1 Towards a working definition of conversational narrative

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I attempt to delineate conversational narrative. This is a daunting task given that narrative "bows to no simple generic blueprint that sets it apart once and for all from other forms of discourse" (Ochs & Capps 2001: 18). The intention here is not to elaborate an all encompassing definition, but rather to sketch the outlines of the object under investigation by defining key properties of conversational narrative and discussing concepts considered fundamental in oral and specifically conversational narrative theory, thus setting the scene for the empirical chapters to come. The full-fledged case studies in the analytical Chapters 3 to 6, it is hoped, will facilitate a much richer and more adequate picture of conversational narrative than is possible in this preliminary chapter.

Conversational narrative is approached from several angles. Section 1.2 locates conversational narrative in a genre framework. In Section 1.3 I outline a participation framework for conversational narrative. Section 1.4 is concerned with temporal sequence as the semantic backbone of narrative. Section 1.5 emphasizes the importance of agent orientation. In Section 1.6, I introduce the notion of narrative structure and discuss the structural complexity of conversational narratives. Section 1.7 portrays recipient design as a macrostrategy underlying narrative-discourse production. Section 1.8 is concerned with the central function of storytelling to make sense, construct identity, and propagate moral stance. No definition of conversational narrative would be complete without discussion of co-construction. Since the whole book is dedicated to the topic of co-construction it was felt unnecessary to add a section on co-construction to this introductory chapter. I intend to give sufficient evidence of co-construction in Chapters 3 to 6.

1.2 Genre

On a simple technical definition, conversational narrative refers to the stories occurring in conversation. Conversation, it is widely agreed, is a core genre. Its special status is owed to three main reasons. To begin with, conversation

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is, unlike highly specialized genres such as speech in academic settings, sermons, or sports commentaries which are used by few speakers only, "the most common, and, it would appear, the most fundamental condition of 'language use' and discourse" (Schegloff 1979: 283) in that it is received and produced by virtually every speaker (see also Goodwin & Heritage 1990: 298, Duranti & Goodwin 1992: 22). Second, conversation is 'archetypical' in the sense that other genres, both spoken and written, can be seen as departures from conversation (Longacre 1983: 44, Halliday & Hasan 1989: 11, Goodwin & Heritage 1990: 298, Biber *et al.* 1999: 1038). Third, conversation is second to none in terms of its innovation potential. As Halliday puts it: it is in conversation that "the semogenic potential of a language is most likely to get extended" (Halliday 2006: 294).

Given that conversation is, then, an essential component of the *condition humaine* it is small wonder that it is sometimes viewed as too vague a notion to qualify for the label of genre (see McCarthy 1998: 31); Swales, for example, characterizes conversation as a "pre-generic dialogic activity" (1990: 61). Also, it is hardly surprising that conversation is anything but a unified genre but host to a number of subgenres. These include: language-in-action, that is, language being used "in support of actions taking place at that moment" (McCarthy 1998: 111; but cf. Goffman who denies language-in-action the status of conversational subgenre arguing that it uses language "in a peripheral and functionally optional way" (1981: 143)). Another candidate for conversational subgenre are service encounters, that is, transactions of goods, information, and services (see McCarthy 1998: 27). Again, different researchers have come to different conclusions as regards inclusion or exclusion of service encounters from conversational subgenres. While McCarthy (1998: 9) accords them conversational subgenre status, Goffman (1981: 141f.) makes a clear distinction between service transaction and conversational genres. A less disputed conversational subgenre are telephone conversations. Although the lack of the visual channel divorces telephone communication from Lyons's 'canonical situation of utterance' (Lyons 1977: 637), which explicitly presupposes the participants' ability to see one another, telephone interactions seem to qualify as conversation maybe less because they are part of everyday communicative behavior (service encounters satisfy that criterion as well) but more because phone calls and face-to-face conversation share similar overall organizations (see Schegloff 1972).

While, then, the labeling of language-in-action, service encounters, and telephone calls as types of conversation may be seen as disputable, the inclusion of *narrative* among conversational subgenres is probably the least problematic and near-universal: to my knowledge, only Swales (1990: 61) views narrative as "pre-generic." The reason cited by Swales is the diversity of types of narrative. For decades, the focus of narrative research in the tradition of Labov & Waletzky (1967/1997) and Labov (1972) tended to be mono-generic in the sense that only first-person experience stories collected in sociolinguistic

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interviews were deemed worth studying, and mono-thematic in that, typically, stories revolving around outstanding, life-threatening events ('danger-of-death') were examined. More recent research on narrative, conversely, has aimed to counterbalance the concentration on what Georgakopoulou (2006a) calls Labovian 'big stories' by emphasizing the role of 'small stories.' These stand in stark contrast to dramatic danger-of-death stories in that they are concerned with trivial-seeming, mundane events of everyday life, which are nonetheless far from irrelevant in that they offer, as already mentioned, "a site for working through who we are and how we should be acting, thinking and feeling as we live our lives" (Ochs & Capps 2001: 17). On the whole, recent narrative research stresses the nature of conversational narrative as a multi-generic activity (e.g., Norrick 2000, Georgakopoulou 2006a), following, for example, Ervin-Tripp & Küntay, who argue that "we are probably better off in considering narrative genre as a continuous cline, consisting of many sub-genres, each of which may need differential research treatment" (1997: 139).

That continuous cline consists of an apparently open-ended range of narrative subgenres. They include, most prominently, first-person experience stories, which are widely seen as by far the most frequent and, hence, the prototypical narrative subtype, as well as third-person experience stories, in which the experience of a non-present participant is recapitulated. The cline further boasts a large number of less central and less prototypical types, including: jokes; dream reports; generalized recurrent stories, which summarize recurring experience; fantasies, constructing hypothetical events; mediated stories, triggered by or recounting media events; retold stories, familiar to (some) participants; second stories, told in response to a first story (see Norrick 2000). The list could easily be extended. Ochs & Capps (2001), for example, also include prayers[1] and untold stories, that is, stories whose telling is obstructed or postponed for multiple reasons including, for instance, impropriety (see Norrick 2005a), painfulness, or memory failure. (For a description of the narrative types annotated in the NC, see Section 2.2.2.) The generic framework embedding conversational narrative is depicted in Figure 1.1.

1.3 Participation

A truism holds that "any tale involves a teller, and that, therefore, narrative study must analyze two basic components: the tale and the teller" (Toolan 2001: 1). It will become very clear in this study that narrative in conversation goes far beyond the supposedly essential dyad of tale and teller. Blum-Kulka (1993) proposes a more adequate conceptual framework, including not only tale and teller, but also telling: "the act of narrating in real time, the actual performance of a story before an audience" (Blum-Kulka 1993: 363). Although this definition of telling is helpful, the wording 'before an audience' is problematic in that it suggests a neat division between teller and recipients.

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Conversation
→ Service encounters
Language-in-action
Telephone calls
General conversation
Conversational narrative
→ Big story
Small story
→ First-person experience
Third-person experience
Generalized recurrent experience
Fantasy
Dream
Joke
Retold story
Second story
Prayer
Untold stories
. . .

Figure 1.1 Conversational and narrative subgenres

Such a neat division is largely untenable for conversational narrative: here, tellings and tales are shared between tellers and recipients such that the latter, far from merely 'receiving' them, may in various ways actively participate in them. This study is in large part dedicated precisely to the contribution recipients make to the unfolding story. Expanding Blum-Kulka's definition and following Ochs & Capps, I define telling as 'the actual performance of a story to and with recipients' (see Ochs & Capps 2001: 2). This alternative wording leaves room for the "considerable variation across social groups and situations concerning the extent to which tellership resides in the hands of one teller or is distributed across several" (Ochs & Capps 2001: 24). The outcome of telling *with* recipients is "a jointly constructed narrative, where division lines between primary and secondary narrators are blurred" (Blum-Kulka 1993: 386).

For stories to be interactionally achieved, a simple condition needs to be satisfied: there need to be interactants. Some storytelling contexts, however, are constituted by just, or mainly, one actant, the teller. This is most clearly the case in literary storytelling, where the only way of interacting between author and reader is by way of the author second-guessing the reader's state of mind (their expectations, reactions, possible comprehension problems, etc.) and designing the written story accordingly (Widdowson 1979). Interaction is also drastically reduced in the oral stories underlying analyses in Labov & Waletzky (1967/1997) and Labov (1972) and a great many subsequent treatments of narrative (see Schegloff 1997: 101).

The following, (1.1), is a typical instance of a Labovian story. Labov and his associates used an interview method whereby, "at a certain point in the conversation, the interviewer asks, 'Were you ever in a situation where you

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were in serious danger of being killed, where you said to yourself – "*This is it*"' " (Labov 1972: 354; emphasis in original). This initial *yes/no* question as well as the succeeding *wh*-question by the interviewer are arrowed in (1.1). Note that in Labov (1972), the two interviewer questions are given in parentheses, as in (1.1):

(1.1)
→ (You ever been in a situation where you thought you were gonna get killed?)
Oh, Yeh, lotta time, man.
→ (Like, what happened?)
Well, like we used to jump off the trestle
And the trestle is about six-seven stories high.
You know, we used to go swimmin' there . . .
We used to jump offa there, you know.
An uh-like, wow! Ya get up there
An' ya feel like
You're gonna die and shit, y'know.
Couple a times I almost . . . I thought I was gonna drown, you know.
(Labov 1972: 361)

The story in (1.1) is "minimally contextualized" (Edwards 1997: 140): the only context the reader is offered is provided by the two elicitation questions, which serve as standard stimuli in the interviews. Apart from the elicitation questions, Labovian stories "report nothing (no talk or other conduct)" (Schegloff 1997: 100) by the recipient(s) either in the course of the telling or on the completion of the story, nor do they systematically record forms of hesitations (but see the silent pauses in (1.1)) or major restarts. In short, "there is nothing interactional in the data at all other than the eliciting question" (Schegloff 1997: 101).[2] That is, once successfully put on the track of telling a story, the interlocutor turns mute and the teller is left to their own devices. Labovian stories are thus essentially monologic and monophonic: they are stories merely initiated by an interlocutor but not received and responded to by a 'participant' re-actively taking part in them.

Given this minimal contextualization, narrative analyses based on this type of data have attracted criticism. Schegloff, for example, argued that "storytelling abstracted from its interactional setting, occasioning, and uptake is an academically hybridized form" (Schegloff 1997: 104) and bemoaned the "artificial environment of the academic elicitation" (Schegloff 1997: 105). More recent narrative analyses have attempted to avoid the danger of decontextualizing stories by (i) turning away from interview-elicited stories to naturally occurring stories in conversation and, driven by the view of narrative as "an organic part of its interactional environment" (Schegloff 1997: 101), by (ii) investigating stories with a focus on both their conversational embedding

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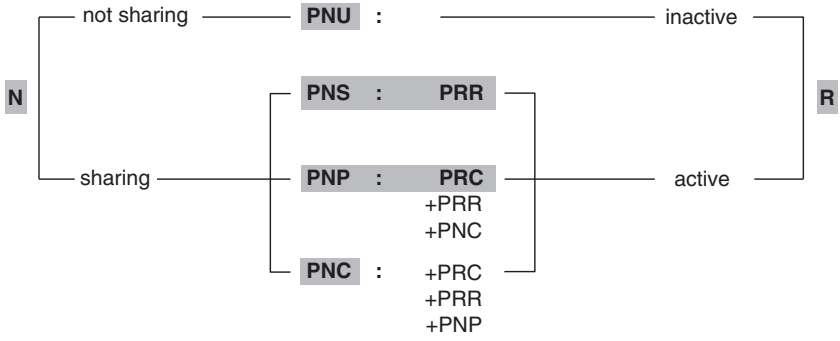


Figure 1.2 Participation framework for conversational narrative; P: Participant role; N: narrator; R: recipient; PNU: Unsupported Narrator; PNS: Supported Narrator; PNP: Primary Narrator; PNC: Ratified Co-narrator; PRC: Co-constructive Recipient; PRR: Responsive Recipient

and particularly the interaction between participants of storytelling, including the broad participant types 'narrator' and 'recipient' as well as a number of subtypes thereof. Crucially, this line of research builds on the assumption that "the recipient(s) is an irremediable component of the story's telling" (Schegloff 1997: 102). Seen from this perspective, conversational narrative is essentially dialogic and polyphonic.

Inspection of corpus data reveals that participant interaction indeed looms large in conversational narrative. The following gives a brief account of the participation framework for conversational narrative underlying this study. The account builds on previous work on participation in general conversation by Goffman (1981) and Rühlemann (2007).

Participant roles in conversational narrative are shown in Figure 1.2.

It has been noted repeatedly in the literature that the distinction between speaker and hearer in conversation is a gross oversimplification (e.g., Schiffrin 1987: 27). This point is all the more valid with regard to participation in conversational narrative. Here, the terms 'narrator' and 'recipient' are hypernyms for a broad range of subroles. A mere distinction between narrator and recipient, then, does not only overlook the polyphonicity of conversational narrative but also ignores the fact that story authorship is by no means the prerequisite of the narrator alone but shared between participants (see Goodwin 1986b).

As shown in Figure 1.2, I propose to distinguish altogether six active roles in conversational narrative, two for recipients and four for narrators. While, in some cases, narrators are Unsupported Narrators (PNU) doing the telling of a story single-handedly, without any backchanneling or other more content-oriented contributions from the audience, more typically the telling of narratives is shared between narrator(s) and recipient(s), with different types of contributions and co-construction from Co-narrators (PNC) and/or

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recipients. Critical to participation in shared narrations are the subroles available for recipients in that the subroles available for narrators can be usefully defined on the basis of recipient subroles.

An initial distinction is between active and inactive recipients, with active recipients responding and contributing, in some way or another, to the ongoing narration and inactive recipients staying verbally blank. Verbally inactive recipients are far from irrelevant to tellers and telling; they too have an impact. First, they may communicate non-verbally, using gaze, nods, hand gestures, or facial expressions as means of reacting to the telling and interacting with the teller. Second, and more importantly, as noted above, even inactive recipients will affect the story's telling because tellers, in keeping with the principle of recipient design, tend to tailor tellings to any recipient present and ratified, regardless of their being active or inactive (see Schegloff 1997).

Any ratified recipient acts as a listener. Listening in storytelling is, as noted by Sacks (1992), a complex task: the listener's business is "not to be listening to a series of independent sentences, but to a series of connected sentences that have the connectedness built in such that it is required for the understanding of any one of them" (Sacks 1992: 232). Listening in this sense, that is, understanding the connectedness of storytelling discourse, is displayed by responses to storytelling: regardless of their further specifications, responses provide, for the narrator, feedback that the storytelling is being listened to, or, in Sacks's (1992: 650) terms, that a 'structural analysis' is being done in the storytelling's course.

Looking at what differential actions can be performed in providing this basic feedback, a division of recipients is suggested into Responsive Recipient (PRR) and Co-constructive Recipient (PRC) (a division which expands Goodwin's (1986a) distinction of recipient behavior as backchannels and assessments). The role of PRR is supportive in the sense of contributing tokens of listenership whose primary function, over and above a number of subfunctions, is to signal the aforementioned analysis and understanding of the connectedness that characterizes storytelling discourse.[3] The role of PRR utterances is interactional, vis-à-vis the teller and their telling (rather than the tale), serving to signal to the teller the recipient's active reception of the telling (see Blum-Kulka 1993: 370).[4] Crucially, utterances by PRR do not evidence an orientation to the tale, that is, to aspects related to the content of the story. Rather, PRR utterances can be seen as backchannel utterances in the sense of Gardner (1998) who noted for backchannel forms that they do not contribute to the ongoing discourse topically (see also Blum-Kulka 1993: 370).

The role of PRC is of a more complex order. Utterances ascribable to this type fulfill a dual role: seen as listener feedback as such, as *any* feedback, they too fulfill the basic role of registering the recipient's structural analysis of the connectedness of narrative discourse. Seen thus, they too have an interactional function. However, PRC responses go beyond merely signaling, to the teller, attention to the telling. Their focus is vis-à-vis the *tale* in the

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Table 1.1 *Characteristics of the recipient roles Responsive Recipient (PRR) and Co-constructive Recipient (PRC)*

	Responsive Recipient (PRR)	Co-constructive Recipient (PRC)
Focus	Teller/telling	Tale
Function	Interactional: Responses primarily signal reception and structural analysis of telling performance. (Responses do not add or elicit new information on story background and events.)	Interactional and topical: Responses primarily add or elicit new information on story background and events.

sense that they contribute to the content of the unfolding story, for example, by requesting or adding orientational information (when, where, to whom, etc. the events happened), adding details to the unfolding account, commenting on events in characteristic ways or contributing discourse presentation (see Section 6.3). Thus, they are not only interactionally relevant, as tokens of listenership, but also topically, as tokens of co-tellership interfering with the content of the story. The role of PRC collapses the two basic roles of narrator and recipient: PRCs can at the same time be considered co-tellers. In a nutshell, while PRR responses primarily register understanding and thus provide interactionally relevant feedback, PRC responses provide interactionally as well as topically relevant feedback. The defining features of the two recipient subroles are summarized in Table 1.1.

In shared narrations, three subroles of narrator are possible: Supported Narrator (PNS), Primary Narrator (PNP), and Ratified Co-narrator (PNC). Narrators assume the subrole of PNS if the only type of recipient response they receive throughout the narration is responses by PRR (that is, tokens of listenership focussing on the telling). If, by contrast, a recipient contributes substantially to the unfolding narrative, thus assuming the role of PRC, the current narrator is no longer seen as the only teller. Their role is reduced to Primary Narrator (PNP). This role, as the name suggests, still does the bulk of the telling but concedes to recipients co-telling space and co-authorship. Tellers are also seen as Primary if their interlocutor is a PNC, that is, a participant who has privileged access to the events underlying the story (see Goodwin 1986b). Privileged access can be gained in three ways: (i) the participant was involved in the events underlying the story or a witness to them, (ii) they are familiar with the tale from previous tellings, or (iii) they co-construct, on an almost equal footing with a PNP, a fantasy, where future or hypothetical events are made up 'on the fly.' It goes without saying that PNCs too may receive recipient support, either in the form of listenership forms or substantial additions to or elicitations of story content.

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In the NC, narrator and recipient roles were assigned on differential bases. Assignment of narrator roles was based on the global level of the story as a whole, asking 'Who does (the main bulk of) the telling?', whereas recipient role assignment was based on the local level of the individual utterance, asking 'What does the response do with regard to the telling and/or the tale?' Thus, except for the very small number of stories where the participant who started out as narrator ostensibly passes on the teller role to another participant, narrators normally keep their role throughout the narrative while recipients may freely shuttle within the same storytelling between recipient subroles (PRR and PRC).

Consider an illustrative example. Speakers S1 (aged 65) and S2 (aged 67), husband and wife, are talking about Carolyn, who works as a nurse in a hospital, and the danger of having intruders in the hospital. Note that the narrative in (1.2), as all narratives in this chapter, is given with all annotations; these are explained in detail in Chapter 2. Additionally, the likely highpoint of the story is marked by an arrow (which is itself not part of the annotation):

(1.2) "Intruder in Withamshaw" (Type: T30 / Embed Level: EC2)

		CNN		
		CNI		
	1	S2	PNP	And do you remember the <pause/>
		CNM		
	2	S1	PRC	What ?
	3	S2	PNP	when Carolyn was working there they had this intruder.
	4	S1	PRC	Well they 're often having intruders , go on
	5	S2	PNP	I ca n't remember all the details . There was quite a to-do about it in the paper.
	6	S1	PRR	Mm.
	7	S2	PNP	I , I know Carolyn said[QSD] that [[MII] they in the end]
	8	S1	PRR	Yeah.
	9	S2	PNP	[[MII] they refused to work on their own]
	10	S1	PRR	Oh that 's right I remember. Yes yes . Yeah .
	11	S2	PNP	because they were so way out . There was no way
	12	S1	PRR	Mm.
→	13	S2	PNP	that they could have summoned help or anything else.
	14	S1	PRC	Mm. Mm. And di did n't she have to leave ?
	15	S2	PX0	Pardon ?
	16	S1	PRC	Did n't she ha well , to get from A to B did n't she have to leave the building somewhere ?
		CNF		
	17	S2	PNP	Yes. Yeah.

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18 S1 PRR Yeah I thought so.
(KBP-N1)

In (1.2), speaker S2's role as PNP remains largely stable: S2 does most of the telling in terms of initiating the topic, remembering and relating the details, and steering the story to its highpoint (encoded in the arrowed utterance): Carolyn's (implicitly ascribed) recognition of her helplessness vis-à-vis the intruder (*There was no way that they could have summoned help*).[5] Even in utterance 17 (*Yes. Yeah*), S2's role can be seen as primary in that the preceding polar question by S1 assigns to her privileged-access rights as the one 'in the know' of the story background information, and her answer, though minimal in terms of number of words, grants the sought confirmation. Only in utterance 15, in requesting a repetition of S1's previous utterance, does S2 take on a non-narrative role (labelled PX0; see Section 2.2.2).

Speaker S1, by contrast, shifts back and forth between two distinct roles, that of PRC and that of PRR. Utterances 2, 4, 14, and 16 help advance the narrative in terms of content. Utterance 2 is a request for completion of the narrator's still incomplete utterance, in which S2 initiates the narrative (*And do you remember the <pause/>*). The request for completion of S2's utterance is thus, effectively, a request for completion of the story launch. In utterance 4, S1 contributes details to the story background (*Well they're often having intruders*) and encourages the main teller to continue (*go on*). In utterance 14 and, in repeated form, utterance 16, he seeks from the teller confirmation of information that helps to contextualize the story events: the proposition underlying the question *Did n't she ha well, to get from A to B did n't she have to leave the building somewhere?* serves to emphasize the danger of getting molested by intruders that Carolyn is exposed to in her work, thus helping to add substance to the story highpoint. Conversely, in responses 6, 8, 10, and 12, S1 merely acknowledges receipt of and, particularly in the non-minimal response in utterance 10, agreement with the narrator's account. The excerpt thus illustrates two things: it shows that a story can indeed be seen as the outcome of collaboration and that participant roles in conversational narrative are dynamic (see Ochs & Capps 2001: 3). The principle of dynamicity favors participation shifts mostly in recipients, who may easily and repeatedly switch between PRR and PRC. It may, however, also apply to narrators: in some cases, speakers who start out as PNP yield their primary role to other participants and take on a PNC role or even a more receptive role in the background.

There is, however, more to participation than the *actual* participation of the participants physically co-present in the telling situation. The pervasive use in conversational storytelling of a single stylistic device opens up yet another, more subtle, dimension to participation, viz. what I will call *virtual* participation. This single device is direct speech, also referred to as quotation and constructed dialog (Tannen 1986). As will be specified in much more

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detail in Section 2.2.2 and, specifically, Section 4.1, constructed dialog pretends to give the exact locution that (could have) occurred in a non-present situation, while, in actual fact, it depicts selected aspects of the reported locution only. To uphold the pretense of faithfulness, constructed dialog is designed as a likeness of real dialog. Design features include the use of non-clausal material (such as interjections, vocatives, exclamations, etc.), the imitation of delivery aspects (such as intonation, voice quality, false starts, etc.), and, perhaps most importantly, the reporting speaker's switch into the reported speaker's referential system, including the use of deictics which are appropriate to the reported speaker and the reported situation but inappropriate to the reporting speaker and the reporting situation (see Levinson 2004: 111, Hanks 2011: 318). The construction of dialog along these lines effectively creates the illusion that the reported speaker speaks for him/herself in the reporting situation. This illusion has serious implications as regards participation. First, the reported speaker is virtually translocated from the non-present told situation to the present telling situation, where he/she becomes a virtual participant. Second, given the virtual co-presence of the reported speaker, the recipient of the constructed dialog becomes a virtual addressee of the reported speaker's utterance. The foundations are laid for virtual turntaking between addressor and addressee. Indeed, as will be shown in Section 6.3, recipients occasionally do respond to the reported speaker's utterance thereby entering into a virtual turntaking relationship with them. Precisely why narrators seek to construct the recipient as a virtual addressee will be discussed in more detail in Section 4.1. As regards participation, the observation and acknowledgement of virtual participation as a subtle dimension complementing the physical dimension of actual participation, suggests that the complexity of participation in conversational storytelling can hardly be overstated.

1.4 Temporal sequence

Another key issue is the question of what the dimensions teller, telling, and tale are concerned with, what type of meaning configuration they are giving space to. Longacre (1983) notes that narrative is 'plus' in respect to contiguous succession, a parameter more commonly referred to as temporal sequence. According to Labov & Waletzky (1967/1997: 15), temporal sequence represents the most central semantic characteristic of narrative; they refer to it as "the defining characteristic of narrative." This view is widely shared. Swales, for example, notes that narrative "operates through a framework of temporal succession in which at least some of the events are reactions to the previous events" (Swales 1990: 61; see also Norrick 2000: 3, Ochs & Capps 2001: 18, Semino & Short 2004: 20). In talking of Labov & Waletzky's notion of temporal sequence, two types of sequence need to be distinguished: sequence of events (also referred to as actions; see van Dijk & Kintsch 1983: 56) and

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sequence of clauses, whereby in narratives "a verbal sequence of clauses [is matched] to the sequence of events that actually happened" (Labov & Waletzky 1967/1997: 12). The clauses used to match events/actions are referred to as 'narrative clauses' and the sequence of such narrative clauses is formally referred to as the 'a-then-b relation,' a relation that is considered quintessential in narrative (see Norrick 2000: 28). Not every clause occurring in narratives qualifies as a narrative clause. The defining feature of narrative clauses is that "[t]heir order cannot be changed without changing the inferred sequence of events in the original semantic interpretation" (Labov & Waletzky 1967/1997: 14): clauses count as narrative clauses if they can be construed as referring to events that occurred one after the other. That is, clauses are narrative clauses by virtue of their being temporally junctured. Crucially, the semantic interpretation of a narrative "depends on the expectation that the events described did, in fact, occur in the same order as they were told in" (Labov & Waletzky 1967/1997: 24).

Consider an example of a narrative consisting only of the a-then-b relation:

(1.3) "He pushed me" 1 (Type: T10 / Embed Level: EN)
CNN
CNI-CNF
S5 PNU He pushed me the other night. I fucking pushed him back.

from which two temporally junctured narrative clauses can be isolated:

a he pushed me the other night
b I fucking pushed him back

Here, clauses a and b reflect the temporal order in which the events occurred: event b cannot have occurred before event a. A slightly longer example is (1.4):

(1.4) "Forgotten book" (Type: T10 / Embed Level: ES)
CNN
CNI-CNF
S2 PNS Yeah I forget one of his books yesterday, and I went home and he clobbered me

which can be broken down into a sequence of three narrative clauses:

a Yeah I forget one of his books yesterday
b and I went home
c and he clobbered me

In this sequence, the conjunction *and* plays a pivotal role. Given the "overwhelming tendency to interpret the conjunction *and*, not as logical &, but as the sequential expression 'and then'" (Yule 1996: 8) the hearer of the story is led to assume that all three narrative clauses stand in a temporal-sequence relation, which can formally be described as:

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a-then-b-then-c

If the order were changed, say, to a-then-c-then-b, as in

a Yeah I forget one of his books yesterday
c and he clobbered me
b and I went home

an altogether different story would result.

The a-then-b relation is not the only one at work in narrative. One also "finds implied relations between clauses such as a-and at the same time-b or a-and now that I come to think of it-b" (Labov & Waletzky 1967/1997: 25). An example of a narrative in which the events described did demonstrably not occur in the same order as they were told in is (1.5):

(1.5) "Mark cried his eyes out" (Type: T1D / Embed Level: EC1)
CNN
CNI-CNF
S1 PNU I woke up, last night and Mark had had a really bad dream he was crying his eyes out.

Three narrative clauses can be isolated:

a I woke up, last night
b and Mark had had a really bad dream
c he was crying his eyes out

Clearly, the mother woke up when and because she heard her son crying; that is, the event described in a occurred after the event described in b and, partly, at the same time as the event in c was occurring. To re-construct the actual temporal order, we could re-arrange the narrative clauses thus (allowing for two minor changes: deletion of *and* as well as change of past perfect to past tense in b)

b last night Mark had a really bad dream
c he was crying his eyes out
a I woke up

Why does the narrator, instead of choosing this temporal order, which reflects the objective sequence of events, use the 'flashback technique,' which, according to Labov, is generally dispreferred in oral narratives (Labov 1997: 411), thus reversing the temporal order of events? The temporal reversal is arguably related to Labov's claim that "[t]he viewpoint in oral narratives of personal experience is that of the narrator at the time of the events referred to" (Labov 1997: 411). The event described in a is, seen from the mother's viewpoint, indeed temporally prior to the event described in b, that Mark had had a bad dream, which she most likely learnt of only at a later point of time (see also van Dijk & Kintsch 1983: 57). The important point illustrated by (1.5) is, then, that the a-then-b relation need not necessarily be

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manifest in the actual sequence of narrative clauses but requires, at times, to be inferred from the semantic structure of the text.

So far, we have been looking at minimal narratives containing two or three narrative clauses. Naturally, most narratives are about far more than just two or three events and, as a result, contain far more narrative clauses. Also, as said earlier, not every clause in a narrative qualifies as a narrative clause, only clauses that are separated by a temporal juncture can be considered narrative clauses.

Consider for example excerpt (1.6) from text KC9-N2.[6] The narrator is reporting the suspicious behavior of a group of people near his car. In (1.6) clauses are numbered; narrative clauses are arrowed as well as labeled a, b, c, etc. Note that instances of quoted speech are interpreted here as subordinate clauses representing the object of the superordinate reporting clause (for a discussion of the structural relationship between reporting clause and quote, see Quirk *et al.* 1985: 1022–1023).

(1.6) "Scruffy people" (Type: T10 / Embed Level: EC2)

	Clause	Narrative clause		Text
→	1	**a**	PNP	One morning when I came here
	2			there was a car arrived here
	3			and it was a a dirty yellow one
→	4a	**b**		and thr two women
			PRR	Yes.
	4b		PNP	and a bloke got out all dressed in black jeans *and* black jumpers.
			PRR	[unclear] perhaps.
→	5	**c**	PNP	So I thought^{QTD} [^{MDD}now that's odd.]
	6			They didn't look the sort to go for a ramble
→	7	**d**		And they come out
→	8	**e**		and they sort of were looking around
	9			and there was a load of cars here.
→	10	**f**		And I thought^{QTD} [^{MDD}I don't like the look of that.]
			PRR	Mm.
→	11	**g**	PNP	So I was standing there
→	12	**h**		and I thought^{QTD} to myself [^{MDD}pretend I'm looking at my watch
	13			and I'm waiting for someone.]
			PRR	Yes.
→	14	**i**	PNP	And they hung about
	15			and hung about
→	16	**j**		and then they came across here,
→	17	**k**		looked at the board

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→	18	**l**		and they kept turning round *and* looking where I was.
	19			And I was still hanging there.
→	20	**m**		Then they walked down there, but not out of sight of the cars.
→	21	**n**		Then they came back,
→	22	**o**		read the notice board again.
	23			I must have been there about five or ten minutes?
			PRC	[unclear] neat haircuts?
	24		PNP	They looked quite quite presentable.
			PXX	[unclear]
	25		PNP	One woman was very fat.
	26		PNP	And I still stood there
→	27	**p**		so I got in the car
→	28	**q**		and wrote the number down.
			PRC	Good for you.
	29		PNP	Cos I thought^{QTD} [^{MDD}I'm never gonna remember it.]
→	30	**r**	PNP	And eventually they got in
→	31	**s**		and went off.
→	32	**t**		But they were, they kept on looking at me to see
	33			if I was gonna move
→	34	**u**		and I thought^{QTD} [^{MDD}I'm not gonna move till you move.]
			PRR	Mm.
	35		PNP	Cos the fact that they only went down there,
	36			came back
	37			and were milling around waiting
	38			I wouldn't have been a bit surprised
	39			cos the car was a filthy old car.
	(. . .)			
	(KC9–N2)			

Filtering out clauses and, specifically, narrative clauses strictly relating temporally junctured events is by no means straightforward and some decisions taken in the analysis may well be disputable. For example, I have counted clause 11 (*So I was standing there*) as a narrative clause although it is clear from the context that the narrator had been standing at the place from where he was watching the scene already some time before clause 11. However, a central theme in the narrative is precisely the narrator's determination to stay where he was so as to be able to prevent the potential car theft and it may be argued that it was *after* his suspicion was aroused that he *decided* to keep standing at his location. If the clause *So I was standing there* is taken as expressing this

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decision, it would qualify as a temporally junctured clause. A second source of uncertainty is the final utterance (clauses 34–39) which is ambiguous as to whether it relates the *possibility* that the suspicious people might come back or the *fact* that they had come back. As Labov notes, the definition of temporal juncture demands that "reports be reports of real events" (Labov 1997: 400). If the final utterance did report the return of the suspects, some more narrative clauses would have to be identified.

With these caveats in mind, it seems that in the excerpt 39 clauses can be distinguished, 21 of which are narrative clauses. That is, a sizable number of clauses (18, to be precise) do not meet the criterion of narrative clauses in that they do not depict an event temporally separated from the event depicted in the preceding clause. To illustrate, clause 1 (*One morning when I came here*) will have to be seen as a narrative clause although, being narrative-initial, there is no narrative clause preceding it. Clauses 2 and 3 (*there was a car arrived here* and *and it was a a dirty yellow one*), by contrast, do not describe events happening *after* the event in 1 but help to flesh out the situation described in 1. Only in clause 4 (*and thr two women* [PRR: *Yes.*] *and a bloke got out all dressed in black jeans and black jumpers*) does the narrator add a new event temporally junctured to the event in clause 1, thus creating the first temporal sequence in the excerpt. The full sequence of narrative clauses can be represented in this 'basic narrative' (see Norrick 2000: 32):

a when I came here there was a car
b and two women and a bloke got out
c so I thought, "Now that's odd"
d and they come out
e and they were looking around
f and I thought, "I don't like the look of that"
g so I was standing there
h and I thought, "Pretend I'm looking at my watch and I'm waiting for someone"
i and they hung about and hung about
j and they came across here
k looked at the board
l and they kept turning round and looking
m then they came back
n then they walked down there
o read the notice board
p so I got in the car
q and wrote the number down
r and eventually they got in
s and went off
t but they kept on looking at me
u and I thought, "I'm not gonna move till you move"

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Although merely skeletal in that much detail is omitted, this basic representation of the story conveys a good sense of what happened. Narrative clauses, then, seem to form the backbone of stories. Other types of clausal material primarily serve to flesh that backbone out.[7]

Two further points are worth making, one related to sequence and linearity and one related to sequence and co-construction. It is important to note that sequentiality does not necessarily equate linearity: conversational stories "do not uniformly thread events into a unilinear time line and cause-effect progression" (Ochs & Capps 2001: 41). Chronologies in conversational narratives may be non-linear in the sense that tellers occasionally tell subsequent events before preceding events, a partially reversed progression which may be mainly due to memory gaps or memory failure (see Norrick 2005b).

As regards sequence and co-construction, it seems that for most narrative subgenres including the most frequent one, viz. first-person experience stories, recipients can exert a powerful influence on the production of narrative clauses. As will be shown in Section 6.3, among the most common types of contribution by Co-constructive Recipients (PRCs) are questions related to the story in progress. The two structural subtypes of questions – *yes/no* and *wh*-questions – interact in different ways with the exposition of narrative events and thus the formulation of narrative clauses: event-related *yes/no* questions seem to qualify as hypothetical narrative clauses in the sense that a possible event is added to the existing sequence of events. Consider (1.7):

(1.7) "Garlic at school" (Type: T10/Embed Level: EC1)

CPR			
(. . .)			
CNN			
(. . .)			
	S_3	PRC	So what happened when you going to have the le, the lesson were you
	S_1	PNP	Well, I was already in and he came in and just erm I was here and he just suddenly came round that way and he sat down next to Louise and and he said^{QSD} [^{MDD}how are you?] I said^{QSD} [^{MDD}I'm okay.] [^{MDF}You look good] or something. And then that was it really.
→	S_3	PRC	[^{MVV} He chatted to Louise did he?]
	S_1	PNP	Yeah. Why break the habit of the lifetime eh?
(KBY-N1)			

Excerpt (1.7) highlights an instance of a narrative event offered, in the form of a question, by a recipient. A female student, S_1, and her mother, S_3, are talking about a boy at college. Apparently, the student is disappointed at the boy's lack of interest in her. When she hints at her disappointment (*And then that was it really*.) the mother correctly guesses who instead he showed an

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interest in (*He chatted to Louise did he ?*), a suggestion her daughter answers in the positive (*Yeah. . . .*).[8] The narrative sequence can be reconstructed as follows, with narrative clause f genuinely co-authored by recipient and narrator:

a I was already in and he just suddenly came round that way
b and he sat down next to Louise
c and he said, "How are you?"
d I said, "I'm okay."
e "You look good."
f He chatted to Louise

Wh-questions by recipients, conversely, do not add hypothetical narrative events. Their co-constructive role is in *eliciting* narrative clauses encoding narrative events: Consider (1.8), where a school girl is relating to her mother how a boy threw a scratch book at her:

(1.8) "Dangerous boy" (Type: T10 / Embed Level: EC2)
(. . .)
CNN
CNI
S2 PNP she's got a big scratch book mum and she glued it on and came that close to me it's about there and he threw it at me and [unclear] there. Can you see it?
→ S1 PRC Mm. What did you say yourself?
CNF
S2 PNP Told Mrs [name] , and she goes^{QGZ} [^{MDD}oh yes, I know] and she just walked off!
(KBJ-N1)

The main narrator starts out by relating three distinct events encapsulated in three narrative clauses:

a she glued it on and
b came close to me and
c he threw it at me

The recipient's question *What did you say yourself?* prompts the main teller to add three more narrative events (her report of the incident to the teacher, the teacher's verbal reaction and how the teacher walked off). The question whether or not the narrator would have added these clauses without the recipient's enquiry cannot be answered. What can be said is that the recipient's question renders their addition highly likely in that the question constitutes the first-pair part of a question-answer adjacency pair, which "*requires* the production of a reciprocal action (or 'second pair part')" (Goodwin & Heritage 1990: 287; added emphasis). That is, the question sets up "specific expectations which have to be attended to" (Levinson 1983: 306).

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Authorship of narrative clauses thus is not the sole prerequisite of the narrator, recipients can become co-authors of narrative clauses: event-related *wh*-questions by recipients give prompts for narrative clauses to be formulated by the narrator, while by using event-related *yes/no* questions recipients construct (hypothetical) narrative clauses themselves.

1.5 Agent orientation

Stories are thus discourses about sequences of events. However, not all event discourses are stories (see van Dijk & Kintsch 1983: 56). Other text types display sequential ordering of events as well. So, sequentiality alone cannot define narrative. Indeed, what Longacre (1983) refers to as 'contingent temporal succession' can be seen as a basic parameter for the classification, not only of narrative, but also procedural discourse types. An example is the following excerpt from the BNC, a recipe; the excerpt is broken up into clauses a to f:

(1.9) To finish 2 tbsp melted butter USING only the white part of the leeks,
- a cut into 1 in pieces.
- b Blanch these in boiling water for two minutes
- c and drain well.
- d Arrange the leeks in a buttered ovenproof dish.
- e Make a cheese sauce in the usual way
- f and pour it over the leeks.

The instructions given build on a similar expectation as in narrative, viz. that the succession of clauses implies a temporal succession of steps taken in preparation of the dish. That is, a temporal sequence underlies the text. Still, recipes are referred to as 'pseudonarratives' (Labov 1997: 396; see also Norrick 2011). What sets this type of temporal sequencing apart from temporal sequencing in narrative? Sequentiality revolves around the notion of time. As is well known, time is a core deictic dimension. Other core deictic dimensions include person and place. It can be argued that recipes, compared to narratives, are lacking in all three core deictic dimensions. The verb forms in the recipe are imperatives, which "lack tense distinctions" (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 827) and predominantly "refer to a situation in the immediate or more remote future" (Quirk *et al.* 1985: 828; see also Mindt 2000: 193). Apart from fantasies (the narrative subgenre in which participants co-construct hypothetical or future events), the most typical narrative genres such as first- and third-person narrative are firmly anchored in past time reference (see Longacre 1983). Moreover, the temporal succession implied in the recipe is not tied to any specific location – the dish can, in principle, be cooked anywhere. Most importantly, note that the imperatives in the recipe are subjectless; the subject is derivable only from the situation "where it is the person or persons that could be referred to as *you*" (Huddleston 1984: 447). Thus, the recipe does not depend on any specific actor performing the steps:

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anybody can prepare the dish following the recipe. Narratives, conversely, essentially revolve around agents, or actors (van Dijk & Kintsch 1983: 55), and the events that occurred are depicted as events that occurred *to them*: events are hardly deemed worth reporting unless they affect human beings. Recipes are, then, pseudonarratives because the events they depict are not spatiotemporally grounded and not related to any specific agent(s); they are minus in respect to agent orientation (Longacre 1983: 3). Personal narratives, conversely, are plus: they do not only relate a series of time-sequenced and causally-related events but also embed the events in terms of when, where and, crucially, to whom they happened (see Semino & Short 2004: 20, van Dijk & Kintsch 1983: 55). Even in the exceedingly rare case of stories where no human protagonists are mentioned, the narrativization of events is justified only by virtue of their implicated relevance to humans. Consider for illustration Ervin-Tripp & Küntay's (1997: 137) "Earthquake story" occasioned by the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake in California. The story is presented in (1.10) in simplified form. Al and Ned are brothers, co-telling to Olga and Cynthia about the disastrous earthquake:

(1.10) "Earthquake story" (simplified from Ervin-Tripp & Küntay 1997: 137)

	Al:	you know that that nice glass china display in our dining room?
	Ned:	in the dining room
	Cynthia:	ooh
	Al:	trashed
	Cynthia:	forget it
	Ned:	absolutely trashed
	Al:	whole thing absolutely yeah every single bit of glass and pottery in th
	Olga:	and crystal?
	Ned:	all the crystal trashed
	Al:	crystal
	Ned:	everything trashed
	Cynthia:	ooh my god
	Al:	oh a er antiques genuine antiques
→	Ned:	and the amount of money we have lost is going to be astronomical

As Ervin-Tripp & Küntay (1997: 137) observe, there is "no human protagonist";[9] the implied protagonist is, arguably, the earthquake that caused the damage related in the story. As regards the lack of explicit reference to human agents, the story is not dissimilar to the recipe: leaving aside Al's reference *you know* (in the initial utterance), which is addressed to the recipients in the telling situation, the only reference to agents (or rather, in this case, patients) occurs in the final utterance, where Ned mentions *the amount of money we have lost*, with *we* probably referring not only to the two brothers but their whole family. On

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the face of it, the agent orientation in this story, then, may seem peripheral. In actual fact, however, it is central, indeed the essence of the story. This is because the damage the earthquake caused is, by implication, damage inflicted on Ned and Al and their family. And even if this implication did not surface in the storytelling (that is, if Ned had mentioned only 'the amount of money lost'), this orientation would be crucial, for whether china, crystal, and antiques get trashed is *self-evidently* relevant to humans valuing such objects: it requires no explicit mentioning. Thus, despite the relative lack of surface presence, the agent orientation even in this text is fundamental.

Thus, to extend the above-used metaphor, while the temporal sequence is the semantic backbone, the orientation to human agents can be seen as the heart of storytelling.

1.6 Narrative structure

No attempt at defining conversational narrative would be complete without a discussion of the internal structure of stories – and of the difficulties inherent in the task of establishing that structure for conversational narrative.

A number of structural models have been elaborated for narrative discourse as such (that is, without genre- or medium-related distinctions), for example, Propp (1928/1968), Barthes (1974), Rumelhart (1975), Thorndyke (1977), and Longacre (1983: 21). Some of the models even claimed to describe 'story grammars' (viz. Rumelhart 1975 and Thorndyke 1977; for a critique of the notion of story grammar, see Brown & Yule 1983: 120–121). The common denominator seems to be the assumption of a basic tri-partite plot sequence, including "the categories of exposition, complication, and resolution" (van Dijk & Kintsch 1983: 55; see also Thorndyke 1977: 78). In research on oral storytelling, the most influential account of the internal structure of narrative is the one proposed by Labov and his associates. The model's applicability to conversational narrative though is not without problems. The following will shed light on some of these problems.

According to Labov & Waletzky (1967/1997) and Labov (1972), narrative discourse falls into six narrative sections, of which the first and the last, Abstract and Coda, are considered optional:

Abstract:	summary (presents the plot in a nutshell)
Orientation:	background (sets the scene for the listener)[10]
Complication:	main events (relates sequence of events)
Evaluation:	point of the story (indicates why the story is told)
Resolution:	result (relates how the events sort themselves out)
Coda:	return to present (bridges the gap between narrated and narrating time)

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The most decisive section is undoubtedly the Evaluation section. According to Labov, the Evaluation section occurs between Complication and Resolution, typically "before the most highly evaluated action or 'point' of the narrative"[11] (Labov 1997: 404), its climax. However, it is also the most complex narrative element in that Evaluation does not only constitute a section (see Labov & Waletzky 1967/1997, Labov 1972) but also permeates all other sections in the form of evaluative devices, so-called comparators, including comparative adjectives and adverbs, adverbs of degree, comparator adverbs such as *just*, *only*, *at least*, expressions of negativity, modals, and, finally, as a type of 'internal evaluation', direct speech (for critical remarks on the Labovian notion of evaluation, see Gwyn 2000 and Edwards 1997). The Evaluation section is hence that section in which the "waves of evaluation" (Labov 1972: 369) understood as evaluative devices are strongest and which immediately precedes the story's most critical, most reportable, event. What this two-fold notion of evaluation, understood (i) as a set of evaluative devices that can occur anywhere in the story and (ii) as a structural component situated right before the story highpoint, amounts to is the claim of a *climactic* – or, to use Georgakopoulou's (1997: 55) term, *climacto-telic* – structuring of narrative: the claim that, over the storytelling's progression from Abstract, Orientation, and Complication to the Evaluation section, 'tension' (Longacre 1983: 4–6) is mounting, which is first relieved at the story climax (see Section 6.3), and further released over Resolution and Coda. Underlying this tension is the 'polarization' (Longacre 1983: 6) between the usual (the ordinary situation and the events that ordinarily occur therein) and the unusual (see Sacks 1992: 235), encoded in the 'tellable event.' Labov's classic tellable event was the near-death experience (see Section 1.2). However, if unusualness of this kind were the inherent standard of tellability, the "storyability of the world," as Sacks (1992: 234) put it, would be seriously restricted and stories in conversation would occur far less commonly than is generally assumed (see Introduction). For in conversational narrative, where stories tend to be 'small' (e.g., Bamberg 2004a) (see Section 1.2), tellable events are typically unspectacular, decidedly ordinary – in short, far from warranting any inherent interest. Their interest, and hence their tellability, lies in their being relevant to the participants of the telling situation. Tellability, then, "results not only from its (detached) content, but also from the contextual (embedded) relevance of the story for the participants" (Norrick 2005a: 325). On this view, tellability relates not to an absolute standard of inherent unusualness but is a function of the story's relevance, or significance, to the participants.

An additional, closely related structuring device is the 'story preface' noted by Sacks (1992). Story prefaces fulfill three distinct functions: they (i) request suspension of ordinary turntaking, (ii) arouse interest, and (iii) give "information about what it will take for the story to be over" (Sacks 1992: 228). Further, he noted that the "organization of storytelling in conversation uses adjacency pairs" (1992: 531), where a story preface serves as a first-pair

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part while the grant of the floor for an extended period constitutes the second-pair part. Note that the third characteristic of story prefaces, to provide information the recipient can use to know when the story is over, is, in the Labovian model, attributed to the abstract; preface and abstract thus conceptually overlap.

While the notion of narrative structure has a wide currency in research on oral narrative, it is not undisputed in research on narrative in conversation. As noted, the model grew out of work on storytelling in sociolinguistic interviews, a genre undoubtedly governed by constraints different from those governing storytelling in casual conversation. It is as yet an open question to what extent conversationalists actually exploit this superstructure in constructing conversational narratives (see Ervin-Tripp & Küntay 1997: 133, Edwards 1997: 139, Georgakopoulou 1997). An example which illustrates narrative structure and some of the issues associated with it is excerpt (1.11); speaker S1 is a 36-year-old woman, S2 and S3 are two children aged eight and ten:

(1.11) "Spilt paint" (Type: T10/Embed Level: EC2)

CPR			
S3		Mum!	
S2		Mm.	
S3		Do you	**Story preface**
S1		What?	
S3		know what?	
CNN			
CNI			
S3	PNP	Andrew [name] spilled paint all over!	**Abstract**
S1	PRC	What?	
S3	PNP	Just all over the table.	
S1	PRR	All over the table.	
S3	PNP	Mm.	
S2	PRC	Well I can [unclear] erm [unclear] over [unclear].	
S3	PNP	Over everything was it?	
S1	PRC	How did they manage that?	**Orientation**
S3	PNP	Cos they we we were, we were doing it [unclear] and and wha they were all kinds of [unclear]	
		and it's got [unclear] and it's got [unclear] and I like, rushed it over to the sink and,	**Complication**

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		and then just [unclear] and then [unclear] with the table it fell	**Evaluation ?/ Resolution**
S1	PRR	My goodness!	
S3	PNP	No th	
CNF			
S2	PRC	I couldn't have spilt it by going^{QGG} [^{MDD} whoop!]	**Coda**

In (1.11), the identification of some sections will be largely consensual while the identification of other sections will be less so. For example, in the initial utterance *Do you know what?* by the speaker who is to become the narrator, we do find a structure that matches some of the properties of a story preface – the property ascribed to story prefaces which is missing here is 'information about what it will take for the story to be over' (see above). Also instantiated is a clear Abstract (*Andrew spilled paint all over*, later complemented by *Over everything was it?*) and an Orientation section filling in background information (note the use of the progressive form in *we were doing it*). Identifying the Complication section is already less straightforward. This section will probably be seen as containing the event depicted in *I like, rushed it over to the sink*, which leads up to what might be either the Evaluation section presenting the most critical event or the Resolution section showing the event's result (*with the table it fell*). Also, only a few items potentially qualify as evaluating devices; they include the repeated collocation *all over*, which has 'pervasive meaning' (Quirk *et al*. 1985: 684), the verb forms *rushed*, implicating haste and *fell* implicating that a mishap occurred, and *just*, perhaps used as a comparator adverb. Finally, it is unclear whether consensus can be achieved over the status of the Co-constructive Recipient's utterance *I couldn't have spilt it by going, "Whoop!"*, which might serve as a sort of Coda in that it re-orients the discourse to the present situation by relating the most reportable event (the spilling) to one of the participants or as a comment made by the listener after story completion, in which latter case there would be no Coda.

While, then, in the excerpt, some narrative sections seem rather firmly in place, other sections cannot be identified with confidence. (However, note the many instances of unintelligible speech scattered across the excerpt, which make a definite interpretation of the excerpt and its structure problematic.)

It would be easy to present narratives with even less overt structure or where this structure seems to be missing altogether (see Georgakopoulou 1997: 10). In some narratives, even more complex structural patterns can be observed (see van Dijk 1975: 291). In KB7-N2, for example, where the main teller is narrating a violent fight of the couple living next door, the telling is *cyclical* in the sense that basically the same story is told not only once but re-told in three recycles, with the recycles separated from one another by

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intervening nested stories (see Section 2.2.2). Given the text's unusual length, only the original version, from which the recycled versions are made, is printed in (1.12); the likely climaxes in each of the three cycles are arrowed, and of the recycles and the nested stories separating them I give a structural skeleton and note the story details they add (for the full text, see Appendix 1; for another instance of a cyclically structured narrative, see Appendix 4).

(1.12) "The couple next door" (Type: T10 / Embed Level: ES)

CPR
(. . .)
CNN
CNI

	S1	PNP	Oh that young couple next door [unclear] ah!	**Abstract**
	S2	PRC	Yeah? [^{MXX}They been at it, have they been at it again?]	
	S1	PNP	Oh I wish you'd have been at home, I'd have gone round there.	
	S2	PRC	What've they been up to now then?	
	S1	PNP	Oh god! [^{MVV}She's been screaming.] He's been reckon she must have locked herself up in the dark. And the only place with a lock on is the bathroom and	**Complication**
			I **reckon**^{QOO} [^{MDD}they'll blooming knock the blooming door down] by the sound of it.	**Evaluation**
	S2	PRR	Gawd.	
→	S3	PNP	[^{MVV}She was screaming,] [^{MSS}he was swearing.] Running up and down the stairs.	
	S2	PRC	What time was this?	**Orientation**
	S1	PNP	Quarter to ten till about half past ten. Or half an hour till half past ten [unclear]	
	S2	PRC	Well that wouldn't please them next door would it?	
	S1	PNP	No.	

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S2 PRR Coo. [unclear]

Nested story 1: People usually don't intervene in domestic fights

Recycle 1 Added details:
-it was morning when she first heard the couple fight **Orientation**
-it made her feel cold **Complication**
→ -he was calling her names
-the dog was barking

Nested story 2: Why two acquaintances, Ann and Rita, didn't intervene in the fight

Recycle 2 Added details:
-she could hear the fighting although the telly was on full blast **Orientation**
-she turned the sound down **Complication**
→ -the fighting caused her distress

Nested story 3: Why the main teller once stayed in a similar violent relationship

Recycle 3 Added details:
-the fighting ended about half past ten **Resolution**
-the man may have left the apartment

CPO
(. . .)
(KB7-N2)

In (1.12), the narrator relates how she overheard the violent argument of a young couple next door, in the course of which, apparently, the woman locked herself up in the bathroom while the man tried to knock the door down. As can be seen from (1.12), each recycle adds some new details, some related to background information (Orientation) (when it was that the narrator first heard the fight and that she was watching television at the time), others to the main events (Complication) (that the man was calling the woman names, how the fight caused the narrator distress, etc.). Crucially, while the original story contains Abstract, Orientation (albeit delayed after Complication), Complication, and Evaluation, it clearly does not contain a Resolution section outlining how the events sorted themselves out. That section is postponed until recycle 3 – that is, as far as after two recycles and three intervening nested stories. The overall structure is schematically depicted in Figure 1.3.

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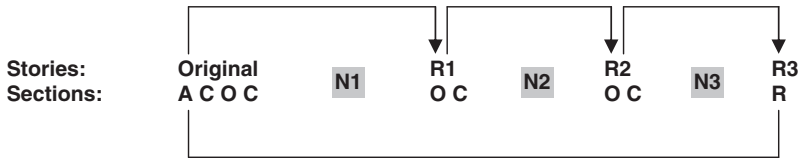


Figure 1.3 Cyclical structure of text KB7-N2; A: Abstract, C: Complication, O: Orientation, R: Resolution; N1,2,3: Nested story 1,2,3; R1,2,3: Recycles 1,2,3.

As shown in Figure 1.3, given that the Resolution which is missing from the original version is provided in recycle 3, the original story and recycle 3 can be seen as a frame, binding the original and the three recycles together. The structural complexity inherent in this frame structure is already considerable. Yet, two more factors add to the structural complexity. First, the section order is partly 'scrambled' in that 'earlier' sections occur later; cf., in the original story, the Orientation section, which follows the Evaluation section. Further, the nested stories each have narrative sections too (see the full text in Appendix 1). Finally, as a consequence of the cyclical structure, each cycle seems to have climactic tension and hence in each cycle a (candidate) climax can be identified (arrowed in the excerpt), which makes the story, not a single-highpoint, but a multiple-highpoint story (see Section 6.3). The complexity of the overall structure of the text can thus hardly be overstated. Beside cyclically organized stories, another type of narrative whose structure diverges from the orthodox Labovian-type of structure are (mostly long) stories with chapterlike divisions. See the discussion of a relevant example in Section 6.3.

The canonical Labovian-type structure is therefore far from being the default structure in conversational stories. This reservation, however, does not imply that narrative structure as such was irrelevant to conversational narrative. As a culturally acquired schema, it cannot be expected to perfectly dictate the way stories in conversation are structured. What it does provide is a macrostructure to which speakers and recipients alike can orient and which can aid them in producing and, respectively, processing stories.

1.7 Recipient design

Stories tell events – the simplicity of this proposition is deceptive; it effectively hides the sheer complexity of the processes involved in narrativizing experience. It is hard to overstate the longwindedness of the trajectory from the events to their actual telling. No attempt is made here to retrace it in full detail. A sketch is all that is possible, and a sketch is all that is needed because

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the focus in this section is on one major operation undertaken in producing storytelling: what Sacks (1992) referred to as recipient design. I will argue that recipient design understood as a macrostrategy of tailoring storytelling to the recipient's cognitive resources, intrinsic interests, and processibility needs governs the narrative discourse production process.

Following van Dijk & Kintsch's (1983) model of strategic discourse production, a basic assumption is that events which are experienced (and later related in a story) are first modeled in a mental representation. A second assumption is that the experiencer will not only represent the events but also interpret them in some preliminary way. For example, if the events involved two cars crashing into one another, they will be interpreted as an accident. Additionally, this basic interpretative process may be influenced by 'structuring devices' such as schemas (Bartlett 1932), scripts (Minsky 1975), or frames (Tannen 1978, 1990), that is, culturally given scenarios to which story experience can readily be matched; see also Lakoff's (1990) notion of Idealized Cognitive Models (ICMs), which store, inter alia, prototypical experiences to which actual experiences can be compared and aligned. All these processes contribute to modeling the cognitive representation of the events. How is this model narrativized, that is, transposed into narrative discourse? Again, it should be emphasized that no claim is made to represent the processes involved in exhaustive detail.

The production process is likely to originate in a plan for a global speech act (van Dijk & Kintsch 1983: 265), that is, in the present context, in a plan to tell a story. This global speech act is executed according to a semantic discourse plan. The discourse plan provides the semantic macrostructure of the to-be-told narrative (that is, its topic or gist) (see van Dijk & Kintsch 1983: 272).[12] Further, the discourse plan is based on the narrator's recipient model, including the recipient's knowledge resources, intrinsic interests, and processibility needs (see van Dijk & Kintsch 1983: 17). A crucial part of the semantic plan for the story is thus that the story is *addressed* to a recipient: stories are discourses-for-recipients. In conversation-analytical terminology, stories are 'recipient-designed': by 'recipient design' Sacks *et al.* "refer to a multitude of respects in which the talk by a party in a conversation is constructed or designed in ways which display an orientation and sensitivity to the particular other(s) who are the co-participants" (Sacks *et al.* 1974: 272). Recipient design in conversational narrative production shows up in multiple ways, some of which will be discussed in what follows.

To begin with, narrators can be shown to display 'an orientation and sensibility' to recipients with regard to the storytelling's processibility. As noted above, discourse presentation is pre-eminent in narrative discourse, particularly presentation using the two direct modes, Direct and Free Direct. Use of these modes poses a potential problem for processibility in that a

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defining feature of quotation is the recurrent oscillation of reference (see Section 4.1). I demonstrate in Section 4.2 that narrators attend to this problem by using specific interjections significantly more often at the onset of quotation than would be predicted on the basis of their occurrence at the onset of utterances. These interjections are thus assigned an additional function as what I will call quotation markers, that is, as auditory quotation marks designating the left-hand boundary of quotation (see also Section 5.2, which explores recipient design in the use of discourse presentation strings at utterance level).

Another way of recipient-designing storytelling is by exploiting the general knowledge shared by the narrator and the recipient of the schematic structure of narrative discourse discussed in Section 1.6. This schematic structure is seen as a 'superstructure' which "provides the overall syntax for the global meaning, the macrostructure, of the text" (van Dijk & Kintsch 1983: 16). Given that this structure serves as an 'ideational scaffolding' (Anderson 1977) for both the "organization and interpretation of experience" (Brown & Yule 1983: 246), imposing it on storytelling aids the teller in structuring the telling while at the same time displaying the above-mentioned orientation to the recipient who expects the scaffolding to be used. This expectation is not only related to the fact that, as van Dijk & Kintsch (1983: 57) note, for each culture, members learn these categorical constraints, along with possible variants, and use them to predict, fill in, and interpret events; the expectation is probably also related to the fact that story structure organizes story discourse hierarchically, assigning some story details, or propositions, to lower- and some to higher-order structures. As a result, as Thorndyke observed (1977), comprehensibility and content recall depend on structural centrality: listeners "tended to recall facts corresponding to high-level organizational story elements rather than lower-level details" (Thorndyke 1977: 77).

Finally, a major resource in the service of recipient design is what Sacks (1992) refers to as 'designed economy.' This strategy favors a critical appraisal of possible material for the story as well as parsimony in making selections from that material. The strategy aims to streamline the telling to the tale such that "[story] terminology is terminology for the story" (Sacks 1992: 237) and story parts are "parts for the story" (1992: 237) rather than a story-independent "characterization of reality" (1992: 237). As a result, "[a]ny parts put in it [the story] can be used by the listener to find what is further going to happen" (1992: 239). Note that the reference to 'what is going to happen' is a reference to the sequence of events forming the backbone of narratives. In other words: designed economy is a production strategy by which narrators seek to include in the storytelling only those elements that bear directly or indirectly on the development of the telling towards its highpoint, the most reportable event, thereby *omitting* elements that are seen as irrelevant to that main line and hence 'superfluous' (van Dijk 1975: 57) (see also van Dijk & Kintsch 1983: 57, Barthes 1974: 244, Chatman 1975: 304).

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To illustrate, a major operation carried out under the heading of designed economy is what Ochs & Capps (2001) term 'foreshadowing,' that is, a process by which the "narrator knows what will follow and casts characters and events in terms of this future trajectory" (Ochs & Capps 2001: 5). As the name implies, foreshadowing is mostly observable in early sections of story-tellings devoted to scene-setting. Settings, then, may not only serve to orient the listeners spatiotemporally but also to cast meaningful shadows ahead into the forthcoming main events and therefore "have the potential to go beyond simply contextualizing events – they may explain them as well" (Ochs & Capps 2001: 130).

Foreshadowing design is exemplified in (1.13), a story told between two London teenagers of African descent. The story-initial utterance is remarkable in two respects. First, it serves a scene-setting function in that it outlines the story situation including its temporal (*last year*) and locational (*in France*) coordinates as well as what Norrick (2000) refers to as general frame (*on holidays*). Additionally, in the arrowed portion in (1.13), it does something which serves a completely different end. In letting the listener know that the narrator is *a bit wary of German people anyway, cos of what's happened and everything* the narrator casts a shadow over the characters referred to as Germans in that *what's happened and everything* vaguely but effectively invokes a particularly dark era in German history, viz. Nazi Germany and the atrocities then committed. Precisely which type of Nazi atrocity is being hinted at is not detailed in this initial utterance. However, as early as in utterance 3, the reference to *anything racist* enables the listener to infer that specification: the hint at Nazi Germany in utterance 1 serves to prepare the ground for the story's defining event, the German tourists' racist remarks about a (black) Jamaican singer (Bob Marley). The main part of the story contained in the remainder of utterance 3 and in utterance 4 relates how the narrator defended his idol Marley against the Germans' racist attitude. The point, then, of telling the story is a demonstration to the interlocutor of the narrator's bravery. Obviously, bravery increases with the size of the opponent. Given that the opponents here were Germans whose ancestors' racism caused genocide, the bravery demonstrated by the story can be considered substantial. In other words, the hint at German history in the opening utterance of the telling foreshadows not only the forthcoming events but also lays the ground to the listener's appreciation of the narrator's brave defense of their idol and, thus, their own origins.

(1.13) "Bob Marley" (Type: T10/Embed Level: EC3)

	CNN		
	CNI		
1	S3	PNP	Last year, right, I was on holiday in the South of France and I, I'd made friends with these two German people

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→			and I'm a bit wary of German people anyway, cos of what's happened and everything.
2	S1	PRR	Mm.
3	S3	PNP	And, no, they hadn't done anything racist up until then and I goes[QGZ] casually, [[MDD]do you like Bob Marley?] [[MDF]No, he's a black nigger.] [[MDF]What! Do you know what you're saying you are, you are some stupid [unclear]]
4	S1	PRC	He's a legend, man.
5	S3	PNP	[[MDF]fool.] You know? I'm going [[QGG]unclear] and, and I said[QSD], [[MDD]look, he's a decent bloke.] He goes[QGZ], [[MDD](mimicking) yes, he's a nice man, but black.] I went [QGD][[MDD]well observed! you know I would never have known [unclear]]
	CNF		
6	S1	PRC	Bob Marley was brilliant.

(KPG-N1)

In sum, given the prominence of the recipient model in narrative-discourse production, recipient design can be seen as the macrostrategy by which narrators align their tellings to that model.[13] Conversational narrative is thus per se co-constructed: in constructing the telling towards the recipient, narrators co-construct narrative. As a result, as Schegloff notes, "[e]ven if recipients stay blank (and perhaps especially then), their presence and conduct enters into the story's telling" (Schegloff 1997: 102).

1.8 Sense-making

Why is a story told in the first place? What goals are participants pursuing in co-constructing stories in conversation? These questions have been given intriguing answers in recent research. For example, Johnstone portrays narratives told by men and women as differential means to foster the 'discourses' of community (women) and contest (men) (Johnstone 1993), while in later work (1997) she views narrative as a means of self-expression. Further, Holmes notes, in passing, the 'moral significance' of stories (Holmes 1997a), a point elaborated on in more detail in Walton & Brewer (2001). Most importantly perhaps, Schiffrin (1996) and, more recently, Bamberg (e.g., 2004a, 2004b), Georgakopoulou (e.g., 2006a, 2006b), and others have stressed the importance of narrative in the construction of identity. Identity work is often achieved in narratives via the sense-making function: "the essential function of personal narrative – to air, probe, and otherwise attempt to reconstruct and make sense of actual and possible life experiences" (Ochs & Capps 2001: 7).

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Thus, seen in a wider perspective, the 'point' of a story is the sense that participants can make of it: what the events reported signify in light of personal and cultural scripts, values and expectations, and whether and how script violation can be reconciled with the participants' script systems (see Daiute & Nelson 1997). Over and above the task of relating 'inherently tellable' events, narratives fulfill functions infinitely more crucial: they are a type of discourse through which we configure identity and self (Bamberg 2004a: 332). Pang (2010) even argues that the self itself is a composite construct "constituted from a conglomeration of life-narratives" (2010: 13221–13222). The ways that stories configure self and identity (and, the reverse, self and identity are stories themselves) are undoubtedly most complex. One prime means by which stories play a role in identity formation is as carriers of moral stance:

> Everyday narratives of personal experience elaborately encode and perpetuate moral worldviews. Personal narratives generally concern life incidents in which a protagonist has violated social expectations. Recounting the violation and taking a moral stance toward it provide a discursive forum for human beings to clarify, reinforce, or revise what they believe and value. (Ochs & Capps 2001:46)

Consider (1.14). S3, an 18-year-old male insurance clerk, is telling a delicate story to two female students aged 13 and 16 about what appears to be a common friend or acquaintance of theirs, Greg: a packet of condoms fell out of his pocket at work. While the repeated instances of laughter both by the teller as well as the recipients indicate a good deal of *schadenfreude* about Greg's embarrassment, the discourse immediately following the recount of the events strikes a more serious tone. In the post-narrative component (CPO), it seems that the participants are trying to find an explanation for Greg's use of condoms, which, we may assume, is seen as morally dubitable and which, then, casts doubts over his moral credibility. The joint attempt to make sense of Greg's behavior is, thus, motivated by the participants' desire to reconcile their view of Greg, whom they value as a friend, and the suspicious behavior, which is in violation of what they expect of him or, maybe more likely, what they know others expect of him. Excerpt (1.14) is hence an illustration of the observation that "[o]nce a person's comportement is incorporated into narrative, it is portrayed in relation to standards of right and wrong and is vulnerable to public moral accountability" (Ochs & Capps 2001: 225).

(1.14) "Dropped your johnnies" (Type: T10 / Embed Level: EC2)

CNN			
	CNI		
	S3	PNP	(singing) [unclear] Oh it was so funny at work today, Greg fell off his chair.
	S1		[. . .]

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	S3	PNP	Packet of condoms fell out of his pocket [unclear]
	S1		[laugh]
	S3	PNP	[laughing] And they were ripped .
	S1		[laugh]
	S3	PNP	Ah no he was, he, he wouldn't sit on his chair [MSS cos he'd just called me an arsehole] and I goes QGZ [MDD oh sit down [unclear] Greg!] I said QSD [MDD sit down Gregory and shut up.] So he went to sit down but his chair weren't there. All I saw were this pair of legs sticking over the desk and him going QGG [MDD aaaaagh!]
	S2	PNC	And his condoms [unclear]
	S3	PNP	And he got up and then one of the girls said QSD [MDD hi Greg dropped your johnnies.]
	UN		[laugh]
	CNF		
	S3	PNP	I've never seen anyone go so red in my life.
CPO			
	S2		How old's he?
	S3		Twenty three. He's married.
	S1		Well, so?
	S3		He got married si what three months ago.
	S1		Maybe he doesn't want any children yet.

(KCE-N1)

In observing this central function of storytelling, to make sense, construct identity, and propagate moral stance, we are led to critically review common definitions of narratives as "a recapitulation of past experience" (Crystal 2003: 307). Narratives do more than recapitulate past experience. By running past experience through the filter of the participants' prevailing moral frameworks, both representation and interpretation of the events are inevitably constrained (Ochs & Capps 2001: 55). Inasmuch as the filtering moral frameworks are socially mediated, the sense made of events is the sense the members of a social group are *expected* to make of such events. The sense-making function thus forces us to acknowledge "a central paradox" (Ochs & Capps 2001: 55), viz. that by telling stories of personal experiences we at the same time de-personalize these experiences (Ochs & Capps 2001: 55).

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1.9 Summary

In this initial chapter I have attempted to delineate key characteristics of conversational narrative thus laying the ground for the empirical chapters to come.

I argued that conversational narrative can be seen as perhaps the most clearly discernible subgenre of conversation. Conversational narrative was shown to represent a wide range of subgenres, including not only first-person and third-person experience stories, as the most common forms, but also an apparently open class of less prominent subtypes of stories such as generalized experience, retold, fantasy, prayer, and so forth. I suggested that, generally, conversational narratives are 'small stories' characteristically concerned not with spectacular, extraordinary experiences but mundane and often trivial-seeming happenings.

In outlining dimensions of narrativity, I followed Blum-Kulka's (1993) threefold model comprising the dimensions teller, tale, and telling. I defined storytelling as the actual performance of a tale to and with recipients, thus according recipients a central part in the emerging tale. Focussing on the interaction of teller and recipients, a framework of participation in conversational narrative was elaborated. The framework proposed is based on a distinction between actual participation and virtual participation. As regards actual participation, the framework recognizes teller and recipient as hypernyms of a broad range of subroles. Two recipient roles were distinguished: Responsive Recipient producing tokens of listenership targeted at the telling, and Co-constructive Recipient contributing content-oriented responses with the potential of directly co-authoring the tale. Narrator subroles were distinguished in close relation to these recipient types: Unsupported Narrator receiving no feedback whatsoever from recipients, Supported Narrator receiving Responsive Recipient responses only, Primary Narrator receiving not only Responsive Recipient utterances but also at least one Co-constructive Recipient response, and, finally, Ratified Co-narrator, making contributions to a Primary Narrator's telling that exhibit privileged access to story information. Finally, virtual participation was depicted in relation to the pervasive use of constructed dialog, whose defining feature is the creation of the illusion that the utterance reported is being produced by the reported speaker themselves in the present telling situation. This illusion entails the emergence of two virtual roles: while the reported speaker becomes a virtual addressor, the recipient is made a virtual addressee.

Further, I discussed the role of the temporal sequence of events, which is considered the most central semantic characteristic of narrative. I also introduced Labov & Waletzky's (1967/1997) a-then-b relation, a formal term used to describe the succession of narrative clauses relating temporally junctured events. The a-then-b relation was portrayed as the backbone of narrative. It was noted that even recipients have recourse to the sequence of

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events: Co-constructive Recipients asking event-related *yes/no* or *wh*-questions can acquire co-authorial status. In the case of *wh*-questions, which constrain a more detailed answer by the narrator, recipients acquire initial degrees of co-authorship whereas in using event-related *yes/no* questions, which constitute hypothetical narrative clauses, co-authorship is increased.

Storytelling was distinguished from other event discourses, such as recipes, which too imply a contiguous sequence of events but do not embed the sequence in terms of when, where and, crucially, to whom they happened. That is, building on Longacre's (1983) discourse typology, I identified agent orientation as another core parameter which is 'plus' in conversational narrative.

The critical notion of narrative structure was discussed, with emphasis placed on the Labovian structural model, which is the most influential in research on oral storytelling. It was shown that the typical Labovian structure, ideally consisting of a progression from the optional Abstract to Complication, Evaluation, Resolution, and the optional Coda, "is often not instantiated in conversational settings" (Georgakopoulou 1997: 10) and it was argued that the internal structure of conversational stories may be inherently more complex, due to nested stories and cyclical or chapter-like divisions. Importantly, due to the tension (Longacre 1983) underlying narrative, narrative structure was characterized as climactotelic (Georgakopoulou 1997).

Moreover, I attempted to outline the role of recipient design in storytelling. Following Sacks *et al.* (1974) and van Dijk & Kintsch (1983), recipient design was defined as a macrostrategy in narrative-discourse production. The macrostrategy is based on the narrator's recipient model and aims to tailor narrative discourse to the recipient, including their processibility needs, intrinsic interests, and knowledge resources.

Finally, I attempted to throw into relief the sense-making function of narrative: the significance participants assign to the events reported, the way they reconcile what happened with what they expect, value, and believe in. Seen thus, conversational stories, though small, are not small talk serving to oil the wheels of conversation. Telling a story to and with others is doing identity work and constructing moral worldviews. That is, the stories we tell and participate in feedback on us: they have repercussions on who we think we are, and who we aspire to be.

In a nutshell, conversational narrative is a conversational subgenre which is concerned with the mundane events of everyday life (small stories), which is inherently dialogic both in terms of the actual and virtual participation patterns that varied types of recipient and narrator enter into, and in terms of the narrator's fundamental orientation to the recipient's needs, interests, and resources (recipient design), which is, further, 'plus', in Longacre's (1983) terms, in respect to contingent succession (temporal sequence), agent

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orientation, and tension (climacto-telic structure), and, finally, which is crucial for identity work.

In the following chapter, Chapter 2, I describe the NC, the corpus underlying this study. I also devote some space to detailing methods and tools the reader may be unfamiliar with.

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