3 How do narrators and recipients co-construct turntaking?

3.1 Introduction

A number of scholars have portrayed spoken narrative as a type of 'monolog.' Swales, for example, sees narrative as a "monologic activity" (1990: 61). Labov (1972: 366) and Chafe (1992: 43) argued that storytelling constitutes "a single 'turn'." In a similar vein, in research in a conversation-analytical (CA) tradition, storytelling is often conceptualized as a 'multi-unit turn': the individual utterances by the teller are taken, not as individual turns, but as turn constructional units (TCUs), together forming an extended turn. In Goodwin & Heritage (1990: 299), for example, stories are "thought of as built from many turn-constructional units" (see also Goodwin 1986a, Norrick 2012). While it is recognized that "[s]tories take more than an utterance to produce" (Sacks 1992: 222) because recipients "are specifically invited" (Sacks 1992: 227) to produce talk in response to the storytelling, their talk is often not accorded the status of proper turns. For example, it is common practice to view talk in the backchannel, such as *mm* and most uses of *yeah*, whose main purpose is the display of understanding (see Gardner 1998), as talk situated "between listening and speaking" (Gardner 1998: 204), and therefore to deny it the status of a turn in its own right. Rather than as turns, recipient utterances during storytelling are seen as 'embedded sequences' (Norrick 2012) which "do not disrupt the overall thrust of the multi-turn unit" (Norrick 2012: 568). Their primary function is as "talk that deals with the recognition that a story is being told" (Sacks 1992: 227). On this view, recipient responses to the main speaker's extended turn (the storytelling) are treated as somewhat 'ancillary' (Edelsky 1993), that is, as subservient to the 'global speech act' (van Dijk & Kintsch 1983: 265) performed by the teller. Conceptually, the view of storytelling as a multi-unit turn, and the denial of turn status to recipient responses it entails, is not without problems. First, labeling responses as 'embedded sequences' does not answer the question exactly what sort of *unit* responses are and how they relate to stories as multi-TCU turns. If indeed "the *basic* unit of talk is the TCU" (Selting 2000: 477, added emphasis), then responses should count as TCUs too, that is, as units that can potentially construct turns. Second, TCUs, by definition,

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end in transition-relevance points (TRPs) (e.g., Sacks *et al.* 1974, Schegloff 1996, Selting 2000), that is, in "places where current speakers can or should exit" (Sacks *et al.* 1974: 708) and "transition to a next speaker becomes *relevant* (although not necessarily accomplished)" (Schegloff 1996: 55; emphasis in original). If, and when, at these points recipients respond in some way, of what kind is this transition if not of the kind described in the quote, viz. a transition effecting speaker change and thus turn change? To rescue the notion of story as a multi-unit turn, Selting (2000: 478) proposes to "distinguish TCUs that do not end in TRPs from those that do."

Also, the view of story as a multi-unit turn is not clearly attested in the writings of pre-eminent figures in CA such as Sacks and his closest associates. On the contrary, their stance towards response utterances, though not overly explicit, seems to be in favor of granting them turn status. First, note that in a number of examples presented in Sacks *et al.* (1974) typical backchannel utterances are explicitly highlighted as (single-unit) turns.[1] Further, the following quote from Sacks is revealing in that it asserts an equivalence of utterance and turn:

> The question is, why do stories take more than an utterance to produce – where the word "utterance" is equivalent to a turn at talk. (Sacks 1992: 223)

Given the equivalence, the quote seems to suggest that stories take, not one multiple-unit turn, but 'more than a turn,' that is, a series of turns by the narrator. Conceiving of storytelling as a series of turns implicates that, upon completion of each turn by the narrator, the immediately next turn is allocated, via next- or self-selection (see Sacks *et al.* 1974: 704), to the recipient. The equivalence of utterance and turn in the quote is also revealing with regard to the recipient. Since recipient responses are utterances too, it should follow that they are turns too. Further, even more conclusive, evidence that this is indeed Sacks's stance on the matter is the following quote: "[i]n storytelling you give them [the recipients] the *floor* to give it back to you" (Sacks 1992: 227, added emphasis). 'Floor,' understood, in Yule's definition, as "the right to speak" (1996: 72), is, in common CA parlance, synonymous with turn (see Edelsky 1993). That is to say, Sacks's statement amounts to stating that in storytelling the narrator *yields* the turn to the recipient in order to get the turn back – that is, speaker change and thus turn change occur. Indeed, some observers acknowledge the possibility that "sequences of [recipient] turns can occur within an extended [storytelling] turn" (Norrick, personal email communication). Empirical evidence to support the view of recipient response as turn is, for example, Goodwin (1986a). Analyzing the sequential placement and function of recipient assessments, he concludes that a particular type of response, viz. assessments, "can in fact take many shapes, some of them quite elaborate with, for example, extended sentences and even *sequences of turns* being devoted exclusively to the activity of doing an assessment" (Goodwin 1986a: 215, added emphasis).

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The conceptual problems associated with the notion of story as multi-unit turn suggest considering alternative views. One such alternative conception of story is as a 'multi-turn unit' (see Norrick 2012), with turn status accorded not only to narrator but also recipient utterances. This, simple, view not only avoids the conceptual pitfalls pertinent to the lacking clarity of the notion of TCU (see Selting 2000), but also seems closely in line with Sacks's and his associates' foundational work on turntaking. Moreover, the conception of storytelling as a complex unit constructed from turns taken by narrator and recipient has the advantage that it does not limit the recipient to the subservient role of simply registering recognition that an extended turn by the narrator is underway. Rather, it acknowledges the recipient's crucial role in co-constructing narrative, a role summarized in the aforementioned observation that content and direction of conversational storytelling "are contingent upon the narrative input of other interlocutors" (Ochs & Capps 2001: 2) and that, due also to recipient input, conversational narrative "becomes an interactional achievement and interlocutors become co-authors" (Ochs & Capps 2001: 3). Denying the input by 'other interlocutors' the status of turns is in stark contrast to viewing them as co-authors. So, story seen as a *multi-turn unit* emphasizes the fact that narrators and recipients 'take turns' at constructing narratives, thus achieving them collaboratively.

Starting from this basic orientation, the question I will address in this chapter is to what extent co-construction impacts on turntaking in conversational narrative. I will show that turntaking is co-constructed both with regard to turn order (Section 3.2) and turn size (Section 3.3).

3.2 Co-construction of turn order

3.2.1 Introduction

An initial recognition of the fact that narrative in conversation is a multi-turn phenomenon came from research in the tradition of Conversation Analysis (CA). As noted, Sacks points out that a story can be seen as an utterance which is "going to take more than a sentence" (1992: 224). Most importantly, he interprets narrative as "an attempt to control the floor over an extended series of utterances" and, hence, "an attempt to control a third slot in talk, from a first" (1992: 18) meaning, more plainly, an attempt to take every second turn. Taking into account that participants to conversational narrative fulfill different roles, the attempt described is the *narrator's* attempt. So, Sacks's observation of the 'every third slot, from a first' turntaking pattern entails the claim that in conversational narrative the *narrator* will take every third turn. This is no small claim. If the observation were valid, the recurrence of the 'every third slot, from a first' pattern would instantiate a remarkable diversion from ordinary turntaking. For among the rules postulated for such ordinary turntaking, we find: "Turn order is not fixed but varies" (Sacks

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et al. 1974: 701). Turn order is not fixed because it is "locally controlled (i.e. turn by turn)" (Sacks *et al.* 1974: 708) rather than pre-determined by some higher-order control mechanism overriding local control. Since control is exercised locally, that is, at every possible transition-relevance place, the rule effectively ensures that "at each such place any party to the conversation can speak next" (Sacks *et al.* 1974: 711). It should be obvious that the 'every third slot, from a first' pattern is in blatant violation of the 'no fixed turn order' rule: it represents precisely such a fixed order.

In this section I aim to test the empirical validity of Sacks's observation. That is, the research question I am going to examine is: Do narrators in conversational narrative control 'every third slot, from a first'? If the observation could be validated statistically, this would be evidence, not only that the 'no fixed turn order' rule postulated by Sacks and colleagues does not hold for conversational narrative, but also that turntaking in narrative is co-constructed in the sense of an agreement between participants to suspend ordinary turntaking for the duration of the story and concede the narrator privileged turntaking rights.

Before we approach the research question directly, some preparatory work is required. To begin with, more convenient terminology will be helpful. To get rid of the somewhat clumsy labeling of the postulated turn order pattern as the 'third slot, from a first' pattern, I will henceforth refer to it as the 'N-notN-N' pattern, with upper case 'N' standing for Narrator and 'notN' for any participant that is not the narrator, that is, any recipient type, Responsive Recipient (PRR) or Co-constructive Recipient (PRC), or a potential Co-Narrator (PNC). The N-notN-N pattern will have to be kept apart from what can be referred to as the 'n-notn-n' pattern, with lower case 'n,' which describes the control of the first and third turn slot, not by the narrator, but by any same speaker irrespective of participant role. The N-notN-N pattern thus represents a subtype of the n-notn-n pattern. Also, since the pattern (in either form) concerns the succession of three turns each, I propose to refer to the resulting turn sequences as 'turn trigrams.' In establishing the possible trigrams available, an important constraint is related to the fundamental rule that 'speaker change occurs' (see Sacks *et al.* 1974): the same speaker cannot, by definition, occupy two successive turns. That is, labeling speakers with letters, a trigram with the structure AAB is not conceivable. If A self-selects, for example, after a pause because no other participant has self-selected, the thus extended turn counts as one turn. However, the same speaker can re-occur in the same trigram if they occur in the trigram's boundary slots, that is, the first *and* last trigram slot (ABA or BAB), thus instantiating the n-notn-n pattern or, if that 'same speaker' is the narrator, the N-notN-N variety.

Further, a note on number of parties is required. As Sacks *et al.* (1974: 712) put it, "[n]umber of parties can vary" (1974: 701). That is, notwithstanding the fact that "the system favours . . . smaller numbers of participants" (1974:

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701), turntaking can, in principle, involve any number of participants equal to, or greater than, two. As regards the N-notN-N pattern in question it should be obvious that two-party conversation presents a special case. With only two participants to a conversation, speakers A and B, turn order cannot escape the pattern within the same narrative (unless in the highly infrequent case that the narrator role shifts from one participant to another). Sequences of three turns each allow for two possible turn-trigrams only, ABA and BAB. That is, the only turn-trigrams available necessarily conform to the pattern. In two-party talk, then, turn order is fixed by default. Sacks's observation of the N-notN-N pattern is therefore critical and, potentially, indicative of narrative, not in two-party conversation and not in two-party narrative where the pattern is inevitable, but in multi-party conversation and multi-party narrative only. The following analysis is therefore focussed to multi-party talk. Specifically, for practical reasons, it will be restricted to analyzing turn order patterning in *three-party* talk.

So far, we have looked at the N-notN-N pattern from the point of view of the narrator, who, according to Sacks, attempts to 'occupy every third turn from a first.' It is intriguing though to look at the pattern from the point of view of the recipients, of whom, in the case of three-party narrative, there are two. It will be clear that the narrator's attempt can only be successful given the two recipients' co-operation. Indeed, the N-notN-N pattern requires recipient cooperation in two ways. First, recipients need to cooperate with the narrator, by yielding them the floor each time a response has been produced. Second, they need to cooperate with one another by *each avoiding to respond* to the same narrator turn. If *both* recipients respond to the same turn by the narrator, the turn order pattern cannot be of the N-notN-N kind: both the second and third slot will be occupied by a recipient (R_1 or R_2) and the turn trigrams obtained will be N-R_1-R_2 or N-R_2-R_1. The N-notN-N pattern can only come into being if *exactly one* of the two recipients responds before the narrator re-enters the floor. If turn order generally is not fixed, the order of response turns relative to one another cannot be fixed either. That is, there should exist no 'rule' governing which of two recipients responds when. If, by contrast, turn order in narrative is fixed, with privileged rights to 'every third turn, from a first' given to the narrator, the order of response turns relative to each other must be 'fixed' to the extent that single-responses (i.e., only one recipient's response occurring between two narrator turns) are preferred over double-responses (i.e., two response turns in immediate succession).

Further, Sacks's (1992) observation of the N-notN-N pattern may clash with yet another crucial rule postulated for ordinary turntaking. If any party can take the turn at transition-relevance points, the 'no fixed turn order' rule entails that the "[r]elative distribution of turns is not specified in advance" (Sacks *et al.* 1974: 701). That is to say that since turn order is not predetermined, any overall distribution of turns, at any current point in a

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Table 3.1 *Possible turn trigrams in three-party conversational narrative*

Pattern	Trigrams starting with N	Trigrams starting with R_1	Trigrams starting with R_2
n=3	N-R_1-R_2	R_1-R_2-N	R_2-N-R_1
	N-R_2-R_1	R_1-N-R_2	R_2-R_1-N
n-notn-n/	N-R_1-N	R_1-N-R_1	R_2-R_1-R_2
N-notN-N	N-R_2-N	R_1-R_2-R_1	R_2-N-R_2

conversation, can result. However, given the N-notN-N pattern (i.e., assuming that the narrator controls 'every third turn, from a first'), turn distribution will inevitably be biased to the narrator. This is because recipients are allocated only 'second' turns. The restriction to second turns is unproblematic in two-party narrative where, given speaker change, turn distribution is equally divided between narrator and listener (whereas turn *size* may differ radically; see Section 3.3). In three-party talk, by contrast, with two recipients, second turns must be divided between the number of recipients: the likelihood for each of the two recipients to get the second turn is effectively halved. In four-party talk, with three recipients, the likelihood for each recipient decreases to a third, and so on. The N-notN-N pattern therefore most likely grants the narrator a greater turn share than their interlocutors. That is, if the N-notN-N pattern is distinctive of turn order in conversational narrative, this diversion from ordinary turn order in conversation will by necessity trigger a second diversion – one from ordinary turn distribution.

Moreover, a closer look is warranted at what turn order patterns are available beside the N-notN-N pattern. First, in a conversation with three participants – the main narrator (N), recipient 1 (R_1), and recipient 2 (R_2) – how many distinct trigrams can there be?

As shown in Table 3.1, in three-party talk, as many as 12 different trigrams are possible. Six of them (or 50%) match the n-notn-n pattern (see the lower two rows), where any one speaker regardless of role takes both the first and the third turn. Two of these n-notn-n trigrams represent a special configuration, viz. the N-notN-N pattern (shaded grey in the table), where the *narrator* occupies the first and third slot and which is the focus of this section. The six trigrams which account for the remaining 50% form a pattern too. They share the property that, unlike the n-notn-n/N-notN-N pattern where only two participants are involved, all three participants take turns. Technically, the pattern can be represented as n=3. Specifically, it can be seen that the above-mentioned case in which two successive recipient responses follow the narrator's turn can be instantiated in the form of two n=3 trigrams, viz. N-R_1-R_2 and N-R_2-R_1. A distinction might be made between recipient responses which are temporally consecutive (that is, which occur one after the other) and those occurring at the same time (that is, in

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overlap). For practical reasons, this distinction is not implemented here; all double-responses are treated as consecutive turns. In sum, the 12 different possible turn-trigrams fall into two distinct turn order patterns, n-notn-n or n=3; two n=3 trigrams represent double-response trigrams while two n-notn-n trigrams match the N-notN-N pattern.

Finally, a crucial question concerns the expected *proportion* of N-notN-N trigrams out of all trigrams in three-party stories. This proportion depends on the probability of occurrence of turns taken by the three participants. If we follow Sacks *et al.*'s (1974) above-mentioned postulates for turn order and turn distribution (that neither turn order nor turn distribution are predetermined in advance), the probabilities are, in principle, equal for all three speakers. That is, the chances for each of the three participants N, R_1, and R_2 to occupy the first slot of the first turn trigram are $1/3 = 0.33$. Once that first slot is taken, given that the same speaker cannot occupy two successive slots, the probability of occurrence increases to $1/2 = 0.5$. To illustrate, since recipients too can take the first turn in a story by initiating or eliciting its telling, the chances that N gets the first turn are 0.33.[2] In that case, the chances that R_1 gets the second turn are 0.5 given that only one competitor is left, viz. R_2. The same logic, and probability, applies to any further turn. Based on these assumptions, a random simulation was performed in R for three distinct speakers taking a total of 10,000 turns. The simulation cuts a distinct 'path' into the web of all possible turn combinations, records the resulting 9,998 trigrams and computes the proportion of N-notN-N trigrams out of all trigrams in that simulation. The process was repeated 100 times and the mean proportion of N-notN-N trigrams for all 100 simulations was computed. It turned out that this mean proportion was 16.67694%. I will round this figure to 17%.[3]

This proportion is decisive in that it constitutes a benchmark value against which the proportions obtained in three-party narrative will be assessed in the analyses below. Note that the same proportion, viz. 17%, is expected for the two double-response trigrams taken together (N-R_1-R_2 and N-R_2-R_1).

Given these orientations, the hypotheses to be tested can be formulated thus:

H_0: In three-party narratives, the true proportion of N-notN-N trigrams is smaller than, or equal to, 17%.

H_1: In three-party narratives, the true proportion of N-notN-N trigrams is greater than 17%.

3.2.2 Data and methods

Given the largely technical nature of the research question, it will be useful to begin with an illustrative example. Consider text KE1-N1. There are three participants, two males, aged 17 and 30, and a third participant whose personal details are unknown. Speaker IDs are replaced by N, R_1, and R_2.

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(3.1) "Recording session" (Type: T30/Embed Level: ES)

CPR
(. . .)
CNN

1	N	PNP	No, it was true [unclear] yesterday.
2	R_2	PRR	Aha.
3	N	PNP	[unclear] his mate says ^{QSZ} [^{MDD}it's his birthday and his dad paid for a recording session somewhere.]
4	R_2	PRC	Eh?
5	N	PNP	[^{MDD} For a hired a studio for three hours.]
6	R_1	PRR	Och! Sod off!
7	R_2	PRR	Yeah?
8	N	PNP	And he said ^{QSD} [^{MII} they've made] [unclear]
9	R_1	PRR	Having a laugh!
10	N	PNP	[^{MII} as much stuff as possible,] all these guitars!
11	R_2	PRR	[belch]
12	N	PNP	Well your man, your man, the guitars [unclear].
13	R_2	PRR	[laugh]
14	R_1	PRR	Ah! Fuck!
15	N	PNP	Er er
16	R_1	PRC	Where did he get them from?
17	N	PNP	Ah, he just scrounged them off of me.

CPO
(. . .)
(KE1-N1)

First, note that turn distribution is strikingly unequal: N has 8 turns, R_1 has 4, and R_2 has 5. As said earlier, if the N-notN-N pattern is to play a leading role in turn order in conversational narrative, the narrator's turn share must be greater than each recipient's. So, as regards text KE1-N1, chances are that the N-notN-N pattern is indeed important. What structure does the text have in terms of turn trigrams? Since we are specifically interested, not in the turns' content, but in turn-sequential patterning, we can strip the text of its words and, to identify the turn trigrams, record separately every three consecutive Ids representing three consecutive turns. The resulting 15 turn trigrams are shown in Table 3.2: sequences that match the N-notN-N pattern are shaded grey; double-responses are framed.

We see that 5 out of 15 trigrams match the N-notN-N pattern. The proportion obtained for the pattern is hence 5/15 = 33%. This is clearly higher than the proportion of 17% expected under the H_o. We do not know though whether the difference is *significant*, that is, whether it is merely due

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Table 3.2 *Turn trigrams in KE1-N1*

Turns	Trigram	Pattern
1–2–3	N-R_2-N	N-notN-N
2–3–4	R_2-N-R_2	n-notn-n
3–4–5	N-R2-N	N-notN-N
4–5–6	R2-N-R1	n=3
5–6–7	N-R_1-R_2	n=3
6–7–8	R_1-R_2-N	n=3
7–8–9	R_2-N-R_1	n=3
8–9–10	N-R1-N	N-notN-N
9–10–11	R_1-N-R_2	n=3
10–11–12	N-R2-N	N-notN-N
11–12–13	R_2-N-R_2	N-notN-N
12–13–14	N-R2-R1	n=3
13–14–15	R_2-R_1-N	n=3
14–15–16	R_1-N-R_1	N-notN-N
15–16–17	N-R1-N	N-notN-N

to chance or a reflection of a general trend in three-party narrative. Table 3.2 also shows that double-response trigrams occur twice, once realized as N-R_1-R_2 and once as N-R_2-R_1, together accounting for 2/12 = 17%, exactly the proportion expected under the H_0. To approach the question of significance, a larger sample of three-party narratives will be examined.

To increase the sample size, the NC was searched for narratives fulfilling four conditions, expressed in the for clause in the XQuery below (see the first five lines): narratives (i) which are first- or third-person experience stories (@narrativeType,'o'), (ii) which are at least 6 turns (count(descendant::u)>5) long, (iii) which do not contain an embedded narrative (@embedLevel='EN'), and (iv) which do not enclose any utterance with a non-narrative or unclear participant role attribute value (@Participation_roles,'PX'). Condition (i) (first- and third-person experience story) was set, first, to control for narrative subgenre and, second, because personal experience stories are widely seen as the prototypical type of narrative. Condition (ii) (minimal length of 6 turns) ensures that the narratives included contain a minimum of 4 trigrams (the total number of turns minus 2). Condition (iii) (no embedded narratives) guarantees constancy of the narrator role (the narrator of an embedded story is in most cases a recipient of the embedding story). Condition (iv) (no PXX- or PXo-tagged turns) disallows narratives containing turns which have no clear, or no topical, relation to the story. Finally, since the focus is on three-party conversational narrative, the where clause (line 9 in the XQuery code) specifies that the number of distinctly identifiable speakers in each narrative is 3. Likewise, for each turn in each of the stories selected, both the story title was retrieved (as a

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means of identification to which story a turn belonged) and, more importantly, the tag assigned for participant role (PNP, PNC, PRR, or PRC).

```
for $narr in //seg[@Components='CNN' and ancestor::div[ends-
        with(@narrativeType,'o')] and count(descendant::u)>5 and
        not(descendant::div[@embedLevel='EN']) and
        not(descendant::u[starts-
        with(@Participation_roles,'PX')])]
let $title := //div[@title and child::seg[.=$narr]]
for $u in //u[ancestor::seg[.=$narr]]
let $part_role := $u[@Participation_roles]
let $speakers := distinct-values($narr//u/@who)
where count($speakers[ends-with(.,'UNK')])=0 and
   count($speakers)=3
return
        concat(string-join($title//div[@title]/string(@title),' '),string-
        join($u[@who]/string(@who),' '),string-
        join($part_role//u[@Participation_roles]/string
           (@Participation_roles),' '))
```

A total of 21 three-party stories matched the above criteria. Upon inspection, it turned out that in two stories the role of the main narrator (PNP) 'wandered' (that is, two distinct speakers took turns as the main narrator). To ensure speaker-narrator match, the two stories were removed from the sample. The final sample thus contains 19 three-party stories.

3.2.3 Results

As noted above, turn order is intimately linked to turn distribution. If turn order is significantly skewed towards the N-notN-N pattern this will inevitably go hand in hand with a skew towards increased turn shares for the narrator and decreased turn shares for the recipients.

The participants in the 19-story sample take together 232 turns. Their distribution is skewed as expected: the narrators take together 107 turns (46%), while those recipients who respond first in the narratives (R_1) have together 68 turns (29%) and those responding in second place (R_2) have 57 turns (25%). Given that, based on Sacks *et al.*'s 'no fixed turn distribution' premise, turns should be distributed equally between the three participants, according to a chi-squared test for given probabilities, these differences are highly significant (X-squared = 17.85, df = 2, p-value = 0.00013).[4] Thus, contrary to Sacks *et al.*'s (1974) postulate, in three-party narrative, turn distribution is skewed towards the narrator. Due to the close linkage between turn distribution and turn order, this finding is a strong indication that turn order will be biased towards the N-notN-N pattern.

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As noted above, turn order in three-party narrative is best investigated in terms of turn trigrams. 194 such trigrams were identified in the data, of which 20 were double-response trigrams, whereas 66 trigrams matched the N-notN-N pattern.

The 20 double-response trigrams account for 10% of all trigrams. As noted, given that the N-R_1-R_2 and N-R_2-R_1 trigrams are two out of 12 possible trigrams in three-party narrative (see Table 3.2), their expected proportion is, like for N-notN-N trigrams, 17%. According to a 1-sample proportions test, this difference in proportion is significant (X-squared = 5.69, df = 1, p-value = 0.017); the confidence interval (CI) (see below) is between 0.07 and 0.16.[5] That is, the true proportion of double-response trigrams is between 7% and 16%, which is below the expected 17%. This indicates that responses to the narrator's turn given by both recipients, occurring either at the same time or consecutively, are significantly *underrepresented*: instead of both of them responding, recipients more commonly take turns at producing responses. The significant result is another strong indication that turn order will be biased towards the N-notN-N pattern and that N-notN-N trigrams will account for a significant share of all trigrams.

The numbers of all trigrams and N-notN-N trigrams per story are listed in Table 3.3:

Table 3.3 *Number of trigrams and N-notN-N trigrams in data (21 three-party narratives)*

Story title (short)	Total number of trigrams	Number of N-notN-N trigrams	Proportion N-notN-N in %
Embarrassing	4	2	50
New bike	4	1	25
Old cricket	4	2	50
Old friend	4	2	50
Teenage	4	2	50
Emma	5	3	60
Tarmacked	5	3	60
Elly	6	2	33
Pushed	6	3	50
One hour	7	1	14
Roaring	9	5	56
Spilled	10	5	50
Stew	12	6	50
BNC	14	2	14
Sleep	14	6	43
Recording	15	5	33
Voucher	15	5	33
Bingo	21	3	14
Malham	35	8	23
Total	*194*	*66*	*34*

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The data in Table 3.3 are presented in ascending order of the total number of trigrams per story (see column 2). The number of trigrams that conform to the N-notN-N pattern is given in column 3, column 4 gives the corresponding percentage value. Note that the maximum percentage value for the N-notn-N pattern is 60%. As can be seen, a good number of the percentage values in Table 3.3 are within proximity of that maximal range. The total of 66 N-notN-N trigrams accounts for 34% of all trigrams in the sample – twice as much as assumed under the H_o, where the expected proportion was 17%. Also, the data in the table reveal a curious tendency: as the number of trigrams per story increases (see column 2), the share the N-notN-N trigrams have in them (expressed as a percentage) seems to decrease. This suggests that the two variables may be negatively correlated.

To test for this possibility, Kendall's correlation test was chosen (see Gries 2009b: 144) to account for the non-normal distribution of the two variables.[6] Generally, correlation tests calculate a correlation coefficient ranging from -1 to +1, "where the extremes indicate perfect correlation and 0 means no correlation" (Dalgaard 2008: 120). According to the test, Kendall's correlation coefficient τ is -0.41. That is, it is smaller than 0, suggesting that the two variables *are* correlated; the strength of the correlation though is modest in that the coefficient is slightly closer to 0, the value indicating that there is no correlation at all, than 1, the value indicating perfect correlation. The p-value = 0.026 indicates that the correlation is significant. Moreover, the negative coefficient indicates that the variables are negatively correlated: the number of N-notN-N trigrams decreases as the total number of trigrams in a story increases. The negativity of the correlation is brought out by a linear regression, plotted in Figure 3.1, where the regression line exhibits a very clear downward slope.

The correlation is undoubtedly an interesting discovery, which I will discuss below, but it does not help address the central question of whether the N-notN-N pattern is statistically significant in three-party narrative. What we have so far are two critical figures. First, under the H_o, N-notN-N trigrams are expected to account for 17% of all trigrams. Second, in the sample, N-notN-N trigrams account for 34% of all trigrams. The question then is whether this difference in proportion is large enough to justify rejecting the H_o.

One obvious method to answer this question is the 1-sample proportions test with continuity correction (e.g., Dalgaard 2008: 146, Gries 2009b: 126). It essentially computes a 95% confidence interval (CI) for the 'true' proportion. CIs take into account sampling variability (see Woods *et al.* 1986: 96) (that is, the variability due to the fact that, in the present case, a new sample of three-party stories will produce a different proportion of N-notN-N trigrams than exactly 34%) and estimate "a likely range within which the population value may lie" (Woods *et al.* 1986: 96). Further, given that we have a prior value that we want to test for, viz. 17%, the null probability was set to 0.17.[7]

The test's results are straightforward: the difference in proportion is very highly significant (p-value = 5.111e-10) and the CI spans between 0.28 and 0.41.

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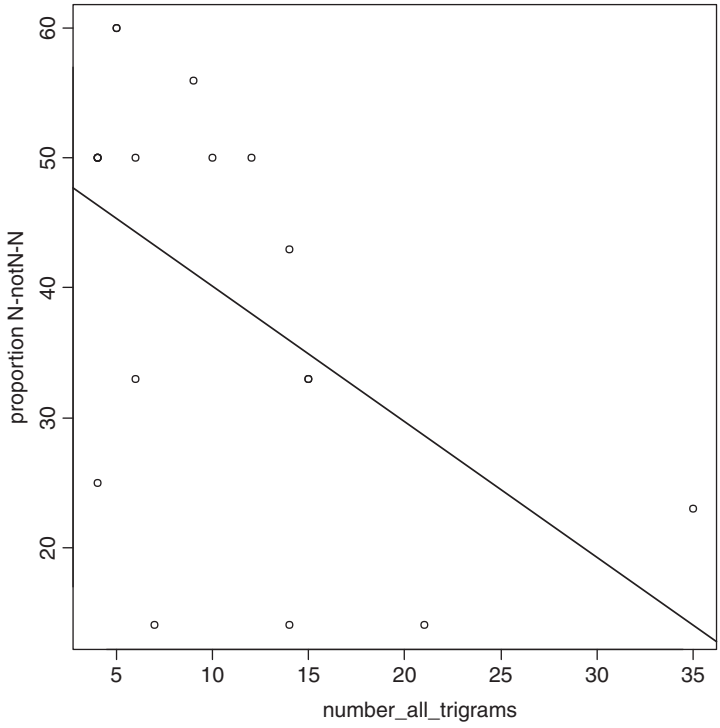


Figure 3.1 Linear regression model of the proportions of N-notN-N trigrams as a function of all trigrams per story

That is, the proportion of N-notN-N trigrams which can, with 95% confidence, be considered true in the population of three-party narratives lies somewhere between 28% and 41%. The proportion suggested by the H_o was 17% – a value not included in the CI. To double-check, a bootstrap was performed (for more details on this method, see Section 4.3).[8] The bootstrap's result fully confirmed the result of the proportions test.[9] Hence, N-notN-N trigrams are significantly more frequent than assumed under the H_o. We can justifiably reject the H_o and accept the H_1: the proportion of N-notN-N trigrams is greater than 17%. That is, Sacks's (1992) interpretation of narrative as an attempt by the narrator to 'control every third slot, from a first' is valid.

3.2.4 Discussion

The previous section reported four findings, one related to turn distribution and three to turn order in three-party narrative. They are discussed in the following.

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As regards turn distribution, it was found that, in three-party narrative, narrators consistently get significantly larger turn shares than any one recipient. A clear diversion was observed from turn distribution in ordinary conversation, where turn distribution is, according to Sacks *et al.* (1974), not specified in advance. In three-party narrative, turn distribution is specified a priori: the arrangement is for the narrator to get the lion's share in turns. Turn distribution is interactively achieved: participants cooperate in giving the narrator preferential access to the floor.

As regards turn order, it was found, first, that the N-notN-N pattern is significantly overrepresented; second, the proportions of N-notN-N trigrams are negatively correlated with the total number of trigrams in stories; and, third, double-response trigrams are significantly underrepresented.

The significant frequency of the 'every third slot, from a first' (N-notN-N) pattern suggests that in three-party narrative, participants co-construct turn order in a way which contrasts starkly with ordinary turntaking, where turn order is locally controlled and, because of its local control, not fixed but varied (see Sacks *et al.* 1974). In conversational three-party narrative, turn order is globally controlled, viz. in relation to the storytelling event, and predetermined, viz. with preferential allocation of third turns, from firsts, to the narrator.

However, global control and predetermination of turn order are negatively correlated with turn number per story. The negative correlation suggests that the strength of the N-notN-N pattern, and hence global control and predetermination of turn order, depend on the number of turns taken within the storytelling process: the more turns are taken while a story is being told, the more often the narrator does not occupy every first and third turn slot in trigrams; or, the reverse, the fewer turns are taken, the more frequently the narrator occupies the boundary slots in turn trigrams. Inasmuch as the number of turns taken in storytelling is correlated with story length, the association can be reformulated thus: the shorter the story, the stronger is the N-notN-N pattern; the longer the story, the weaker is the pattern. Seen from the point of view of interaction the negative correlation suggests that the N-notN-N pattern is at its best in brief narrative interaction, while sustained interaction leads to its decay. It seems then that, in three-party narrative, the turn order pattern the participants typically start out from is the N-notN-N pattern where the narrator gets privileged rights to take third turns, from firsts; the longer the story grows and the longer the interaction between the participants is sustained, the more likely a return to the turn order pattern typical of ordinary conversation becomes, where turn order is not predetermined. One reason for N-notN-N decay as a function of sustained interaction may be that the pattern is a *diversion* from the ordinary turn order patterning, which, by virtue of being the default pattern, is more deeply entrenched and hence psychologically more powerful than the N-notN-N pattern. The default turn order is only temporarily supplanted; the more turns are taken, the more the divergent pattern is pushed aside and the default pattern re-instantiated.

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The underrepresentation of double-response trigrams, finally, is another striking finding for it suggests close cooperation, not only between recipients and narrator, but also between the two recipients. The N-notN-N pattern presupposes that the narrator is allowed to return to the floor each time, not *both* recipients have, but just *one* of them has produced a response. The fact that $N\text{-}R_1\text{-}R_2$ and $N\text{-}R_2\text{-}R_1$ trigrams occur significantly less frequently than expected under the H_o suggests that recipients seek to *avoid* double-responding and, instead, give preference to single-responding. To achieve this end, there must exist a mutual orientation between the recipients; if they did not orient to one another, monitoring in some way each other's likely or current actions, double responses would inevitably occur more frequently. As regards minimal, telling/tale-related (PRR) responses mainly functioning to register the recipient's listening and understanding as well as signal the recipients' willingness to allow turn continuation (see Section 1.3), it makes some sense to assume that the recipients' mutual orientation is based on an agreement according to which one recipient's token of listenership is taken as functionally sufficient a signal for both recipients: if the signal has the desired effect – to encourage the narrator to carry on – no need is felt by the second recipient to signal their understanding too. Recipients thus coordinate their behavior, thereby establishing what could be called an 'economy of listening': one recipient's registering their listenership suffices to co-register the other recipient's listening as well.

The overall success of the N-notN-N pattern is no small achievement, for two reasons. First, the success is based on two premises, viz. the reversal of Sacks *et al.*'s (1974) rule that turn distribution is not fixed and on fine-tuned cooperation between recipients to avoid double responses. Moreover, the achievement lies in the fact that the varied turn order of ordinary conversation is suspended (see Goodwin & Heritage 1990, Sacks 1992) and exchanged for a much more constrained turn order although this turn order decisively advantages the narrator and disadvantages the recipients and although turns are a valued resource in conversation participants normally compete for (e.g., Coulthard 1977). The switch from the default, varied turn order to a temporary, constrained turn order presupposes the participants' willingness to accept the temporary disadvantage in turn order. In other words, we observe an agreement between participants to allocate turn resources specifically to one of them thereby withdrawing resources from others.

3.2.5 Summary

In this case study I have been concerned with patterns of turn order in conversational narrative. The aim has been to examine the empirical and statistical validity of Sacks's (1992) observation that narrators attempt to control 'every third slot, from a first,' an observation which concerns multi-party narrative but not two-party narrative (where this turn pattern is inevitable).

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For practical reasons I limited the analysis to three-party narratives. Since the turn pattern in question involves the succession of three turns each, the analysis was geared towards what I referred to as turn trigrams. The turn order pattern corresponding to Sacks's observation was labeled the N-notN-N pattern (with N standing for narrator), which can be instantiated, in three-party narrative, in the form of two trigrams, N-R_1-N and N-R_2-N (with R_1 and R_2 standing for the two recipients). Given that the N-notN-N pattern implicates that turns are preferentially distributed to the narrator and that recipients avoid double-responses, attention was also paid to turn distribution and to how recipients cooperate in taking response turns.

Starting from a close analysis of the turn trigrams found in a single narrative, I widened the database by extracting from the NC an exhaustive set of personal experience three-party narratives, fulfilling a number of strict conditions. A sample of 19 narratives was thus extracted and analyzed for turn distribution and turn trigrams.

A number of closely intertwined findings were made. First, as expected, turns were found to be distributed with a significant skew towards the narrator, who gets the lion's share in turns. Second, the N-notN-N trigrams accounted for a much larger proportion, viz. 34%, than expected under the H_o, where the expected proportion was 17%. The significance of this difference in proportion was confirmed by two tests, a proportions test and a bootstrap: in either case, the confidence interval excluded the stipulated 17% but included the 34% found in the sample. The results thus fully confirm Sacks's observation: the N-notN-N pattern occurs with significantly greater than random frequency; that is, narrators indeed succeed in gaining control over 'every third turn, from a first.' The decay of the N-notN-N pattern in stories with more extensive turntaking was seen in relation to the *divergent* nature of the pattern, which can only supplant the default pattern temporarily. Further, it was discovered that the N-notN-N pattern is negatively correlated with the total number of trigrams per story: the proportions of N-notN-N trigrams in the stories decrease as the numbers of trigrams in the stories increase. Finally, it was found that, to ensure that the narrator gets every third turn, from a first, the two recipients coordinate their turntaking economically: instead of both recipients responding to any one narrator turn either in overlap to one another or in two adjacent turns, recipients 'take turns' at producing responses: double-responses are avoided, preference is given to single-responses. It was hypothesized that, to achieve this 'economy of listening', recipients must cooperate, closely monitoring each other's behavior. Precisely how the economy of listening is achieved and whether it is also achieved in narrative with more than three participants, is a rewarding objective for future research.

The significance of the N-notN-N pattern suggests an agreement between all three participants to suspend ordinary turn order patterning and grant the narrator privileged turn order rights. The local (turn-by-turn) control of

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ordinary turn order is overridden by some higher control mechanism. I assume that this higher-order mechanism is the speech act, for the production of a story can be seen as a global, or narrative, speech act (see van Dijk & Kintsch 1983; but see Searle's (1975: 323) critique of the notion of 'narrative speech act'): the act of relating a sequence of events to and with recipients. Granting the narrator privileged turn order rights is strategic: it ensures that he/she can perform the speech act in due time; the earlier the narrator has completed the narrative speech act the earlier a return to 'free' turntaking becomes possible, where turns are locally ordered and distributed.

In the following section, I investigate whether co-construction can be observed with yet another turntaking measure, namely turn size.

3.3 Co-construction of turn size

3.3.1 Introduction

One of Sacks *et al.*'s (1974) fundamental rules for turntaking concerns turn size; Sacks and his collaborators state that "[t]urn size is not fixed, but varies" (Sacks *et al.* 1974: 701). Note that the rule is formulated for conversation. In the previous section, we saw that Sacks *et al.*'s rule according to which the succession of speakers (turn order) is not predetermined, does *not* hold for conversational narrative. It is, then, consistent to ask: To what extent does the rule for turn *size* hold for conversational narrative? Or, to put it more specifically, can a similar agreement between recipients and narrators be observed as for turn order, such that narrators are granted long turns while recipients take short turns thus ensuring sizable and homogeneous fluctuation of turn size? If we were to find such turn size fluctuation due to a systematic imbalance in turn size between narrators and recipients this would not be surprising for two reasons.

First, narrative turns have been observed to 'outsize' general conversational turns. For example, Ochs & Capps (2001: 37) note that "[e]xtended turn length by a principal teller is a distinguishing feature of many personal narratives." Similar observations have been reported in conversation analytical work (e.g., Jefferson 1978, Sacks 1992). Also, it will be remembered from Section 2.2.2 that, in the NC, narrator utterances were observed to outscore recipient utterances significantly in terms of length.

Second, the imbalance in turn size would reflect the epistemic imbalance that holds between narrator and recipient. In stories which are 'new' to the listeners in the sense that they are unfamiliar with the events reported therein, the narrators of personal stories who share their experience, or that of a third-person with the listeners for the first time, have an epistemic advantage over the listeners: they know of the events, either by own experience (first-person experience) or by hearsay (third-person experience), while the recipient does not have privileged knowledge of them. This advantage

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may be expected to translate into greater turn size on the part of the narrator and lesser turn size on the part of the recipient(s), at least in cases where their responses are restricted to, as Sacks remarks, "'Mm hm's, 'Uh huh's, whatever else they put in" (Sacks 1992: 18).

I therefore assume that extended turn size by principal teller, coupled to minimal turn size by recipient as well as constancy of fluctuation between them is especially characteristic of personal experience narratives. I also assume that, unlike the N-notN-N pattern, which was observed to be indicative only of multi-party narrative, turn size fluctuation should be indicative of narrative regardless of number of participants. However, for space considerations, the analysis presented in the following will be limited to two-party narratives.

3.3.2 Data and methods

To initially approach the data under consideration and illustrate the issue at stake, consider (3.2), a first-person narrative involving two speakers; see Appendix 2 for the full text including the pre-narrative (CPR) and post-narrative (CPO) components:

(3.2) "Tax" (Type: T10/Embed Level: ES)
(. . .)
CNN
CNI

#1	S1	PNP	And of course, now they when we originally moved in here [^{MSS}we asked about the rates] and they said ^{QSD} [^{MII}oh they co they wouldn't raise it because it was an unfinished project]
#2	S2	PRR	Yeah.
#3	S1	PNP	[^{MII} and nobody had paid rates, and they wouldn't pay rates until they'd actually finished building on the land opposite.]
#4	S2	PRR	Yeah.
#5	S1	PNP	Anyway, when the accountant came in to do the books he said ^{QSD} er, oh he said ^{QSD} [^{MDD}you've got to pay something.] So he said^{QSD} , [^{MDD}I'll get onto them myself.] Anyway, apparently, [^{MSS}he was told exactly the same thing as I was told]
#6	S2	PRR	Yeah.
#7	S1	PNP	but of course, it had kind of stirred up a hornets' nest! Next thing they were down with the measuring up and we'd just got a four thousand pound rate bill! And, they've

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			actually rated it at ten and a half thousand erm payable
#8	S2	PRR	Yeah.
#9	S1	PNP	three thousand eight, and of course, well Neil said [QSD[MDD there's VAT, I didn't think you had to pay VAT on rates?]
CNF			
#10	S2	PRC	I didn't, I didn't, you know, I don't
#11	S1	PNP	You know?
#12	S2	PRR	Yeah.
(KB9-N2)			

In (3.2), the number of turns in the two non-narrative components CPR (pre-narrative) and CPO (post-narrative) is 15 each (see Appendix 2); the number of turns in the narrative component CNN is 12. The first step in analyzing turn size fluctuation in this excerpt is to count the number of words in each turn. The results are shown in Table 3.4. The table also gives the turn size fluctuation (TSF) coefficients discussed in more detail below.

A cursory look at the figures for number of words per turn in Table 3.4 shows that there are a number of very long turns in the narrative component CNN, indeed much longer (the longest turn for example, turn #7, contains 47 words) than the longest turns in CPR and CPO (the longest turns in CPR and CPO are turn #4 with 29 words and, respectively, turn #10 with 22 words). Also, while there are many one-word turns in all three components, the alternation between (very) short turns and (very) long turns is much more regular in CNN than in the non-narrative components.

Table 3.4 *Number of words per turn and TSF coefficients in the pre-narrative (CPR), narrative (CNN), and post-narrative (CPO) components of text KB9-N2*

Turn #	CPR	TSF coeff.	CNN	TSF coeff.	CPO	TSF coeff.
#1	4		33		11	
#2	1	0.60	1	0.94	1	0.83
#3	14	0.87	21	0.91	14	0.87
#4	29	0.35	1	0.91	1	0.87
#5	1	0.93	44	0.96	10	0.82
#6	11	0.83	1	0.96	1	0.82
#7	1	0.83	47	0.96	14	0.87
#8	5	0.67	1	0.96	2	0.75
#9	2	0.43	27	0.93	10	0.67
#10	13	0.73	11	0.42	22	0.38
#11	14	0.04	2	0.69	1	0.91
#12	5	0.47	1	0.33	8	0.78
#13	7	0.17			10	0.11
#14	1	0.75			21	0.35
#15	4	0.60			1	0.91

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$$\frac{(N_i - N_{[i+1]})}{(N_i + N_{[i+1]})}$$

Figure 3.2 Turn size fluctuation formula adapted from Leech and Fallon (1992) (N: number of words; i: turn number)

To bring out the fluctuation pattern underlying the text components more clearly, I adapted Leech and Fallon's (1992) difference coefficient formula. It compresses large differences into values ranging between 0 and 1, thus making them more easily comparable.

What we obtain from applying the formula in Figure 3.2 are coefficients of turn size fluctuation, henceforth TSF. As noted, the TSF coefficients for text KB9-N2 are included in Table 3.4 above. Note that, for the present purpose of measuring TSF, only the *size* of the coefficient is relevant, whereas the *sign* is irrelevant. Negative coefficients were therefore converted into positive ones. To illustrate the procedure, the TSF coefficient for turns #1 and #2 in CNN is calculated thus: (number of words in turn #1 minus number of words in turn #2) divided by (number of words in turn #1 plus number of words in turn #2):

(33 – 1) / (33 + 1) = 32 / 34 = 0.94

Importantly, TSF coefficients do not measure the length of individual turns. Rather, each individual TSF coefficient reflects the length of one turn *in relation* to the length of the immediately preceding turn. Coefficients are thus a measure of turn bigrams. Consider this excerpt from the above used text KB9-N2, where the lengths and coefficients but not the words are given:

(3.3) "Tax" (Type: T10 / Embed Level: ES)

	CNN CNI			N	Coeff.
	#1	S1	PNP	33	
→	#2	S2	PRR	1	0.94
	#3	S1	PNP	21	0.91
→	#4	S2	PRR	1	0.91

Compare, for example, the coefficients for the two arrowed PRR responses (#2 and #4) in (3.3): although the two responses have the same length (1 word), the coefficient for the first response (0.94) is greater than the coefficient for the second (0.91). This is because the narrator's turn preceding the first response is longer (33 words) than the narrator's turn (21 words) preceding the second response. As noted earlier (see Section 1.3) in the NC annotation scheme, the two recipient roles and the role of Co-narrator were assigned on a turn-by-turn basis; that is, the assignment of the role depended on what the utterance 'does' in relation to the preceding utterance. This

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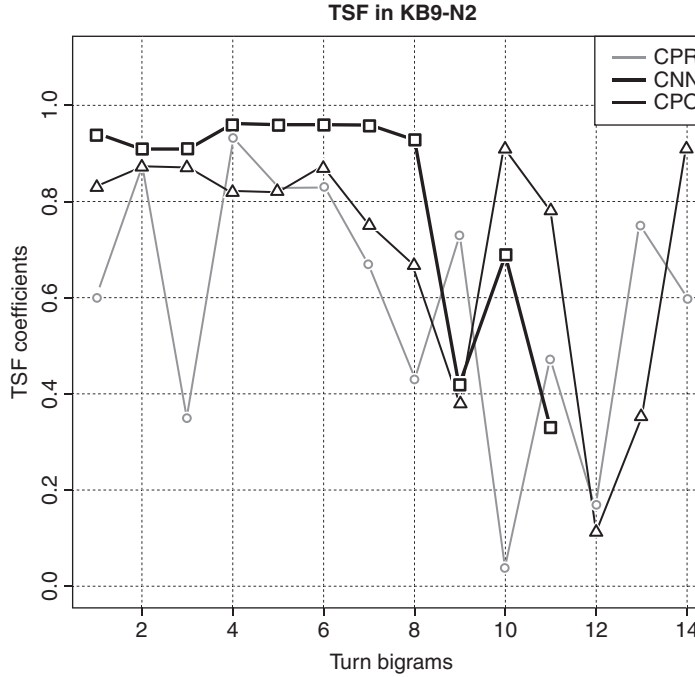


Figure 3.3 TSF coefficients for text KB9-N2; CPR: pre-narrative; CNN: narrative; CPO: post-narrative components

preceding role is, by definition (since we are dealing with two-party narrative and since the unclear and non-narrative roles were discarded), the role of narrator, either in the incarnation of Primary Narrator (PNP) or Supported Narrator (PNS). In other words, all TSF coefficients obtained for the roles of (i) PRR, (ii) PRC, and (iii) PNC reflect the relation between the length of turns by these roles and the length of the preceding (Primary or Supported) narrator's turn. This association of TSF with participant role will be key in the analysis below.

Figure 3.3 depicts the TSF coefficients for the three components of text KB9-N2 as line plots. It can be seen that the coefficients for the narrative (CNN) component diverge from the coefficients for the pre-narrative (CPR) and post-narrative (CPO) components on two counts: (i) the coefficient values for CNN are greater (only bigrams #9-#10, #10-#11 and #11-#12 have small coefficients), and (ii) they exhibit less dispersion (or, positively, greater homogeneity) among each other: the values remain almost level throughout the first 9 turn pairs; again, only the last three bigrams see a noticeable drop. Observation (i), that the coefficient values for CNN are, on

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Table 3.5 *Medians and IQRs for components of text KB9-N2; CPR: pre-narrative, CNN: narrative, CPO: post-narrative components*

	CPR	CNN	CPO
median	0.63	0.93	0.81
IQR	0.37	0.15	0.18

the whole, larger, is supported by a comparison of the medians, a measure of the 'typical' value which is less affected by occasional extreme values than the more commonly known arithmetic mean and which is therefore more robust (see Woods *et al.* 1986: 32).[10] Observation (ii), that the coefficients for CNN are more homogeneous, is supported by a comparison of the interquartile ranges (IQR), a measure of dispersion that helps when the data contain outliers (as is the case particularly for CNN, whose last three coefficients markedly diverge from the rest of the distribution). The IQR expresses "the length of the interval around the median that includes about half of the data" (Gries 2009a: 204).

The median for CNN (0.93) is much greater than the one for CPR (0.63) and it is still greater, but much less markedly, than the median for CPO (0.81). The IQR for CNN (0.15) is clearly much smaller than the IQR for CPR (0.37) and also slightly smaller than the IQR for CPO (0.18). This suggests that within the range of the 50% of the distribution around the median, the homogeneity of the distribution for CNN is remarkable; while the data in CPO is only slightly less homogeneous, the distribution for CPR is very largely heterogeneous.[11]

To what extent can we generalize from the observations made on a single text to the population of conversational narrative as a whole? To generalize, a statistical test of significance is warranted and, as a sufficient basis for that test, inspection of a much larger sample is required.

At first, explicit hypotheses are required. In analyzing text KB9-N2, we observed that turn size was subject to fluctuation which was both (i) sizable in terms of the coefficient values obtained and (ii) regular in terms of the homogeneity of the coefficients. If we assume that these observations hold not only for a single but for most two-party narratives, the hypotheses can be formulated thus:

H_0: In two-party conversational narrative, TSF is equally, or less, sizable and equally, or less, homogeneous in the narrative components CNN than in the enclosing conversational components CPR and CPO.

H_1: In two-party conversational narrative, TSF is more sizable and more homogeneous in the narrative components CNN than in the enclosing conversational components CPR and CPO.

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Obviously, 'sizable' and 'homogeneous' are relative terms that can take on a wide range of values. I will operationalize TSF *size* in terms of the central tendency of the data expressed in the median value and TSF *homogeneity* in terms of the length of the Q_1–Q_3 interval around the median expressed as the IQR. Further, I set the reference values, for median, at $\mu_o = 0.75$ and, for IQR, at 0.25.[12]

XQueries were instructed to retrieve turn lengths from texts that satisfied four criteria:[13] find among all narrative components (CNN) those (i) which are tagged as personal experience stories (T10 or T30), (ii) which are more than 7 turns long, (iii) which do not contain an embedded narrative (EN), and (iv) which do not enclose any non-narrative or unclear participant role (PX). Condition (i) was set to avoid the influence of narrative subgenres such as, for example, fantasies, which should be considered atypical in that fantasies "construct a fictional world" (Norrick 2000: 161) and where the construction is in principle shared equally between participants, most typically between a Primary Narrator (PNP) and a Co-narrator (PNC), and where hence no regular and sizable fluctuation will be expected to occur (see below). Condition (ii) (minimal length is 8 turns) was imposed because of the difficulty to detect regular patterning of TSF in narratives consisting of insufficient numbers of turns; given the minimum of 8 turns in the story, the number of TSF coefficients for each narrative was at least 7 – a number from which patterning (or lack thereof) of TSF can reasonably well be observed. Conditions (iii) and (iv) served to exclude those types of intervening turns that are (potentially) unrelated to the story and whose inclusion might hide the otherwise regular TSF in the transcript of which they are a part. To ensure that genuine two-party conversational narratives were targeted one further criterion was that the number of distinctly identifiable speakers had to be exactly two.

3.3.3 Results

The XQueries retrieved 43 first-person experience (T10) stories and 10 third-person experience (T30) stories that satisfied these criteria. Table 3.6 gives an overview of the data:

Table 3.6 *Data analyzed for turn size fluctuation (TSF); CPR: pre-narrative, CNN: narrative, CPO: post-narrative components*

	Number of components	Number of turns	Number of coefficients
CPR	58	854	796
CNN	53	779	726
CPO	72	1003	931
Total	183	2,636	2,453

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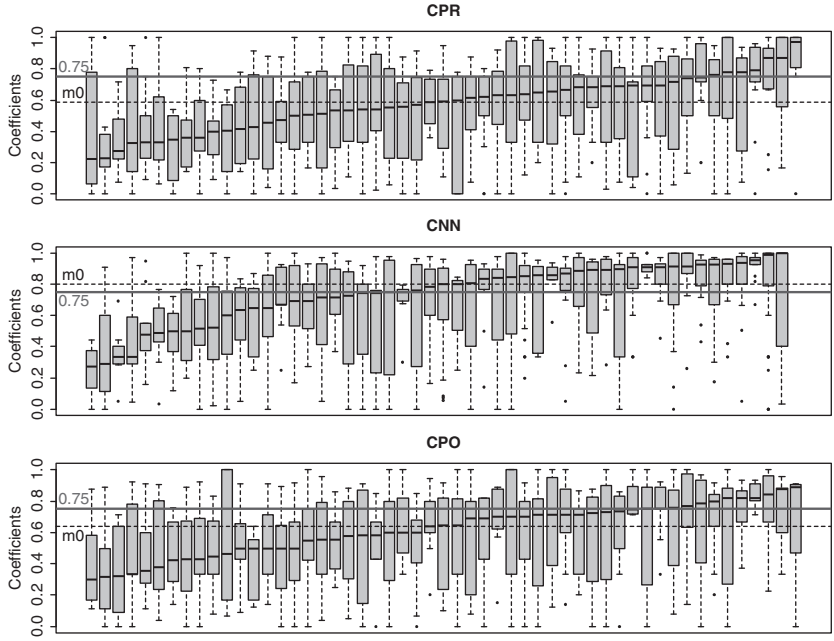


Figure 3.4 Boxplots of turn size fluctuation (TSF) coefficients per narrative across pre-narrative (CPR), narrative (CNN), and post-narrative (CPO) components

A total of 53 distinct narrative (CNN) components were included; in many cases, the 58 pre-narrative (CPR) components and the 72 post-narrative (CPO) components were not from the same text as the CNN components because the share of the 53 stories which are enclosed by non-narrative components of the required length (number of turns > 7) is obviously small. The total number of turns (2,636) and the number of TSF coefficients calculated (2,453) are considerable, promising reliable results.[14]

In the boxplots in Figure 3.4, the TSF coefficients obtained for the three components per narrative are presented in ascending order from left to right. It can be seen that for the pre-narrative (CPR) and post-narrative (CPO) components (given in the upper and the lower panel) the overwhelming majority of the medians remain below the stipulated reference median 0.75. For the narrative (CNN) components (in the middle panel), by contrast, roughly half of all the medians are above the reference value. The average medians and IQRs for the three component types are presented in Table 3.7.

The average median TSF coefficient for CNN is 0.80, that is, well above the reference value, while the average medians for CPR (0.60) and CPO (0.64) are clearly below it. Not surprisingly, given this stark contrast, the

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Table 3.7 *Average medians and IQRs of TSF coefficients; CPR: pre-narrative, CNN: narrative, CPO: post-narrative components*

	CPR	CNN	CPO
average median	0.60	0.80	0.64
average IQR	0.48	0.47	0.50

results of a pairwise comparison of the medians using Wilcoxon rank sum tests indicate significance: the differences are very highly significant for CNN compared to CPR and for CNN compared to CPO (p-values <2e-16) but not for CPR compared to CPO (p-value = 0.16). Since the median is the measure of TSF *size*, we can say with certainty that TSF is more sizable in conversational narrative than in non-narrative conversation. Remember that the H_1 stated that TSF is more sizable and more regular in storytelling than in non-narrative conversation. The first part of the hypothesis – the greater TSF size in storytelling – can hence be adopted. Conversely, the second part – the greater TSF homogeneity – can not. The measure used for TSF homogeneity is, as noted, the interquartile range (IQR). Looking back to Figure 3.4, we note that the number of small boxes (indicating small IQRs) may be greater in CNN than in CPR and CPO but also that the number of very large boxes (indicating large IQRs), which is high for CPR and CPO, is not dramatically smaller for CNN. Not surprisingly, the average IQRs are strikingly similar for the three components: 0.48 for CPR, 0.47 for CNN, and 0.50 for CPO. Clearly, these differences are minimal.

What are these minimal differences due to? That is, what additional factors bear on the homogeneity of TSF? Can factors be identified that have an effect on TSF homogeneity, either positively, by increasing it, or negatively, by decreasing it? In what follows I wish to investigate one such potential factor, participation role.

As noted earlier, TSF is a Janus-faced measure: it describes how the lengths of two adjacent turns – a narrator turn and a recipient or Co-narrator turn – relate to one another. TSF is thus open to influence from two sides: changes in narrator length as well as changes in recipient and Co-narrator length will have an effect. There is evidence to assume that both sides do exert their potential influence. First, we saw in Sections 2.2.2 and 2.3.2 that the two recipient types, Responsive Recipient (PRR) and Co-constructive Recipient (PRC), differ, inter alia, in terms of length, with PRR utterances being significantly shorter than PRC contributions (PRR utterances were on average 1.33 words long, whereas the mean for PRC utterances was 6.82 words). Further, we know that PNC contributions are on average even longer than PRC turns, namely 8.41 words. The co-occurrence of PRR, PRC, and PNC contributions in the same story will therefore lead to a decrease in TSF

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homogeneity. Second, there is evidence to suggest that these differences in recipient turn length are correlated with changes in the length of the preceding narrator turn. The evidence comes from an examination of two subsets of Primary Narrator (PNP) utterances: subset [A] consisting of those PNP turns immediately followed by Co-constructive Recipient (PRC) responses, and subset [B] containing PNP turns immediately followed by Responsive Recipient (PRR) utterances. The subsets were drawn from, not only two-party narrative, but the whole of the NC; the data are hence larger than for the present analysis. According to a Wilcoxon rank sum test, the differences in length between the subsets are very highly significant: p-value = 7.183e-10. Given that the subsets were selected on the basis of the type of response that follows (viz. either PRR or PRC), there is, then, the possibility that narrator length as well as recipient length and, hence, recipient type are correlated. This possibility is examined in the following.

For the 779 turns in the two-party narratives (CNN) collected in the present data set (see Table 3.6) the lengths of six turn types were calculated: PRR, PRC, and PNC turns, as well as the narrator turns preceding PRR, PRC, and, respectively, PNC. The results are intriguing: not only are, according to Wilcoxon rank sum tests, the lengths of recipient turns significantly different, which is to be expected given the findings presented in Sections 2.2.2 and 2.3.2, but also the narrators' lengths are significantly correlated with the type of response they elicit: narrator turns occurring before PNC are significantly shorter than narrator turns occurring before PRC turns (p-value = 0.02618), which are, in turn, significantly shorter than narrator turns preceding PRR turns (p-value = 0.00106).

To facilitate direct comparisons, the boxplots in Figure 3.5 show data pairs: the two white boxplots represent the lengths of PNP turns immediately preceding PNC turns as well as the lengths of these PNC turns themselves (PNP & PNC); light grey boxes represent PNP turns followed by PRC as well as PRC turns themselves (PNP & PRC); dark grey boxes represent PNP turns occurring before PRR and the respective PRR responses (PNP & PRR). It can be seen that the box pair parts differ dramatically in the degree to which they overlap: while the white boxes overlap completely, the overlap is reduced for the light grey boxes whereas the dark grey boxes do not overlap at all. This indicates large overlap of lengths for PNP & PNC as well as some overlap of turn lengths for PNP & PRC but no overlap at all and hence extreme dissimilarity of lengths for PNP & PRR. Compare the medians in Table 3.8.

As noted, TSF coefficients express the relation between the lengths of two adjacent turns: the less the difference in the lengths of the two turns the smaller the TSF coefficient; the greater the difference in length the greater the TSF coefficient. Thus, TSF must be greatest for turn pairs involving Primary Narrator (PNP) and Responsive Recipient (PRR), and (much) smaller for turn pairs involving Primary Narrator and Co-constructive Recipient (PRC) and, respectively, Co-narrator (PNC).

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Table 3.8 *Median lengths of narrator and recipient turn pairs*

	PNP & PNC		PNP & PRC		PNP & PRR	
medians	6	7	13	6	21	1

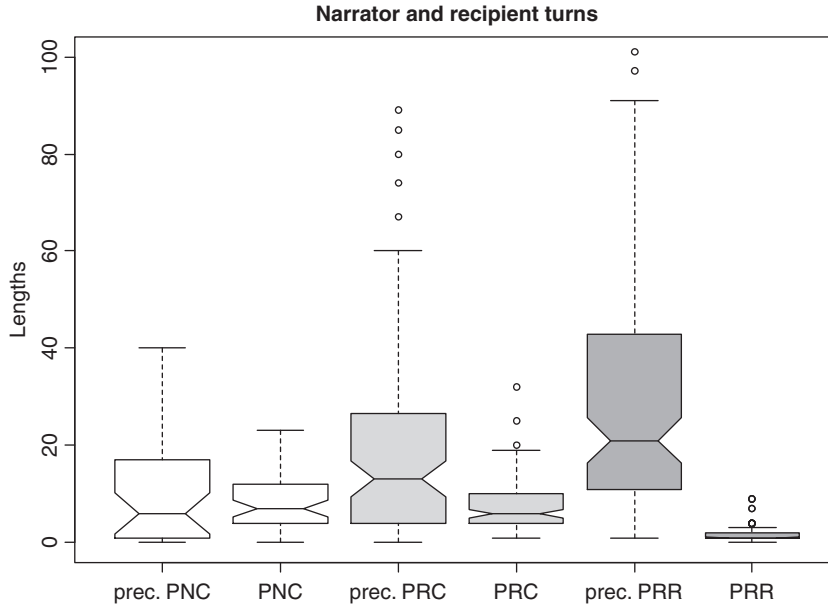


Figure 3.5 Lengths of turns by Primary Narrator (PNP) immediately preceding turns by Co-narrator (PNC), Co-constructive Recipient (PRC), and Responsive Recipient (PRR) as well as lengths of PNC, PRC, and PRR turns

To test these assumptions, subsets were created of TSF coefficients for PRR, PRC, and, respectively, PNC turns. Since a TSF coefficient is always a measure for turn bigrams involving a recipient/Co-narrator turn and the preceding narrator turn, the coefficient for any single PRR, PRC, or PNC turn inevitably reflects how the length of this turn relates to the length of the narrator turn that precedes it.

The results presented in Figure 3.6 are clear-cut: turn bigrams involving Responsive Recipients (PRR) indeed show the kind of fluctuation described by the H_1: the TSF is sizable and homogeneous – its size can be read off from the median, which is 0.91 and thus far above the threshold of 0.75, while its homogeneity can be seen in the IQR, which is 0.18 and thus clearly below the

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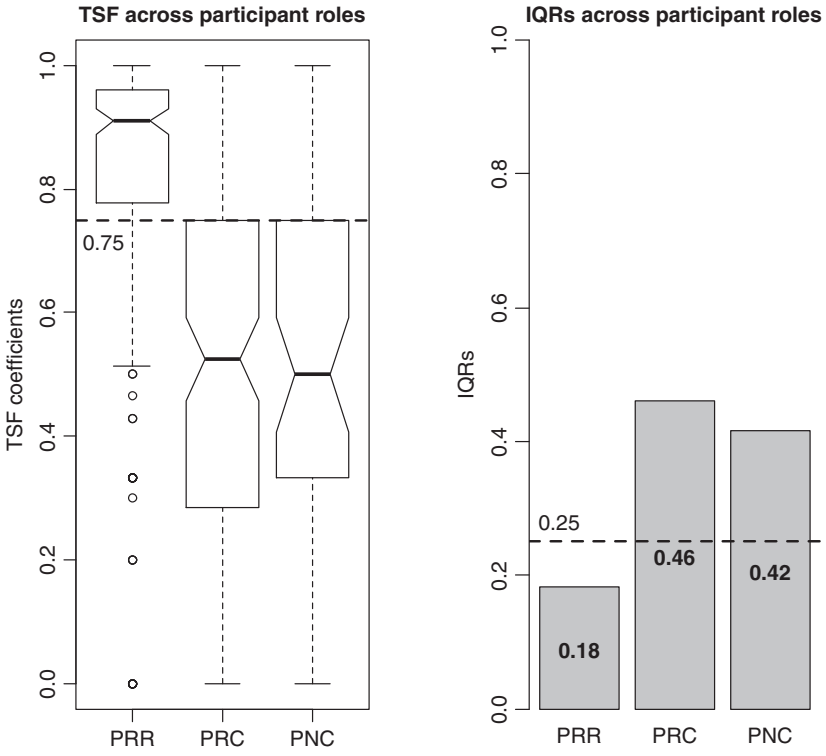


Figure 3.6 Left panel: boxplots of TSF coefficients for Responsive Recipient (PRR), Co-constructive Recipient (PRC) and Co-narrator (PNC); right panel: barplots of respective IQRs

threshold of 0.25. By contrast, the coefficients obtained for turn bigrams involving Co-constructive Recipients (PRC) and, respectively, Co-narrators (PNC) are far less sizable and far less homogeneous: the medians are 0.52 and 0.50,[15] while the IQRs are 0.46 and 0.42. This is clear evidence to suggest that TSF is both sizable *and* homogeneous only when recipients interact with the narrator, not vis-à-vis the tale, but the narrator's telling, that is, when they act in the role as Responsive Recipient (PRR). As soon as recipients switch into discourse roles associated with greater turn lengths, TSF loses in homogeneity.

The three interactional patterns – PNP & PRR, PNP & PRC, and PNP & PNC – can be plotted on a cline for TSF: on one extreme, for PNP & PNC, TSF is low and heterogeneous, on the other extreme, for PNP & PRR, TSF is high and homogeneous (see Figure 3.7).

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Figure 3.7 Cline for TSF

3.3.4 *Discussion*

The analyses have yielded two main findings: (i) TSF is significantly greater ('more sizable') in conversational narrative than in non-narrative conversation; (ii) TSF is significantly greater and more homogeneous between narrators and Responsive Recipients (PRR) than between narrators and Co-constructive Recipients (PRC) and, respectively, narrators and Co-Narrators (PNC).

Finding (i), that TSF is greater in narrative than in non-narrative conversation, suggests that turn size is subgenre-dependent. In non-narrative conversation, the average TSF was, for pre-narrative, 0.60 and, for post-narrative, 0.64, that is, close to 0.3, the 'ideal' value under the assumption that Sacks *et al.*'s (1974) rule applies, which indicates that turn size is not predetermined between the participants such that any participant can, at any point in the conversation, take long or short turns.[16] In conversational narrative, by contrast, the rule does not apply. Here, the fluctuation that holds between any two adjacent turns, expressed as a TSF coefficient, is significantly greater, namely 0.8. Since in narrative with two parties, turn bigrams inevitably include a narrator and a recipient/Co-narrator, the alternative 'rule' that could be gleaned is that, in conversational narrative, turn size *is* predetermined: on average, narrators take long turns while recipients/Co-narrators take short turns. This finding not only ties in well with above cited observations of extended turn length of main tellers but also, more importantly, provides the hitherto missing empirical and statistical validation of these qualitative observations. As regards the relationship between narrators and recipients, who have no prior knowledge of the story events, the significant imbalance in turn size lends itself to an interpretation in the light of the epistemic imbalance that holds between them: while narrators in producing the story can work from the cognitive representation of the events they have modeled via experience (in the case of first-person experience stories) or hearsay (in the case of third-person experience stories), recipients know little or nothing of the events; they need to construct a mental representation of the events *via the story* (see van Dijk & Kintsch 1983). That is, recipients lag behind the narrator epistemically: while the narrator has knowledge of the events from the beginning, the recipients' knowledge only grows in line with the progression of the storytelling production. The finding that TSF is significantly more sizable in conversational narrative than in general conversation is the direct correlate of this epistemic imbalance.

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Finding (ii), that TSF is both greater and more homogeneous between narrators and Responsive Recipients (PRR) than between narrators and Co-constructive Recipients and, respectively, Co-narrators, invites a two-fold reading. First, the finding suggests that size and homogeneity of TSF depend on narrative roles and the interaction between the roles. The fact that TSF between narrators and Co-narrators is less sizable and less homogeneous is due to the specific epistemic status of Co-narrators, which is less disadvantaged than that of recipients: Co-narrators share with the Primary Narrator key knowledge of the story events. In the case of generalized experience stories, Primary Narrators and Co-narrators can have similar generalized representations and thus be on an equal footing epistemically. Consider (3.4), where the details of how to order checks are provided and discussed by the Primary Narrator and the Co-narrator as partners with equal rights and where, accordingly, turn size is not skewed to any of them and, consequently, TSF is, on average, small and heterogeneous:

(3.4) "How to order cheques" (Type: T1G / Embed Level: EC2)

CNN				
CNI			**N**	**Coeff.**
S3	PNP	You write to the bank and say[QSB]	7	
S1	PNC	[[MDD]I haven't got any cheque books.]	7	0
S3	PNP	Well.	1	0.75
UN	[. . ..]			
S3	PNP	[[MSS]Do you ring the printer then for a cheque book.]	10	0.82
S1	PNC	No, it's suppose to come, you [unclear] come automatically.	9	0.05
S3	PNP	Well when you get another cheque book, you write on the back please can I have another cheque book.	19	0.35

(KCD-N2)

The fact that TSF between Primary Narrator (PNP) and Co-constructive Recipient (PRC) is smaller and less homogeneous than between Primary Narrator and Responsive Recipient (PRR) is related to the willingness of PRC to interact with the tale, for example, by providing comments, extending story information, and asking questions (see Section 6.3), thus gaining direct co-authorial rights. In (3.5), for instance, the Co-constructive Recipient not only initiates the story by asking questions about David but also supports and fuels the storytelling's progress by posing two further questions. His turns are only slightly shorter than the lengths of the Primary Narrator's turns, thus leading to a decrease in TSF:

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(3.5) "David" (Type: T10/Embed Level: EC1)

CNI			N	Coeff.
S1	PRC	Erm yeah did you see David then? He came round?	10	
S2	PNP	Yeah! God I forgot about that, [unclear] thought ^{QTD} [^{MII}he'd drop in.] Oh I, I was really pleased cos I was a bit worried ^{QOO} [^{MII}that he wouldn't do that.]	29	0.49
S1	PRC	Oh what, what, what what was he like? What did he do?	12	0.41
S2	PNP	He was lovely. He was really happy and he, he, he's sorting himself out.	15	0.11
S1	PRC	He hasn't smoked, he's given up smoking hasn't he?	12	0.11

(KC7-N1)

Given that, as in (3.5), Primary Narrators (PNP) and Co-constructive Recipient (PRC) jointly author the story, with the recipient eliciting and the narrator providing or confirming story information, it is not surprising that the turn lengths between the two participants are rather similar and hence the TSF is small and heterogeneous.

TSF is 'at its best' where narrators interact with Responsive Recipients (PRR), who, by definition, do not interact with the story topically but merely display active listenership: in turn bigrams involving narrators and PRR, TSF is both significantly greater and more homogeneous than in turn bigrams involving, on the listener side, PRC or PNC. Consider (3.6), where the Primary Narrator recounts the story of two dyslexic children. The recipient seems to have no knowledge whatsoever of the events described by the narrator. She merely acquits the narrator's telling with non-topical backchannel forms, signaling listening and understanding and, on occasion, affective involvement without getting involved in co-authoring the story via tale-related contributions.

(3.6) "Dyslexic kids" (Type: T30/Embed Level: EC2)

CNN			N	Coeff.
(. . .)				
S1	PNP	of course they had a problem hadn't they? [^{MUU}English speaking in the house and Welsh at school]	18	0.9
S2	PRR	[laugh]	0	1
S1	PNP	so it was quite, and er then they, they, well they weren't learning very well at all	18	1
S2	PRR	Oh	1	0.9
S1	PNP	they always seemed backward, they	31	0.94

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		found that they took them to different specialist and the truth is, they've both left school now and got jobs, but they were er, dyslexia		
S2	PRR	Oh goodness	2	0.88
S1	PNP	they found out both of them	6	0.5
S2	PRR	Oh	1	0.71
S1	PNP	but they got jobs, quite good jobs, and the fella who it is employing them, he's one himself, so he employs that sort of people you see?	28	0.93
S2	PRR	Mm	1	0.93
S1	PNP	But they get on now	5	0.67
S2	PRR	Good	1	0.67
(KBo-N1)				

Thus, the differences in TSF between the interactional pairings are due to the specifications of the role of Co-narrator (PNC) and the two recipient roles Co-constructive Recipient (PRC) and Responsive Recipient (PRR). However, this cannot be the whole story in that the narrator too contributes to size and homogeneity (or lack thereof) of TSF by making adjustments to their turn lengths. As noted, narrators' turn lengths vary significantly in correlation with the subsequent response type: they are shortest prior to responses by PNC, of intermediate length prior to PRC, and longest prior to PRR. Given that in the present analysis of turn bigrams narrator turns invariably occupy the initial slot in the bigrams (that is, they precede the subsequent response), it is tempting to assume that the narrator's turn length *exerts an influence* on the recipient's response length and type. If that were the case, turn length by the narrator would co-determine the kind of response received. There is, then, the possibility that by adjusting turn length narrators have *one* means, out of presumably many, by which to exercise *control* over what type of response they elicit. Along these lines, a long turn by the narrator is intended by the narrator, and thus understood by the recipient, as a signal that 'more' is yet to follow. Upon completion of the extended turn, the floor is open to the recipient only on the condition that what is done in taking the floor is restricted to displaying "an understanding that an extended unit of talk is underway by another [speaker] and that it is not yet, or may not yet be . . . complete" (Schegloff 1982: 81) and that, after each such display, the floor is immediately given back to the narrator (see Sacks 1992: 227). A turn of intermediate length is intended by the narrator, and thus understood by the recipient, as a signal that the floor is *more unconditionally* open to the audience and that the recipient, in taking the floor, is entitled to do a number of things, including offering assessments, eliciting or providing information, or adding discourse presentation (see Section 6.3). In this view, which is at present

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merely tentative, the length of narrator turns co-influences response behavior: it subtly keys the recipient in *how* to respond, minimally and with an orientation to the telling/teller, or substantially, with an orientation to the tale, or, if applicable, in the role of Ratified Co-narrator. Recipients, in turn, seem to attune to the variations in narrator turn length and, like chameleons, change their response behavior accordingly (for more on the 'chameleon effect,' see Danescu-Niculescu-Mizil & Lillian 2011).

3.3.5 Summary

This case study concerned itself with the co-construction of turn size in two-party conversational storytelling. The measure used to investigate this possibility was turn size fluctuation (TSF), expressed as a coefficient obtained from a comparison of the lengths of the component turns in turn bigrams. It was hypothesized that TSF would be more sizable and more homogeneous in conversational narrative than in non-narrative conversation. While it was demonstrated that TSF is significantly more sizable in two-party conversational narrative than in two-party non-narrative conversation, TSF was not found to be more homogeneous in storytelling generally.TSF which satisfied both criteria of sizability *and* homogeneity was discovered for recipients interacting with narrators in the role of Responsive Recipient (PRR) only. That is, for conversational narrative as a conversational subgenre the hypothesis could not be adopted unreservedly. TSF in storytelling is distinguished from TSF in general conversation only by its being more sizable: that is, the fluctuation between the lengths of participants' turns is significantly greater than the fluctuation between turns of participants in general conversation. By contrast, the hypothesis could be unreservedly adopted for one specific interactional pattern, that of Responsive Recipients (PRR) interacting with Primary Narrators (PNP): in this dyadic interaction, TSF was not only significantly more sizable but also clearly more homogeneous than in storytelling shared between Narrator and (i) Co-constructive Recipient (PRC) or (ii) Co-narrator (PNC). Another key finding that emerged from the analysis was that the type of recipient response varies significantly depending on the length of the narrator turn preceding them. Long turns are correlated with PRR responses, while shorter narrator turns are correlated with PRC and, respectively, PNC turns. The possibility was noted that turn size is one of the (presumably many) variables by which narrators can control the type of response they elicit.

To explain the differences in TSF between the interactional pairings, two possible sources were identified. First, the differences in TSF were seen in relation to the specifications of the roles of Co-narrator (PNC) and the two recipient roles Co-constructive Recipient (PRC) and Responsive Recipient (PRR), viz. the privileged epistemic status of Co-narrators (PNC), which allows them to interact with the narrator on an equal footing, (ii) the topical

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interventions of Co-constructive Recipients (PRC), by which they gain co-authorship of the story; and (iii) the lacking topicalness of Responsive Recipient (PRR) feedback, which only registers their active listenership. Second, the differences in TSF were also interpreted in relation to the significant variation in narrator turn length within the pairings. The length of the narrator turn was seen as exercising an important influence on the choice of response, with short turns inviting contributions by Ratified Co-narrator (PNC) (if applicable), with turns of intermediate length suggesting a tale-related response by Co-constructive Recipient (PRC), and with extended turns signaling that merely a sign of continuation is sought from the recipient in the role as Responsive Recipient (PRR). So, while *sizable* TSF is a characteristic of conversational narrative, TSF that is sizable *and* homogeneous at the same time is a characteristic precisely of the type of interaction Sacks was referring to in stating that "[i]n storytelling you give them [the recipients] the floor to give it back to you" (Sacks 1992: 227), viz. the interaction between narrator and Responsive Recipient (PRR), the recipient whose responsiveness is restricted to contributing small tokens of listenership displaying their understanding of the telling so far and their willingness to continue yielding the floor to the narrator.

Turn size is subtly predetermined and co-constructed. As regards the PNP & PRR dyad, the turn size gap is yawning: turn size is allocated primarily to the narrator. In PNP & PRC interaction, the gap is narrowing: while still greater for the narrator, turn size for PRC is increased. In PNP & PNC interaction, the gap is amost closed: narrator and Co-narrator have very similar turn sizes. Among the many interactional achievements in conversational narrative, this detailed agreement regarding the co-construction of turn size is certainly not the smallest.

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