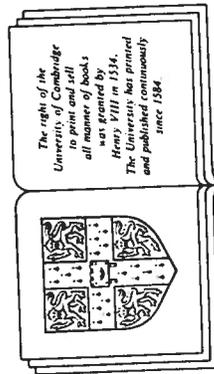


Conflict talk

Sociolinguistic investigations of arguments in conversations

Edited by
ALLEN D. GRIMSHAW
Indiana University

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- 3 Brown and Levinson (1978: 134-5) define negative politeness as "redressive action addressed to the addressee's negative face: his want to have his freedom of action unhindered. It performs the function of minimizing the particular imposition that the face threatening act unavoidably effects." Forms of "negative politeness" also serve a social distancing function.
- 4 For a detailed analysis of Hart's use of indirection see O'Donnell (1983), pp. 152-204.
- 5 For a discussion of the role of Black English Vernacular (BEV) in constructing relations of power and solidarity see O'Donnell (1983), pp. 97-122; p. 248.
- 6 An analysis of labor/capital relations and discourse across time would allow me to account for the extent to which contemporary industrial relations talk is a product of as well as a departure from that of earlier historical epochs.

11 The management of a co-operative self during argument: the role of opinions and stories

DEBORAH SCHIFFRIN

1. Co-operation and conflict

Everyday forms of talk are guided by norms of co-operation and competition. Even argument, a form of talk which might seem to be the paradigm example of conflict talk, can be a co-operative way of speaking as well as (or instead of) a competitive way of speaking. In this chapter, I describe how two speech activities - giving an opinion and telling a story - help individuals to co-operatively manage themselves during conflict talk. More specifically, I suggest that opinions and stories adjust the participation framework of talk, and that these adjustments allow individuals to negotiate two of the idealized standards (truth and sincerity) underlying argument.

I begin by clarifying what I mean by participation framework, and how truth and sincerity are relevant to argument. I then turn to my main discussion of opinions and stories. After highlighting those features of opinions and stories which make them useful in the management of conflict, I analyze each speech activity within an argument to suggest its role during conflict talk. The arguments on which I focus are about intermarriage, a topic of controversy in the lower-middle-class Jewish community in Philadelphia in which I did sociolinguistic fieldwork.¹

1.1 Participation frameworks

A participation framework is comprised of a set of positions which individuals within perceptual range of an utterance may take in relation to what is said.² Although both producers and recipients of talk can occupy such positions, I will focus here mostly on the participation statuses occupied by those at the production end of talk: animator, author, figure, and principal. Although these positions can be filled by different people (Goffman, 1974, 1981b), I am interested here only in how a single individual can alternate among these positions during the course of his or her own talk.

An animator is that aspect of self involved in the actual physical production of talk: "the talking machine, a body engaged in acoustic activity ... an individual active in the role of utterance production" (Goffman, 1981c: 144). Self repairs, for example, show the individual as animator for they display him/her as monitoring and adjusting the production of sounds and their intended meanings. An author is that aspect of self responsible for the content of talk, "someone who has selected the sentiments that are being expressed" (Goffman, 1981c: 144). For example, when a speaker quotes his/her own prior words, he/she is at once the animator and the author of that quote; but when a speaker quotes another's prior words, he/she is assigning the authorial role to the original source of those words. A figure is that aspect of self displayed through talk; in a story for example, a speaker presents a particular image of him/herself through the construction and rendition of events in the story. A principal is "someone whose position is established by the words that are spoken, someone whose beliefs have been told, someone who is committed to what the words say" (Goffman, 1981c: 144). Our tacit understandings of talk include the assumptions that what is being said is the speaker's position, that the speaker is committed to his words, and that the speaker does believe in what is being said — such that evidence to the contrary is expected to be explicitly marked (e.g., by explicitly framing a statement as a joke). In short, the animator produces talk, the author creates talk, the figure is portrayed through talk, and the principal is responsible for talk.

Each position within a participation framework is associated with codified and normatively specified conduct (Goffman, 1981a: 3). In other words, we expect animators, figures, authors, and principals to conduct themselves in routine ways, and we can recognize these aspects of the self because of our normative expectations about the conduct appropriate for each position.

Norms of conduct, however, are not the only link between participation frameworks and social interaction. The related concepts of **footing** (Goffman, 1981c) and **frame** (Goffman, 1974) provide two additional links. Footing concerns "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" (Goffman, 1981c: 128); frames are the organizational and interactional principles by which situations are defined and sustained as experiences (Goffman, 1974). Frames and footings are closely related, since one source of the definition of a situation (the frame) is the sort of alignments taken up by participation (the footing): we experience a situation as a "friendly chat" or a "hostile discussion", for example, because of the different stances which individual take with regard to one another and to what is being said. Similarly, changes in footings are related to shifts in frame... a change in participant alignment may motivate a change in the interactional definition of the situation as an experience, or *vice versa*. And, finally, footing and frames are related to participation frameworks, because

alterations in such frameworks result from changes in our alignments and in our definitions of situations.

In sum, a participation framework is the set of positions which individuals take in relation to an utterance. Such a framework is related to participant footings and experiential frames.³

1.2 Truth and sincerity

Truth and sincerity have a role in argument which is similar to their more general role in co-operative conversation. The philosopher Grice (1975) has observed that individuals bring to conversation assumptions about each others' rationality and co-operative nature.⁴ These assumptions are differentiated into four specific maxims which address the truth (maxim of quality), informativeness (maxim of quantity), relevance (maxim of relevance), and orderliness (maxim of manner) of all conversational contributions. Together the maxims form a "co-operative principle" which allows interactants to both convey and infer each others' intended communicative meanings — especially when such meanings go beyond the semantic content of what is actually said. A key part of Grice's theory is that individuals routinely violate the specific maxims. Despite such violations, however, individuals still assume each others' co-operative intent, and it is this assumption that leads them to search for some other understanding of what has been said. Because actual behavior is expected to differ from the guidelines of the specific maxims, then, the maxims are idealized norms whose routine violations are strategies which allow people to mean more than they say.

Grice's (1975) maxim of quality is the maxim most relevant for argument:

Try to make your contribution one that is true, specifically:
do not say what you believe to be false
do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

This maxim suggests that speakers assume each other not only to be presenting utterances in whose truth they believe, but utterances in whose truth they have reason to believe, i.e. utterances about which they are sincere. Because it is the truth of a proposition, and the sincerity of a speaker, which are adjusted by opinions and stories, it is the maxim of quality which is most relevant to my analysis.

2. Speech activities in argument

Let us turn now to opinions and stories. In section 2.1, I discuss how the general characteristics of opinions contribute to their function in argument, paying special attention to the way they adjust the participation framework

of talk. An example of an opinion during an argument illustrates. Section 2.2 follows the same format for stories.

2.1 Opinions

Consider, first, that it is not always possible to find linguistic features which mark a declarative statement as the presentation of an opinion. The most straightforward linguistic cue is metalinguistic (e.g., prefacing a statement with *my opinion is*), or the use of verbs (e.g., *I think, it seems*) which show that the speaker cannot claim with absolute confidence the factuality of what is about to be said. Other opinions are marked internally by modals conveying degrees of likelihood that a particular situation holds, e.g., both *could* and *should* can mark opinions, since the former can convey the speaker's feeling of uncertainty and the latter the speaker's feeling of certainty. Except for the metalinguistic *my opinion is*, however, the linguistic devices just identified are not used solely in the statement of opinions. *I think*, for example, has not only the meaning suggested above, but also its more literal meaning as a verb of cognition; *should* can convey a meaning of obligation rather than certainty (compare *Customers should pay by cash to it should rain tomorrow – just look at that sky!*). In short, there is not always an absolute linguistic criterion by which to differentiate opinions from other statements.⁵

The lack of a linguistic definition for opinions means that we need to look elsewhere for a way to define this speech activity.⁶ I will define an opinion as an individual's internal, evaluative position about a circumstance. There are three critical features in this definition. First, opinions are not available for observation. This means that "it is not clear what kind of substantiation would be sufficient to ground an opinion in an external reality" (Goffman, 1974: 503), i.e. opinions are not available for external verification. Second, opinions are individual, subjective positions rather than objective statements of fact.⁷ Third, although opinions are internal cognitive states at one level of analysis, they are also representations of an external situation – the circumstances to which the opinion is addressed. This means that at one level of analysis, opinions depict an internal state, but, at another level of analysis, opinions also depict an external state.

These features suggest that, when presented in a conversation, opinions remain in the special informational preserve of the speaker which "can be as little established as disconfirmed" (Goffman, 1974: 503.) They also suggest that the very existence of an opinion implies general uncertainty over the circumstances addressed by the opinion. This explains, for example, why we are more likely to understand *That flower is pretty* as an opinion than *That flower is red*: the state of "beauty" has a lower degree of certainty – because it is less open to objective verification – than the state of "redness."⁸

Let us consider, now, how opinions adjust the participation framework of

talk. Recall that when individuals make statements about an external world, they are usually seen as displaying a principal: "someone whose position is established by the words that are spoken, someone whose beliefs have been told, someone who is committed to what the words say" (Goffman, 1981c: 144). As I suggested above, there seems to exist a set of tacit understandings that what is being said is the speaker's position, and that the speaker is committed to his words, and does believe in what is being said. What opinions do is **modify that tacit understanding about speaker commitment to words**.

Suppose someone prefaces a statement by saying *my opinion is*, or ends a statement by saying *That's my opinion*. There are two ways of interpreting such brackets. First, they may be interpreted as **decreasing the speaker's commitment to a statement**, as if the speaker had said *That's my opinion; I don't know for sure*. Alternatively, they may be interpreted as **increasing the speaker's commitment to a statement**, as if the speaker had said *That's my opinion; I don't care what anybody else thinks*. These two interpretations are radically different subjective alignments toward what is being talked about: the former **mitigates the speaker's commitment** and the latter **intensifies the speaker's commitment**. But there is also an underlying similarity: changing one's commitment in either a mitigating or an intensifying direction is a modification of the speaker's display of a **principal** – of that aspect of self through which commitment is assumed to be expressed. Another way of saying this is that opinions propose a new subjective alignment to a proposition, and thus, a modification in footing.

The footing change displayed by an opinion involves not only the principal, but also that aspect of self referred to as the author, "someone who has selected the sentiments that are being expressed" (Goffman, 1981c: 144), i.e., someone who is responsible for the factual content of talk. So, when opinions mitigate a speaker's commitment to a position, it is the principal who displays the reduced commitment to the facts put forth by the author; similarly, when opinions intensify a speaker's commitment to a position, it is the principal who displays the extra commitment to the facts put forth by the author. In both cases, then, it is as if the principal is saying: "I am committed to the facts put forth by the author in a way which you would not otherwise expect."

It is because opinions shift a speaker's participation status that they can be used to negotiate truth and sincerity in argument. More specifically, opinions allow speakers to shield themselves from the truthfulness of the facts by focusing on their own stance toward what is being said. Another way of saying this is that opinions free the speaker (as author) from a claim to truth, by emphasizing the speaker's claim (as principal) to sincerity.

The argument in example 1 highlights some of these features of opinions (for transcription conventions, see appendix, p.257). Three people are involved in the argument. Henry and Zaida are a lower-middle-class, Jewish

couple in their mid sixties; they have two sons (both married) and an unmarried teenage daughter. The third person is Irene – Henry and Zelda's neighbour, in her mid thirties, also lower-middle-class and Jewish; she has four children, ranging in age from five to sixteen.⁹ Prior to example 1, Henry and Irene had been arguing about intermarriage between Jews and Gentiles. Henry does not approve of intermarriage and he has just told several stories about how he was able to influence his sons' choices of Jewish wives, and how his mother was able to prevent her son (Henry's older brother) from dating a Gentile woman many years ago. Irene had said earlier that although she doesn't like intermarriage, she is willing to accept it in her own family, not only because she thinks that religious differences are disappearing (see discussion of Irene's story in example 3), but because she feels unable to prevent her children from doing whatever they want. Example 1 begins as Henry emphasizes the importance of the role that parents can (and should) have in influencing their children's decisions. (*He* in (a-c) refers to Henry's older brother, who was the object of a story that Henry has just completed.)

Example 1

- Henry: (a) But he– the fact is that he listens. T' my mother.
 (b) And, he did her wishes.
 (c) We respected our mother to the hilt.
 Irene: (d) But that was *years* ago.
 Henry: (e) But *why* shouldn't you respect your mother today?
 Zelda: (f) [Wait a– wait a minute.
 (g) That's his opinion!
 Henry: (h) [Why] should it be different?
 Irene: (i) [All right.] Right.
 (j) That was *years* ago. I don't think =
 (k) I don't feel that the kids–] I don't think =
 Henry: (l) D'you agree with me?
 Irene: (m) = the kids–] today . . .
 Zelda: (n) [Heh?]
 Henry: (o) D'you agree with me?
 Zelda: (p) No I don't agree with him.
 (q) He has his own beliefs.

The argument in (a) to (e) revolves specifically around Henry's claim that children should obey their parents. As I noted above, this claim is relevant to Henry's position against intermarriage – since it is his belief that Jewish

children's obedience to their parents helps prevent them from intermarrying. As I also noted, Henry's claim (a-c) figures as the point of a story (not included in example 1) describing how his parents had prevented his older brother from dating a Gentile girl. Irene's challenge in (d) is that the circumstance Henry has described is no longer relevant.

Henry defends himself in (e) with a question: *But why shouldn't you respect your mother today?* His question has two effects. First, it shifts the direction of the argument from the outcome of respect (respect leads to obedience which leads to children not going against their parents' wishes, i.e., not marrying out of their religion) to the reasons for respect (he asks *why shouldn't*). Second, it shifts the burden of defence away from himself and onto Irene because the form and content of his question (a WH-question with a negative, and the modal *should*) presupposes that Irene has said that children should not respect their mothers. However, this is not what Irene has said and it is not her challenge to Henry. If we look back at the placement of Irene's challenge, we see that it starts just as Henry begins to mention his family's respect for his mother ((c, d)). It seems unlikely, then, that Irene was challenging the importance of respect *per se*; rather, what she was challenging was Henry's prior point that children obey their parents (a, b). (This interpretation is also consistent with Irene's expressions of belief elsewhere in our conversations: she states that children are more independent than they used to be and less afraid of risk.) Since Irene has not challenged the importance of respect, Henry's question need not force her to defend the position that children should not respect their mothers. What we might expect, then, is for Irene to clarify her challenge, e.g.: *I didn't mean that they shouldn't respect their parents. I meant that they don't respect them anymore, or But can't children respect their parents without obeying them?*

However, what happens next in the argument is that Zelda overlaps Henry's question with *Wait a– wait a minute. That's his opinion!* (f-g). Thus, Zelda seeks to interrupt the argument in order to frame Henry's claim as an opinion. Henry continues to challenge Irene (in (h), *why should it be different?*), but note that Zelda's identification of Henry's position as an opinion has added a new proposition to which Irene can respond: not only can she respond to the content of Henry's position (that children should respect mothers), but she can respond to the definition of that position as opinion. This is precisely what Irene does in (i) and (j): her *All right. Right.* affirms the status of Henry's claim as opinion, and her *that was years ago* reissues her attack on the content of Henry's position. Thus, Irene does not grant Henry's position its substantive content, although she does grant the position its status as opinion.

As Irene begins to support her position in (k) – children today are different than they were when Henry was young – Henry turns his attention to Zelda to ask *d'you agree with me?* (l, o). Zelda responds that she does not agree and that *He has his own beliefs* (p, q). Thus, like Irene, Zelda has assigned to

Henry's position its status as opinion without agreeing with its substantive content.

In sum, both Zelda and Irene have allowed Henry his right to be committed as principal to an opinion. But since both have different substantive views of the circumstance to which the opinion is addressed, they are simultaneously denying his view as author to the content of that opinion. The effect is to emphasize Henry's claim to sincerity and to free Henry from his claim to truth. Thus, example 1 illustrates that identifying a statement as an opinion can change the course of an argument by adding a proposition ("what I say is an opinion") to prior substantive propositions ("this is what I say"). This makes it possible for individuals to both agree and disagree – to agree with the sincerity with which the principal is committed to a substantive proposition, but to disagree with the truth of that substantive proposition as put forth by the author.

These characteristics of opinions give them somewhat paradoxical roles in argument: they may either begin or end conflict talk. Because opinions free the speaker from a claim to truth (since they are unavailable for proof), another's right to doubt the validity of an opinion cannot be denied. This means that speakers often justify their opinions through evidence or reasoning even when those opinions have not been openly disputed. (We see an instance of this in example 3.) And, for the same reason, opinions will often provoke a disagreement.

Since opinions are the speaker's own informational preserve, however, the speaker's right to maintain an opinion cannot be denied by others. This means that individuals may respond to attacks on their opinions by admitting uncertainty over the facts, but stressing their right to present an opinion (*I may be wrong, but that's my opinion*). And although they may even recognize faults in their own reasoning, or concede to others the validity of a challenge, they may still keep their own opinions (*I can't help it, that's my opinion*). Similarly, individuals can defend themselves against another's challenge by redefining an assertion as an opinion, and by then defending their right to that opinion – simply because they can count on their opponent's willingness to grant them that right to an opinion. And as we saw in (1), opponents in an argument who support contradictory positions may actually defend each other's rights to different opinions, without forsaking all of their own positions, and therefore, without losing total ground in their dispute. All of these are ways that opinions can help terminate – rather than initiate – conflict talk.

In sum, opinions are unverifiable, internal, subjective depictions of an external world. Their presentation in talk displays a participation status in which a principal modifies the commitment of an author toward a proposition. This footing change creates a partial sacrifice of claims to truth for claims to sincerity: the facts presented by the author cannot remain undisputed, but the principal's stance toward that proposition cannot be

disputed. It also gives opinions a paradoxical status in argument, such that they can either initiate or end an argument.

2.2 Stories

Since stories and opinions are very different speech activities, it is not surprising that their roles in argument differ. I will suggest that stories of personal experience create participation shifts in both speaker and hearer. The speaker is portrayed in a triple capacity as author, figure, and animator; the hearer is transformed into a specialized recipient role, that of an appreciative audience that can react to author, figure, and animator. Since several features of story telling underlie these shifts in participation framework, I describe these features before focusing more on the actual shifts.

First is selective interpretation: stories of personal experience recount events from an individual's life which have been selectively interpreted from the perspective of that individual. The most vivid illustration of this is stories which report personal confrontations (Johnstone, 1987; W. Labov, 1981): such stories allow an individual to justify the correctness of his or her prior actions to an audience who may not have been present during the actual confrontation – and thus is less able than the actual protagonist to challenge the narrator's rendition of "only one side of the story." Although confrontational stories are the most obvious example of selective interpretation, all stories do this to a certain degree – if only because external events are always interpreted from subjective standpoints formed on the basis of past individual experience.

A second factor leading to a shift in participation framework is a shift in deictic center – a shift from the time, place, and participant co-ordinates of the conversational (or storytelling) world to the co-ordinates of the story world. Such a shift may actually reflect the speaker's own reorientation: a friend with a three-year-old son, for example, was recently describing her pregnancy to me, and referred to her son as *it* – the same way in which she referred to him prior to his birth, and prior to her knowledge of his gender.

Many linguistic devices used in stories reflect (and create) this deictic shift. Even the temporal ordering found in most stories – the matching between the presentation of clauses and the inferred order of events (W. Labov, 1972a) – can be seen as a deictic shift which transforms past events into the storyteller's perspective, and allows the audience to see those events from that perspective. For example, narrators often report pre-existing states in introductory orientation clauses. However, when they are reporting states which existed, but about which they themselves did not know during the initial stages of their experience, they frequently delay mention of those states until the story has reached their own point of discovery. In other words, narrators may allow their initial point of discovery to be displayed in its original temporal sequence, thus moving their audience back to the

initiation of their own involvement and carrying it along with their own viewpoint, perspective, and information state. It is in this sense that temporal ordering reflects a deictic shift which transforms the audience from a passive recipient of information to a vicarious participant in an experience.

The third way that stories adjust a participation framework is through evaluative devices. Such devices are phonological, grammatical, and textual modifications of the discourse norms which highlight parts of the experience from the narrator's perspective, and thus show the speaker taking a particular orientation toward what is being talked about (W. Labov, 1972a; Polanyi, 1979). For example, in Schiffrin (1981), I compared three stories with parallel plot structures and similar evaluations. Each story concerned the way in which a mother was able to solve her child's problem when more knowledgeable authorities had failed, and in each story the most highly evaluated section was the mother's discovery of the solution for her child's problem. I found a particular evaluative device – the historical present tense – used only when the speaker was justifying her own role as mother, not when she herself was the child reporting on her mother's role as mother. Thus, it was the speaker's orientation toward the problem situation which influenced her use of evaluation: when she was using the past to justify her own competence as mother (a competence, incidentally, which was frequently challenged by her neighbors), she highlighted that part of her past which best supported her position – her claim to being a good mother.

Finally, stories contextualize an event: they frame an event within a reported reality (the story world) which supplements the reality simultaneously being created through the conversation (the storytelling world). A brief example illustrates. Example 2 is a story in which Ira and Jan (a lower-middle-class, middle-aged, Jewish couple who live across the street from Henry, Zeld, and Irene) are jointly explaining their position against intermarriage between Jews and Gentiles to me. Immediately prior to example 2, Ira had mentioned that his son had *brought home a Puerto Rican girl*, and that the son *saw no difference*. Neither Ira nor Jan, however, believe that there is *no difference* between ethnic groups, and they develop and support this position later in our conversation. In example 2, they are contrasting their daughter Beth's experience dating a young man of a different religion with their son's experience with the Puerto Rican: because Beth's experience is more in line with their own view, their retelling of this experience can be used to contextualize their own position.¹⁰

Example 2

Ira: (a) Now my daughter went out with eh— she went out with a couple Gentile kids,

(b) and she said that =

Jan: (c) [she wouldn't go out with them =

Ira: (d) = she wouldn't go out with them again.]
Jan: (e) [= again.] [She] said they're too different.

Ira: (f) She said that uh . . . they're just eh—the—
Jan: (g) [they're] different.

Ira: (h) They're different.

Jan: (i) She says, "It's not what I'm used to.

Ira: (j) So em . . . s—she

Jan: (k) [One] was a . . . his father was a friend of my husband's.

(l) And when I heard she was goin' out with him,

(m) I said, "You're goin' out with a Gentile boy?"

(n) She says, "Well Daddy knows his father."

(o) I said, "I don't care."

(p) So she introduced him,

(q) and they went out,

(r) and she came home early,

(s) and I said, "Well, y' goin' out with him again?"

(t) She says, "Nope."

(u) I said, "Did he get fresh?"

(v) She said, "No!"

(w) She says, "But he's different!"

(x) She says, "I'm not used t' Gentile boys."

(y) That cured her!

Ira: (z) [hhhhhhhhhh] hhhhh

Jan: (aa) She'd never go out with one again.

Prior to Jan's story, both Jan and Ira report their daughter Beth as having stated that she would not go out with Gentiles again (Jan in (c) and Ira in (d)). Both also report Beth's statement of their very own position: Gentiles are *different* from Jews (Jan in (e) and (g), Ira in (h)). Jan also directly quotes Beth's reason for not wanting to date Gentiles again before she begins her story: *it's not what I'm used to* (i).

All three of these propositions are contextualized in Jan's story. In (t), Beth responds to Jan's question (*Well, y' goin' out with him again?* in (s)) with *Nope*. Then in (w), Beth gives her reason: *But he's different*. And finally, in (x), Beth embellishes her reason: *I'm not used t' Gentile boys*. Thus, Jan tells her story in a way which not only presents Beth's experience as a confirmation of her own view, but also allows Beth to actually present Jan's very own views – but in her own individual words. It is in these ways that Jan's story contextualizes her position about intermarriage.

Note, also, that Jan allows Beth to "see for herself" that Gentile boys are *different* (note that in (o), Jan reports herself as saying *I don't care*).¹¹ That Beth then came to the very same conclusion as Jan – without Jan having

forced her into this conclusion – also strengthens Jan's own position. In other words, if Jan had forbidden Beth to go out on the date, Beth's conclusion would not have been nearly so convincing.

I have suggested that four factors – selective interpretation, deictic shifts, evaluation, and contextualization – all help transform the person who listens to a story into an audience that vicariously participates in the narrator's experience. It is this transformation which could lead a listener to be sympathetically aligned with whatever position a story is being told to support. In other words, the advantage created by stories is this: once a particular experience is seen from another's point of view, so, too, can the more general proposition which the particular experience is supporting be seen from that individual's point of view.

Because reports of vicarious experience (e.g., relaying the plot of a film or transmitting a news item) are similar in some ways to personal stories (Chafe, 1980), some of the same participation shifts occur in both types of stories. For example, an author (that part of the self whose sentiments are chosen for expression) is displayed through the selective interpretations and deictic shifts occurring in both personal and vicarious stories. This is because the selection and organization of events into a story is not an objective process; rather, it is strongly constrained by the sentiments which the speaker holds toward the experience. It does seem, however, that one's sentiments about an experience are less objective if the experience is one in which the individual has participated; thus, perhaps, an author is more visibly displayed in personal stories.

Personal stories also allow another dimension of the narrator's self to be displayed, simply because they display both the narrator's current competence as a story teller, and his or her prior competence in whatever role and status had been occupied in the prior experience. The simultaneous view of the narrator's competence in two domains means that the narrator is displayed in two capacities besides that of author. First, the narrator is seen in the story-telling world as an animator, as "the talking machine, a body engaged in acoustic activity . . . an individual active in the role of utterance production" (Goffman, 1981c: 144). Second, the narrator is seen in the story as a character in the story, as a figure, someone "who belongs to the world that is spoken about, not the world in which the speaking occurs" (Goffman, 1981c: 147).

To summarize, personal stories create the opportunity to present oneself in three capacities. First is animator – the producer of talk. Second is author: the author can interpret an experience, arrange evaluative devices, and create story events which contextualize a position in order to convey just those sentiments which highlight that version of the experience most in line with the position being argued for. Third is figure: the figure can act in the story world precisely as he or she might have wanted to act had there been the chance to do so. In short, the audience gains an idealized view of the

experience (through the author), and an idealized view of the narrator (through the figure). And the narrator's hope is that these idealized views will lead the audience into acceptance of the position being argued for.

How, then, do stories allow a speaker to negotiate the truth and sincerity of an argument? Stories can be used to support a speaker's claim during argument because they lead the listener toward a sympathetic alignment with the position being argued. Another way of saying this is that stories create a testimony for the position – a testimony which invites the listener to join in an interactional allegiance and endorse the speaker's position. Thus, what a story can create is a widened base of support for the position. It is this widened base which frees the speaker as author from sole responsibility for the truth of the position, at the same time that it frees the speaker as principal from being alone in his/her commitment to, and sincerity in the belief of, the position. In other words, stories delegate much of the supportive work in an argument – including responsibility for truth and sincerity – to different parts of the self, and to the audience.

The argument in example 3 highlights some of these features of stories. Again, the speakers are Henry, Zelda, and Irene. Henry has just completed a fairly long monologue about anti-Semitism. (His belief that Gentiles are prejudiced against Jews is one reason why he does not favor intermarriage.) Irene, who had left Henry and Zelda's kitchen to return to her own house for a moment, has just re-entered.

Example 3

Irene: (a) Fill me in.

Debby: (b) We're talking about whether Jewish people should marry people who aren't Jewish.

Irene: (c) Oh *you*: want t'start a fight here. If you know me!

Zelda: (d) Well see she's taping it. [We know! Yeh!]

Irene: (e) That's why I said . . .]Well, let's put it this way.

(f) Uh: . . .]

(g) I feel that my children should marry within their religion.

(h) But if they choose . . . not to, it wouldn't be the worst thing in the world for me.

(i) So we had a long discussion, my neighbor's Italian.

(j) We had a long discussion a couple weeks ago.

(k) all the kids and I were sittin' . . . and *her*, we were sittin' on the patio.

(l) And when her daughter tried t'express herself that you're not marrying a religion, you're marrying a person.

(m) Anita's very strong on that.

(n) Yeh she says, "You are not mar--"

- (o) Which is true.
 (p) You're not marrying somebody's religion.
 (q) And I feel, eventually, and it may not be in my day,
 (r) maybe it'll be in my children's, I don't know, or their children's.
 (s) that there will only be one religion in this world.
 Henry: (t) No. Never be.
 Irene: (u) Well I feel there will. Because—
 Henry: (v) {Never.} {Do you know?} [continues]

As I noted in discussion of (1), Irene is less bothered by intermarriage than Henry. Their disagreement is common knowledge to Henry, Irene, and Zelda: note Irene's *Oh you: want t'start a fight here. If you know me!* (c) and Zelda's response *We know!* (d). Irene's story in (i) to (p) presents one reason why she is willing to accept (even though she doesn't desire) her children's intermarriage (g, h). Note that her story supports a reason for an opinion: she states in (g) and (h) what she "feels" about what her children "should" do, and how if they didn't, it wouldn't be the "worst thing" (an evaluative term) for her. The reason for this opinion is given at the end of the story: *You're not marrying somebody's religion* (p).

How does Irene use her personal story to support her opinion? First, Irene has her neighbor's child, Anita, state her very own view (1, n) as something in which she really believes (m). The reported speech (1, n) and the intensifier *very strong* (m) both contextualize and evaluate Anita's (and Irene's) belief.¹² Second, Irene embeds Anita's view within her own everyday experience: it occurs during a *long discussion* in which she herself took part (*we had a long discussion* (i, j), *all the kids and I . . . we* (k)). It is also important that this experience is reported as an ordinary part of Irene's life: *sitin' on the patio* (k) is a routine activity for summer evenings in Irene's neighborhood. This everyday nature of the experience heightens the story's sense of authenticity, that is, Irene did not have to force Anita to state her views, she just happened to do so in the course of an ordinary conversation. Third, Irene makes clear that Anita is not Jewish (*my neighbor's Italian* (i)). This is important to Irene and Henry's overall argument. Recall that Henry had just finished a long monologue in which he claimed that one reason he is against intermarriage is that Gentiles are anti-Semitic. (Although Irene was not present to hear Henry's monologue, she is familiar with his general position about anti-Semitism.) Anita's expression of indifference toward religion is thus one piece of evidence against Henry's belief in anti-Semitism. Fourth, Irene evaluates Anita's view as *true* (o) and then uses that evaluation as an introduction to her own view: *You're not marrying somebody's religion* (p). This view then becomes a pivot from which to state an even more extreme view about the eventual disappearance of all religious differences.

What is the role of Irene's story in her argument with Henry? Irene's story

reports someone else's endorsement for why she believes that intermarriage *wouldn't be the worst thing in the world* (h). The reason is that *You're not marrying somebody's religion* (p). The story thus widens the base of support for Irene's belief and frees her from sole responsibility for either its truth or her own sincerity in holding that belief. Its interactional effect is to invite Henry to join in an allegiance not only with Irene herself, but with another person (Anita) who shares Irene's belief.

Henry does not agree with Irene even after her story. But note that the story itself is somewhat immune to attack: Henry does not dispute Anita's reported statement that *you're not marrying a religion*. What he does challenge (in (t) with *No. Never be.*) is the more extreme view expressed by Irene after her story (*there will only be one religion in this world* (s)). Henry combines this challenge with his own views about anti-Semitism (conveyed in his monologue prior to Irene's story) to describe how assimilated Jews in pre-war Germany were taken to concentration camps, and thus to argue that even those Jews who had acted as if there were one religion were victims of anti-Semitism. Thus, Henry relates the story to his prior topic only by attacking the more extreme belief that the story has allowed Irene to state. But because the story itself is insulated from attack, Henry's challenge does not force Irene to totally retreat from her position; rather, she is allowed to maintain some of her prior ground in this argument.

Of course there are other roles played by stories during argument. In Schiffrin (1985), for example, I describe an argument between Henry and Irene in which Henry again leaves intact the details of Irene's story, but challenges the ability of the story to stand as an appropriate example for the general position being argued. And sometimes stories actually end a dispute: in an argument between Henry and Irene over the value of professional help for personal problems, two of Irene's stories about the help provided her son and niece by a school counselor prompt Henry to admit that *Well then they're good to have*. Thus, in contrast to opinions, which may either begin or end an argument, stories are likely to be used as efforts to end an argument.

In sum, stories are speech activities used during argument to strengthen speakers' claims. They have four characteristics – selective interpretation, deictic shifts, evaluation, and contextualization – which help transform the listener of a story into a vicarious participant in an experience, and which allow the narrator to present him/herself as animator, figure, and author. Because they create a widened base of support for the speaker's position, they free the author from sole responsibility for the truth of a position, and allow the principal to share responsibility for commitment to a position with the audience.

3. The management of co-operation during argument

We have seen that two speech activities – stating opinions and telling personal stories – can be used in argument to negotiate the truth of a

position being argued and the sincerity of a speaker. These two activities work in different ways. Opinions sacrifice the absolute truth of a position for the sincerity of its speaker, and stories widen the speaker's claim to both the truth and sincerity of the position. Although these alterations give opinions and stories very different roles in argument, what makes them possible is the same for both speech activities: the speaker draws upon different relationships between the self and talk (different footings) to display multiple participation statuses which figure in the continual framing and reframing of talk.

The participation statuses that I have discussed allow the speaker to align him/herself with some of the idealized standards of cooperation which underlie talk. I stated above that Grice's maxim of quality ("do not say what you believe to be false, do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence") was the idealized standard of co-operation most relevant to argument. We have now seen how both opinions and stories address this maxim of quality: opinions separate the speaker's belief from the truth or falsity of what is said, stories create what the speaker believes to be adequate evidence. The dynamic nature of the alignments displayed by opinions and stories shows how truth and sincerity cannot be considered as taken-for-granted, static features of argument; rather, they are potentially emergent features of argument which are open to participant negotiation.

It is not only the local norms provided by speech activities such as opinions and stories which allow individuals to negotiate the truth and sincerity of their arguments. Other co-operative norms in argument are relatively global, i.e., they are sustained during the entire course of an argument. For example, arguments may have cultural meanings other than "conflict", and they may be interactionally motivated by ends other than the negotiation and resolution of disagreement. In Schiffrin (1984), I describe how Jewish Americans use argument as a means of sociability, that is, as a form of talk in which "the common search for the truth, the form of the argument, may occur; but it must not permit the seriousness of the momentary content to become its substance" (Simmel, 1961: 161). Sociable argument is thus a co-operative enactment of conflict which actually demonstrates the solidarity of a relationship – simply because it displays the ability of that relationship to tolerate features of talk typically associated with conflict, e.g. disagreement, challenge, interruption, insult (cf. Bateson, 1955; Kochman, 1983; W. Labov, 1972b).

Certainly there are other ways of speaking through which individuals manage the co-operative side of their selves during conflict talk. Perhaps the analysis of such forms of talk will not only help us appreciate the co-operative norms that exist during conflict talk, but help us learn how to build on those norms, so that we can direct people who disagree away from intensification of their conflict and toward resolution of their conflict.

Appendix Key to transcription conventions

- . Falling intonation followed by noticeable pause (as at end of declarative sentence)
- ? Rising intonation followed by noticeable pause (as at end of interrogative sentence)
- Continuing intonation: may be slight rise or fall in contour (less than " or " ?"); may be followed by a pause (shorter than " or " ?")
- ! Animated tone
- ... Noticeable pause or break in rhythm without falling intonation (each half-second pause is marked as measured by stop watch)

– Self-interruption with glottal stop

: Lengthened syllable

italic type Emphatic stress

CAPS Very emphatic stress

When speech from A and B overlap, the starting point of the overlap is marked by a left-hand bracket, and the ending point of the overlap is marked by a right-hand bracket.

A: Do you know what time the party's supposed to start?
B: [Six o'clock.]

When lack of space prevents continuous speech from A from being presented on a single line of text, then " = " at end of A1 and " = " at beginning of A2 shows the continuity.

A1: Do you know what time the party's supposed to start? =
B: [Six o'clock.]

A2: = Because I have to work late tonight.

When speech from B follows from A without perceptible pause, then Z links the end of A with the beginning of B.

A: Do you know the time? Z
B: Six o'clock.

Notes

An earlier version of this chapter was presented at the American Anthropological Association Meetings, December 1985, during a session organized by Gillian Sankoff and Bambi Schieffelin on "Framing discourse: truth, lies, and deception."

- 1 Fieldwork was done as part of a project on linguistic change and variation (NSF Grant 75-00245). I thank William Labov, principal investigator, for generous access to this material.
- 2 This section compiles (and of course greatly reduces) ideas in Goffman (1974, 1981a, b, c).
- 3 Also crucial to the establishment, maintenance, and adjustment of participation frameworks in social interaction are the verbal and nonverbal devices through which people indicate interpretive contexts for what they are saying. Gumperz (1982a: 131) calls these devices contextualization cues: "any feature of linguistic form that contributes to the signalling of contextual presuppositions" (see Goffman, 1981c: 126-127.) Equally important is the ability of the self (as either speaker or hearer) to adopt

multiple positions within a given encounter. Two points are important here. First, participation statuses could not exist if the self were not already socially constructed as a multi-faceted entity. That is, individuals do not have holistic, undifferentiated selves (although they may of course believe themselves to); rather they have sets of selves which are created and managed during the different interactions in which they are involved. The differentiation of speakers as animator, author, figure, and principal is possible, then, only because speakers are already divided selves. Second, participation statuses could not exist if social interaction did not provide structured opportunities for the emergence and management of selves. Such opportunities are closely linked to the organization of the conversations and encounters in which talk occurs, and to the organization of the gatherings and social establishments in which social occasions are housed. I do not address here two issues: the possible cultural relativity of the Gricean principles, the difference between assumed and negotiated cooperative rules. On the former, see Keenan, 1979; on the latter, see Schiffrin, 1987b.

4 Consider, also, that there is a partial functional overlap between opinions (at least when they mitigate speaker commitment, see discussion below) and hedges (as reflected in the use of certain expressions, e.g., *I think*, in both speech activities). And since statements of opinion are about disputable events, they also coincide with Labov and Fanshel's (1977) D-events. Faced with the need to search further than language for the means by which to recognize particular speech activities, linguists often turn to the philosophically motivated body of work known as "speech act theory" (Austin, 1962; Bach and Harnish, 1982; Searle, 1969). A key insight of this work is that speech acts (such as promising, requesting, warning, and giving opinions) are constituted (i.e., created) because speaker and hearer share knowledge of the underlying conditions which allow a particular utterance to be used as an action. The utterance *Okay*, for example, can count as a "promise" as readily as the utterance *I promise* just so long as its speaker is understood to have intended through its utterance the acceptance of an obligation to perform a future action which will benefit the hearer. Atelsek (1981) analyzes opinions within such a framework. A recent court decision ruling that a statement is an opinion if it "cannot objectively be proved or disproved" points out the importance of this second feature (*Washington Post* editorial, "Libel: facts and opinions," May 29, 1985.)

8 The general uncertainty presupposed by an opinion, however, can challenge those who believe in the verifiability of a particular circumstance. A dramatic illustration of this challenge is the movement in many conservative political circles against the educational approach known as secular humanism, an approach which emphasizes the relativity (at cultural, social, and personal levels) of many moral decisions: a parents' group in the small town of Plano in Texas forbade local teachers to request their students' opinions – simply because if students were found to actually have opinions, that implied the existence of uncertainty and relativism, that is, that there was no absolute truth (*New York Times*, May 17, 1981, p.1).

9 I describe these speakers (and others in the community) in Schiffrin 1984, 1987a.

10 This example is clearly not an argument in the sense of conflict talk, i.e. co-present interlocutors are not disagreeing with one another, and it is not intended as such. However, it is an argument in a rhetorical sense (Schiffrin, 1985): Jan and Ira are supporting their positions on a disputable issue (intermarriage) after having just reported the position (taken by their son) to which they are opposed. So even though Jan and Ira are not themselves in opposition, they are jointly oriented toward disputing the validity of an opposing position.

11 That Jan's *I don't care* is a statement that she – as opposed to her daughter Beth – does not care about Beth's date is signalled by the contrastive stress (indicated by italics) on *I*.

12 Direct quotes (as in examples 2 and 3) actually produce a more complex footing than I am here describing, since the animator of the quote is presenting another person as the author.

Introduction: Narrative analysis in the shift from texts to practices

ANNA DE FINA and ALEXANDRA GEORGAKOPOULOU

The point of departure for this special issue is the recent shift within discourse and sociolinguistic narrative analysis from a long-standing conception of (oral, cf. natural, nonliterary) narrative as a well-defined and delineated genre with an identifiable structure toward the exploration of the multiplicity, fragmentation, and irreducible situatedness of its forms and functions in a wide range of social arenas. We can refer to this shift as a move away from narrative as text (i.e., defined on the basis of textual criteria and primarily studied for its textual make-up) to narrative as practice within social interaction. For a lot of the work here, context remains a key concept and although there is an undeniably long-standing tradition of contextualized studies of narrative (e.g., ethnography of communication in studies such as Bauman 1986 and Hymes 1981, among others) there are distinct elements in this latest shift that in our view qualify it as a 'new' turn to narrative:

1. An increasing acceptance of narrative as talk-in-social interaction informed by conversation analysis and ethnomethodology. This has had profound implications for the definition of narrative, its exigencies, and the analytical tools deemed appropriate for its investigation (e.g., De Fina and Georgakopoulou forthcoming; Georgakopoulou 2007; chapters in Quasthoff and Becker 2004; Schegloff 1997).
2. An emphasis, derived from recent theories of context and genre (e.g., Bauman 2001), not just on the *contextualized* but also on the *contextualizing* aspects of narrative. In this sense, narrative is being studied both for the ways in which its tellings are shaped by larger sociocultural processes at work and for how it provides organization for the interactive occasions on which it occurs. Furthermore, although the notion of context remains elusive, contested, and indeterminate, there is now consensus on the view of context not as a static surrounding frame but as a set of multiple and intersecting processes that are mutually feeding with talk. The move away from context as a pre-

existing 'setting' toward dynamic notions of social spaces that may be conventionally associated with certain kinds of language use and norms, but also prone to heterogeneity and fragmentation, has been instrumental in looking at both narrative tellings *in situ* and at ways in which space is more or less subtly referred to, reworked, and constructed anew within narrative plots (see contributions in Baynham and De Fina 2005).

3. An increasing commitment to social theoretical concerns (mainly within the framework of cultural studies). This is particularly evident in proliferating work on narrative and identities (e.g., De Fina 2003; Georgakopoulou 2002, 2007; De Fina et al. 2006) that has variously problematized, de-essentialized, or added nuance to the widely held view that narrative is a privileged communication mode for making sense of the self. Research in this area has also blurred the boundaries between narrative analysis and narrative inquiry, thus shifting the emphasis of the former from narrative as an end to narrative as a means to an end.

With this special issue, we are reflecting on and assessing critically this 'new' turn to narrative that is part of a more general shift from texts to social practices in language-focused inquiry. We are also addressing its implications for the received analytic vocabulary of narrative within socially minded linguistics (e.g., pragmatics, sociolinguistics, discourse analysis). To this effect, the papers that follow engage with a variety of narrative data and settings in order to explore the implications for narrative analysis of a focus on the contextual embedding of narrative tellings. In particular, the authors study data from clinical interviews, spontaneous conversations among peers, focus group interviews, and institutional encounters. They also zoom in on a variety of settings: workplaces, schools, and courts, therapeutic sessions and encounters focused on sociability. In doing so, they address the following issues:

- The role of received narrative models such as the one proposed by Labov (1972; Labov and Waletzky 1967) and their application to narratives that develop in settings other than the sociolinguistic interview.
- The implications of making 'small' stories (i.e., fragmented, with multiple tellers, heavily embedded in their surroundings, see Bamberg 2004; Georgakopoulou 2003, 2007; Ochs and Capps 2001) part of focal concerns for narrative analysis.
- The application of concepts that allow us to tap into the contextual embedding of narratives and into the role of storytelling as a context-shaping discourse activity. Of particular interest here is the investigation of the impact of storytelling on personal and social rights and

relations, on institutions and events, and the interweaving, in the tellings, of collective and institutional voices (Briggs 1997).

- Finally, there is the perennial, but also as timely as ever, question of how microanalytic interactional approaches to narrative can be reconciled with other perspectives that are more interested in macro accounts. A matter of debate in this respect concerns the methodological validity and the analytical ways of abstracting a larger, across-contexts story (often described as a master narrative) from the moment-by-moment contingencies of narrative (re)tellings in local contexts.

In tackling the above issues, the papers argue for an analytic vocabulary that fully takes into account issues of co-construction, embeddedness, intertextuality, and recontextualization of stories, while bringing in new insights into ‘core’ narrative analytic concepts, such as structure–evaluation–performance (e.g., Johnson; Kjaerbeck). At the same time, they scrutinize narratives as social practices from a variety of vantage points: by problematizing the normative expectations associated with research interviews as one of the main settings of narrative production while arguing for the importance of certain kinds of stories, hitherto viewed as ‘a-typical’ (e.g., Bamberg and Georgakopoulou; Fasulo and Zuccheromaglio); by teasing out ways in which situational and cultural contexts shape and are shaped by narrative tellings (e.g., De Fina; Marra and Holmes); by placing emphasis on the sequential features of narrative as being consequential for social action (e.g., Bercelli, Rossano, and Viaro); more generally, by opting for multilayered analyses that do justice to the complexities of narrative events while according a pivotal place to linguistic analysis in the study of narrative and social practices. In all cases, the papers aim at pushing the agenda of conventional narrative studies to underexplored facets of narrative tellings and events.

More specifically, Bercelli, Rossano, and Viaro shift attention away from a focus on the therapist to the stories told by clients in psychotherapy sessions, while recognizing that the tellings are both collaboratively produced and intimately linked with the therapist’s questions. The paper shows how the sequential placement of stories presents implications for the telling roles involved and documents the systematicity that characterizes the telling of stories-in-interaction. These systematic ways are distinctly different from those traditionally observed in the launching and closing of stories in conversational environments among intimates. At the same time, they provide further evidence for the consistent finding that story tellings often serve the purpose of backing up claims and interpretations offered by other interlocutors.

The use of stories as argumentative devices and as resources for doing agreement and managing disagreement is increasingly being studied within a view of narrative as social practice, organically embedded in talk-in-interaction. Kjaerbeck's paper extends the conversation-analytic concept of preference for agreement developed in the context of adjacency pairs (Pomerantz 1984) to the negotiation of the punchline in stories told in parent-teacher meetings in a Danish recreation center for children with special needs. Stories by the teachers are routinely told in the context of assessment of a child's progress to back up claims, particularly when there is audible disagreement or misalignment from the parents regarding the assessment. However, they also frame and contextualize the assessment. In addition to stories performing social actions in local contexts, this paper's findings link up with previous work that shows that certain actions such as accounting for and illustrating claims or supporting arguments and disputes (Schiffrin 1990; Goodwin 1990) are typically associated with the telling of stories.

Stories are inextricably bound up with the norms and participant role relations in institutional settings and documenting the ways in which these are negotiated is also a focal concern in Johnson's contribution. The paper shows how the questioning of suspects in police interviews is instrumental in both eliciting certain kinds of stories and in 'transforming' them into institutionally acceptable evidential tales. At the same time, the paper provides new insights into the construction of the story components that Labov called 'evaluation', through a sequential analysis that takes into account the role of co-text in shaping this process. But the author also reminds us that who tells which story and how prescribed stories in certain settings can be resisted are always a function of the context in which stories occur.

Locating their study in an institutional workplace setting, too, Fasulo and Zucchermaglio shed light on three types of storytelling which, although salient in their data, depart from the prototype of personal experience, past-event stories. They inventively label these stories 'rewindings', 'fictions', and 'templates'. In contrast to the emphasis of narrative research on actual, past events as the backbone of stories, their analysis shows the importance that unrealized or hypothetical events have for the construction of narrative tellings: these tellings too are systematic and perform specific actions in their local contexts. What is more important, they should be conceived of as 'local versions of entirely ordinary narrative production' (Fasulo and Zucchermaglio this issue).

The same plea for inclusion in the narrative canon of stories that depart from the well-researched prototype of the Labovian narrative or the life story elicited in research interviews is to be found in Bamberg and

Georgakopoulou's contribution. The paper builds on the authors' previous work on 'small stories' and illustrates their significance for identity analysis—the stronghold of 'big stories' research—through a close analysis of a story in the focus group data of 10-year-old boys in an American school. Following five analytical steps as part of their model of positioning, the authors illustrate that a wealth of identity work is done not just in the telling of a story but also in the refusals to tell and the negotiations around telling and telling roles. Here, the move toward under-represented narrative activities is not just analytical but ontological and epistemological, too, probing into issues of how we define narrative, where we draw the line between a telling and a nontelling, and what it is about moments of narrative orientation, even if they do not translate into full-fledged stories, that deserve the analytical attention.

How stories are situated not just at the micro, but also at the macro level, that is, in relation to larger social and cultural processes above and beyond the immediate telling situation is a theme that runs through all papers. In Marra and Holmes's contribution, it forms the focal concern. More specifically, their focus is on the interconnection between ethnicity and professional identities in the storytelling activities of members of a New Zealand Māori organization. Marra and Holmes start off from the widely held view that storytelling in groups of people who interact regularly forms a fundamental part of their repertoire of shared resources. The construction of ethnic identities is investigated within the frame of the concept of community of practice. The authors are able to show how in this community Māori cultural values interweave with distinctive styles of telling based on collusive construction and humorous representations of cultural 'outsiders'. In this case, too, relationships between tellings and contexts are complex, dynamic, and multifaceted: not only is storytelling shaped by specific cultural values but also conducive to the construction of a cultural-professional identity in tune with the stated ethos of the company, i.e., to an extent 'pre-allocated' and prescribed by the context.

In a similar vein, De Fina investigates how stories become resources for identity negotiations within another community of practice: a card-playing club whose members are Italian and Italian American men. De Fina investigates how topically linked narratives can be placed and understood within the local context of the *Circolo della Briscola's* activities and how they participate in the shaping of aspects of the club's life. She argues that these local meaning-making activities connect with macro social processes through the negotiation, within the constraints of local practices, of the positioning and roles of the ethnic group in the wider social space. In this sense, narrative activity can be seen as having a central

role among the symbolic practices (Bourdieu 2002 [1977]) in which social groups engage to carry out struggles for legitimation and recognition in order to accumulate symbolic capital and greater social power.

Overall, the papers bring to the fore under-represented data as well as modes of analysis with a view to problematizing and extending the conceptual boundaries of the mainstay vocabulary within narrative analysis. In this way, we attempt to contribute toward the charting of the paradigmatic shift within narrative analysis from narrative as text to narratives as practices.

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