Narration

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1. Definitions and Dimensions of Narrative

The development of social media genres such as blogs, social network sites and wikis has allowed people with relatively little technological expertise to publish stories about their own experiences and the world around them. These examples of story-telling provided important cases studies against which scholars have tested and refined existing definitions of and frameworks for analysing narrative across a number of disciplines. Within pragmatics, narrative analysis has been influenced by a number of research traditions which pre-date the emergence of social media, such as the ethnopoetic work of Hymes (1996, 1998), studies in discursive psychology, such as Bruner's (1986, 1991) discussion of narrative and identity, and the sociolinguistic work of Labov (1972, 2013). These studies scrutinised narration as it took place in various face-to-face contexts, (such as performances and interviews) but conceptualised the object of study in somewhat different ways. For example, in Labov's seminal work, narrative is defined as a particular text type that can be observed as a discrete verbal artefact. In line with this, he proposed the minimal definition of narrative in linguistic terms as 'one method of recapitulating past experience by matching a verbal sequence of clauses to the sequence of events which (it is inferred) actually occurred' (Labov 1972: 359-60). In contrast, Bruner's (1991) description of a 'canonical narrative' relied less on the qualities of a verbal artefact (the narrative product) and instead evoked cognitive models in the form of scripts to position narratives as macro-social patterns, understanding narrative as 'an instrument of the mind' (p.6). These theoretical starting points are important, for they shaped the parameters against which the norms for narration could be evaluated. Following Labov's structural description of a 'fully formed narrative', narratives are expected to contain a core component, the Complicating Action, which is resolved in the Result or Resolution. In addition, Labov suggested that in order for the story to be told successfully, it must also be tellable, where tellability was realised linguistically in a range of lexico-grammatical resources brought together under the umbrella heading of evaluation. In Bruner's response to Labov's work, he argued that tellability implied both normativity and breach as central components for narrative. Canonical narratives thus typically report and revolve around some kind of 'trouble' (Bruner 1991: 16), in ways that are culturally shaped and may bring to light the ways narratives operate as a form of cultural legitimacy.

In the decades following the work of Labov and Bruner, narrative research in pragmatics has considered a complex range and variety of storytelling practices across different contexts. In moving beyond the narrative examples elicited by Labov, scholars recognised increasingly that the formal properties of a narrative could not be thought of in universal, abstract terms and instead a more flexible approach to analysing narration as a process was required. This move has been described as a shift towards narrativity, which following a cognitive approach focuses on the interpretation of a text as more or less like a narrative (Ryan 2007). Interpreting the narrativity of a text repositions the Labovian framework as one option amongst many possibilities for narrative structure, albeit an option that is (from a cognitive) perspective regarded as a proto-typical example of the category against which other storytelling examples might vary.

Building on a more flexible, contextualised approach to narration, Ochs and Capps' (2001) argue that the structural qualities of the narrative text are but one of five dimensions that may characterise any given storytelling instance. The five dimensions include the structural features of narrative (linearity) but place a clear emphasis on contextual elements, such as the persons involved in the telling (tellership), and the sites in which the telling which takes place (embeddedness), which may inform the interpretation of moral stance and the assessment of selected narrative content as more or less tellable. Ochs and Capps (2001) point out that each of these dimensions can be realised in different ways, so that the kinds of narratives that might be scrutinised can be thought of in more flexible terms. Whilst the stories analysed by Labov were typically single teller accounts of highly tellable events, which were told in relatively detached performances, other stories can be told by many tellers, about mundane topics and be embedded in complex interactional contexts. This is particularly the case in social media narration, which can incorporate the contribution of many tellers in various kinds of collaborations, be told in episodic, post-by-post forms and be embedded in online templates quite unlike the face-to-face interview, conversational or performative contexts considered in earlier research.

Further interest in non-canonical examples of narration has gathered under the umbrella of what has begun to be known as 'small stories research'. Small story research positions itself as a strategic shift; an 'antidote to canonical research' (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008: 377) in which the analytic focus is turned towards 'a gamut of underrepresented narrative activities' (ibid: 381) that fall beyond 'fully formed' stories. Small stories include breaking news, hypothetical stories and projections of future events

(Georgakopoulou 2007), refusals to tell (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou 2008), narrative stance-taking (Georgakopoulou 2013) and conversational shared stories (Georgakopoulou 2005, 2007). These small stories are highly embedded in their interactional contexts, often falling on the periphery or margins of the main topic of the talk. In line with the emphasis on their emergent, interactional contexts, small stories are often co-constructed rather than the accomplishment of a single narrator. The stories are typically fleeting rather than fully developed and often report events which are mundane and every day in nature rather than landmark examples of tellable topics.

Like the sociolinguistic traditions of narrative research, the methods used in small story research are empirically oriented and include close attention to the micro-analysis of the narration, usually in verbal form. However, drawing on positioning theory as developed by Davies and Harré (1990), small story research attempts to situate the micro-analysis of the narrative text in relation to the macro-social narratives that are invoked by the tellers. Crucially, in small stories research this interpretive move takes place by analysing the narration in relation to its interactional context, such as the turn-by-turn conversational co-text in which the narrators are positioned. In this way, small stories research moves beyond the limitations of structuralist models such as Labov's that treat narrative primarily as a product, rather than a process. At the same time, it also provides a method that allows researchers to move between the empirical analysis of narrative practice and the interpretation of what those practices might mean for the broader, macro-social meanings and ways of thinking that shape tellers' experiences.

2. Social Media Contexts for Narration: Media affordances and Multimodality

In Ochs and Capps' dimensional approach and in the small stories paradigm, the narrative practices are understood in relation to the localised, co-texts of interaction and broader, socio-cultural contexts in which those interactions take place. Whilst the focus on a meso-level of analysis is a crucial turning point for theorising narration as a practice rather than understanding narrative as textual product, these models emerged against the backdrop of co-textual interactions took place, for the most part, in offline, face-to-face contexts. Even in these offline situations for telling, context is a multifaceted notion. However, when we turn to social media sites and platforms, the contextual complexity of narration increases further still. On the one hand, this opens up new avenues for narrative for inquiry, for generally, unlike the ephemeral nature of face-to-face narration, many of the formats found in many

social media sites and platforms preserve the interactional context in tractable forms that allow the researcher to trace the processes of narrative production and reception. For example, the quasi-conversational exchanges between participants can be archived in posts and responses, and further contextual information such as the time and place of the interaction may also be observed through meta-data appended to the posts, comments and other kinds of interaction. On the other hand, we might wish to be cautious about taking a media-blind approach and simply transposing concepts of narration from face-to-face interactions to those found online. Whilst there are clear points of continuity between the stories narrated in face-to-face contexts and those found in social media sites and platforms, there are also important differences that relate to the mediated nature of the interaction.

Within computer-mediated discourse analysis, these differences have been discussed in relation to media affordances. Gibson (1977) coined the term 'affordances' to explain the ways in which the characteristics of a particular environment both constrained and enabled particular kinds of activity to take place. However, rather than assume that the technology directly determines what kinds of narration takes place in social media, the communicative functions of a particular site or platform can be taken up, adapted and appropriated more or less creatively by the participants involved in the narrative interaction. These media affordances are thus part of the broader communicative situation in which narration takes place, and inter-relate to other, non-technological characteristics. Herring's (2007) multi-faceted classification of computer-mediated discourse developed Hymes' (1974) ethnography of communication model and sets out a useful set of medium and situation factors that can be used to compare and contrast the different social media contexts. In her model, the situation factors include those which span many kinds of technology, such as the participants, the norms and purpose of the communication and the linguistic code. Alongside this, she lists the medium factors which include whether the communication is synchronous or asynchronous, private or public, the choices for identity representation (such as anonymity), size of the message, the persistence of the transcript, message format and channels for communication. The last of these concerns the multimodal range of the particular sites, which may include options to use images, sound, and audio-visual content as part of the narration.

The multimodal nature of social media narration poses particular challenges to the models of narrative that were designed to analyse stories conveyed primarily in spoken words. However, within literary-critical narratology, there has been an increased interest in the ways in which narratives can be told in different media (Ryan 2004). Within the project

of transmedial narratology, one of the key questions that scholars have tried to answer is the extent to which non-verbal semiotic resources can tell a story. Definitions of narrative which foreground verbal factors such as past tense verbs and sequences of clauses are difficult to apply to non-verbal phenomenon such as pure music or still images. Nonetheless, a more cognitive approach suggests that in certain conditions, visual content can prompt the interpretation of narrativity (Ranta 2013). For example, if the content of the image includes human participants who are arranged in compositions which imply the transfer of actions from one participant to another (Van Leeuwen 1996, 2008), a sequence of events may be inferred by the viewer. Likewise, the potential for musical sequences to mirror a plot-like progression from complication to resolution have been interpreted as narrative resources (Rabinowitz 2004), especially where these are combined with verbal content such as song lyrics and genres that carry particular narrative qualities, such as opera (Hutcheon and Hutcheon 2010) or musical theatre (Krogh Hansen 2011).

More importantly for social media examples of narration, multimodality draws attention to the ways in which semiotic resources are combined in ways that contribute to the narrative dimensions of tellability, tellership and linearity. For example, in some social media contexts, there can be a clear division between the content that is conveyed in each of the multimodal elements or contributed by different tellers. In the video-sharing site, YouTube, the stories narrated in videos can incorporate still and moving images, sound, words, gesture and dance. In contrast, the comments are verbal and multimodal content such as image, emojis or links to other sites are for the most part absent. In turn, this shapes the ways that the video-maker and the commenters can contribute to the narration: commenters can only write a response and cannot alter the audio-visual content. In other cases, where stories are retold in mashups, different semiotic resources can be recontextualised and combined with new content. For example, in Georgakopoulou's (2015) study of videos responding to a Greek political incident, she showed how the verbal content and actions were transferred from one video to another, but the orientation shown in the video changed to reframe the political incident as a parody.

The multimodal combinations that are possible in social media narration also challenge early text-based approaches that understand narrative as a product that can be decontextualized from their interactional context. In social media narration it remains important to distinguish between the reported events (the narrative discourse) and the context of narration. However, in other cases, the boundaries between the narrative discourse and the context are less clear cut. A case in point is the quasi-real time reporting of events in social

media where the time of reporting and the time of the reported events are similar. In these instances, such as the updates posted to sites such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, the timestamp may contextualise both the narration and the reported events. The possibility of embedding content relevant to the reported events in the template around the space where the reported events are published has increased over time. The medium factors of the international social network site, Facebook, illustrate this process. In its early days, the Facebook template provided a space for its members to post updates. The update template was a text box, in which the member could complete the default statement "[username] is…." The updates published on personal Facebook accounts to the site member's 'wall' could contain many kinds of texts, including small stories such as breaking news and projections (Page 2010, 2012). As the design of status update evolved, the template changed to incorporate interactions from other tellers, in the form of comments and response buttons such as the 'like' and most recently, 'reaction' icons. The modality of the updates also changed as it became possible to upload images and video directly into the status update (rather than archiving these separately in albums). In addition, the meta-data published in the status update template also changed to include the possibility of representing places (through check in buttons) and participants (by tagging other site members). Given that the this multimodal content can contribute to the narrative, for example, by providing orientation or evaluation (Page et al. 2013) of the events reported in the update, it becomes difficult to treat the narrative as an isolated verbal product alone. Instead, there has been a shift towards seeing the constellation of the multimodal content, such as the written update along with images, video, comments and responses as a composite 'wall event' (Androutsopoulos 2014) in which the narration takes places and can be shared by multiple tellers, such as the updater, the commenters and possibly other participants if the image and video in question were produced in another context and then reproduced in the Facebook update.

The episodic nature of many social media sites, where stories are told in multiple posts over time (such as blog or forum posts), or through the incremental evolution of documents such as wiki pages, stretches the boundaries of social media narration further still. In line with research that traces iterative storytelling as a form of identity construction over time, such as Wortham and Rhodes' (2015) work on chains of narratives across speech events, the narration that can be observed in social media contexts is highly open-ended can evolve across multiple, intertextually networked segments. Examples of mediated chains of storytelling can include updates posted over time to an individual's profile or personal account on a social media site. The narrativised chains can be interpreted relative to the

architecture of the site's archive, for example through timelines or reverse chronological sequencing. However, the ways in which people make use of multiple social media contexts for distributing and redistributing their stories can make tracing these narrative chains a complex methodological process. For example, Adami (2014) reports on the ways in which food bloggers cross posted their texts (including stories) across interconnected platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram and YouTube. Chains of stories do not just unfold with open-ended linearity over time, but also across multiple sites of interaction, with varying media factors and audiences. In her work, Adami argues for an ethnographically informed model of analysis that traces the cross-posting practices of the blogger over time, taking into account the multimodal analysis of how the narrative was remediated according to its new context. Adami's analysis shows how the process of social media narration can operate as process of assemblage, where the written report of events on the blog post was created alongside other narrative artefacts (such as video and images) that appeared on other sites (YouTube and Instagram). The choice to assemble, remix and remediate the narrative content across different sites reflected not only the medium factors of each site in question (such as the restrictions on message length in Twitter, or the audio-visual emphasis of video and photo sharing sites), but also the different audiences with whom the blogger engaged. For example, the multimodal composition of the words and images projected closer social distance between the blogger and her audience on Instagram, than did her use of the video and advice-giving tips on the noticeboard of Pinterest (Adami 2014: 239). This example illustrates neatly how the analysis of social media storytelling must stretch beyond the earlier, mono-modal work in discourse-analytic narrative research but retains similar concerns found in this earlier work that considers narratives as a resource for negotiating the tellers' identitites.

3. Tellers and narrative identity

The contextualising impetus in narrative inquiry exemplified in the work of Ochs and Capps (2001) and extended within the small stories paradigm (Georgakopoulou 2007) moved the focus away from the narrative text as the sole object of scrutiny and towards broader concerns regarding how the narration might achieve particular interpersonal outcomes for the participants. The increasing interest in the tellership as a narrative dimension and the sites of telling (Georgakopoulou 2011) in which the narration was embedded went hand-in-hand with the broader research that began to analyse identity as constructed discursively through interaction (Antaki and Widdicombe 1998). The contexts of social media might seem to

offer the environment par excellence where this trend of narrative research might further develop. First, the text-based forms of online interaction suggested that online identity could be treated as a 'mask,' separate from other, offline identity (Turkle 1995) and so is in line with the view of identity as a fluid, discursive project, rather than as a stable, essentialist attribute of tellers. Second, the identities-in-interaction approach benefited from the potential of social media contexts to open up mediated forms of collaboration to enable innovative opportunities for the co-construction of narration between multiple tellers. Narrative tellership can be approached in relation to these inter-related aspects of identity. Zimmerman (1998) distinguishes between these aspects by differentiating a participant's transportable identity (the characteristics and attributes that are carried from one interactional context to another) from the situated identities (the generic or institutional roles that a participant can adopt within a specific speech event, such as a radio show host – interviewer, doctor – patient and so on) and discourse identities (the localised turn-by-turn roles determined by the interaction) that any given participant may take up. The affordances of different social media sites shape the transportable, situated and discourse identities for tellers, each of which underpin the storytelling rights (Shuman 1986, 2005, 2015) for a teller to contribute to the narration in the first place.

The medium factors that shape transportable identity include the options for participants to represent their identity in ways that are more or less anonymous, and more or less connected with aspects of the identities that are constructed in other contexts outside social media. Typically, this kind of information about the tellers is located in the profiles that a participant can create as they become members of a particular site. The representation of the teller's transportable identities is related to notions of authenticity, and the assumption that the right to tell a story is associated with personal experience of the reported events. As Schiffrin (2006) points out, this assumption is rooted in the Labov's research, where he found that stories of vicarious experience were seldom as fully evaluated as those where the narrator had participated in events first hand. In social media contexts, despite early claims that online environments would open up possibilities for identity play, expectations of authenticity persist and may be embedded in the tellership rights that are formulated in site specific terms and conditions. Some sites encourage their members to use their real names. For example, Facebook's terms state that 'We require people to provide the name they use in real life; that way you always know who you're connecting with' (Facebook 2016). Similarly, Twitter's terms and conditions (2016) prohibit impersonation and require that parody, commentary and fan accounts are demarcated as such in the account name and

profile information. In contrast, other sites do not make such restrictions and may discourage their members from disclosing information that identifies aspects of their offline identity. For example, whilst Wikipedia allows its members to create usernames that can be a person's 'real name', in their Guidelines for new Users (2016) this is framed as a 'risk' and outing a Wikipedia Editor's offline identity is considered a serious offence. These choices are related to the generic purpose of the site in question, where the tellership rights do not rest upon the narrators' first-hand experience of events. For example, as an online Encyclopedia relies on the neutral synthesis of existing, published knowledge rather than the sharing of personal experience or opinion to shape the content of the articles that are co-constructed by the editors. The rights for a teller to contribute to a particular Wikipedia article are thus shaped by the core content policies, No original research and Verifiability, which propose that the contribution to articles be supported by 'reliable sources'. The first-hand, individual experience of events is replaced by the authority of peer-reviewed, published source material as a criteria for the tellership.

Of course, participants do not necessarily respond to the policies, terms and conditions of any given site in a uniform way. Wikipedia editors may choose to use their real names in their accounts, and frequently debate what kinds of source material can be regarded as reliable. It is possible for Facebook members to breach the norms for authentic tellership, for example by posting updates on another members' account (Page 2012, 2015). The motivation for and relational outcomes of these choices are often embedded in offline contexts of interactions that suggest that a sharp distinction between the offline and online aspects of narration is difficult to uphold. For example, the Facebook participants who engaged in playful impersonation were part of an offline community of practice, where the relational work that emerged from these breaches of authenticity were for some members of the audience a rapport-enhancing form of teasing, whilst for other members of the audience the breaches in authenticity could result in loss of face, embarrassment and ridicule. In part, the differences in the relational outcome reflect the distinctive nature of the contexts in which tellership takes place in some social network sites. Some social media sites are characterised by what has been called context collapse (Wesch 200X), which describes the ways in which a networked audience (such as Friend list on Facebook, or a Follower list on Twitter or Instagram) can bring together groups of participants who would not typically be united in the same interactional context. This may pose particular challenges for tellers who, on the one hand, may opt for authentic self-disclosure on a site like Facebook, yet not wish to disclose exactly the same 'breaking news' to all members of their Friend list via the one-to-many

broadcasts of a status update. Prior to the introduction of privacy settings in Facebook as affordances which allow members to filter the intended audience for updates, some tellers negotiated this pragmatic dilemma by narrating stories that were intentionally mundane in their tellability (Page 2012), or sharing stories that were circulating in the mainstream media (Page et al. 2013). More generally, revealing too much in social media contexts where authenticity is expected can also be interpreted as 'over-sharing' personal information, and echo wider moral panics about the potential for social media sites to reconfigure the boundaries between the private and public sphere. In yet other cases, options for tellers to retain anonymity can result in other kinds of norms for tellability being established. For example, Suler (2004: 13) argued that anonymity might lead to disinhibition and 'toxic outcomes' such as 'harsh language, criticism, even threats.' At least some evidence suggests that disinhibition does result in community norms at the upper end of the mundane-troublesome spectrum in sites like 4Chan, which require their members to use anonymous representation, and whose content is deemed inappropriate for consumption in some contexts, as indicated through filters that categorise these stories as 'not safe for work.'

At a micro-level, the affordances of social media also provide novel opportunities for discourse identities to emerge. Social media sites provide different technological formats for tellers to co-construct the narration via their interactions with each other. These technological resources can be contrasted along a number of parameters, including:

- whether the tellers contribute to separate or composite textual units (such as post by post, or to a single wiki page),
- whether the interaction is controlled by one or all tellers (such as moderated or unmoderated forums),
- the types of interaction that are possible (adding, altering or removing content),
- the design of the interactional context (how replies and responses are connected to the originating post).

These factors can shape the discourse identities and interactional contexts in which narration is embedded. In some cases, this may result in formats that resemble face-to-face involvement in the narration. Examples include discussion forums, where tellers may respond to an original post with second stories, evaluation or requests for clarification or further breaking news in subsequent posts. In other cases, the asynchronous, collapsed contexts of social network sites mean that the interactional coherence associated with face-to-face co-narration is reconfigured. For example, social media resources such as hashtags can be used

in some sites (such as Twitter) to aggregate all content containing that search term in a single thread. This offers particular, mediated opportunities for co-narration between multiple tellers who contribute content and evaluation to an emerging story around a particular topic (such as the reports of a particular event, or commentary on a television show). Unlike the interactional coherence of face-to-face conversation that enables the co-construction of a narrative to be negotiated turn-by-turn, in hashtag threads, the aggregated content is sequenced according to the time that the post was published to the site and thus the tellers' contributions need not be organised as adjacent responses within a single, linear structure. In media studies, the more diffuse, fragmented streams of content are sometimes described as 'ambient' (Zappavigna 2011), where participants scan, sift and select content rather than reading each individual post as connected within a singular story. In terms of co-tellership, this ambient co-tellership no longer relies on tellers talking to each other, but rather talking together about a topic with often little acknowledgement of each other (as indicated through replies or direct address to other tellers).

The technological formats of other sites, such as those that use wiki pages, provide options for discourse identities that draw on written, rather than spoken traditions of narration. Wiki technology allows tellers to add to, alter and remove the content contributed by another person. The unfolding narrative artefact of the cumulatively revised document can thus decrease rather than increase in composition, with open-ended linearity as the text is updated over time. The revisions to Wikipedia articles exemplify this kind of narration (see Page 2013, 2014), as do similar technologies such as google docs. Within sites like Wikipedia, deleting the text written by another editor can result in further, subsequent reactions from other editors contributing to the article. For example, if one editor deletes the work of another, the other editor may wish to reinstate the deleted text, in an action that Wikipedia calls a 'revert'. The guidance that the Wikipedia community provide for carrying out a revert suggest that co-tellership may not always be harmonious and that some kinds of co-narration, such as reversions, can be particularly contentious. One measure to manage the risks and benefits of collective co-narration involve assigning tellers particular rights within a particular telling situation. This can take the form of site-specific situated identities, such as Administrators (in Wikipedia), or being a Page or channel owner (in Facebook and YouTube respectively), or moderating a forum or chat thread. The potential for discourse identities and situated identities to operate within particular hierarchies, where one teller can control the contributions of another (for example, by blocking them from a particular site and hence constraining their tellership rights) suggests that at a local level, co-narration need not be

equal. This raises further questions about how asymmetries in co-tellership might be embedded in broader, macro-social hierarchies where some tellers hold greater power than others.

In the early rhetoric of what is sometimes called 'web 2.0' (O'Reilly 2005), the collaborative potential of social media was optimistically framed as participatory culture (Jenkins 2006), that blurred the distinctions between producers and consumers in forms of produsage (Bruns 2008) such as fanfiction and micro-celebrity practices (Page 2012). To some extent, the democratising possibilities for co-tellership remain important political opportunities. Yet as social media has developed through its early decades, other scholars have critiqued how equal the opportunities for participation might be, both in terms of types of interaction (Van Dijck 2013) and more widely in terms of global inequalities that persist in access to technology and digital literacies (Deumert 2014). At a more localised level, the co-tellers' interactions can also be differentiated in terms of their participatory potential. Some kinds of interactions contribute more to the creation of content, whilst others curate that content, or redistribute it through actions such as 'sharing' or reposting it within and across sites. The distribution of these types of actions can be unequal, where fewer participants contribute to the creation of content than those who consume it. This is true in many social media sites, such as Instagram and Twitter, where large numbers of fans redistribute the content created by the celebrity that they 'follow' or in YouTube where videos can attract large numbers of viewers that outnumber the accounts that upload video content (Page forthcoming).

More generally, pragmatic approaches to social media narration might question the ends to which the co-narration is put. Rather than doing away with economic and institutional hierarchies, these continue to be played out in the macro-social positioning of co-tellers within wider narratives. In some cases, companies might wish to personalise their organization and build their reputation through employee testimonials (Maagaard 2014). In other cases, companies can respond to the stories that customers tell in their reviews of products and services (Zhang and Vasquez 2014). In turn, consumers can use narratives as the basis to build their own online reputation as reviewers (Vasquez 2014). In other cases, celebrity practioners use stories that appear to give greater access to their backstage performances, but are still characterised by synthetic personalisation that treats the audience as an aggregated fan base (Page 2012). Alongside this, in other socio-economic contexts, social media is opening up spaces for stories to be told outside mainstream or institutionalised media context. For example, in the health sector, narratives of illness can be shared by

advice-seekers in online forums (Locher 2008) and social network sites (Koteyko and Hunt 2015) as a means of sharing the tellers' self-management of medical conditions and thereby contrasting their personal expertise with the rhetoric of the medical professionals. The development of citizen journalism practices of curating, commenting on and remixing the news similarly allows stance-taking towards of first-hand reporting of events that contrast with that reported through mainstream channels. Where censorship of online interaction remains in place, participants can develop multimodal strategies to reference political situations. Deumert (2014: 79) describes how in 2010, Chinese bloggers who commented on the absence from Liu Xiaobo from the Nobel Prize ceremony in Oslo, used images as an attempt to evade the linguistic restrictions that were placed on political discussion of this situation. Clearly, the macro-social outcomes of co-narration for particular tellers in different social media and socio-cultural contexts are highly varied, but indicate the many ways in which narration can support, challenge or attempt to negotiate master narratives that position some tellers or versions of events as dominant whilst marginalising others.

4. Current trends and future directions

The development of devices such as smart phones and tablets that allow participants to access, produce and consume social media interactions means that the contextualising trends in narrative research have begun to take an increasing interest in the narrative dimension of embeddedness. In Ochs and Capps' (2001), embeddedness was framed in relation to the localised, interactional co-text that framed the verbal narration. In the case of social media narration, there are other elements of the context in which these co-texts are embedded. As Jones (2005) has pointed out, people do not interact with technology in a vacuum but rather these interactions take place in multi-layered contexts. The contexts for social media narration include elements such physical spaces, such as particular locations, (around objects, in rooms, buildings, or landscapes), and at particular times or during events (searching for information, waiting for a bus, sharing a meal with friends), and connect people via particular digital sites or platforms (such as social network sites, messaging services or apps). The development of GPS (global positioning service) technologies within these devices has been further integrated into particular social media sites and platforms so that the division between physical and digital contexts are increasingly difficult to maintain. Within the analysis of narration, this has led scholars to explore the rich and complex ways in which space and place can be used as narrative resources. Some studies have explored the potential for mobile devices to provide access to historical stories about particular places. For example,

Greenspan's (2011) development of storytelling technologies such as Storytrek make it possible for participants to co-construct historical narratives by accessing archived material and displaying this on digital maps as they move through particular spaces within particular location, such as the Rideau canal area in Ottawa, Canada. In the heritage sector, the use of audio-tours precedes social media uses of mobile storytelling but has developed more recently to include the co-construction of oral history projects about particular places such as the Murmur project. The Murmur project (Ruston 2011, Page 2012) allowed participants to record stories about their lived experience of places, onsite, via cell phones and then made these recordings available for others to listen to later, either onsite or remotely via a web archive. From a linguistic perspective, these stories are of interest for the ways in which the narrators use place and person deictics to co-create an imagined, shared interactional space and to re-imagine present locations in the light of past, personal experience narratives.

The importance of space and place as narrative resources has also been documented in other day-to-day uses of social media sites via mobile devices. For example, Cohen (2015) shows how particular kinds of 'breaking news' stories are part of the narrative practices that young, Ethopian men use when interacting around site like Tinder. Tinder is a location based service that allows its members to connect selectively with other people in their immediate geographical location, and is linked to information drawn from the person's Facebook or Instagram profile. In his ethnographic study of four, male Ethiopian teenagers, Cohen showed how these participants engaged in a particular type of breaking news, world attending sequences, to manage their polyfocal social activities of going to 'pick up' events. Cohen study usefully points to the methodology required to appreciate the complex, situated ways in which mobile storytelling takes place as narrative practice, including observation of the participants in physical spaces (as they gather together and hand around mobile devices) and the interactional co-text of conversations in which the world attending sequences emerged. The importance of space and place as narrative resources is also important at a macro-social level. In computer-mediated discourse analysis, there has been increasing recognition of the multilingual nature of online communication (Danet and Herring 2007). At the same time, the complex patterns of migration and heterogenous urban societies were theorised in relation to the concept of superdiversity. In sociolinguistics, this has been taken up by scholars such as Blommaert and Rampton (2011) who have pointed to the complex ways in which individuals might use linguistic repertoires to position their identity within these superdiverse flows. The place of social media within these global patterns of mobility has drawn particular attention (Androutsopoulos and Juffermans 2014), for digital contexts for interaction allow

individuals to remain in contact and involved in communities where they may no longer be geographically resident. The analysis of narratives of personal experience has begun to be included in this field of inquiry (Heyd 2014). Rather than assuming that speakers might narrate a single narrative of their place identity (Myers 2006), in superdiverse contexts, Heyd's (2014) study of posts made to a Nigerian web forum explores the ethnolinguistic repertoires that the forum members used when they told 'narratives of belonging'. This narrative work builds on a rich tradition of exploring the role of space and spatialization, particularly in immigrant narratives (De Fina 2003, 2009). However, the methods used by Heyd contrast with those used to explore earlier, offline examples of narration. The relative permanence of some forms of social media interactions mean that it is possible to compile relatively large scale corpora of narratives and then use concordancing tools to carry out corpus-assisted analysis of these materials. In Heyd's (2014) study, she used word lists to identify the lexical labels that the tellers used to project ethnic and racial distance and proximity between themselves and others, and then used qualitative analysis to explore how certain labels that were embedded in a range of biographical narratives.

The complexity of the narrative embeddedness in social media narration is also manifest in the convergence of mainstream and social media. The replicability of social media which enables the recontextualisation of narrative content means that the stories told in response to events reported in the mainstream news can be readily incorporated into the news reports themselves. Likewise in other kinds of mainstream narrative production, such as reality television series, the audience's use of social media as commentary can be co-opted by television corporations as a means of boosting their online visibility. Typically, this kind of recontextualisation relies on the affordances of hashtags in sites like Twitter to aggregate the content created on social media before sifting and selecting particular posts to be reproduced, either within social media (for example, as retweets), or within the screened programme itself. However, there is no guarantee that the responses to news events with be homogenous. Instead, the ambient nature and open ended linearity of many social media formats means that there are opportunities for tellers to affiliate and disaffiliate from the hashtag or from each other in forms of narrative stance-taking. For example, Giaxoglou (2015) describes how the hashtag #jesuischarlie was used by different members of the social media site, Twitter, to express affiliation or disaffiliation towards the attacks on the satirical magazine, Charlie Hebdo in Paris, during 2015. As these hashtags were translated into different languages (especially English and French), adapted and recontextualised, the hashtag became an indexical reference to a larger, mediated stories of protest and resistance. Other kinds of

multimodal practices illustrate the variety of narrative stance-taking that are available. For example, in November 2015, Facebook enabled its members to incorporate an overlay of the French flag with their profile picture as a 'sign of solidarity', though the extent to which such online actions result in actual, offline action remains open to debate. Studies like Giaxoglou's show how at the micro-level, small stories can intersect with large scale political events. At the same time, the scale with which this stance-taking can be taken up also poses challenges for the more qualitative methods that are usually used within small stories research. In some cases, it can be useful to use methods more usually associated with 'big data' to contextualise particular narrative interactions (Page 2015), such as social network analysis. Given the diversity of social media narration, there is room for narrative research that trains the analytical foci toward the micro and the macro level, though in order to do so, it may be that scholars in pragmatics will need to broaden their interdisciplinary collaborations so that the affordances of social media sites can be harnessed fully in the years to come.

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