Telling the story: Meaning making in a community narrative

Karyn Stapleton [*], John Wilson

School of Communication, Ulster University, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland BT37 0QB, United Kingdom

Abstract

Narrative theory distinguishes between the theme of a story and its form or ''telling''. This idea is central to Narrative Psychology, where narrative is proposed as a way of understanding cognition (Bruner, 1986, 2004) and the concept of *narrative templates* (Wertsch, 2002) is used to explain underlying regularities in how collective memories/accounts are structured and expressed. Linguistic studies of narrative have mostly examined ''one-off'' tellings, focusing on structural or social features, with a related concern to define narrative discourse *per se*. Consequently, there is little empirical examination of how shared templates are realised in different settings, nor of how such templates structure everyday understanding within communities. Here, we examine two separate tellings of a political/community narrative in a Belfast nationalist community. Both draw upon a shared template, which links sense-making and identity at different levels within the community. However, there are marked performative differences between the two tellings. Our analysis is distinctive in focusing on a shared narrative in two settings rather than on a self-contained narrative event. We highlight three key points relevant to narrative pragmatics. Firstly, we show how community narrative operates as a shared sense-making resource for members. Secondly, we demonstrate that different discourse activities are used to realise the underlying template, and hence, we argue against seeking definitive descriptions of ''narrative discourse''. Finally, we show how the narrative performances reflect power and the perceived purpose of the respective interviews, thereby providing a framework for identity positioning.
© 2016 The Authors. Published by Elsevier B.V. This is an open access article under the CC BY license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

Keywords: Narrative templates; Narrative performance; Community narrative; Political narrative; Meaning/sense-making; Narrative discourse

1. Introduction

Since at least the 1980s, the study of narrative has been proposed as a way of understanding cognition, including memory and identity (Bruner, 1986, 1990, 2002, 2004). As part of this narrative psychology, theorists such as Wertsch (2002, 2008a,b) have suggested that *narrative templates* underlie collective accounts and hence, these templates structure shared understandings and memories of events and outcomes. We suggest that this concept has been under-examined within linguistic studies of narrative, where analyses have usually focused on self-contained narratives, and further, have been concerned to delineate narrative discourse in terms of either formal/structural features or rhetorical/social outcomes (or both). In this paper, we examine two separate tellings of a shared political/community narrative in a Belfast nationalist community. We have three analytic aims relevant to narrative pragmatics: (1) to examine the role of the shared narrative (template) as a sense-making resource within the community; (2) to examine how the same template is collaboratively realised across different speakers and settings and, crucially, through a range of different discourse

---

* Corresponding author. Fax: +44 28 90 368251.
E-mail addresses: k.stapleton@ulster.ac.uk (K. Stapleton), j.wilson@ulster.ac.uk (J. Wilson).

activities; and (3) to analyse performative and interactional differences between the two tellings, which demonstrate the role of narrative as a framework for identity positioning.

2. Narrative: content and form

Narrative theory has drawn distinctions between the content or theme of a story, that is, the *narrated event* and its form or telling, that is, the *narrative event* (Ricoeur, 1984; see Juzwick, 2014; Sarangi, 2008; Thornborrow, 2014). Thus, the same basic story can be told in different forms on different occasions of ''telling''. This dualistic notion is drawn from work in a number of academic traditions, including literary studies, folklore/anthropology, psychology, and sociolinguistics (see McQuillan, 2000; De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012; Juzwick, 2014; Thornborrow, 2014). For example, literary analysis has examined the structure, cultural forms and textual qualities of narrative (often literary texts), while anthropological studies have explored the content and form of stories, their cultural resonance and the storytelling practices of different cultures (Propp, 1968; Polanyi, 1982). Within narrative psychology, narrative has been proposed as a way of understanding cognition (Bruner, 1986, 1990, 2002, 2004). Here, the culturally available narrative form is seen as a type of deep-structure that underpins everyday thinking and expression.

Bruner (2004) cites the work of early Russian formalists who developed a three-part distinction between the *fabula* (i.e. the overall theme, e.g. jealousy, ambition), the *sjuzet* (i.e. the discourse, including sequence, language, plot) and the *forma* (i.e. the genre or type, e.g. romance or tragedy, of which, in turn, many ''tokens'' or instances exist). Of course, similar distinctions between theme and realisation can be found throughout the history of the study of narrative (McQuillan, 2000), and are reflected in taxonomic efforts, dating from Aristotle's *Poetics*, to determine specific set categories or forms of construction. For example, White (1973) suggests organising texts/narratives as tragedy, romance, comedy, and satire (for application of this to psychology, see Gergen and Gergen, 1993). In relation to our personal life-stories, Bruner claims that we generate and tell our narratives from the range of ''possible'' lives and worlds available to us, thereby becoming ''variants of the culture's canonical forms'' (Bruner, 2004:694). Hence, we articulate our own and others' stories within the narrative forms that our culture provides for us, that is, by drawing on the narrative ''cultural tool kit''. Bruner further argues that narrative is ''our preferred, perhaps even our obligatory medium for expressing human aspirations and their vicissitudes, our own and those of others'' (2002:89).

Bruner's discussion of underpinning narrative forms has been developed further in the fields of anthropology and cultural psychology, notably by Wertsch (2002, 2008a,b) who has empirically examined the role of such ''narrative templates'' in the organisation of collective memory and interpretation. Drawing on the work of Bakhtin in philosophy (Bakhtin, 1981) and Vygotsky in psychology (Vygotsky, 1987), as well as Bruner's narrative approach to cognition, Wertsch examines the process of collective remembering and interpretation as a series of dialogic realisations of an underlying cultural representation of events; in other words, a narrative template. As told in a given setting, then, narratives are always located within the previous articulations of others and the individual voice (or voices) of the tellers must be textually coordinated with these other versions and representations. Wertsch further distinguishes between ''specific narratives'', which focus on particular events, actors, and instances, and ''schematic narrative templates''. These latter are the broader narrative templates that we have been discussing and are defined by Wertsch (2008b:120) as ''abstract forms of narrative representation [which] typically shape several specific narratives''. Unlike the archetypal categories of narrative described above, however, these narrative templates are specific to particular cultural traditions and, moreover, may be expected to differ from one culture to another.

In this paper, we are focally concerned with the idea that a shared narrative template can underlie the production of individual and group-based stories. We are specifically interested in how such templates become realised discursively, pragmatically, and interactionally, across different speakers and story forms. Although linguistic research on narrative has often distinguished between the story and the telling (e.g. Blum-Kulka, 1997; De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012; see section 3), there has been very little empirical examination of the way in which the same shared narrative may be realised through different discourse activities, and by separate groups of speakers. Before moving to the analysis, we will firstly outline some key concepts within the linguistic/pragmatic study of narrative, including the focus on tellings, rather than templates, which provide a point of departure for our paper.

3. Linguistic studies of narrative: tellings vs. templates

Sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and discourse-based approaches to narrative have focused on various aspects of the linguistic production and use of narratives in a range of sociocultural contexts. As noted earlier, a central concern of such work has been to define the features and/or the social functions of narrative. Thornborrow (2014) identifies three distinct approaches here. The first is focused on the formal and structural features of spoken narrative, deriving from Labov's classic sociolinguistic studies of narrative components and sequencing (Labov, 1972, 1982; Labov and Waletzky, 1967). The second examines the cultural meaning and significance of spoken narratives, including the features that make a story

"tellable" within a given cultural setting (Ochs and Capps, 2001). Finally, there is a prominent strand of work that explores the interactional design and situated telling of narratives, deriving from the early interactional analyses of Sacks ([1970] 1992) and developed more recently in the concept of "small stories" (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008) and subsequent developments. Closely related to this latter tradition is the notion of discourse function and an analytic focus on what is actually being achieved, socially and rhetorically, in the construction of narratives (Edwards, 1997).

Of central relevance to the present study, linguistic researchers have also examined the relationship between the story itself and the way in which it is realised by different tellers in different contexts. For example, in her study of Jewish and American/Israeli family interactions, Blum-Kulka (1997) identified three separate elements in narrative analysis: the *tale*, which is the story material, including chronology, characters and events; the *teller*, who is the person doing, or taking part in, the recounting of the narrative; and the *telling* itself, which is the situated act of story-telling or narration, including its interactional and social features. Similarly, De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2012) discuss Genette's (1980) concepts of the *narration*, or act of telling; the *story*, which is the basic sequence of events being recounted; and the *discourse*, or text of the narrative. The distinction between story and discourse has been seen to reflect a deep vs. surface structure in narrative. Thus, the same basic story can be told in various ways and can differ in each instance of telling: "the ways in which the plot is told will vary according to authors, media and contexts of performance" (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012:3; see also Ochs and Capps, 2001; Norrick, 2000, 2009). We will return to this point later.

Recent work has placed central emphasis on the situated, contextualised nature of story-telling (Bamberg, 2006; De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012). Thus, attention has been directed away from the structural, sequential and content-based aspects of narratives, which interested Labov and his followers, in favour of situated, interactional and functional features (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008). Such approaches have emphasised that everyday conversational narratives are diverse in format and function, are often partial and fragmented, and are inextricably embedded in local interactional contexts as well as in broader social and cultural structures. This emphasis has been driven, in large part, by the concept of "small stories" (Bamberg, 2004; Georgakopoulou, 2007; Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008; De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2008); and there has been a related shift in the definition of what "counts" as narrative discourse. Small stories are seen as narrative orientations and performances arising in real life, often conversational, contexts. As such, the concept is an "umbrella term" used to represent a whole range of narrative discourse and narrative-oriented activities (e.g. projection, deferral, allusion), which have been under-represented in narrative research (Georgakopoulou, 2007:vii). In contrast to the canonical narratives studied by Labov, small stories are often partial and fragmented, unfold during the course of interaction, are embedded in the interactional context, often focus on the recent past or unfolding events, fulfil social and interpersonal functions, and may comprise shared stories and tellings (Georgakopoulou, 2007; Ryan, 2008). For these reasons, the concept can be taken to cover "a gamut of data more or less connected to the narrative canon" (Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008:382). While the small stories concept has sometimes been criticised for a lack of precision and/or internal inconsistencies related to methodology (Norrick, 2009; Wilson and Stapleton, 2010), this research agenda has nonetheless been central to an important wider movement within narrative discourse/pragmatics highlighting the situatedness of narratives within interactional settings.

Context and meaning-construction are central to a situated analysis. As told or performed in interactional settings, stories reflect both the local interaction itself, including the roles and relationships that the participants are attempting to manage, and the wider social and cultural contexts from which they derive (Norrick, 2000; Sarangi, 2008; De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012; Juzwick, 2014). As will be explored in the present paper, this means that the same basic narrative is likely to be performed differently by different speakers, depending on the context in which they are interacting; or indeed, by the same speakers within different settings, thereby reflecting their roles and perspective on the setting. In this way, conversational narratives are both "contextualised" and "contextualising" (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2008:275) in that they both reflect and, to a greater or lesser extent, shape and define the context of which they are a part. Narratives can also function as a form of sense-making in relation to external issues and events (Edwards, 1997; Schiffrin, 2006) and through this, as a way of positioning both the tellers themselves and the protagonists of the stories being told. A final point to note here is that situated narratives can be seen to provide links between macro and micro contexts in that the positionings and worldviews adopted in the narration reflect aspects of the wider socio-cultural settings within which the speakers are located and from which the narratives derive (Georgakopoulou, 2007, 2014; De Fina, 2008; Ryan, 2008; Souto-Manning, 2014).

Despite recent moves to seriously consider contextualised tellings, however, linguistic studies of narrative typically continue to examine one-off, or self-contained, narratives. We argue that this focus on narrative telling has militated against a sustained empirical examination of the sense-making and identity functions of shared narrative content, as conceptualised within narrative psychology with reference to narrative templates. In addition, we suggest that the related concern to delineate the forms and features of narrative discourse has obscured the way in which different discourse activities may, together, work to realise underlying narrative representations. Thus, the present study aims to further the linguistic study of narrative and its role in everyday sense-making through an explicit focus on the construction of a shared narrative template within a community setting. In light of the research outlined above, our analysis is distinctive in that it

examines a community narrative (see Johnstone, 1990, 2006) and in its focus on the realisation of a shared template across two different sets of speakers, rather than on a one-off telling or account. We are also focally interested in the performative differences between the two groups of speakers. This approach provides further insights into the role of narrative as resource for identity positioning and allows for an empirical examination of the distinction between narrative content and form. Finally, we examine how different discourse activities, including accounting, explanation, blaming, and justifying, can all be seen as modes of realising the underlying narrative template, thereby questioning the need for delimitation of narrative discourse.

4. The present study: data and context

The data are drawn from a study funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (2003–4), which examined discursive negotiation of identities in Northern Ireland (NI) in the aftermath of political devolution and in response to changing socio-political structures. The Belfast Agreement of 1998 established political devolution in NI, whereby a local Legislative Assembly (the Northern Ireland Assembly – NIA) was set up at Stormont to manage a range of internal devolved issues, including health and education. This was part of the wider project of constitutional devolution across the UK, which also saw the establishment of the Welsh Assembly and the Scottish Parliament. However, NI devolution was distinctive among the UK regions in that it was inextricably bound up with the political Peace Process, which sought to find accommodation between nationalists/republications (who seek the unification of NI with the Republic of Ireland) and unionists/loyalists (who seek to maintain NI's position within the UK). The NIA was set up not only as a political institution to manage devolved matters, but also, importantly, as a site of power-sharing between the unionist and nationalist representatives (Hayes and McAllister, 2001; Wilson and Stapleton, 2006). Hence, from the outset, it reflected the dual aims of constitutional reform and conflict resolution (Horowitz, 2002; Tonge, 2005). The NIA was also unique among the devolved institutions in terms of its instability in its early years. Between 1998 and 2007, it was repeatedly suspended and reinstated due to political disagreements, including allegations of IRA spying at Stormont. Thus, at the time, Bradbury and Mitchell (2001:257) observed that as an institution, the NIA was ''threatened by interparty animosities and severe limits on the normalization of policy-making''. In our analysis, we will consider how these issues were being discussed and interpreted by members of the nationalist community at that time.

The wider study participants were recruited from working-class urban communities in Belfast; one community (West Belfast WB) being Catholic/nationalist and the other (East Belfast EB) being Protestant/unionist. Two main groups were established, one from each community, which were composed, in each case, of already existing family/friendship networks. Each of these groups met (separately) at roughly monthly intervals over a nine month-period to engage in discussions about the political process and its impacts on their own lives. In West Belfast, an additional group took part for a limited time near the start of the study (WB leaders). This group comprised community leaders and facilitators, a number of whom were also involved in politics at a grassroots level. Its members met twice to participate in recorded discussions as part of the research. The analysis below is based on the WB data only, as through this data, we were able to examine two groups of speakers from the same self-recognised community. Although led by a Researcher, all of the discussions were open-ended and allowed participants to talk in a largely untrammelled manner. They were audio-recorded and transcribed and the data were analysed discursively (Potter and Wetherell, 1987; Edwards and Potter, 1992; Edwards, 1997; Potter, 2000). There was a specific analytic focus on action, construction, self- and community-alignments, everyday sense-making, attribution, and community narratives. The extracts used for this analysis were selected on a thematic and chronological basis, as further detailed below.

As already noted, the data are drawn from discussions recorded in early 2004 in WB at a point of stalemate in the devolution process. At that time, the NIA had been suspended since October 2002 amid allegations of IRA spying at Stormont and the aim of reestablishing power-sharing seemed difficult, if not impossible, to attain. An election to the suspended Assembly had just taken place and the outcome of this had shown major gains for the more ''hard-line'' versions of nationalism and unionism (Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionist Party, respectively) at the expense of their more moderate colleagues. A formal review of the Belfast Agreement was taking place, partly in an attempt to restore the political institutions. In February 2004, separate group interviews, as described above, were conducted with the WB leaders (Group 1) and with the main WB community members group (Group 2). Both group discussions focused largely on the ongoing political impasse and the review of the Agreement. The researcher introduced these issues and asked for the participants' views, then letting them take their own trajectory in discussing the topic. A community narrative structure emerged in both discussions and this template was used to account for the socio-political issues in question.

5. Analysis

In explaining the political stalemate, both sets of participants draw upon (and thus articulate) what can be seen as a narrative template, as described in section 2. This is essentially an account of how the current situation came about, where

the politicians and the community are currently positioned, and the likely future trajectory of the political process and the outcomes for the nationalist community. Extracts were selected on a thematic and chronological basis with respect to their sense-making function and the emergent narrative template (see further below). At this level of sense-making and construction, there are striking parallels between the two sets of accounts, which demonstrate the realisation of an underlying template (Wertsch, 2002) at different levels within the community. Both accounts show almost identical patterns of reasoning and produce congruent versions of the future of the political process and of how their own community will respond to this.

It is worth noting here that while the general issues were introduced and opinions sought by the researcher, the narrative template itself was not elicited, either in structure or content, but rather emerged in the course of the participants' jointly constructed accounts. As we argue throughout this paper, the emergent structure may be seen as a narrative template in the sense used by Wertsch (2002, 2008a,b) insofar as it provides a framework, and a sequence of events, actors and attributions, which shape the accounts produced by our respondents. To the extent that the basic form and themes are articulated by both groups, this template may also be seen as a *community* narrative (cf. Johnstone, 1990, 2006) on at least three levels. Firstly, it is centrally about the nationalist community and its location within the wider socio-political context, rather than being an account of individual experience. Secondly, it is shared by the community as a whole, as evidenced in its production by two separate groups; therefore, it provides a shared frame of reference and mode of sense-making. Finally, and although the degree of interactivity differs between the groups, the story is jointly told by community members in both discussions.

There are two main sections to the analysis. We initially examine the structural and functional parallels at the level of sense-making (section 5.1); we then explore differences in performance between the two tellings (section 5.2). The analysis is based on four Extended Extracts (EEs) drawn from the recordings described above and focusing on two key phases of the discussions: (1) explaining how the current situation came about (EE A: Group 1; EE B: Group 2); and (2) outlining what is likely to happen in the future (EE C: Group 1; EE D: Group 2). These are presented in Appendix together with a key to transcription symbols.

5.1. Sense-making: how we got here and where we're going

Chronologically, the story begins in the present as the participants attempt to make sense of the current situation. It then moves on to discuss the likely future trajectory of the process, and as part of this, it also looks backwards to the past. The overall structure contains a series of cause-and-effect relationships and patterns of practical reasoning. Key protagonists are constructed, including individuals, political parties, unionist people, governments, and in particular, the nationalist community of which the speakers are a part. Attribution of actions, motives and outcomes is present throughout the accounts.

5.1.1. Discussing the present stalemate
This part of the analysis is based on EEs A and B (Appendix).

Both groups openly express *frustration at the current situation*, including the suspension of the Assembly and the general political impasse. In addition, they are sceptical about the ongoing review of the Agreement and the political institutions.

Extract 1: Group 1
M2: (. . .) And (.) holding a review instead of doing something <u>else</u>, like (.) making progress on the <u>Agreement</u> (1.0) that, to me, seems to be a <u>bad</u> thing. (.) <u>Why</u> stop (.) stall (.) and review? Why not make <u>progress</u>? And review progress while you're <u>making</u> it? (.) So that's a bad sign, I think.

Extract 2: Group 1
M3: (. . .) But basically, because unionists aren't playing, everything just <u>stops</u>. (.) And there's a sense that the British government, <u>and</u> to an increasing, to a degree as well, the <u>Irish</u> government have just (.) you know, like, said, 'Well (.) you can't play until the <u>unionists</u> are ready.' You know? (.) And there's quite a deep <u>frustration</u> about that.

In both of the above extracts, the speakers (community leaders) express concern about the lack of progress in the political process. In extract 1, M2 twice explicitly contrasts the review with ''progress'' thereby presenting it as an impediment (or perhaps even antithetical) to actually moving the process forward. He also uses two rhetorical questions which suggest that the review is, at best, unnecessary and, at worst, undertaken for adverse purposes (''so that's a bad sign, I think''). In extract 2, M3 expresses ''deep frustration'' at the actions of the British and Irish governments who are presented as facilitating the demands of unionist politicians and therefore allowing the stalemate to continue. Two aspects of this account are worth noting. Firstly, the political process is framed as ''playing'', with the unionist politicians acting as

stubborn or unwilling children who are being indulged by authority sources/figures. This conveys immaturity in the behaviour of unionists and a level of absurdity in the overall situation, both of which lead to frustration on the part of nationalists/republicans. Secondly, M3 presents his claim in a depersonalised way: ''there is quite a deep frustration'', which frames the frustration as a shared community experience, rather than a personal reaction.

Group 2 (community members) similarly express frustration at the ongoing impasse and review process.

Extract 3: Group 2
F3: That's, that's (.) yes, that's very <u>dangerous</u>. (.) I'm, I'm wondering <u>why</u>?
F2: <u>Why</u> is there a <u>review</u>? (.) I mean, they all sat down, it took them long enough to get (.) what we <u>had</u>.

Extract 4: Group 2
F4: =Aye, the Review was to <u>improve</u> on what they'd <u>done</u>. (.) Not to, to <u>dismantle</u> it.
R: No, to look at how it's <u>progressing</u>, and see=
F1: =Well obviously, it <u>hasn't</u> progressed, so they'll <u>have</u> to review it, like. (.) But I hope they just don't make it a (.) to <u>pacify</u> those people.
(2.0)
R: So, are you hopeful the Review is going to (.) <u>work</u>? (.) Because they're planning to have a conclusion, and I know they keep shifting it (.) but I think it's by <u>summer</u> now?
F5: Summer, what <u>year</u>?

In extract 3, both speakers question the reason for the review and echoing M2 above, they imply that it is both unnecessary and potentially an ominous development. However, in contrast to the depersonalised frames of extracts 1 and 2, F3 presents her *personal* response to the review as a sense of puzzlement and suspicion. F2's claim that the Agreement detail had previously been worked out in a protracted and painstaking way further underlines the perceived incongruity of now reviewing what was agreed. In extract 4, the speakers equate the review with a ''dismantling'' of the political process and therefore an impediment to progress. Here, there is also an alternative claim by F1 that the original process was not, in fact, progressing anyway; and hence the review is necessary to deal with this problem. There is a clear sense, however, that the original lack of progress was not due to the Agreement itself but was brought about by others, specifically, unionist politicians. Hence, F2 expresses a hope that the review is not simply a means to ''pacify'' the unionists (or ''those people''). As in extract 2 above, this choice of vocabulary suggests an obstinate and childish response by unionists. F5's facetious response to the Researcher's suggestion that the review will be concluded by the summer, also underlines the frustration felt by the community at the ongoing deadlock.

As indicated above, in explaining the political stalemate and the genesis of the official review of the Agreement, the speakers in both groups *attach blame primarily to unionist politicians* and, to a lesser extent, the *British and Irish governments*, who are seen as pandering to unionist intransigence and/or childishness.

Extract 5: Group 1
M1: Right, ok (.) I'll go first this time. Um, I think that the the, the <u>shorter</u> (.) the period, the Review is held in, the better. Then it can't <u>prolong</u> into a whole series of (.) what the DUP are hoping it to be. (.) <u>Negotiations</u> rather than a <u>review</u> process, um (.) and the better, the shorter time that occurs, well then, maybe there is a <u>bit</u> of hope (1.0) that the suspended institutions will be up and running again.

Extract 6: Group 1
M3: (. . .) And I think there's just this huge bemusement as to what's happening on the (.) <u>unionist</u> side. On the one level, there's a sense that, you know, here we are (.) <u>yet</u> again, <u>as</u> for the last hundred and fifty years, back to (.) the current incarnation of the unionist <u>veto</u>. (.) But basically, because unionists aren't playing, everything just <u>stops</u>. (.) And there's a sense that the British government, <u>and</u> to an increasing, to a degree as well, the <u>Irish</u> government have just (.) you know, like, said, 'Well (.) you can't play until the <u>unionists</u> are ready.' You know? (.) And there's quite a deep <u>frustration</u> about that. (1.0) You know it's almost as if (.) the republican line on the consent principle, is being <u>proved</u> in <u>practice</u>. (.) You know that if you give unionists a (.) a veto on <u>progress</u>, then what we have is *(laughs briefly)* no <u>progress</u>.

In extract 5, the unionist DUP (Democratic Unionist Party) are presented as attempting to use the review to impede the implementation of the Agreement. From this perspective, it is in the interests of the DUP to prolong the stalemate and the review period. Indeed, it is claimed that the party wants to reframe the review as a renegotiation of the Agreement itself. Therefore, as in some of the extracts above, M1 presents unionists as blocking progress and actively prolonging the current situation. For this reason, he claims that the review should take place quickly to prevent the DUP effectively hijacking it for their own purposes. That the restoration of the political institutions is desired by nationalists is conveyed in

his ''hope'' that a shorter review will prevent a protracted delay of this sort. Extract 6 (which draws on some of the same material as extract 2) more directly lays the blame for the impasse at the feet of unionists. In this account, M3 explicitly invokes the concept of a ''unionist veto'' on progress, and moreover, places this within a historical context, as something that has happened repeatedly in the past. His claim that the situation is thus ''the current incarnation of the unionist veto'' again conveys a sense of frustration while also firmly attributing responsibility to unionists for the general lack of progress. The clear implication here is that unionists do not want, and indeed are openly resistant to, political progress; therefore, if they are given a choice, the stalling of progress is inevitable, as expressed in the emphatic cause-and-effect claim that ''if you give unionists a veto on progress, then what we have is no progress''.

   We now consider some of these constructions in the Group 2 discussion.

Extract 7: Group 2
F1: Is this where they're reviewing the Good Friday Agreement?
R: Yeah.//Yeah
F1:   //They're looking at it again //to see if they can change it.
R: //Yes, yes=
F1: =So that Ian Paisley will accept it?
R: Well (.) that they can come to an//agreement.
F1:   //You know, let's come to an agreement, and agree this, and then 'Hold on, I don't like that bit'.
(Laughter)

Extract 8: Group 2
F2: Why is there a review? (.) I mean, they all sat down, it took them long enough to get (.) what we had.
F1: Because some of them didn't read the fine print.
R: No, well, I think=
F1: =And then, when it was pointed out to them afterwards, said, 'I didn't know that was in there'. (.) So, the British government said, 'Och well, alright then. We'll review it'.
(Laughter)=

Extract 9: Group 2
F1: I think it'll work out exactly the same way as the Good Friday Agreement. When they seen it, they went into words, they went into different things. (.) And 'change this', or 'what does that mean?'=
F: =Mmhm
F1: 'Identify that, describe it', and all this caper. So I think (.) to do a review, it'll be the same thing all over again.
(1.5)
F2: Och, I don't know.
(2.0)
F4: I think they're, they're putting all sorts of obstacles.

In extract 1, the review is again see as a process whereby unionists hope to change the original Agreement. F1 claims that the governments (''they'') are reviewing the terms of the Agreement with the specific aim of modifying these so that they can be accepted by the DUP leader, Dr. Ian Paisley. When the Researcher recasts the aim of review as ''coming to an agreement'', F1 expresses her own scepticism about the process through a humorous depiction of unionist behaviour, whereby they initially agree to something but then decide that they ''don't like'' aspects of what they've agreed to. This construction again positions unionists as childish and obstructive. In this case, inconsistency rather than intransigence is emphasised as a characteristic; however, this inconsistency nonetheless underlines a more general disposition to oppose change. In extract 8, F1 claims that unionist politicians originally failed to take account of the Agreement's ''fine print''; the implication is that they belatedly realised that they did not agree with some aspects and therefore are now attempting to derail it. This is a slightly different construction from that of the *inherently* obdurate unionist (extract 6), since it implies that some unionists might have previously been prepared to accept the Agreement – albeit on imperfectly understood grounds. Again, however, unionists are presented as forestalling progress and again, the British government is presented as pandering to this behaviour in an overly indulgent manner, as conveyed through the attributed verbalised response (''Och well, alright then. We'll review it''). In extract 9, the focus on ''fine print'' or detail is constructed as a deliberate blocking tactic by unionists. That is, unionists are presented as using an endless series of demands on seemingly trivial issues (repeated emphasis on ''change'', ''identify'', ''describe'') with the express aim of blocking progress on more substantive matters. It is further claimed that such behaviour is a replication of the way that they previously tried to block the Agreement itself by using delay tactics and generally looking for any available obstacle to halt progress.

In contrast to *unionists, nationalists and republicans are constructed as actively trying to break the current political deadlock*.

Extract 10: Group 1

M3: I̲'̲d̲ characterise it in, uh (.) a couple of ways. One is that (2.5) you really d̲o̲ get a sense of (.) a community that's up and (***) moving o̲n̲. Ready for, um, you know the Peace Process and institutions to get up and running. (.) And I think there's just this huge bemusement as to what's happening on the (.) u̲n̲i̲o̲n̲i̲s̲t̲ side.

Extract 11: Group 1

M3: (. . .) And there's quite a deep f̲r̲u̲s̲t̲r̲a̲t̲i̲o̲n̲ about that. (1.0) You know it's almost as if (.) the republican line on the consent principle, is being p̲r̲o̲v̲e̲d̲ in p̲r̲a̲c̲t̲i̲c̲e̲. (.) You know that if you give unionists a (.) a veto on p̲r̲o̲g̲r̲e̲s̲s̲, then what we have is *(laughs briefly)* no p̲r̲o̲g̲r̲e̲s̲s̲. (.) You know, and we're back to Charlie Haughey's famous saying that (.) you know like, this really i̲s̲ a failed political entity. (.) And you know everything that's been tried by republicans has just been shown to confirm the a̲n̲a̲l̲y̲s̲i̲s̲. (.) So, I mean, what's going on in the u̲n̲i̲o̲n̲i̲s̲t̲ community is a m̲a̲j̲o̲r̲ (.) question, I think.

Extract 12: Group 1

M3: (. . .) I think there's just that, that huge frustration. You know, and I mean I think the (.) u̲n̲d̲e̲r̲n̲e̲a̲t̲h̲ it all (.) you know, whereas republicans, who are now the largest party, are committed to working the Agreement (.) you know, it just seems to me, impossible to imagine that the unionists are going to (2.5) buy in, that the DUP's going to buy i̲n̲t̲o̲ that, anytime s̲o̲o̲n̲.

Extracts 10–12 all contrast a progressive and reasonable republican stance with an obstructive and retrograde unionist position. In extract 10, the nationalist/republican community as a whole is presented as ''ready'' for political progress but as being thwarted by the intransigence of the unionists who hold a ''veto'' on this. It is also claimed that republicans are ''bemused'' at what is happening (and possibly at why it is being allowed to happen by those in higher authority, namely the governments). In extract 11, which follows on from extract 2 above, M3 claims that the behaviour of unionist politicians in exercising their veto has proved a view that republicans have long held about unionists' unwillingness to cooperate with the other ''side'' or to allow progress to take place. In fact, he claims that each effort by republicans has just reinforced this point. Again, this account constructs republicans as actively ''trying'' to break the deadlock but as being prevented from doing so by their unionist counterparts; and further, as having prior insight into unionist behaviour that is now being ''proven'' rather than gained anew from the current situation. In extract 12, republicans are explicitly presented as ''committed'' to the Agreement and hence to political progress. However, there is an inevitable blocking of this by unionists (here specifically, the DUP), which it is claimed will continue to stymie progress in the foreseeable future.

As in the examples above, similar positions can be seen in the Group 2 discussion.

Extract 13: Group 2

F4: I̲ think they're, they're putting all sorts of o̲b̲s̲t̲a̲c̲l̲e̲s̲. (1.0) I mean, anything that happens, I mean like Bobby//Tohill

F5:   //I k̲n̲o̲w̲=

F4: =I mean, Sinn Fein, that's Sinn F̲e̲i̲n̲'̲s̲ fault.

F5: Everything's Sinn Fein's fault.

Extract 14: Group 2

R: OK, so yeah, I was just (.) going to ask you really, about the Review (..) And whether you're hopeful for a c̲o̲n̲c̲l̲u̲s̲i̲o̲n̲?

F3: W̲e̲'̲r̲e̲ always hopeful for a conclusion, but I don't think it's coming. T̲h̲a̲t̲'̲s̲ not very r̲e̲a̲l̲i̲s̲t̲i̲c̲, i̲s̲ it?

In Extract 13, the unionist politicians are constructed as blaming Sinn Fein for the stalemate. F4 and F5 jointly construct this through an extreme case construction where initially one generic issue ''that'' and then ''everything'' is blamed on Sinn Fein by unionists. This construction is, of course, contiguous with the construction of unionists themselves as wilfully placing ''obstacles'' in the way of progress. In extract 14, in response to the Researcher's query about their expectations, F5 uses prosodic emphasis to contrast the aspirations of the nationalist/republication community with the likely continuance of the deadlock which is seen as the product of unionist opposition to progress. This construction also draws a contrast between aspiration and reality, thereby casting her own community as enduringly idealistic and (perhaps overly) optimistic despite the ''reality'' of unionist obstruction.

Summary:

In this section, we have examined the two groups' explanations for the current political deadlock. We have identified a number of parallel themes which together provide a shared sense-making framework and also reflect common cultural representations within the community. The current situation is constructed as regrettable and the review of the Agreement

as both unnecessary and as a negative development arising from questionable sources. The blame for the continuing impasse is clearly attributed to unionists, in particular the DUP, who are presented as intransigent, behaving in a childish manner and actively trying to thwart the political process for their own ends. The British government and, to some extent, the Irish government are seen as overly indulgent of this behaviour and hence as also assuming some responsibility for the situation. Nationalists and republicans, on the other hand, are presented as progressive, reasonable and patient in their efforts to break the deadlock, despite the behaviour of unionists (who are ultimately preventing progress) and their own historical experiences and insights.

5.1.2. Looking to the future (and the past)

This part of the analysis is based on EEs C and D (Appendix).

In looking to the future of the process, both groups claim that they expect *unionist politicians will continue to block progress*. This was previously evidenced in extract 12 (Group 1) above, specifically, M3's claim that the DUP are unlikely to support the process in the foreseeable future; and also in extract 14 (Group 2), where F3 claims that her community's hopes for a political resolution are ''not very realistic''. Similar ideas are expressed in Extracts 15 and 16.

Extract 15: Group 1
M2: (..) And, um (.) but obviously, the (2.0) the Review (.) well, that might comfort people for a while, in political unionism. (.) Which is wedded to, which hasn't matured sufficiently to (.) to see the need for accommodation. Not for nationalists and republicans to accommodate ourselves to the status quo, but an accommodation between (.) the political leaders of nationalism and republicanism, and the political leaders of loyalism and unionism.

In extract 15, M2 claims that the review is a source of ''comfort'' to some unionists because it delays the need to engage with political progress (see also the continuation of this account in extracts 17 and 21). In this way, unionists are again constructed as blocking implementation of the Agreement and M2 attributes their behaviour to a lack of political maturity. This attribution echoes the earlier frames of ''childish'' behaviour and posturing by unionists, but here, it is presented as specifically political in nature. That is, unionists are not mature enough to accept political accommodation with nationalists; and for this reason, it is claimed, they will continue to block progress and, indeed, to use the review as a delaying tactic.

Extract 16: Group 2
F1: =But, you know (.) see, it might, you know, there might be light at the end of the tunnel. So that Ian Paisley will accept it? (.) Maybe some of the young radicals coming //up in the DUP
F5: //But the older ones just accept everything they say, as set in stone. (.) And they'll never, they don't want change

Extract 16 also claims that unionists, and in particular, the DUP, will continue to block progress for as long as they can. In this case, however, F1 distinguishes between different types of DUP members to suggest the potential for progress in the future. A contrast is drawn between the then leader, Ian Paisley, who was seen as implacably opposed to power-sharing with republicans and more ''radical'' younger members of the party, who might be more amenable to the notion. The metaphor of (possible) ''light at the end of the tunnel'' again highlights the desirability of political movement from the community's perspective. Nonetheless, F5's claim that the older party members will continue to block change under-scores the perceived ''reality'' of unionist response in the near future, in contrast to F1's construction of a possible accommodation.

Despite their claim that unionists will continue to block progress, both groups also advance the position that that *change or progress is inevitable*. Change is constructed as taking place inexorably despite, indeed in the face of, unionist opposition.

Extract 17: Group 1
M2 (..) In the meantime, we will just get on. I think people will just get on with working out strategies and tactics for (.) creating more change. (.) And that won't be stoppable by, by freezing the Agreement. Or by complaining about implementation, or (.) or by misrepresenting rights as concessions. (.) That simply inspires (.) provokes people to do more. *(laughs briefly)*

In extract 17, which follows directly from extract 15, M2 constructs change as both an inevitable process and as something that is being brought about by the actions of republicans. Political progress is seen as inexorable and unimpeded by attempts to block it. The passivised construction ''it won't be stoppable'' claims that once set in train, political change acquires a life of its own, which carries it forward. Simultaneously, however, the change being described here is linked

directly to the actions of nationalists and republications who are presented as actively developing strategies and tactics to accelerate change; and as being further motivated ("inspired") rather than thwarted by attempts to block this process.

Moving to the Group 2 data, we can see parallel constructions of the future.

Extract 18: Group 2

F3: There's not (.) an awful lot of different <u>options</u>, really, is there? (.) We'll <u>never</u> go back to the way we <u>were</u>. (.) Twenty years ago. I can't see that ever happening. (.) I don't know where we go from <u>here</u>, um, as I said before, <u>stalemate</u>. (.) And then, maybe it's just to see who's going to give in first. Somebody is going to have to give a wee bit of <u>something</u>.

Extract 19: Group 2

F1: But the young radical ones coming up (.) <u>they</u> know that there <u>has</u> to be change. There <u>has</u> to be. Otherwise (.) as you <u>say</u>, it's stalemate. (.) Go back to the way it <u>was</u>?=
F3: =It'll <u>never</u> go back to the way it was.

In extracts 18 and 19, Group 2 members also present a narrative of inevitable change/progress. As in the account of M2 above, this is simultaneously presented in generalised terms (it will never go back to the way it was) and as a consequence of the nationalist community's refusal to accept a stalling or regression in the process. In extract 18, F3 presents the acceptance of change as an unavoidable outcome of limited options, which will ultimately require some form of compromise (and hence, in this narrative, political progress). In extract 19, which follows directly from extract 17 above, F1 links the inevitability of progress to a perceived growing acceptance by some DUP members that this is their only option in the future. The notion of continuing stalemate and/or a reversal of the changes to date is emphatically rejected by both speakers.

Both groups attribute the inevitability of progress, at least in part, to the positions and responses of the nationalist/republican community. They claim that *their community refuses to accept a return to the status quo* and because of this, they will continue to advance the project of political change, thereby making change itself unavoidable. In turn, this community position is explained with reference to historical and biographical experiences. In the remaining extracts (20–22), we examine this in more detail. Firstly, in extracts 20–21, we consider Group 1 data; then in extract 22, we consider a similar structure from Group 2.

Extract 20: Group 1

M2: (..) But the idea (.) I heard a unionist commentator say, um (1.0) not to me, but to somebody else, they were saying, "Well (2.0) so, it's Direct Rule now. You had it for twenty-five years. What are you going to do then?" (.) And it's <u>so</u> conceited to think that, um (2.5) that the nationalist or republican community will just <u>consent</u> to that. (.) It's also so (2.0) uh (2.0) so <u>blind</u> to everything that's happened in the last few decades (.) to believe that people will just consent to that. Because they emphatically <u>won't</u> consent to that.

Extract 21: Group 1

M2: (..) In the meantime, <u>we</u> will just get <u>on</u>. I think people will just get on with working out strategies and tactics for (.) creating more <u>change</u>. (.) And that won't be stoppable by, by freezing the Agreement. Or by complaining about implementation, or (.) or by misrepresenting rights as concessions. (.) <u>That</u> simply inspires (.) provokes people to do <u>more</u>. *(laughs briefly)* Because you can't continue to tell people, your rights, your quality of life, um (.) will be (.) at the behest of someone <u>else</u> (.) without, uh, sowing great dissatisfaction, and <u>anger</u> (.) and <u>opposition</u>. (.) You can't do that indefinitely, without people <u>responding</u> to it.

In extracts 20 and 21, M2 presents, on behalf of the nationalist community, a categorical refusal to accept the way others (unionists) are framing the situation and its likely outcome. In extract 20, he overtly rejects the contention by an unnamed unionist commentator that the political impasse equates to a return to Direct Rule from Westminster; while in extract 21, he denies the significance of blocking or delaying tactics on the grounds that these will not derail the political process. Two structural features are notable in both accounts. Firstly, M2 speaks on behalf of his community as a whole (see also section 5.2.3) and articulates their position as a communally held one. Secondly, the position of the nationalist community is presented as a *response* to the actions of others and/or the socio-historical context in which they are embedded. Hence, they will refuse to accept others' definitions and actions because of their historical and ongoing experiences. Moreover, by alternating between the specific responses of his community and generalised statements about how "people" will respond to particular types of actions and situations, M2 implicitly frames his community's position not only as product of their own experiences, but also as a *natural response* that people, generally, would display under these circumstances. There is also a clear sense of community confidence and empowerment to the extent that they are able to reject the proposals and expectations that others seek to impose.

In extract 22, we can see a similar Group 2 positioning of the community.

Extract 22: Group 2
F3: =It'll <u>never</u> go //back to the way it was.
F1:   //<u>Nobody</u> wants that for their children. (.) And especially if you think of people <u>our</u> age, who lived <u>through</u>
that, who lived through the Troubles. (.) <u>Nobody</u> wants that for our children. I don't want <u>my</u> kids to live through that. (.)
Even though, at the time, it was exciting. Going back to when you were a child. But the older you got, the more <u>frightening</u> it
got. (.) And you know, you might get, hopefully young, the younger generation, the next younger politicians that are coming
up (.) are going to be a wee bit more (.) <u>political</u>

In extract 22, which follows directly from extract 19 above, the speakers reject the possibility that the political situation will
regress, or ''go back to the way it was''. This position is, again, linked to past experiences. In this case, however, it is the
biographical experiences of F1 herself and her contemporaries, who experienced the Troubles as they were growing up.
Set within a personal, community and family context, the community's refusal to ''go back'' is presented as being based
directly on their past experiences. Like M2's account immediately above, this position is also generalised as a natural
reaction in the sense that ''nobody'' (or no reasonable person?) would wish that experience for their own children.
Therefore, political progress is inevitable to avoid regression to the past; younger politicians are invoked as a possible
means of advancing this.

Summary:
    In discussing the future of the political progress and their own community within this context, both groups provide a
shared form of sense-making, which is, again, shaped by cultural representations within the community. Both groups
claim that unionists will continue to try to block progress and it is also claimed that unionists will continue to use the review
of the Agreement as a means of delaying political engagement. Nonetheless, both groups present a clear narrative of
change. Change and progress are constructed as inevitable in that there are no other options for the future, and as
unstoppable once in train. This process is presented as flying in the face of unionist opposition and attempts to derail it. It is
also linked explicitly to the actions and stances of the nationalist/republican community; in particular, their refusal to return
to the pre-Agreement status quo. The nationalist response is, in turn, linked to the specific socio-historical and
biographical experiences of the community and is framed as a natural reaction to their circumstances and/or the actions of
others.

5.2. Performance and interaction: different ways of telling the story

    In this part of the analysis, we examine the stylistic and interactional differences between the accounts of the two
groups. Hence, we examine how the same basic story is told differently in two interview settings and how these tellings
themselves shape the meaning of the respective interviews.

5.2.1. Interaction, turn-taking and collaboration
    One of the most immediately evident differences is the *length of turns* taken by the speakers and the *degree of formality*
with which the floor is passed from one speaker to another. In the Group 1 data, speakers take extended turns and indeed
the majority of the data from this group consists of lengthy contributions by individual speakers: see, for example, EE A,
lines 8–28; and lines 35–74; EE C, lines 1–28. These turns are formally marked by the person who is about to take the floor
and/or the person passing the floor to the next speaker. In extract 5, in response to a question from the Researcher, M1
prefaces his account in the following way:

M1: Right ok (.) I'll go first this time. . ..

Here, M1 announces that he will assume the floor to address the Researcher's query. In addition, he refers to speaker
order and rotation, thereby implicitly indexing a formalised notion of turn allocation and/or parity of speaking rights. Once a
speaker has claimed the floor in this way, there seems to be an implicit agreement among the speakers that the individual
concerned holds extended speaking rights until he has finished his account and/or passed the floor back to another
speaker. Hence, there is minimal overlap or interruption from the other speakers while an account is being delivered,
including a marked lack of explicit verbal support for the speaker. To this extent, accounts may be seen as individually
rather than collaboratively produced.
    In addition, the Group 1 speakers commonly frame and label their accounts as particular types of discursive action. For
example, in extract 10 above M2 prefaces his description of the nationalist community's ''mood'' by claiming that he is
about to ''characterise'' this:

M3: <u>I'd</u> characterise it in, uh (.) a couple of ways.

Moreover, he claims that his characterisation will have a number of aspects, hence providing an advance structuring device for his account. Speakers also sometimes label their constructions *after* they have produced them. An example of this is seen in extract 23 (drawn from EE A).

Extract 23: Group 1
M2: Well the <u>Review</u> is actually a provision under the Agreement. (.) And, for that reason, reviewing progress ought to be a <u>good</u> thing. (.) The problem is the way the Review has come about. So that's just a point I would like to make at the start.

Here, M2 draws attention to a key point that he would like his listeners (and it can be assumed, the Researcher, in particular) to note. This strategy emphasises the point in question and presents it as a framing or backdrop for the account as a whole. A further feature of Group 1 data, which is perhaps linked to these various framing, labelling and structuring devices, is that the speakers display minimal hesitation, revision or repair in delivering their accounts.

In contrast, the Group 2 data comprises a series of short speaking turns: see, for example, extracts 7, 8, 9 and 13 above; EE B, lines 1–24. Here there are no formal turn markers or references to pre-allocation of the floor. The speakers do not appear to offer extended speaking rights as in the Group 1 examples above. New speakers frequently "take" the floor while others are speaking, and interruption and overlap are common throughout the discussion, as exemplified in extract 24. Unlike the Group 1 data, the Group 2 discussions lack any formal discursive labelling, framing or structuring devices. There is, in addition, more hesitation, pausing, and revision (see, for example, EE D, lines 48–60).

Extract 24: Group 2
F1: =But, you know (.) see, it <u>might</u>, you know, there <u>might</u> be light at the end of the tunnel. So that Ian Paisley will accept it? (.) Maybe some of the young <u>radicals</u> coming//up in the DUP
F5:   //But the <u>older</u> ones just <u>accept</u> everything <u>they</u> say, as set in stone. (.) And they'll never, //<u>they</u> don't <u>want</u> change
F1:   //But the young radical ones coming up (.) <u>they</u> know that there <u>has</u> to be change. There <u>has</u> to be. Otherwise (.) as you <u>say</u>, it's stalemate. (.) Go back to the way it <u>was</u>?=
F3: =It'll <u>never</u> go//back to the way it was.
F1:   //<u>Nobody</u> wants that for their children.

In this extract, the conversational floor alternates between F1, F5 and F3 through a series of short turns and interruptions/overlaps. Notably, while F5's contribution can be seen to offer an alternative viewpoint to what F1 is claiming, taken together, these turns work seamlessly to produce a supportive context (see Coates, 1996) and ultimately, a collaboratively produced account of what is likely to happen in the future. Explicit verbal support is also evident throughout the Group 2 discourse, as shown in extract 25.

Extract 25: Group 2
F4: <u>I</u> think they're, they're putting all sorts of <u>obstacles</u>. (1.0) I mean, anything that happens, I mean like Bobby//Tohill
F5:   //I <u>know</u>=
F4: =I mean, Sinn Fein, that's Sinn <u>Fein's</u> fault.
F5: Everything's Sinn Fein's fault.

Here, F4's construction of unionist obstruction is actively supported by F5 through verbal reinforcement, direct agreement and repetition of specific words and key points. Again, this results in a jointly produced account, which may be seen as the outcome of collaboration between the two speakers rather than being "owned" by either one.

5.2.2. Register and style

Another key difference between the two groups is in the nature of their lexical choices and the syntactic structures that they deploy. In this respect, Group 1 can be seen to use a highly formalised register, including technical and specialised vocabulary and complex syntactic structures (see, for example, extracts 6, 11, 15 and 21). To examine another brief example in more detail:

Extract 26: Group 1
M2 (. . .) But (.) <u>that's</u> the problem. That lack of transparency. Uh, this Agreement isn't just the property of London and Dublin, or of <u>any</u> individual political party. (.) It's (.) the outcome of a referendum north and south of Ireland (.) and therefore has a purchase (.) constitutionally <u>and</u> politically. (.) Which uh (1.5) just <u>isn't</u> <u>reflected</u> in the kind of review underway at the moment.

In this extract, as in many others, the speaker uses a complex syntactic structure, and indeed, throughout the Group 1 data, the speakers routinely make use of conjunctive and/or subordinate clauses to construct and illustrate their arguments. The speaker also uses a series of formal lexical choices, which can be seen to reproduce a political genre of discourse, which has particular salience in Northern Ireland: for example, ''lack of transparency''; ''property of London and Dublin''; ''a purchase constitutionally and politically'' and the extent to which this purchase is ''reflected'' in the ongoing review. (Other examples drawn from the extracts above include ''wedded to'', ''at the behest of'', ''misrepresenting rights as concessions'', and ''the current incarnation of the unionist veto''). All of these items are drawn from a specialised political vocabulary and they display not only the speakers' familiarity with this genre, but also their facility with relevant concepts and distinctions, such as, in this case, the difference between constitutional and political significance. The speakers also perform and display an in-depth knowledge of the political process itself, including the Agreement, its implementation and review. This is evidenced in extract 27 and at other points throughout the discussion (see also EE A, lines 59–63).

Extract 27: Group 1
M2: (. . .) Well the <u>Review</u> is actually a provision under the Agreement. (. . .) But it's a paragraph 8 review, so it's provided for within the Agreement. (.) The problem is that the Agreement isn't <u>legislative</u>, and therefore didn't set out specifically what (.) duration the Review should be.

Taken together, the Group 1 speakers' specialised, formal and complex linguistic and structural choices can be seen as a performance of a particular type of expertise (see also section 5.2.3). An expository style is adopted (again, see section 5.2.3) and the general tone of the discussion is one of gravitas and authority.

Group 2, on the other hand, use a markedly more informal and ''everyday'' register, including short and often truncated or revised syntactic structures and colloquial expressions. For example, in extract 18:

F3: There's not (.) an awful lot of different <u>options</u>, really, is there? (.) We'll <u>never</u> go back to the way we <u>were</u>. (.) Twenty years ago. I can't see that ever happening. (.) I don't know where we go from <u>here</u>, um, as I said before, <u>stalemate</u>. (.) And then, maybe it's just to see who's going to give in first. Somebody is going to have to give a wee bit of <u>something</u>.

This account is marked by a series of points which are briefly expressed and under-developed in their own right, but which nonetheless work together to produce a coherent argument about the future of the process. The language used is colloquial and draws on everyday idioms such as ''giving in first'' and ''giving a wee bit of something'' (see also extracts 8, 9 and 19). It is also expressed from the speaker's personal point of view rather than as a general set of political principles or concepts. These accounts are often multiply hedged and marked by pauses, revisions and epistemic discourse markers (see extracts 24 and 25).

Unlike Group 1, the speakers do not display any specialised knowledge either of political concepts or of the review process that is underway. In fact, they often perform a lack of knowledge of the issues under discussion, engage in collaborative sense-making of concepts, and/or seek clarification from the Researcher about the meaning and significance of issues; for example, in extract 7, F1 seeks clarification from the Researcher about the meaning and significance of the review. In addition, they sometimes directly demonstrate a lack of engagement with the technical aspects of the process, as in extract 28:

Extract 28: Group 2
F1: I thought he was on another wee committee that I missed when my mummy *(laughs)*
F5: What Review? I <u>missed</u> it.
(Laughter)
R: No, sorry. The, the review of the Good Friday Agreement. Which is ongoing at the <u>moment</u>.

In this extract, the speakers collaboratively perform a lack of knowledge of the review through F1's report of her confusion with another ''wee committee'' and F5's claim that she ''missed it''. These constructions also overtly display a lack of *involvement* with the process itself (if not with the context/outcomes at a more general level) and thus a general distancing of the speakers from the finer detail of politics. A final point to note here is the use of *humour* as a discursive resource. The Group 2 speakers frequently use humour as a discursive and interactional resource and to position themselves in particular ways in relation to the arguments that they are constructing. For example, facetiously attributed speech is used in constructing the ''childish unionists'' frame (extract 7) and humour is used in expressing cynicism about the likelihood of progress (extract 4). Collaborative humour and laughter are common throughout the Group 2 discussion. In contrast, direct displays of humour/laughter are largely absent from the Group 1 extracts.

5.2.3. Footing and authority

A final important difference between the groups may be observed in the *footing* (Goffman, 1981) that they adopt. As noted earlier, Group 1 speakers generally adopt a formal style of delivery which displays specialised knowledge and authority. This is further conveyed through an *expository* style of delivery, whereby the speakers outline relevant concepts and issues for the benefit of the Researcher (see extracts 21 and 27; also EE A, lines 55–59). This places the speakers in an authoritative position not only as representatives of their community but also vis-à-vis the Researcher who is being informed rather than seeking information from the group. On the other hand, the Group 1 speakers orient repeatedly to the fact that they are taking part in a research interview, as indicated in the formality of their responses and turn-taking and in direct references such as that in extract 29.

As indicated in the discussion of extracts 20 and 21, these speakers generally speak *on behalf of*, or as representing the views of, the nationalist community as a whole. Some examples already discussed include: describing how the nationalist community is feeling in terms of a shared emotion (extract 3; EE A, lines 67–69); stating how the nationalist community will act or respond in the future (extract 20); explaining general processes of how ''people'' will generally respond to a given situation (extract 21); and making claims about how the political process will develop from a nationalist perspective (EE C, lines 24–28). Moreover, in extract 29, M3 explicitly introduces his account (i.e. extract 3) as being about the feelings of the nationalist community.

Extract 29: Group 1
M3: *(coughs)* Um. (5.0) I think, um, I mean the purpose of this focus group is for you to kind of touch base with what the <u>mood</u> is out there.=
R: =Mmm.
M3: <u>I'd</u> characterise it in, uh (.) a couple of ways.

In this extract, M3 frames his construction as providing an insight into the mood of the nationalist community. In being able to provide this, he positions himself as both speaking ''of'' and ''for'' the community; that is, as a member who is able to speak on behalf of others. As noted earlier, the Group 1 constructions of events and processes are commonly depersonalised or generalised, which further positions the speakers as representatives of a community and/or process, rather than as individuals expressing individual views. Where reference is made to personal events or experiences, these are placed firmly in the context of the political process and indeed, are only evoked to illustrate an aspect of this context (for example, extract 20; EE A, lines 64–68). Similarly, when reference is made to community experiences, these are cast in general terms, as descriptions of the community, rather than from the speakers' personal perspectives as community members (for example, extract 3).

In contrast to Group 1's expository style and depersonalised stance, Group 2 adopt a conversational style, which, contains many features of mundane interaction, including interruptions, questions, requests for clarification, expression of doubt, and humorous asides. In addition, the speakers frame their accounts exclusively from a *personal perspective*. While they sometimes include others in their claims (either other members of the group or of the community more generally), these latter accounts are indexed through the personal pronoun ''we'' – rather than ''the community'', ''people'' etc. that are found in the Group 1 data (see for example, extract 14). This feature positions the Group 2 speakers as community members describing shared experiences and responses, in contrast to the Group 1 self-positioning as representatives who are speaking on behalf of others. Group 2 constructions are more commonly set within the context of biography, personal events and memories, or past community experiences that were shared with others (extracts 22 and 28). Thus, personal experiences are used as a way of explaining the current situation and the likely future outcomes of the process. These are presented as personal responses (nobody wants to go back to violence: extract 22) or perspectives (I can't see us ever going back: extract 18).

6. Discussion and conclusion

We have examined the articulation of a shared narrative template (Bruner, 2004; Wertsch, 2002) within a community setting. This tradition, drawn from narrative psychology, allows for the analysis of narrative realisation without the need for narrative discourse delimitation, which is often assumed within linguistic studies of narrative. It also allows for an empirical exploration of the distinction between narrative content and form. We will discuss further in this section the theoretical contribution of this approach for the study of narrative pragmatics.

As they produce their collective accounts of the political context, the speakers can be seen to draw on a shared and narratively structured representation of events, as described by Wertsch (2008a,b). Within this narrative structure, different actors, event sequences and causal relationships are articulated as a way of making sense of the community's experiences and actions. In basic form, the template underlying the speakers' accounts can be seen as the following:

- Political devolution and power-sharing in the NIA was necessary and brought benefits for the nationalist community.
- The nationalist community were active in achieving devolution and they fought to overcome obstacles along the way, including past disadvantages.
- The current stalemate has been caused by unionists, who oppose devolution/power-sharing and seek to obstruct it.
- Unionists (particularly politicians) are both childish and intransigent in opposing devolution. They will continue to resist the return of the political institutions.
- By contrast, nationalist politicians (and in particular Sinn Fein) work hard to renew the process, but are being thwarted by unionists.
- Unionists are being facilitated by both British and Irish governments, who are overly indulgent towards them and have allowed them to stall the political process.
- The nationalist community are frustrated at the deadlock and will not allow it to continue much longer.
- Change and progress is inevitable. This means that the political process will be reinstated in the future and unionists will simply have to accept that.
- Unionists will continue to block progress, but they will ultimately have to accept it, since nationalists will refuse to return to the status quo.
- The nationalist community will be active in bringing about the reinstatement of the process.
- The nationalist community will ultimately achieve their preferred outcome, that is, a return to devolution.

The above structure can arguably be seen as a heroic narrative form (see Gergen and Gergen, 1993), where the protagonist battles adversity to achieve a desired outcome. By examining this structure, as articulated through the collective accounts of the speakers, we have highlighted *the core sense-making function* of narrative within the community. Indeed, we argue that studying narrative at this structural level (rather than as one-off events or types of discourse) allows for unique insights into sense-making and everyday interpretation *per se*, as well as the role of narrative in this process. In our analysis, both groups demonstrate almost identical patterns of practical reasoning, including common modes of attributing blame, responsibility, and causal relationships. They also produce congruent versions of the future of the political process, and of the way in which their own (nationalist) community will respond to this. The analysis, then, provides empirical insight into how narrative operates across different social actors to provide a shared meaning structure. Drawing on the narrative template, both groups of speakers can be seen to possess a common and easily comprehensible mode of interpreting the socio-political world. This approach also highlights the *dialogic nature* of narrative (Bakhtin, 1981; Wertsch, 2002). In producing a collective and congruent structure, the speakers not only draw upon a shared template of events, actors, and trajectories, but also echo and rearticulate existing sets of meanings and narrative tellings, such as ''intransigent unionists'', ''unstoppable progress'', and other tropes and representations. As Lemke (1995:25) similarly demonstrates in his analysis of textual politics, ''to the extent that we have individual voices, we fashion them out of the social voices already available to us'' (see also Stapleton and Wilson, 2010). Of course, this also raises questions about issues of power, access, and control of the narrative. It is not the aim of this paper to explore these issues: however, we will consider in a future analysis of these data the likely ideological dimension of narrative templates and the extent to which templates may be shaped and managed at an official level, with consequences for everyday sense-making within the community (in preparation).

The second main strand of our analysis focused on the *performative and pragmatic differences* between the two tellings, including interaction, register and style, and footing/self-positioning. This provides further insight into the way in which narrative telling provides a *resource for self-positioning and identity construction*. As already noted, the template is realised differently in each case, due to the use of specific discursive, pragmatic and interactional strategies. Group 1 speakers use highly formalised syntactic and lexical structures, often speak 'on behalf of others', rarely include accounts of personal experience, formally allocate turns, rarely interrupt one another, take extended turns, and adopt an expository – rather than conversational – style. An authoritative footing is adopted throughout. The discussion with Group 2, on the other hand, shows many features of mundane conversation, including interruptions, question-and-answer sequences, false starts and revisions. The speakers take much shorter, sometimes truncated, turns and collaborative overlapping is common. Humour is frequently used to position the speakers in relation to the issues under discussion. Accounts are commonly personalised; e.g. framed as personal opinions or explained in terms of personal biographical experiences. A non-authoritative footing is adopted.

We argue that key to this variation is the relative role and positioning of the speakers both within the local community and broader political power structures; and indeed, that these positionings are further constituted through the interactions themselves. It is also worth noting here, that while the narrative template may be seen as emergent from the speakers' accounts rather than being purposely elicited by the interviewer, both tellings were nonetheless produced in the context of research interviews. The interview itself can be seen as a form of social practice (Ryan, 2008; Deschambault, 2011; De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012) and hence, at least to some extent, these accounts were produced for the interviewer as a conscious representation of the community and the speakers themselves. That being the case, it is interesting to note

that there is a *reconstitution of the interview genre itself* in each case, achieved through the interaction style of the participants and the construction of their knowledge relative to the researcher.

The two groups of speakers position themselves differently, not only as narrators of their community story, but also as *participants* in the interview situation (see Bamberg and Georgakopoulou, 2008). Group 1 clearly position themselves as authoritative, as possessing specific expertise and access, and as representative of, or speaking "on behalf" of, the community more generally. Through their expository style of delivery, they also position themselves as possessing *more expertise than the Researcher*. Thus, the interview might be seen as instructional for the Researcher. In contrast, Group 2 speakers present a non-authoritative identity. They often seek information or clarification (either from the Researcher or from another group member) before presenting an opinion; and in fact, they sometimes "perform" a lack of knowledge, using humour to distance themselves from the more technical aspects of politics and drawing instead on personal and biographical frames of reference. They position themselves as *having less knowledge or expertise than the Researcher* and thus offer personal opinions as members of the community, rather than its spokespeople. These different narrative performances constitute the interview genre as an instructional vs. an information-gathering event respectively.

To conclude, we will reflect briefly upon the way in which the concept and analysis of narrative templates can contribute to our understanding of narrative pragmatics and indeed linguistic studies of narrative more generally.

As noted earlier, the narrative psychology tradition, from which the concept of narrative template is drawn, proposes narrative structures as a way of understanding cognition and, in particular, the production and articulation of collective memories and representations (Bruner, 2004; Wertsch, 2008a,b). While not typically focused on the fine-grained analysis of language and interaction, this approach nonetheless allows for the analysis of narrative realisation without the need for narrative discourse delimitation, which is often sought in linguistic studies of narrative, however broadly defined. In our analysis, we have shown that a wide range of different discourse activities, including accounting, explanation, blaming, and justifying, can all be seen as modes of realising the underlying narrative template, if not necessarily constituting "narratives" in and of themselves. From this perspective, then, it is arguably not necessary to seek definitive descriptions of "narrative discourse" as a genre if our primary aim is to examine the role of narrative as a mode of sense-making and/or identity positioning. In a general treatment of narrative, McQuillan (2000:11) also discusses the relationship between definitional boundaries and narrative meaning: "When the boundaries of structuralist, formalist or hermeneutic definition have been removed. . .what remains is a narrativised and narrativising context. . .Narrative is both the minimal unit of meaning and the cognitive process which makes meaning possible."

Adopting a narrative template approach provides insights for linguistic study of narrative, in that it allows for an *empirical examination of the distinction between content and form/telling*. While this is a commonly drawn distinction in narrative studies (De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012; Juzwick, 2014; Thornborrow, 2014), linguistic analyses have commonly examined single or self-contained tellings, with a focus on the structural, formal features of narratives and/or their social, rhetorical and interactional functions. Thus, we argue, the realisation of narrative content through different tellings has been under-researched in traditional linguistic analyses. In turn, the standard linguistic focus on individual narrative tellings has arguably militated against empirical examination of the sense-making and identity functions of shared narrative representations, as conceptualised within narrative psychology.

Of course, the use of narrative template as an analytic framework raises questions about how such template structures are to be conceptualised ontologically and epistemologically. For example, should we consider templates as cognitively stored "action frames"; and how can we identify these independently from an identified genre of "narrative (template) discourse"? In addition, and as noted by one of the reviewers of this paper, such an approach might be seen as a form of what Becker (1988) calls "languaging", i.e. a process that sees the analyst adopting a particular perspective and making decisions as to the choice of actors, activities, and content. However, the core of our analysis shows that the narrative template is evidenced, and indeed, constituted, in its linguistic realisation. Thus, rather than recourse to formalised notions of "cognitive structures", which (like schemata, and many other cognitive models) would not be possible to physically instantiate, we reference instead the linguistic tellings themselves and, also, importantly, the manifest orientations of our participants (see Edwards and Potter, 1992; Edwards, 1997) as evidence that a particular meaning frame is being used. This frame contains within it a set of actors, events, attributes, sequences, and causal relationships. Indeed, it is the deployment of the same meaning frame in different performative contexts, that we take as evidence for a shared template structure accessible to both sets of participants. We would also argue that all linguistic interaction requires making choices from existing templates (e.g. syntactic, phonological, or ideological) and moreover, that it would not be possible for meaningful communication to take place without normative guides or templates, whether or not we can align a particular template with an identifiable genre of discourse.

In light of the above discussion, the present study offers a distinctive discursive and pragmatic examination of how a shared "deep-structure" narrative (see De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012) is produced by different groups of speakers, with attendant issues of context, power, identity, and performance. Of course, such a linguistic analysis also has *import for narrative psychology* in that it demonstrates how narrative templates become realised, discursively, pragmatically, and interactionally, in real-time contexts of meaning-making and interpretation.

Funding

Acknowledgements

Appendix: Transcriptions and Key to symbols

Extended Extract A: Explaining the stalemate: Group 1

M1: Right, ok (.) I'll go first this time. Um, I think that the, the <u>shorter</u> (.) the period, the Review is held in, the better. Then it can't <u>prolong</u> into a whole series of (.) what the DUP are hoping it to be. (.) <u>Negotiations</u> rather than a <u>review</u> process, um (.) and the better, the shorter time that occurs, well then, maybe there is a <u>bit</u> of hope (1.0) that the suspended institutions will be up and running again.
(..)
M2: Well the <u>Review</u> is actually a provision under the Agreement. (.) And, for that reason, reviewing progress ought to be a <u>good</u> thing. (.) The problem is the way the Review has come about. So that's just a point I would like to make at the start. And (.) holding a review instead of doing something <u>else</u>, like (.) making progress on the <u>Agreement</u> (1.0) that, to me, seems to be a <u>bad</u> thing. (.) <u>Why</u> stop (.) stall (.) and review? Why not make <u>progress</u>? And review progress while you're <u>making</u> it? (.) So that's a bad sign, I think. But it's a paragraph 8 review, so it's provided for within the Agreement. (.) The problem is that the Agreement isn't <u>legislative</u>, and therefore didn't set out specifically what (.) duration the Review should be, uh (.) what way it should be governed. (.) So, some of that's been done, and I don't fully understand <u>how</u> it's being done at the moment. (.) That seems to be very much (.) private to the governments. London and Dublin. (.) And maybe the parties are informed about that (.) or maybe <u>not</u>. Certainly I don't think the <u>public's</u> well-informed about what kind of review is underway. And how this relates to what the Agreement envisaged. Both paragraph 8 review, and making further <u>progress</u>. (.) So a review of progress in an Agreement is (.) probably a good thing. Like a review of progress in any (.) walk of life, or any (.) area of work. (.) Providing you're continuing to make <u>progress</u>. (..) But (.) <u>that's</u> the problem. That lack of transparency. Uh, this Agreement isn't just the property of London and Dublin, or of <u>any</u> individual political party. (.) It's (.) the outcome of a referendum north and south of Ireland (.) and therefore has a purchase (.) constitutionally <u>and</u> politically. (.) Which uh (1.5) just <u>isn't</u> <u>reflected</u> in the kind of review underway at the moment.
(1.5)
R: Does everybody else agree with that?
(3.5)
M3: *(coughs)* Um. (5.0) I think, um, I mean the purpose of this focus group is for you to kind of touch base with what the <u>mood</u> is out there.=
R: =Mmm.
M3: <u>I'd</u> characterise it in, uh (.) a couple of ways. One is that (2.5) you really <u>do</u> get a sense of (.) a community that's up and (***) moving <u>on</u>. Ready for, um, you know the Peace Process and institutions to get up and running. (.) And I think there's just this huge bemusement as to what's happening on the (.) <u>unionist</u> side. On the one level, there's a sense that, you know, here we are (.) <u>yet</u> again, <u>as</u> for the last hundred and fifty years, back to (.) the current incarnation of the unionist <u>veto</u>. (.) But basically, because unionists aren't playing, everything just <u>stops</u>. (.) And there's a sense that the British government, <u>and</u> to an increasing, to a degree as well, the <u>Irish</u> government have just (.) you know, like, said, 'Well (.) you can't play until the <u>unionists</u> are ready.' You know? (.) And there's quite a deep <u>frustration</u> about that. (1.0) You know it's almost as if (.) the republican line on the consent principle, is being <u>proved</u> in <u>practice</u>. (.) You know that if you give unionists a (.) a veto on <u>progress</u>, then what we have is *(laughs briefly)* no <u>progress</u>. (.) You know, and we're back to Charlie Haughey's famous saying that (.) you know like, this really <u>is</u> a failed political entity. (.) And you know everything that's been tried by republicans has just been shown to confirm the <u>analysis</u>. (.) So, I mean, what's going on in the <u>unionist</u> community is a <u>major</u> (.) question, I think. (2.0) And people are very interested to try and kind of <u>unpack</u> that. Um (1.0) the uh (2.0) the disarray within the Unionist party, and the <u>confidence</u> apparently in the DUP (.) perhaps gives us an opportunity of seeing (.) what they come <u>up</u> with, you know, when they are finally in the driving seat. (.) I have to say that their proposals <u>for</u> the Review, last week, were less than satisfactory. (..) Uh, but when you kind of look at the proposals carefully (.) there's <u>really</u> nothing in it for, for nationalists. And I think Brian Feeney is probably right when he says that (.) you know, um (.) it's really about majority <u>rule</u>. (.) You know, they kind of couch it in, in other <u>ways</u>, but it's really about

majority <u>rule</u>. They haven't even got to the kind of, <u>power</u>-sharing level, much <u>less</u> the North-South stuff. They say they're going to publish proposals in due course. But it's interesting that uh, they just can't concentrate on Strand <u>One</u>, rather than seeing the whole thing as a <u>package</u>. (4.0) So it's hard to kind of, work out what exactly is going on in the unionist community. I actually <u>said</u> to him (.) you know, when you look at your documents, you've got <u>eight</u> pages on <u>proposals</u>. (.) For <u>devolution</u>. (.) And then you've got eight pages saying, 'this is what Sinn <u>Fein</u> has to do.' (.) You know, which is hardly much <u>balance</u>. (.) And I think everybody's saying, 'well what are you going to do, <u>really</u>? Are you going to <u>engage</u>?' (.) I think there's just that, that huge frustration. You know, and I mean I think the (.) <u>underneath</u> it all (.) you know, whereas republicans, who are now the largest party, are committed to working the Agreement (.) you know, it just seems to me, impossible to imagine that the unionists are going to (2.5) buy in, that the DUP's going to buy <u>into</u> that, anytime <u>soon</u>. And I mean the other thing is the behaviour of the British <u>government</u>, you know, particularly over the Barron Report. (.) I think they have been <u>absolutely</u> <u>outrageous</u>

Extended Extract B: Explaining the stalemate: Group 2

F1: Is this where they're reviewing the Good Friday <u>Agreement</u>?
R: Yeah.//Yeah
F1:   //They're looking at it again//to see if they can change it.
R: //<u>Yes</u>, yes=
F1: =So that Ian Paisley will <u>accept</u> it?
R: <u>Well</u> (.) that they can come to an//agreement.
F1:   //You know, let's come to an agreement, and <u>agree</u> this, and then '<u>Hold</u> on, <u>I</u> don't <u>like</u> that bit'.
(Laughter)
F1: I thought he was on another wee committee that I missed when my mummy *(laughs)*
F5: What Review? I <u>missed</u> it.
(Laughter)
R: No, sorry. The, the review of the Good Friday Agreement. Which is ongoing at the <u>moment</u>.
F3: That's, that's (.) yes, that's very <u>dangerous</u>. (.) I'm, I'm wondering <u>why</u>?
F2: <u>Why</u> is there a <u>review</u>? (.) I mean, they all sat down, it took them long enough to get (.) what we <u>had</u>.
F1: Because <u>some</u> of them didn't read the fine <u>print</u>.
R: No, well, I think=
F1: =And then, when it was pointed out to them afterwards, said, '<u>I</u> didn't know <u>that</u> was in there'. (.) So, the British government said, 'Och well, <u>alright</u> then. We'll <u>review</u> it'.
(Laughter)=
R: =No, I think (.) <u>originally</u> (.) I think, originally, this was built <u>in</u> as <u>part</u> of the Agreement=
=*(Laughter)*=
R: =That there would be a review after (.) whatever, after so many <u>years</u>. So then, the thing was (.) after the election, that, that all the, the (.) well some people were saying that it <u>wasn't</u> actually going to be a review, that it was going to be a renegotiation=
F3: =Yeah=
R: =That was the stumbling point. (.) But I think the idea of a <u>review</u> was, was, as my understanding, was <u>always</u> <u>in</u> there. So, this is what they're trying to do at the moment.
(1.0)
F3: Aye, to improve.=
F4: =Aye, the Review was to <u>improve</u> on what they'd <u>done</u>. (.) Not to, to <u>dismantle</u> it.
R: No, to look at how it's <u>progressing</u>, and see=
F1: =Well obviously, it <u>hasn't</u> progressed, so they'll <u>have</u> to review it, like. (.) But I hope they just don't make it a (.) to <u>pacify</u> those people.
(2.0)
R: So, are you hopeful the Review is going to (.) <u>work</u>? (.) Because they're planning to have a conclusion, and I know they keep shifting it (.) but I think it's by <u>summer</u> now?
F5: Summer, what <u>year</u>?
(Laughter)
F1: I think it'll work out exactly the same way as the Good Friday Agreement. When they seen it, they went into <u>words</u>, they went into different things. (.) And '<u>change</u> this', or 'what does <u>that</u> mean?'=

F: =Mmhm

F1: 'Identify that, describe it', and all this caper. So I think (.) to do a review, it'll be the same thing all over again. (1.5)

F2: Och, I don't know.

(2.0)

F4: I think they're, they're putting all sorts of obstacles. (1.0) I mean, anything that happens, I mean like Bobby//Tohill

F5:   //I know=

F4: =I mean, Sinn Fein, that's Sinn Fein's fault.

F5: Everything's Sinn Fein's fault.

(Brief interruption)

R: OK, so yeah, I was just (.) going to ask you really, about the Review, which we talked about before, and how you feel it's going what you think the major obstacles are? (.) And you've kind of talked around that already. (.) And whether you're hopeful for a conclusion?

F3: We're always hopeful for a conclusion, but I don't think it's coming. That's not very realistic, is it?

Extended Extract C: Looking to the future: Group 1

M2: =Yeah, and we'll maybe hear what we were supposed to see on October 21st. (1.5) So, it will only be (.) three or four months too late. (.) But the idea (.) I heard a unionist commentator say, um (1.0) not to me, but to somebody else, they were saying, 'Well (2.0) so, it's Direct Rule now. You had it for twenty-five years. What are you going to do then?' (.) And it's so conceited to think that, um (2.5) that the nationalist or republican community will just consent to that (.) It's also so (2.0) uh (2.0) so blind to everything that's happened in the last few decades (.) to believe that people will just consent to that. Because they emphatically won't consent to that. And, um (.) but obviously, the (2.0) the Review (.) well, that might comfort people for a while, in political unionism. (.) Which is wedded to, which hasn't matured sufficiently to (.) to see the need for accommodation. Not for nationalists and republicans to accommodate ourselves to the status quo, but an accommodation between (.) the political leaders of nationalism and republicanism, and the political leaders of loyalism and unionism. (.) In the meantime, we will just get on. I think people will just get on with working out strategies and tactics for (.) creating more change. (.) And that won't be stoppable by, by freezing the Agreement. Or by complaining about implementation, or (.) or by misrepresenting rights as concessions. (.) That simply inspires (.) provokes people to do more. *(laughs briefly)* Because you can't continue to tell people, your rights, your quality of life, um (.) will be (.) at the behest of someone else (.) without, uh, sowing great dissatisfaction, and anger (.) and opposition. (.) You can't do that indefinitely, without people responding to it. But I think that the uh, the period, Easter, we'll probably talk about this a bit more, and, and we'll probably not know much more about what has been, uh (.) done and agreed. But one, one projection I'd make, fairly certain (.) with a fair degree of confidence, is (.) a point that's just been made, a couple of people have just made, that, uh, if there's any pronouncement, publicly, it'll be about republicans and guns. And, uh (.) and it won't wash in this community, because (.) that's not what people see as being the most urgent matter. (.) Or what's missing from the process.

Extended Extract D: Looking to the future: Group 2

R: So (.) if it doesn't work, what do you think is going to happen then? (.) I think this is the question probably puzzling, um, Blair and Bertie Ahern at the moment, as well.

F1: I don't know.

F3: There's not (.) an awful lot of different options, really, is there? (.) We'll never go back to the way we were. (.) Twenty years ago. I can't see that ever happening. (.) I don't know where we go from here, um, as I said before, stalemate. (.) And then, maybe it's just to see who's going to give in first. Somebody is going to have to give a wee bit of something.

F1: Yeah, but I watched a programme, and, and (.) it was all to do with the DUP, and they went to some African tribe or something over in (.) Africa.=

R: =Oh yeah, //yeah. I saw that.

F1:   //Do you remember? (.) And basically what the programme was saying was they were just waiting (***) and then they were going to go and (.) share power with Sinn Fein.

(. . ..)

F1:   =But, you know (.) see, it might, you know, there might be light at the end of the tunnel. So that Ian Paisley will accept it? (.) Maybe some of the young radicals coming //up in the DUP

F5:   //But the older ones just accept everything they say, as set in stone. (.) And they'll never,//they don't want change

F1:   //But the young radical ones coming up (.) they know that there has to be change. There has to be. Otherwise (.) as you say, it's stalemate. (.) Go back to the way it was?=

F3: =It'll never go //back to the way it was.

F1:   //Nobody wants that for their children. (.) And especially if you think of people our age, who lived through that, who lived through the Troubles. (.) Nobody wants that for our children. I don't want my kids to live through that. (.) Even though, at the time, it was exciting. Going back to when you were a child. But the older you got, the more frightening it got. (.) And you know, you might get, hopefully young, the younger generation, the next younger politicians that are coming up (.) are going to be a wee bit more (.) political.

Key to transcription symbols

(.)   Brief pause (less than one second)
(***)   Unintelligible material
___   (underlining) Prosodic emphasis on word or phrase
//   Beginning of overlapping speech
=   No discernible pause between one turn and the next
(. . .) Some material omitted
R: Researcher
F1:   Female 1 (etc.)
M1:   Male 1 (etc.)

References

Bakhtin, Mikhail, 1981. The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin (M. Holquist, ed., C. Emerson, M. Holquist, Trans.). University of Texas Press, Austin, TX.

Bamberg, Michael, 2004. Talk, small stories and adolescent identities. Hum. Dev. 47, 331–353.

Bamberg, Michael, 2006. Biographic-narrative research, quo vadis? A critical review of 'big stories' from the perspective of 'small stories'. In: Milnes, K., Horrocks, C., Kelly, N., Roberts, B., Robinson, D. (Eds.), Narrative, Memory and Knowledge. University of Huddersfield Press, Huddersfield, UK, pp. 63–79.

Bamberg, Michael, Georgakopoulou, Alexandra, 2008. Small stories as a new perspective in narrative and identity analysis. Text Talk 28, 377–396.

Becker, Alton L., 1988. Language in particular: a lecture. In: Tannen, D. (Ed.), Linguistics in Context: Connecting, Observation and Understanding. Ablex, Norwood, NJ, pp. 17–36.

Blum-Kulka, Shoshana, 1997. Dinner Talk. Routledge, New York.

Bradbury, Jonathan, Mitchell, James, 2001. Devolution: new politics for old. Parliam. Aff. 54, 257–275.

Bruner, Jerome, 1986. Actual Minds, Possible Worlds. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Bruner, Jerome, 1990. Acts of Meaning. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.

Bruner, Jerome, 2002. Making Stories: Law, Literature and Life. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York.

Bruner, Jerome, 2004. Life as narrative. Soc. Res. 71, 691–710.

Coates, Jennifer, 1996. Women Talk. Blackwell, Oxford.

De Fina, Anna, 2008. Who tells which story and why? Micro and macro contexts in narrative. Text Talk 28, 421–442.

De Fina, Anna, Georgakopoulou, Alexandra, 2008. Introduction: narrative analysis in the shift from texts to practices. Text Talk 28, 275–281.

De Fina, Anna, Georgakopoulou, Alexandra, 2012. Analyzing Narrative: Discourse and Sociolinguistic Perspectives. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.

Deschambault, Ryan, 2011. From 'analytic nuisance' to interactional resource: re-viewing small stories within interviews in a mixed methods study. J. Pragmat. 43, 3080–3090.

Edwards, Derek, 1997. Discourse and Cognition. Sage, London.

Edwards, Derek, Potter, Jonathan, 1992. Discursive Psychology. Sage, London.

Genette, Gérard, 1980. Narrative Discourse (J.E. Lewin, Trans.). Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY.

Georgakopoulou, Alexandra, 2007. Small Stories, Interaction and Identities. John Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia.

Georgakopoulou, Alexandra, 2014. Small stories transposition and social media: a micro perspective on the 'Greek crisis'. Discourse Soc. 25, 519–539.

Gergen, Mary M., Gergen, Kenneth J., 1993. Autobiographies and the shaping of gendered lives. In: Coupland, N., Nussbaum, J.F. (Eds.), Discourse and Lifespan Identity. Sage, Newbury Park, pp. 28–54.

Goffman, Erving, 1981. Footing. In: Goffman, E. (Ed.), Forms of Talk. University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, pp. 124–159.

Hayes, Bernadette C., McAllister, Ian, 2001. Who voted for peace? Public support for the 1998 Northern Ireland Agreement. Ir. Polit. Stud. 16, 73–93.

Horowitz, Donald L., 2002. Explaining the Northern Ireland Agreement: the sources of an unlikely constitutional consensus. Br. J. Polit. Sci. 32, 193–220.

Johnstone, Barbara, 1990. Stories, Community, and Place: Narratives from Middle America. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN.

Johnstone, Barbara, 2006. A new role for narrative in variationist sociolinguistics. Narrat. Inq. 16, 46–55.
Juzwick, Mary M., 2014. Spoken narrative. In: Gee, J.P., Handford, M. (Eds.), The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis. Routledge, London/New York, pp. 326–341.
Labov, William, 1972. Language in the Inner City: Studies in Black English Vernacular. University of Philadelphia Press, Philadelphia, PA.
Labov, William, 1982. Speech actions and reactions in personal narrative. In: Tannen, D. (Ed.), Analyzing Discourse: Text and Talk. Georgetown University Press, Washington, DC, pp. 219–247.
Labov, William, Waletzky, Joshua, 1967. Narrative analysis: oral versions of personal experience. In: Helm, J. (Ed.), Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts. Washington University Press, Seattle, WA, pp. 12–44.
Lemke, Jay L., 1995. Textual Politics: Discourse and Social Dynamics. Taylor & Francis, London.
McQuillan, Martin, 2000. Introduction. Aporias of writing: narrative and subjectivity. In: McQuillan, M. (Ed.), The Narrative Reader. Routledge, London, pp. 1–34.
Norrick, Neal R., 2000. Conversational Narrative. John Benjamins, Amsterdam.
Norrick, Neal R., 2009. Small stories, interaction and identities. Lang. Soc. 38, 104–108.
Ochs, Elinor, Capps, Lisa, 2001. Living Narrative. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
Polanyi, Livia, 1982. What stories can tell us about their tellers' worlds. Poet. Today 2, 97–112.
Potter, Jonathan, 2000. Post-cognitive psychology. Theory Psychol. 10, 31–37.
Potter, Jonathan, Wetherell, Margaret, 1987. Discourse and Social Psychology. Sage, London.
Propp, Vladimir, 1968. Morphology of the Folktale, 2nd ed. University of Texas Press, Austin, TX.
Ricoeur, Paul, 1984. Time and Narrative. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.
Ryan, Mary, 2008. Small stories, big issues: tracing complex subjectivities of high school students in interactional talk. Crit. Discourse Stud. 5, 217–229.
Sacks, Harvey, 1992. Lectures on Conversation, vols. 1 and 2. Blackwell, Oxford, UK.
Sarangi, Srikant, 2008. Editorial: narrative practice, competence, and understanding. Text Talk 28, 271–274.
Schiffrin, Deborah, 2006. In Other words: Variation in Reference and Narrative. Cambridge University Press, New York.
Souto-Manning, Mariana, 2014. Critical narrative analysis: the interplay of critical discourse and narrative analyses. Int. J. Qual. Stud. Educ. 27, 159–180.
Stapleton, Karyn, Wilson, John, 2010. Community discourse about politics in Northern Ireland. Text Talk 30, 311–331.
Thornborrow, Joanna, 2014. Narrative analysis. In: Gee, J.P., Handford, M. (Eds.), The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis. Routledge, London/New York, pp. 66–78.
Tonge, Jonathan, 2005. The New Northern Irish Politics? Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke/New York.
Vygotsky Lev S., 1987. The Collected Works of L.S. Vygotsky, vol. 1 (N. Minnick, ed. and Trans.). Plenum, New York.
Wertsch, James V., 2002. Voices of Collective Remembering. Cambridge University Press, New York.
Wertsch, James V., 2008a. Collective memory and narrative templates. Soc. Res. 75, 133–156.
Wertsch, James V., 2008b. The narrative organization of collective memory. ETHOS 36, 120–135.
White, Hayden, 1973. Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe. John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD.
Wilson, John, Stapleton, Karyn (Eds.), 2006. Devolution and Identity. Ashgate, Aldershot, Hampshire.
Wilson, John, Stapleton, Karyn, 2010. The big story about small stories: narratives of crime and terrorism. J. Sociolinguist. 14, 287–312.

Karyn Stapleton is a Senior Lecturer in Communication at Ulster University. Her research interests are in discourse, identity, interpersonal pragmatics, and social psychology. Recent research publications have included articles on: interpersonal accountability, pragmatics of swearing, cognitive dissonance, public apology, and women's identities in conflict contexts.

John Wilson is Emeritus Professor of Communication at Ulster University. His research interests are in pragmatics, sociolinguistics, social theory, and discourse analysis. His core work focuses on political and parliamentary language and he has authored/edited a number of key texts in this area: *Politically Speaking* (1990, Blackwell), *Discourse, Politics and Women as Leaders* (edited with D. Boxer, 2015, Benjamins) and *Talking with the President* (2015, OUP).