly happy to take that inferior position. Although this act of Li's may be interpreted as using self-deprecation as a means to gain attention, it will be clear in later episodes that he does not do so in the technical/problem-solving domain. This episode clearly shows that girls are very concerned about their status in the social ranking, while for the boy the status in the social ranking is not a concern at all.

Why is age a big deal and how is it related to social status? The Chinese society is a highly hierarchy-conscious society, and seniority in age is a very important source of status. For example, the Chinese kinship terms not only indicate the generational differences, but also the age difference: Bóbo (father's older brother) versus Shūshu (father's younger brother), Gēge (older brother) versus Dìdi (younger brother), and Jiějie (older sister) versus Mèimei (younger sister). The language even makes efforts to serial order the siblings according to their birth order, such as Dà Gē (grand older brother), Èr Gē (second older brother), and so forth. This applies to

sisters, uncles, aunts, and grand uncles and aunts. This consciousness about age seniority is clearly socialized into the girls' mind at the age of five, but it does not seem to be taken seriously yet by the boys.

*Excerpt 2: Girls' disputes focus on moral issues and they gang up to fight for it.* Girls not only compete for status in the social hierarchy, but also are sensitive and competent in using social/moral justifications to aid themselves in conflict situations. Excerpt 2 shows that girls tend to focus on issues concerning social/moral standards in a conflict situation. When a conflict situation is framed as involving a social/moral issue, girls can use various conflict strategies such as direct confrontation and ganging up with a third party in order to get their way.

**Excerpt 2:** (All-girl group) Girls: Sun, Fu, Shi

   107  Fu:  (picks up a playdough box from Shi's side of table, to Shi)
          nǐ   zhège hái bù dǎkāi kànkan shénme yàng a?
          you this   still not open look    look    what look SFP
          Why don't you open this one of yours and see what it is like?

   108  Shi:  (grabs the playdough box back from Fu)
          gěi  wǒ zìjǐ dǎkāi, wǒ zìjǐ dǎkāi.
          give I    self open, I   self open
          Give it to me to open it myself. I open it myself.

 ☞109  Fu:  (turns to Sun, smilingly)
          lǎoshī,   nàge, nàge
          teacher, that, that
          The teacher, that, that,

 ☞110      shūshu shuō hùxiāng qiānràng, duì  ba.
          uncle  say   mutual give-way, right QU
          Uncle said we should be generous to each other, right?
                                         [accusation][gang up]

 ☞111      nǐ  ài  yòng shénme sè   jiù  yòng shénme sè,   duì  ba?
          you like use what    color then use   what    color, right QU
          You can use whatever color you like, right?     [accusation][gang up]

 ☞112  Sun:  duì!
          right
          Right!                                           [gang up]

This episode shows that girls are quite sensitive to and focus on social-moral issues in their conflicts. In this episode, Shi does not want another girl Fu to open her playdough box. Fu then frames this act into a moral issue and accuses Shi of being selfish and non-sharing, by quoting the teacher and the experimenter ("uncle"). In the direct accusation of Shi, Fu also tries to get support from the third girl Sun by getting her endorsement of her accusation. Sun backs up Fu against Shi. What is noteworthy in this episode is the type of accusation that Fu made. Fu's accusation

is that Shi is selfish and non-sharing, a social/moral one in nature. The use of social/moral accusations in conflict situations by girls shows a clear contrast to those accusations made by boys in similar conflict situation, who typically justify their own actions or accuse others on the ground of technical competence, as illustrated later in Excerpt 18.

*Excerpt 3: Girls use social/moral justifications in resolving conflicts.* The use of social/moral justifications by girls can be quite effective in helping girls get what they want. Excerpt 3 shows that even when one's action is not quite socially appropriate, one may get her way by accusing the other person on social/moral grounds.

**Excerpt 3:**  (All-girl group) Girls: Sun, Fu, Shi

> 224  Sun:  (moves to Shi, tries to take Shi's playdough pressor)
> ràng  wǒ  wánr  yī  ge  ma.  gěi  wǒ.
> allow  I  play  one  CL  SFP  give  I
> Let me play with it once. Give it to me.
>
> 225  Fu:  (shows own playdough)
> nǐ  kàn,  diào  le.
> you  look  drop  PERF
> Look, it dropped.
>
> 226  Shi:  (holds playdough pressor tightly away from Sun)
> bù  xíng  de.
> not  allowed  REL
> No way.
>
> 227  bù  néng  ràng  nǐ  wánr.
> not  can  let  you  play
> I can't let you play with it.
>
> 228  Sun:  (moves to the other side of Shi, loudly)
> shūshu,  tā  bù  qiānràng.
> uncle  he/she  not  share
> Uncle, she doesn't share.
>
> 229  (Shi loosens grip, Sun grabs the playdough pressor and takes it away)

In Excerpt 3, a girl Sun tries to take the toy with which the other girl Shi is playing. Sun's action is quite aggressive and interruptive. Shi squarely rejects. Then Sun shouts to the experimenter Guo that Shi is not sharing. In doing so, Sun accuses Shi of inappropriate social/moral behavior. Hearing this accusation, Shi loosens the grip of the toy and this allows Sun to grab it and take it away. This episode indicates not only that girls' attention is oriented to social/moral issues in conflicts, but also that social/moral accusations have a strong effect on girls' behavior. Even in very intense conflict situations, girls want to be socially and morally proper in their behavior and try to project such a social image.

*Excerpt 4: Boys readily accept girls' social/moral criticisms without contention.* Girls not only compete among themselves for social status ranking, but also take the liberty of criticizing boys for socially inappropriate behavior as judged by the girls. In contrast, when confronted with criticisms from girls about their social behavior, boys seem to readily accept the criticism without fighting back, even though the criticism may not seem to be legitimate from an objective point of view, as illustrated below in Excerpt 4.

**Excerpt 4:**   (Mixed-sex group)  Girls: Sun, Fu;   Boy: Li
    258   Li:    (presses playdough, then punches it with rolling pin, making some
                  noise)
☞259   Sun:   (scoldingly, to Li)
                  nǐ   gàn má    ne,   gūlōng gūlōng de,
                  you do   what QU, gulong  gulong DE
                  What are you doing? Making those gulong gulong sounds.      [scold]
☞260   SR:    hái   ná    gǎn miàn     zhàng, gē gē duò  ne?
                  even hold roll noodles stick,   ge ge chop PROG
                  And even use the rolling pin to chop on it?                        [scold]
☞260   Li:    (goes to take Sun's knife, Sun watches, Li goes back to work on play-
                  dough)                                                              [acceptance]

In this episode, the boy Li punches the playdough with a rolling pin, producing some noises. The girl Sun does not seem to like his action and the noise, and she scolds Li for his behavior in a condescending adult-like manner. Even though Li's behavior is not inappropriate for a play situation like this, and Sun's scolding is obviously fussy, picky, and obnoxious, Li does not talk back at all. Important to note here is that Sun's scolding is not focused on the technical inappropriateness of Li's action, such as the possibility that the action will break the machine or will not produce proper playdough products. Rather, it is focused on the more general social effect of his action, such as making some strange sounds or unconventional use of the rolling pin (chopping, instead of rolling).

*Excerpt 5: Girls gang up to make up social rules against boys, using inclusion and ostracizing strategies.* Girls can be quite controlling over boys when the conflict involves compliance to social rules. Excerpt 5 shows that girls are very assertive in criticizing the boy for violating the social rules and use social ostracizing strategies to pressure boys to comply.

**Except 5**    (Mixed sex group)  Girls: Sun, Fu        Boy: Li
    392   Guo:  dōu  gē   dào  yí    kuàir.
                  all    put  to    one   piece
                  Put all of them together.
    393   Fu:    (to Guo)

wǒ yě   shì, wǒ yě   nòng le,
I    also  BE  I   also make PERF
Me too. I also made some,

394  gē  zài  zhè lǐ tóu. (referring to the same box)
put at   this inside
and put them in here.

395  Li:  (opens lid of another box, loud to Guo)
zhè  shì  wǒ  de.
this BE I    REL
This is mine.

396  Fu:  (opens lid of own box, to Li)
wǒmen dōu gē  zài zhè lǐ tóu   le,
we     all  put at   this inside PERF
We all put them in here.

397  nǐ  kàn  ya.
you look SFP
You look.

398  Li:  (puts own playdough products to own box)
wǒ yào   gē  zhè lǐ tóu.
I    want put this inside
I want to put them in here.

399  Fu:  (tries to open Li's box to get playdough out)

399  nà   nǐ  děi    děng nàge, nàge,
then  you have-to wait that   that
But you have to wait that, that,

400  děng zhè lǐ    tóu gē  mǎn le,
wait  this inside put full PERF
wait till it is full in here,

401  ránhòu cái néng gē  nà   lǐ tóu.
then   still can   put that inside
then can you start to put them in there.

402  kàn nǐ  zhè hái shì,
look you this still BE
Look at yours. They are still,

403  děi    gěi tā nèng xià   lái,   duì  ba? (looks at Sun)
have-to give it  make down come right QU
It has to be cut down, right?

404  Sun:  (to Fu)
duì.
right
Right.

405    Sun:    (conciliatory, points at Li's box to Fu)
            ràng   Li    gē    zhèr    ba.
            let    Li    put   here    SFP
            Let's allow Li to put them in here.
406            (to Fu, comments on Li's playdough)
            nǐ   děi    lá    xià    lái,    duì    ba?
            you  have-to cut  down   come    right  QU
            You have to cut it down, isn't that right?
407            Li   bù    lá    jiù    bù    lá,
            Li   not   cut   then   not   cut
            If Li doesn't cut it down, then let it be.
408            fǎnzhèng bù   lá   de    jiù    dōu   bù   nénggòu
            anyway   not  cut  REL   then   all   not  can
            Anyway, if they are not cut down, then they can't
409            gēn       wǒmen de   gē   yī   kuàir, shìba?
            together   we       REL  put  one  piece  BE QU
            be put together with ours, right?
410    Fu:     en.
            right
            Right.

In this episode, the experimenter Guo asks the children to put all the playdough products together. The girl Fu is very quick in showing Guo that she is complying with the rule. When the boy Li claims to Guo that he has a private box for his own playdough products, Fu criticizes Li for not being collective. Fu first argues that both she and the other girl Sun have been putting playdough products in the common box all along. When Li insists that he wants to put his own playdough products in another box, Fu counters Li's insistence by laying out the rule that one can only use another box when the first one is full. To prove that Li is not justified to use the other box, Fu further accuses Li's product as unfinished, and then asks Sun to verify that Li's products are defective. Sun, the other girl, gangs up with Fu by confirming that Li's products are not properly done. Although she seems to be taking a more conciliatory position in saying that Li is allowed to use another box, it was really a serious attack against Li in disguise, since right after that she says that if Li's products are not up to the standard, they won't be allowed to be put in the common box anyway. This states that any nonconformity to the rules would be socially ostracized. In this episode, we can see that Li at first frames the situation in such a way that it is assumed to be good to keep individuals' things separately. The two girls fight back vigorously, but in different ways. One girl tries to confront that assumption by not allowing such practice, while the other girl sneakily changes the frame by making it a privilege to join the group and stating that one cannot

join the group unless one conforms to the group's standards. The boy not only is in an inferior position in the argument concerning the social/moral issues, but also has scant resources for negotiating strategies as compared with the two girls.

*Excerpt 6: Girls' criticism can be harsh and not quite justified, but boys do not mind.* Girls not only can be quite harsh in criticizing boys for their behaviors on social and moral grounds when the criticism is justified, but also can be quite harsh when the criticism is not that justified, as shown in Excerpt 6.

**Excerpt 6:** (Mixed sex group)  Girls: Sun, Fu   Boy: Li

  603  Li:  (presses hard to get playdough out of the playdough machine, knocks over machine)

  604  Sun:  (laughing)

              nǐ   gàn má   ne    Li, chōufēng la?

              you do  what PROG Li crazy   PERF

              What are you doing, Li? Are you crazy?

  605  Li:  hei. (laughs, looks at Sun)

  606  Fu:  gàosù nǐ  méi      yǒu jiù shì méi      yǒu le,

              tell    you not-have have just BE  not-have have PERF

              When I told you that it was all gone, then it would be all gone.

  607  Fu:  nǐ hái shǐjìn    wàng rénjiā lǐtóu jǐ.

              you still use-force toward other inside press

              You are still trying to press so hard into mine.

In Excerpt 6, the girl Fu finds that they have run out of playdough in the machine. The boy Li tries to help by pressing the lever hard and knocking the machine in order to get out more playdough. Then the other girl Sun ridicules Li as being crazy in his action. Fu concurs with Sun by stating that she has already told Li that there is nothing in it, thus making Li's action irrational and ridiculous. Here, we see that the girls are presenting the boy as a crazy naughty child who produces criticizable behaviors and the girls themselves as the standard keeper. What is noteworthy here is that the boy's action is quite reasonable given the situation and is not against any obvious social or moral standard. It is the girls who are subjectively presenting the action as ridiculous. Even though the girls' ridicules and criticisms are not fully justified, the boy takes them light-heartedly by responding with laughs and continued actions. It seems that within the domain of social/moral issues, girls always feel free to criticize boys, while boys are highly tolerant and accepting for such criticisms.

*Excerpt 7: Although boys can use social/moral justifications, they are not readily available.* Excerpt 7 provides an example showing that boys are not as sensitive and competent in using social/moral justifications the way girls do. Although they are able to reason in social/moral issues and justify actions with social/moral stand-

ards as well as girls, such behavior tends to be forced by others, rather than spontaneous responses. This is shown in Excerpt 7 below.

**Excerpt 7:**   (Mixed sex group)   Girl: Shi,     Boys: Zha (Zhang), Gao

385   Zha:   (takes playdough machine)
zài     wánr yí   cì.
again play   one CL
I'll play with it once again.

386   Shi: (while playing with her own toy, challenging to Zhang)
wǒ zài     wánr yí   cì, hǎo  bù  hǎo?
I    again play   one CL good not  good
How about I play with it once again?

387      (in a tone like making a rule, with a plain and authoritative tone)
yī  rén      wánr yī   cì  he.
one person play   one CL SFP
One person plays with it once.

388   Zha:   bù   xíng.
not   OK
No way.

389   Shi:   wèi   shá?
for    what
Why not?

390   Gao:   (while rolling his own playdough, argues for his own turn)
wǒ   wánr  me?
I     play   QU
What about me?

391   Zha:   (to Shi)
wǒ zài      wánr.
I    PROG play
I'm playing with it now.

392   Gao:   (stops playing, stretches up body, loud to Zhang, teaching tone)
Zhang, nǐ   guāng zìjǐ  yà.
Zhang  you only    self  press
Zhang, you just pressing it yourself.

393   Shi:   zěnme bù  gěi bié    rén     yà    ya?
why    not give other  people press QU
How come you don't let others press?

394   Zha:   (defensively)
bù   shì,  wǒ gāngcái gěi   nǐ   yà.
not  BE  I    earlier   give you press
It's not like that. I was pressing it for you just now.

395          nà    nà,  gāngcái Shi,  yà    le    hěn  cháng shíjiān le.
             then  then earlier  Shi  press PERF  very  long  time   PERF
             And, and, just now, Shi was pressing it for a long time.

             .........

401   Zha:   (to Shi)
             wǒ dì  sān  cì    jiù   ràng gěi  nǐmen wánr le.
             I   SN  three time then  let  give you   play  PERF
             I'll let you play with it at the third time.

402   Shi:   xíng, dì  sān  cì   gěi  wǒ. (turns to play with Gao)
             OK    SN  three time give I
             OK, give it to me at the third time.

In this episode, the boy Zhang has been playing with the only playdough machine for a while, and he states to himself that he wants to play with it once again. The girl Shi immediately rejected his plan by saying what if she wants to play with it. Then she justifies her wish by suggesting a fair-play rule, one person playing with it once and then letting another person play. Zhang rejects that rule with a blunt refusal "No way!". When challenged for its reason by Shi, Zhang gives the justification, "I'm playing with it." which is socially unacceptable selfish conduct. This of course exposes Zhang to easy criticisms. Even his loyal ally, the other boy Gao, sees his unreasonableness and joins Shi in criticizing him for being selfish. Only at this time does Zhang realize the weak ground of his position and then starts to make a conscientious effort to make a valid justification for his position, namely, he was working for Gao in the previous turn, and Shi played with it for a long time before, and therefore, he was justified to have another turn before Shi. He ends his justification by promising to give Shi a turn soon. This episode shows that although boys are able to produce valid and sophisticated social/moral justifications for their behavior, the process is not as readily accessible and automatic to them as to girls. They have to make a conscious effort to orient themselves towards social/moral directions only when they are pressed by the situation. In contrast, girls seem to do it automatically.

*Excerpt 8: Girls fight over social-moral issues, but boys are not allowed to participate in it.* The boys' lack of readiness and spontaneity in using social/moral rules might have been resulted partially from the negative responses they get from girls when they try to put their foot in the social/moral domain. Excerpt 8 shows that boys are aware of the maintenance of social/moral standards and care to intervene when needed. However, they would encounter unreasonable resistance from girls, who seem to regard themselves as the sole moral guardians, excluding boys.

**Excerpt 8:**   (Mixed-sex group)   Girls: Sun, Fu;        Boy: Li

  377   Sun:   (realizes that her own blue playdough is in front of Fu, takes it)

        gěi  wǒ  ba,  nǐ  ge  dà  húndàn.

        give  I    SFP, you  CL  big  bastard

        Give it to me, you big bastard.

  378   Fu:   (protests)

        wǒ  méi      qiǎng  nǐ  de    ya.

        I    have-not  rob    you  POSS  SFP

        I didn't rob it from you.

  379   Sun:   (loud, to Fu)

        nà  nǐ  bǎ  wǒ  de    ná  zǒu  le.

        but  you  BA  I    POSS take  go    PERF

        But you took mine away from me.

☞380   Li:   (loud and firm, to Sun)

        bù    néng  mà    rén.

        not  can    curse  people

        It's not allowed to say bad words.                              [scold]

☞381   Fu:   (challengingly, to Li)

        shéi  mà    rén    le.

        who  curse  people  PFT

        Who said bad words?                              [counter]

  382   Sun:   (points at Fu's playdough, scoldingly)

        kànkan  nǐ,    sī    de    duō  duō  a.

        look    look  you,  tear  DE  so    much  SFP

        Look at you. You have torn up so many.

☞383   (turns to Li, loud and challengingly)

        duì      ya, shéi  mà    rén    le?

        correct  SFP, who  curse  people  PFT

        That's right. Who said bad words?                              [gang up]

In Excerpt 8, the two girls Sun and Fu get engaged in a dispute over the possession of a toy. When Sun uses a bad word in attacking Fu, the boy Li criticizes her by stating the common sense moral standard, "It's not allowed to say bad words." Although Li sides with Fu in doing so, Fu does not appreciate Li's moral support, but rather, turns against Li. Since it is impossible to challenge Li's criticism because he states a common sense rule, Fu undermines Li's criticism of Sun by denying the fact that Sun said a bad word. In this way, Fu's position is fully consistent with the rule, but at the same time, puts Li in the immoral position, since she is in effect saying that Li is lying. At this point, Fu's opponent Sun also changes her alliance by siding with Fu against Li, claiming that she did not say any bad word. Why should the two opposing girls suddenly adjust their alignment to jointly fight against the boy who is helping one of them? It seems that girls are quite sensitive to who

should be the moral guardian in the interaction and try to carefully guard against intruders into their restricted sphere of influence. The intrusion of the gender territory seems to be a serious issue that overrides the personal conflict among members of the same gender. That is why the two girls change the alliance and gang up against the boy. It is also very important to notice that the boy Li did not follow up with the dispute, even though he is on the absolutely right side. His behavior seems to acknowledge the exclusive girl dominance over that domain.

*Excerpt 9: Girls are accepting to criticisms by other girls.* The claim that girls have the exclusive privilege as moral guardians can be supported by a girl's response to a similar criticism from another girl. Although the girls are highly defensive when the criticism is made by boys, as shown in Excerpt 8, they are quite accepting of similar criticisms when they are made by other girls, as shown in Excerpt 9 below.

**Excerpt 9:**   (Mixed sex group)   Girls: Sun, Fu;   Boy: Li

| 598 | Li: | (presses hard, multicolored playdough strips come out of the machine) |
| | | wa ha! |
| | | Wow! |
| 599 | Li: | (looks at Fu and Sun) |
| | | wǒ nòng de piào    bú piàoliàng? |
| | | I    make REL beautiful not beautiful |
| | | Is what I made beautiful? |
| 601 | Fu: | piàoliàng. |
| | | Beautiful. |
| 602 | Sun: | (giggle) |
| | | jiù gēn nà  dà shǐkèlàng zǐ    shì de. |
| | | just with that big shit-eating-bug like REL |
| | | Just like the shit-eating bugs. |
| 603 | Fu: | (giggles first, then seriously) |
| | | bié    shuō nàme ěxīn    de  huà. |
| | | don't say   that   vomiting REL speech |
| | | Don't say things that gross. |

In Excerpt 9, the girl Sun again uses a vulgar expression "shit-eating bugs" to describe what Li has proudly produced with the playdough machine. The other girl Fu makes a scolding and prohibitive move by a straight negative imperative "Don't say things that gross." This is a very similar situation as shown in Excerpt 8, except that this time the criticizer is a girl. In fact, the criticism here is more direct and personal than the one made by Li in Excerpt 8. A bare imperative is used here while an impersonal rule statement is used in Excerpt 8. However, the girl Sun does not

retort back to Fu at all. Putting Excerpts 8 and 9 together, it seems that girls can accept a moral criticism from a girl, but find it difficult to take it from a boy.

**Summary of girls' and boys' behaviors in the social/moral domain**

From the above examples, a clear pattern of gender differences seems to emerge concerning behaviors in the social/moral domain. Girls tend to be quite competitive for status in the social hierarchy. They want to hold higher social status by being older than other children. When conflicts emerge, girls immediately see the social/moral issues in them and try to accuse their opponents for breaching the social/moral standards. In contrast, boys do not seem to focus their attention on competing for status in the social hierarchy. In fact, they are willing to take a subordinate position just to amuse the girls. Girls' use of social/moral accounts as justifications or accusations seems to be automatic and skillful. In contrast, boys' use of such tactics only occurs when pressed. When girls use social/moral tactics in criticizing boys, boys are submissive and compliant. Girls use social/moral tactics against boys in such a pervasive way that they can be seen as close to abusive, as they use them in situations when the social/moral criticism is quite arbitrary without adequate justification. Finally, girls regard themselves as the exclusive moral guardians, and they are willing to temporarily suspend the personal conflicts among themselves in order to exclude boys from treading on the girls' domain of control. All this seems to suggest that the social/moral domain is the Chinese girls' territory and sphere of influence. In this domain, girls are competitive, competent, and domineering, while boys are indifferent, clumsy, and submissive.

2.      *Gender differences in the technical problem-solving domain*

So far, Chinese boys seem to be quite submissive to and marginalized by girls in mixed sex interactions. However, nothing could be further from the truth if we assume that this is the general behavioral pattern of the Chinese girls and boys across all situations. In fact, in many situations, boys can be very bossy and girls submissive. The cluster of situations where boys are domineering and girls are submissive can be labeled as the technical/problem-solving domain.

*Excerpt 10: Boys can be domineering over technical/problem-solving issues.* In Excerpt 10, the boy Li, who is quite submissive to girls in situations in the social/moral domain, turns out to be very bossy and domineering to the girls when it comes to issues in the technical/problem-solving domain. In contrast, the girl Sun, who is quite harsh and domineering in the social/moral domain turns out to be quite submissive.

**Excerpt 10:** (Mixed sex group)   Girls: Sun, Fu,   Boy: Li

| 06 | | (Guo places playdough box on the table, all children get excited, try to take things out) |
|---|---|---|

06   (Guo places playdough box on the table, all children get excited, try to take things out)

07   Li: (to Sun and Fu)

zhè  shì  xiàngpíní. zhè lǐ     quán  shì  hǎo  wánr  de  dōngxi.

this BE playdough this inside all   BE good play REL thing

This is playdough. Inside are all fun toys.

08   Sun: (tries to take things out of the box)

09  Fu:  (watches Li and Sun, excited)

wǒ jiā    yě  yǒu zhè ge.

I   home also have this CL

I have this in my house too.

10  Sun:  (while taking things out of box)

wǒ jiā    yě  yǒu zhè ge.

I   home also have this CL

I have this in my house too.

11  Li:  (harshly and loudly to Sun)

bié    dòng.

don't touch

Don't touch it.

12  Guo:                                (walks to the table, to all)

bié  pèng zhe   a.

don't hit    touch SFP

Don't hurt yourselves.

13  Li:  (to Sun)

dāi  huǐr  nǐ  zài  gěi  dòng huài   le.

wait while you then give touch broken PERF

What if you break them.

14  Sun: (steps aside a little, low voice)

ná    chū  lái.

take out  come

I'm taking them out.

15  Li:  (one second pause, then to Guo)

duì    ba, shūshu?

right QU uncle

Isn't that right, uncle?

16  Guo: duì.

Yes.

In this episode, the experimenter Guo is taking out the playdough machine and various playdough containers from the bag. All three children are very excited about the toys and make comments about them. There is a clear difference between

the boy's comments and the two girls' comments. The boy Li starts to state what the toys are and what function they have, showing that he has the knowledge about the toys. This behavior is oriented toward the technical/problem-solving domain, because the statement reveals one's specific knowledge about these objects. In contrast, the two girls' comments show a quite different orientation. Fu states that she has the same toys at home, and Sun states that she also has them at home. These comments are oriented towards the social/moral domain because they are trying to brag about their possession of interesting toys as a way to gain social status. This difference shows that boys tend to show off about their possession of specific knowledge, while girls tend to show off about their possession of socially valued wealth.

Further down in the episode, we see a clear gender contrast in the conflict styles in the technical/problem-solving domain. When the girl Sun tries to get the toys out of the box, the boy Li makes a harsh prohibition to Sun in the form of a blunt negative imperative, "Don't touch it!" Li then justifies the prohibition by a demeaning statement "You will break them." This justification implies that Sun is incompetent in handling the toys, and it aggravates the prohibition. As if this is not enough, Li goes further by trying to get confirmation for his claim from the experimenter Guo. All this presents a serious threat to Sun's image of problem-solving competence. How would Sun respond to all this? Judging from previous excerpts, we know that Sun can be very harsh and domineering in her communicative style. However, to Li's harsh prohibition in Excerpt 10, Sun gives very little resistance. Although she does not stop taking things out of the box, she has to justify her noncompliance by sheepishly saying that she was just taking things out (since it does not require any skill to do this, there is no way that she will break the toy). Although this is an act of self-defense, it is in essence a quite self-destructive one. In doing so, she accepts Li's presupposition that she does not know about the object (she could have said, "I know how to play with them, so I won't break them"). From this episode, we can see that girls' and boys' communicative styles in conflicts in the technical/problem-solving domain present an opposite pattern from those in the social/moral domain.

*Excerpt 11: Girls easily accept boys' put-downs about their abilities.* When the conflict situation is in the technical/problem-solving domain, girls not only readily accept boys' harsh directives, but also easily accept boys' insulting put-downs about their abilities, as shown in Excerpt 11.

**Excerpt 11:** (Mixed sex group)   Girl: Shi      Boys: Zha (Zhang), Gao
   617   Zha: (tries to put playdough into holder of presser, Shi watches)
                  yà, zhè ge, yà  yà  yà  yà.
                  oh  this CL  oh  oh  oh  oh
                  Uh oh, this, oh, oh, oh, oh.

618  Gao:  (press own playdough, to self)
       yà, chū qù lou, chū qù lou.
       oh exit go SFP exit go SFP
       Oh, it comes out, it comes out.

619  Zha:  (finishes putting in playdough, ready, to Shi)
       hǎo le!
       good PERF
       OK, it's ready now.

620  Shi:  (moves to the other side of Zhang)
       děng huǐr, wǒ lái qiē a.
       wait while I come cut SFP
       Wait a minute. I'll come to cut it.

621      (gets to other side)
       děng huǐr, (gets knife ready) yà ba.
       wait while press SFP
       Wait a minute. You can press now.

622  Zha:  (loudly ordering, to Shi)
       děng huǐr de.
       wait while REL
       Wait a minute.

623  Shi:  (holds knife, waits)

624  Zha:  děng huǐr.
       wait while
       Wait a minute.

625  Shi:  (holds knife)
       wǒ yǐjīng zhǔnbèi hǎo le, kuài diǎn qiē ba.
       I already prepare good PERF quick little cut SFP
       I'm already ready. Cut it quickly.

626  Zha:  (loud order)
       děng huǐr de,
       wait while REL
       Wait a minute.

627      (adds some playdough)
       zài yào diǎn lán de, shǎguā.
       again want little blue REL silly melon
       (We) need some more blue ones, you fool.

628      nǐmén dōu zhīdào le?
       you all know PERF
       Now do you all know about it?

629  Shi:  (wait, then notices Gao)

In Excerpt 11, the boy Zhang is pressing playdough noodles with a playdough machine. The girl Shi does not get a chance to play with it and is observing on the side. When Zhang presses out some playdough noodles, he tells Shi that the noodles are ready to be taken away for storage. Even though taking away the noodles is a subordinate role, Shi plays it with excitement and enthusiasm. She asks Zhang to wait a little for her to get ready, and when she is ready, she tells Zhang to continue to press so as to produce more noodles. As soon as Shi starts to tell Zhang what to do, Zhang gets impatient with Shi and makes a blunt prohibitive imperative "Wait a minute!" with a loud voice. Confronted with Zhang's harsh imperative, Shi readily complies by holding her knife and waiting patiently. Zhang repeats the imperative, and Shi keeps waiting. When Shi tells Zhang again that she is ready and asks him to give permission for her to cut, Zhang issues the imperative in loud voice again. Then he adds some blue playdough to the machine and tells Shi that she is a fool. Then he makes the remark "Now do you all know about it?" to show that he is the only master of knowledge. To this, Shi responds by continuing to wait without any remarks. It seems that Shi is quite ready to accept the subordinate role when the play involves how to play with a toy and she is quite used to such insulting put-downs.

*Excerpt 12: Girls are willing to show incompetence when in doubt.* Girls not only readily accept boys' rudeness and arrogance in conflict situations in the technical/problem-solving domain, but also they voluntarily admit their own weakness and incompetence. When things are in doubt, even when girls have the access and privilege to a toy, they will show that they do not have the competence and confidence to play with the toy, as shown in Excerpt 12.

**Excerpt 12:** (Mixed sex group)   Girl: Shi      Boys: Zha (Zhang), Gao
   18   Shi:   (tries to take Gao's playdough machine)
              ēiya,      nǐ  gěi  wǒ  yòng  yí  xià  zhè  ge,
              come-on  you  give  I   use  one  time  this  CL
              Come on, you give it to me to use for a little while.
   19   Gao:   (lets go playdough machine, looks at Shi, complaining)
              gàn  má      ya,  nǐ?
              do   what  SFP  you
              What are you doing?
   20   Shi:   (fiddles with playdough machine, whining)
              wǒ  jiù   xiǎng  wánr  zhèi  ge.
              I    just  want  play  this  CL
              I just want to play with this.

21        (tries to put playdough in)
         děng huǐr  wǒ xiān gē  jìn    qù.
         wait  while  I   first  put  enter  go
         Later, I'll put it in first.

22  Zha:  (sees Shi holding playdough machine, comes to Shi)
         wǒ...
         I...

23  Shi:  shūshu, zhè zǎ   wánr? wǒ bù  huì         wánr.
         uncle   this how play  I   not know-how-to play
         Uncle, how to play with this? I do know how to play with it.

24        (turns back to look at Guo, smiles, holds up playdough machine)
         zǎ    gē jìn    qù? wǒ bú huì         gē.
         how put enter go  I   not know-how-to put
         How to put it in? I don't know how to put it in.

25  Zha:  (grabs playdough machine from Shi, in patronizing tone)
         bú  shì, bú  shì, shì zhème   zhe   wánr.
         not  BE  not  BE  BE  this-way  PROG  play
         No, no. It should be played with like this.

26        (tries to demonstrate to Shi)

27        wǒ, wǒ, wǒ bú  wánr zhè ge,
         I    I    I   not play  this CL
         I, I, I don't play with it.

28        (then leaves playdough machine on table in a hurry, goes back to own
        play)

29        nǐ   jiù  bǎ zhè ge sāi       jìn    qù jiù  xíng,
         you just BA this CL squeeze enter go just OK
         You simply squeeze this into it, and it will be all.

30  Shi:  (to Zhang)
         nǎ    ge? zhè zhè ge ya? sāi,     sāi     zhè lǐtóu  a?
         which CL  this this CL QU squeeze  squeeze  this inside  QU
         Which one? This one? Squeeze it into this?

31        (pretends in scared tone)
         a,  bù  gǎn, bù  gǎn, bù  gǎn,
         oh not dare not dare not dare
         Uh oh, I dare not, I dare not, I dare not.

32        a    zhè ge bù  gǎn, bù  gǎn.
         Ah this CL not dare not dare
         Oh, this I dare not, dare not.

33        (in exaggerated tone)
         zǎ    wánr ya? wǒ bù  gǎn wánr,
         how play  QU I   not dare play
         How to play with it? I dare not play with it.

34      wǒ bú   huì              wánr zhè xiē,
        I    not know-how-to play   this PL
        I don't know how to play with these.

35      wǒ bú   huì              wánr zhè xiē wánjù de   a,
        I    not know-how-to play   this PL toy    REL SFP
        I don't know how to play with these toys.

36      wǒ kě   bù  huì              wánr zhè xiē wánjù,  a,
        I    at-all not know-how-to play   this PL  toy      SFP
        I just don't know how to play with these toys.

37      wǒ cóng méi      wánr guò  zhè zhǒng wánjù a.
        I    ever have-not play EXPE this type   toy   SFP
        I have never played with this kind of toys.

38      (pretends to be scared, leaves the table and the playdough machine)

In this episode, the girl Shi grabs the playdough machine from the boy Gao. Reluctantly, Gao gives up the machine to Shi with a complaint. Although Shi is quite rude and domineering in taking over the machine, she immediately seeks help from the Experimenter Guo, with the justification that she does not know how to play with it. Without any attempts of trying, she says that she does not even know how to put the playdough into the machine. At this moment, the other boy Zhang comes and tries to show her how to play in a patronizing way. Then he leaves Shi alone in a rush to play with his own toys. Shi continues to ask Zhang what to do, while Zhang ignores her. Then she pretends to show that she is very scared of the machine, repeatedly saying that she dares not play with the toy because she does not know how to play with it. At the end, she leaves the table and the machine. The girl Shi's aggressive behavior in grabbing the toy from the boy Gao contrasts sharply to her ready admission of her lack of problem-solving competence and submissiveness to boys for problem-solving. It is also interesting to see that Shi links her emotions with her cognitive abilities and past experience. She says that she is afraid of playing with the toy because she does not know how to play with it, due to lack of prior experience. In this episode, when confronted with technical novelty or difficulties, the girl Shi is willing and ready to admit incompetence and fear.

*Excerpt 13: Girls encourage girls to give up on technical problems.* What do girls do when they encounter technical difficulties when other playmates are all girls? In contrast to the girls' behavior in similar situations in the mixed-sex group, girls do not seek technical help from other girls in the all-girls group. Instead, they will seek help from the adult. Do other girls offer any help to their female playmates in such situations? They do. However, they do not offer technical help to solve the problem but rather, they offer some kind of moral/social support by asking the person in difficulty to give up on the problem. This is shown in Excerpt 13.

**Excerpt 13:** (All girls group)Girls: Fu, Shi, Sun

    80  Shi:   (cannot pull out presser, holds presser, to Guo, whiny)

                ēiya,        shūshu bāng wǒ ná   kāi   xià,

                come-on uncle   help  I    take away a bit

                Come on, Uncle, help me to pull this out.

    81        wǒ ná   bú  dòng.

                I    take  not  move

                I can't pull it out.

    82  Sun:  (next to Shi, plays with own toy)

                ná  bú  dòng nǐ  bú  huì         bù  ná  ya?

                take not move you not know-how-to not take QU

                If you can't pull it out, why can't you stop pulling it out?

    83  Guo:  děng yī   xià   a.

                wait  one time SFP

                Wait a second, OK?

    84  Shi:   (whiny )

                ná   yī   xià   ma, shūshu.

                take one time SFP uncle

                Just pull it a bit, please, Uncle.

    85  Fu:    (shows own playdough box)

                kàn  kàn  wǒ zhè lǐtóu  làn    bù        jījī de.

                look look I    this inside messy yucky-like REL

                Look, what a mess I have inside it here.

    86  Guo:  (to Shi)

                děng yī   xià   a.

                wait  one time SFP

                Wait a second, OK?

    87  Shi:   ēi yōu,   kuài  diǎn ya,  shūshu.

                come-on quick little SFP uncle

                Come on, hurry up, please, Uncle.

In this episode, Shi continues to ask Guo for help and Guo continues to ignore her request. Another girl Sun comes in and asks Shi why she can't simply stop pulling the machine out. In doing so, Sun offers her help by asking her to change the goal, namely, giving up on the problem. We see that girls seek technical help from males, but not females. Other girls, instead of offering technical help, offer a kind of moral/social support by encouraging the other party to give up on the problem.

    *Excerpt 14: Girls seek technical help from boys, but not from girls.* How would girls respond when other girls attempt to offer technical help? Excerpt 14 shows that girls do not seem to trust other girls' technical help, even though they could not get boys' help. This excerpt also shows that even when girls have quite good

knowledge about how to solve a problem, they are not sure of themselves and tend to think that boys have better knowledge than they do.

**Excerpt 14:** (Mixed sex group)  Girls: Sun, Fu;      Boy: Li

260  Fu:    (tries to figure out how to make one thing, to Li)

261         Li, zhè yí  ge zěnme    méi     yǒu bǐ ya?
            Li  this one CL how-come not-have  have pen QU
            Li, how come this one does not have a pen?

262  Sun:   nǎr    ne, bǐ?
            where SFP  pen
            Where is the pen?

263  Fu:    (ignores Sun, to Li)
            nǐ  kàn  zhè yīnggāi,
            you look this should
            Look, this should,

264         zhè yí  ge yīnggāi zhème   biǎn xíng,
            this one CL should  this-way flat   shape
            this one should be flat like this,

265         suǒyǐ yīnggāi yǒu yī  dōngxi,
            so     should  have one thing
            so, there should be one thing,

266         néng chā   ya.
            can  insert SFP
            so that it be inserted.

267  Sun:   bǐ? bǐ,  shénme jiào?
            pen pen what    call
            Pen? What is a pen?

In Excerpt 14, the girl Fu is trying to figure out how a toy works. She seems to have found that one piece is missing. Instead of continue to work it out on her own, she asks the boy Li why the toy has some part missing. From the way she describes what the toy should consist of, it is quite obvious that she has quite good knowledge about the toy. It is also clear that Li should not necessarily have better knowledge about the toy, since Fu has played with the toy more than Li. However, Fu asks Li twice for help, and Li ignores. The other girl Sun responds to Fu's query twice, expressing interest in getting involved. However, Fu keeps seeking Li's attention, completely ignoring Sun. Fu's decision to ignore Sun may not be entirely unfounded, since Sun only repeats the name of the missing part twice without providing any useful information and then switches her attention to other matters.

*Excerpt 15: Boys are willing to help girls with technical problems.* When girls request technical help from boys, boys often are willing to offer help. This willingness to offer help may not necessarily be due to boys' better ability to solve the problem.

Rather, it shows more about attitudes than ability. In Excerpt 15, the boy Zhang tries to help the girl Shi, even when he himself has difficulties in working it out.

**Excerpt 15:** (Mixed sex group)   Girl: Shi      Boys: Zha (Zhang), Gao

01   Shi:   (tries to open playdough box, fails)
             ei you,   ei you.
             Ouch,   ouch,

02          (gives playdough box to Zhang)
             nǐ   bāng wǒ dǎ     yī   xià.
             you help  I    open one time
             You help me open this a little bit.

03   Zha:   (engaged with own playdough, puts down own playdough box)
             ei,   mǎshàng   de.
             OK  right-away  REL
             OK, I'll do that right away.
             (tries hard to open)
             ēi   yōu, zánmen děi       gěi   tā   kàn   kàn.
             oh  uh,  we        have-to  give  it   look  look
             Oh uh, we have to take a look at this.

04   Guo:   (to Zhang)
             dǎ   bù   kāi   le       a?
             hit  not  ope   PERF  QU
             You can't open it?

05   Zha: (tries hard)
             ei you, wǒ yě   dǎ bù   kāi   le.
             ouch  I    also hit not open PERF
             Ouch, even I can't open it.

06   Guo:   (comes to help, Zhang gives playdough box to Guo)
             shūshu gěi   nǐ   dǎ kāi.
             uncle   give you hit open
             Uncle will open it for you.

07          (opens box)
             hǎo  le,     zhèi huí    dǎ kāi   le.
             good PERF this  round hit open PERF
             OK, now it is open.

In this episode, the boy Zhang is busy playing with his own toys, when the girl Shi asks him for help. Zhang responds to the request immediately by putting down his own toys right away and making the reassuring and supportive remark "OK, I'll do that right away." Although it turns out that the box was too hard for Zhang to open, he does try his best in providing the technical help in a very supportive way. We also observe that the girl Shi explicitly mentions the actor, action, and beneficiary

in a bare imperative, and uses the verb "bāng" (help). By using this form, the girl explicitly presents the boy as a competent actor and herself as a weaker person in need of help.

*Excerpt 16: Boys refuse problem-solving help from other boys.* In mixed sex groups, it seems quite natural and spontaneous for the boys to offer help and girls to ask for and accept help. It seems to be assumed that boys should play the role of the helper and this assumption is reinforced by the reliable supply of help once it is requested. In this context, we see no conflict at all between the help seeker and the help giver. What happens when boys offer help to other boys? In this data set, boys seldom seek technical help from others, but try to work out the problem on their own. Excerpt 16 shows that when boys are offered technical help by others, they will resist it. If the help is persistently offered, there will be serious conflicts.

**Excerpt 16**: (All boys group)      Boys: Zha (Zhang), Gao, Li

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 66 | Gao: | (tries hard to open a playdough box, unsuccessful) | |
| ☞67 | Li: | (walks to Gao's place, tries to grab the box, confidently) | |
| | | wǒ lái    nèng. | |
| | | I    come  make | |
| | | I'll do it. | [offer help] |
| ☞68 | Gao: | (holds on to box tight, refusing to let go) | [refusal] |
| ☞69 | Li: | (nicely) | |
| | | Gao, wǒ lái    bāng nǐ. | |
| | | Gao, I   come help  you | |
| | | Gao, I'm here to help you. | [re-offer] |
| 70 | Gao: | (holds back, protesting) | |
| ☞ | | nǐ,   wǒ nèng, wǒ gāngcái dǎ    kāi   le. | |
| | | you,  I   make, I   just-now make open pft | |
| | | You, I do it. I've just opened it once before. | [refusal] |
| ☞71 | Li: | (tries to grab over) | |
| | | bié    dòng. | |
| | | don't  move | |
| | | Don't move. | [prohibition] |
| ☞72 | Gao: | ēiya, wǒ dǎ    kāi   le. | |
| | | hey,  I   make open PFT | |
| | | Stop it. I've opened it before. | [protest] |
| ☞73 | Li: | (Gao refuses to give in, Li stops, scolding tone) | |
| ☞ | | dāihuǐr nǐ zài bǎ zhè nèng huài le. | |
| | | later you then BA this make broken PFT | |
| | | What if you break it then? | [put-down] |
| 74 | | (Li walks back to own seat) | |

In this episode, Li notices that Gao has some difficulty in opening a box and then offers to help Gao in Line 67. This shows that boys tend to be overconfident about their own technical problem-solving abilities. Although offering help is normally a very friendly social move, it is not so among boys when it is concerning technical issues. Instead, it is regarded as a move for competition and a threat to one's competence reputation. In this episode, Gao refuses to let Li do it, even though Li later explicitly frames the move as a friendly offer of help (Lines 68–69). After being refused twice, Li still does not give up, and his original offer of help is turned into a physical conflict over the possession of the box. The conflict ends without a solution, with Li's negative remark about Gao's competence. In this conflict, the boys use a variety of linguistic strategies to negotiate their positions, ranging from strongly aggravated moves such as direct prohibition "Don't move!", insistence "I do it!", and scolding on the grounds of negative consequences "What if you break it?", to explicit mitigated moves, such as reframing of the move as friendly help, "I'm here to help you" and justification, "I've opened it once before." But neither type of strategy seems to have much effect to the other party. This indicates that technical problem-solving competence is a very important issue among boys and they do not want to be on the losing side of a conflict concerning this issue.

In Excerpt 16, it should be noted that the two boys use a particular type of justification for their discourse moves. In Lines 70 and 72, Gao's justification for his refusal is "I have opened it once before." This justification claims that he has the experience and expertise to open the box and therefore does not need Li's help. Thus, the justification is on the ground of his possession of technical expertise. An obvious alternative justification can be a social one. Gao could have claimed that the box is his and he has the right to play with the box and does not want Li to play with it. However, such social justifications are not used by boys in their conflicts. This shows a clear contrast with the social/moral justifications used by girls as shown in Excerpts 2 and 3. It should also be noted that competition for the upper hand in technical competence is shown even when the boys lose the conflict. In Lines 73, Li realizes that he could not persuade Gao to accept his help. He gives up his attempt to win this conflict, but he compensates his loss by putting down the competence of his opponent Gao. He scolds Gao by predicting that Gao will break the box. This statement implies that Li knows how to do it, and Gao clearly doesn't, and therefore he is very likely to break it due to his incompetence. From this episode, we can see that boys' various discourse moves, such as the offer for help, justifications, prohibitions, and put-downs are all focused around the issue of technical problem-solving competence.

*Excerpt 17: Boys compete in showing off their ability to play independently.* The claim that boys tend to focus their primary attention on issues in the technical problem-solving domain is also evidenced by the fact that they tend to actively

show off their knowledge and competence. Excerpt 17 shows that boys try to use all sorts of ways to demonstrate their knowledge about the toys and their competence in dealing with them properly.

**Excerpt 17:** (All boys group)      Boys: Zha (Zhang), Gao, Li

09   Guo:   hái jì          zhe   zěnme wánr ma?
             still remember PROG how   play QU
             Do you still remember how to play with them?

10   Gao:   jì          de.
             remember RESU
             Yes.

11   Zha:   jì          de.
             remember RESU
             Yes.

12   Li:    jì          de.
             remember RESU
             Yes.

13   Li:    àn     zhe tú       pīn.
             follow PROG diagram  put-together
             Just follow the diagram to put them together.

14   Zha:   (checks out all rails from the box, to self)
             děng huǐr  de, wǒ, wǒ jì          de.
             wait while REL I    I   remember RESU
             Wait a minute. I, I remember.

15   Gao:   (shows tunnel to Zhang)
             ài, ài, zhè shì dā zài qiáo    shàng de.
             hey hey this BE put at bridge on     REL
             Hey, hey, this is to be put on the bridge.

16   Zha:   duì.
             Right.

17   Gao:   (shows joined tunnels to Zhang)

18          zhè, zhè shàng miàn hái méi       yǒu chāi       ne.
             this this top    side still have-not have pull-apart STAT
             This, this has not been pulled apart yet.

19   Gao:   zhè shāndòng zhèng hǎo,  liǎ  shāndòng,
             this tunnel    just   good two tunnel
             This tunnel is just right. Two tunnels,

20          hái shì pīn     zài yīqǐ    méi      yǒu chāi.
             still BE assemble at  together have-not have demolish
             they are still together and have not been taken apart yet.

21   Zha:   (takes a tunnel from Gao, looks, then puts it on the table)
            zhèng   hǎo.
            just    good
            Just right.
22   Gao:   zhèng   hǎo.
            just    good
            Just right
23   Zha:   (looks around for toys, loud order)
            hēi, gěi, gěi  wǒ  ná   lái,
            hey give give I    take come
            Hey, for me, take that over for me.
24          (Li walks to Zhang with rails, Zhang thought Li was helping him)
25          gěi  wǒ  ná  sì    ge yuán  de.
            give I    take four CL round REL
            Take four round-shaped ones for me.
26   Li:    (ignores Zhang, walks past Zhang)
27   Zha:   (looks for toys by himself)
            wǒ  děi     zhǎo  zháo  sì    ge yuán  de.
            I    have-to look-for touch four CL round REL
            I have to find four round ones.
28   Li:    (comes back, follows Zhang to look for toys in the box)
29   Gao:   (comes to the box)
            wǒ  yě   děi    yào   sì... (sees train, takes it)
            I    also have-to want four
            I also need four...
30   Li:    (pushes Zhang slightly away, takes out two train cars)
31   Gao:   (holds one train car)
            a,  zhè xiǎo  huǒchē.
            oh this little  train
            Oh, here is a little train.
32          wǒ, wǒ xiān gěi  xī      xiǎo  huǒchē.
            I    I   first give magnet little  train
            I, I'll first magnet the car to the train.
            (tries to magnet his own car to the car on the table)
33   Zha:   à.
            OK.
34   Li:    (looks for the locomotive in the box)
            wǒ  děi     zhǎo   zhè ge huǒchētóu.
            I    have-to look-for this CL locomotive
            I have to look for the locomotive.

In Excerpt 17, the experimenter Guo asks if the boys remembers how to play with the trains and rail tracks that they played with in the first play session a while ago. All three boys say that they remember. Then Li elaborates by saying that they should use the illustration chart as their model to put things together. Meanwhile, Zhang competes with Li by picking out various train tracks from the box while saying that he remembers how to put the tracks together. Gao, the normal ally of Zhang, tries to help Zhang put things together by picking up the right tracks and making suggestions. Although Gao is collaborating with Zhang by taking a supporting role, he plays that role by actively showing his knowledge and competence in practical problem-solving skills. He even tries to find the short cut to speed up the assembling process by pointing out that some tracks are sill conjoined from the previous session. When Zhang says that he needs to have four round pieces, Gao says that he needs to find four round pieces too, to show that he has his own agenda as well. When Li comes to pick out some train cars, Gao also picks some cars and magnet them together to form a train. Then Li advances the progress by saying that he needs to find the locomotive. Although there is no explicit actualized conflict in this excerpt, their activities are not collaborative. We have a clear sense of independent activities among the three boys working on similar things (i.e., building the rail tracks) in a parallel way. In their activities, we see independence rather than interdependence, and a sense of competition for being better than the other party in building the tracks and trains. Although there is some team work between Zhang and Gao, who are allies in many other contexts, Gao actively shows his knowledge about the toys and later shows that he has an independent agenda from Zhang.

*Excerpt 18: Boys pick on each other for technical problem-solving matters.* Boys also tend to pay close attention to whether another's job is properly done. To them, following the right procedure is important and they are proud in proving themselves correct. They also find pleasure in showing other people wrong in technical problem-solving matters. In Excerpt 18, the three boys are engaged in a prolonged exchange in accusing the other party to be wrong and proving themselves to be correct.

**Excerpt 18**: (All boys group)      Boys: Zha (Zhang), Gao, Li
     55   Gao:   (walks to Zhang, referring to Li's train)
                 Zhāng nǐ   kàn zhè ge huǒchē ya. dòu   bú dòu?
                 Zhang you look this CL train    SFP funny not funny
                 Zhang, look, how funny this train is.
     56          (goes past Li's train, laughs)
                 ēiya, ān fǎn    le. (looks carefully)
                 oh   uh insert reversed PERF
                 oh uh. It's put the opposite way.

57     ān   fǎn    le,    yīnggāi   zhè,
     insert reversed PERF   should   this
     It's put the opposite way. It should be like this,

58     yīnggāi   zhè   ge   shì   zài   zhè   shàng   de. (about to correct the train)
     should   this CL   BE   at   this top   REL
     This one should be put on this.

59   Zha:   ài. (pulls away the train, drops two round cylinders on the table, and
     they roll)
     Mh hem.

60   Li:   (runs to the other end of table to catch rolling cylinders)

61   Gao:   (tries to stop cylinders, fails, ignores them, to Li)
     bié    dòng.
     don't   touch
     Don't touch them.

62   Li:   (takes the cylinders, back to Zhang & Gao's place, loud)
     nǐ   men   cái   cuò   le    ne!
     you PL   just   wrong PERF SFP
     It is you two who made a mistake.

63   Zha:   (shows own train to Li to indicate it as the correct train)
     zhè   shì   wǒ   de.
     this BE   I    POSS
     This IS mine (meaning: It IS the right train for me).

64   Li:   (loud)
     nǐ   men   cuò   le.
     you PL   wrong PERF
     You two made a mistake.

65   Zha:   (defensively)
     wǒ, wǒ   shì   zhè   ge   de,   zhè   shì   wǒ   de.
     I   I   BE   this CL   REL   this BE   I    POSS
     Mine, mine train IS this one. This IS mine.

66   Gao:   wǒ   de    hǎoxiàng   shì   hóng   de. (looks for things in the box)
     I   POSS appear    BE   red   REL
     Mine perhaps should be red ones.

67   Li:   (to Zhang)
     bú   duì.
     not   right.
     It's not right.

68     (loud to Guo)
     shūshu,   nǐ   kàn   tāmen.
     uncle   you   look   they
     Uncle, you look at them.

69      Zhāng bǎ  nà  ge, bǎ  nà  ge huáng sè   chā   dào nà
        Zhang BA that CL  BA that CL yellow color insert to   that
        ge  shàngtóu qù le.
        CL  on       go PERF
        Zhang put that, put that yellow one on that one.

70  Li:  nǐ   kàn.
        you  look
        Look!

71  Guo:  ēn, nǐ  men shāngliàng zhe   wánr a!
        OK you PL  discuss     PROG play SFP
        OK, you all discuss together to figure it out.

72  Zha:  (shows the train to Guo)
        bú  shì nà  ge, jiù zhème  zhe, nǐ   kàn.
        not BE  that CL  just this-way PROG you look
        Not that one. It has to be like this way. Look.

73  Li:  (firm, strong, and loud, to Zhang)
        cuò       le!
        wrong  SFP
        Wrong!

74  Zha:  (hides train behind, louder)
        cuò,    méi        cuò!
        wrong  have-not  wrong
        Wrong, it's not wrong!

75  Gao:  (takes a toy from box, gives to Li)
        gěi.
        give
        Here you go.

76  Li:  (points at other train cars, loud & strong, to Zhang)
        zhè ge cái ān  zhè shàngtou de  ne.
        this CL just put this top       REL SFP
        It is this one (not the other one) that should be put on this.

77  Zha:  (lower voice, unsure)
        bú shì.
        not BE
        It is not.

78      (realizes that Li might be right, softer)
        kěnéng  shì ba..
        possible BE SFP
        Maybe it is.

79      (pulls off one part, puts it on the other train car)
        en,    kang.
        OK,   kang (train sound).

80   Li:     zhè bú shì dā  xiǎo rénr    de. (pulls out the figure from car)
                  this not BE build little person REL
                  This is not the one to put a little person.

81   Zha:   (puts a car next to Li)
                  zhè ge duì.
                  this CL right
                  This one is correct.

82          (finds another train car, examines, to Li)
                  nà  zhèr yòu duō le    yī ge.
                  then here then more PERF one CL
                  But there is one extra here.

83          (examines Li's train)
                  nǐ kàn, cuò le,  nǐ zhè cuò    le    ba.
                  you look wrong PERF you this wrong PERF SFP
                  Look, it is wrong. I told you that yours was wrong.

84          nǐ kàn, zhèr quē yī  kuàir.
                  you look here miss one piece
                  Look, there is one piece missing here.

85   Gao:   (loud, supporting Zhang)
                  cuò le,    cuò le,    shì cuò    le.
                  wrong PERF wrong PERF BE wrong PERF
                  It's wrong. It's wrong. It IS wrong.

86          (clarifying)
                  tā    cuò    le,    zánmen duì  le.
                  he/she wrong PERF we      right PERF
                  He is wrong. We are right.

84   Li:     (continues to work on train, ignores Zhang & Gao)

In this long episode, when Gao goes past Li's train, he laughs at him and says that his train is made the opposite way. Then he tells Li what should be the correct way. Li makes a firm rejection by saying that Gao and Zhang are wrong. At this point, Zhang steps in by showing Li their train and saying that their train is made correctly. Li insists loudly that Gao and Zhang are wrong and Zhang defends himself by saying that the train is correctly made. Li responds to Zhang's insistence by a firm claim "Wrong!" to Zhang, followed by a loud report to the adult experimenter Guo. Li asks Guo to look at what Zhang is doing. Normally children use this form to complain about another person's misbehavior to an authority person. By using this form, Li is equating a technically wrong doing with a social/moral misconduct. When Guo tries to stay out of the conflict by asking them to work out a common solution, Zhang shows his train to Guo to prove that he is correct. Then Li and Zhang insist on their own positions in several rounds. Then in Line 78, Zhang becomes unsure and makes a concession by saying "Maybe it is." However,

this submission is only temporary. As soon as Zhang finds another train car and discovers some problem with Li's work in Line 82, he comes back to the previous dispute with Li and claims that Li is wrong from the beginning. At this point, Zhang's ally Gao jumps in by making a blanket claim that Li is wrong and they are right. Confronted with the new evidence, Li ignores Gao and Zhang and it stops the dispute. However, Li does not admit to being wrong. In this long episode, we see that both Zhang and Li take the issue of who is correct in the technical problem-solving matter very seriously. They insist on their own position and try to find evidence to support their position. They take a weak stance when they find evidence against themselves but become strong and assertive as soon as they find evidence in their favor. They never willingly admit that they are wrong concerning technical problem-solving issues. The two boys' conflict style concerning technical problem-solving issues is very similar to the conflict style between the two girls in disputes about social status (see Excerpt 1). The boys' conflict style in Excerpt 18 also contrasts sharply to the boys' voluntary assumption of an inferior status in a dispute involving fighting for social status shown in Excerpt 1.

## Summary of children's behavior in the technical problem-solving domain

From the examples shown in Excerpts 10–18, we see a clear gender difference in children's behavior in the technical problem-solving domain. The two genders' behavior seems to be the reverse of that in the social-moral domain. In the technical problem-solving domain, boys show competitive and domineering communicative styles while girls show passive, submissive, and deferential styles. In the mixed sex group, boys voluntarily offer help to girls, boss girls around, and even put down girls without any mitigation. In contrast, girls are quite willing to accept the boys' harsh directives and put-downs.

This behavioral difference between the boys and girl causes few actualized conflicts between the two genders in the mixed gender group because the two genders are complementary to each other. Even when girls have the knowledge in solving a technical problem, they are not self-confident and tend to admit their own weakness and seek boys' assistance as the first resort. The request form that girls use in getting boys' help tend to show that such a social relationship is a default social convention, as if the boys' role is to provide help and the girls are the natural recipients of help. Boys, on the other hand, readily comply to such requests, as if they were confirming the assumption that providing help is their natural obligation. When girls are by themselves without boys or adults, their help to each other tends to be more of a social support rather than a practical/technical support to solve the problem. When problems persist, they tend to encourage others to give up on the

problem. In contrast, things are very different among the all-boys group. Boys compete in showing off their knowledge and competence in solving technical problems. They actively offer technical help to other boys, but such offers are frequently resisted rigorously by other boys, resulting in extended conflict exchanges. When they make justifications, they tend to focus on the technical and problem-solving aspects of the issue, claiming that they are the experts, so that they can either offer help or reject help. They also tend to put down others for their problem-solving competence in order to show that the opponent is less competent.

*Discussion*

The above data show that, for Mandarin-speaking Chinese children, *both* girls and boys may use *both* domineering or submissive conflict management styles. Whether they are domineering or submissive depends on the thematic domains involved in the situation. Two thematic domains seem to have emerged in the data, the social-moral domain and the technical problem-solving domain. The same child, whether a girl or a boy, may show dramatically different communicative styles in the two different thematic domains.

When the situation is within the social-moral domain, girls are highly sensitive, competitive, and domineering. They compete with others for socially-derived ranking, use social-moral reasons as default justifications for their social moves, and keep criticizing others' behaviors as socially inappropriate. They even go to such an extreme as to claim monopoly of the role as the social-moral guardian by excluding boys from having any say in deciding on social-moral issues. In contrast, boys do not seem to compete for social-moral matters. They are either inactive or even willingly submissive to girls in interactions concerning these matters. When boys are excluded by girls from taking the role of a moral guardian, they do not persist in seeking this role.

In contrast, when interactions involve issues in the technical problem-solving domain, boys are highly sensitive, competitive, and domineering. They take pride in possessing adequate technical problem-solving competence, try to assume the role of the default problem solver in a group by actively and willingly offering help to others, refuse to take help from others, and frequently put down others for their technical competence. In contrast, girls are willing to admit their weakness in problem-solving abilities even when they do have the ability, they readily attribute failure to their own abilities rather than to external situations, they are ready to accept others' bossing-around for problem-solving issues, and they actively seek others' help whenever they encounter difficulties in technical matters. When they seek help, they typically go to boys rather than other girls.

These different behavioral patterns seem to suggest that in the Chinese culture, the social-moral domain is girls' valued social-communicative domain. Girls are expected and make great efforts to excel, compete, and be dominant in this domain. In this domain, they compete among themselves for a better position and assume the dominant position over boys. In contrast, the technical problem-solving domain is the boys' valued social-communicative domain. Boys are expected to excel, compete, and be dominant in this domain. They compete among themselves for a better position and assume the dominant position over girls.

These findings with the Mandarin-speaking Chinese girls and boys raise several important theoretical issues concerning gender differences in communicative styles and its development.

First, the data partially confirm Dien's (1992) hypothesis on the unique gender differences in personality development in the Chinese culture. Dien proposes that Chinese girls assume a mother-figure role that possesses much power in the social-moral domain, while boys assume a child's role, which is dependent and happy with an inferior status. However, the data do not support the claim that such role assignment is across the board for all situations. Chinese girls are not nurturing as mothers when it comes to technical problem-solving issues. In addition, in the technical problem-solving domain, boys are highly nurturing in offering help, though such behavior may cause conflicts if the recipient of the help is a boy. Thus, girls' power and boys' dependence are not across the board, as Dien proposes, but rather quite context dependent.

Second, the data present challenges to the claim that it is a universal phenomenon that girls and boys are different in their communicative styles, known as the Separate Worlds Hypothesis (see Kyratzis & Guo, 1996, 2001 for detailed discussion). A fundamental assumption in that claim, which is mostly based on data collected from English, is that there are consistent and polarized gender differences in communicative styles for both adults (Lakoff, 1975; Tannen, 1990; Zimmerman & West, 1975) and children (Goodwin, 1980; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1987, Sheldon, 1990), masculinity being domineering, self-centered, and competitive, and femininity powerless, nurturing, and cooperative. This difference is hypothesized to have been caused by segregated socialization processes of the two genders from as early as "the third year of life" (Maccoby, 1998, p. 287). This Separate Worlds Hypothesis, claims that children of the two different genders develop different values and communicative styles (Fagot, 1991; Maccoby, 1998; Maccoby & Jacklin, 1987; Maltz & Borker, 1982) such that they have different and separate cultures. When girls and boys bring their own communicative styles into mixed-gender interactions, they unwittingly create the undesirable inequality between the two sexes. Such gender difference, segregation, and inequality are claimed to have been found across different cultures, including India, Japan, the Philippines, Mexico, Kenya,

and the U.S. (Whiting & Edwards, 1988). As a result, such gender differences are claimed to be culturally universal. This universal claim is pushed to its extreme by some researchers' adoption of the biological-evolutionary explanation (Buss, 1995; Maccoby, 1998) for such gender difference. After citing empirical research findings showing that childhood gender segregation is found across cultures and regardless of individual variations, Maccoby (1998) states that

> The gender-differentiated phenomena of childhood documented in the early chapters of this book fit quite well with an evolutionary perspective. There are striking similarities between human children and their nonhuman primate cousins with respect to differentiated play styles and gender segregation. It is plausible that the distinctive agendas enacted in male playgroups – in particular, the formation of dominance hierarchies – serve to regulate male in-group aggression and socialize boys for cooperative endeavors with other males, as some evolutionary theorists have suggested. (p. 290).

The data of the current study are obviously at strong odds with the above claim. Among the 5-year-old Chinese children, girls can be domineering and competitive, and boys can be submissive and cooperative. The *same* child, whether a girl or a boy, can be *both* domineering and competitive on the one hand, and submissive and cooperative on the other. Thus, biology cannot be the cause of the different communicative styles.

Third, the data challenge a frequently held assumption that each gender has a consistent communicative style. Such assumption is clearly shown in the earlier-mentioned Separate Worlds Hypothesis (also referred to as the Cultural Hypothesis, Maltz & Borker, 1982; Tannen, 1990). The current data suggest that girls and boys in the Chinese context are not in two separate cultures. First, both girls and boys vary their communicative behaviors in different contexts. Children from each gender have the full repertoire of communicative styles, ranging from very submissive to very assertive. They change their styles in accordance to the thematic domains of the interaction and the roles they play in it. For example, girls can boss boys around and put them down for matters in the social-moral domain, but they become deferent and subordinate to boys in dealing with technical problem-solving issues. It is evident that children's communicative styles are not consistent, but rather that they vary depending on the interactive contexts. Second, children behave with full knowledge of the social positions of other children. When girls pick on other girls for social-moral misconducts, they compete with each other by trying to find the other party's socially inappropriate behaviors. In doing so, they acknowledge that the other girls can play the role as a moral guardian. However, when boys pick on girls for social-moral misconducts, girls try to exclude boys from becoming a moral guardian from the beginning. The data indi-

cate that children from both genders are fully aware of the roles and positions of both their own gender and the other gender. Among the Chinese children, their social world is complementary and interdependent, rather than isolated and independent. Such a difference may be a result of a more general cultural difference in ideology between the West and China, the Western culture being the more individualistic one, emphasizing independence and individuation, while China being the more collectivist culture emphasizing mutual dependence, (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). The individualistic orientation more or less directs the speaker to use their own communicative styles independent of situations and other participants, while the collectivist orientation forces the speaker to be more aware of the situation and other participants. In this sense, we propose that regarding gendered communicative styles, English-speakers are more or less "monolingual" in their styles, while Mandarin-Chinese-speakers are more or less "bilingual" or "multilingual" in their styles, and they "code-switch" their communicative styles in different situations (see discussion along the same direction in Kyratzis & Guo, 1996). The context-dependent nature of the Chinese girls and boys' behaviors are consistent with Liu's (2002) empirical finding about the multiplicity of gender identity. Liu found that Chinese girls in Taiwan apply different ethics when interacting with different people. For example, they put more trust in familiar friends and show more nontraditionally defined feminine selves. But when interacting with unfamiliar friends, they show more traditionally defined feminine selves, such as being elegant, quiet, and attentive to others' speech. When they interact with strangers, they are just simply cold. When dealing with knowledge, they are deferent and submissive when viewing textbook knowledge, but they are highly critical and creative in viewing and applying common-sense knowledge.

Fourth, the data challenge the commonly held assumption in the study of gender differences that similarity in personality always results in compatibility and social harmony, while personality dissonance results in social conflict (e.g., Maltz & Borker, 1982; Tannen, 1990; Maccoby, 1998). The current data from Chinese children show just the opposite pattern. Personality dissonance results in harmony while personality similarity results in social conflicts. Girls and boys seek to have very clearly defined boundaries in their roles in the two domains, and their roles are complementary. For example, girls assume powerful social roles and enjoy higher social status, while boys assume inferior social roles and do not seek social status. In a mixed sex group, social harmony is achieved, while in an all-girl group, competition and conflicts occur. It is the same story in the technical problem-solving domain. In a mixed sex group, girls actively seek technical help while boys actively and happily offer help. As a result, we observe complementary interaction and social harmony. In an all-boy group, competition and conflicts occur when one offers practical help to another. The evident complementary relationship between

the two sexes amount the Chinese children may be due, again, to the collectivist cultural values among the Chinese. While people are treated as equals and individuals in the West, people in the Chinese culture are regarded as role players who are interrelated in a complex social network (Feng, 1948). Once a person is assigned a role, he/she will accept the role and play it according to the social norms. When the situation is in accordance with the social expectations, such as in the mixed sex groups, no negotiation of roles is needed and no conflicts will occur. However, when the situation is out of the normal expectation of one's role, participants have to negotiate their mutual relations on the spot, and therefore conflicts occur more frequently.

Last but not the least, the current data challenge the strong postmodern feminist position that claims that gender identity is merely a fluid by-product, emergently constructed through on-going performance in localized social interactions (Freed, 1996; Greenwood, 1996). Weatherall (2002) states that

> from a social constructionist approach, women's (or men's) speech styles are no longer seen to be derived from the social identity of those who use them, but are treated as a discursive or ideological-symbolic concept available to construct one's self as a man or a woman. Thus, being a woman or a man is a matter, among other things, of talking like one. (p. 85).

Cameron (1997) rejects the existence of women as a conceptual category independent of language and discourse. In her criticism of the Essentialist approaches to gender and language (such as Lakoff, 1975 and Tannen, 1990), she states that

> A presupposition here is that 'women' pre-exist the 'language'. 'Women's language' is the language of subjects who are already, definitively, women. Which brings us back to Simone de Beauvoir's question... [are there women really?] (p. 27).

What is claimed in the above quotes from the postmodern feminist scholars is that one is a woman or a man because she or he talks like a woman or man. In other words, one's discourse in localized social interactions determined the social category of that person. Although it is important for postmodern feminism and feminist social psychology to emphasize the importance of the social constructive power of language and discourse, it seems to be too extreme to reduce the construct of women to just a fluid and emergent social identity constructed in social interactions each time afresh. To do so is to brush away the literature of the rich theorizing and research findings in individual psychology in the past century. In addition, such claims are not consistent with the current data. Many times, these Chinese children attempted to cross the gender boundary discursively in their social interactions. For example, the boy Li, in Excerpt 8, attempted to take the role of the moral guardian by criticizing Sun's inappropriate behavior. This was not only objected to by Sun, but

also by another girl Fu, whom Li was trying to support. It was obvious that there was a bottom line boundary between the girls and boys that cannot be negotiated discursively. This bottom line might have been discursively negotiated in the past social interactions. But in this particular social interaction, the bottom line (i.e., which gender can be the moral guardians) pre-exists the discourse, and it constrains the discursive behavior of the children. As shown in the data, the boy's attempt to renegotiate the boundaries of gender identity fails, and the discursive power gives way to the more stable gender identity, which existed before this social interaction.

Conclusion

Data from Mandarin-Chinese-speaking children's naturalistic interactions indicate that girls and boys possess the same repertoire of conflict communicative styles. Ostensibly, this seems to suggest no gender difference in their communicative styles. However, there are clear gender differences between girls and boys concerning when, where, and to whom they use certain communicative styles. Girls and boys play different cultural roles in the two different thematic domains, which determine their communicative styles in potential conflict situations. The data further suggest that the ostensive power asymmetry between the two genders may not be experienced subjectively as social inequality, but rather as people fulfilling their culturally defined roles in a specific social situation. Due to the complementary role assignment in the Chinese culture, both genders are well-integrated with, rather than separated from, each other, even though their conflict strategies are different in a given situation. This cultural structure results in a more harmonious social atmosphere in a mixed sex group than in a same sex group, where more conflicts are observed.

The above finding and claim seem to go against the current trend in gender research, challenging both the essentialist tradition, which claims universal gender differences and gender segregation, and the postmodern tradition, which advocates that gender is an emergent and transient epiphenomenon. This study argues that gender, though socially constructed, highly variable, and intermingled with other social categories, is nevertheless a prominent social category in our daily social life that constantly guides our social and discursive behaviors. It is not merely being passively created in our daily social interactions, but rather, it plays an active role in influencing our social interactions. As well put by Freedman (1990),

> I do not disagree with either the political or the theoretical project of expanding our definitions of gender to be both more precise and more variable. But I do not think such an effort requires us to claim that theories about gender must transcend

the concept itself, no matter how fashionable such decentering practices may now seem. The challenge for feminist theory today is to expand, not restrict, our critique of gender and to affirm gender as a category of reality that matters tremendously in our lives (p. 260).

Perhaps studying the various patterns of gender difference in non-Western cultures will help us understand how the social/cultural systems determine the various gender roles and influence the different behavioral patterns of the two genders.

## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| BA | "BA" Construction Marker, indicating patient case |
| BE | The copula "to be" |
| CL | Classifier |
| DE | Nominalization Particle |
| EXPE | Experiential Aspect Maker |
| PERF | Perfective Aspect Marker |
| PL | Plural Marker |
| POSS | Possessive Marker |
| PROG | Progressive Aspect Marker |
| REL | Relativizer |
| RESU | Resultative Marker |
| QU | Question Marker |
| SFP | Sentence Final Particle |
| STAT | Stative Aspect Marker |

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# "Mr. Lanoe hit on my mom"

## Reestablishment of believability insequential 'small stories' by adolescent boys

Luke Moissinac

The focus of this chapter is on how a 13-year-old adolescent boy reestablishes the believability of a story that has been challenged by his conversational interactants. He has to do this within a conversation that consists of sequential narratives, the cooperative fabric of which had been disrupted by the challenge to his credibility. He achieves the restoration of both his reliability as a story teller and alignment with his interlocutors by telling another 'small' story with sophisticated discursive devices. The study also describes how four 13-year-old boys use 'small' stories to position themselves with respect to each other as well as the master narratives of hegemonic masculinity, and in doing so, make identity claims for themselves. A subsidiary goal of this chapter is to provide a detailed exemplar of positioning analysis (Bamberg, 1997).

### Sequential narratives, believability, and identity claims

Coates (2003, p.78) has claimed that "conversational narrative is our chief means of constructing the fictions of our lives and of getting others to collude in them." Previous to this assertion, Miller, Hengst, Alexander, and Sperry (2000) had exposited a more extensive argument on how children learn through acculturation, beginning with familial interlocutors, how to construct versions of reality that are grounded in particular socio-historical contexts. Furthermore, they highlighted the point that personal story-telling allows a person to draw him/herself individualized versions of reality that intersect with other stories that s/he has heard in differing levels of social interaction, from the immediate micro-social level of direct interaction, through the prescriptive discourses of small to medium size institutions that enmesh our lives such as schools and recreational activity groups, to the master narratives of a culture that frame our existences, whether or not we are conscious of them. In the explication of their thesis they emphasize that cultural input is primary in learning to be a competent storyteller and that the processes of intertextuality and the hybridization through the interanimation of different gen-

res of discourse (story-telling being just one of them among a range that includes argumentation/disputation, conversation, hortatory discourse, propaganda) are key in the process that allows new perspectives to be fashioned.

But what if we are not believed and thus are treated by our interlocutors as unreliable narrators? Then our stories remain on the plane of fiction (Fludernik, 2001). The excerpt that I present involves the narrative repair of challenges to an adolescent narrator's believability. My orientation to narrative in conversation is derived from Ochs and Capps (2001). Ochs and Capps highlighted that the majority of narratives that perfuse daily living, and that are the main instruments for the maintenance and transmission of cultural ways of being, are characteristically different from the long, highly tellable stories that have been the focus of life-story and life-event research (e.g., Brockmeier & Carbaugh, 2001; Fischer, 2000; Labov, 1972; Labov & Fanshel, 1977; McAdams, 1996; McAdems, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2001). The proximate cause of this difference is simply that they are stories that are embedded in social interaction. Their immediately obvious distinctive characteristic is that they are co-constructed by many tellers who cooperate and compete to varying degrees to mold them according to different goals. They are certainly not told singularly to a passive, nonjudgmental, receptive audience. Next, their tellability is not necessarily high to an external observer. They can be told as instances of reliving already shared experiences (Norrick, 1997) or even be short elliptical references to frozen interpretations of former group experiences (e.g., Georgako-poulou, 2005). As already implied, they are highly embedded in surrounding talk rather than being detached set pieces, may contain varied and conflicting moral messages instead of endorsing only one moral standpoint and finally, are frequently not linear in temporal and causal order, being more open and spatial in these structural characteristics.

The 'small' stories (as opposed to the longer narratives of life-story and life-event research) that form the analytical base of this study (see Bamberg, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, for antecedent exemplars of such work) are close in character to those described by Ochs and Capps. They are short, are conversationally embedded and negotiated, and are low in tellability, linearity, temporality, and causality. However, as will be demonstrated in each instance, they are fine-tuned vis-à-vis their audiences, vis-à-vis master narratives or dominant discourses (and even can be instances of countering narratives), and they incorporate multiple moral stances, which reflect the real-time testing-out and experimenting with identity projections by the participants. It is also one of the goals of this study to evince the value of analyzing these 'small' stories in the uncovering of the identity work that adolescent boys engage in on a quotidian basis. These conversationally embedded stories afford their tellers opportunities to practice different identities, allowing them to continuously edit the meanings of their experiences by modified retellings, and

also to rehearse different positions that can be taken towards their audiences and competing master narratives. All this functions in the service of constantly refining the answer to the question of 'who-am-I?' that results incrementally in a sense of coherence, but one that is always open to reworking.

In terms of a conceptualization of identity in social intercourse, this study draws on prevailing ideas in discourse studies that view identities as fluid, context sensitive, and continually in the process of construction (e.g., Antaki, Condor, & Levine, 1996; Dickerson, 2000; Georgakopoulou, 2002; Malone, 1997) as well as subscribes to the notion that the iterative performances in social interaction constitute identities that may eventually be labeled as 'stable' by external observers (Butler, 1990, 1993; Pennycook, 2004; Speer & Potter, 2002). Such a process can be considered to be a partial or temporary sedimentation across varying amounts of time and space that is akin to Hopper's (1998) theory of emergent grammar. In this work though, the analogical extension would be towards the sedimentation of emergent identities through emergent discourses that create an illusion of stability in the perspective of an observer who has been making a casual series of observations that appear consistent from an uncritical, nonanalytical standpoint. However, more detailed analysis will demonstrate how even so-called 'stable' identities or 'personality traits' engender an improvisatory aspect that is essential to the expression of whatever storehouse of interpretative repertoires (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Wetherell, 1998) that a person might have for differing social situations. In addition, the analyses undertaken here can be considered parallel to that of accounting for one's social actions and stances in communication (Buttny, 1993, 2004) as well as being parallel to Wenger's (1998) notion that identities are always negotiated and anchored in communities of practice, a view that has also been put forth by Eckert (1989; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1995) as specifically applied to different exclusionary cliques in high school.

Although earlier work on the tactical use of stories in conversation by adolescent boys is scant, Goodwin (1993) has documented incidences of how African American boys aged 9 to 14 years are able to expand the participation framework of a dispute by introducing a narrative. The story allows members of the audience to contribute to the dispute by interjecting themselves as witnesses or providing evaluative alignments with either side. The work reported here parallels this research but differs from it in that the introduced story does not open up participation frameworks for overhearers. Rather, the story is so well-crafted that it effectively defuses the dispute and realigns the teller with the group. The more recent work of Kuhn (Kuhn & Udell, 2003; Felton & Kuhn, 2001) on the development of argumentative discourse skills in adolescence can be considered indirectly related to this study. Although Kuhn and her colleagues used an experimental method with imagined scenarios for the generation of argumentation by academically at-

risk 13- to 14-year-olds, her findings do point in directions that are pertinent to the work presented here. In brief, Kuhn found that peer dialogues were more effective than individual efforts in the generation of more "powerful argumentative strategies, such as counterargument" (Kuhn & Udell, 2003, p.1245), which lends support to the greater efficacy of co-construction processes. Nevertheless, Kuhn's laboratory-based methodology greatly attenuates the complexity of naturally occurring discourse that almost always includes interjections from interlocutors at unforeseen junctures. The study reported here approximates quotidian complexity better by being based on talk that is derived from a group discussion among adolescents with minimal directive input from an adult convener. Moreover, it will be demonstrated how co-construction of narratives in sequence is instrumental to the establishment of group solidarity as well as its restoration after a breach has occurred.

On a more general level, the conversation style of boys was originally shown to be hierarchical and competitive (e.g., Maltz & Borker, 1982). However, Cameron (1997) demonstrated that European American college students employed discourse strategies of both competition and cooperation while doing performative work to establish their heterosexual masculine gender identities by positioning themselves contrastively towards other males whom they assumed to be 'gay.' Interestingly, one of the main discourse genres that was used by Cameron's participants was gossip, a genre that has been stereotypically viewed as feminine. Hence, Cameron points out that solely associating male discourse with a competitive style is as stereotypical as presuming female discourse to be self-effacing and oppressed. Such a viewpoint had been presaged by Lee (1992) through his work on cooperative strategies between adult male friends. He concluded that it is neither the form nor the content of discourse, each taken in isolation, that is the key to meaning-making. It is, rather, the complex interplay between them. More recent work on the characteristics of sequential narratives in the conversations of men (Coates, 2003) and the conversational practices of older adolescent boys aged 15 to17 years (Deppermann, 2007) has highlighted how the generation of group solidarity is equally important to these interactions. The data under consideration here demonstrate how the two opposing styles are not mutually exclusive but can co-occur in a relatively short stretch of talk. The narratives are termed sequential because they occur close to each other and share a topical link (Coates, 2003).

Also germane to this study is Chesire's (2000) investigation of the narratives told by adolescent friendship networks in groups on an adventure playground in England. Although her study included both boys and girls aged between 11 and 15 years, we will only be concerned with her results for the boys here. Cheshire's most important finding was that although the narratives of the boys appeared extremely competitive at first blush, being peppered with interruptions and insults, closer scrutiny revealed that these were actually part of a unique, inclusive style. It was

through these embedded interruptions and insults that the form of the telling allowed as many group members as they wished to participate. Apart from the evident co-construction processes involved, Cheshire concluded that "the same speaker may tell a narrative in different ways, both 'cooperatively' and competitively, depending on the context in which the narrative occurs" (p. 236). Parallels to her findings will be displayed in this analysis, albeit with the added focus on how the participants in this study continuously position themselves vis-à-vis the master narratives of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995; Donaldson, 1993).

Hegemonic masculinity is taken to be the assumed, unmarked form of masculinity that prevails in a culture and is all the more potent in its influences because it goes unnoticed as a master narrative or dominant discourse. In Western-type cultures this is taken as the patriarchal version of masculinity in which men are supposed to be in control of the household, endorse a compulsory heterosexuality for self and others, be oriented towards competition and achievement, are emotionally over-controlled and under-expressive, and value rational thought over intuition (see also, Burstyn, 1999; Messner, 1992).

The analytical approach to the boys' masculine identity constructions is a discursive-narrative one that parallels that of other language-based studies in the same vein (e.g., Cameron, 1997; Coates, 2003; Edley & Wetherell, 1997; Pascoe, 2003). In contradistinction to traditional male role theory (e.g., Pleck, 1995; Walker, Tokar, & Fischer, 2000), these studies point to the multiplicity of masculinities (even in a constricted interactional timeframe), their exquisite contextual sensitivity, and the resourcefulness of the participants in shaping masculine identities that tread the fine line between complying with and resisting (see Bamberg & Andrews, 2004) hegemonic masculinities, often even straddling compliance and resistance. Coates's (2003) work on sequential stories told by men demonstrated that they were achieved collaboratively by the co-participants and were oriented to the dominant discourses of hegemonic masculinity such as heroism and laddishness. In the sequential stories told here by adolescent boys, we can observe a similar co-production of storying that relates to the management of young male identities. Through the overriding theme of the bad behavior of teachers, the boys position themselves with, and against, each other as well as vis-à-vis master narratives of masculinity. In doing so, they come off as knowing, mature and superior to these teachers.

The transcript for this particular study deals with four European American boys aged 13 to 14 talking about teachers and grades in a group discussion that was convened by a male adult. Although the convener had a set of topics that had to be covered, namely school, friendship and friends, girls, emotions and changing bodies, and future plans, he made an effort to encourage discussion just between the adolescent participants as much as possible. Before the start of the transcript, the boys had been comparing the lowest grades that they had obtained in different

school years. Note that this interaction takes place with minimal input from the moderator.

In broad sweep, Ben initially steers the talk in the direction of depicting teachers as adversarial and unfair. Vic seizes this as an opportunity to sensationalize the negative positioning tone by asserting that a teacher made sexual advances to his mother. Kev then tries to follow suit but has his veracity immediately challenged by Vic and Art. After a number of weak attempts to stave off these challenges, Kev successfully uses a number of discourse devices in elaborating a story of the incident to establish its verisimilitude. Following successful uptake of Kev's story, Vic fills in the details of his own story, which he makes more tellable (Bruner, 2001; Polanyi, 1985) than Kev's but not without counter challenges by Kev. The segment ends with Ben beginning another story that also paints teachers in a negative light.

## Participants

The boys in this study participated in the second phase of a moderately large-scale cross-sectional and longitudinal study of early adolescent males (ages 10–15) on discourse, conversational narrative, and identity development (Bamberg, 2004a, 2004b). The study was conducted in a large, metropolitan city in New England and the participants were of multi-ethnic origin, including African Americans, Asian Americans, European Americans, and Hispanic Americans. In this second phase, boys who had been 10 to 13 years of age were followed up in individual interviews, group discussions, and after school excursions. Ten hours of interview data and ten hours of group discussion data have been collected[1]. The study is currently in its final, follow-up phase.

## Approach to analysis

Apart from the analytical focus on 'small' stories embedded in group discussion the rationale and motivation for which have already been discussed, the main analytical tools employed in these studies are based on discursive psychology (itself owing much to conversation analysis) and positioning theory.

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1.    The first phase generated approximately 300 hours of audio- and video-recorded interactive data. These break down into about 35 hours of group discussions, 60 hours of interview data, 172 hours of ethnographically notated free-interactive data in school, and 33 hours of non-adult directed interactions on the excursions/activities.

*Discursive psychological elements*

The most general analytical orientation in concert with discursive psychology (e.g., Edwards, 1997; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996) is a close attention to the sequential organization of talk. This means that participants' orientations to preceding segments of talk are examined for the sequential implicativeness of responses. In other words, the conditional relevance of talk, be it in narrative or non-narrative discourse, is of paramount importance to the analysis. In this way, the imposition of analysts' categories is guarded against and demonstrable proof of interpretations in the discourse of the participants is always required. Added to this is an attention to participants' use of interpretative repertoires (Potter & Wetherell, 1987) that are distilled through multiple passes through the data.

Apart from these framing considerations, the data were scrutinized for the functional use of discursive devices, an exhaustive listing of which would be impossible, but that include discourse markers (Schiffrin, 1987), extreme case formulations (Pomerantz, 1986), the functions of reported speech (Tannen, 1989; Vincent & Perrin, 1999), softeners (Edwards, 2000), stake inoculation (Potter, 1996), topic shading (Lawrence, 1996), and the use of silences (Gough, 2001; Kiesling, 2001), among others.

*Positioning theory and practice*

Drawing on the theorization of Hollway (1984) on the production of different subjectivities by different genders, Davies and Harré (1990) described how individuals position themselves with respect to each other in conversation as well as how varying discursive practices provide particular subject positions, which can be occupied by different social interactants at different times. To wit, "A subject position incorporates both a conceptual repertoire and a location for persons within a structure of rights for those that use that repertoire" (Davies & Harré, 1990, p. 46). From this rather general definition, Harré and van Langenhove (1992) attempted to classify different varieties of positioning. However, the results of their efforts were too unwieldy to translate into concise research instruments.

Bamberg (1997) introduced a functionally feasible system of positioning analysis and subsequently refined it in subsequent writings (Bamberg, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2004a). Bamberg's positioning analysis system is both concise and grounded in narrative theory and so was considered apposite for the research conducted here. In essence, Bamberg postulated that in social intercourse in general, and narration in particular, participants employ positioning strategies on the following three levels:

i.    Positioning Level 1: This concerns how a narrator positions the characters with respect to each other in the story realm.

ii.   Positioning Level 2: On this level, a speaker positions him/herself with respect to the interlocutors who are being addressed.

iii.  Positioning Level 3: The final level of positioning pertains to how a speaker wants to be understood vis-à-vis the competing dominant discourses or master narratives that potentially frame the interaction in its temporal and spatial locality. It is through juxtaposing him/herself in the matrix of competing master narratives that a speaker simultaneously displays positions with regard to the various possibilities of identity that have been taken on in the past, can be tried out in the present, and could be considered for future purposes. By doing so, speakers evoke and develop a portfolio of identities that is available to be carried over into new conversations as resources for interactive work (Antaki, 1994). More than that, positioning oneself vis-à-vis the dominant discourses of a culture in a story/narrative abstracts out a personally bespoke cultural moment as a tell-worthy narrative event (Thornborrow & Coates, 2005). In this way, culture is continuously being reinvigorated, transformed, and transmitted on a micro-social level, ultimately reflexively reworking larger social orders, a process that is close to the tenets of ethnomethodology (Button, 1991; Garfinkel, 1967). In other words, "it is through narrating ourselves, through constructing the self through narrative, that we construct our culture" (Brockmeier & Carbaugh, 2001, p. 16).

It is through the interplay of the various positioning levels that a person projects an emergent identity of who-I-am. It is thus up to the analyst to carefully dissect and subsequently resynthesize these levels of organization in order to interpret a person's identity claims with as much fidelity as possible to the person's interactive aims. This concern has been one of the crucial analytical foci that guided the interpretative work in this study.

**Analysis**

Follow-up Focus Group I / 13 & 14-yr / 39:44

Participants: M – Moderator; V – Vic; K – Kev; B – Ben; A – Art
    01   A:   the lowest grade I ever got was a zero when I forgot to pass in my home-
                work
    02   B:   miss Brown I remember that my pro-
    03   V:   SHE WAS THE COOLEST huhhuhhuh {enthusiastically gesturing}
    04   B:   my project was one day late my China project
                and she gave me a zero cos it was one day late
                my mom flipped out at her

and I remember when mister Collins gave me a Ben detention=
05 A:  =[a Ben detention↑]
06 K:  [a Ben detention↑]
07 B:                    [he left me] in a room and he left {V nods knowingly}
08 V:  DUDE THAT DUDE HIT ON MY MOM
09 B:  huh[huhhuh]
10 K:      [mister Lanoe hit] on MY mom he goes to my school (.)
       he at at summer school=
11 V:  =WHO↑
12 K:  he he's in my school=
13 V:  =who↑ >what's his name<
14 K:  mister <u>La</u>:: <u>Noe</u>:: {deliberately pronounced}
15 A:  I thought you said mister Rabado=
16 V:  =uh huhhuh I was about to say
       what [ (…………..)]
17 K:        [anyway he's in my summer school]
       and you know the teachers had to come in
       I mean the parents you know for the uh
       >whatever (.) you know (.) look around the school<
       and then you know mister Lanoe ev'ry see everytime he'd see my mom
       he kept going "Kev uh your mom comin tomorrow?"
       <"no mister Lanoe uh the thing (.) is in 2 weeks"> {deliberately}
       "oh awright"
18 V:  [huhhuhhuh]
19 B:  [huhhuhhuh]
20 K:  he he liked (.) you know (.) yeah=

For clarity of analysis, this moderately long stretch of conversational interaction
will be divided into three sections that represent natural divisions in the discourse
activities and actions that the boys engage in. These are:

> Section 1:  Turns 01–09 – Sequential narratives on the adversarial  behaviors of teachers.
> Section 2:  Turns 10–16 – Challenges to Kev's believability.
> Section 3:  Turns 17–20 – Restoration of Kev's reliability and alignment with the  group.

For each section, the analysis will exposit how the boys position the characters in
the stories that they tell (Level 1), how the boys position themselves to one an-
other (Level 2), and how they position themselves to master narratives prevalent
in the culture (Level 3). It must be pointed out that this segregation of positioning
levels is never mutually exclusive, especially how Levels 1 and 2 relate to the dom-
inant discourses of Level 3. However, this attempt to treat them separately is being

undertaken in order to demonstrate the workings of, and value inherent to, such a positioning analysis.

*Section 1: sequential narratives on the adversarial behaviors of teachers*
*Positioning level 1: story characters*

Immediately prior to this segment, the boys had been comparing the lowest grades that they had obtained in their elementary school years. In the first turn of this segment, Art starts to trump the discussion of bad grades by using the extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) of getting a zero for the minor transgression of forgetting to hand in his homework. It is not that the quality of the work was poor but that the teacher based the extreme grade on tardiness that had nothing to do with the actual assignment. What is more, the teacher did not just penalize the late hand-in by grading the assignment lower than its quality deserved but by completely obviating Art's effort. In this way, Art positions this teacher as an un-reasonable person who metes out punishment that is not commensurate with the transgression at hand. Ben displays immediate recognition of the teacher on just this one instance of extreme strictness by naming the teacher that Art had not been named before and launching a story preface "I remember that…"

Instead of yielding the floor to Ben, Vic cuts him off by strongly asserting that the teacher in question, Miss Brown, was the coolest, which is a positioning coun-ter to the one that Art and Ben had been building up. Ben reciprocally does not display any uptake of this assertion (and neither does any of the other boys) but continues his narrative, picking up directly where he was cut off by repeating his last two syllables. In his narrative he strongly mirrors the details of Art's zero grade episode: His project was also late and it was given a zero, too. He uses repetition of the temporal phrase "one day late" to emphasize the unfairness of the teacher's ac-tion. Following this, he positions his mother as a strongly agentive advocate by stating that she "flipped out" at the teacher. Here he parallels the teacher's extreme behavior with an extreme formulation of anger: His mother did not just get angry or even mad but flipped out.

Having provided a detailed positioning of one teacher as unfair and adver-sarial, Ben supplements and supports this positioning by recounting the action of another male teacher, Mr. Collins, who punished him with a personalized deten-tion, which was all the more inappropriate because the teacher left the detention class without informing the student. Vic seems to display knowledge of this teach-er's behavior by nodding. However, his emphatic assertion in the immediate next turn that the teacher had hit on his mother throws some ambiguity on whether he was ratifying Ben's depiction of Mr. Collins or whether he was nodding to indicate that he had wider knowledge of the teacher's inappropriate behavior. Whichever

the case, his formulation "Dude, that dude hit on my mom" brings the prevailing general theme of teachers as adversaries to an extreme. He achieves this by combining the two character types that had been in use, that is, teachers and mothers, but does so in a way that is new to the interaction. Vic's mother is not an advocate against the unreasonable teacher as Ben's mother was but is positioned as a recipient herself of poorly judged behavior from Mr. Collins.

Vic not only positions Mr.Collins as exhibiting highly inappropriate behavior of a sexual nature towards Vic's mother, but also downgrades him to the level of the boys themselves by the symmetry between the term of address "dude" for Vic's interlocuters and this same term of reference for Mr. Collins. More interestingly, this positioning of Mr. Collins by Vic is extremely rich in its indexical properties towards master narratives of adult sexual behavior but these have to be explicated at the next two levels of positioning.

*Positioning level 2: interlocutors*

In this section of the interaction, the boys are primarily taking aligning positions with respect to each other. Ben immediately aligns with Art in turn 2 but is cut off by Vic's contradictory assertion in turn 3. Not to be so easily put off, Ben continues his interrupted story that reiterates Art's initial positioning of the teacher as unreasonable with punishments. After this, he expands this positioning of students against teachers by introducing another teacher, Mr. Collins, who had been even more unreasonable with detention. This provides Vic with an opportunity to redress his earlier nonalignment by pushing the theme of teachers as badly behaving adversaries to the extreme. In doing so, he firmly re-positions himself with the group.

In short, Section 1 of the interaction consists of the boys using 'small' stories to achieve solidarity with each other through positioning themselves against their former teachers who have treated them unfairly as well as displayed behaviors inappropriate to their roles as educators. On the other hand, they also appear to be competing with each other on the extremity of the teachers' behavior that they can bring to the interaction. This is consonant with Cheshire's (2000) finding that adolescent boys both compete and cooperate with each other in everyday conversational interactions.

*Positioning level 3: master narratives / dominant discourses*

In general, the boys had been taking antithetical positions towards the dominant discourse of teachers being role models for their students and generally exhibiting responsible and reasonable behavior even in situations where students have to be chastised for mistakes. This theme was taken to a head with Vic's assertion "Dude that dude hit on my mom." The indexical properties of this utterance vis-à-vis the master

narratives of appropriate behavior, both sexual and otherwise, are so rich as to warrant a detailed analysis.

With one word of address "dude," Vic conjures up a world of laidback, slightly academically challenged, California-surfer-guy, sexually promiscuous camaraderie as exemplified by the movie "Dude, where's my car?" As a term of address it usually marks solidarity or an attempt to recruit collusion/cooperation. The application of "dude" as a term of reference for the teacher is very telling. Obviously, Vic is not trying to describe Mr. Collins as a co-conspirator. Rather, he is alleging that the teacher had engaged in behavior that can be construed as morally suspect. This assertion comes in the context of preceding talk about teachers as adversaries in general and Mr. Collins's unreasonable variation on the detention theme in particular. It should then be taken as additional criticism of Mr. Collins's actions. However, the criticism is mitigated and made entertaining by the frivolous worldview that "dude" indexes. This can be observed by the immediate response to Vic's utterance, which is a knowing chuckle by Ben who had just been criticizing Mr. Collins.

Vic's utterance is interesting in many other respects. First, it is enunciated with strong emphasis, which can be taken as both sensationalizing the bad behavior of Mr. Collins in particular, and teachers in general, as well as a strong claim that he is presenting an abstract of a story that is tellable. Next, the content of the utterance is one involving adult sexual politics. To hit on someone is to make sexual advances that are either unexpected, undesired, or both by the recipient. And for a teacher to do that to a middle school student's mother is usually seen as morally reprehensible. Most of the time, adolescents cannot even conceive of their own parents having sex without expressing revulsion. But things are not that simple. There exists in American culture a strong pressure to be sexually attractive and to keep this up throughout one's lifetime. Having sexual advances made to oneself is taken as an indication of one's measure of success in living up to this dominant discourse. Woe to the person who is never hit on. In light of this, Vic's assertion that Mr. Collins hit on his mother entails the implicit assertion that his mother is worth hitting on. Is this a reasonable interpretation? The uptake of the utterance demonstrates that it is. Ben chuckles in appreciation of the morally dilemmatic scenario, which was also reframed as youthfully entertaining by the use of the term "dude."

Before proceeding with the analysis let us summarize what Vic has been doing with his story abstract in terms of positioning. By referring to Mr. Collins as "dude," Vic effectively downgrades his status as a person of authority to the level of a sexually promiscuous, morally suspect, slightly intellectually challenged character. His mother is positioned as the object of unwanted sexual advances, which, however, affirm that she is nonetheless sexually attractive. By using "dude" to address his audience he simultaneously positions himself and his audience as knowledgeable in sexual matters pertaining to dude character types, euphemizes the moral repre-

hensibility of the teacher's behavior, and draws the teacher's status downwards to a common level of the dude sort. All this is occasioned while pushing the portrayal of teachers as adversaries to the extreme level of harassing mothers sexually, albeit with nod and wink irony. Vic can thus be seen as making identity claims that center around a knowledge of adult sexual politics and their dilemmatic moral tensions in combination with a culturally available way to mitigate his criticism.

### Section 2: challenges to Kev's believability

In turn 10 Kev reacts to Vic's "dude" utterance by asserting that his mother had also been hit on by a teacher. Kev's immediate uptake, which overlaps with Ben's laughter (turn 9), orients even more to this implicit desirability of being hit on. Kev states that another teacher, Mr. Lanoe, hit on his mother with emphasis on "my," which is hearable as asserting that his mother is equally worth hitting on. In this section, the levels of positioning 1 and 3 remain the same as in Section 1. Teachers are positioned as adversaries while the positions taken towards dominant discourses are the ones that have already been explicated in Section 1. The level of positioning that is most interesting here is that of the second level where Kev has to defend against the skepticism of his interlocutors.

### Positioning level 2: interlocutors

Instead of orienting to the negative moral implications of a teacher hitting on a fellow student's mother, Kev appears to be indicating that it is not only Vic's mother who has been hit on by a teacher. A Mr. Lanoe had hit on Kev's mother. Kev immediately follows this statement by providing details that situate Mr. Lanoe in Kev's more recent sphere of experience, distinct from the other two teachers about whom the boys as a group had been reminiscing. He states that Mr. Lanoe teaches at his school and then self-repairs that to mean his summer school. In doing so, he is hearable as trying to start a second story related to Vic's abstract as well as being somewhat unsure of how his story will be responded to. His provision of these initial details about Mr. Lanoe can also be interpreted as an attempt to pre-empt a challenge to his believability because he knows that Mr. Lanoe is not familiar to the other boys in the group since he was not at the elementary school that they all had attended together. However, his attempt at staving of a challenge is unsuccessful.

Vic immediately challenges the reliability of Kev's story-beginning with his emphasized "WHO↑" in turn 11. This challenge has more than one implication: Vic can be either challenging Kev's veracity per se or he can also be challenging Kev's attempt to usurp the story that should follow from his abstract, or both. It is conceivable that Vic was motivated to mount such a strong challenge because not only was Mr. Lanoe unfamiliar but also because his story-telling rights had been

being infringed upon (Shuman, 1986). The sequence of next five turns (12–16) evidences Kev's initial attempts to ward of Vic's challenge. In turn 12, Kev displays lack of confidence by stuttering and repeating the assertion that Mr. Lanoe is a teacher in his current middle school. This does not satisfy Vic who not only repeats his one word question "who↑" but rapidly adds to it by asking for the name of the teacher to be clarified.

Turn 14 is interesting in the way Kev over pronounces and stretches out the syllables of the name, in effect producing an effect of exasperated patience, as if he were talking down to individuals who have difficulty hearing or understanding. This tactic does not work, as Art now chimes in to support Vic and to affirm that Kev's earlier enunciations of the teacher's name were not clear but mistakable with another name "Rabado." This name seems to be also familiar to Vic, since in turn 16 Vic reciprocally supports Art in constructing something humorous about the mix-up between the names. What Vic says is unfortunately not clear.

The interaction in section 2 thus consists of adversarial positions taken against Kev by two of the other boys, Vic and Art. While the latter try to vitiate Kev's believability as a narrator, Kev makes unsuccessful attempts to convince them. He is thus so far unable to redress his interlocutors' positioning of him as being unreliable and dissonant with the camaraderie of the group.

In the next section, we observe how Kev reestablishes his reliability as a narrator while at the same time realigning himself with the tenor of the group's interaction.

### Section 3: restoration of Kev's reliability and alignment with the group

In turn 17, Kev does not wait for Vic and Art's collaborative challenge to his reliability to further escalate since he launches into a story to reestablish his reliability as a narrator and the veracity of the narrated event. In doing so, he also reestablishes rapport with the group (Positioning level 2). While doing so, Kev maintains the antithetical positions taken towards the relevant master narratives of teaching and probity of the preceding talk (Positioning level 3) but varies them in order to achieve believability and alignment with his interlocutors. He manages this by employing a number of discursive devices to position himself vis-à-vis the teacher in his story. Since this is the most interesting level of positioning in this section, it will be elaborated in greatest detail.

### Positioning level 1: story characters
The discursive devices that Kev uses to achieve his positioning as morally superior to his teacher in his 'small' story include the following:
1.  Discourse markers
2.  Use of detail to provide a sense of authenticity

3.  Use of extreme case formulations and iterative verbform
4.  Use of quoted speech to portray a sense of immediacy
5.  Restyling the voices in the quoted speech to achieve an inverted power positioning between self and teacher

1. *Discourse markers.* To begin the story, Kev uses the discourse marker "anyway," which is usually a marker of a topic or thematic shift. Appropriately, he uses it to effect the switch away from Art and Vic's collusive challenge and to segue into his elaborated story.

Another discourse marker that is particularly salient in Kev's story is "you know," which is used four times in the course of a very short story. Although this marker is usually taken to be an indicator of uncertainty, it has also been described as expressing a speaker's appeal for agreement (see Eckert, 2003). In Kev's case, it appears that the function of "you know" starts off mainly as a marker of uncertainty/nervousness (especially when he makes an error in the story and has to repair it) but shades into a recruiter of agreement by its use the fourth time around.

2. *Use of detail.* Tannen (1989, p. 140 ff) has described how supplying details in a story can result in the story being considered authentic. The way Kev starts off his story is in line with this: He provides orienting information that locates the situation as a regular summer school scenario. Parents coming in to "look around the school" is nothing out of the ordinary. However, in the process of providing this detail Kev displays a measure of haste and anxiety by making a mistake about who was to inspect the school premises, self-repairing the mistake and using hedges such as "you know" and "whatever."

3. *Extreme case formulations and iterative verb form.* When Kev gets to the main point of interest of his story, i.e., Mr. Lanoe's actions that he construes as hitting on his mother, he uses the extreme case formulations (Pomerantz, 1986) "ev'ry" and "everytime" to indicate that this teacher's behavior was not a one time occurrence but rather happened repeatedly and without exception. In this use of extreme case formulations, Kev presents the behavior of the teacher as so consistent that he insulates it from challenges. He backs this up by using the iterative verb form "kept going" to describe the teacher's inquiries about his mother. This positions the teacher as persistent and desperate.

4. *Use of direct quoted speech.* Kev vivifies his story with a sense of immediacy and unassailability by providing direct quoted speech of the interaction between the teacher and himself concerning his mother. This is an extremely potent device that portrays the events in a story as if it were "a play peopled by characters who take on life and breath" (Tannen, 1989, p. 103). The construction of such vividness further insulates Kev's recounting from challenges and contributes in large measure to his desired positioning as a reliable storyteller.

5.   *Restyling the voices in the quoted speech.* Kev restyles the teacher's and his own voice in the quoted speech. The teacher is portrayed as seeking information from Kev, information that he seems desperate to have because he seeks it repeatedly. Kev also imbues the teacher's voice with juvenile intonation. By contrast, he voices himself as the didactic party in the interaction: He slows down his intonation and uses deliberate pronunciation such that he makes his response to the teacher sound like a version of motherese or child directed speech. He also shows how impatient and ignorant the teacher is through his correction that the parent-visit to the school is not on the next day but in two weeks' time. Here, he constructs the teacher as not knowing the schedule of the school, instead he has to be reminded of it by the student. Further, it can be heard as if the teacher's desperate desire to meet Kev's mother distracts his attention from school matters.

Kev's construction of Mr. Lanoe's response to his didactic voicing is also illustrative of a denigration of the teacher's professional position through the use of careless pronunciation for "alright." The response is also hearable as a meek acceptance of the student's condescending correction of the teacher's hopes. In this way, Kev successfully turns the tables on the teacher, inverting the power relationship between himself and Mr. Lanoe. He positions himself as superior, knowledgeable of the schedule of school events, and patient with the shortcomings of the teacher. The teacher is positioned as ignorant of the school schedule and by extension irresponsible, impatiently pursuing his personal inclinations, and therefore displaced to an inferior position.

*Positioning level 2: interlocutors*

As he launches into his small story, Kev uses the discourse marker "anyway" in overlap with Vic's talk as a dismissive device: In effect, he is signaling to Vic that his objections are unfounded and that what is coming up will neutralize them. Using "anyway" here positions Kev as in control of the situation and it works admirably in securing him the floor to tell his 'small' story without interruption.

At the conclusion of his 'small' story, Kev has effectively repositioned himself in consonance with his interlocutors. His reliability as a narrator should not be challenged anymore because the events are constructed in vivid detail; interest in his mother did not occur once but repeatedly. His story positions himself as knowledgeable of heterosexist politics. More than that, the teacher is positioned as a desperately importunate, effectively a figure of fun.

That this positioning is a successful one is depicted by the joint laughter evinced from Vic and Ben in response to the story in turns 18 and 19. There is no return to the questioning of the veracity of Kev's assertion that his mother had been hit on.

*Positioning level 3: master narratives / dominant discourses*
In addition to the prevailing positions that have been taken towards the dominant discourses concerning the behavior of teachers, Kev attempts to mitigate these positions in his last turn (20). He attempts to provide a softening of his arguably harsh positioning of the teacher by hazarding an explanation for his behavior. He begins to say that Mr. Lanoe liked his mother, has difficulty with saying this, and has to resort to hedges ("you know," "yeah"). By doing so he positions himself as reasonable and open to understanding the teacher's behavior in more positive terms. However, he displays an inability to include his mother explicitly in this more sober formulation, which is hearable as his difficulty in negotiating the dilemma inherent in the teacher's actions.

## Summary and conclusions

The narratives in this sequence are related through a common positioning of teachers as adversarial. They are all about the unreasonable behavior of teachers. Initially (turn 1–10) it appears that the boys are performing solidarity (Coates, 2001, 2003) but a breach appears when Kev's believability is challenged by Vic with support from Art (turn 11–16). It is through the telling of a more detailed story that Kev reestablishes himself as a reliable narrator and simultaneously restores a sense of solidarity within the group. In doing so, Kev employs a number of illustrative finely tuned positionings as follows:

*Vis-à-vis his interlocutors*
i.   My stories are as believable as yours
ii.  My experiences are equivalent to yours
iii. We share solidarity against badly behaved teachers

*Vis-à-vis master narratives of heterosexuality and adulthood*
i.   We can identify and criticize undesirable, desperate forms of sexual conduct
ii.  Our boundaries within hegemonic masculinity are more reasonable than those of some teachers
iii. We can turn the tables on adults

I hope to have demonstrated that these positions were not arbitrary but rather shaped by Kev's interactions with his interlocutors. In establishing these positions Kev was successful in achieving the social goal of re-aligning with the group, providing an example that narratives told in conversation are potent tools for achieving social actions (Mandelbaum, 2003). After Kev had successfully fended off the challenge to his believability as a narrator, Vic reasserts his rights to finish his own

story on the theme of the sexually-nuanced misbehavior of teachers. Although Kev in turn tries to challenge Vic's believability, his attempts are largely ignored by the rest of the boys who become more concerned with comparing how they did on a statewide examination. Hence, Kev's attempts to turn the tables on Vic were ultimately unsuccessful because his actions were not supported by any of the other members of the group.

This illustrates how certain competitive social actions need cooperation (collusion in Coates's, 2003, terms) from third parties in a local context to succeed. In the first instance, the alignment of Art with Vic in questioning Kev's credibility created a context in which Kev felt the need to tell a more extended story with sophisticated discursive devices to reestablish both his credibility and realignment with the group. By contrast, Kev's own challenges to Vic's continuation of his story were not taken up by anyone else so that there did not evolve a fertile context for the pursuit of Kev's objections. Thus, we are allowed an *in situ* glimpse of how different contexts are constituted through differing uptake by interlocutors, and the consequences of these contexts for recursively constituting the direction of succeeding interaction.

More importantly, Kev employed a 'small' narrative to fend off a threat to his identity as a reliable storyteller while demonstrating familiarity with, and evaluation of, adult heterosexual interactions. This was not done in isolation, but as a response to a challenge from two of his interlocutors within a sequence of 'small' narratives that had been generally positioning the boys as morally superior to their teachers who were being depicted as unreasonable. The important question to ask, then, is why was Kev challenged when his initial declaration was not at odds with the general drift of the preceding stories that were constructing a particular reality that the boys seemed to be sharing. One answer can be deduced from the sequence of escalation of the depicted 'transgressions' that were being told about the teachers. It is observable that from Art's first introduction of the topic in turn 1, each succeeding story racheted up the stakes about commonly known teachers until Vic appeared to bring it all to a head with the extremely marked declaration "Dude, that dude hit on my mom." Kev, by introducing a teacher whose name was not familiar to his interlocutors and concomitantly marking his assertion as a competitive one through emphasizing "my" in turn 10, may have signaled a usurping of what Vic may have considered as his story-telling rights (Shuman, 1986) to the crowning story of the series. Such a view is supported by Vic's playing the main inquisitor of Kev's competing declaration in the next few turns.

Here we observe how a co-constructed narrative reality is disturbed by Kev's actions that were not only competitive, but also appeared outside the boundaries of the shared reality that had been fabricated by the group. The disjuncture is important enough to Vic to have him interrogate its origins with eventual support

from Art. The rift in group solidarity is serious enough that it is only restored after Kev tells a more extended 'small' story that restores his credentials as a reliable storyteller while at the same time repositioning himself securely with the group as morally superior to that particular teacher and teachers in general. This sequence of 'small' stories illustrates an *in vivo* example of how individual and group realities can intersect, diverge, and be restored in social interaction with concomitant implications for the emergent identities of the interactants. It is through such fine-grained discursive analyses of these 'small' stories told in real-time interaction that we are able to depict the processes of how Kev first tries to claim a knowledgeable identity equivalent to Vic's dominant one, is then challenged on this claim, and finally works up an identity that is accepted as on par with his interlocutors.

This points to the worth of analyzing the 'small' stories that are told in everyday conversations as a window onto the emergence of social identities on a microgenetic level (for expositions on microgenesis as a method see for example, Catán, 1986; Siegler & Crowley, 1991; Werner, 1956). It is only on this level of analysis that we get to discern the intricate processes of identity construction as they emerge in the ebb and flow of everyday conversation. The importance of this cannot be overstated, because much previous Eriksonian research on identity has paid too little attention to direct social inputs on a micro-social level (Kroger, 2004) and has been overly concerned with 'black-box' transitions between static statuses (Kroger, 2003). Even more important, Bamberg (Bamberg, 2004c; Korobov & Bamberg, 2004) has made the case that a fruitful way of viewing development is that in which the individual becomes more and more adept at discursively or rhetorically navigating ever more complex social situations by garnering the means to do so through social interaction. Such a perspective resonates with the earlier assertions of Packer (1987), who advocated for the importance of practical activity as an engine of development, stating:

> "I want to propose that social fluency is at least as important a telos for social development as is the formation of explicit theories, principles, and hypotheses about the social world…More explicitly, social development consists in (sic) increasingly broadened fluency: becoming socially fluent in an increased range of situations or subworlds…" (p. 267).

Packer is explicit in championing social fluency as a developmental end in itself and more so that "development as a process can only deal with *local* improvements and with proximal change" (p. 268, emphasis in original). Moreover, what can social fluency mean but the ability to transact with others through language in social situations on the local level, processes that can only be uncovered, analyzed, and understood on a microgenetic scale. The research requirements for the latter are amply satisfied by this discursive-narrative analysis of conversational stories.

It is through investigations of 'small' stories such as this one that we can begin to more fully appreciate how adolescents gain social fluency with each other while negotiating how they want to be understood with respect to the dominant discourses that frame their interactions, those of hegemonic masculinity being some of the most important. By taking positions vis-à-vis these dominant discourses or master narratives as well as their interactants, they experiment with emergent identities, modify them, and eventually settle on sedimented versions that assume a semi-stable quality both to themselves and external observers, although always being in the process of reworking these. Furthermore, it is only through a microgenetic lens that the improvisatory nature of such identity construction processes can be exposed. In sum, attention to 'small' stories negotiated in conversation is potentially a potent tool to uncover the processes of identity development as well as social development in its full complexity and embeddedness in social intercourse.

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## Appendix A

Transcription conventions

| | |
|---|---|
| (.) | Pause |
| = | Latching of successive talk |
| [overlap] | Overlapping speech |
| No::: | Elongation of prior syllable |
| ↑ | Rising intonation |
| ↓ | Falling intonation |
| ˚quieter˚ | Quieter than surrounding talk |
| <u>emphasis</u> | Emphasis |
| LOUD | Strong emphasis |
| >faster< | Accelerated talk |
| <slower> | Drawn out talk |
| ((…)) | Talk unclear or inaudible |
| {comments} | Comments by transcriber including paralinguistics/non-verbals |

# "Strip poker! They don't show nothing!'"

## Positioning identities in adolescent male talk about a television game show

Neill Korobov and Michael Bamberg

The purpose of our chapter is to approach 'narrative' and 'identities' as highly interactive and empirical phenomena that occur in talk. In talk, identities come to existence and become empirical as occasioned conversational resources that are locally and rhetorically constructed. Further, we conceptualize 'identities' as 'interactional identities' that are employed by interactants *in situ*, not as one identity here and then another identity there, but as a complex weaving of 'positionings.' As such, we will apply the discursive notions of 'positions' and 'positioning' in order to examine how a group of 10-year-old boys work up their identities during a stretch of 'naturally-occurring' small stories about seeing female nudity on a television game show. Our argument is that their identities are best viewed as a confluence of positionings – as 'masculine,' 'heterosexual,' 'childish,' and as 'consumer critics.' Most importantly, we will show how these positionings are crafted in less than fully obvious, direct, or self-incriminating ways. By doing such mitigation, the boys are able to do two things simultaneously: 1) hedge their commitment to 'hetero-normative masculinity,' particularly to those features that *may* suggest shallowness, chauvinism, or sexism, while 2) displaying a clear interest in 'heterosexual desire.'

Within the 'new psychology' of masculinity (see Good, Wallace, & Borst, 1994; Levant, 1996; Thompson, Pleck, & Ferrera, 1992), the notion of identity is seen as plural, as captured with the often cited idea of multiple masculinities or multiple masculine identities (Connell, 1995; Levant, 1996). Within this perspective, identities are treated as an effect of the way masculine gender roles and masculine ideologies are *internalized* by individuals. Trading heavily on some of the central tenets of 'self categorization theory' and 'social identity theory' (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979), these researchers argue that men's identities are (in part) the outcome of an ongoing psychological constructive process of categorization, identifi-

cation, and social comparison (see Kilianski, 2003; Levant, 1996). As such, however much it is claimed that identities are plural, social, or ideological, they are often examined as essentially psychological phenomena that exert a determining influence on thought and behavior. These efforts, in turn, inform experimental procedures that ostensibly measure components of men's identities (attitudes, feelings, and so on), which are then used as predictive or explanatory variables.

While this type of approach is common in psychology, the purpose of this chapter is to approach male identities as highly interactive empirical phenomena that occur in talk. Here, identities are approached as occasioned conversational resources that are locally and rhetorically constructed. The fact that these identities emerge in talk about shared events, such as having seen particular movies or TV-shows, consisting of a sequence of 'small stories', is more than coincidental. Further, identities are being conceptualized as 'interactional identities' that are employed by 'interactants' *in situ*, not as one identity here and then another identity there, but as a complex weaving of 'positionings' (Bamberg, 2004). As such, one of the central aims of this chapter is apply the discursive notion of 'positions' and 'positioning' as they have been developed in previous work with narratives (Bamberg, 1997, 2004) in order to examine how a group of 10-year-old boys work up a range of descriptions and evaluations during a stretch of 'naturally-occurring' talk about seeing female nudity on a television game show. Our goal is to show how their 'masculine' identities are actually a confluence of positionings – for instance, involving the way they position themselves as 'children', and then subvert that; the way they position themselves as 'heterosexuals' and then mitigate against certain features of that; and finally, the way they position themselves as members of a 'culture of consumerism', and then resist that.

More specifically, we are interested in how their descriptions and assessments about seeing female nudity on TV get 'on-record' in a way that sidesteps the appearance of being overly serious about them (Antaki, 2003; Speer & Potter, 2000). In the present data, these evaluative moves involve laughable exaggeration, idiomatic formulations of 'not knowing', and appeals to common sense (among other things), all of which allow the boys to display a tongue-in-cheek investment in their views, thus preserving the quality of 'deniability' should they be challenged (see Gough, 2001; Potter, 1998; Speer, 2002). We are interested in how the insulated nature of such evaluative views, as well as the formulations that are used to 'bring them off', are instrumental for constructing positions that allow the boys to demonstrate the curious negotiability that takes place in the interactive performance of their gendered identities.

In terms of the specific 'positionings' noted above, we will show how the boys design their descriptions and evaluations to delicately position themselves as 'children' who are both very 'heterosexual' and 'masculine' in their orientation to more

'adult-like' and 'consumer cultural' activities. As discursive psychologists, we are interested in examining how these positionings are occasioned and locally put to use within interaction, and we are determined to explain this without recourse to either psychological speculation or cultural exegesis (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998). As is often the case in 'naturally occurring' talk, where there is no research-er to ask *about* one's affiliation with certain social identities, the boys do not explic-itly name the identities that they are trading on, such as 'we are masculine because' or 'this is heterosexual.' Rather, they engage in descriptions and assessments that occasion certain *features* of those identities, features that are treated by the others as 'relevant' and 'procedurally consequential,' useful and (at times) problematic (Sacks, 1992; Widdicombe, 1998). In doing so, they engage in what we will argue is a continuous process of *positioning* themselves alongside the ever-changing fea-tures of the very 'identities' that they are in the process of constructing.

## Positions, positioning, and identity

Before moving further, it is necessary to discuss what is and is *not* meant with the use of 'positioning,' how it fits within discursive psychology (from here, DP), and how it is analytically useful for examining the formation of identities. We will first discuss what we mean by 'positions,' and then what we mean with 'positioning activities.' Our argument is that these terms are useful for connecting an interest in studying talk as it is used for doing social interaction with studying talk as it is employed to 'do identity' (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998; Bamberg, 1997, 2004).

According to Bamberg (2004), there are two common ways of conceptualizing 'positions.' The more traditional, Foucauldian view is to see positions as resources with an 'off-the-shelf' life – that is, as grounded in master-narratives, cultural dis-courses, texts, institutional norms, and so forth. While not exactly an endorse-ment of strong discursive determinism (because subjects do have some choice about which positions to take up), discursive work that adopts this more post-structural view of positioning often launders the participants' discursive activities through the extant meanings associated with discourses, repertoires, ideologies, norms, and so on. The other, more ethnomethodological view of positioning that we adopt in this chapter begins with a view of positions as interactively drawn-up, resisted, and amended by participants. In this view, positions are *not* off-the-shelf resources, but are indexed and occasioned as an effect of the way the social inter-action is ordered, made relevant, and attended to as an ongoing agentive accom-plishment of the subject-within-context.

Positions are, however, not equivalent to activities or conversational devices in the way that discursive psychologists typically use these terms. Rather, positions are

a way of describing the *force* that certain activities, devices, and ordering procedures have for establishing the relational constellation of the participants present or imagined. This is especially obvious when the talk occasions the features of identity-rich categories. 'Positions' emerge as the identity-relevant effects of the way speakers order conversational devices and discursive activities (Bamberg, 1997, 2000, 2004; Korobov, 2001). To work up an *identity* position, speakers use small stories to signify what their talk is about, i.e., they construct characters in space and time and assess them in certain ways from a particular vantage point – hence establishing the 'aboutness' of their talk. In doing this, speakers simultaneously orient themselves to this 'aboutness' in interactively relevant ways in order to do social interaction and, most importantly, to establish their identities.

For instance, an adolescent boy may construct a character description ("man (.) that girl's a babe") and may then employ the tag of 'you know' at the end of the description. Such an evaluation and casual-looking token simultaneously establishes the terms by which the content is established and the speaker's local position vis-à-vis that content, and as such, begins to pull for a certain form of social interaction (intersubjectivity, agreement, and so forth). But the evaluation and tag may also work, as Sacks (1992) notes, as one of many membership categorization devices that order together the participants and imagined others into collections of 'things' that may be treated as similar, disparate, good, bad, and so on. When one analyzes how these devices and activities are ordered and attended to by the participants, one can begin to see how the devices and activities that do social interaction also (at times) cast speakers and listeners into endogenously produced identity positions that can be useful for managing a sense of how one is 'coming across.'

This idea addresses part of what we mean with the use of 'positioning activities.' Positioning is not an activity in the same way that 'disagreeing' is an activity. We can show where and how a participant is disagreeing and what 'disagreeing' is doing as a form of social interaction. That is, we can show how disagreement is managed and brought off for the interaction. But simply examining its usefulness as a way of doing social interaction doesn't *necessarily* tell us anything about its usefulness in the accomplishment of identities. By conceptualizing disagreeing, for instance, as a *positioning* activity, we are drawing attention to the way it functions to position selves vis-à-vis one another and vis-à-vis a discursively established world 'out there.' We are attempting to underscore the ways that some activities (and the linguistic devices and sequential arrangements that constitute them) are employed to *do* not only social interaction, but also social *identities*.

As noted above, it is useful to draw on Sacks' (1992) work on membership categorization devices and category-bound attributes. Like Sacks, we are *partly* interested in calling upon what we as members of a culture know about the conventionalized features of certain identities as well as the formulaic and indexical

nature of certain expressions in order to make claims about when identities are being made relevant. But at the same time we are determined to offer a sequentially grounded account that guards against ascriptivism, which means that when we think that the categorical features of certain identities are being batted about, we are obligated to say how it is there and how it is relevant for the participants (Antaki & Widdicombe, 1998).

## Positioning and discursive psychology

While this view of positioning certainly connects with some of the central predilections of ethnomethodology, its fit within discursive psychology still deserves clarification, particularly since there are many varieties of DP. One variety of DP that has gained popularity for its discussion of positioning is the early work of Davies and Harré (1990), but most notably Harré and van Langenhove's (1999) edited book, *Positioning Theory*. Harré and colleagues offer positioning as an 'immanentist' replacement for a clutch of static, non-discursive, and overly-cognitive concepts like role, or role theory. Positioning is conceptualized as a fluid, dynamic, and liberating alternative. Positioning is introduced as the vanguard for an immanent view of conversational action. Or, more precisely, they offer an *ethogenic* conception of positioning as the dynamic and ever-changing assignment of rule-governed rights and duties (inherent in story lines) among groups of social participants (see Varela & Harré, 1996).

This ethogenic conception of positioning is couched within Harré's weaker version of social constructionism and his immanent conception of social representations. This view of positioning is at odds with the discursive psychological view of positioning that we are advancing. For starters, we question the place of ethogenics for discursive psychology (see Potter, 1998; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). Harré's use of positioning works to *extract* from discourse sets of rules that people use. Although the knowledge needed to manage such rules is said to be immanent within the discourses themselves, Harré notes that rules are not reducible to the discourses (Varela & Harré, 1996). This seems to posit a kind of storehouse of social knowledge that enables acts of positioning to stand as indexes of the moral order. As Potter and Wetherell (1987) have argued, extracting social rules from the construction or performance of them is problematic. It reifies the idea of social rules and undermines the diachronic relationship between *description* and *evaluation*. In contrast, the version of DP being drawn on here argues that psychology's traditional armamentarium of concepts be analyzed as *topics* that are attended to and managed in talk, rather than being resources that psychologists haul to the discursive scene. Discursive work ought to open up available rhetorical versions

rather than tracing those versions back to the rules and norms that purportedly make them possible.

We also resist the way Harré attempts to update the traditional view of social representations by fitting it with his view of the 'discursive turn.' Although he treats social representations as immanent within social practices, the representations nonetheless maintain a kind of 'cognitive ontology' (Potter & Wetherell, 1987). We should note that the version of DP we are advancing here is not an ontological position. It is purely epistemological. As such, our version of DP parts company with Harré's conceptualization of cognition. As alluded to above, we prefer to argue that rules, beliefs, attitudes, and everything concerning the 'mind' and 'world' are to be treated analytically as discourse's topics and business (Edwards, 1997; Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996; Potter & Edwards, 2003). They are the topics we construct and mobilize in our evaluations, event descriptions, and stories in order to get things done, especially our identities.

*Data and analysis*

The data presented here come from the first phase of a longitudinal and cross-sectional study investigating adolescent boys' (ages 10–15) discourse development (Bamberg, 2004). The first phase of the study lasted about eight months and involved interviews, group discussions, written journal entries, and also the collection of 'naturally occurring' data. The data we draw on in this chapter were elicited by taking the boys on after-school outings to various places, like apple orchards, bowling alleys, and recreational centers to play ping-pong, billiards, poker and so forth. The aim was to create an environment where they could simply 'hang out' and talk about whatever they wanted. One or two adults were present and generally remained in the periphery.

The particular excerpt we analyze took place in the back of a van on the way to go apple picking. By the time of this outing, the boys had already grown accustomed to wearing the small mini-disc recorders (that fit into their pockets), and as a result there was no referencing, joking, or playing with the recorders. This particular van ride was comprised of six 10-year-old boys (all given pseudonyms). There was only one adult in the van at the time, the driver, who was not involved in the conversation at all. For analytic purposes, the transcript has been divided into four sections (see Appendix 1 for transcription conventions). The transcript picks up as the boys are talking about movies that they have seen. This leads to Jamal remarking that once his dad let his brother rent "a stripper movie," which we then find out was the movie "*Striptease.*" Upon hearing this, Kyle announces

"STRIP POKER!" and the conversation shifts to talking about the television game show, *Strip Poker*[1].

While our analysis will focus on the kinds of things discursive psychologists are generally concerned with (the way evaluations are described, actions performed, issues of stake and accountability), we will incorporate the notion of positions and positioning in order to discuss how the boys orient to the features of several relevant identities: being 'children,' being 'heterosexual,' being 'masculine,' and being 'consumer critics.' Initially, we will show how they position themselves as children with a limited range of privileges. We will note how they begin to subvert this characterization, and how they use the features of heterosexuality and masculinity to do this. We will specifically focus on how the boys bring off a range of evaluations about the game show *Strip Poker*, evaluations cloaked in formulations of not-knowing, irony, and laughable hyperbole. These evaluations not only occasion the identity category of critics of consumer culture, but they also allow the boys to position themselves as heterosexual. These positions are occasioned as the boys manage the dilemmas of seeming naïve versus informed as consumer critics, and excited/aroused versus not too desperate as *heterosexual* consumer critics interested in seeing female nudity. The following excerpt represents a typical activity of comparing movies or TV-shows they have seen, sharing small stories about these events in 'naturally occurring' talk activities:

Section 1
Lines 1–31
Participants: Kyle, Arthur, Jose, Jamal

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Kyle: | have you seen "Scream 3" |
| 2 | Arthur: | no |
| 3 | Kyle: | ahh::: that was sca::::ry:: |
| 4 | Arthur | my mom doesn't let me see rated R movies |
| 5 | Jose: | (1.5) Scream 3 isn't really rated R |
| 6 | Kyle: | uh (.) it's like PG-13 er' something like that |
| 7 | | ((8 seconds of diverted talk about the van slowing down)) |
| 8 | Jose: | my mom only lets me watch some rated R movies (1.0) if |
| 9 | | they're not bad (.) really really bad (.) but normally all I |

---

**1.** "Strip Poker" is a cable television game show (*USA* network) where two male/female couples compete in trying to answer various trivia questions. When a question is answered incorrectly, some clothing must be removed. As the show progresses, more clothes are removed, until the end where all the contestants essentially strip down to their final layer of undergarments. During the last few seconds of the show, the contestants dance around and act as if they are about to remove the final layer of their underwear. But before this actually happens, the show always breaks off to commercials.

10          can see is PG-13 movies (.) up to there
11   Jamal:   my mom (.) my mom and dad don't really care (.) well my
12           mom cares if I watch rated R but my dad doesn't really care
13           (1.0) he's just like ↓"o::kay:: so:: wa'''=
14   Arthur:  =does he act like this ((in deep voice)) "HEY (.) do you
15           wanna watch a rated R mo<u>vie</u> (.) come <u>right</u> in here (.) >yur'
16           mom's not gonna get tell'd< yer' <u>mom</u> won't mind=
17   Kyle:    =that's what MY=
18   Jamal:   =is that [what your dad says]
19   Kyle:              [that's::what my tha]t's what sometimes=
20   Jamal:   =but once (.) once=
21   Kyle:    =<u>look at that</u> (.) that's Jimmy's girlfriend (1.0) everybody (.) Jimmy's
22           girlfriend (.) look behind you
23   Jamal:   once he let my brother (.) he let my brother rent a <u>stripper</u> movie=
24   Kyle:    =<u>everybody</u> (.) Jimmy's girlfriend (.) right there (2.0) Jimmy's girlfriend
25           (.) Jimmy's girlfriend=
26   Jose:    =Jimmy doesn't have a girlfriend=
27   Kyle:    =[Jimmy has a girlfriend and it's a <u>tra:::shcan</u>
28   Jamal:   [hey Arthur do you know what that movie was=
29   Kyle:    =one of those recycling bins=
30   Jamal:   =striptease
31   Kyle:    STRIP POKER

This first section precedes the first topicalization of *Strip Poker* (in line 31). Kyle opens with a question about "Scream 3," which receives a minimal non-evaluative response from Arthur. Kyle furnishes an evaluation of the movie, one that uses emphatic stress to play up the heightened feature of scariness, and by extension, he positions himself as scared by it. Arthur orients to the feature of scariness as an index of the category 'rated R,' which is relevant as a type of movie that his mom doesn't let him see. Three things are relevant in Arthur's response (line 4): first, he positions himself as passive ("my mom doesn't let me"); second, the construction "doesn't let me" is the generalized, iterative present tense; third, there is event pluralization with "see rated R movies." Taken together, this is a script formulation (Edwards, 1995) where a generalized and recurring state of affairs is indexed (he isn't allowed to see rated R movies) and a general disposition about his mother (she *regularly* doesn't let him) is given to account for it. This not only positions Arthur as unaccountable for his lack of knowledge about "Scream 3," but it also positions him as a child under the supervision of his mother, and his mother as not letting him see something that Kyle has just shown interest in.

In line 8 Jose continues Arthur's scripting project (both with the use of the iterative present tense and with event pluralization), but Jose's position is not *as* gen-

eralized. The use of "only" works like a temporal adverb (equivalent to 'at times') and the qualifier of "some" in "<u>some</u> rated R movies" coupled with the conditional of "if they're not bad," works to position his mother as a bit more permissive than Arthur's mom, and himself, by extension, as having more privileges. The upgrade of "really really bad" only further emphasizes this characterization. His digression of "but normally all I can see" is instrumental. It attends to the issue of 'overdoing it,' or exaggerating his privileges too much, and rescripts (with the use of "normally," "all," and iterative present tense in "can see") a position of being a child that is commensurate with Arthur's position.

In line 12, Jamal introduces the category of dad into the discussion, and following his self-correction in line 11 ("well my mom cares"), begins to differentiate his mom from his dad by trading on the disposition of caring. He de-emphasizes the intensity of his dad's concern (with the softener "just" in line 13) and drops pitch in animating his dad's voice as a nonchalant register in "o::kay so:: wa'". The downshift in register is heard as a turn projection cue and is taken up in the form of a co-participant completion by Arthur, who extends the project of animating how Jamal's dad might act in such a situation. Arthur's formulaic construction of the dad's response is telling. The first part is almost tautological in its simplicity, hearable as 'if you wanna watch it, come watch.' This positions the activity of watching a rated R movie as unproblematic, and his dad as offering unfettered access to it. The second part (beginning with "yur' mom's not gonna") draws up a co-conspiratorial position with the son *against* the mother. There is something idiomatic about the way it is formulated, as if it could be heard as 'out of sight, out of mind' or 'what she doesn't know won't upset her.' This constructs the mother as perhaps needing to be protected from 'reality,' the dad in cahoots with the son, and the son as being extended more adult (perhaps 'masculine') privileges.

This claim that 'masculine' identities are lurking begins to become more obvious. Jamal orients to Arthur's positioning of dads by attempting a bid for the floor in line 20, with a recycled turn beginning in line 23, to point out that once his dad let his brother rent a stripper movie. There is an indexical force in the use of 'stripper' in characterizing the movie. Jamal could have said 'rated R' or used any number of other descriptors. The choice of 'stripper' is an upgraded evaluation that seems occasioned by Arthur's account in lines 14–16 of the *permissive* nature of what dads allow their sons to see. It treats the dad's openness as openness about something in particular – that is, sexualized forms of female nudity, as indexed with the use of 'stripper movies.' Here is where the positioning of certain features of the identity category masculinity start to become relevant, something that will increasingly open up as the interaction unfolds.

In trying to regain the floor in line 28, Jamal reorients to his event description in the form of a pre-announcement that works to explore Arthur's receptiveness to

a possible forthcoming announcement about the name of the stripper movie (see Schegloff, 1990). By doing this, Jamal is orienting to the potential trouble that may be lurking in such an announcement. Jamal announces it as "*Striptease*" (line 30), and immediately upon hearing this, Kyle shouts out "Strip Poker". Kyle's exclamation is not designed as a question (with rising intonation), as if to check whether he heard Jamal correctly. Rather, it is a full-out exclamation that plays off of the word 'strip' in "*Striptease*" in making relevant another two-part word that begins with 'strip,' "Strip Poker." In this way, it surfaces as a kind of spontaneous alliteration, or tying mechanism that works to renew the relevance of 'stripping', but in a way that (as we will see) projects stripping in a new direction.

Section 2
Lines 31–40

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 31 | Kyle: | STRIP POKER |
| 32 | Jamal: | no (.) strip<u>tease</u>= |
| 33 | Jose: | =°oh (.) [I've watched that] ° |
| 34 | Kyle: | [the nake::d player]::s= |
| 35 | Jamal: | =on tape (1.0) <u>nu::th</u>ing covered= |
| 36 | Kyle: | =OHH YEAH:::= |
| 37 | Jamal: | =oh I wouldn't dare let my brother (.) when he was eleven (.) rent that |
| 38 | Arthur: | there's naked (.) the <u>naked players</u> |
| 39 | Jose: | do you watch <u>that </u>show (.) Strip Poker= |
| 40 | Kyle: | =STRIP POKER (.) THEY DON'T SHOW <u>NOTH</u>ING |

By emphasizing the word 'tease,' Jamal's rejoinder of "no (.) strip<u>tease</u>" in line 32 orients to Kyle's "STRIP POKER" as a potential alliterative misread. It re-foregrounds the topic of "*Striptease*" for potential uptake. Lines 33–38 involve a jostling back and forth between the movie "*Striptease*" and the game show "*Strip Poker*." In lines 33 and 34, Jose and Kyle overlap in orienting back to Kyle's exclamation of "STRIP POKER" and treat it as the television game show "*Strip Poker*" – as something that Jose has watched and that, according to Kyle, features 'naked players.' Jamal's turn in line 35 can be heard as a continuation of his turn in 32, where he re-topicalizes the movie "*Striptease*" in a two-part evaluation of the movie. Noting that it was "on tape" may seem repetitive, since he said earlier (line 23) that it was rented. However, when set next to the second part of the evaluation ("nothing covered"), it seems to orient to the *unedited* feature of being 'on tape.' As such, the 'nothing covered' part is hearable as the relevant thing about unedited, 'on tape' material. The 'nothing covered' indexes what is relevant about 'strippers.' In these few lines, the boys move between "*Striptease*" and "*Strip Poker*," both of which are oriented to because they feature nudity and/or stripping.

Kyle's formulaic appreciation ("OHH YEAH:::") in line 36 works as the first demonstrative evaluation of such features. Such a formulaic response is heard as a response to the two prior turns, where naked players and nudity figure prominently. As such, there are grounds to treat his exclamation as an index for a type of appreciation that is conversationally normative in heterosexual masculine banter, that is, as open and enthusiastic excitement about seeing naked women (Brooks, 1997; Levant, 1997). But rather than offering an upgraded or same assessment, Jamal's rejoinder in line 37 begins with a delay token ("oh") and then follows with a weak disagreement ("I wouldn't dare") (see Pomerantz, 1984). His use of 'dare' indexes that there is something potentially dangerous or risky in what his father did by letting the brother rent a rated R movie as an 11-year-old. By drawing up such a position, Jamal positions his father as potentially irresponsible and himself within a more adult-space of responsibility. Two identities seem to be lurking here: The first being a stereotypically masculine identity in which the features of lust and sexual attraction are salient; the other a more adult, rational and mature identity where the feature of responsibility seems salient.

In line 38, we hear Arthur offer an evaluation of "*Strip Poker*" that repeats the feature of "naked players" that Kyle offered in line 34. The next turn (line 39) is a question from Jose, one that is stated with an emphasis on "that" in "do you watch that show." The use of "that" and the emphasis on it has indexical force. It points back to Arthur's prior utterance where "Strip Poker" has been re-topicalized and where "naked players" is yet again the relevant feature. As such, Jose's question is about 'watching' *that* show, where the "that" indexes naked players. The question has the potential to be heard less as a straightforward request for information, but as a move that is subtly questioning the motives of "you" (likely Arthur or Kyle) for watching a show that features naked players.

Kyle immediately self-selects and offers a response with a dispreferred turn shape. Rather than answering in the preferred way of 'yes I do' or 'no I don't' (where one's agency is marked), he opens by linguistically marking "Strip Poker," and then continues on to assess the show in the negative, with "THEY DON'T SHOW NOTHING." By doing this, Kyle is able to demonstrate knowledge about the show but in a *critical* way that mitigates against the perception (possibly indexed in both Jose's question and in his own exclamation in line 36) that he is swept away or *overly* taken by seeing nudity. This critical posture signals the beginning of a process of positioning themselves as *heterosexual* and *masculine* 'critics' who are interested in seeing nudity and stripping, and even complaining about not getting to see it, while simultaneously not appearing desperate for it or ignorant about why they are not seeing it.

Section 3

Lines 40–51

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 40 | Kyle: | =STRIP POKER (.) THEY DON'T SHOW <u>NOTHING</u> |
| 41 | Jamal: | I KNOW (.) they have like THREE PAIRS of underwear on (.) and like |
| 42 | | [FIVE BRA::S] |
| 43 | Kyle: | [they have like] they have like 46 pairs of shorts for em' (.) LIKE FIVE |
| 44 | | PAIRS OF SOCKS ON (.) <u>TWO</u> PAIRS OF SHOES (.) LIKE <u>SIX</u> |
| 45 | | JACKETS (.) I MEAN WHAT'S <u>WITH</u> THIS (1.0) IT SAYS <u>STRIP</u> (.) |
| 46 | | poker (.) not let's let's see who can wear the most AND NOT STRIP |
| 47 | | ((laughter, 2.0)) |
| 48 | Arthur: | yeah (.) I WISH THEY'D HAVE SOMEBODY ACTUALLY stri= |
| 49 | Jamal: | =yeah they are still left with like a shirt on and two pairs of under-wear= |
| 50 | Kyle: | =yeah (.) the farthest they got once was like underwear and a bra (1.0) |
| 51 | | that's the farthest they got = |

In lines 41–45, Jamal and Kyle collude in building upgraded, hyperbolic assessments in describing just how much the contestants *don't* show. They do this through exaggerated, if not impossible, sounding descriptions of all the clothes that the contestants layer on. As such, it is heard as a gag and treated as one (the boys end up laughing). But there may be something else accomplished with the use of such exaggerations, something relevant that figures into the *doing* of 'masculinity' and 'heterosexuality.' One must remember that they are exaggerating the absence of something (nudity) that they have already displayed interest in. There is the potential, then, to see the exaggeration as a part of an activity (however mitigated) of complaining about not getting to see nudity.

There are two ways to make a case that the joking also works as complaining. For starters, the weight of detail in the descriptions, coupled with the emphatic stress, makes the descriptions hearably absurd. Absurdity, as Antaki (2003) notes, is good camouflage. Unlike precisely stated detailed descriptions, absurd sounding ones are not easily undermined. They can be retracted or laughed off quite easily. This might suggest that the gag might be doubling as a complaint, since complaining is generally something one does not want to be obvious about. The second and more obvious bit of evidence comes with Kyle's "I MEAN WHAT'S <u>WITH</u> THIS" in line 45. The phrase is an idiomatic formulation, delivered with vigor, and packaged in the form of a rhetorical, wh-question construction. These types of rhetorical questions often come in an already-established environment of complaint, and as such, work to underscore something problematic about prior utterances. These types of formulations have been variously called 'displays of uncertainty' or 'displaying a lack of understanding', and are common in the analysis of prejudice talk (Edwards, 2000; Speer & Potter, 2000). By displaying uncertainty ("what's with

this"), one is able to indirectly construct something as problematic by claiming to have a difficulty understanding it.

Although Kyle's statement is designed as a humorous quip, it also works as a complaint about the incongruity between what the show seems to promise (stripping) and what it actually delivers (not stripping), as seen in lines 45–46. Because of its indirectness, it can be easily denied or deflected if challenged for appearing chauvinistic, immature, shallow, or sexist. They could claim that they are railing against the hypocrisy of the show, and not so much against the lack of nudity *per se*. But this option to equivocate seems to be partly undermined with Arthur's follow-up statement in line 48. He plays 'emotions' against 'world' in saying that he 'wishes' that 'they'd actually have someone strip.' It constructs the show as blocking the attainment of a desire, something ingredient in acts of complaining. As such, the focus of his desire is more centrally about seeing some actual stripping. There is a bit of an equivocation, then, between directness and indirectness.

Nevertheless, these formulations (particularly Kyle's idiomatic "what's with this" in line 45) orient to dual identity positions that seem to be gaining force as the interaction unfolds. These formulations and the discursive activities that they are a part of allow the boys to display a 'heterosexual' and stereotypically 'masculine' position of interest and desire in seeing nudity and stripping but in a way that inoculates against appearing too desperate, shallow, or immature about it.

Section 4
Lines 50–62

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 50 | Kyle: | =yeah (.) the farthest they got once was like underwear and a bra (.) |
| 51 | | that's the farthest they got = |
| 52 | Jose: | =that's the farthest they are ALLOWED to go (.) >what's they gonna |
| 53 | | do< just blurt it all off |
| 54 | Jamal: | no nobody's ever gone that way cause nobody wants to take off their= |
| 55 | Jose: | =cause the game <u>stops</u> after that |
| 56 | Jamal: | [yeah:: (.) like] |
| 57 | Kyle: | [>and then an'] then and then<= |
| 58 | Jamal: | =and the girls just like keep on taking off all their tops= |
| 59 | Kyle: | =cause that's cause (.) and then it says (.) and then it says (.) and then at |
| 60 | | the end they make them get down and take off everything (.) and they= |
| 61 | Jose: | =I <u>know</u> (.) but they NEVER take off everything= |
| 62 | Kyle: | =yeah (.) they probably take it off right after the show stops (.) you know |

This last section features Jose (in particular) displaying his knowledge about the tacit rules of the way the show works, thus working up a worldly and knowing, adult-like position. Jose emphasizes that there are limits or rules that prevent the players from getting fully naked. His emphasis on "allowed" (line 52) and his wh-question construction in "what's they gonna do" both work to challenge Jamal and Kyle's prior utterances. The exaggerated "just blurt it all off" that follows the rhetorical question construction questions Kyle and Jamal for having desires that not only violate the show's rules, but that are also hearably absurd. While Kyle and Jamal may have inoculated their positions from appearing shallow or chauvinistic, they are being positioned in this instance as naïve.

Jamal's next turn makes explicit the implicit negative assertion in Jose's wh-question challenge (with "no nobody's ever"). As such, he appears to agree with Jose's assessment that full-out stripping won't ever happen, but the reason Jamal cites has nothing to do with the rules of what is and is not allowed. He constructs the contestants (hearable as female contestants because of their talk of "bras") as not 'wanting' to take off everything. In other words, despite the appearance of stripping, they don't actually 'want' to get fully naked. This positions the activity as an artifice or tease, and the ones doing it as knowingly participating in it. Picking up on Jamal's thread of causality, Jose retorts "cause the game stops after that," which yet again appeals to the nature of the way the game is constructed, rather than the intentions of the players, in accounting for the lack of full stripping. And then again, in line 61, Jose makes a final plea to the nature of the way the game works. In a typical fashion, Kyle then agrees ("yeah"), but then goes on to speculate ("probably") that the full stripping takes place right after the show is off the air – that is, as soon as we are unable to see it. The "you know" casual looking token constructs such a speculation as something that is intersubjectively obvious. It orients back to Jamal's assertion (line 54) that the stripping is in the hands of the strippers, and as such, they determine what we see and don't see.

In this final section, Jose's position draws on the feature of common sense rationality, where an external appeal to the rules of the television show are given causal force. For Jose, not getting to see full nudity is simply a part of the way the show works. In this way, we can hear Jose positioning himself as an adult, invoking the external world of rules in order to teach the boys something. In contrast, Jamal and Kyle topicalize the dispositional tendencies of the ones doing the stripping to account for the lack of full nudity. For them, the strippers are positioned as willful agents who choose to engage in a stripping act (and by extension, as responsible for exciting them), but who don't 'want' to get fully naked (line 54), at least not until the show is off the air (line 62). Although this type of attribution work is small-scale in this particular interaction, the way it is brought off by the boys is telling, particularly when set next to the broader, cultural discourse of what has been called the

'male sex drive discourse' (Hollway, 1983) – where male sexuality is constructed as a biological *response to* the sexual signals of women who are often positioned as actively and willfully giving off such signals.

## Discussion

This analysis has examined how boys position characters on the referential plane of discourse in order to position themselves and each other by orienting to the relevant features of social identities, and how such positioning is accomplished in the performance of certain kinds of event descriptions and evaluations. At the opening of the excerpt, the boys position themselves passively as children through scripted formulations where their mother is positioned as *generally* not letting them watch rated R movies. They then contrast their moms with their dads, and through a bit of caricature work, they position their dads as indifferent, as supplying the boys with a casual entry into the *adult* world of rated R movies. But it isn't just any kind of rated R movie, but ones with strippers. It is here that the identity features of heterosexual and masculine begin to be worked up.

At first, there is a curious excitability about seeing nudity (i.e., Kyle's formulaic appreciation of "OHH YEAH" and the repeated topicalization of 'nudity' and 'naked players'). But this is tempered with an 'adult-like' moral unease (i.e., Jamal's "oh I wouldn't dare" and Jose's "do you watch that show"). Kyle orients to Jose's question (line 39) less as a request for information and more as a potential challenge. Kyle self-selects with a dispreferred turn shape that situates the show (not him) in the negative, thus opening up a 'critical' position that threads through the rest of the conversation. To do this, they use idiomatic formulations of 'not knowing' and laughable hyperbole to work up a critical form of joking – a form that walks the fine line between mocking the show for its inconsistencies and subtly registering a complaint about not getting to see something that they admittedly 'desire' to see. The activity of complaining seems eminently parasitic on the gag. The delicate and indirect formulations by which this is carried off usher in a new heterosexual and masculine position – one that is no longer unequivocally excited about seeing nudity, but one that is now a bit more *sensitive* to possibly being seen as shallow or desperate. But there still remains a hearable (for Jose) naïveté in Kyle and Jamal's remonstrations. To mitigate this 'naïveté', Jose works up a worldly and knowing position about the rules of the game, thus positioning Kyle and Jamal as possibly ignorant, and by extension, immature or childlike in their naïveté.

What is particularly important about all of this is the way that their 'masculine' identities are a confluence of positionings (as children, heterosexuals, consumer critics). These positionings, moreover, were less than straightforwardly construct-

ed or embraced, as seen in the way their evaluations and assessments were often hedged or oriented to indirectly. This indirect or subtle mobilization appears to attend to issues of stake and interest (Edwards & Potter, 1992; Potter, 1996), that is, to the precarious disputability or edge of anti-normativeness (Antaki, 2003) that may be heard, and thus inoculated against, as the features of different identities are indexed. The boys orient to certain features of 'heterosexual masculinity,' but they do so with devices and formulations that make their identity positions appear less than fully obvious or self-incriminating. This is particularly evident in the way Kyle and Jamal designed their complaint by cloaking it in a laughable series of exaggerated descriptions about the show's lack of stripping. By doing this, they are able to hold on to the aspect of heterosexual masculinity that is interested in seeing stripping and female nudity, but in an *indirect* way that is partly inoculated against other, perhaps pernicious features associated with heterosexual masculinity, such as, shallowness, chauvinism, sexism, and so on.

These findings have important implications for the study of gender identities. They suggest that talk about one's gender works against 'fixity.' In other words, *doing* heterosexuality and masculinity is an evasive, inscrutable, and insinuatingly strategic project (Benwell, 2002). Previous research has shown how men not only *downplay* certain features of heterosexual masculinity, but at times how they may also work *up* the stereotypical features of heterosexual masculinity in an obviously deliberate, knowing, or ironic way, thus signaling that it isn't meant to be taken seriously (Benwell, 2002; Speer, 2002; Whelehan, 2000). As positioning activities, these moves may be as deliberate as co-opting feminist practices (Pease, 2002) or engaging in the 'repertoires of romance' (Redman, 2001), or they may involve a shameless flaunting of political correctness or 'new laddism' (Benwell, 2002). Or more commonly, they may involve the simple but strategic use of disclaimers, irony, humor, playing dumb, biting one's tongue, (Gough, 2001), or simply attempting to look normal or ordinary (Wetherell & Edley, 1999). Because they are indirect and subtle, these types of discursive practices are quite common features of heterosexual masculinity and are very difficult to challenge without looking puritanical, naïve, or lacking in a sense of humor (Mills, 2003).

It is our belief that a discursive psychological methodology is essential for examining precisely how these types of indirect and subtle positioning activities (and resulting identity positions) get 'brought off' and situated rather seamlessly in ordinary conversation. Our specific goal has been to show that in local conversations between pre-adolescent males, identities do not arrive on the discursive scene pre-packaged, such that the boys simply tell us about themselves in the kind of straightforward way that they would be asked about their attitudes and beliefs on most psychological scales and inventories. These more standard psychological measures tend to systematically parse out and ignore the interactive subtleties and rhetorical

displays of sensitivity and guardedness found in the everyday doing of identity. The value in a discursive psychological analysis is that it reveals that it is precisely these sensitive orientations, and the work done to preempt and deflect possible counters to the hearable trouble in such orientations, that matter most in the performance of social identities.

We believe that this calls for a distinctly discursive form of psychology that takes seriously the social business that the participants themselves are conducting when they discursively occasion aspects of certain identity-rich categories. It provides a more elaborate and sequentially grounded account of what we mean by 'identity categories,' and of the conversational processes of taking up and managing the features of such categories. A discursive psychological approach allows us to see what it is that the boys *themselves* find useful or troublesome about certain identity ascriptions, and it enables us to account for the dexterity they exhibit by shifting their identity positions in the course of conversation. It allows us to understand how *they* interpret the social meanings of these identities, and how *they* use those meanings to position their own and others' identities in talk.

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## Appendix 1 – Transcription conventions

| | |
|---|---|
| *(.)* | *Short pause of less than 1 second* |
| *(1.5)* | *Timed pause in seconds* |
| *[overlap]* | *Overlapping speech* |
| ↓ | *Falling intonation* |
| *°quieter°* | *Encloses talk that is quieter than the surrounding talk* |
| *LOUD* | *Talk that is louder than the surrounding talk* |
| *Emphasis* | *Emphasis* |
| *>faster<* | *Encloses talk that is faster than the surrounding talk* |
| *((comments))* | *Encloses comments from the transcriber* |
| *Rea:::ly* | *Elongation of the prior sound* |
| *=* | *Immediate latching of successive talk* |

# Using the other for oneself

## Conversational practices of representing out-group members among adolescents

Arnulf Deppermann

Representing and assessing other social groups is a primary issue in verbal interactions of adolescent peer groups. By the representation of others, the peer-group gains its own identity *ex negativo*. The paper analyzes instances of naturally occurring peer group interactions. It is argued that the default orientation towards interactional competition and entertainment that is distinctive for adolescents' peer group interactions leads to a preference for stereotypical representations of the other. By constructing images of the out-group, the peer group creates highly involving and entertaining interactive events that strengthen consensus and emotional cohesion among the group members. While the practice of stereotyping others tacitly reproduces common moral standards, it simultaneously avoids imposing them explicitly on the individual member. Convening on what we are not and what we do not want to be by stereotyping others thus can be seen as a solution for the problem to reconcile the need for a common group identity and shared normative expectations with the need for individual freedom and absence from obligations.

A major issue in the development of social and personal identity in adolescence is the distinction of one's own identity from those of members of other social groups. Adolescents set themselves apart both intergenerationally from the generation of their parents and from children and intragenerationally from other youngsters who differ in their socio-stylistic orientation. These distinctions are realized by various interactional, emblematic, and actional practices, for example, by self-presentation, provocation, conflict, avoidance, or geographic segregation. Peer group interactions are a most important arena for the conversational construction and assessment of social identities of self and other. Aspects of the other's identity are made present by stylizations. These representations of the other can serve to cope with experiences with members of other social groups; they can also provide

opportunities for a vicarious and often fictional realization of forms of action that would be stigmatized if the actor performed them as expressions of his own desires and intentions. These portraits, however, also point to identities that the portrayers claim for themselves, typically in sharp contrast to those of the ones represented. In this chapter, I will investigate this process of how a group of male adolescents conversationally achieves their collective identity as a peer group by distinction from other social units. In particular, it will be shown

– that representations of others' identities are used as a resource for accomplishing competition and entertainment, which are the most generally preferred keyings of interaction in the peer group;
– that people who are not members of the peer group tend to be portrayed stereotypically (or at least in a way which builds on a tacit consensus about stereotypical attributions);
– that the conversational construction of others' identities contributes to creating a sense of belonging together that provides for a synthesis of two opposing motives: It establishes group cohesion and involves all participants in a common we-feeling, while simultaneously warranting autonomy and distinction of the individual in the context of the peer group.

Before I will analyze different conversational practices of portraying members of the out-group in the third section of this chapter, I will first sketch my understanding of 'identity,' which is inspired by ethnomethodology and conversation analysis; then, in the second section, I will turn to a short description of the data and the methods used.

### Towards an empirically grounded notion of 'identity-in-interaction': Social categories from the perspective of ethnomethodology and conversation analysis

The notion 'identity' is most popular in sociology and qualitative research. From a theoretical point of view, 'identity' is a means for the scientific constitution of the unity of the individual as an agent: By relating them to a common identity, the different, ephemeral actions of an individual are bundled and projected onto timeless, more or less stable dimensions of attributes, and these are understood as being related to one another by a uniform, overarching structure of subjectivity. 'Identity' thus builds a bridge between the individual and society: Identity is seen to be a product of social interaction; specifically, individuals obtain their identity most importantly by their membership in social groups. Theorists like Erikson (1966), Mead (1967), Habermas (1992), or Tajfel and Turner (1986) all subscribe to these fundamental functions of identity. 'Identity' is not only an abstract descriptive notion; it is also used to explain actions and to predict possibilities for

future action. These notions of 'identity' from social theory, however, prove to be problematic for the empirical study of identity-in-interaction. They posit conditions that cannot be assumed as premises, but rather refer to issues that are far from being settled: For example, are facets of personal identities consistent over situations, stable and coherent over time, can the subject reflect on his or her actions, and can s/he formulate them in words? Moreover, social theory aims at an aggregate, temporally extended level of 'identity' that can only very rarely be captured when studying the detail of ordinary interactions. Everyday interactions mostly have no manifest biographic reference; it is only occasionally that biographical episodes are told and that aspects of continuity, reliability, or biographical change move into the interactional focus. Furthermore, some of the defining properties of classic notions of 'identity,' such as reflexivity, expressive authenticity, or awareness of intentions, cannot be captured by the analysis of talk-in-interaction – and, indeed, maybe not in any empirical way. At the very least, these mentalistic concepts would have to be deeply reformulated in order to be fitted to the methodology of the empirical investigation of talk-in-interaction.

An empirically grounded notion of 'identity-in-interaction' has to start with cases in which participants themselves make concerns of identity relevant for their business at hand in an interaction. Such a conception of 'identity' has been developed by various researchers from ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, and discursive psychology (Antaki & Widdicombe 1998). These approaches do not aim at a theoretically informed view of the description and explanation of actions with recourse to 'identity.' Instead, they focus on how participants in an interaction identify themselves and others in their talk, which means that they focus on the interactional and linguistic organization they use for this and on which occasions and for which ends identity becomes an issue for speakers. Interaction is not viewed as a more or less transparent, epiphenomenal medium that is only useful as a tool that mirrors the more substantial and motivating realms of cognition or social structure (for a critique see Bamberg, 1999; Coulter, 1990; Edwards, 1997). On the contrary, talk-in-interaction is seen as the primordial site of the accomplishment of social facts (Schegloff, 1991). It is a reality *sui generis* in a Durkheimian sense, which means that it is structured by practices that are to be studied in their own right (specifically regarding 'identity,' see Widdicombe, 1998). The construction and attribution of identities is one of those social facts that is interactively organized.

Starting with Sacks (1972, 1979, 1992), principles governing this organization have been studied in terms of membership categorization analysis (see also Hester & Eglin, 1997; Jayyusi, 1984). It revealed that attributions of identities are closely tied to the participants' practical concerns: They are used to warrant attributions of blame, justifications, or explanations, or to claim authority, expertise, or credibility,

and so on. Constructions of identity thus are resources that participants use in a way that is sensitive to the pragmatic, expressive, and moral concerns of the interaction at hand. Identities play a central part in the design, the course, and the results of talk-in-interaction as well as in the intelligibility of accounts (Hester & Eglin, 1997; Sacks, 1972). This local view of identity contrasts sharply with prevailing essentialist conceptions of identity, which claim that identities are made up of social or personal properties that characterize a person without regard to specific contexts.

Conversation analysis instead asks when and how participants make a certain identity relevant. Moreover, the situated interpretation of identity-categories is not fixed, but can also indexically and flexibly be adapted to the local context. For instance, the categorization "youngster" is not self-evidently relevant because a person is 14 years old. It is to be asked: When does s/he use this categorization to describe her/himself? How is "youngster" interpreted in different contexts of use (e.g., in contrast to "adult" versus as a categorization used by adults themselves)? When does the identity as a youngster become irrelevant because other identities (such as "pupil," "heavy metal-freak," or "German") are at issue? Identity thus strictly and only matters in the way that it is relevant for the participants and in its specific "procedural consequentiality" for the interactional process (Schegloff, 1991). Unlike other approaches, it is not the individual in isolation who "owns" an identity. The attribution and negotiation of identities is part of the interactional process, and so identities are studied as collaborative achievements of all parties to a conversation.

The multifaceted relevance and usability of identities in talk-in-interaction relies on the fact that identity-categories are (more or less closely) associated with category-bound actions and properties. These connections provide for rich inferential potentials (Sacks, 1992, p.40; Schenkein, 1978). Knowing that a person belongs to a certain category (e.g., 'professor'), we can infer that the person also has properties (e.g., 'professional knowledge') and performs actions (e.g., 'reads scientific literature') that are definitional, typical, or normatively required of the incumbents of category membership.[1] In turn, accounts of actions and properties may be used to suggest an inference to the relevance of the associated identity-categories. Identity categories and their associated actions, properties, and expectations concerning motives, aims, knowledge of category incumbents are tools for the organization and interpretation of experience. They reflect relations of belonging and distinction and of sympathy and disrespect. In short, they are means for the articulation of social structure by the members themselves (Coulter, 1996).

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**1.**    Jayyusi (1984) discerns different statuses that actions and properties can obtain with respect to their associated categories.

An important difference lies between the in-group categories that the speaker assigns to her/himself (in the actual conversation), and the out-group categories, to which s/he does not see her/himself to be belonging. Studies in the tradition of Social Identity Theory found systematic differences in the representation of in- and out-groups:[2] In-groups are more positively evaluated than out-groups, which are overwhelmingly associated with negative properties; in-groups are perceived as being internally more heterogeneous than out-groups, whose members are seen to be characterized by only few stereotypical features that are attributed to all category incumbents without a difference. In general, contrasts between groups are accentuated and overrated, while similarities and commonalities are ignored or treated as being irrelevant. Stereotyping results in stable cognitive schemata, which are resistant against change and disconfirming experiences. As a consequence, category members are subject to reductive, overgeneralized, and inadequate perceptions that rest on the schematically based association of features. Individuals perform social comparisons to enhance their self-esteem and to justify their category-related attitudes and actions: They favor the in-group by comparing themselves to weaker (stigmatized, inferior, unsuccessful, and so on) groups, focus on features that provide a positive distinction of the in-group, and interpret similar actions positively, when performed by in-group members, and negatively, when done by out-group members (e.g., 'peaceful/reasonable' versus 'coward/weak'). There is an attributional asymmetry: While negative actions of out-group members are judged to be intentional, dispositional, and without a rational motive, the same actions performed by in-group members are excused as being unintentional, caused by circumstances, or discarded as an irrelevant exception. These tendencies of stereotyping increase when groups find themselves in a conflict or in a competition over scarce resources.

Social Identity Theory and research on stereotyping have been criticized for reifying stereotypes as cognitive structures determined by objective category membership without taking into account that categorizations of self and other vary with contexts in the way ethnomethodologists and conversation analysts have shown (see above; Widdicombe, 1998). A conversation analytic approach to stereotyping thus will start from instances of talk in which respect for and assessment of members of social categories become an interactional issue. It could be shown that participants stereotype others in hyperbolic and emotional ways (often with indignation) if their partners approve of the stereotype and join the activity (Bergmann, 1996; Nazarkiewicz, 1999). Speakers, however, show that they are sensitive to the danger of being reproached of prejudice: They use various protective strategies,

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2.   See Hogg (2001), Hogg & Abrams (1988), Hilton & von Hippel (1996), Spears, Oakes, Ellemers & Haslam (1997), and Tajfel & Turner (1986).

such as jocular keying of stereotypical representations, framing their assertions as subjective experience without claims to generalization, explicit denial of hostile attitudes or reference to positively valued members of an out-group (see e.g., Wetherell & Potter, 1992). A major theoretical problem still rests with 'stereotype,' 'prejudice,' and similar categories as analysts' predicates. They are normative, ironic categories that imply that the researcher has a more adequate conception of the social reality than the participants have and they communicate a moral critique of their practices of categorization. Although stereotypical descriptions are regularly characterized by specific design features, they cannot be identified on behalf of these features alone – the attribution of stereotyping always rests on a comparison between the reality as it is represented by the participants and the researchers' own view of the "real facts" (Hausendorf, 2000).[3] Moreover, typifying, selective perception, inductive generalization, and category-based expectations are basic cognitive and communicative principles, which are needed in order to cope with experiences and to gain agency by reducing the complexity of reality (Hilton & von Hippel, 1996). So, it is far from evident when typifying starts to be stereotyping, and the research on stereotypes itself becomes a site for ideological debate.

## Data and methods

This study is part of a larger conversation analytic and ethnographic research project on talk-in-interaction among German male adolescents. For more than two years, two participant observers regularly accompanied a peer group of adolescent boys ranging from 15 to 17 years of age during their leisure time. The peer group consisted of about 10 core and another 10 peripheral members living in a small town in Germany. We recorded about 30 hours of naturally occurring interactions in various settings, such as in the local youth center, on bus trips, on the skateground, in restaurants, and so forth. Additionally, we conducted in-depth interviews with the members of the peer group and with youth workers, the mayor, parents, and additional relevant others. Together with the field notes and other ethnographic documents, the interviews and the membership competencies that we acquired during fieldwork establish an ethnographic framework, which pro-

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3.    The use of the notion of 'stereotyping' as an analytic predicate thus means, that the researcher departs from the stance of 'ethnomethodological indifference' (Garfinkel & Sacks, 1970), which prohibits her/him from any supposition about how the things participants talk about really are.

vides an interpretative backdrop for our conversation analyses of tape-recorded data; that is, we aim at an ethnographic conversational analysis.[4]

Ethnography converges with conversation analysis in some fundamental starting points:

– it emphasizes the need of working with authentic, unstructured empirical data, that is, data that originate from situations in the field that were not arranged by the researcher;
– it aims at reconstructing cultural processes by developing and refining its analytical concepts "bottom up," that is, "from the data themselves" (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973, p. 290); special attention is paid to "emic," that is, members' categories that can serve as a guideline for the search for and reconstruction of phenomena;
– it understands culture as constituted by symbolic actions and it emphasizes the paramount importance of verbal interaction;[5]
– the careful analysis of single cases is the point of departure for the development of theoretical claims and their validation.

Ethnography plays a double role in our work on adolescents' interactions: It is necessary for the access to the data, and it is used as to improve our analytical capacities.

If you want to obtain recordings of authentic interactions among adolescents, you cannot simply address some teenagers and make them talk into your microphones. Just as in other social settings that are not equally accessible for everyone, it is necessary to first gain trust and acceptance by members of the field. This involves being there for some time on a regular basis, accounting for one's presence, and finding a role that fits into the local scenario. In our research project, this access to the field was provided by my co-worker Axel Schmidt, who had been working as a youth-guardian in the local youth center for several years. When the research project started, he had been closely acquainted with most of the adolescents under study for several years. Secondly, profound knowledge of the social organization of the field is necessary in order to collect a sample of recordings that includes the instances of the most typical genres and occasions of interaction. Specifically, the researcher has to become familiar with relevant settings, purposes, the range of participants, time schedules, and rhythms of interactional occasions (daily, weekly, during the year) that each may go along with distinctive genres, topics, and styles of interaction. Only such familiarity can provide a systematic search for and variation of data; it prevents premature generalization of singular observa-

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4.  The methodological conception and specific procedures are described in detail in Deppermann (1999, 2000).

5.  There are, though, versions of ethnography that rather insist on the cognitive basis of culture.

tions and paves the way to accumulate a holistic portrait of the interactional practices of a peer group.

Data analyses can profit from ethnographic knowledge in several ways:

– The analyst always has to keep in mind that interactions are not just verbal exchanges between speakers and hearers, but encounters between embodied participants who often simultaneously perform reciprocal actions. Since adolescents like to move around, refer to objects or clothing, and so on, sometimes a lot of information needed for the interpretation of some stretch of data is not found on tape and has to be supplied from field notes.

– Ethnographic knowledge enhances the analysts' interpretative skills. Knowing how adolescents interpret their own actions; being acquainted with (often divergent) perspectives from different actors; having traced the history of topics, interpersonal relations, or settings; knowing local norms and values, referents of utterances, and idiosyncratic word meanings; understanding innuendo, allusions, and cut-off turns – all this contributes to a deeper and more adequate analysis of conversational data. Often, this knowledge is indispensable in order to understand or even notice aspects of data that would go unnoticed or interpreted mistakenly if the analyst were only to rely on his/her stranger's competence. To be sure, ethnographic knowledge does not have to be posited as a resource for interpretation that is truthful and relevant beyond doubt. Rather, it has to be demonstrated that ethnographically derived knowledge leads to a more detailed and more consistent interpretation. That is, the analyst has to refrain from premature subsumptive use of ethnographic information on conversational data. Its validity and its relevance always have to be proven regarding the recorded data at hand; it must be shown to be consequential for the interactional process. In this way, ethnography and conversation analysis can enrich one another, because a lot of ethnographic findings can also be substantiated and elucidated concerning their constitutive technical details by conversation analysis.

In the approach presented in this chapter, ethnography thus supplements conversation analysis. We do not aim at a traditional, "comprehensive" ethnography of a peer group. Rather, ethnography is a subsidiary, though indispensable, tool for systematizing and improving the conversation analytic work.

*Practices of portraying members of other social groups in adolescents' conversations*

In the conversations we recorded, talking about absent people who do not belong to the peer group is a very frequent activity of the adolescents. Almost all references to out-groups involve a reference to specific members who are part of the

adolescents' local field of action and perception. There are six sets of social categories by which the youngsters organize their relevant social others:

– other male adolescents, who mostly pursue a different lifestyle: gays ("Schwule"),[6] beaneaters ("Hawacks/Kanaken"), trash ("Assis"), college students ("Studenten")
– girls, who are predominantly categorized by attractiveness and moral criteria: attractive girls (*'cute chicks'*: "Mucken/Schnitten"), sluts ("Schlampen"), silly girls (*'broads'*: "Tussen")
– adults who try to control the youngsters' activities (mayor, teachers, youth worker)
– significant others from the village
– members of the families (parents, siblings, grandparents)
– public persons known from the media (sport stars, artists, singers).

The orientation towards youth cultural scenes and their components (music, sports, clothing, looks, and so on), which is said to be the major concern in adolescent peer cultures, most strikingly plays only a very minor role in the conversations we recorded. Translocal youth cultures become only relevant when connected with one's own experiences and with respect to lived social relations (i.e., who hangs on to which style and who attends which club?).

In what follows, we look at how members of out-groups are portrayed in conversation. While there are various interactional practices by which others may be depicted, it will be shown, that there are some basic procedures which govern the portrayal of others. Our analysis focuses on three cases, which are each discussed in three steps: (1) Attribution of features: Which features are attributed to the category-member? (2) Assessment: How is the category-member evaluated? (3) Interactional process: How are categorizations interactively organized? How are they occasioned? How are the individual participants sequentially involved in working out the portrayal? What is the interactional function of the portrayal?

**Portraying an out-group member**

Our first case comes from a round of gossip. Bernd reports that a 38-year-old woman is said to have sexual interest in a boy of the same age as the participants. Denis adds that this woman was an "assischlampe" (*trashy slut*),[7] and he reports on her behavior and her looks.

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6. Words in quotes are German expressions (participants' codes), English translations are given in italics.

7. «assi» morphologically is an abbreviative derivation of «asozial» (*asocial*).

*Case 1 [Juk 17–23 „assischlampe"/"assislut" 6.12.98]*

```
01  Bernd: eyj und auf jE:den fall, (-)
               ey and A:nyway, (-)
02          dem sei mudder will was von einem; (.)
               his mother wants a piece of one of them; (.)
03          der is- (.) der is so alt wie WI:R. (.)
               he is- (.) he is as old as wE: are. (.)
04          die mudder, (.) die is so (<<all> wirklisch>)
               the mother, (.) she is so (<<all>like>)
05          achtunddreißig oder so, (.) oder
               thirty eight or so, (.) or
06          neunund[dreißsch.
               thirty [nine.
07  Denis: [<<gehaucht >ey und die is so ASSI:::;>]
               [<<aspirated>ey and she is so TRASHY:::;>]
08  Frank: [<<p, gehaucht> und die is so widerlisch h]
               [<<p, aspirated> and she is so disgusting h]
09  Frank: ey alder.>
               ey buddy.>
10  Bernd: =hej <<staccato> die die> die hat schon bei dem,
               =hey <<staccato> she she> she already was at his,
11          die hat schon bei dem vor=m HAUS gstanden
               she already stood in front of his HOUSE
12          und hat geSUNgen und so=n dreck, (-)
               and sung and such a dirt, (-)
13          na un hat RUMgeschrien. (.)
               yeah an has scrEAmed around. (.)
14          <<lachend> hh hh hähä.> (-)
               <<laughing> hh hh haha> (-)
15  Denis: ey, (.) <<singend> die mutter is so Assi::,
               ey, (.) <<singing> the mother is so TRASHY::,
16          so=ne As[sischlampe:.>               ]
               such an TRA[shslu:t.>               ]
17  Alex:        [<<lachend> rhumgesungen.>] (.)
                    [<<laughing>sahng around.>] (.)
18  Denis: eh,=WÄ::. (.)
               ah,=WA::. (.)
19  Alex:  ((lacht))
               ((laughs))
20  Knut:  <<gehaucht> uha::,> (--)
               <<aspirated> oohu::,> (--)
```

```
21  Denis: die is,
            she is,
22  Alex:  =<<lachend> vorm haus gestanden und gesungen.>
            =<<laughing>  stood  in  front  of  the  house  and
            sang.>
23         geil,
            fucking great,
24  Denis: =der ihr kleiner sohn, (.) der, (.)
            =her younger son, (.) he, (.)
25         als der kleine sohn elf war oder    [so
            when her younger son was eleven or  [so
26  Bernd:                                      [das
                                                [that
27         is die [NOTgeile muddi, ]
            is the [DESperate⁸ mommy,]
28  Denis:       [da is se an mir ] (.)
                  [then she passed ] (.)
29         mit dEm an mir vorbeigefahren,
            me by with hIm,
30         <<all> kleine sohn elf jahre alt,> (-)
            <<all> younger son eleven years old,> (-)
31         <<all> nebe der gehockt,> (.)
            <<all> sat next to her,> (.)
32         <<all> kipp graucht;> (.)
            <<all> smoked a fag;> (.)
33         <<all> mit de oma noch hinte drin,> (.)
            <<all> with grandma in the rear,> (.)
34         <<all> kipp graucht,> (-).hh
            <<all> smoked a fag;> (-).hh
35         ts:: e:h, (.) GOTT, (-)
            ts:: ey:, (.) GOD, (-)
36         vOll die assis. (.)
            rEAlly the trash. (.)
37  Frank: <<t, rauhe Stimme> asozial=o=WÄHhh.,> (.)
            <<low onset, rough voice>asocial=o=WAHhh.,> (.)
38  Denis: e:h=die is so, (.)
            a:h=she is so, (.)
39         die is so richtig <<f> E::klich,> (.)
            she is really so <<f> disGU::sting,> (.)
```

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**8.**  *desperate* here means "desperately searching for a sexual partner".

```
40  Denis: [die hat so miniröcke an                    ]
           [she wears such mini skirts                 ]
41  Bernd: [aber de große zecher is ja net so asozial,] (.)
           [but the elder zecher is not that asocial, ] (.)
42  Bernd: [aber de kleine is schon voll asozial.      ]
           [but the younger one is already really asocial. ]
43  Denis: [und  so  BOMberjacke  un  versIffte  BLONDgfärbte
           haar-]
           [and such BOMberjackets an filthy BLONDly dyed hair-]
44  Denis: un(=so) (.) <<gepresst> ö:h'- (.)ö:h'- (.)>
           an(=like) (.) <<choked voice> a:h' (.)a:h' (.)>
```

**Attribution of features**

Denis categorizes the woman talked about as an "assischlampe" (*trash slut*; line 16), while Bernd calls her "notgeile muddi" (*desparate mommy*; line 27). The content of these categorizations is made clear by the account of her looks and actions:

–  "notgeile muddi" (*desparate mommy*) refers to the public display of sexual interest that a woman who is also a mother has in an adolescent who is more than 20 years younger than she is (lines 01–14). This categorization relies on a moral standard for adequate actions of incumbents of the category 'mother,' from which the woman talked about deviates.

–  "assischlampe" (*trash slut*) is also a categorization of moral, but also of aesthetic, deviance. The woman is portrayed as a mother who does not fulfill her parental duties: She allows her 11-year-old son to smoke and sit in the front seat of her car. The reference to the grandma, who also smokes (lines 33p.), the clothes (mini skirts and bomber jackets), her neglected looks (filthy dyed blonde hair), and the animation of non-lexical sounds in a choked voice (lines 40–44) all are category-bound activities of a socio-stylistic type of lower working class members, who are marked by a lack of hygiene and civilization.

**Assessment**

"[N]otgeile muddi" (*desperate horny mommy*) und "assischlampe" (*trash slut*) are social categorizations that do not refer to categories that would exist for just any member of society. The terms are defined with respect to the normative and aesthetic relevancies of the adolescent speakers. Moreover, these categorizations require one to select only those actions and features of the categorized persons that

are consistent with these highly abusive terms.[9] The woman's action is portrayed as being extreme (lines 12f.), and no information is offered that could serve as a legitimization. The person is represented as someone who acts irreflexively and incompetently; her behavior is not a result of rational choices, but reflects habitus. Singular actions are the grounds for a generalizing and reductive judgement about the person as such (see also line 36), which is established by the categorizations "assischlampe" and "notgeile muddi." The participants construct a self-validating account: The generalizing abusive categorizations act as a search procedure that calls for details that bolster this evaluation; in turn, the abusive categorizations establish an interpretative frame that clarifies the indexical meaning and the evaluative import of the descriptive details.

The moral verdict, however, does not lie at the heart of the evaluative affect displayed (as it would be, e.g., in the case of indignation). The moral judgement is only the precondition for the extensive performance of disgust and contempt that is displayed lexically ("assi" (*trashy*, lines 07, 15, 36), "widerlisch" (*disgusting*, line 08), "dreck" (*dirt*, line 12) as well as prosodically (aspirated, singing intonation, non-lexical sounds mimicking spitting and vomiting in lines 18, 20, 35, 37). This aesthetic, somatically demonstrated contempt does not only refer to bodily facts (hygiene, clothing, sexuality); the participants take it as a license to use their own bodies as an expressive field for the performance of affective behaviors that are themselves nasty. Social contempt and bodily disgust are celebrated as a performance: Deviance from norms is not criticized as a moral scandal, but it is acclaimed as an entertaining grotesque.[10] The social world is represented as a funny caricature, full of abnormities that are expressively displayed and commented on.

### Interactional process

The two main speakers, Denis and Bernd, both assess the woman talked about very negatively. A closer look, however, reveals that they attribute quite different properties to her, and they do not show if one agrees with the other's assertions. While the participants mutually echo their extensive performance of disgust and contempt, the accounts concerning the woman's actions are much less attended to. The participants primarily orient themselves to the performance and experience of a shared evaluative affect, by which they confirm shared assessments and simul-

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**9.**   This is, of course, a reflexive argument, because the abusive character of the terms is established and warranted by the selection of deviant, disgusting behaviors and features.

**10.**   This is also evidenced by laughter and by singing, aspirated and laughing intonations in various turns.

taneously establish an entertaining interactional event. In this, Bernd and Denis compete for the audience's attention. Already before Bernd reaches the climax of his story, Denis and Frank deliver a devaluating comment: "und die is so assi/widerlisch" (*and she is so trashy/disgusting*, lines 07f.). As later recyclings of this formulation show, this was already a pre-announcement of Denis' own account (starting later with line 15), which Bernd once again confronts with his contrasting thematic focus of sexual deviance.

The orientation to competition and entertainment is the most pervasive mark of the interactional style of the in-group interactions of the peer group under study (Deppermann & Schmidt, 2001; Neumann-Braun, Deppermann, & Schmidt, 2002). Given this general orientation, it comes as no surprise that references to members of out-groups are realized in succinct and reductive extreme assessments that rapidly express their point and tend to become generalizing and scandalizing caricatures. Descriptive precision and multifaceted, pondered assessments are dispreferred and have little chance for interactional uptake (cf. Bernd's story orientation, which is overlapped by Denis' and Frank's assessments in lines 07p., and Bernd's distinction of degrees of trashiness of the family in question in lines 42p., which does not receive any reaction). Because of these orientations, gossip and slander are the primary genres that are used for talking about out-group members. The performance of these genres thus provides for a resource for the self-positioning of the individual member of the peer group: It is not the most realistic portrayal of the other that is at issue, but speakers gain attention and respect by accounts that contribute to establish an entertaining and emotionally involving sense of sharing.

### Representing out-group members who do not act category-bound

The first case was an instance of a portrait of an out-group member who performs actions that are judged to be typical of the out-group. The conversational portrait thus can at once be seen as an explication and as a confirmation of the stereotypical image of the out-group. In the next segment, out-group members who do not conform to the expectations about category-bound actions are depicted. However, this does not lead to making these category-bound expectations into a problem, but to a negative assessment of the deviant out-group members.

The next transcript is from a recording of an excursion that the peer group made to Austria. When the adolescents arrived, they explored the unknown site and formulated and assessed their impressions. The group worked to develop a shared perspective on relevant objects, such as the local dialect, the currency, the size of the town, stores, and women. They apply the categories and relevancies that are most important for structuring their life world at home to the new situation and interpret it in terms of the dichotomy 'same as at home – different from home.'

*Case 2 [Juk 16–32]*

```
01  Denis: aber wEnigstens, (.)
               but at lEAst, (.)
02         ham die hier auch (.) normale klamotten, (.)
               here they also wear (.) regular stuff, (.)
03         <<acc> die biff ä:h, (.) die biffkes. (.)>
               <<acc> the biff a:h, (.) the biffkes. (.)>
04         die schlUchten scheißer, (---)
               the cAnyon shitters, (---)
05  Knut:  he::, (.)
               hey::, (.)
06         kuckt mal ob irgend einer
               just look if anyone
07         jemand <<laughing> en BAFfelo sieht, (..)
               someone <<laughing> sees a BUFfalo¹¹, (..)
08  Denis: hähä. (.)
               haha. (.)
09  Knut:  ja=n ka↑NAcke. (..) ↑HÄ, (.)
               yea=a: ↑BEANeater. (..) ↑HA, (.)
10  Denis: was? (.) wo?
               what? (.) where?
11  Knut:  =[laughing] isch W↑EISS es net, (.)
               =[laughing] I don´t KN↑OW, (.)
12  Denis: <<p> hast=u ein [ges,>]
               <<p> hav=ya seen [one,>]
13  Frank:               [ja, ] (.)
                             [yes, ] (.)
14  Frank: isch hab AUch kanacken gesehen, (.)
               I have ALso seen beaneaters, (.)
15         da da oben, (.)
               there up there, (.)
16  Denis: [ja da oben die zwo, (.) die da gestanden haben. ]
               [yeah up there those two, (.) who stood there.      ]
17  Frank: [a, (.), a, (.) am, (.) am lift mit schIschuh,      ]
               [a, (.), a, (.) at, (.) at the lift with skIshoes, ]
18  Frank: ich dacht so
               I thought like
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**11.** «Buffalo» does not refer to the animal of the Great Plains, but is the name of a brand of shoes which «Kanaken» (*beaneaters*) preferentially wear (at least in the adolescents' opinion). Consequently, it here is used as a metonym for "Kanaken" (*beaneaters*).

```
19          <<continuously falling pitch, aspirated> N↓Ä::::.>
            <<continuously falling pitch, aspirated> N↓O::::.>
20 Denis: =hey, was das für=n Assikhipphe? hahaha- (--)
            =hey, what a trAshfhagh is this? huhuhu-(--)
```

**Attribution of features**

This excerpt starts with Denis' assessment of the clothes that Austrians wear (lines 01–04). He calls them "schluchtenscheißer" (*canyon shitters*) which is an equally abusive term for a national group as Knut's and Frank's "Kanacken" (*beaneaters*, lines 09 and 14) for an ethnic group. By the adverb "wenigstens" (*at least*, line 01), Denis suggests that the Austrians ("hier", *here* in line 02) are defective with respect to his own norms and that the fact that they wear "normale klamotten" (*normal clothes*) was not to be expected. "Normal clothes" neither refers to an Austrian nor to a German average standard. It does not have the descriptive sense of "usual," but the normative sense of "acceptable" with respect to the ethnocentric aesthetic preferences of the peer group. The local reference term "hier" (*here*, line 02) is reformulated by the personal reference term "schluchtenscheißer" (*canyon shitters*, line 04). This acts as a self-repair, because "schluchtenscheißer" contextualizes the relevant stereotypical expectation. This stereotype is part of shared cultural knowledge and must be used in order to recover the locally relevant category-bound features, which are not – in contrast to the case discussed in the previous section – explicated. The stereotype refers to people living in the mountains, wearing dirndl, leather trousers and other old-fashioned, folkloristic clothes, listening to German folk music, and holding more conservative views. It is only against the background of these stereotypical assumptions that the observation about "normal clothes" becomes reportable as a contrast.

Knut achieves a topic transition by shifting the focus to another social group with distinctive clothing: He asks jokingly, if anyone had seen a "buffalo," that is, an adolescent of Southern European, Turkish, or Arabic origin. The request continues the practice of appropriating the new surroundings by comparison with the familiar. For the peer group, "buffaloes" (line 07, rsp. "Kanacken", lines 09ff.)[12] are

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12.   While the term «buffalo» is a peer-group-specific adaption, «Kanacke» is widely used as an abusive name for people who look like foreigners of southern origin in Gemany. «Kanacke» strictly is neither an ethnic nor a national category term, because its use is only based on perceptual features that are interpreted to index national and ethnic membership, although it clearly covers people with very different ethnic origins and national identities. The great importance that «Kanacken» have for the adolescents under study is also reflected by the fact that there is a vast variety of names used for them (such as «Ölem,» «Lan,» «Gellocke,» «Hawack»). Each of

a most relevant out-group; they are judged to be dangerous and aggressive brag-garts. It is to be noticed that the mere presence of "buffaloes/kanacken" would count as news, irrespective of what the "buffaloes/kanacken" do. Their introduc-tion as an object of talk that is intrinsically interesting is ratified by Frank, who reports a behavior of category-members: He saw "kanacken" who went skiing (lines 14–17). Just as with the "schluchtenscheißer" before, the grounds for his negative assessment "N↓Ä::::" remain implicit. The negative assessment clearly is based on the fact that skiing is not a category-bound action for "Kanacken," given the stereotypical expectations of the participants.[13]

Both for the "schluchtenscheißer" and for the "kanacken," it is the deviance from category-bound expectations, which are themselves not communicated, that is the basis of an assessment. Nevertheless, the category-bound expectation reveals itself to be stable and immune against disconfirmation: It is not that the negative stereotype of the other becomes revised in the light of a discrepant observation, but – at least in the case of the "Kanacken" – the discrepant observation is devalu-ated and used to support the negative assessment of the social category.

## Assessment

In this passage, assessments operate on two levels: Firstly, there is an implicit ster-eotypical expectation regarding the social categories, which is negative and which can already be gleaned from the abusive category-terms. Secondly, there is a man-ifest assessment of perceived category-members. The latter assessment rests on the discrepancy between category-bound expectations and the observed cases. The shared expectation is taken for granted and provides for reportability, since it is the deviance from category-bound expectations that makes the facts presented noteworthy.[14] In the case of the "schluchtenscheißer", this deviance is appreciated or at least attenuates the negative assessment of the category (cf. "wenigstens", *at least*, line 01). In the case of the "kanacken", Frank expressively stages his negative affect in line 17 by an aspirated voice in a low frequency, with continuously falling

them is derived from a specific aspect that is attributed to the category (such as typical clothing, language, looks).

**13.**    However, the precise source of incongruence with the stereotype is not that clear: It might be that «Kanacken» are judged to be poor and thus not able to afford skiing; they are asssociated with warm climate, which is in contrast to winter sports; they are considered to be incapable of skiing, and so on.

**14.**    Otherwise, it wouldn't be reportable that people wear ski-shoes while waiting at a ski-lift. Disregarding the stereotyical expectation, only the contrary would be reportable, that is, people who were not appropriately dressed for skiing.

intonation, extreme prolongation of the vowel, which makes him sound incredulous and full of contempt. Frank seems to contextualize that the fact that "kanacken" go skiing is almost ontologically anomalous, against nature. The absence of any further explanation or challenge points to the taken-for-granted status of the stereotype and its evaluation in the peer group.

**Interactional process**

Just as in the case "assischlampe", the participants orient themselves toward the provision of entertaining contributions. Like in other humoristic genres (as jokes or comedies), incongruence between expectations and events and the devaluation of out-groups are used as a means for creating funny moments (cf. Attardo, 1994). The collection of social categories – here in connection with lifestyle concerns (clothing, sports) – is used as a resource for creating interactional coherence and for competing for entertaining contributions to collective slander about out-groups. More specifically, the participants orient to selecting abusive terms for social categories that are tabooed or unknown in adults' conversations. Our ethnographic observations show that especially the "kanacken" have an almost ubiquitous relevance as an object of talk – any observation relating to them is newsworthy and establishes a potential for the performance of comic and entertaining interactional sequences.

*Looking at the in-group from the stylized perspective of the out-group*

Out-group members are not just represented "for themselves". Often, it is precisely the way they relate to the in-group and, most importantly, the views they hold concerning the in-group that becomes an object of talk. Consequently, the stylization of the perspective of the other on the self is a major resource for simultaneously representing the other and oneself in contradistinction. In the next excerpt, members of the adolescent peer group sit in a caravan that was lent to them by the local youth guards. Just before the transcript starts, one part of the youngsters (the "savants") played a trick on the others ("the ignorants") by requesting them to hand them objects (a bottle, a toy cow, etc.) that the savants had glued to the walls and to the desk of the caravan. The ignorants' failures to lift the objects pleased the savants, while the ignorants reacted with irritation (see Mark's insult in line 01). Denis now focuses on the possible consequences that this mischief could have for the group: The town's mayor had announced a visit to the area where the caravan was parked, because neighbors had complained about noise, dirt, and the neglected state of the

caravan. With reference to this control visit, Denis imagines how the mayor might try to remove the cow from where it sticks:

*Case 3 [Juk 13–1]*

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01  Mark:  ihr [seid voll die A:schlöscher. ]
            you [are real Assholes.          ]
02  Denis: [haha des is ja sEhr geil,        ].hh
            [huhu that is rEAlly hot,].hh
03  Denis: <<laughing> de BÜRGERmeister kommt mOrgen,
            <<laughing> the MAYOR will come tomOrrow,
04  Otto:  [sieht die kuh hier,        ]
            [sees the cow here,         ]
05  Denis: [.hhh oder Übermorgen,     ] (.)
            [.hhh or the day After,    ] (.)
06  Denis: [und ihr BABBT, (.)((laughs))]
            [and you STICK, (.)((laughs))]
07  Many¹⁵:[(kichern))                  ]
            [((chuckle))                 ]
08  Denis: ihr BABBT, (.) mit sekundenkleber, (.)
            you STICK, (.) with crazy glue, (.)
09         was ja gar net Assig is,
            which is absolutely not trAshy,
10         auf des holzteil die kuh fest.> (.)
            the cow onto that wooden part.> (.)
11  Many:  ((laughter))
12  Denis: .hh und wenn de des ABreisst,
            .hh and if ya rip it OFF,
13         dann sin Unten noch die
            then there´ll still be the
14  Denis: [stOffteilschen, (.) im sekundenkleber drin;    ]
            [particles of cloth, (.) dOwn in the crazy glue;]
15  Many:  [((laughter))                                   ]
16  Michi: [((laughs))                                     ]
17  Bernd: [geb mer ma bidde] em meier sei wasserflasch.
            [just gimme please] meier´s waterbottle.
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**15.** «Many» is not a name but refers to simultaneous actions of more than one participant.

**Attribution of features**

In contrast to the cases presented above, the term "mayor" is not derogatory *per se* and does not imply a specific attitude of the speaker. The fictional scenario which Denis projects[16] intertextually alludes to the well-known schema of comedies in which official authorities (like policemen, teachers, mayors, or directors) in vain try to re-establish order. Used as a reference form in this interactional context, "mayor" makes relevant a stereotypical role conception: The mayor is held to be an official authority who represents the public order, and who acts as a control and as an executive, which indexically means that he is going to restore the order in the caravan. These category-bound expectations are not made explicit, but have to be known in order to grasp the comic incongruence between the arrival of the mayor and the disorder in the caravan.

**Assessment**

In contrast to the cases 1 and 2, it is not the representation of typical or untypical behavior of out-group members that is at issue. In case 3, the participants make fun of the out-group member's perspective on the in-group; this results in a self-promotion of the in-group. In cases 1 and 2, out-group members were straightforwardly categorized from the peer group's perspective. In case 3, however, we find a complex layering of evaluative perspectives from different points of view, which is typical of humorous portraits (see Bakhtin 1981):
–   The basic layer is the *categorization of the out-group from the in-group's view* – the mayor is firmly established as an authoritative controller and as a representative of the narrow-minded world of the adults, and thus is assessed negatively.
–   The second layer is provided by the *assessment of the in-group that it attributes to the out-group*. The mayor's alleged perspective is articulated when Denis, with an ironic inversion, calls the disorder in the caravan "assig" (*trashy*, line 09). Thus a self-categorization of the adolescents from the point of view of the other can be found here. It refers to deviant and disgusting behavior which indexically means that the damage caused by the objects stuck to the caravan cannot thoroughly be repaired – "particles of cloth" that cannot be removed (lines 13p.) will remain.
–   The third layer consists in the *assessment of the out-group's perspective on the in-group by the in-group itself*. The mayor's perspective is devalued as his at-

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**16.**   It is not only fictional because of the imagination of the mayor's actions, but also, because it was not to be expected that the mayor would really enter the caravan in order to control its state.

tempts at gaining control are made fun of. The fiction of the mayor trying to restore order has several aspects of comic disrespect. Already the imagination of the mayor who enters the narrow and dirty caravan is most comic, because – in Goffman's (1959) terms – he would be acting on a stage that is not suitable for his claimed status and that would thus be threatening his status. Moreover, the attempt at restitution of order fails; instead, he even increases the disorder as he tries to remove the toy cow and leaves ugly remainders of cloth. The sublime – the mayor – is compromised by the humble – the adolescents and their caravan – in several respects.

–   The fourth layer is the resulting *self-enhancement of the in-group*. While the predicate "assig" (*trashy*) normally counts as a negative assessment among the peer group (see case 1), it gains a positive connotation if used by the mayor, because he represents an out-group that stands for order and narrow-mindedness. In contrast to these values, "assig" (*trashy*) contextualizes autonomy and deviation from the adults' bourgeois standards. "Assig" thus does not imply any positive features per se (in a denotational sense), but it acquires a positive value by its potential for distinction from the adults' world. Moreover, the imagination of the mayor's failure implies a subversive, resistant triumph. The participants assume the identity of outlaws who, at least for a moment, manage to threaten the hegemonic order and invert the power relations.

The negative assessment of an out-group, which is itself negatively assessed by the in-group, is thus used for self-representation *ex negativo*. It most notably rests on an imagination of the out-group member's perspective and not on his factual actions towards the participants.

*Interactional process*

Saying "haha das is ja sehr geil" (*huhu that is really hot*, line 01), Denis assesses the state of the caravan with respect to imagining the upcoming mayor's visit. The category 'mayor' is introduced and assessed in the context of a fictional scenario. Both Denis' intonation, which is interspersed with particles of laughter and out-breaths, and the participants' reactions (laughter, chuckling) contextualize the jocular key of the fiction and an orientation toward entertainment. The comicality of the scenario is at once evident for all participants: Otto continues Denis' opening of the fiction by stating the fact that will arouse the mayor's rage for order: "sieht die kuh hier" (*sees the cow here*, line 04), and the other participants laugh (line 07). It is especially the statement of creative and concrete details that produces comic effects. A further humoristic device is Denis' use of the practice of 'playful reproach': He contrasts the actions of the adolescents (sticking objects)

with the fact, that they knew that the mayor's visit was due (lines 03pp.), phrasing it in a construction that is routinely used for making a complaint or a reproach (see Günthner, 2000). By excluding himself with this activity from the peer group (cf. "ihr babbt…"; *you stick…*, line 06), he assumes the role of the prosecutor and projects the consequences that the group's behavior might have. Framed as a playful reproach, the scenario gains further comic potential as it is unfolded with the ironical voice of the critical adult. This double-voicing (Bakhtin, 1981, p.324) mocks the adults' moral perspective by its playful performance and thereby further euhances the collective entertainment.

## Conclusion

Stereotyping in conversation is a resource for competitive entertainment and it is a way of reconciling group-identity with individual autonomy. In this section, I shall sum up the constitutive features of talking about out-groups in our data. Then I will discuss in more detail how they can be understood as a systematic resource adapted to the constitution of the peer-group as a processual social entity.

This study analyzed conversational processes of talking about out-groups in adolescents' peer group interactions, which, in order to take place, require a specific setting and a specific selection of participants. These interactions are neither motivated nor restricted by thematic or functional constraints (contrary to, for instance, institutional interactions), and the participants are free from role-related obligations. This lack of preconditions provides an interactional space, which, however, is not arbitrarily used. The interaction is consistently structured by a preference for interpersonal competition and for the production of self-entertainment (see Deppermann & Schmidt, 2001). These preferences most generally govern how the problem of what comes next is to be tackled. Stated differently: How do the adolescents create shared interactional involvement and common experience under the condition of lacking prestructuration, and how do they limit the scope of suitable contributions to the interaction? In our data, competition and entertainment are realized by various interactional genres, such as jokes, gossip, ritual insults, and jocular conflicts, grotesque or caricaturing fictions, puns, bragging, playing tricks, and so forth. Talking about members of out-groups is one of the resources for creating interactional events that fulfill the standards of competition and entertainment. The structural and procedural properties of the talk can only be understood adequately if they are seen as resulting from the preference for competition and entertainment. This preference favors

– focusing on such behaviors of members of out-groups that in some way violate norms and expectations;

–   the reduction of the out-group's portrayal to only few features, which are mostly negatively assessed, and the dispreference for a multifaceted, reflected, and refined account of the out-group;
–   the dramatization and the extreme (hyperbolic) formulation of actions and features of the out-group tending towards grotesque and caricature;
–   the dispositional attribution of refused actions of members of the out-group and the generalization of singular actions and of fragments of knowledge to an assessment of the person as a whole.

All of these preferences are accentuated by the orientation to conversational competition among the participants, which results in sequences of topping one another in the production of accounts that comply with these features. The ways out-groups are represented in adolescent peer group conversations thus match very closely with what is called "stereotyping" in Social Identity Theory (cf. section 1). As to its formal properties, conversational stereotyping is immanently motivated by the preferences for competition and entertainment. Their contents, however, are motivated by the practical relevance that specific social categories have for the adolescents: They represent rivals ("kanacken", *beaneaters*), controlers (*mayor*), counter-images to norms of conduct ("assischlampe", *trash-slut*), or social groups which dominate the present situation ("schluchtenscheißer", *canyon shitters*). It is difficult to judge how far the features attributed to the out-groups comply with the adolescents' experience. At least in some cases, specific experiences are the starting point for the construction of stereotypes, which are developed according to the preferences discussed above. Stereotypes may be conversationally constructed, explicated, and elaborated on (see the first section of this chapter); or, they may be presupposed as shared, taken for granted knowledge. Negative assessments may be based on behaviors that are held to be category-bound; behavior then is rejected, because it violates the normative and moral standards that the in-group holds to be valid in the situation (*type-deviance*). Negative assessments may altenatively rest on deviations of the individual category-member from category-bound norms (*token-deviance*). Token-deviance can result in the negative assessment of a category-member's behavior even in cases where the behavior as such is positively assessed but seen as being improper for members of that category (see the section on *beaneaters who go skiing*). Both kinds of deviance are generated by a common intepretive procedure: The noticing of *factual* deviation from an ethnocentric expectation of the in-group is taken to be *morally* abnormal.

Consistent with the preferences for competition and entertainment, stereotyping is done in a jocular key. Primary moral genres such as complaints, criticizing, or critical discussions about moral issues are very seldomly done. Although moral deviance basically provides for the reportability of the behaviors of a person, it is

only a prerequisite, which is to be exploited for the perfomance of an entertaining and emotionally involving communicative event. To achieve this, it is not necessary that all participants really approve of the same attributions of properties to the social category or person who becomes the object of stereotyping. Sometimes, the participants do attribute very different properties (see case 1 above). Such differences do not affect the collective process of stereotyping, if the participants manage to recover and understand their partners' attributions and if they agree on the general expressive-humorous mode of negative assessment of the represented other. Collective stereotyping thus does not seem to require shared mental representations, but rather the willingness and the competence to join a collective praxis of assessing, which rests on a consensus about posssibly relevant expectations regarding social categories. These become accentuated in an occasioned and locally specific way. Properties and assessments are not invariably associated with a category; for example, the category 'assi' (*trashy*) is negatively assessed as a categorization of an out-group, while it is positively assessed when applied to the in-group from the standpoint of an out-group with values and normative expectations to which the in-group opposes. Such differences often are not simply contradictions. They result from the complexities of the normative social order from the peer group's point of view. The asssessment of properties depends on the interpersonal and intercategorical relation (as discussed with the mayor) and on the membership of incumbents of one social category in other social categories (e.g., being 'trashy' as a 'mother' versus as an 'adolescent'). These contingencies show that identities often are not attributed by simply looking at the target category and its members. As case 3 most clearly shows, the peer group locates its self- and other-categorizations in the context of its constructions of others' discourses about the group. Attributions of features and assessments are performed in a field of perspectives which mutually represent, stylize, comment, and assess one another – and do so as well with the constructions of their mutual second and third order representations (cf. Bakhtin, 1981). Interactionally, this layering of perspectives is evoked by reported speech (Günthner, 1999), by the jocular, ironic, caricaturing design of the representation of others, and by the comments, interpretations, and affective performances that the peer-group enacts as part of the representational activity. The mutual reflexivity of social cognition and its conversational representation thus is a genuine source of its own for the accomplishment of socio-categorial attributions and assessments.

Stereotyping is a resource both for producing entertainment and conversational competition and for coping with problematic social experiences. Beyond these obvious findings, we can gain an enlarged understanding of the functions and payoffs of this resource, when we relate it to more general requirements and restrictions of the peer-group-interaction. Stereotyping is a way to implicitly enhance the

in-group by devaluating the out-group without violating the taboo of self-praise: While the out-group is portrayed as being defective with respect to a certain standard, it is implicitly claimed that the in-group does better and fulfills the standard in question. Since this self-enhancement is always deniable, it is, however, not jeopardized by embarrassment and objection, as it would be in the case of overt self-praise. The identity and the cohesion of the in-group emerges *ex negativo* by distinction from others. The features of identity that are positively claimed for the in-group are to be inferred from what is refused in others. Still, the precise content of the in-group identity as well as its norms and values remain unstated and rather vague: They are only present as a constitutive backdrop for the production of funny moments, which grow out of the representation of their violation by out-group-members. The practice of entertainment presupposes a normative and moral order – those who do not share its core-assumptions will find the conversational representations of others neither funny nor even reportable at all. This order is confirmed and reproduced by the entertaining conversational practices without ever becoming thematic or even problematic itself. A successful contribution to conversational entertainment, however, does not only reproduce the normative and moral standards of the group; the speaker also has to play with these standards in a creative way. But there are further reasons for the reproduction of the peer group's normative and moral order to become realized only by talking about deviant behaviors of out-groups. Firstly, behaviors in accordance with the norms would not be reportable: It would not be interesting to tell that one wears clean clothes, regularly washes himself, or looks for sexual partners of the same age. These are taken-for-granted assumptions, which could not be brought up without causing embarrasment and inferences that would not be welcome. Nevertheless, such facts about the person are basic elements of claims to personal identity and social prestige, which regularly have to be confirmed. Secondly, making norms explicit would run counter to the preference for jocularity and entertainment – it would not match a self-presentation as cool and casual, and it would block the emergence of funny moments.[17] Most importantly, stating positive norms explicitly would restrict the individual's scope of action, because it would establish definite obligations for the members of the peer group. This would contradict the desire for individual autonomy and informal participation, and it would provide for disagreement and struggles over the right who may tell whom how to behave. These problems do not develop when talking in the peer group about inadequate behaviors of non-members. Derogatory talk about out-groups thus can be seen as a solution for the structural problem of how to achieve social integration as a group while simultaneously max-

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17.   This is to be seen by the fact that activities like requesting information, reflecting remarks, or argumentative discussions are absent or being ignored.

imizing the individual's autonomy within the group and minimizing his/her obligations towards the group. It is easier to reach consensus on what you are not or what you do not want to be (as a group) than on what you positively are or want to be. Positive norms would not only be more obligatory, they would also restrain the individual's options more strictly than stating the refused options does. Integration of action is achieved by performing emotionally involving interactional events (and therefore based on shared practices); this also requires convergence on content-related norms that are regularly confirmed by jocular negative assessments of out-groups. They operate as a means of social control over the members of the in-group. Still, they stay implicit, diffuse, and open to interpretation as to their precise content and as to the degree of obligation for the individual. What is even more interesting, possible sanctions of the group against its members are kept unspoken. Nevertheless, they become evident for everyone who participates in gossip and slander about out-groups.

While the restrictive potential of such sequences of stereotyping stays latent for the participants, it manifestly offers them an arena for individual self-presentation: In the competition for entertaining contributions, every member of the peer group has the chance to make points and enhance his/her status by producing the most absurd or grotesque fantasy, the funniest or most unexpected remark, or the most creative or coolest retort. There is a "cooperative competition" (Eckert, 1993), by which the group's identity and its cohesion, social control, and integration are accomplished *ex negativo* and *en passant*, while the participants manifestly orient to fun, entertainment, competition, and coping with social experiences. For the individual, conversational stereotyping is a resource to gain status in the group by contributing to the constitution of the group's identity *ex negativo* in an entertaining way.

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## Transcription conventions

(following Selting, Auer, Barden, Bergmann, Couper-Kuhlen, Guenthner, et al., 1998)

| | |
|---|---|
| [ ] | segments of talk spoken in overlap |
| = | latching, contraction of syllables |
| (.) | tiny gap between utterances (< 0.25 seconds) |
| (-) | pause 0.25–0.5 seconds |
| (--) | pause 0.5–0.9 seconds |
| (1.0) | pause measured in seconds |
| : | prolongation of a sound |
| strEssed | stressed vowel/syllable |

| | |
|---|---|
| . | falling final intonation of a tum-constructional unit |
| ; | slightly falling final intonation tum-constructional |
| - | level final intonation tum-constructional |
| , | slightly rising final intonation tum-constructional |
| ? | rising final intonation tum-constructional |
| ↑ | rise in intonation |
| (unclear) | dubious hearing |
| <<f>> | *forte*, loud voice |
| <<p>> | *piano*, soft voice |
| <<all> > | *allegro*, faster than surrounding segments of speech |
| <<acc> > | *accelerando*, accelerating |
| <<high> > | comment on the way a segment is spoken |
| ((sleeps)) | description of non-vocal activities |
| .hh | in-breath |

# Like pieces in a puzzle

## Working with layered methods
## of reading personal narratives

Lynn Sorsoli

This chapter presents an instrumental case study involving a systematic examination of statements, personal narratives, and selected relational interactions taking place in interviews conducted with one study participant. My goal was to understand the intersection between complex trauma and race. By discussing separately the findings at each level of this analysis, I illustrate the ways layered methods of analyzing narratives lead to a progressively deepening understanding of experience. As a result, the chapter accomplishes two things: 1) it highlights the interpretive limits imposed by various methods of unitizing narrative data; and 2) it explicates the innovative practice of layering interpretive readings in a single qualitative analysis. In addition, in this contribution to the volume, the in-depth analysis unravels the potentially traumatic effects of racial discrimination and the ways early painful experiences can combine and accumulate over time, while also exploring the phenomenon of resilience in a complex ecological system.

Over the past decade, many disciplines, including psychology, have taken a "narrative turn," (e.g., Bruner, 1986, 1990; Mishler, 1986; Rosenwald & Ochberg, 1992; Sarbin, 1986; see Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998; Riessman, 2002). This shift, has been accompanied by the increasing use and growing credibility of qualitative methods of analysis and a dramatic rise in the use of interview data. Clearly, explorations of what people have to say about their own experiences have begun to join more established means of psychological investigation, such as observation and measurement (Bruner, 1990). Some qualitative approaches, such as portraiture (Davis, 2003; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997) and other ethnographic methods (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995), rely on observational fieldwork and other materials in addition to interview data; other approaches, such as narrative and discourse analysis (Brown & Yule, 1983; Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998; Stubbs,

1983), and grounded theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), often rely solely on interviews to provide data for analyses. Perhaps because of its broad usage and a surge in fascination with life story, qualitative research that focuses mainly on narrative and the interview process has become increasingly popular.

In their invaluable text on narrative research with life history interviews, Lieblich et al. (1998) differentiate among several approaches to narrative analysis and interpretation. Analytic approaches, they suggest, can differ on two dimensions: 1) whether the approach prioritizes the form a story takes or its content; and 2) whether an interview is dissected into various chunks before analysis (i.e., via codes or categories) or considered as a single whole unit. Thus, some studies examine narrative content, while others examine form; one study considers life stories holistically, while another explores story segments. Their closing discussion acknowledges that these dimensions actually artificially dichotomize narrative research and may cause readers to overlook the fact that each exists on a continuum. Many studies, they point out, combine the strategies of the different "cells" of their model, illustrating the lack of firm boundaries among these categories, while also raising questions about the potential to combine methods in other ways, such as working in several cells sequentially.

The practice of working sequentially across differing methods is somewhat uncommon because although qualitative researchers understand the value of continually revisiting the data in a circular and reflexive process, most adhere to a single method – or approach. Qualitative analyses are time consuming to learn and apply rigorously, which serves to further encourage the practice of remaining loyal to a favored approach or "cell." However, although certainly time-consuming, it is quite possible to employ multiple narrative techniques: linking various techniques together can allow a more comprehensive portrait to emerge from the data. One analysis, for example, might follow distinct aspects of an experience by separating each narrative thread to allow a closer examination before braiding the threads back together into a single comprehensive story (e.g., Sorsoli, 2004). Another analysis might attend, in layers, to different "voices" in the data, including the presence of and/or shifts in subject use, such as from 'I' to 'you' or 'we' (e.g., Brown, 1998; Jack, 1991; Shaw, 2002; Tolman, 2003), or explore different "languages of the unsayable" (Rogers, Casey, Ekert, Holland, Nakkula & Sheinberg, 1999; see also Sorsoli, 2000). While it is impossible to apply and discuss every possible narrative technique in a single research paper, the innovative methods guiding the above mentioned analyses (Brown, Argyris, Attanuci, Bardige, Gilligan, Johnston, et al., 1988; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg & Bertsch, 2003; Rogers, Casey, Ekert & Holland, 1999) involve multiple interpretive layers, incorporating a layer of "reading for plot" or "re-storying," in combination with readings for differ-

ent "voices" or "languages." In effect, these methods explicitly involve layering an analysis prioritizing form with an analysis prioritizing content.

Not so much bricolage (Geertz, 1988; Kincheloe, 2001; Levi-Strauss, 1966) as intentional and systematic, these layered approaches to the analytic process, comprised of multiple interpretive readings of the original transcripts (see Brown et al., 1988; Rogers, Casey, Ekert & Holland, 1999) allow researchers to explore alternatives and to continually check and question findings as they arise, at each level of the analysis. Because each level offers unique information, the analysis at any level may call into question interpretations made at other levels by offering alternative explanations for the phenomena that are being observed, thus integrating validation into the research process (Kvale, 1995). As other scholars articulate (e.g., Riessman, 2002), however, these approaches do not assume objectivity and seek to articulate "a" truth (or set of truths) rather than "the" truth of personal narratives. The systematic use of more than one method or layer of interpretive reading forces the existence of multiple perspectives during the process of analysis, actively encouraging researchers to go beneath the loudest stories they are hearing and to behold the data as if seeing it "through a set of prisms each of which catch[ing] some part of it" (Bruner, 1986, p. 26).

At the same time, however, the specific "set of prisms" we choose as researchers, and/or the qualities of those prisms, may have profound effects on subsequent interpretations. We might choose to approach interview data as if this material bears a relatively transparent relation to the psyche. Or, we might treat interviews as if they were much like pieces of performance art. We may choose to prioritize the linguistic aspects of the interview text or decide to highlight the relational aspects of this unique communication process. These choices necessarily impact the understandings we reach as a result of our research. For narrative researchers, it could be argued that analysis begins at the very level of transcription: a level of analysis that is very often over-looked, though it can have a rather large impact on the subsequent ways data can be explored (Gee, 1986; Mishler, 1991; Poland, 1995) and perhaps in some senses already reflects a chosen theoretical framework (Ochs, 1979). Stammers, stutters, retractions, subject shifts, voice drops, silences – whether and how these linguistic markers are transcribed affects future analyses. It could also be argued that the interview questions just as important as the transcription process. Do they, and the interviewer, offer room for such things as silence and revision? Does the research design (i.e., research questions, interview protocol, etc.) allow or even encourage the exploration of such complexities of speech?

Each of these decision points in study design offers certain possibilities and limitations, as does the ways we choose to create coding units or "chunk" narrative data for analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Lieblich, et al., 1998). As Riessman (2002) highlights, there are differences between approaches that take the idea of narrative

more literally and those that consider the ways narratives may permeate research interviews; further, "deciding which segments to analyze and putting boundaries around them are interpretive acts that are shaped in major ways by the investigator's theoretical interests" (p. 698–699). In this chapter, I conduct an analysis designed to explore the interpretive limits imposed by various methods of unitizing narrative data while also introducing the practice of layering interpretive readings. Taking as my "set of prisms" several possible units of narrative, I systematically look at the statements, stories, and selected interactions taking place in the interviews I conducted with one particular participant with the goal of understanding the potential intersection between complex trauma and race. By coding inductively (Miles & Huberman, 1994) and discussing separately the findings at each level of this analysis, I demonstrate the way the unit of analysis can alter how we hear the data while also illustrating the ways layered methods of analyzing narratives leads to a progressively deepening understanding of experience, which in this case is the experience of a Black woman who has survived a painful childhood.

### Method: layered readings

As mentioned earlier, there are different ways to conduct layered readings of personal narratives. For example, the "Listening Guide" (Brown et al., 1988; Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg, & Bertsch, 2003) involves separate readings for plot and self combined with two (or more) additional readings for contrapuntal voices – which are interpretive readings specifically focused on listening for particular "voices" in the interview transcripts. For the purposes of analysis, a "voice" can be thought of as a way of speaking that embodies certain specific characteristics, including a unique perspective that involves particular assumptions and a particular orientation, or world-view. Another layered method of narrative research, a process entitled "an Interpretive Poetics" (Rogers, Casey, Ekert, & Holland., 1999), also involves four layers. First, from the interview transcripts, profiles are crafted around interpretive questions (Seidman, 1991), thus "re-storying" the narratives by creating multiple versions of the information shared while reducing the data into a more manageable form. Returning to the transcripts a second time, moments of understanding or misunderstanding and the changes in questioning or answering patterns occurring around those moments in time are explored to reveal patterns in relational dynamics. A third layer approaches what was not spoken in the interview by examining the "languages of the unsayable," four key features often present in spoken language: negations, erasures and revisions, smokescreens, and silences (Rogers, Casey, Ekert, Holland, et al., 1999). Finally, the use of figurative language is examined.

It seems particularly critical to acknowledge that there will be limits to what can be said in research interviews when interviewing populations for whom silence and secrecy may have become habitual. Because painful, highly emotional, and/or traumatic events are difficult, if not impossible, to relate even under ideal circumstances, listening well to these experiences can be a demanding exercise, one that warrants a method of analysis that both assumes and examines this phenomenon. When painful events occur in tandem with complicated social experiences, such as racism and discrimination, the nuances of life stories can become even more difficult to untangle and explore. Adopting a layered method of analysis allows the sensitive listening required to hear complex stories as well as those that are marginalized in society and possibly even within certain storytellers; the layers, in concert, draw attention not only to the existence and content of these often silenced stories but the ways they are being put into words.

Because these kinds of stories are so complex and delicate, they require a particular kind of focused listening for optimal understanding. In contrast to quantitative research, which relies on large samples that can offer great statistical power, the object of qualitative research is often not to generalize but to optimize the understanding of a specific story, topic, or case (Stake, 1995, 1998). In such instances, a case study, preferably one specifically designed to attend to the complexities of voice and story, can be an appropriate and useful research method (Yin, 1994). In this chapter, an instrumental case study (Stake, 1995, 1998) is used to provide insight into the intersection of racism and trauma in a complex person-event ecosystem. By examining, at separate levels of analysis, the frequencies of certain types of descriptors and metaphors, the themes of personal narratives, and the ways meanings are clarified and communicated through relational interactions, this particular case study offers a thorough and systematic exploration of how a woman who had not experienced significant direct exposure to maltreatment or violence came to be narrating many of the common symptoms of trauma.

This case is chosen from a larger study exploring women's experiences of disclosing painful or traumatic events.1 As with each of the women participating in the study, I conducted two separate interviews with Patti.2 The first interview (the

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1.    In all, sixteen women were interviewed for this study, including four survivors of childhood sexual abuse and one survivor of physical abuse. Most of the participants were Caucasian, two were Latina, one was bi-racial (African/White), and one was Black. These women represent a range in socio-economic status, education (from high-school equivalency to Ph.D.), and age (22-55). With honesty and courage, they shared many personal and painful stories, including stories about divorce, abandonment, race, immigration, suicide attempts, depression, homosexuality, and being the child of an alcoholic.

2.    To preserve confidentiality, all names, dates, places and certain other identifying information has been altered throughout this chapter.

Multidimensional Trauma Recovery and Resiliency Interview [Harvey et al., 1994]) was semi-structured and designed to ask a variety of questions about life history, including early experiences, both positive and painful or traumatic, work history, ways of coping with stress and emotions, expectations for the future, and the meaning-making process. The second interview was designed to be open-ended; and although it was built around information obtained in the first interview, it was clearly focused on the qualities of relationships and the process of disclosing painful or traumatic events across the lifespan. Together, these interviews served as vehicles for understanding the intricacies and nuances of each woman's experiences within a particular culture and context, and the ways in which these factors shaped her identity and her personal encounters with trauma. Patti's two interviews were relatively long, each lasting between two and three hours.

The audio-taped interviews were transcribed verbatim, including pauses, voice drops (both volume and pitch), laughter, stammers, and repetitions. Where available and appropriate, information about body language, gestures, and gaze from post-interview notes were also included. As an initial layer of analysis, using these full, annotated transcripts as a text, an open-coding technique was utilized (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1998); repetitive words, clauses, and/or statements were inductively coded line by line. Beginning with a clean transcript, personal narratives were then identified and coded, providing a second layer of analysis. As Riessman (2002) describes, there are many different ways of defining narratives for analysis. This analysis relied on an approach to personal narrative that is fairly restrictive and involves stories that are organized around a specific topic or event, character set, setting, and plot. Thus, although Patti's stories did not necessarily always have a clear beginning, middle, and end, the narratives selected for this analysis were discrete and did "recapitulate specific events the narrator witnessed or experienced" (Riessman, 2002, p. 696). Finally, interview segments involving conversations about the meaning of her experiences were coded. During the segments selected for analysis, I was actively intervening, not merely asking for clarification or more information, but consciously reckoning Patti's narratives against each other. Thus, during these segments, I was rather closely involved in the co-production of new narratives. These segments provide a sense of the context in which the full narratives arose; it was also during these portions of the interviews that new themes and/or meanings were often generated or became clearer. At each successive level of analysis, codes from the previous level were carried forward as provisional codes, whereupon they continued to be refined, even while emergent codes were sought.

While these three layers of analysis were intricately related, each layer allowed a slightly different understanding of Patti's experiences to emerge. After each layer of analysis was completed, analytical memos were composed to document the

emerging categories of experiences that were being coded, as well as the ways these categories seemed connected with each other (Maxwell, 1996). Finally, the contents collected into each of the coded categories were analyzed thematically and used to formulate potential understandings of the ecological nature of trauma and recovery in Patti's life.

## Results and discussion

*Narrative elements: words, phrases, and statements*

The three most common kinds of statements in Patti's transcripts involved being different, bad or inferior in some way, and either hiding or alone (see Table 1).3 The word "different" was particularly ubiquitous. Patti contended that she had a "different definition of home," a "different sense of appropriateness," and a "different" understanding of "happiness." She said she "looked different," "dressed funny," and had a "gigantic family compared to everybody else." Several times during the interviews she referred to herself as a "freak" or "weirdo." Often in close proximity were statements revealing a self-perception involving a sense of inferiority. For example, she described herself as "ugly and weird," "skuzzy," "emotionally screwed-up" and a "big fat loser." She made frequent references to being alone, particularly during her childhood, saying that "kids didn't play with me," "I sat in the corner reading books" and "did not mingle." Her aloneness, even at home and in spite of her "gigantic family," was striking. "When I'm home," she said, "I just have to sit there and not let anybody know who I am." Separating these statements, words, and clauses from the rest of the transcript, the sheer preponderance of these kinds of statements explains why I came away with a clear sense of Patti's negative self-perceptions, even though the interviews themselves felt positive, upbeat, and humor-filled.

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**3.**   ³ A final narrative element was that of "reason" (i.e., "'Cause when you did come home and say you were upset then there was some reason you shouldn't be," "That was the only reason I was there," "And there was no reason. I mean, I hated him," "That's a good enough reason," "It's like, I don't care if it's not reasonable.")

**Table 1.** Examples of common statements, words, or phrases.

| Different | Bad/Inferior/Disliked | Alone/Hiding |
|---|---|---|
| [I had] a gigantic family compared to everybody else. | I was, I'm sort of the stereotypical nerdy kid. | I was that, the kid who, you know, sat in the corner reading books. |
| Didn't really fit in with the neighborhood. | Tall and skinny, which, in our neighborhood was ugly and weird. | Did not, um, generally mingle. |
| I could read, before I went to kindergarten, so I already was weird. Compared to the other kids. | I'm the skuzzy person and, you know, who'd want to hang out with a weirdo like me anyway? Like if I were them, I wouldn't hang out me. | I'm sitting there reading books while they're doing the A, B, Cs. |
| I already was just, you know, just didn't fit in. | So it wasn't that hard to figure out why kids didn't play with me. | There wasn't really a relationship. We had, I had very old-fashioned, strict parents. So the relationship was, they tell you what to do and you do it. There wasn't any, you know, what do you think, how do you feel? |
| Didn't fit in with my community at all, or my so-called you know community, the uh neighborhood. | If you're a freak, it's like yeah, I really am, there's something wrong with me, and people notice it. | We weren't allowed to associate with anybody anyway, even if we hadn't been weird and, we weren't even supposed to. |
| I mean, I dressed funny. | First you're hated because you're lighter than everybody and then suddenly you're hated for being darker than everybody. | So it was just like, good, if I just get straight 'A's and read books the rest of my life, then they'll, they won't hassle me. |
| I looked different. | This is an incredibly emotionally screwed-up person. | When I'm home, I just have to sit there and not let anybody know who I am. |

| Different | Bad/Inferior/Disliked | Alone/Hiding |
|---|---|---|
| And I grew up not looking like people around me, in addition to you know, sort of <u>being</u> weird that I just didn't look, I didn't fit in physically. | You'd go home thinking you're somebody and like oh I forgot, I'm just the, you know, a big fat loser. | I don't want the teachers to know that because they think I'm fine the way I am. |
| Obviously not, you know, blended in too well. | So it was like, okay, when I'm home, I'm just a big fat loser, I will sit here and not say anything so then I won't ANY attention, because it's only going to be negative. | [The most painful part of my childhood was the] total solitude. |
| I'm a natural born freak. | | |

Put together, these elements of the narrative paint a rather bleak picture of Patti's childhood and later life experiences, her consistently negative self-assessments forming a powerful undercurrent to the interviews even though her words and voice revealed little emotion. This level of analysis, however, simply explores the manifest content of the interviews – while detecting the sheer frequency of these kinds of statements, little has been revealed about their contexts. For example, it remains to be seen how these statements appeared within the context of her stories, what the stories she told during the interviews were about and the types characters they involved, or the kinds of questions she was being asked, let alone the quality of the research relationship; therefore, any interpretations should be made sparingly. And yet, the consistency of Patti's statements is striking – particularly when considered from a clinical perspective. Because this first layer of analysis does offer an accurate representation of the manifest content of the interviews, it alone may provide sufficient information for the purposes of certain studies. Other narrative studies may choose to focus on aspects of narratives that are not so immediately obvious and rely on interpretive techniques to "read between the lines," accounting for ways narrative data is complicated, nuanced, and non-transparent (e.g., Brown, 1998; Jack, 1991; Tolman, 2003). Layering approaches can allow researchers to examine both the manifest and latent content, balancing a more subjective, interpretive reading with the more impartial description of the basic narrative elements that are present in the data. Further, because race was brought up as an important issue during the interview, the absence of it as a category at this level of analysis suggests that I remain watchful for its presence in subsequent analyses.

**Proper narratives: stories and examples**

By focusing on what the "stories" a person tells can reveal about the self presented within them, this second level of analysis gives precedence to the storied nature of human experience, emphasizing the perspective that we are the stories we tell and that stories are the central manner of presenting one's inner reality to the outside world (McAdams, 1993; Ochberg, 1994). Patti's narratives throughout these transcripts were numerous, although she often alluded to past experiences without providing quite enough information or context for a listener to clearly immediately comprehend the events that had transpired. It was often necessary to directly ask for basic information, such as what she actually said or did in a specific situation in order to comprehend and follow the story she was telling. Because the interviews were designed to be phenomenological (Seidman, 1991), with an emphasis on meaning, rather than as a tool to solicit and collect narrative material, clarifications were only sought when necessary for understanding – most of Patti's stories, as they often do, arose naturally during the interview process as she provided examples of seminal experiences in her life (Bruner, 1990). Many of the stories she told involved her sisters, which she said surprised her, because "they aren't a big part of my life." Thematically, the majority of her stories involved emotion (often anger) as a source of danger and the sense of being exiled. In particular, she narrated many experiences alluding to the tendency for emotions to flare up, the ways experiences or expression of emotion had been used against her by her family, and the sense of being separate or separated from a community. At this level of analysis, it felt like she was communicating that she was alone in a world that was fundamentally against her.

One of Patti's narratives, for example, was about a day when she was having some difficulty painting. Because she highly values painting, and because painting offers her a sense of stability, worth, and support, it is understandable that she might have a very emotional reaction to this experience. At the same time, however, because her reaction is so extreme, it provides a sense of the way emotion overcomes her:

> One day I woke up, and it was like, okay, I'm gonna paint something and I started to paint something, and I couldn't paint anything. Like anything! I couldn't even, you know I'm like, maybe I'll paint some blue, something, and I'm like, what kinds of things are blue? (laughs) You know, and it was just like I couldn't paint anything and that was like, "Oh no!" What if tomorrow I wake up and I still can't paint anything, and then the day after that I can't paint anything. You know, and it's just like, "Uh oh, it's gone. I knew it was going to go someday." So then I was just…<u>bummed</u>. For the rest of the day. It's like I'm not even getting dressed, what's the point? By tomorrow I won't be a painter anymore. I don't exist anymore. What the hell's the point?

Given Patti's extreme emotional response to a bout of "painter's block," it would make sense to assume that emotions in general seemed dangerous to her, particularly in light of the fact that other stories have signaled that her family's condemnation of emotion (in favor of reason) has left her with a sense that she is inadequate both for having emotions and not being able to control them more effectively: Stories that were emotionally intense also tended to involve a sense of unworthiness. For Patti, emotions were also dangerous in other ways: it was common for her narratives to be about the many ways her sisters could be careless or thoughtless with regard to the feelings of others. Patti, who felt quite strongly about confidentiality, observed the way her sisters "blabbed" to one another and felt they were not only far too careless with emotional confessions, but deliberately hurtful. In the following narrative, she was describing her perception of the high probability for humiliation that would exist if she were to "share" emotions with her family members and the guarded behaviors she has adopted as a result:

> One of my sisters, you know, bawled her eyes out over the phone, to another one. You <u>know</u> that a year later, exactly – it was like, okay, she must have marked it on her calendar, a year from now I'm going to casually drop in the conversation, "Well when I was talking to so and so, she bawled her eyes out." So like, "Oh, don't expect me to <u>ever</u> bawl my eyes out in front of you. Because first of all, I don't even want to share that kind of raw emotion with you. I am doubly not going to share anything with you that you'll be blabbing to somebody else. Because it wasn't that you wanted me to open up so we could be closer, it's like you wanted something to humiliate me with." So it's like, "Now that you've made that clear…" (laughs) I had a phone conversation about a boyfriend that I'd broken up with. (sweet sing song voice) "Oh are you upset because you broke up with him?" (sits up straight, broad smile, bright cheery voice) "Nope! Everything's cool, I'm going out to party, as a matter of fact."

Adding to the elements from the analysis at the statement level (being different, being bad, being alone or hiding), Patti's stories introduce new codes (now in the context of stories and thus coinciding with themes) that are more centrally about emotion and community. The stories she tells highlight huge swings in emotion and the sense that she has very intense emotions that few people witness or understand, the ways emotions and mistakes can be used against her (most often by her family), and the ways she is or gets separated from a community, as if it were just beyond her grasp. In her stories, we can begin to hear a deep distrust of relationships and a possible difficulty with modulating affect. Further, although she did not tell stories focusing explicitly on the ways she was different, bad, or alone, in the background, the sense that she is unworthy is still quietly present; in these particular stories, the persistent threat of humiliation and the fear of losing her artistic abilities – the one

thing she was consistently praised for by teachers – both signal the fragility of her self-esteem and her sense that the world is dangerous and unkind.

In terms of clinical symptoms, examining her stories provides an understanding with regard to the existence and strength of her sense that she is different, unworthy, and alone. And yet, even though her stories offer a glimpse at the pervasive stress that must have surrounded her as a child, most of the experiences she narrates would not be considered "traumatic" in the classical sense as they do not appear to involve experiences that would necessarily overwhelm psychological coping mechanisms (Herman, 1992; Terr, 1990, 1991). However, Patti did narrate one experience that seemed potentially traumatic. A child during desegregation, Patti was one of the first Black students to experience "bussing." During the interview, she described the experience in detail:

> I was bussed for a few weeks. And that was just a <u>horrible</u> experience. It was an amazing thing to go from school being a safe place in some sense to when you're bussed. We'd have to ride around with a police motorcade guarding us to get to school. And it was bizarre. Sometimes we'd get to school on time and sometimes we wouldn't. Some days they'd send the bus back. It was an amazingly horrendous experience. And we knew that they had tipped over the busses. The high school started first, but they stalled the middle school kids. We were sitting home watching them tip busses over and going, "Okay in a few weeks this'll be us." So it had calmed down a little by the time we started, but if you're eleven years old and you're watching them tip busses over and then you have to go get on one, it's like, "I don't want to go to school." So that was uh…not fun.

Of the various experiences she shared during the interviews, the experience narrated here comes closest to a "classic" trauma narrative. She described this as a "horrible experience" involving a clear threat to her physical integrity, as well as feelings involving dread, helplessness, and a sudden loss of safety. If the final statement in this excerpt, "so that was uh…not fun," is interpreted as exit speech – signaling the end of the story (Riessman, 2002) – it could be concluded that that story is about the experience of desegregation. However, as it was told in the interview, the story had not yet reached its climax; reading forward in the transcript reveals that the story was also about the unforeseen gain and loss of a community:

> And <u>then</u> when I got there, they put me in an A.P. English class. And there was exactly one Black kid in the A.P. English class. Oh that was fun! There was just little old me. So it's like okay, as if it wasn't bad enough coming here and plus you come on the busses and then…it's sort of like a community activity, which is a sad way of having one 'cause I, at home didn't fit in with my community at all, or my so-called you know community, the uh neighborhood, but then when you're on the bus and people are threatening your lives and suddenly it's like, "Yeah, we're all

friends!" You know? So it was weird to go to school and then… be separated to go down to A.P. English class.

Reading this final segment of the story, it can be understood that the climax, or crux, of the story, is not simply that bussing was a horrible experience; the story is also about the fact that riding the busses created a community where a community had never previously existed. As Patti says, "suddenly it was like 'Yeah, we're all friends!'" The real tragedy for Patti, at least in part, was that she was once she got to the school, she was again separated, even from this "sad way of having one" community, because she had been assigned to an A. P. English class. Obviously, however, there is also important information to hear about how race figures into her experiences; for example, she indicates clearly how her race was apparent and set her apart in her new English class. At the same time, phases like "exactly one Black kid" and "little old me" signal, yet again, her sense of "aloneness" in the world.

At this second level of analysis, the themes of Patti's stories reveal that she feels intensely, fears humiliation, and continually mourns the loss of community, building on the original narrative elements involving a sense of inferiority, difference, and isolation. Although she has told a story about one potentially traumatic experience, the vast majority of her stories seem more emotionally painful than classically "traumatic." The stories about her family, for example, are often about emotional betrayal and/or being "picked at" and "judged" for every "flaw" or "mistake," and surviving in a context in which, she suggests, "if you did not come home with straight A's…you got told what an idiot you were." Thus, while individually the experiences Patti describes still seem on the edge of normal everyday experiences for children – she has not been beaten or sexually abused, she has not been neglected, and she has not been abandoned – as a whole her narratives suggest the flavor of constant relational struggles, loss, and insecurity. Moreover, the ways these "pieces" are beginning to fit together provide clues about how she may have begun to feel trapped and hopeless about her situation.

*Narratives in context: transcript segments*

During in-depth interviews, interviewers are continually engaged in a struggle to make sense of the material at hand, often mentally sticking two "pieces" of narrative, or two separate stories, together in an attempt to see how they fit with one another. Researchers adopting a feminist approach to interviewing (Anderson & Jack, 1991; Minister 1991; Oakley, 1990) tend to share such thoughts with their participants through responses like "Is it just like the time when you…?" or "But I thought you said…" Interview segments involving this type of talk reflect a passion for coherence, as well as understanding. And yet, bringing together the different

sources of conflicting information and sharing what an interviewer is taking away from a participant's stories is also a way of "member checking" (Maxwell, 1996) during the course of the interview. As an analytic practice, examining these types of interview segments offers insight into how stories were being told by revealing the kinds of questions the interviewer was able to ask and the ways a participant responded to these questions, simultaneously offering a sense of the quality of the research relationship and an indication of a participant's engagement in the topic.

The following segment of interview involves a conversation about the powerful effect that teachers had had on Patti's life and the ways teachers had provided her with "continual attention and support," particularly with regard to her painting. She had mentioned that teachers "always loved [her]," "talked" to her, and made her feel "interesting and worthwhile." As a result, she found herself questioning her home life, because, as she put it, "it was like, if all of these teachers think that I have something interesting to say and I'm worthwhile, then why is it that nobody in my family does?" When I asked how she had made sense of that situation, she said, "There was somebody out there. If nobody out there, if nobody ever thought that I was worth a plug nickel, I think it would be different, but after a while, if the only people who constantly criticize you are the people you're related to, you start thinking, well, maybe they have a problem, you know?" While this sounds extremely resilient, my skepticism is obvious in my response, "But it seems more logical to think everyone else is wrong." At this delicate point, Patti was able to meet my skepticism, acknowledging that when she was young, this was true, but adding that she eventually realized that she did not necessarily need to get a good grade for her teachers to think that she was worthwhile, and this, she said, provided her with "another piece of the puzzle." In the following segment, I continue to delve more deeply into this "puzzle," contrasting the relationships she was describing with her teachers with her earlier description of her relationship with parents in order to understand how she is making sense of these very different experiences:

Lynn:    Like you, they (your teachers) saw you as a person.
Patti:    Yes.
Lynn:    Which would be different than people who couldn't even hear what you said.
Patti:    Right. Right. Definitely.
Lynn:    Yeah. So it was as if you and what you did and what you thought was important, not just your grades and your schoolwork.
Patti:    Exactly. It wasn't just how do you fit into this preconceived puzzle, which is pretty much how I always feel in my family, that there was this big jigsaw puzzle with eight little pieces and I was just one of them and I was supposed to fit in that little space. It was like, sorry, I don't know which one it is. And

you have some people – the little square puzzle piece that fits exactly where it's supposed to be, all the time. The main thing to me after a while was if you had that many kids and the first one did everything she was supposed to do, exactly when she was supposed to do it and exactly the <u>way</u> she was supposed to do it, why can't you just be satisfied with that? Can't you just acknowledge that maybe all the good stuff was used up on her? Why do we all have to do exactly the same thing? She's already done that. That's her gig. Let everybody else have a separate one.

Lynn:    It sounds like at least at some point or at some level, there was a sense that she got all the good stuff, or she has the good stuff.

Patti:    Oh yes.

Lynn:    So…this sense of worthwhile, did that make it all the way into you? How does that fit, how does this sense of being worthwhile that came from the teachers fit with this sense that your sister had all the good stuff and you guys didn't get any?

Patti:    Um…well, it fit – it was always, "Gee I wish I'd been born into a different family that thought people like me were okay." <u>Not</u> like I felt like wonderful and like I was a great person. I felt wonderful <u>while</u> I was talking to teachers or <u>while</u> I was at school, and then the rest of the time…it's not like you can <u>live</u> at school. You'd go home thinking you're somebody and "Oh I forgot, I'm just a big fat loser." So it was like, okay, when I'm home, I'm just a big fat loser, I will sit here and not say anything so then I won't get <u>any</u> attention, because it's only going to be negative. After a while, you just sort of go, well, when I'm not home, I can be myself. When I'm home, I just have to sit there and not let anybody know who I am. Because even if I decided to follow in her footsteps and do everything the way she did it, they still found out something wrong with me.

This excerpt illustrates the earlier element of "difference," as well as her desire for a sense of belonging to a "community," and her belief that attempting to belong, even within her family, requires "fit[ting] in that little space." This requirement leaves her with a profound sense of hopelessness because even if she did her best to fit, "they still found out something wrong with me." The element of "aloneness" can be observed in her decision to just "sit here and not say anything," which was her way of coping with the negative attention she so often felt she received at home. At the same time, the feeling of "badness" is also still present, in this case highlighting a creative split between the "big fat loser" she felt she was at home and the "wonderful…great person" she felt she could be at school. Unfortunately, she ultimately felt forced into the role of "big fat loser" because "it's not like you can live at school." This new theme, feeling forced to embody the negative aspects of her self (or at risk of being "found out" and rejected from the community), also occurs in stories that are more potently tied to race.

When talking about her experiences in graduate courses, for example, the issue of race emerged with great clarity. The instructor, she believed, was inappropriately bringing race into the class discussions, which understandably made her very angry. In the following segment, after she describes what happened when she approached the instructor to explain her desire not to be singled out in this manner, I again attempt to make associations between the experience she is currently describing and the ways she had already described her early experiences in her family:

Patti:  I told her, I entered this classroom as a graduate student, and an art teacher, and in two weeks, I was transformed into an angry Black woman. That is <u>not</u> who I was when I walked into this classroom. Even if that does happen to be a part of who I am, it had nothing to do with this classroom. And I said, what really bothers me the most, is that I am one hell of an art teacher and that's being lost in this 'I'm an angry Black woman.' When I paint I can be an angry Black woman if I want, which I don't, but (laughs) it has nothing to do with my abilities. I got angrier as time went on because I discovered that I was more educated than most of the people in the class. Everybody in that classroom knew more about modern art than I did, but not a bloody person in that room had a clue about sfumato or chiaroscuro. Not one of them could teach somebody else to understand da Vinci's innovations. And that to me was what I had to contribute that was different from everybody else and instead I was forced to contribute my Blackness. What the hell does Blackness have to do with 15th or 16th century art? Nothing.

Lynn:  So, I mean, it kind of is back to…you not being seen for who you are.

Patti:  Exactly.

Lynn:  Just kind of like how it was in your family.

Patti:  Yes.

Lynn:  They didn't see who you were. They forced you to fit as a puzzle piece.

Patti:  Yes. (laughing) Exactly. Right.

Lynn:  They were forcing you to be the angry Black woman, that was your little piece and you didn't want to be that.

Patti:  Yes.

Lynn:  I can see why that made you very angry.

Patti:  Oh yes! And it's like gee why aren't I a teacher now? Because I wasn't going to be a teacher, I was always going to be "the Black art teacher." You can't just go into a classroom and teach and then run home. You <u>have</u> to interact with these people and not anybody had any respect for or wanted to be part of my private life in any way shape or form. I felt I would have no social life. I'm already being set up to not have anything in common personally with my colleagues. For me the only community I ever thought I would be a part of is an academic community and I felt like I was <u>robbed</u> of that because people were relating to my race. It was like, people in this room probably like to sit

> down in the evening and drink a cup of tea. And I like that too. But they don't know that. They think I'm sitting home, you know, plotting the downfall of the White race or something. And it's not fair. I would have enjoyed having tea with these people. You know?

Along with the lively sense of humor that characterized much of these interviews, this segment clearly illustrates the way her experiences in the world mirror her early experiences in her family. The sense that nobody "had any respect for or wanted to be part of my private life in any way shape or form," the feeling of being "set up" to fail, and "robbed" of a community, are all familiar elements of her early life, now appearing in a new context. In this situation, these themes are also specifically associated with race. Moreover, it is more apparent that she has become trapped in these stories that she learned early in life, and now, like many trauma survivors, continually relives (Chu, 1991; Terr, 1994; van der Kolk, 1989).

Examining segments of the interviews in which one narrated experience was contrasted against another illustrates how the data came to exist; it was not simply that Patti made such connections naturally but that the quality of the research relationship allowed me to ask the kind of probing questions necessary to flesh out these connections and allowed Patti to feel safe enough to think with me, extending her narratives in new directions. In fact, it was during these kinds of exchanges that Patti came closest to acknowledging her anger and pain. This third level of analysis illustrates one way, among many, to begin to consider <u>how</u> stories are told during research interviews. In this case, which often seems to be the case in phenomenological interviews, many of Patti's stories gradually unfolded during the interview process. Early versions of certain stories deepened and became more complex or nuanced as I asked questions or made interpretive statements. In contrast, an interviewer's attempts to understand may meet a certain type of "roadblock," as when a participant dodges all efforts to garner information, shuts down emotionally, and/or physically leaves the interview process entirely. Other ways to consider how stories are being told could involve attention to discourse and/or, as described earlier, a level of analysis dedicated to exploring various "voices" that may be present during the process of telling one's stories (Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Rogers, Casey, Ekert, Holland et al., 1999; Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg & Bertsch, 2003).

This practice of examining interview segments also clarifies that it was not simply what she had experienced but the way she had made meaning of these experiences and had transferred these meanings from one situation to another (or not) that left her psychologically vulnerable. For example, though she felt worthwhile at school, that feeling did little to counter her belief at home that she was just a "big fat loser" and that her sister had "gotten all the good stuff." Meanwhile, although hiding every emotion except anger was clearly adaptive within her family,

this practice became maladaptive when she tried to work out conflicts in her grad-
uate program or connect with roommates and friends.

Once we have all of these pieces and a sense for the ways they have come to-
gether in her life, we can see how disruptive they have been. It becomes clearer that
her own personal story and family environment colluded with society in ways that
made her very vulnerable and that she has internalized this as being born "wrong,"
creating a situation in which she may feel both helpless and hopeless. In every
layer of this analysis, if we listen closely, we can hear the theme "I'm bad" rising
like an *idée fixe* in a Berlioz symphony. However, in each layer, the theme sounds
slightly different, and thus we must actively listen for the refrain in order to hear
and understand its new meaning. While the first layer of analysis captured the
many different ways her sense that she was "bad" was expressed directly and meta-
phorically in her statements, the second layer clarified the way her "badness" was
expressed more quietly in the background of her stories and in the context of the
world being against her. While the final layer elaborated her sense of the societal
ramifications of her "badness" as it was co-constructed through conversation, il-
luminating both her anger and her intense but well hidden pain. All three layers
thus contribute unique understandings of her experiences. Ultimately, however, it
was clear that Patti's experiences with discrimination and prejudice afforded her
with many reasons to feel bad or different and many reasons to feel justifiably an-
gry, while her family-life provided few skills that would allow her to cope effec-
tively with the resulting emotional stress. Thus, it was neither her family-life nor
racism alone but the way societal prejudice intensified the messages she received
about herself within her family that was so disruptive in her life, trapping her in a
story that says she is different and unworthy. Overall, her experiences in the world,
while not the typical "sudden and overwhelming" events that are often associated
with trauma, nevertheless seem to have had the effect of disrupting her sense that
the world is a safe place, fundamentally altering the ways in which she perceives
and responds to the world and her relationships and leaving her with narratives
similar to survivors of other kinds of traumatic experiences.

## Conclusion

As researchers, we hear stories in a chamber that holds the echoes of our own sto-
ries, our research questions, and the stories we have heard others tell. As listeners
in the process of phenomenological interviewing (Seidman, 1991), we are also
piecing together a quilt of oral history, hearing not only stories, but patches of nar-
rative talk, such as simple statements of fact or opinion, asides, or even questions.
We join these with portions of the interview in which we, as bystanders, intervene

in the storytelling process by asking for clarification or making connections between stories and/or sharing interpretations in an effort to understand and follow the narration of the interviewee's experiences. At least at these three levels, statement, story, and dialogue, we continually make sense of what we hear during interviews. Because I was listening to Patti's narratives on these three levels, and because no single level seemed to tell the story that I, as an interviewer, had heard, I finally realized that replicating in my research process what I had done as a listener demanded systematically altering narrative units during my analysis. Riessman writes, "Narrative analysis takes as its object of investigation the story itself" (2002, p. 696), but the "stories," I realized, were not all I was hearing: My understanding of Patti's experiences demanded giving due consideration to the rest of the story, the pieces that were missing from this little puzzle. Incorporating these missing pieces allowed me to do what seems to be a more naturalistic analysis of Patti's interview transcripts. Only then did I feel I had the pieces I needed to understand the puzzle her life experiences had presented to me, and the way I eventually came to understand them.

The key to designing a successful layered analysis hinges on choosing layers that are appropriate, instructive, and clearly related to one's analytic questions and theoretical framework. The goal is to choose layers that will illuminate a particular phenomenon in different ways, each successive reading providing a unique perspective on the data. In this chapter I have looked at various factors that can be involved in an analysis of narratives. I have chosen to explore different units of analysis rather than attempting to understand the existence of the different "voices" that were also inevitably present in this data. Taking into account the recurring narrative elements, or statements, that flavored the interview along with the more lengthy examples and formal narratives, and considering each of these in light of selected interview segments has called attention to different assumptions about the ways human experiences are put into words. Successively broadening the unit of analysis has allowed me to differentiate, for example, the words and phrases we say most often from the stories we create and tell about our experiences. It has also allowed me to consider the importance of the research relationship in the co-production of personal narratives.

Although each level of this analysis separately produced very interesting findings, the systematic contrast across the full transcript has allowed us to see the way Patti's words and stories fit together and intertwine, as well as the ways they were communicated in the interviews, revealing her experiences in a unique context and light. The method of analysis used for this case study has thus produced a rich understanding of Patti's life experiences. In general, as a narrative technique, the rigor of a layered approach to analysis encourages constant and careful attention to shifts in language and meaning as well as a progressive deepening of understanding. In

this case, considering the transcript for the separate contributions of statement, story, and joint construction, each in succession, allows the pieces of the puzzle, why she sounds so much like a trauma survivor, to finally fall into place.

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# Theories of self in psychotherapeutic narratives

Alessandra Fasulo

Drawing on video recorded interactions of group psychotherapy meetings, the study explores the connection between narrative understanding of self on the life path and situated enactments of discursive identities. In a community for ex-heroin addicts, where the observations took place, the local understanding of the healing path is framed in terms of a narrative template with particular versions of self as characters in the plot. It is proposed that individuals connect to this time-stretched healing narrative during therapy hours via the adoption of a specific community register whereby engagement with the community is ritually performed. Through the analysis of a conflict started by one patient over the authenticity of "community talk" and of the adjustment in participation framework and interactional norms ensued by the attack, it can be shown that successful enactment of situated identities *vis-à-vis* the relevant social group is central to the survival of narratively construed ideologies. Problematic issues related to co-participation in both informal and institutional interaction, a feature typical of residential communities, are discussed. The analysis is ultimately directed to illustrate how a notion of self is emergent in interaction, enacted through performances that need social ratification. This does not entail a view of self as volatile or liquid but rather as the object of substantial socialization efforts by societal institutions and groups, and territory of conflict between individuals and subcultures.

## A few landmarks and a disclaimer

Historians of psychology identify two broad areas of theory and investigation: The first one has its philosophical roots in the Socratic dialogue and views thought as embedded in social relations, its practice developed into therapeutic approaches to single cases and extensive analysis of interaction and context. The second approach thrives into the Cartesian tradition, sees thought as a natural object, and applies nomothetic methods – that is, methods oriented to finding general laws – to the study of a universal mind (Mecacci, 1999).

The study of self has its strongest representatives within the first approach, where it is seen as the outcome of the adaptive development in the social group, thus as actively incorporating aspects of the social environment and culturally established forms of *persona*. The universalistic perspective borrowed these basic points but has since studied the self as a primary knowledge structure with organizational properties toward behavior and cognition (Markus, 1977). Besides other theoretical concerns, there is a central methodological difference in the two ways of studying the self. As a knowledge schema, the self can only be studied in retrospect as a set of *representations* (i.e., what people say about their own self; see Markus & Nurius, 1986) or as *effects* on some other cognitive domain, for example, inducing self-serving biases in causal attribution or recall (i.e., changing causal judgments or memories to the interest of a better self image; see Sedikides & Green, 2000; Weiner, Frieze, Kukla, Reed, Rest & Rosenbaum, 1972). As an "emergent," interactional phenomenon instead, the self can be observed prospectively, as an *object-in-time* and something that it is *done* rather than *held*. Also, whereas in cognitivistic studies conceptions and theories of the self and its functioning are viewed as part of the knowledge system of the individuals (for instance, implicit theories of traits' stability or change; see Ross, 1989), the dialogic tradition takes into account those theories of self that are embedded in the various cultural objects – such as narrative genres, cultural inventories of personality, and local views of bodily and emotional experience – with the capacity of shaping different versions of the self when they are made alive through meaningful interaction in specific contexts.

An unfortunate connotation of the cultural and interactionist perspectives is that they propose a kind of 'liquid' version of self and identity, to borrow the adjective Bauman (2000) applies to modernity (namely, something only living in language and virtuality) so that both the solidity and the consequences for life that the individuals feel in connection with the experience of having a self would be deeply underestimated. Such connotation is partly owed to the semantic halo of a word like 'construction' (Hacking, 1999; Lynch, 1993), which brings about ideas of falsification and artifice, or to the inheritance that comes to anything 'cultural' from the ancient opposition with 'natural' (also expressed by the 'innate/acquired' couplet). Surely, some responsibility for the idea of a soluble identity endorsed in interactionist studies lies in works that have 'construction' as the point of arrival of the inquiry. Following the ethnomethodological advice, the 'construction' should be instead a starting point and the research should be aimed at discovering the "methods" through which it occurs (Fele, 2002; Lynch, 1993).

Studies in the production of historically and contextually situated selves show that complex systems of activity have been generated for the creation and maintenance of self and identity, systems named by Foucault "technologies of the self."

Daily self-examinations, disciplined habits, dialogues with masters, and deprivation of mundane pleasures are among the techniques found by Foucault, testifying that the self was the object of a methodical care already as far back as in the first centuries of the Roman Empire (Foucault, 1984, 1988). Far from being conceived as transient and easily manipulated, the self – or soul – appears in these descriptions as modified by rigorous application and deep engagement with ethical doctrines. Furthermore, practices of self-modification, though involving time spent in solitude, were rooted in sociality, both when these were learned and when self-examination was carried on in talk or writing addressed to friends and advisors.

Such brief and incomplete reminders of the landmarks in the study of the self are meant to clarify that the approach endorsed here does not support a liquid representation of the self, but it is aimed at illustrating how the self gets reflexively constituted together with the development of a local web of discourses, meanings, and activities. In the following study, phases of psychotherapeutic activity will be analyzed with a main focus on the relationship between life narratives and identities situated in social interaction.

*Site of the research*

The study was based on video recordings from eight group therapy sessions in a community of ex-heroin addicts. The community is a house up on a hill in South Central Italy that hosted six people, all with a history of several years of heroin use. They were all men; I therefore will use the masculine pronoun to refer to them throughout the paper. At the time of my first visit, five of them they had just moved there from another community house run by the same center, while one person came in a week later. There were no other residents in the house; there were no gates or any other sort of physical barriers. The residents would occasionally go out to work in the fields for a grower nearby, but no free movement was allowed outside the house apart from negotiated visits home, which they called "verifying." Control on group activities was exerted by the resident with the longest permanence in the community (here named Daniele); he supervised wake time, cooking and cleaning shifts, and the respect of rules such as no coffee and a limited number of cigarettes and of TV hours per day. The center encouraged two years' stay as the required amount of time to complete the therapeutic process and enhance probabilities of staying clean of drugs once outside. When someone left beforehand, the departure was negotiated. As far as I understood, there had been no escapes from the community at the time of my visit.

I had been given access to the site through the therapist, who was a research assistant to the social psychology chair at the University of Rome. During record-

ing, I was sitting by the camera in the same room where the therapy took place, which was the living room of the house.

The therapy sessions' interactional format was conceived as rounds of individual interviews in the presence of the whole group; not everybody was interviewed in every session, and the length and number of interviews varied each time.

*Narrative emplotments*

In the setting I have observed, narrative activity is central: Not only are psychotherapeutic encounters largely based on storytelling as a form of discourse, but also the whole therapeutic path is presented as a narrative template to which the individuals must orient themselves. Mattingly (1998) reports from her field research with physiotherapists that they were not able to work without a larger narrative framework representing what the patients should get at, what the different phases would look like, and how the patients had to behave in order to prove they were moving inside that frame. "This effort at story making which I will refer to as therapeutic emplotment," argues Mattingly, "is integral to the healing power of this practice" (Mattingly, 1998, p. 2). Minor actions or even movements were regularly commented on by therapists with an orientation to the healing narrative. Similarly, in the interactions I recorded, all the threads coming out from the interviews were woven into the fabric of the local therapeutic plot.

The healing narrative circulating in the community is usually introduced by the therapist in connection with an explanation of the ideal recovery program. It involves: a) a first phase in which the newcomer understands his problems and finds the will to solve them; b) a second phase in which he finds alternative behaviors, thus beginning to change himself; and, c) a third phase in which he, by continuous practice, reinforces the change and makes the new behaviors his own. The last phase is necessary for the new behaviors to apply automatically in critical situations. Such sequence of stages is structurally a narrative: In every stage there are obstacles, enemies and allies, trials to overcome; wisdom is the most rewarding prize waiting at the end of the path. The primary narrative antagonist it is never heroin, but the psychological problems that had lead to it. Sequentially, the narrative appears in the closing phases of individual interviews, as part of the assessment of the stage at which the patient is. Following is the basic plot in two versions, from the voice of the therapist.

(To avoid very long excerpts and even longer explanations the examples following the mentioning of each therapeutic step have been omitted. Such omitted parts are indicated with […]. Transcription symbols have been reported in the glosses only as regards intonational contour, whereas pronunciation effects have been mostly ignored. Arrows (→) mark utterances of analytic relevance).

**Excerpt 1** – *Therapeutic plot I*

| 1. | Ther. | The reason of the two years of community:, | Il discorso dei due anni di comunità:, |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2. | | […] is that you need a given time- | […] è che ci vuole un certo tempo- |
| 3. | → | to begin working=to understand. | per iniziare a lavorare=per capire. |
| 4. | | to set in the intention of changing. | per mettersi nella volontà di cambiare. |
| 5. | | to get better and | di migliorare |
| 6. | | understand one's problems. | e di capire i propri problemi. |
| 7. | | You need some more time:, | ci vuole un altro po' di tempo:, |
| 8. | → | to actually change. | per cambiare proprio. |
| 9. | | then you need time | poi ci vuole il tempo |
| 10. | | to strengthen the behavior. | […] pe' rafforzare il comportamento. |
| 11. | | once one has understood= | 'na volta che si è capi:to= |
| 12. | | =once one has changed, | ='na volta che si è cambia:to, |
| 13. | → | one needs to <u>ena:</u>ct the behavior. | bisogna <u>agi:</u>rlo il comportamento. |

**Excerpt 2** – *Therapeutic plot II*

| 1 | Ther. | Three things, understanding >first of all< | Tre co:se, capi:re >innanzitutto< |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | → | understanding why one does certain things. | capi:re. uno perchè fa certe co:se. |
| 3 | → | finding an alternative | trovare un'alternativa |
| | | for the wrong behavior. | al comportamento sbaglia:to. |
| 4 | → | and then make it become | e poi farlo diventare |
| | | your own behavior. | comportamento proprio. |
| 5 | | […] these things are: they need time. | […] ste cose so: ce vogliono tempo. |

In the description of the healing process, no mention is made of the physical process of detoxication or of drugs in general. The initial phase is the search for "problems," namely, the psychological cause or set of causes that make "one do some things." Once the problems each person has are identified and recognized in past behaviors or in examples taken from present life, opposite behaviors – "alternatives" – must be found. In excerpt 1 this step implies "to have changed" already, yet that is not enough in that extra time is required to have the chance of enacting the right behaviors repeatedly and to strengthen the changes. These steps, seen alto-

gether, imply a journey into oneself, the struggle with one's problems and bad habits, and training in doing the right thing.

The trouble that both the therapist and the group members face is that the assessment on the position of each member on this path relies on slippery cues: Both the problems and the alternative behaviors have to be assessed on the basis of the reports that the group members offer about their everyday experience and inner feelings in the community. Such reports are scrutinized by the therapist who can agree or disagree with the members' self-evaluation of their position on the path.

He can even decide that a member has not even started and is, therefore, symbolically out of the community (the context of such judgment is the interaction that will be examined later in the chapter):

**Excerpt 3**  *The place as metaphor I*

| | |
|---|---|
| Ther.    …You are not wo:rking therefore you are doing | …Tu non stai lavora:ndo perciò non stai |
| absolutely nothing for yourself | facendo assolutamente niente per te |
| […] you have not come in the community. | […] tu non sei entra:to in comunità. |

In another instance, despite three months of staying, a participant is told he has just come in:

**Excerpt 4**  *The place as metaphor II*

| | |
|---|---|
| Ther.    It means that you come in the community just now. | significa che tu adesso entri in comunità. |

The word "community" is not used in the literal sense of the residential premise the members are living in; rather, the physical reality is intended as a metaphor for the therapeutic path, so that residents can "enter" it or be still "outside" it. As shown in former studies (Fasulo, 1994, 1999), the need for assessing members' positions means that every event in the participant's life is imbued with allegorical potential and can be used to signify members' psychological change. This is promoted by the therapist's routine question "What does it mean?" at the end of the participants' narratives, encouraging a view of daily events as always containing a meaning in terms of a member's position or advancement. The life of the residents is thus transformed by means of exemplar narratives in a circular process of narrating, redrafting with the therapist, and applying the revised version to everyday circumstances.

References to the therapeutic narrative are found in expressions such as "working inside," "strengthening my character," or "telling myself what to do." The antagonist self appears weak (it must be strengthened, it can be carried away) and demanding (is represented as the "child" in the psychotherapeutic model followed

by this therapist); but what is perceived to be the "essence" of the self – following Lakoff and Johnson's (1999) analysis of self metaphors – stays with the volitional part, the agent or "subject" who impresses his action onto the other. In the local narrative, therapy works in helping this essential self in its efforts at establishing control over the internal enemies. The focus of what follows is the way in which the self-as-character of the wider therapeutic plot is hooked to the self-as-participant in the therapeutic encounter.

### Rituals, membership and risk

The social group observed here has some peculiar aspects: Its members share a past of deviance and addiction and the prospect of a life under a stigma. They suffer a present of severe restriction of freedom in the same physical environment, which is not tiny but not as large either as to allow individual bedrooms. They are almost always in one another's sight when carrying out everyday business and they are naturally involved in informal conversations except when they meet in the context of the weekly therapy (and monthly 'seminars'). Thus, the same people have access to both the ordinary identity of the other members as expressed in informal everyday action and conversation and to their institutional identity as expressed in the therapeutic interviews.

Coexistence of the ordinary and the institutional self is not exceptional in social life: We experience this situation from an early age, for example in school, when the informal, subterranean life of peers streams parallel to the interaction with the school authorities. These social spheres are not entirely separated, though, given that there is some transference from one another, as teachers know too well when confronting pupils who keep their status in the group through conflict with their authority. In this sense, participation in institutional speech events at the presence of people who are co-participants in another kind of social order is an occasion of exposure (Goffman, 1959), because the institutional self is made public to people who are 'looking glasses' of the ordinary self of the speaker as well. In the community, peer life is not in opposition or indifferent to the institutional interaction, as it might be in school; in fact, therapy time has the task of lending meaning and worth to the sacrifices endured in seclusion and to warrant the hope of a different life freed from heroin, that is, freed from a disordered existence, possibly jail and, with a much higher than average probability, a premature death. On the other hand, there is a distance between the everyday and institutional ways of talking, and between the corresponding situated identities. "Community talk," as we will call the register associated with therapy, assumes in this framework a ritual value: Repeating words that have been locally generated, interview after inter-

view, these individuals maintain their membership and subscribe to the ideology that promises them a new life. Elsbree (1982, pp. 9–10) touches on this capacity of rituals in a very straightforward passage:

> Hence, while we may resist the conscious intrusion of ritualism in mundane activities, still it is there, either in the original learning or in the teaching of another. Ritual certifies that something is being done correctly, appropriately, efficaciously. Thus it also certifies the doer, the actor, the agent […]. Ritual warrants our belief, and belief is usually concerned with questions of identity: my status (Ms. versus Mrs.), my rights, my gender, my destiny, whatever in a given culture is operative in defining what people have been, are now, can be. […] Ritual is the unification of the microcosmic bits of action into an efficacious pattern and a meaningful gestalt to live by.

Ways of doing things, of behaving in places, or of talking in given social gatherings, can be conceived as rituals that 'certify' the identity of a participant; at the same time, the social situation is lent reality by activities oriented to its existence. This is true, of course, for social reality as a whole and for our basic identity as "ordinary" people (Sacks, 1984), but the relevant actions need to be specified in every new situated identity one must enact, which means that rituals – actions pertinent to a context – must be learned by newcomers. In turn, this can imply, especially if the ritual is elaborated, a certain amount of imitation from established members and a period of transition in which a person can be plagued by awareness when performing his or her first attempts, while the other participants can judge the performance and withdraw ratification.

Group therapy is one of such contexts for the six people observed; it was an unfamiliar activity system in which the group members could observe the others in the process of being socialized. Sharing two different spheres of activity and a phase of socialization results in a double fragility of the therapeutic situated identities and demands the situation to be treated as "serious" by *all* participants. In what follows, we will analyze at length an episode in which a participant, to defend his position, challenges the other participants by defining their attitude during therapy as a "mask." The situated identity and self of those attacked are thus endangered with the accusation of being inauthentic by a member who claims access to their true attitudes; going through the episode, we will observe the effects of the challenge on the interaction and the strategies put forward to counter its potential damage. The discussion will highlight how particular versions of the self are dependent on co-participant ratification and how narrative trajectories of self hinge upon the acknowledgment of the self enacted in interaction.

## The problem of authenticity

Toward the end of the fourth recorded session (Excerpt 5 below), the therapist announced to one participant that he would have not be interviewed any further if he did not change his attitude. The contested attitude involves complaining about the restrictions of the community, longing for the pleasures of outside life, and seeing heroin as a casual mistake in what was otherwise a good and balanced life.

In reaction to this warning, the criticized person claims that such attitude is shared by other members of the group, with the only difference being that he is sincere while the others only *say* that they appreciate community life and that they are changing themselves.

**Excerpt 5**  *Masks and magic wands*

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Ther | You know what it means Nino | Sai che vuol dire questo Pino |
| 2. | Nino | °What does it mean.° | °Che vuol dire.° |
| 3. | Ther | It means that you hope | Significa che tu speri |
| 4. | | that even without doing anything for yourself, | che pur non facendo <u>nie</u>nte per <u>te</u> |
| 5. | | <u>you</u> personally, the others=the community= | <u>tu</u> in prima persona, gli <u>al</u>tri=la comunità= |
| 6. | | =Father Domenico[1], who knows what other wizard | =padre Domenico, chissà quale altro mago |
| 7. | | can do something for you. | possa fare qualcosa per te. |
| 8. | → | you wait for a change from the outside | ti aspetti un cambiamento dall'esterno |
| 9. | → | with the magic wand | con la bacchetta magica |
| 10. | Nino | No: maybe I am just waiting for time | No: forse aspetto che il tempo |
| 11. | | to change something | possa cambiare qualcosa |
| 12. | Ther | Nino I warn you if you go on like this (0.3) | Nino ti avverto se continui così, (0.3) |
| 13. | | you stay here by force you w- | tu ci stai a forza qua tu n- |
| 14. | → | you won't be addressed in the group any more | non sarai più interpellato nel gruppo. |
| 15. | | you are an absence=not a presence. | sei un'<u>as</u>senza=non una presenza. |
| 16. | | (1.2) | (1.2) |
| 17. | Nino | Well I didn't °I didn't understand really° | Cioè non: °non ho capito bene° |
| 18. | Ther | YOU DIDN'T UNDERS[TAND | NON HAI CAPITO [BE:NE, |

| 19. | Nino | [ADDRESSED | [INTERPELLAto |
|---|---|---|---|
| 20. | | in the group what does this mean | nel gruppo che vuol dire |
| 21. | Ther | <By me- in the Saturday meeting | <Da me- nell'incontro del <u>sa</u>bato |
| 22. | | I won't address you any more (.) | io non ti considererò più. (.) |
| 23. | → | because I work with people | perché io lavoro con le persone |
| 24. | → | who want- to change (.) | che vogliono- cambia:re. (.) |
| 25. | → | to <u>them</u> I devote time.= | a <u>lo</u>ro dedico il tempo.= |
| 26. | | =today I devoted you an hour, | =io oggi ho dedicato un'ora a te, |
| 27. | | just for you to say you don't want to do any-thing.> | solo per dire che tu non vuoi far niente.> |
| 28. | Nino | >°But I want to say that °< | >°Voglio dire che però°< |
| 29. | | I want to tell you something on this fact [uh? | te voglio dì 'na cosa su 'sto fatto=[eh? |
| 30. | Ther | [Uh: | [Eh: |
| 31. | Nino | I am sincere on what I feel= | Io so' since:ro, su quello che sento.= |
| 32. | | =but I se:e, that so:me, (.) | =però io no:to, che in alcu:ni, (.) |
| 33. | | who ma:ybe, (0.4) | che maga:ri, (0.4) |
| 34. | | would say the <u>same</u> things= | ti direbbero le <u>stes</u>se cose mie= |
| 35. | | =don't <u>say</u> them though. (0.5) | però non le <u>di:</u>cono. (0.5) |
| 36. | → | and they put a <u>mask</u> on uh= | e si mettono 'na <u>mas</u>chera eh= |
| 37. | Ther | =This is the problem of those who read | =Questo è il problema di chi legge |
| 38. | | in other people's brain. | nel cervello degli altri. |

The excerpt begins with the kind of interpretation we talked about earlier, where the therapist provides for the 'meaning' of what a participant said in terms of his position in the therapeutic path. The interpretation here is that Nino refuses to be the agent of his own change, but wishes for some external or "magic" agent to do it for him. This is equal to being "an absence and not a presence" and the absence is thus translated into a ban from the therapy circle. Nino asks for clarifications about the therapist's announcement, first in general terms (line 17), then – halting a repair that had started out as a challenge – by rephrasing the question and focusing on the action that will be withdrawn from him (lines 17–20). The explanation comes in a very authoritative fashion: Talking in a very slow and *staccato* mode, the therapist details what will happen and differentiates Nino from the others who 'want to

change' (line 21–27). It is such distinction between him and the others that triggers Nino's accusation: After a 'preliminary' (line 29), which anticipates the delicate nature of what is coming and projects that the useful piece of information will not be the first thing out (Schegloff, 1980), Nino claims that he is getting punished for being sincere and adds that there are others-and they might as well say the same things – who are safe because they wear masks.

Before going on to see the effects produced in the group by the accusation, let us consider what this scene can tell us about the relation between the self in the general narrative and the self in therapy interaction.

What is imputed to Nino is the lack of adherence to the therapeutic narrative valued in the community. The struggle is on the overarching representation of how the change has to take place and of what its nature will be; that is, what kind of characters, obstacles and ending will lend sense to the community time. The fact that we are dealing with narrative genres in opposition is also revealed in the image that Antonio brings up, that of the "magic wand." 'Magic' against 'work' is by no means a casual element in addicts' therapy. As shown by Merlino and Padiglione (1993), the idea of a 'program', which is shared by most therapeutic treatments of addiction, is devised specifically to replace with an orderly time the 'fatal' time in which addicts live, the wait for events that would, in their hopes, solve the problem in one shot and forever. For instance, a marriage or the birth of a child are imagined as imparting a decisive turn on the addict's life without too much effort on their behalf. The two narratives, as Merlino and Padiglione argue, involve differentiated time patterns, the first fragmented and slow, the second punctual and fast. It is clear then that weekly therapy sessions can only fit in with the 'work' narrative, whereas they cannot affect the other one. The deviant member wants "time" to be the agent of change and rejects the idea of having psychological problems, so both the main characters of the therapeutic plot – the willful self and the troublesome one – are absent. This definition has the most destructive effect in the present time of the sessions in that what should be taken for granted in therapy discourse is brought to the fore and problematized anew, parasiting and blocking the circulation of discourse[1]. The therapist's remark on the hour wasted on Nino (line 26–7) is a signal of this: By topicalizing what should be background assumptions, the interviews with Nino become a blob from which the therapist drags himself out with difficulty and never without tension.

In this group – but it could be the same for a group working at a project or an engaged couple – subscribing to a common narrative is a condition for the interaction to go smoothly, in that it represents the intersubjective background for discur-

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1.   So much so that very often the talk between Nino and the therapist goes off track, as visible in therapist's interventions like "I am the therapist and I am doing the questions".

sive moves like making the point of a story, proffering assessments, and creating metaphors, jokes, or innuendo. Like perhaps all ideologies, the local narrative and its moral orientation are taken on as the *given* of the discourse and this contributes to make the group a meaningful entity, defined by its particular kind of discourse presuppositions. Rejecting the common narrative, instead, had the result first of flooding the conversation with questions, explanation, and metacommunication, and then of leading rapidly to conflict and serious threat to the social bonds.

## Rituals and ritualism

On the particular occasion analyzed in the study, Nino not only opposes the therapist's version of the community narrative but also fights for his own version to take over. He does so by claiming that other members are *in fact* – although not admittedly – believers of the counter-narrative as well. The attack aims to the heart of the reality of the situation, and the therapist, with various conversational means, defends the therapy realm from the threat of deconstruction (see Appendix 1 for this section of the episode, lines 50–53 and 57–63). He defines the issue of sincerity as not relevant to Nino's case: Why would Nino care if all the others were lying? This is another piece of community ideology very often brought out, namely, that everyone must speak for himself and not generalize his problems. But, after the therapist has reiterated his intention to keep him out of therapy, Nino says that his only choice then would be to put on a mask as well. This time, he not only reports on the insincere attitude of the other participants, but parodies them, thus triggering their reactions:

**Excerpt 6** *On masks again* [asterisks frame direct reported speech]

| 77 | Ther | Uh. I said that with you, (0.5) | He. io ho detto che con te, (0.5) |
|----|------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 78 | | if you don't take on an attitude= | se non ti metti in un atteggiamento= |
| 79 | | =if you don't come in the community:, | =se non entri in comunità:, |
| 80 | Nino | Then I could just take a mask too, | Allora pur io mò me pigliavo 'na ma:schera, |
| 81 | | (0.2) | (0.2) |
| 82 | → | say *Antò I am working | dico *Antò sto lavora:ndo, |
| 83 | → | I'm doing a goo:d program inside myself | mi sto facendo un bel progra:mma dentro di me |
| 84 | → | I'm changing (re[ally)* | mi sto cambiando (vera[mente)* |
| 85 | Luca | [But where did you | [Ma do l'hai |
| | → | | |

| 86 | → | see'em =in here? | visti=dentro cca? |
|---|---|---|---|
| 87 | → | these ma- who put masks on. | 'ste mas- chi se mette le maschere. |
| 88 | Nino | (°          °) [masks ↑wait. | (°          °) [maschere: ↑aspetta. |
| 89 | Luca |                   [°in this group here.° |                   [°dentro a sto gruppo cca° |
| 90 | Nino | ( ) | (          ) |
| 91 | Luca | No no I [got- | No no io [ti aggio ca- |
| 92 | Nino |    [May I answer Luca may I |    [Posso rispondere a Luca posso |
| 93 | | answer=[may I answer you | rispondere=[ti posso rispondere |
| 94 | Luca |    [I got it Nino I got it |    [Ti ho capi:to Nino ti ho capito |
| 95 | Nino | But not maybe in offensive terms | Ma non nel termine- magari offensivo |
| 96 | | [or (in terms) | [oppure (in termini) |
| 97 | Fran. | [But have you heard him? | [Ma tu l'hai sentu:to: a iss'. |
| 98 | Luca | [NO NO:: I got what you said | [NO NO: io ti ho capi:to quello che hai detto |
| 99 | Nino | I am saying there are people who | Sto dicendo ce sta gente che magari |
| 100 | | maybe are not working= | non sta lavorando= |
| 101 | Luca | =[DO NOT EXPOSE THEIR PROBLEMS | =[NON ESPONE I SUOI PROBLEMI: |
| 102 | |              as they really a:re you mean. |              come sta:nno dici tu. |
| 103 | Nino | =[ARE NOT WORKING DEEP DOWN. | =[NON STA LAVORANDO DENTRO. |
| 104 | | >DEEP=DEEP=DOWN.< | >DENTRO=DENTRO=DENTRO<. |

Nino's talk about the mask proves indeed "delicate," especially when he demonstrates how easy it is to wear the mask by acting out the inauthentic script in the first person. The parody strikes home and another participant challenges Nino to go through with his accusation. Interestingly, Luca does not yet ask about 'who' they are, but 'where' Nino has seen the masked people. Despite the mitigation, Luca's challenge is heard clearly so that Nino has to disclaim the implication that the description was intended in "offensive terms." Another person joins Luca with an exclamation of disbelief: "Have you heard him" (line 97). This exchange, all in overlap, sees Nino trying to reformulate the meaning of his claim and Luca assuring him that he has understood correctly. Emphasis increases both in loudness and expressive means. With the repetition of the word "*dentro*" ("inside" or "deep down"), he attempts to justify "people who are not working": He locates the falsity so deep that his mates could be unaware of it and therefore innocent.

In their analysis of therapeutic discourse, Labov and Fanshel (1977) argue that propositions that are very rare in ordinary conversation can be found in therapy

talk. To illustrate the point, they say that in ordinary conversation people can rarely be heard saying, "I am better than you," – although this could be hinted at in various ways – whereas therapists can make explicit similar points when giving interpretations. The mask episode looks precisely to be one of these instances, at the very extreme of the range of "sayable" propositions, but coming from a patient. The accusation about the participants wearing masks is marginal in another sense, too: It is uttered by a person who has just been situated at the boundary of the social group, and who was warned that he has very few chances to talk again. It is from this liminal space and from such an outcast identity that the whole social event gets threatened in its foundations. Nino has been singled out for his different attitude, and he tries to invert the meaning of the situation attributing only to himself the virtue of sincerity. He also claims to have better knowledge than the therapist on the status of the others' assertions (cf. excerpt 5, line 29 "I want to tell *you* something on this fact"). This part is particularly serious in that Nino *has,* in fact, more contacts with the others by living with them, whereas the therapist sees the group only a couple of hours per week. The way Nino talks about his mates could lead one to think that he has heard or seen things counting as evidence in support of the mask hypothesis (later in the exchange, one of the members will address this implication by saying that a word or two of complaint can slip out without it meaning that they share Nino's views). The resulting image of the therapist is more or less that of one who can be easily fooled by some utterly conventional expressions of faith.

Let us stop to consider the turn in which Nino drives his attack more directly. Cutting in the therapist's turn that is recycling the intention not to talk to him anymore, he says that he could put the mask on too, and in so doing he passes his cupped hand top down in front of his face (see Figure 1); as soon as his face is visible again, he engages in his short performance. This is done in a serious and warm voice, with the emphasis on "working" and "good" (or, literally, "beautiful"):

**Excerpt 6a**

| 82 | Nino | say *Antò I am working | dico *Antò sto lavora:ndo, (.) |
|----|------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 83 |      | I'm doing a goo:d program inside myself | mi sto facendo un <u>be</u>:l programma dentro di me |
| 84 |      | I'm changing (re[ally]* | mi sto cambiando (vera[mente]* |

**Figure 1.**  *"then I could just take a mask too"*
(faces have been made illegible for privacy reasons)

Nino is picking on something here; specifically, he has identified a particular type of utterances in therapy, those utterances that, rather than contributing substantial information, communicate the speakers' engagement in the therapeutic enterprise. Often, utterances of this kind appear in this setting within the "abstract" or "evaluation section" (Labov & Waletzky, 1967) of stories meant to illustrate speakers' psychological change. As such, while announcing or summarizing the point of the story, ritual utterances can be also conceived as filtering or orienting devices to select the episodes to bring into therapy. On some of these occasions, when the therapist wants to shake the optimism of a participant, he can act not very differently from Nino and probe the interlocutor to report on negative things as well. For instance, in a former session, Andrea had provided a long positive account about his late advancements, and such account was built out of material similar to that appearing in Nino's parody:

**Excerpt 7**  *Community talk*

| 1 | Andrea | Already these days | Già in questi gi<u>o</u>rni |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | | I am doing a program=y'know, | mi sto facendo un progra:mma=capì, |
| 3 | | to work one year= | di lavorare un a:nno= |
| 4 | | = because let's say I have understood that: | =perchè diciamo ho capito che:: |
| 5 | | (1.0) | (1.0) |
| 6 | | I mean that you don't come to nothing | cioè che non risolvi niente |
| 7 | | in three four months | in tre quattro mesi. |

Andrea's is "community talk": He refers to his decision as "doing a program" and to staying in the community one year as "working one year;" as in Nino's imitation, this "working" does not refer to a material activity but to the "doing" of the community member. The therapist does not comment in appreciation of Andrea's achievement, but instead asks for a different type of contents:

**Excerpt 8**  *Challenging the positive account*

| 1 | Ther. | Come on Andrea | Dai Andrea |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | | you are telling just positive things | stai a dì tutte cose bu:one |
| 3 | | all right- anyway, | vabbè- però, |
| 4 | | let's see the problems. What are your problems? | vediamo i problemi. che problemi hai? |
| 5 | Andrea | What are you- | Che probl- |
| 6 | | how d'you mean what are your problems? | in che senso che problemi ho? |
| 7 | Ther. | Eh you are in heaven | Eh stai in paradiso |
| 8 | | everything is in a positive phase | sta tutto in una fase positiva |
| 9 | Andrea | No no no wait. these: | No no no aspè. le fase: |
| 10 | | there are negative things. | le cose negative ci stanno. |

With his "come on," "all right," and "you're in heaven," the therapist expresses a dismissive attitude and a light mockery toward Andrea's account. With the question about the "problems," he also communicates to him that he is aware of the many difficulties of community life. Exchanges like this shed new light on Nino's action: When casting doubts on the authenticity of his mates' positive reports, he makes a move belonging to the discursive role of the therapist, claiming rights to a

heightened status and trying to achieve credibility by following in the therapist's own footsteps. The way the accusation was accomplished was thus carefully built, and was not just the casual use of a commonplace metaphor for lying, that of the mask. Nino's performance is picturing the common expressions of the group members as empty formulae: By *representing* them, he is construing these rituals, namely, actions meaningfully connected to the context, as *ritualistic*. Though claiming sight on one's innermost states, it is implicated that such actions do not require anything but knowledge of the local lore plus maybe some acting ability.

### Counterstrategies

Summarizing, we have seen that Nino's claims pointed out to extra-therapy evidence making him a better judge than the therapist, gave a demonstration of the scripted nature of positive accounts and, in so doing, paralleled a recurrent therapeutic intervention. While pursuing a superior status for himself, Nino tried to diminish the status of his mates and to endanger the trust between therapist and group members.

The perception of danger by both therapist and patients is revealed by their verbal behavior, especially in terms of participation structure. First, Nino's turns at talk get repeatedly and extensively overlapped, which can be seen in lines 13 to 28 of excerpt 5, and in the fragment that came before where the therapist covers his first attempt at mocking the participants by repeating in a very loud volume the same challenge[2]: "and what's your problem, and what's your problem?" (Appendix 1). He is thus affirming that he is not being a recipient of the act of spying on the mates and simultaneously operating at erasing it, by making the words inaudible.

Another consequence at the level of participation structure is that another member of the group directly addresses Nino without asking for the therapist's permission. Exchanges between group members are allowed and sometimes encouraged, but either the therapist elicits such interventions or a member asks the therapist permission to talk; if a member wants to address a question or remark directly, he will start with some introductory formula like "may I tell you something." Other members' talk in the interview with the therapist is thus a marked behavior. Here, on the contrary, Luca addresses Nino directly and without an introduction; this is evidence that Nino's act has changed at least temporarily the rights and duties of participation.

Claims to authenticity, or certainty, over another participant in a dispute are described by Ochs and Capps (1997, p. 86) as "building blocks of identity" and

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**2.** Labov and Fanshel (1977) note that challenges are aggravated when repeated in identical form.

"attempt[s by individuals] to establish themselves as authorities and [...] the addressee as liar or culprit." By overlapping Nino's talk and directly opposing his statements, the whole group is denying him authority and sheltering the relative identities from the danger in which he has tried to put them. In doing so, however, the normal functioning of the therapy encounter is altered, so that Nino's threat to the whole event structure achieves at least partially his goal.[3]

In the omitted lines, Nino, cornered and pushed to pronounce the names of those he thinks wear masks, chooses instead to point to two persons whom he excludes from the accusation, Andrea and Francesco. The therapist does not let him to pursue this strategy and insists for the names to be spoken out loud. Here's when the remaining persons, obviously the liars, polemically self-denounce:

**Excerpt 9** *Feigned confessions*

| 152 | Ther. | WHO ARE THEY I STILL DON'T GET WHO THEY ARE= | CHI SO' ANCORA NON HO CAPITO CHI SO'= |
|---|---|---|---|
| 153 | | =[ANDREA AND FRANCESCO            OR ALL THE OTHERS? | =[ANDREA E FRANCESCO            O TUTTI GLI ALTRI? |
| 154 | Dan. | =[((*raises his hand, the index finger up*)) | =[((*alza la mano con l'indice verso l'alto*)) |
| 155 | | °It's me° | °So io° |
| 156 | Mauro | [((*raises his hand*)) | [((*alza la mano*)) |
| 157 | Nino | [Francesco is excluded because- | [Francesco lo escludo pecchè- |
| 158 | | ((*turning back and seeing their lifted arms*)) | ((*si gira e nota le braccia alzate*)) |
| 159 | Luca | And me too. | E so' pure io. |
| 160 | Nino | Daniele Luca e: Bannetta ((*the 3rd is Mauro s' surname*)) | Daniele Luca e: Bannetta. ((*cognome di Mauro*)) |
| 161 | | (0.5) | (0.5) |
| 162 | | [then | [poi |
| 163 | Ther. | [You mean they say many nice things | [Cioè dicono tante belle cose |
| 164 | | but are not working on themselves. | ma non stanno lavorando su di loro. |
| 165 | | (1.0) | (1.0) |

At this point the alignment against Nino is solid, and it includes everybody, even young Mauro who is usually ready to laugh in appreciation at Nino's *boutades* (see

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3.    This is I think what led the therapist to gain control of the interaction, as he does in joining Luca's inquiry and extending his turn over his (see Appendix 2, lines 109-114).

for example Appendix 1, line 42). The alignment was progressively built by repeated exchanges of glances, so that when Daniele raises his hand in the feigned confession of being a liar, the others are ready to join in.

They choose a way of expressing their opposition that exploits the theatrical metaphor already set up. In a new performing piece, both verbal and non-verbal, they declare "it's me," pretending to have been "unmasked." This act forces another turn on the situation: By making a scene out of the accusation that had been brought forth as a piece of theatre, the group ironically distances from it and displays group solidarity against the accuser.

In the next weeks, Nino would not actually be interviewed, though he would be allowed to stay in the session. After a few more weeks, anyhow, he would be compelled to leave the community, since his presence was seen by the coordinators as too disturbing for the others.

We have followed the development of the episode in order to observe what kind of solutions are possible after one's identity as speaker has been defined as lacking authenticity. In logical terms, like in the famous Cretan paradox – in which the sentence "All Cretans are liars" was pronounced by a Cretan person – whatever the speaker says after such accusation has no value, since it can be just another lie. Once received, the definition cannot then be rejected in general terms, by saying, "You are not right," or in personal terms, by saying, "This is not my case." The strategy that the participants have devised, in the case examined here, it is to heighten their responsibility as speakers, first by asking for the names to be uttered and then mocking a confession, thus acting in the fictitious world established by the accusation. By willingly moving into a reality in which they would be liars, and installing it within the reality of the therapy, they deny any interest in hiding their true attitude, which had been the basis for the whole mask business. They are also making a statement of loyalty to the therapist: He is the addressee of their collective hand raising, as it is done after his question (lines 152–3) and out of Nino's sight (see Figure 2). The gesture, by preceding Nino's answer with the names of the guilty ones, renders it useless and restates a direct connection between the group and the therapist, to whom – it is metaphorically shown – they can even confess nonexistent sins.

**Figure 2.** *"it's me"*

## Narrative, rituals, and the self

From the position gained after the analysis of the episode we can get back to the issue of narrative and identity.

One way therapeutic action is carried through is the presentation of a narrative template valid for everyone, spanning for months or years of life; single individuals can fit their personal story and daily experience into the narrative in (at least) two ways. First, by molding ordinary events into stories that are told to the therapist and by extracting from them a meaning that locate the actors in some point of that overarching storyline: Once this meaning is established, therapy can infiltrate ordinary life because the individuals are aware of the possible therapeutic reading of whatever they are doing.

A second way by which individuals are linked with the therapeutic narrative concerns more closely the form, rather than the content, of their behavior during therapy time. It implies talking community talk, adopting a lexicon and a style that are signs of membership, and rejecting the words and style that belong to former periods or to informal moments of the extra-therapeutic present. Such ritual actions reflexively constitute a self that can plausibly star in the happy ending of the

therapeutic narrative; without this weekly performance, which allows members to rehearse as different discourse characters (Fasulo, 1997), the identity acting in the therapeutic narrative would remain detached and unreal, out of reach.

The tradition of dialogic cure works by defining what parts of self are the object of concern and fixing objectives that have moral implications (Hodges, 2002). The therapy builds a *persona* and gives it a language that is appropriate; *persona*, person, as the reader knows, derives from an ancient word for "mask." As Goffman has widely illustrated and the present example confirmed, making one's self public implies the risk of disconfirmation, but there are no alternative roads passing by the social arena. Definitions and counter-definitions must fight in the open, armed with expressive means from available repertoires or emergent ones in interaction. In phases when the self gets redefined, the person needs to be sheltered from skeptical views; uncertain first steps of the new identity must not be laughed at. In his aggressive act against the institutional identities of participants and the institution as a whole, Nino acted in such a way as to expose the ritual and to ridicule it. He had in fact spoken from another "field of discourse" (Labov & Fanshel, 1977), hoping that being the witness of the ordinary self of members he could destroy the reality of therapy. This was perceived as a serious attack to the therapeutic reality, as revealed by the set of strategies put forward to resist it, ranging from direct challenge to the stealing of expressive means from the antagonist to put them at one's own service. The other members of the community denied any discontinuity between their ordinary self and the self in therapy, defying Nino's effort to depict the two as opposed and the therapy as a comedy.

This episode in the life of a group demonstrates that the self is not a property of individuals, nor it is prior to action, but it lives in enacted versions and in registers of discourse. The authentic self does not lie underneath talk; rather, it is acknowledged in talk afterwards and backwards, when nothing goes wrong.

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## Appendix 1

The *mask* episode, section between excerpts 5 and 6

| 37 | Ther | =This is the problem of who reads | =Questo è il problema di chi legge |
|----|------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 38 | | in other people['s brain | nel cerve[llo degli altri |
| 39 | Nino | [They put a mask on | [Si mettono la maschera |
| 40 | | while I am telling you that here | io invece te lo dico che a me 'cca |
| 41 | | I got fed up | me s'aggio abbuffato le palle |
| 42 | Mauro | Hehehehe – ((*at the vulgar expression*)) | Hehehehe |
| 44 | Nino | There are people that maybe | Ci sta gente che >magari |
| 45 | | are fed up but don't say it | se l'è abbuffate< però non lo di:ce |
| 46 | | they say [that they want to work | =dice[che vuò lavora:re, |
| 47 | Ther. | [And what's the problem for you? | [>E ma qual'è il problema per te?< |
| 48 | Nino | TH[EY WANT TO DO THIS, | C[HE VUÒ FA:RE, |
| 49 | Ther | [AND WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? | [E TU CHE PROBLEMA HAI? |
| 50 | Nino | [I AM WORKING ↑BUT WHAT DO Y- | [STONGO   LAVORANDO   ↑MA QUANNO MA- |
| 51 | Ther. | [AND WHAT'S- | [E QUAL È- |
| 52 | Nino | [THIS'S BULLSHIT | [SO' TU:TTE STRONZA:TE |
| 53 | Ther | [AND   WHAT'S   THE   PROBLEM   FOR YOU? | [E QUAL È IL PROBLEMA PER TE? |
| 54 | | but what's the problem for you? | ma qual è il problema per te? |
| 55 | Nino | Because I am sincere. | Perchè io so' sincero. |
| | | you don't (want ) but I am sincere | tu non la (vuoi ) ma io so' sincero |
| 56 | | I don't like it here | io 'cca ce sto male |
| 57 | Ther | What do you care if the others | Che te ne frega se gli altri |
| 58 | | are doing- are- are lying to me | ti stanno- mi- mi mentono |
| 59 | | are telling lies | dicono buci:e= |
| 60 | | invent a lot of nice discourses | si inventano un sacco di bei discorsi |
| 61 | | to pretend they are working | per far finta che stanno a lavorare |
| 62 | | when it's not true? | e poi non è vero? |

| 63 | | what's to do with you? | a te che interessa? |
|----|------|------|------|
| 64 | Nino | Not to work practic- [practically | Non a lavorare materi-[materialmente |
| 65 | Ther |              [I know=I know=I know. |         [Ho capito=ho capito=ho capito. |
| 66 | Nino | Because here we all work | Perché qua lavoriamo tutti quanti |
| 67 | | it's not- I mean inside them | non è- cioè dentro di lo:ro |
| 68 | | OTHER <u>PEO</u>PLE TOO STAY HERE TO: | [ANCHE ALTRA <u>GEN</u>TE STA 'CCA a: |
| 69 | Ther | [WHAT DO YOU CARE | [E A TE CHE TE NE FREGA |
| 70 | Nino | ↓Waiting for time to pass | ↓Aspettando il tempo. |
| 71 | Ther | And what do you ca[re | E che te ne fre[ga |
| 72 | Nino |         [That maybe time can change them |         [Che magari u tempo po' cambia essi. |
| 73 | | and not that they [change themselves | no che essi se [cambiano loro stessi. |
| 74 | Ther |         [What do you care |         [Che te ne frega. |
| 75 | Nino | How do you mean what I- | Come che me- |
| 76 | | °I told you I it is for me° | E °io t'ho detto come sto io.° |
| 77 | Ther | Uh I said that with you, (0.5) | He°. io ho detto che con te, (0.5) |

*continues in extract 6*

## Appendix 2

The *mask* episode, section between excerpts 6 and 9

| 103 | Nino | =[ARE NOT WORKING DEEP DOWN | [NON STA LAVORANDO DENTRO. |
|-----|------|-----|-----|
| 104 | | DEEP=DEEP=DOWN. | DENTRO=DENTRO=DENTRO. |
| 105 | | he does things: >practically< ((*softened voice*)) | se dà da fa': >praticamente< ((*con voce addolcita* )) |
| 106 | | but deep down he's not working. | però dentro=dentro non sta lavora:ndo. |
| 107 | | (0.2) | (0.2) |
| 108 | | and he doesn't say that maybe y'know? | e non lo di:ce magari capito? |
| 109 | Luca | [BUT] | [MA |
| 110 | Ther | [Shall] we (point'em out?) | [Lo] vogliamo (indicare)? |
| 111 | Luca | ↑Who are those [who:: are | ↑C̲h̲:i so chisti 'cca [che:: so' |
| 112 | Ther |                   [Yeah |                   [Ecco |
| 113 | | shall we say who are they | lo vogliamo dire chi so' |
| 114 | | so maybe you can help'em | così forse li possiamo aiutare |
| 115 | | ((*probably Nino makes a 'no' gesture*)) | ((*probabile gesto di diniego da parte di Nino*)) |
| 116 | Luca | Why not why can't you say that? | Come no pecchè non lo puoi dì |
| 117 | Nino | [°Because:°] | [°Ma perché:°] |
| 118 | Luca | [Here::] we are talking about everything. | [Acca'::] stamo a parlà di tutto. |
| 119 | | let's talk [about that=no? | parla[mone=no?. |
| 120 | Nino |         [(      ) Andrea- |       [(    ) Andrea- |
| 121 | | well I can tell you this | ecco ti posso di questo qua |
| 122 | | Andrea really opens up his soul | che Andrea si sfoga proprio coll'anima |
| 123 | | when he says- something. | quando dice- 'na cosa. |
| 124 | | I can tell you this | ti posso dire questo qua. |
| 125 | | that Andrea really opens up- I mean | che Andrea si sfoga proprio,- cioè |
| 126 | | really his sou=maybe the others, | proprio: coll'an=magari gli altri, |
| 127 | | (0.2) | (0.2) |
| 128 | | [not because they are: | [ma no perchè sono: |

| 129 | Ther | [But you- | [Ma tu- |
|-----|------|-----------|---------|
| 130 | r | you have to tell me who doesn't work | tu m'hai da dice chi non lavora |
| 131 | | not who works= | no chi lavora= |
| 132 | | =Andrea I can see him too | =Andrea lo riesco a vedè pure io |
| 133 | | [if there's some- | [se c'è qualcu- |
| 134 | Nino | [EXCEPT ANDREA PERHAPS- | [FUORI ANDREA FORSE- |
| 135 | | except=except Andrea | fuori=fuori Andrea, |
| 136 | | and Scalpellini who is very:: uh | e Scalmellini che è molto:: eh |
| 137 | | DISPERSI:VE, | DISPERSI:VO, |
| 138 | | ↓everybody. | ↓tutti quanti. |
| 139 | Ther | Everybody <u>li</u>es. | Tutti quanti <u>mentono</u>. |
| 140 | Nino | NO=li:es. [NO LIES. no=li- they don't | NO=me:[ntono. NO=MENTONO. no=ment- non s- |
| 141 | Ther | [They put a mask on. | [Si mettono la maschera. |
| 142 | Dan. | ((*smiles, then lifts his eyebrows in a comment to the heavy accusation*)) | ((*sorride, poi alza le sopracciglia a commento de la gravità dell'affermazione*)) |
| 143 | Nino | Wait maybe I wasn't clear. | Aspè forse mi so' spiegato male. |
| 144 | | they don't realize | <u>non</u> si rendono conto |
| 145 | | to express really: (0.2) | di esprimere proprio: (0.2) |
| 146 | | as I said.=I said | come ho detto io.=dico |
| 147 | | *look here I do things, I work | *guarda 'i 'cca me do' da fa', lavoro |
| 148 | | [practically too but I don't work | [pure praticamente però non lavoro |
| 149 | | really inside me truly ((*doing*)) | proprio dentro de me veramente ((*facendo*)) |
| 150 | | an examination inside me*] | 'N ESAME DENTRO DI ME*] |
| 151 | | [((*at Nino's back, while he's talking, Dan. looks at Mauro, lifts eyebrows, then they smile to each other; M lifts his eyebrows in the same way, then D smiles and passes the hand on his face as to show disagreement and resignation at Nino's insistence*))] | [((*dietro le spalle di Nino che parla, D guarda M e alza le sopracciglia, si sorridono, M alza le sopracciglia nello stesso modo; poi D sorride e scuote la testa, si passa la mano sul viso mostrando sia disaccordo che rassegnazione con ciò che Nino insiste a dire*))] |

*Continues in extract 9*

# Index

In the series *Studies in Narrative* the following titles have been published thus far or are scheduled for publication: