

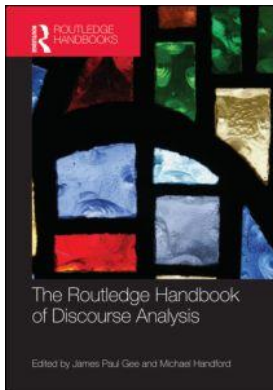
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Spoken narrative

Mary M. Juzwik

- Ms. Gomez (teacher): Well, It's unfortunate, you know. As you get older, too, there are probably going to be things that come up, where people are going to try to take advantage of you, sometimes in a physical way. And will you be prepared for it? You know, I-my experience has been different growing up because I'm Mexican and I see the world through Mexican eyes. And I was taught that not everybody likes Mexican kids. And so I grew up being on guard around adults, around people. I have to watch out for that... Like let me give you an example. I was in the store the other day and the clerk was ignoring me. She was waiting on the person over here, and then she went to wait on the person over here, and after she did this twice and I had been there first, I spoke up. And I said, "Excuse me, am I invisible?"
- Alice (student): You said that?
- Ms. Gomez: Yes, to the clerk. And she looked at me. She said, "Oh I'm sorry." She said, I said, "I was waiting I was here first." And she wasn't going to acknowledge me until I spoke up...

This chapter overviews and illustrates methods, issues, and trends in discourse analytic approaches to spoken narrative such as this one, told by 7th grade teacher Susan Gomez¹ as part of literary discussion in an English language arts classroom.² The following questions organize the chapter: How do researchers entextualize a bit of discourse *as narrative*—that is, how do they make a selection from the infinite sea of discourse about what to designate as “narrative text,” and so distinguish it from non-narrative discourse? How do researchers make decisions transcribing spoken narrative? What disciplinary approaches and constructs allow discourse analytic (DA) researchers of spoken narrative to conceptualize and approach analysis of narrative discourse such as this? How have approaches shifted and what new approaches are emerging?

Capturing and defining spoken narrative discourse

A challenge attendant on the very term “narrative” is that it tends to be used so pervasively in various research literatures and in everyday/ordinary language that many feel as though its meaning “goes without saying.” If a discourse analyst hopes to focus analysis on spoken narratives in analysis, then defining that phenomenon is crucial for the credibility of the analysis. How, then, do narrative discourse analysts select what discourse counts as “narrative” from a data set inclusive of both narrative and non-narrative talk and texts? This question may initially seem arcane, trivial, or esoteric, but I believe its consideration is deeply practical for researchers who are new to the study of spoken narrative discourse.

Before addressing the technicalities and choices entailed in entextualizing a bit of spoken discourse as “narrative,” it is useful to consider some broader distinctions related to the study of

narrative. Scholars of oral and written narrative (e.g. Jakobson, 1971; Genette, 1980; Bauman, 1986; Wortham, 2001; Norrick, 2007) have distinguished between the referential content of the narrative (that is, the events that are being represented in a narrative text—such as the experience of being rendered invisible by a clerk in a store) and the interactional event of telling a narrative (the face-to-face or other interactional situation, in this case Ms. Gomez and her students sitting with their chairs arranged in a circle, doing “literary discussion”). We may refer to the former as “narrated event” and the latter as “narrative event.” The discourse, or text, that takes shape in a narrative event, then, can be called a “narrative.” But what distinguishes narrative discourse from other semiotic forms, functions, and activities?

A crucial tradition of defining narrative comes from the structuralist work of Labov (1972; Labov and Waletzky, 1967), who defines a minimal narrative as a series of at least two temporally sequenced, causally linked narrative clauses. Narrative clauses “recapitulate” an action event (often a simple noun/verb clause). Much of Ms. Gomez’s narrative takes the form of an orientation that sets the scene for the confrontation described, but does not include narrative clauses. Following this logic, “Through Mexican eyes” does include the narrative or plot-driven clauses (with repetitions and elaborations excluded):

- (a) The clerk was ignoring me.
- (b) I spoke up.
- (c) And she looked at me.
- (d) She said, “Oh I’m sorry.”
- (e) I said, “I was waiting, I was here first.”

Clear temporal and causal movement connects (a) through to (e): as a result of the clerk ignoring her, Susan Gomez spoke up. This act of speaking caused the clerk to look at her and then to apologize. Ms. Gomez responded by stating her grievance: that an expectation for proper social behavior had been violated. It is useful to observe with this example how messy the process of parsing narrative identification can be, for example distinguishing between narrative clauses and other types of clauses within a narrative text.

Another complicated issue is determining where a narrative begins and ends. Why doesn’t this particular narrative begin with the utterance “For example” rather than with “Well, it’s unfortunate, you know”? I have demarcated the beginning of this narrative at different points for different analytic purposes. In the initial phase of narrative identification, colleagues and I identified its beginning as “I-my experience has been different.” However, in re-visiting this narrative and a videotape of the narrative event for another analysis (Juzwik, 2010), I decided to rely on a phatic marker “Well” signaling a change in speaker (Bakhtin, 1986), but a continuation of an ongoing dialogue. This decision comported with the interactional focus of that analysis. For interactional researchers of spoken narrative, the change in speaking subject may be used as a satisfactory criterion for a narrative beginning; this is, however, a departure from the structuralist definition of narrative discussed above.³

To identify narrative beginnings (and endings) in the broader data set, we also relied on framing keys (Goffman, 1974)—discursive cues that narrative talk was beginning and ending. In fairy tales this is quite simple, as the phrase “Once upon a time” serves as a frame to signal a taleworld now beginning. In spoken narrative speakers often use abstracts to begin narratives. For example, after the initial phatic utterance, Ms. Gomez’s warning to her 7th grade students introduces the topic of her narrative, “being taken advantage of,” a theme from the literary text under discussion: “As you get older, too, there are probably going to be things that come up, where people are going to try to take advantage of you, sometimes in a physical way. And will

you be prepared for it?” By cuing the gist of a narrative, an abstract can bring the audience immediately into the “so what” of a narrative. In conversational narrative events, openings can further function as bids for the floor, although teachers do not usually need to make such bids because they are typically assumed to have speaking rights most of the time, at least in classrooms. Students, however, often do need to make such bids. Some openings from the conversational narrative data set of which the opening narrative was part—which totals 145 narratives—include abstracts (e.g. “Well you think you can [tell if someone is pregnant],/ And you can’t always tell”), conjunctive phrases (e.g. but, well, so, and), temporal locators (e.g. “One time I said,” “I once babysat at a really dirty house”), and phatic phrases (e.g. “all right,” “um,” “see,” “you know”). Further, because much narrative discourse is conversational and thus responds to prior narratives, narrators sometimes begin by repeating a word, phrase, or idea from a previous speaker/narrative (e.g. Ms. Gomez’s “It’s”). Other ways researchers discern endings of narratives are codas (Labov), which bridge between the narrated event and the narrative event and signal the narrative event is finished.

Beyond the structuralist criterion, it is difficult to set forth a definitive rule or procedure for identifying and demarcating narrative talk within all sets of spoken narrative data. However, the issue of identifying and defining narrative too often goes unaddressed in narrative discourse analytic research. Given the notional conceptions of story that circulate in public discourse and everyday language, and given the proliferating discussion about narrative analysis in the scholarly literature, a failure to define what one means by narrative can undermine analytic credibility. How narrative discourse was identified, for the purposes of a given narrative discourse analysis, should be addressed.

Transcribing spoken narrative discourse

The prose form of the narrative, such as the excerpt I presented above, is perhaps the most common way in which narratives are transcribed in my own field of educational research, and I suspect in other applied fields as well. But unbroken prose may not be the most useful way to transcribe narratives for discourse analyses of spoken narrative, unless the analysis focuses only on the lexical dimensions of the narrative. For most discourse analytic work (e.g. analyses beyond the word level), some level of breaking the transcript into smaller chunks is preferred in order to illuminate various discursive patterns.

Consider, for example, the following re-transcription of Ms. Gomez’s “Through Mexican eyes.”

Ms. Gomez

1. [WELL, It’s] unfortunate,
2. you know.
3. As you get older too,
4. there are probably going to be things that come up
3. where people are going to try to take advantage of you
4. someTIMES in a physical way.
5. And will you be prepared for it?
6. You know,
7. I, my experience is dif-,
8. has been different growing up
9. Because I’m Mexican
10. And I SEE the world through Mexican eyes.
11. I was taught,
12. you know,
13. that not everybody LIKES Mexican kids.

14. And so I grew up being on guard around adults,
 15. around people.
 16. I have to WATCH OUT for that.
 17. Because if I let my guard down,
 18. and I've done that,
 19. where I didn't think about it,
 20. I wasn't paying any attention,
 21. and somebody treated me unfairly.
 22. And it,
 23. then,
 24. really makes me,
 25. freaks me OUT
 26. And it makes me uncomfortable,
 27. when somebody's being prejudiced or something?
 28. And I don't like not being ready for it
 29. I'd RATHER,
 30. I was explaining this to someone the other day,
 31. I'd rather go into a situation EXPECTING to be treated unfairly
 32. than go into a situation no-,
 33. not expecting, thinking,
 34. "Oh yeah, these are nice people,
 35. Well, they're going to be nice to me."
 36. Because,
 37. when I'm not,
 38. when I don't have my guard up,
 39. I'm not prepared to answer back to somebody.
 40. You know what I mean?
 41. what I'm saying?
 42. Like, let me give you an example
 43. I was in the store the other day.
 44. And the CLERK was ignoring me.
 45. She was waiting on a person over here
 46. And then she went to wait on a person over here
 47. And after she did this TWICE
 48. And I had been there FIRST,
 49. I spoke up.
 50. And I said,
 51. "Excuse me,
 52. Am I INVISIBLE?"
 53. [And sh-
 Alice: [You SAID that?
 54. Yes, to the CLERK
 55. And she looked at me.
 56. She said,
 57. "Oh, I'm sorry."
 58. She said –
 59. I said,
 60. "I was WAITing,

61. I was here FIRST.”
 62. And SHE WASN’T GOING to acknowledge me
 63. Until I spoke UP.
 64. And it made me,
 65. and it reminded me AGAIN
 66. That there are people OUT there
 67. That are going to try to take advantage of me,
 68. and [be MEAN to me,
 69. Being disrespectful to me.
- Alice: [(That’s like what happened to us too)]
 Ms. Gomez: “Pardon?”

In this rendering I parse the narrative into small bits of language, what Chafe (1980) refers to as “idea units” (IUs) (cf. Scollon and Scollon, 1981; Gee, 1991). Idea units constitute “spurts of consciousness” that regulate the flow of information in discourse. To transcribe the narrative as shown above, I demarcated IUs by parsing them into lines. Relatively short (in Chafe’s research, about six words on average), IUs are identified through (a) pauses: IUs are typically marked with a pause, sometimes brief and sometimes longer; (b) intonation: IUs typically constitute a single pitch glide ending with either a rise or a fall in pitch; (c) syntax: IUs tend to consist of a single clause, a verb with accompanying noun phrases. They also tend to begin with conjunctions (Chafe, 1980, p. 14): for example, Ms. Gomez relies heavily on “and” at places in the focal narrative excerpt, which I believe to be a characteristic of her “narrative style.” Although Chafe argues that intonation is the chief most useful marker in identifying IUs, I along with Scollon and Scollon (1981) rely heavily on pauses. Stanzas are divided according to syntactic and thematic considerations (Hymes, 1981; Gee, 1989, 1991), analogous to paragraphs in prose. Stanzas mark shifts in perspective, topic, time, or dramatic shifts in intonation. Often, in the broader data set, temporal and orienting transitions signal the beginnings of stanzas, as do shifts in vantage point as indicated by shifting meanings of pronouns. Other features of the discourse—including volume or emphasis shifts, intonational features of the discourse, and transcriber uncertainty are shown in “Transcription conventions” at the end of this chapter.

Among scholars of spoken narrative, many lively debates about transcription have surfaced, particularly in folklore and anthropology (e.g. Tedlock, 1983; Hymes, 1996). Some have asserted that there is a single correct way to transcribe narrative discourse (e.g. Hymes, personal correspondence); my own position—and one taken by others in recent years—is that the method of transcription largely depends on (1) the focus of the study; (2) the body of theory and research informing the study; (3) the nature and qualities of data themselves; and (4) the current state of scholarship in the field in which the work is situated (cf. Ochs, 1979; Mishler, 1991). Some narrative analysts use transcription methods that follow conventions of conversation analytic (CA) transcripts (Juzwik *et al.*, 2008; see also Chapter 20, this volume). Others do line-by-line transcription (such as the above) to highlight the performative, poetic, and structural features (Gee, 1991; Juzwik, 2009). Still others follow more prosaic conventions, for example to study story structure or lexical dimensions of narrative. CA transcripts are likely to represent disfluencies, hesitations, and repairs, because these moves are important to account for in analysis; however, more poetic transcription styles will often eliminate disfluencies to create an “ideal text” (Gee, 1989). It is commonly agreed that analysts of spoken narrative must determine which aspects of semiotic action are appropriate to foreground selectively in transcription for a given analytical project; for, as Ochs (1979) points out, a good transcript is a selective transcript. Analysts should further recognize that they are making rhetorical choices as they transcribe their data (Mishler, 1991).

A range of other factors can be taken into account when transcribing narrative discourse. Some researchers need to account for processes of *translation* in their transcription work: Blum-Kulka (2005), for example, presents transcripts of Israeli pre-schooler talk by using the Hebrew in the left column and the English translation in the right. What is essential is (a) the suitability of transcription choices for purpose of the research and (b) the explicit discussion on how and why narrative data were transcribed as they were—an argument that should not be neglected.

Disciplining spoken narrative discourse

As I observed already, narrative discourse analysis—like discourse analysis more generally—is an interdisciplinary enterprise. But what are some of the major disciplinary traditions informing narrative discourse analysis? And what different analytic or interpretive *concepts* do these traditions suggest/afford/offer? In what follows I discuss four major traditions informing current narrative discourse analytic work: 1(1) literary studies; (2) psychology; (3) folklore and anthropology; and (4) sociolinguistics. I am necessarily selective here, providing only cursory outlines of major disciplinary traditions informing narrative study in the past 40 years or so. In some cases it is difficult to distinguish or characterize certain scholars or collaborators within disciplinary boundaries because of the interdisciplinary cross-fertilization characterizing the study of spoken narrative.

Literary studies

Perhaps the greatest general influence on everyday and historical uses of the term “narrative,” literary studies has seen a robust body of scholarship and terminology around “narratology” emerge in recent years. (For helpful summaries, see Mitchell, 1980; Herman and Vervaeck, 2001; Herman *et al.*, 2005; Phelan and Rabinowitz, 2005; Herman, 2007.) In the early 1970s a group of literary scholars and writers set out to redefine the parameters of American literature by including oral literature, such as Native American storytelling, within an intellectual project they called *ethnopoetics* (Quasha and Rothenberg, 1973). If secondary English classrooms today are any indication, this ambitious project was not successful; it did, however, provide a useful term for the comparative ethnographic study of oral literature (discussed in more detail in the section on folklore and anthropology, below).

More typically concerned with written and fictional narrative, the terminology and theory of literary study offer a rich set of theoretical resources for scholars of spoken narratives (even when, as is most usual, those narratives are non-fiction). Key themes and foci in literary scholarship work on narrative include (but are not limited to) story or plot (Chatman, 1978; Aristotle, 1992; Dannenberg, 2005), narration (Prince, 1980; Abbott, 2005), time (Genette, 1980; Ricoeur, 1984–1988), space-time (Bakhtin, 1981), character (Phelan, 1996; Margolin, 2007), dialogue (Bakhtin, 1981, 1984; Thomas, 2007), focalization (Jahn, 2005, 2007) genre (Bakhtin, 1986; Todorov, 1990; Beebe, 1994), audience and “the reader” (Rabinowitz, 1977; Iser, 1978; Phelan, 1996), and voice (Genette, 1980; Bakhtin, 1984; Aczel, 2005). An interesting body of work links literary narrative with rhetoric and ethics (Booth, 1983, 1988; Phelan, 1996), which is suggestive of the possibility for studying spoken narrative events as rhetorical situations with ethical reverberations (Juzwik, 2009).

Bakhtin’s work on narrative deserves special mention, because it has traveled into and influenced virtually all of the disciplinary conversations discussed below. Organized by some critics around the comprehensive idea of “dialogism” (Holquist, 1990),⁴ Bakhtin’s work—which takes literary narratives, especially the novel (and precursors to the novel) as its data—interprets narratives as generic utterances within chains of communication. In the case of novels, the communicative chains to which authors respond span epochs. In great novels such as those of Dostoevsky—according to Bakhtin (1981, 1984)—characters and social voices get put into an “unfinalizable”

Table 23.1 A fuzzy-set definition of narrative

<i>Dimension</i>	<i>Conditions for inclusion</i>
Spatial (Semantic)	1. "Narrative must be about a world populated by individuated existents"
Temporal (Semantic)	2. "This world must be situated in time and undergo significant transformations."
Mental (Semantic)	3. "The transformations must be caused by non-habitual physical events"
	4. "Some of the participants in the events must be intelligent agents who have a mental life and react emotionally to the states of the world"
	5. "Some of the events must be purposeful actions by these agents."
Formal and Pragmatic	6. "The sequence of events must form a unified causal chain and lead to closure."
	7. "The occurrence of at least some of the events must be asserted as fact for the storyworld."
	8. "The story must communicate something meaningful to the audience".

Source: Ryan, 2007: 29

dialogue. Thus narratives can be said to be dialogic in two senses. First, they are dialogically linked to previous narratives; in Bakhtin's (1990) parlance, they are said to be "answerable" to previous texts. They also anticipate future responses; they are poised toward an "addressee" (Bakhtin, 1986). Second, they can be "internally dialogic": within the utterance of a single speaker (e.g. a novelist or a character in a novel), multiple voices are dramatized and put into dialogue.

Scholars of literature have also developed nuanced definitions of narrative that analysts of spoken narrative may find generative. Ryan (2007) proposes defining narrative texts as belonging in a "fuzzy-set" across four dimensions, "allowing variable degrees of membership, but center[ing] on prototypical cases that everybody recognizes as stories" (p. 28). Table 23.1 details the "fuzzy-set" definition of narrative.

Returning to the data grounding this chapter, the "Through Mexican eyes" narrative, myriad directions could be pursued by an analyst equipped with the literary tools outlined above. One possibility involves comparing functions of oral and literary narrative in Ms. Gomez's classroom: Juzwik and Sherry (2007) show that the spoken narrative and literary discourse shared similar functional features at the levels of form, content, and narrator role.

Psychology

Bruner's (1985) distinction between "paradigmatic" and "narrative" modes of cognitive functioning has wielded extraordinary influence on narrative research and narrative theory in the social sciences. The paradigmatic mode, which Bruner argues has come to be more privileged and valued in Western culture, leads to "good theory, tight analysis, logical proof, and empirical discovery guided by reasoned hypothesis" (p. 98). The narrative mode, on the other hand, leads to "good stories, gripping drama, believable historical accounts" (ibid.). Drenched in value, the narrative mode relies on characters, actions, intentions, evaluations, and is essentially temporal in its logic. Moreover, the narrative mode depends on believability more than on "truth" and is evaluated on different grounds than the logico-scientific mode. Whereas the genre of "argument" corresponds with the paradigmatic mode, the "story" genre corresponds with the narrative mode (p. 106). More generally, Bruner advocates making narrative modes of knowing more central to social science inquiry and to educational processes.

While Bruner's paradigmatic/narrative distinction focuses on thinking, and therefore on the individual mind, some recent work in psychology has focused on the situated, relational, and interactional work that narratives do. In a rather strong statement about this line of work, M. Gergen (2004) writes: "a narrative comes into existence as a facet of relationship, not as a product of an individual" (p. 280). Much work from this perspective can be tied to an epistemology of "social constructionism." Such relational approaches to narrative have been further mobilized to reconsider women's ways of narrating (Gergen and Gergen, 1988; Bateson, 1989). Other researchers have turned to narrative to study human development, conceptualizing spoken (and written) narrative as a mediating device between unfolding sociohistoric processes and individual identity development (Nelson, 1989; Daiute, 2004; Thornborrow and Coates, 2005). Also from a sociohistoric perspective, researchers have studied spoken narratives as tools for collective remembering, for example in looking at how students in schools become socialized through textbook narratives and through oral talk about the past to interpret history according to nationally sanctioned storylines (Wertsch, 2002; Barton and Levstik, 2004; Juzwik, 2009).

To return to our excerpt, "Through Mexican eyes," this narrative could be explored from multiple angles by drawing upon contemporary psychological approaches to narrative. We might, for example, consider how the teacher's implied goal—helping her students prepare for situations when others try to take advantage of them—might be advanced through the narrative, as opposed to being advanced through the paradigmatic mode (e.g. through a treatise on racism or ethnic discrimination in American life). A further analytic direction might be to consider how—through oral narratives such as this—Ms. Gomez performs *ethos* over time, in her classroom conversations with students. Such an analysis might involve looking, for example, at how a teacher's short narratives (such as "Through Mexican eyes") accumulate and become sedimented over time, across a school year, to form a broader "life story." Finally, we might undertake a feminist analysis of how Ms. Gomez's narratives, over time, show her constructing a relational self—as indicated, for example, in line 30 of the narrative: "I was explaining this to someone the other da:y." This line further gives some indication of how she considers her literary discussions with students to be similar to her interactions with friends and family members beyond the classroom.

Folklore studies and anthropology

Although folklore studies and anthropology represent two distinct strands of scholarly activity, in the recent history of scholarship, which includes "spoken narrative" as data, these two approaches have been woven together—perhaps because of the considerable influence of Dell Hymes and Richard Bauman, scholars who seem to straddle both fields. Typically studies in folklore and anthropology situate the study of narratives within ethnographic descriptions of particular cultural groups (e.g. Bauman's (1986) study of oral storytelling among Texas dog traders) or comparative descriptions of multiple cultural groups (e.g. Heath's (1982) study of family narrative practices around bedtime in different communities in the southeastern United States or Scollon and Scollon's (1981) study of Athabaskan and English interethnic communication). Whereas anthropology has a considerable history of studying the narratives of "exotic others" (Boas, 1927), folklore studies has always been more focused on studying the narratives of groups of which scholars are part (Propp, 1968).⁵ These disciplinary traditions have focused on the preservation of languages and oral storytelling traditions that are in danger of eradication due to industrialization or other forces of "modernity" (Shuman, 2005). In other cases scholars attempt to "give voice" to marginalized or neglected voices or narrators, in a populist aesthetic spirit.⁶

Folkloric and anthropological studies concerned with spoken narrative, many falling within the "ethnography of speaking" tradition, have shifted from comparative textual studies to

comparative ethnographic studies of situated performances of narrative communication (Shuman, 2005). In fact, the construct of “performance” (laid out in Bauman, 1977) has been a key conceptualization informing studies of spoken narrative in folklore and anthropology. Bauman (1986) defines performance as:

the assumption of responsibility to the audience for a display of communicative skill, highlighting the way in which communication is carried out, above and beyond its referential content... the act of expression on the part of the performer is thus laid open to evaluation for the way it is done, for the relative skill and effectiveness of the performer’s display. It is also offered for the enhancement of experience, through the present appreciation of the intrinsic qualities of the act of expression itself. Performance thus calls forth special attention to and heightened awareness of both the act of expression and the performer... performance may be understood as the enactment of the poetic function, the essence of spoken artistry.

(p. 3)

Embedded in this notion of performance is a focus on narrative tellers and the sociocultural situations in which narratives are told. This does not, however, preclude attention to narrative texts themselves. Bauman and Briggs (1990) explain: “In order to avoid reifying ‘the context’ it is necessary to study the textual details that illuminate the manner in which participants are collectively constructing the world around them” (p. 69). Indeed, an important contribution of performance approaches to narrative study has been the careful ethnographic attention to *poetics* in the context of narrative performance (e.g. Hymes, 1981), an emphasis associated with the term *ethnopoetics* (Quasha and Rothenberg, 1973). Other points of comparison in performance studies of narrative include (but are not limited to) storytelling rights, or how the authorization to tell narratives in a particular cultural setting is negotiated and achieved by participants (Shuman, 1986), the ritualization and attendant social practices in which narrative tellings are embedded (Narayan, 1997), and the time–space of narrative performances (Heath, 1983).

More recent work on “context” in the cross-cultural study of oral narrative performance has moved away from a static approach to context (where context is comprised of a list of descriptors) to a more dynamic notion, focused on how texts come to be interactionally decontextualized, entextualized, and recontextualized by participants (Bauman and Briggs, 1990; Goodwin and Duranti, 1990; Silverstein and Urban, 1996). Bauman and Briggs detail how, in performances, texts come—through various signs, oftentimes poetic—to be cordoned off from the flow of discursive and semiotic activity (i.e. *decontextualized*) and then to be *recontextualized* in inventive ways for a narrator’s performative purposes. This happens, for example, when a narrator recycles a “constructed dialogue,” a bit of language whose authorship is attributed to someone other than the teller, for the purposes of her own story (e.g. to get a laugh, or to take a moral stance).

As a focus on narrative tellers and contexts of narrating has acquired prominence, so too folklorists and anthropologists have themselves become more reflexive about *who they themselves are* in relation to the persons whose stories they represent in their research. Narayan (1997), for example, collects and presents interpretations of Kangra folk narratives “in collaboration with” (so reads the cover of her book) storyteller Urmila Devi Sood, or “Urmilaji.” In keeping with already discussed notions of researcher reflexivity, Narayan enlists Urmilaji to interpret the narratives she has recorded and transcribed in her field work, a process she describes as “oral literary criticism” (1995). Narayan identifies herself—an Indian American—as both insider and outsider in this work: While her (American-born) mother has lived in the Kangra community for many years (and Narayan reports living with her mother while doing her field work), she is herself an American professor who often feels like a “cultural other” in the village setting.

Through this disciplinary lens, we might consider the “Through Mexican eyes” narrative as a situated “performance,” even though it is a “conversational narrative” (Georgakopoulou, 1998) rather than a “full performance” (Hymes, 1981). Juzwik (2010), for example, argues that Susan Gomez’s narrative telling amounts to an (identifying) performance: She enacts being a person of color who speaks up in order to correct a violation of the social and moral order: being ignored by a clerk because she is Mexican. Showcasing her narrative virtuosity and drawing attention to herself as teller (and as protagonist), she recruits poetic and aesthetic performance keys. Poetic keys include the contrast between ONCE and TWICE (lines 47–48) and the trope of antanaclasis (the repetition of the same word with different meanings for each use), where “waiting” gets mobilized in multiple senses (lines 45–46 and line 60). Aesthetic keys include constructed dialogues (e.g. in lines 51–52) that revivify for her student audience the climactic event of *speaking up*. The analysis further explores how Ms. Gomez’s constructed dialogue gets recontextualized by several students (including Alice) and by Ms. Gomez in subsequent (identifying) narrative performances. For example, Alice—who interjected what I interpret to be a *surprised* “You said that?” in response to Ms. Gomez’s performed dialogue—responds immediately by telling a narrative in which an adult utters those same words—“Excuse me, I was here first”—to butt in front of her, a “kid” who is ignored by the clerk (the same scenario as in Ms. Gomez’s narrative). Here she contests Ms. Gomez’s storyline that “speaking up” (like Ms. Gomez) is necessarily the morally correct action by suggesting that an adult “speaking up” can also do wrong, at least according to “kids.” This constructed dialogue gets recontextualized and recycled in two subsequent narratives, one told by Ms. Gomez and another by another student.

Sociolinguistics

Perhaps the most elaborated disciplinary perspective devoted to spoken narrative at present is sociolinguistics. This can perhaps be explained by the looming presence of William Labov in early, and defining, sociolinguistic research. Labov’s (Labov and Waletzky, 1967; Labov, 1972) large-scale studies of narratives told in research interviews by African–American “inner-city” youth and by other groups of people pivotally shaped years of sociolinguistic research on spoken narrative. I mentioned above a key contribution of this research: a formalist strategy for defining minimal narrative discourse. Labov took as paradigmatic narrative data “fully-formed narratives” of personal experience, told by participants in structured research interviews. Vicarious narratives—that is, narrators narrating events that they themselves did not experience—were present in the data, but considered less artful or developed (Labov, 1972).

This work also influentially identified six features of “fully-formed narratives”:

Abstract: opening clauses encapsulating the point of the narrative (lines 1–5 of Ms. Gomez’s narrative)

Ms. Gomez (Teacher): Well, It’s unfortunate, you know. As you get older, too, there are probably going to be things that come up, where people are going to try to take advantage of you, sometimes in a physical way. And will you be prepared for it? You know, I-my experience has been different growing up because I’m Mexican and I see the world through Mexican eyes. And I was taught that not everybody likes Mexican kids. And so I grew up being on guard around adults, around people. I have to watch out for that... Like let me give you an example. I was in the store the other day and the clerk was ignoring me. She was waiting on the person over here, and then she went to wait on the person over here, and after she did this twice and I had been there first, I spoke up. And I said, “Excuse me, am I invisible?”

Alice(student): You said that?

Ms. Gomez: Yes, to the clerk. And she looked at me. She said, “Oh I’m sorry.”

She said, I said, “I was waiting I was here first.” And she wasn’t going to acknowledge me until I spoke up...

Orientation: scene-setting descriptive clauses that locate the narrative—time, place, persons, situation (Ms. Gomez’s narrative includes a lengthy orientation, which I locate from lines 6–43)

Complicating action: the clauses that form the action or plot of a narrative (see definition of narrative discussion in the section “Capturing and defining spoken narrative discourse” above)

Evaluation: “the means used by the narrator to indicate the point of the narrative” (Labov, 1972: 306). External evaluation is set apart from the narrated event, whereas embedded evaluation is (Labov believes, more artfully) placed within the narrated event. (Lines 62–63 in Ms. Gomez’s narrative offer an example of external evaluation; the emphasis on the words “TWICE” and “FIRST,” in lines 47 and 48, of embedded evaluation.)

Result or resolution: the termination, or result, of the complicating action (lines 55–61 of Ms. Gomez’s narrative)

Coda: clauses signaling that the narrative is finished; may bridge the gap between the narrated event and the narrative event or show the effects of narrated events on narrator (lines 64–69 of Ms. Gomez’s narrative)

Connected with formalist literary perspectives of the 60s and 70s (e.g. Genette, 1980), Labov’s structuralist approach offered forth these touchstone concepts for the study of spoken narrative that have been developed, elaborated, and critiqued in recent years. Polanyi (1985), for example, further developed the concept of evaluation in a study of conversational American storytelling. This work argued that the temporally and causally sequenced narrative plot criteria alone were insufficient for defining a minimal narrative and, further, that some manner of narrator *evaluation* needed to be present in order for discourse to be labeled “narrative” (in contrast to the “annals” examined by White, 1980). In a related, but distinct, intellectual tradition, Halliday and Hasan’s (1976) theorization of cohesion ties influenced a generation of researchers with an interest in spoken narrative: this work, although it pursued functional aims, was sometimes recruited for formalist narrative analyses.⁷

Several trends in recent sociolinguistic narrative studies have resulted from the intellectual influences of interactional sociolinguistics (Goffman, 1974, 1981; Gumperz, 1982) and conversation analysis (see Clayman and Gill, this volume). First, contemporary scholars of spoken narrative have recognized that spoken narrative data need not be elicited in interviews, but that, in interview settings, analysts should account for the interactional work that narratives are doing (e.g. Wortham, 2001). Beyond research interviews, however, narratives abound in everyday conversation (Ochs and Capps, 2001), hence the term “conversational narratives” (Norrick, 2000) and an accompanying analytic focus on how narrative “talk in interaction” functions for participants in various social settings (Tannen, 1989; Georgakopoulou, 1998; Norrick, 2000; Bamberg, 2004). Ochs and Capps (2001), for example, outline five dimensions for analyzing conversational narrative data: (a) tellership (Is a narrative single or collaboratively told?); (b) tellability (High or low?); (c) embeddedness (relatively detached, i.e. more performative, or embedded, i.e. more dialogic in surrounding talk); (d) linearity (Is the temporal and causal ordering relatively closed or open?); and (e) Moral stance (Are the general point(s) about the teller or the world being conveyed certain and constant or are they uncertain and fluid in the telling?). Another key concept in the sociolinguistic literature, *constructed dialogue* (Tannen, 1989),

focuses attention on how narrators make use of reported speech (Volosinov, 1973) or animation (Goffman, 1981) in their narrative tellings. A further line of inquiry is the study of *response stories* (Norrick, 2007; Juzwik, 2010)—the study of how narratives are conversationally decontextualized, entextualized, and recontextualized to do identity and other social work.

Another contribution of recent sociolinguistic work on narrative is the idea that narrative discourse analysis ought to be expanded to include “small stories” (e.g. Bamberg, 2004, 2006; Georgakopoulou, 2007)—narratives that do not fit more “canonical” definitions of fully formed narratives, nor are they even necessarily even tales of once occurrent, personally experienced events. A narrative can, for example, be hypothetical or *irrealis* (Ochs and Capps, 2001; Juzwik, 2006), meaning that it narrates events that could happen or could have happened—but did not (yet) happen in the past, present, and/or future. “Small story” data are generally spoken and studied in contexts in and beyond research interviews, for example in everyday talk among friends, students and teachers in classrooms, families at the dinner table, and so on. Oftentimes conversational narratives are *co-authored* (Rymes, 2001), so that a single narrator is difficult to identify. Such co-authorship happened in Ms. Gomez’s classroom, for example, when several students co-told a narrative about an unfair soccer coach whom many of them knew.

A sociolinguistic analysis of “Through Mexican eyes” might take a number of different directions. Sociolinguistic analyses often focus attention on a collection, or corpus, of narrative data generated in a particular context or by a particular participant or group of participants. Analysts might catalogue different types of narrative (e.g. personal experience, hypothetical) in the data set of which Ms. Gomez’s “Through Mexican eyes” narrative was a part. An analysis might further compare the sorts of narratives that appear in classroom discussions of literature with those that occur in other disciplines (e.g. math, history). One sociolinguistically informed analysis (Juzwik *et al.*, 2008) explored several questions, including (1) the relationship between narrative and discussion and (2) how narratives—including this one—interactionally functioned in the classroom literary discussions. In the unit of which the “Through Mexican eyes” narrative event was a part, at least 40 percent of all discussion discourse was comprised of narrative discourse. In looking more closely at “conversational narrative discussion,” we observed narratives serving to prime, sustain, ratify, and amplify discussion about the literature.

Shifting analytic approaches to spoken narrative data

As may be evident from my discussion of the four literatures above, narrative discourse analytic work appears to have shifted over time, with a general movement away from formalist approaches that dominated the 1970s and early 1980s to increasingly dialogic approaches that incorporate analysis of interaction and the situation of the narrative event, alongside attention to textual features and structures. Accompanying this trend toward more interactional analysis, some recent research on narrative tends to avoid grand claims about or evaluations of “narrative artfulness” (Labov, 1972) or the beneficence of narrative “modes of knowing” (Bruner, 1985). I conclude by noting one emerging direction for analysis of spoken narrative discourse: “multi-semiotic” analysis.

In a critical discourse analysis of “racial literacy” in teacher candidates’ book club conversations, Rogers and Mosley (2008) categorize “multimodal” resources including pointing, motioning, using artifacts or bodies, eye contact/gaze, use of proximity, posture, use of print or images, facial expressions, head movements, use of air quotes, gestures, and reaching for artifacts (p. 128). This list offers one starting point for researchers wishing to consider narrative alongside other sign systems. Prior *et al.* (2006), however, prefer the term “multisemiotic” to “multimodal,” because the former suggests a broader, more activity-oriented conception, beyond modes (e.g. image). Multisemiotic analysis of narrative seeks to capture, transcribe, and analyze the multiple, laminated sign systems at

play when persons enact spoken narratives (Prior and Hengst, 2010). Hengst (2010), for example, offers an intriguing conversational narrative analysis of the successful communications of partners, one of whom has a diagnosis of the communicative disorder known as aphasia. Despite communicative challenges, such as “syntactic, semantic, phonemic, and articulatory errors and . . . false starts, long silences and prosodic disruptions” (pp. 109–110), partners with aphasia were able to communicate successfully with partners by using multisemiotic cues. Because of careful analytic attention to gesture, gaze, and other sign systems—beyond discourse—Hengst shows how overall communicative competence was far ahead of the linguistic competence for participants with aphasia. This insight would not be available through narrative discourse analysis alone.

Transcription conventions

ALL CAPS	The utterance is louder or otherwise emphasized, in comparison to surrounding words
[Overlapping talk
(?)	unintelligible speech
(abc)	“best guess” transcription
(())	Additional information or description
:	Elongated vowel sound
?	Rising intonation and pause
.	Falling intonation and pause
,	Slight pause
--	self-interruption/repair

Further readings

- Bakhtin, M. M. (1981) *The Dialogic Imagination [1935]*, trans. M. Holquist, ed. C. Emerson and M. Holquist. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press and Bakhtin, M. M. (1986) *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays [1953]*, ed. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, trans. V. W. McGee. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press. These have been enormously influential on discourse analytic work on spoken narrative, particularly from a dialogic perspective.
- Bamberg, M. (ed.) (1997) ‘Oral versions of personal experience: three decades of narrative analysis’, *Journal of Narrative and Life History*, 7: 207–216 (special issue). Further commentary on and critiques of Labov’s model, along with a re-print of Labov and Waletzky’s (1967) seminal paper, are presented in this collection.
- Halliday, M. A. K. and Hasan, R. (1976) *Cohesion in English*. London: Longman and Labov, W. (1972) ‘The transformation of experience in narrative syntax’, in W. Labov (ed.) *Language in the Inner City*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, pp. 354–396. Both influenced formalist studies of spoken narrative.
- Herman, D. (ed.) (2007) *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*. New York: Cambridge University Press. This offers a helpful companion to the study of both spoken and written narrative. Norrick’s chapter speaks specifically of conversational narrative analysis.
- Ochs, E. and Capps, L. (2001) *Living Narratives: Creating Lives in Everyday Storytelling*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Ochs and Capps, who themselves call upon Bakhtin, provide an overview and theoretical framework for conversational narrative analysis.

Notes

- 1 Pseudonym
- 2 For more detail about the project in which the narrative datum was generated, see Juzwik *et al.* (2008).
- 3 This change-in-speaker criterion, however, was not always helpful for identifying the boundaries of Susan Gomez’s narratives or those of her students, because it did not allow for the back-and-forth narrative co-constructions that often characterize conversational narrative practices.
- 4 Although this interpretation is controversial: Bernard-Donals (1994) argues that Bakhtin’s work does not neatly fall within a comprehensive theory, such as “dialogism,” and that a philosophical tension between phenomenology and Marxism can be observed, especially if one turns to the lesser studied texts.

- 5 Scholars of spoken narrative whose work has made an impact on educational studies (e.g. Heath, 1983; Gee, 1985; Poveda, 2002) have often studied narratives and narrative practices in groups of which they are not members because of the illumination this work offers to educational practices.
- 6 Bourdieu (1998) critiques this effort as naïve (pp. 134–137).
- 7 For example, the work of Halliday and Hasan (1976) was enormously influential on narrative studies in literacy education in the 1980s.

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