

## A four-part model for narrative genres and identities: evidence from Greek data

Argiris Archakis<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

*This article presents a tentative typology of narrative genres based on Greek data and following a discourse analytic perspective. Taking into consideration the contemporary literature on narrative, I maintain that the reassessment of the interlocutor's role and, in general, participants' interaction in the unfolding of the narrative event have played an important role in shifting the research interest from 'big' to 'small' narratives. Furthermore, taking into account the medium of the narrative, I propose a four-part model that emerges if a vertical oral/written continuum is intersected horizontally by a dialogue/monologue one (Politis 2001). In this context, I discuss narrative genres such as the monological autobiographical narrative, the conversational narrative of past or future events, the online journalistic narrative (news bulletin), and the printed journalistic narrative (newspaper article). Finally, I argue that, in interactive environments, symmetrical and intimate relations between the interlocutors permit the construction of collective in-group identities. On the contrary, in monological environments, where relations are asymmetrical and there is social distance between interlocutors, the latter's positionings and, consequently, their identities tend to be primarily –but not necessarily– individual ones.<sup>2</sup>*

### Keywords

*Oral narratives, co-narratives, written narratives, online journalistic narratives, printed journalistic narratives, identity construction*

<sup>1</sup> Department of Philology, University of Patras, Greece, [archakis@upatras.gr](mailto:archakis@upatras.gr)

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## Introductory and methodological observations

It is probably a truism that oral discourse is the primary and prototypical medium of linguistic expression (see Lyons 1981). The most common genre in oral linguistic expression seems to be the *narrative*. According to Georgakopoulou (2006a: p.33), narrative is recognised as ‘a primary or foundational genre’ and is placed at a ‘level above the other genres’ (see also Swales 1990, Virtanen 1992).

These observations have led discourse analysts (see Georgakopoulou & Goutsos 2011: pp.63-65, pp.204-205) to approach the various genres by using the fundamental distinction between the narrative and the non-narrative modes as a starting point: the *narrative* mode comprises texts based on the presentation of a sequence of unexpected and mainly past events from a specific evaluative perspective (Labov 1972: p.359 ff, see also Bruner 1990); the *non-narrative* mode includes informative genres relating to the processing and management of knowledge in the context of descriptions, reasoning, confirmation or rejection of assumptions, etc. (see also Georgakopoulou & Goutsos 2000).

Recent research in discourse analysis has highlighted narrative as the locus of constructing identities *par excellence* (see, e.g., De Fina 2003). A central distinction in exploring the concept of identity is that between the essentialist approach and the social constructionist approach. This distinction is based on whether discourse contributes to shaping the identity or not (see Benwell & Stokoe 2006: p.4, p.6). According to the essentialist approach, discourse is a representative mirror reflecting the innate and constant attributes of the self (see Benwell & Stokoe 2006: p.19, p.21, pp.24-25, p.27). In contrast, under the social constructionist approach, discourse (in this case narrative) is a means for individuals’ positioning towards various hegemonic views in social circulation and, therefore, a means for the construction of social categories of membership (see Benwell & Stokoe 2006: pp.30-34, Bucholtz & Hall 2003, 2005).

Based on Greek data and following a discourse analytic perspective, this paper explores questions relating to the sequential organization of oral stories and to the textual coherence of written stories. The contribution of the analysis pertains to accounting, on the one hand, for the similarities and differences among various narrative genres and, on the other, for the processes of self sustainability within these genres. More specifically, a classification of oral and written narrative genres is proposed, highlighting and analysing both their structural, functional and textual features, as well as their potential concerning the construction of narrators’ identities.

At this point it should be underlined that the term *discourse analysis*, as employed here, is ‘centrally concerned with giving an account of how coherence and sequential organization in discourse is produced and understood’ (Levinson 1983: p.286). Moreover, and following Fairclough’s (2003: p.3) conceptualization of the term, ‘no real understanding of the social effects of discourse is possible without looking closely at what happens when people talk or write’. From this perspective, discourse as language in use seems to be ‘an irreducible part of social life, dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life’ (Fairclough’s 2003: p.2, p.3). Thus, I consider discourse

analytic tools most relevant and appropriate for narrative analysis, especially when questions of narrative (sub)genres and narrative construction of identities are raised (see e.g. Benwell & Stokoe 2006: pp. 42-43, pp.129-162, De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012).

In what follows, I propose a four-part model that emerges if a vertical oral/written continuum is intersected horizontally by a dialogue/monologue one (Politis 2001). Moreover, I will discuss the types of identities that can be constructed within each part. In particular the theoretical tools that help me form the four-part model are unfolded. I embark upon recent research findings that distinguish between big and small narratives. Then, I attempt to elaborate this distinction by using two intersected continua: One referring to the way interaction takes place in each narrative, i.e. the monologue/dialogue one, and the other referring to the medium of each narrative, i.e. the oral/written continuum. Based on the resulting four-part model, I argue that symmetrical and intimate relations in interactive environments support the construction of collective in-group identities, whereas asymmetrical and formal relations in monological environments support the construction of individual identities.

In the following sections I give examples for each of the four parts of the proposed model. The narrative extracts presented and analysed in these sections come from various Greek research projects exploiting diverse corpora of narrative genres. I focus on (1) autobiographical narratives emerging in interviews, (2) conversational co-narratives, (3) online news bulletins and (4) news paper articles. Since the four-part model attempts to accommodate diverse narrative genres in Greek and the identities constructed therein, I intend to draw on data from my own previous research as well as from other studies on Greek narrative genres. The analyses proposed for the data coming from other researchers do not necessarily follow the ones proposed by them. When their suggestions are followed, special references and acknowledgements are offered. In my view, this methodological decision reveals and simultaneously assesses the descriptive range and potential of the proposed model.

Finally, in the concluding remarks, I present the complete version of the proposed model based on the analysis of the previous sections. I include observations concerning both narrative genres and opportunities for identity constructions provided therein. I also discuss the limitations of the model and some points for further research.

### **The classification of narratives**

In Fairclough's (2003: p.68) terms, I perceive the narrative genre as a broad abstract category which 'transcend[s] particular networks of social practices'. This broad genre includes

'many different types of narrative genres (e.g. conversational narratives, the endless "stories" in the press and on television, the "stories" that clients tell counsellors in therapy, etc.) which are more specifically situated in terms of social practices' (Fairclough 2003: p.68).

In this section, I introduce the theoretical tools which will help me build the four-part model accommodating the various narrative (sub)genres occurring in various social practices as well as the identities constructed therein.

Labov's seminal analysis (1972) brought into the limelight the so-called *big narratives*, that is the oral autobiographical, monological narratives emerging in interviews (e.g. for research, psychotherapeutic, interrogative, and other purposes). Such extended personal narratives constitute accounts of (selected periods from) the biography of the narrators and thus contribute to the construction of a coherent sense of the self (see Bamberg 2007). In this context, Labov proposed a model of narrative analysis including six structural components (see below).

Gradually, however, research shifted its interest from these big, structurally cohesive narratives, and the unique identities represented therein (along with the sense of the essentialist definition of individuals they convey), to small fragmented narratives and *ad hoc* identity constructions (see Sarbin & Kitsuse 1994). According to relevant research findings, small narratives do not thrive in institutionalised settings (such as an interview), but emerge mainly in spontaneous conversations, and may not include all the components identified by Labov.

A decisive factor in the formation of small narratives is the interlocutor, who is not limited to the role of the recipient, but participates in shaping the narrative on (shared) past experiences and anticipated (future or fictional) actions. In other words, during narrative communication the *interpersonal function of language*, in Halliday's (1978) terms, involves the contributions of both the narrator and his/her audience (i.e. it is 'two-way') rather than only those of the narrator (i.e. 'one-way') as used to be the case when research focused only on big, autobiographical stories (see Fairclough 2003: p.77). Furthermore, since the interlocutor shares certain experiences with the (main) narrator, s/he can understand allusive narrative excerpts which are not necessarily presented in detail (see Georgakopoulou 2007, Ochs & Capps 2001, Schegloff 1997).

Small, fragmented narratives of past and anticipated experiences, co-performed in interaction, allow for various *ad hoc* identity constructions by the narrators. According to Bamberg's approach (1997, 2004), identities are constructed via the characters' stylistic choices and the relations between them in the story's narrative world (see also Schiffrin 1996). Moreover, the identity construction process is enhanced by the relationship between the narrator and the present (co)-narrators-listeners during the narrative event. The way this network of relations is defined contributes to the overall positioning of the (co)-narrators vis-à-vis dominant ideological positions in social circulation (see also Archakis & Tsakona 2012).

Such findings underline the characteristics of narrative not only as a genre, but also as an interactive practice offering opportunities for identity construction (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2008). If an important factor in the turn of research towards interactive narrative practices is the reassessment of the interlocutor's role in co-constructing the performance and the content of the narrative, another determining factor with a strong impact on the interactive (and hence textual) aspects of narratives is the *medium*, or the *mode of discourse* in Halliday's (1978, 1989) terms, which may be oral or written.

The oral medium entails the presence of a recipient and his/her greater or lesser potential to interact with the narrator. In the written medium, the recipient is not in the same spatiotemporal frame with the narrator when the latter produces his/her text: the recipient perceives the text at a time other than that of its production. However, we should keep in mind that in contemporary mediated communication (e.g. via websites), there are opportunities for interaction: the (relatively) direct involvement of the recipients of written narratives is feasible (see Hoffmann 2010).

At this point I will attempt to map the universe of discourse that surrounds us and to locate narrative genres in it. A particularly useful guide in this mapping is the four-part model which results when a vertical oral/written continuum is intersected horizontally by a dialogue/monologue continuum. This model is based on discourse analytic tools coming from Halliday's (1978) functional approach (see Politis 2001: p.61, see also Georgakopoulou & Goutsos 2004, 2011, Tannen 1982):

**Figure 1: The universe of discourse (Politis 2001)**

<p><b>a) oral monologue;</b> political speeches, religious sermons, academic lectures, etc.</p>	<p><b>b) oral dialogue;</b> everyday conversation, classroom interaction, courtroom interaction, doctor-patient interaction, etc.</p>
<p><b>d) written monologue;</b> literary and historical texts, legal/bureaucratic documents, newspaper articles, etc.</p>	<p><b>c) written dialogue;</b> exchange of letters by post, email, online chat, posts on websites or blogs, etc.</p>

Most of the genres surrounding us (including the narrative ones) can be placed in one of the four parts of Figure 1 (see Archakis forthcoming). This classification could become more detailed and more accurate if the social distance and the power difference between the interlocutors is also taken into account, as they affect, inter alia, the rights to develop a story and its content (Politis 2001, see also Brown & Gilman 1972, Brown & Levinson 1987, De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012: p.136 ff):

a) Oral monologue includes genres such as political speeches, religious sermons, academic lectures, etc. Monological narratives can be inserted in these genres. For example, narratives are often inserted in political speeches or lectures, where there is social distance and power difference between the speaker and the recipients. Monological narratives are also identified during the course of interviews, often in extended answers offered by the interviewee to the interviewer (Stenström 1994: p.169 ff;). Usually there is social distance and a clear power difference between them, since it is the interviewer who determines how the narrative will develop and also gives the interviewee the right for an extended turn at talk with no interference from his/her part, as we shall see below.

b) Oral dialogue includes genres such as spontaneous everyday conversation where social distance and power difference between the participants is usually

negligible. Conversational co-narratives, which I shall address extensively below, are found in spontaneous symmetrical everyday interactions. Oral dialogue is also part of asymmetrical interactions in classrooms, courtrooms, between a doctor and a patient etc. (see also the interviews mentioned above).

c) Written dialogue includes genres such as the exchange of letters by post, the exchange of messages through the electronic media (e.g. e-mails, sms), e-publication of texts in blogs or webpages and (journalistic) articles with a section for online comments, online conversations (e.g. on Facebook), etc. In most of these exchanges we can identify written narratives that can be read and commented on by recipients. Here the social distance and the power difference between the author and the reader may be limited (e.g. when two friends exchange e-mails with narratives) or visible (e.g. when a journalist uploads a news bulletin, which the reader can only comment upon but cannot revise). I will focus on news bulletins posted on websites where interaction is feasible.

d) Written monologue includes genres such as literary, historical and legal texts, bureaucratic documents, printed newspaper articles, etc. Given that the disciplines of philology and history present systematic approaches and analyses of literary and historical narratives, I shall not extend my discussion to those.<sup>3</sup> I shall focus my attention on journalistic articles as written monological narratives, where the social distance and power difference between the author and the readers is important in terms of the management and dissemination of information.

The possibilities for identity construction offered by the narrative genres included in the aforementioned four-part model, could be described as follows: The symmetrical relations between the interlocutors and the negligible social distance between them in interactive environments (e.g. oral or written online chat) foster the construction of collective identities, i.e. joint positionings by the interlocutors ((co)-storytellers) vis-à-vis dominant ideological positions. It is worth mentioning here that, apart from the familiarity of the participants, their common experiences also play an important role in the construction of collective identities. In their discussion of collectivism, Hofstede et al. (2010: p.92) emphasize the fact that people 'are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups', contrary to individualism, where 'the ties between individuals are loose' (see also Llamas & Watt 2010). However, in-group relationships do not necessarily mean that disputes and controversies between participants may not prevent the construction of collective identities. On the other hand, when the relation between the interlocutors is loose and asymmetrical, the social distance between them is increased, and the context of communication becomes monological (e.g. in a lecture, in a news article), then the positionings and hence the identities constructed tend to be mainly individual ones.

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<sup>3</sup> However, it is worth mentioning at this point that, according to Georgakopoulou & Goutsos (2011: p.229) 'the mechanisms of discourse organization and representation, as well as [...] discourse markers and markers of interpersonal relations are based on the same principles in both literary and non literary texts'.

## Oral narratives

In this section I shall present and discuss narratives either conforming to or deviating from the canon of the typical oral narrative as proposed by Labov (1972).

### **Oral monologue: the ‘canonical’ oral narrative**

As already mentioned, a narrative conveys the development of (usually past) events. A complete narrative, in line with Labov’s narrative canon (1972: p.359 ff), includes at least two – usually more – narrative clauses, which follow the sequential presentation of past events. Such clauses form the answer to the question ‘what happened then?’. As we can see in example 1 below, this core narrative is usually framed by the following structural narrative components: *abstract* (answers the question ‘what is it about?’), *orientation* (‘who, what, when, where?’), *resolution* (‘what finally happened?’), *evaluation* (‘what does this mean?’) and *coda* which concludes the narrative and returns to the starting point of the conversation.

(1) Elli Zouroudi, a dancer, gives an interview to journalist Artemis Matsas about her experiences during the Second World War (Poulios 2011: p.356). The following autobiographical narrative emerges in the interview:<sup>4</sup>

- M: Εσείς κυρία Ζουρούδη (.) προσφέρατε πολλά στον απελευθερωτικό αγώνα της Ελλάδος .hh κατά τη διάρκεια δηλαδή του πολέμου, ε? .hh E:: (.) θέλετε (.) θυμόσατε εφιαλτικές στιγμές από τότε?
- Z: 1. Για όνομα του Θεού (.) .hh είναι δυνατόν να μη θυμάται κανείς τα βάσανά του?  
 2. (.) .hh (.) Σας είπα κύριε Μάτσα ήταν πάρα πολλά .hh Έχω κάνει τριάντα έξι  
 3. εγχειρήσεις .hh μέσα στις φυλακές .hh από φυλακή σε φυλακή ξύλο .hh (.)  
 4. πείνα .hh (.) ΨΕΙ:ΠΕΣ. .hh (.) Ήμουνα στις φυλακάς Τυρνάβου (.) δεν ήσαν  
 5. φυλακές ήτα:ν ένα μεγάλο κτίριο .hh (.) στο νοσοκομείο το ελληνικό του  
 6. στρατού: (.) έξω από τον Τύρναβο κοντά στη γέφυρα .hh Εκεί λοιπόν με

<sup>4</sup> In all the oral excerpts presented here the following transcription symbols are used (see Poulios 2011: pp.416-417):

=	latching utterances
-	self-correction
[	beginning of overlap
[ ]	simultaneous talk
(.)	brief pause
>xxx<	rapid production
.hh	inhalations during the flow of discourse
::	prolongation of a sound
.	falling intonation
,	ongoing intonation
?	rising intonation
( )	incomprehensible parts of utterances
((xxx))	clarification points made by the author (in both oral and written excerpts)
[...]	omission of utterances.

7. είχανε ρίξει για δεκα: (.) οχτώ: μή:νες ολομό:ναχη. .hhhh (.) Λοιπό:ν α:: (.) ε::
8. απέξω ήτανε ο στρατώ:νας γύρω γύρω ήταν ο στρατώνας ο ιταλικό:ς. hh (.)
9. Έρχεται λοιπόν ένας Ιταλό:ς και μου λέει σινιόρα σινιόρα απ' το παράθυρο .hh
10. της κουζίνας που ήταν γεμά:το συρματοπλεγμα. .hh Κυρία κυρία, του λέω τι:
11. θέ:λεις, να λέει σου 'φερα δώρο Χριστούγεννα σήμερα. .h [(.) .hh Λέω εγώ (.)

M:

[Ναι.

Z: 12. τι είναι? Λέει

13. ένα ωραίο πουλί να το μαγειρέ:ψεις να φας που 'ναι Χριστούγεννα. .hh Το
14. πή:ρα (.) μου 'φε- 'δωσε και κάτι ξύ:λα. .hh (.) Και::: εντωμεταξύ το 'βαλα
15. εγώ στη φωτιά:, (.) δ:- δεν έβραζε αυτό, πέρασαν κάπου δυο ώ:ρες, .hh
16. τέλειωσαν τα ξύ:λα .hh το:: (.) που:- το πουλί: δεν:: δεν ψήθηκε. Και έρχεται
17. ύστερα από δυο ώρες και μου λέει. (.) .hh Σ' άρεσε? ωραίο ήταν? Λέω μα δεν
18. μπορεί να ψηθεί. .hh Και καγχάζοντας γυρίζει και μου λέει. (.) .hhh Μα α:φού
19. ήτανε: ψό:φιο κορά:κι? (.) .hh Καταλαβαίνετε εκείνη τη στιγμή τι: έ:νιωσα.  
(Poulios 2011: pp.356-357, with simplified transcription symbols)

M: You: Mrs Zouroudi (.) offered a lot to Greece's liberation struggle .hh that is, during the war, hm? .hh Hm:: (.) would you like (.) do you recall any nightmarish moments from then?

Z: 1. For God's sake (.) .hh is it possible for one not to remember one's plights?

2. (.) .hh (.) I told you Mr Matsas there were: many. hh I have had thirty six
3. operations .hh inside the prison:s .hh from one prison to another beat:ing .hh(.
4. hun:ger .hh (.) LI:CE. .hh (.) I was in prison in Tyrna:vos (.) it was not a
5. prison it wa:s a lar:ge build:ing .hh (.) in the Greek army hospital
6. out:side Tyrnavos near the bridge .hh So, they had
7. dumped me there for eight:(.)een: mon:ths all a:lone. .hhhh (.) So: ah::: (.) eh::
8. outside were the barra:cks all around were the Italia:n barracks. hh (.)
9. So, an Italia:n ((soldier)) comes up calling signora signora through the kitchen

.h window

10. which was full: of barbed wire. .hh Madame madame, I say what:

11. do you: want, here he says to me I brought you a present it's Christmas today.  
.h [(.) .hh I say (.)

M: [Yes.

Z: 12. what is it? He says to me

13. a nice bird to coo:k for dinner as it is Christmas. .hh I
14. to:ok it (.) he brou- gave me some woo:d. hh (.) And::: in the meantime I
15. put it on the fire:, (.) it:- it did not boil, almost two hou:rs went by, .hh
16. I ran out of woo:d .hh the:: (.) that:- the bird: wasn't:: wasn't cooked. And he

comes

17. two hours later and says to me. (.) .hh Did you like it? was it nice? I say to him
18. but it cannot be cooked. .hh And chuckling he turns and says. (.) .hhh But bu:t
19. it was: a de:ad ra:ven? (.) .hh You understand how I f:elt at that moment.



In this autobiographical narrative we can identify all the structural components from Labov's canon:

- Abstract* (line 1)
- Orientation* (lines 2-8, 9-10, 15),
- Complicating Action* (lines 9, 10-15, 16-19),
- Resolution* (lines 15-16),
- Evaluation* (lines 1, 18, 19),
- Coda* (line 19)

The various linguistic choices the narrator made when performing the narrative contribute to the additional evaluation of the story. In particular, the use of the historical/narrative present tense in the complicating action (*comes, he says to me, I say to him, etc.*) in conjunction with the use of direct speech to represent the turn-taking (between the narrator-heroine of the story and the Italian soldier) underline the unexpected event of the story (see Georgakopoulou 1997), namely that the Italian soldier gave the heroine a dead raven that was impossible to boil.<sup>5</sup>

In this monological autobiographical narrative, which emerges with all its components in the asymmetrical setting of the interview, Elli Zouroudi constructs an individual identity. In other words, in the narrative world, she projects herself as a war victim (see her references to imprisonment and plights in the orientation part) humiliated by the Italian soldier (see the complicating action). Thus, her positioning is compatible with the Greek national discourse, according to which many Greeks fought for their country, suffering hardships and humiliation, but at the same time showing resilience and high morale.

### ***Oral dialogue: a-typical oral narratives***

Contrary to Labov's narrative canon (as presented in example 1), the narrative often emerges less visibly in interaction and is delivered collaboratively by more than one interlocutors (see Ochs & Capps 2001: pp.1-58, Georgakopoulou 2007: pp.33-35, pp.40-60).

#### *Co-narratives of past events*

When the events of the narrative are not a personal experience of one interlocutor but a shared experience of more interlocutors, or are already known to them, the narrative can be performed jointly by more than one of them (see e.g. Cheshire 2000). The following example is a case in point, where two close friends and classmates, A(nthi) and D(espoina), converse with S(tavroula), whom they have recently met. Specifically, they

<sup>5</sup> This analytical frame proposed by Labov will be employed again in the discussion of written newspaper articles. As we will see there, some of these components are not used by the journalists, while their order of occurrence may vary.

are recounting an incident relating to the final exam in the religion course,<sup>6</sup> during which the examiners stopped the procedure:

- (2)
- 1 A: Άσε ρε, τι μας κάνανε [θρησκευτικά:]  
2 Δ: [( ) θρησκευτικά]  
3 Σ: Τι έγινε, για πείτε μου.  
4 A: Την ώρα που γράφαμε=  
5 Δ: =μας λένε σταματήστε να γράφετε=  
6 A: =μπαίνουν μέσα και μας λένε σταματήστε να γράφετε, θα:: αλλάξει  
λέει η τελευταία σελίδα, εγώ εντωμεταξύ τα ήξερα τα θέματα, και  
λέω ρε γαμώτο λέω τι [θα μας βάλουν τώρα?]  
7 Δ: [Και 'γω αυτό σκέφτηκα, ακριβώς]  
8 A: Και [εντωμεταξύ]  
9 Δ: [Εντωμεταξύ] τα'χα γράψει εγώ τα μισά, είχα προλάβει.  
10 A: Ναι:: είχαμε πεθάνει στο άγχος μέχρι- καθίσαμε μι-, πόση ώρα? Μισή  
ώρα θα χάσαμε?  
11 Δ: Μισή ώρα ναι, γύρω στη μισή ώρα χάσαμε.  
12 A: Χάσαμε μισή ώρα τσάμπα, και μας φέρνουνε και δεν είχαν αλλάξει  
τίποτα, τι είχαν αλλάξει, μια λέξη?  
13 Δ: Είχαν αλλάξει μία λέξη, που και πάλι εγώ, δηλαδή και [που την  
άλλαξαν τα]  
14 A: [( )]  
15 Δ: ίδια θα 'γραφα, και μας λέει, όλη τη σελίδα την τελευταία να την  
κρατήσουμε έτσι, να μη [γράψουμε τίποτα]  
16 A: [Να μη γράψουμε τίποτα]  
17 Δ: και δεν αλλάξαμε τίποτα, αλλάξαμε μια λέξη μόνο, μια διευκρίνιση,  
Μια παρένθεση είχαν αλλάξει [μια διευκρίνιση και μια παρένθεση]  
18 A: [Δεν ξέρω τι είχε γίνει]  
19 Δ: και δεν άλλαξε τίποτα, αλλά λέω ότι μερικά παιδιά μπορεί να είχαν  
μπερδευτεί, εγώ πάντως το ίδιο θα 'γραφα, δεν μου:: έδωσε τίποτα.  
20 A: Μα το ίδιο ζητάγανε, το ίδιο πράγμα απλά::, δεν κατάλαβα γιατί  
αλλάξανε::, και ίσα που μας αγχώσανε.  
(author's personal data)

- 1 A: Hey dude, listen to what they did to us [religion course:]  
2 D: [( ) religion course]  
3 S: What happened, tell me.  
4 A: When we were writing our exam=  
5 D: =they say stop writing=  
6 A: =they come in and say stop writing, the:: last page will change, by the way I  
knew the answers, and I say shit what [will they give us now?]  
7 D: [That's what I thought, exactly]  
8 A: And [meanwhile]  
9 D: [Meanwhile] I'd written half the answers, I'd managed to.  
10 A: Yes:: we were stressed to death unt- we sat for ha-, how long? We

<sup>6</sup> In Greece, the Orthodox Christian religion is the official religion of the state and hence Orthodox religion courses are offered at school.

must have wasted half an hour, mustn't we?

11 D: Half an hour yes, we wasted about half an hour.

12 A: We wasted half an hour for nothing, and they bring and they had not changed anything, what had they changed, one word?

13 D: They had changed one word, which I again, that is even though [they changed it I]

14 A: [ ( ) ]

15 D: I would have written the same, and he ((the examiner)) says, all the last page to keep as it is, to [write nothing on it?]

16 A: [To write nothing]

17 D: and we didn't change anything, we changed one word only, a clarification. They'd changed a parenthesis [a clarification and a parenthesis]

18 A: [I don't know what had happened]

19 D: and nothing changed, but I say some kids may have been puzzled, but I would have written the same, it didn't:: add anything.

20 A: But they asked for the same, the same thing it's just that::, I didn't understand why they changed::, and all they did was manage to stress us.

In this example, A offers to narrate an incident regarding the final exam in the religion course at school (turn 1), while D shows her involvement and participation in the incident by overlapping A from as early as turn 2. S shows an interest by asking the two classmates to relate the incident (turn 3). Indeed, the ensuing narrative is delivered by the two classmates together, in a very interesting coordination.

As the narrative develops there are numerous and systematic repetitions during the transition from one interlocutor to the other (see Tannen 1989, Kakridi-Ferrari 1998). More specifically, the following words and phrases are repeated: *religion course* (turns 1-2), *stop writing* (turns 5-6), *meanwhile* (turns 8-9), *half an hour* (turns 10-11-12), *had changed* (turns 12-13), *one word* (turns 12-13), *write nothing* (turns 15-16).

In addition, during the transition from one co-narrator to the other many overlaps are observed: in turns 1-2 (repetition), 6-7 (statement of similar thinking), 8-9 (repetition) 13-14 (there is an incomprehensible utterance), 15-16 (repetition), 17-18 (similar utterance meaning). I consider all these overlaps cooperative rather than competitive (Tannen 1990): Each time one of the two interlocutors overlaps the other, she confirms and agrees with the words of her co-narrator and does not change the narrative development.

Finally, during the turn-taking from turn 4 to turn 5 and then to turn 6 the interlocutors produce latching utterances: D takes on from A and then A takes on from D, one continuing the narrative thread after the other.

It therefore seems that through collaborative overlaps including explicit repetitions or similar thoughts, and through latching utterances continuing the same

narrative thread, the two narrators perform a cohesive co-narration articulating their voices as one (see Norrick 2000: p.23, p.57 ff).<sup>7</sup>

Turning my attention to the way the two friends and co-narrators define themselves, I would like to point out that during the unfolding of their coordinated co-narrative they construct a common, collective student identity. Their positioning is critical towards the examination process, since teachers' exam practices are projected as unjustified and ineffective. Through their common narrative voice, the two classmates shape the identity of a student *we*, stigmatizing the inefficient examination practices of their teachers.

### *Co-narratives of future events*

Narratives such as the one in example 3 below also constitute interesting deviations from Labov's narrative canon (1972), not only because they are jointly constructed by more than one narrator, but also because they refer to *future* events. Specifically, V(*ivi*) chats with her best friend T(*onia*) about how the latter will approach the boy (Danny) she fancies. As pointed out by Georgakopoulou's (2006a, 2007) analysis that is followed here, V and T jointly construct and narrate an incident that has not yet happened:

- (3)
- 1 B: Παιδί: μου, έλα να καταστρώσουμε το σχέδιό μας τώρα=  
2 T: = Ποιο σχέ:διο παιδί μου:  
3 B: Για το Ντάνυ ρε. Θα πας ωραία και καλά και θα του πεις >γεια σου  
γεια< τι κάνεις καλά πά:με για καφέ? Άντε (.) αυτή τη βδομάδα  
που 'ναι ευκαιρία  
4 T: Γιατί: είναι ευκαιρία τώρα?  
5 B: Γιατί απ' την Πέμπτη κι έπειτα θα 'χει πολλή δουλειά που θα τελειώνει  
κι η νηστεία=  
6 T: =Ρε Βιβή: (.) δε μπορώ να πάω να του πω >γεια σου τι κάνεις καλά<  
πότε θα βγούμε δεν είναι ξεκάρφωτο?=  
7 B: =Γιατί: είναι ξεκάρφωτο παιδί μου? Θα το πας πιεστικά

- 1 V: Come on man (.) let's make our plan now=  
2 T: = What pla:n ma:n!  
3 V: For Danny man. You will go carefree and say >hi to him< what's up  
wanna go out for a coffee? Got to be done this week (.) it's a good  
opportunity.  
4 T: Why is it a good opportunity?  
5 V: Cause as for Thursday he'll be very busy with fasting coming to an  
end=  
6 T: =Vivi: man (.) I can't go up to him and say >hi what's up<  
when are we going out? Isn't it totally out of the blue?=  
7 V: =Why:: is it out of the blue man? You'll get right in there.  
(Georgakopoulou 2007: pp.155-156, with simplified transcription symbols)

<sup>7</sup>In cases where two or more interlocutors want to highlight their shared standpoints, but do not happen to share common experiences to co-narrate, they may choose to tell different stories with parallel action and/or evaluation in succession (see Blum-Kulka 1993, Norrick 1997, Sacks 1995). Thus, they reduce the social distance between them.

In turn 3 it becomes clear that the core of the narrative is not made up of a succession of past events, but of future imaginary events: *You will go carefree and say >hi to him< what's up wanna go out for a coffee?*

In addition, in turns 3 and 5 orientation details, i.e. the setting in which the narrative event takes place, are not clear, but instead negotiated between the interlocutors. In particular, T appears to doubt the appropriateness of the meeting time proposed by V (*Why is it a good opportunity?*, turn 4). This pushes V to argue for the appropriateness of the time proposed (*Cause as for Thursday he'll be very busy with fasting coming to an end*, turn 5). Then T shows her reluctance for such a meeting (*Vivi: man (.) I can't go up to him and say >hi what's up< when are we going out? Isn't it totally out of the blue?*, turn 6) which prompts V's encouragement and incitement (*Why:: is it out of the blue man? You'll get right in there*, turn 7).

Given that the narrative in example 3 refers to future events, the interlocutors are given the opportunity to 'imagine together' how the events will occur. Towards this goal point not only V's invitation to T (*Come on man (.) let's make our plan now*, turn 1) but also their negotiation regarding the place and time of the meeting and T's psychological state in view of the meeting (turns 6 and 7).

Summarizing the above observations, and relating them with the issue of identity, I would like to suggest that during the unfolding of this narrative the two co-narrators attempt to build a collective identity. A leading role in delivering the narrative is played by Vivi, who encourages Tonia to make a pass at the boy she is interested in, by proposing a female identity without inhibitions. In other words, this future co-narrative involves an extensive negotiation between the two girls because of Tonia's resistance and objections, thus attempting –without necessarily succeeding– to form a common female identity with a positive attitude towards a discourse on sexuality that wants women to claim dynamically the partner they wish, and not succumb to passive roles.

### **Written narratives**

One of the key features of written discourse is the lack of direct interaction between the author and the recipient (see Figure 1). The prototypical form of the written monologue includes genres of written narratives, such as newspaper articles.

#### **Written dialogue**

In contemporary media, interlocutors who do not coexist in space and time are given the opportunity to interact (Georgakopoulou 2006b: p.156, see also Herring 1996). Written interaction is possible via online chat, e-mail exchanges, electronic articles with comment sections, etc. (see Hoffmann 2010). In such genres supported by new technologies, diverse narrative genres may appear. For example, during the exchange of electronic messages more or less typical narratives can be identified (Georgakopoulou 2007).

Apart from being interactive, new technologies provide additional opportunities for presenting events in progress, such as a football match or a demonstration. In these new genres, narrative forms markedly deviating from Labov's canon can be identified.

*Journalistic representation of real-time events: the case of online news bulletins*

In this section, I focus my attention on representations of real-time events in specialised websites. New technologies allow readers to be informed on the development of current events by reading live text transmission (see Jucker 2010: pp.57-59).<sup>8</sup> Typical is the following news bulletin from the *Real.gr* website (2011), where the course of events in a demonstration against the financial measures taken during the current economic crisis is reported at regular and precisely defined intervals:

(4) Επεισόδια και προσαγωγές στο Σύνταγμα

5/10/2011 2:37:00 μμ

**14.35** Όπως μετέδωσε το Mega, εργαζόμενοι στο μετρό κατήγγειλαν ότι δέχτηκαν επίθεση από αστυνομικές δυνάμεις, στην είσοδο του σταθμού του Συντάγματος και μάλιστα, δύο άτομα τραυματίστηκαν.

**14.20** Σε εξέλιξη βρίσκονται αυτή την ώρα επεισόδια στην οδό Όθωνος.

**13.55** Η αστυνομία προχώρησε σε άγνωστο –μέχρι στιγμής– αριθμό προσαγωγών. Το μεγαλύτερο μέρος των διαδηλωτών έχει αποχωρήσει από την Πλατεία Συντάγματος.

**13.40** Ένταση και μικροεπεισόδια πριν από λίγο στο Σύνταγμα. Η αστυνομία απάντησε με χρήση χημικών.

**13.30** Αποχώρησαν από το σημείο του μεταλλικού φράχτη οι διαδηλωτές. Κατευθύνονται προς την Πλατεία Συντάγματος και την οδό Πανεπιστημίου.

**13.15** Ένταση αυτή την ώρα στο μεταλλικό φράχτη που έχει στήσει η αστυνομία. Δεκάδες διαδηλωτές προσπάθησαν να το ρίξουν. Οι αστυνομικοί απάντησαν, κάνοντας χρήση χημικών, προκειμένου να τους απομακρύνουν.

**12.30** Στο Σύνταγμα βρίσκεται η πορεία της ΓΣΕΕ και της ΑΔΕΔΥ. Στο σημείο παραμένουν μέλη του ΠΑΜΕ.

**12.20** Στην Πλατεία Συντάγματος, επί της οδού Αμαλίας έχουν φθάσει τα μέλη του ΠΑΜΕ. Σε λίγο ξεκινάει η πορεία της ΓΣΕΕ και της ΑΔΕΔΥ.

**12.00** Μέσω της οδού Πανεπιστημίου οι διαδηλωτές του ΠΑΜΕ κατευθύνονται στην Πλατεία Συντάγματος και τη Βουλή. Σε εξέλιξη είναι οι ομιλίες στη συγκέντρωση χιλιάδων εργαζομένων στην πλατεία Κλαυθμώνος. Ραντεβού δίνουν αυτή την ώρα μαθητές, φοιτητές, δάσκαλοι και καθηγητές στα Προπύλαια.

(*Real.gr* 2011, data collected by the author)

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<sup>8</sup> Until recently, direct transmission was only possible through radio and television, where the relevant genre of oral narrative-recording of current events flourished.

## Unrest and arrests in Syntagma square

5/10/2011 2:37:00 pm

**14.35** As reported by Mega, Metro employees alleged that they were attacked by the police at the entrance of the ((Metro)) station at Syntagma Square and, indeed, two people were injured.

**14.20** Riots in Othonos Street are currently under way.

**13.55** The police have taken an as yet unknown number of people into custody. The majority of demonstrators has left Syntagma Square.

**13.40** Tension and some unrest in Syntagma a few minutes ago. Police retaliated with teargas.

**13.30** Protesters have withdrawn from the metal fence. They are heading for Syntagma Square and Panepistimiou Street.

**13.15** Tension now next to the metal fence set up by the police. Dozens of protesters tried to bring it down. The police responded by using teargas to disperse them.

**12.30** The protest march by the GSEE ((General Confederation of Greek Workers)) and the ADEDY ((Supreme Administration of Greek Civil Servants Trade Union)) has arrived in Syntagma. Members of PAME ((All Workers Militant Front)) are still there.

**12.20** Members of PAME in Syntagma Square, on Amalias Street. The demonstration by of GSEE and ADEDY will start soon.

**12.00** Protesters of PAME are moving along Panepistimiou Street towards Syntagma Square and the Parliament. Speeches are being given to the congregation of thousands of workers in Klafthmonos Square. School and university students and teachers are congregating in front of the University ((of Athens)).



In the news bulletin of example 4 we can first observe that the title serves as a narrative abstract. However, the title can change as events unfold. While the title is *Unrest and arrests in Syntagma Square* at 5/10/2011 2:37:00 pm, it becomes *Unrest in Syntagma Square – 10 arrests* at 6/10/2011 5:59:00 am.

The narrator does not know the outcome of the events in advance, as is the case with narratives of past events. S/he is driven by the course of events when recording them and is allowed by the electronic medium to revise the original title as seen in example 4 (see also Jucker 2010: p.64, pp.74-75).

The orientation of the narrative is not explained in detail, but such knowledge is taken for granted, even though the characteristics of the recipients of the bulletin are not known. For example, it is presupposed that the readers know that *Mega* is a TV station, that the phrase *at the entrance of the station in Syntagma* refers to the Metro entrance located on Syntagma Square, the central square of Athens (at 14.35), that the term *riots* has a specific and explicit reference (at 14.20), that the acronyms GSEE, ADEDY and PAME are recognizable (at 12.20), etc. In other words, the style of the narrative is not detailed but suggestive, one could say in the form of ‘hasty notes’, as it seeks to keep up with the rapidly evolving events.

Unlike oral narratives which are produced only once unless they are (tape/video-) recorded, websites (see example 4) do not necessarily have such an ephemeral character. The reader may be informed about the events as they occur, but s/he can also

refer to them at a later stage, as the post once completed may remain available for a long time (see Jucker 2010: p.65, p.75).

Furthermore, the opportunity for interactive comments on the reported events is usually available in such contexts. However, on the webpage where example 4 comes from, this opportunity is limited, since the reader can only express whether s/he liked the post or not. This post received 7 likes  and 3 dislikes . Other webpages allow for more extensive commentary. In any case, the possibility for commenting (either limited or extensive) is given at the end of the post but does not affect its structure and content. The opportunity for many authors to contribute to an online written a narrative in a manner more or less similar to conversational co-narratives, exists mostly on websites such as Facebook (see Androutsopoulos 2010, De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012: p.122 ff, West 2013).

With regard to the projected identity in example 4, it is interesting to note here that, under the pressure of time and perhaps the policy of the news portal s/he works for, the reporter chooses to record people's relations and actions in a seemingly 'neutral' way, namely without using expressly evaluative elements (e.g. *police, policemen, police force, workers, protesters, etc.*). Therefore, it could be assumed that the reporter constructs the individual identity of an as 'objective' as possible reporter whose prime concern is to 'catch up' with the events by representing them with 'hasty notes' and by avoiding mixing the news with evaluative, ideological commentary.

### **Written monologue: newspaper articles**

Journalistic news articles are one of the most typical forms of written narrative, which exhibit some crucial similarities and differences from the oral narratives of personal experience discussed above on the basis of Labov's model of componential analysis (1972). In his analysis of news reports using Labov's (1972) model, Bell (1991) suggests that, given that the main focus of journalistic articles is to preserve the reader's interest, the succession of the reported events is not strictly followed, while use is made of repetition, recall and flashbacks. In addition, important information is placed first: The abstract component is mandatory at the beginning of the text (as a title or lead), while orientation and/or resolution components often appear at the beginning as well (see Fowler 1991: p.13 ff).

The following example 5 is an extract from a news article published in the newspaper *Ta Nea* on 10 February 2005. It is a story covering the parliamentary debate on the recruitment of civil servants; the debate took place on 9 February 2005:

- (5) Είπαν «όχι» στον ... Μαυρογιαλούρο  
Αποχώρηση των βουλευτών του ΠΑΣΟΚ κατά τη συζήτηση του νομοσχεδίου για τις προσλήψεις

Αποχώρησε χθες το ΠΑΣΟΚ από τη Βουλή, κατά τη συζήτηση του νομοσχεδίου για τις προσλήψεις στο Δημόσιο, κατηγορώντας την κυβέρνηση ότι «γυρίζει την



ελληνική κοινωνία σε παλαιολιθικές εποχές» με την καθιέρωση της προσωπικής συνέντευξης των υποψηφίων και προωθεί τα «δικά της παιδιά στο Δημόσιο».

Την ίδια ώρα η Νέα Δημοκρατία, σε μια κίνηση αντιπερισπασμού, αξιοποίησε προς όφελός της τη διχογνωμία των βουλευτών της αξιωματικής αντιπολίτευσης σχετικά με το χρονικό σημείο και την αιτία της αποχώρησής τους. «Βρείτε τα πρώτα μεταξύ σας και μετά ελάτε στη Βουλή...», σχολίαζαν.

Κατά τη συζήτηση, γράφτηκαν 117 ομιλητές και ανταλλάχτηκαν σκληρές εκφράσεις από τους βουλευτές των δύο κομμάτων, δίνοντας τέλος στη συναίνεση – η οποία υπήρξε προχθές για την εκλογή Παπούλια– που κράτησε μόλις λίγες ώρες. [...]

(Ta Nea, 9-2-2005)

They said “no” to ... Mavroyalouros<sup>9</sup>

The MPs of PASOK left the chamber during the discussion of the legislation on the recruitment of civil servants

Yesterday, PASOK ((Panhellenic Socialist Movement)) MPs walked out of Parliament during the debate on the bill for the recruitment of civil servants, accusing the government of “taking Greek society back to Palaeolithic times” with the introduction of a personal interview for candidates and of promoting “its own children in the Civil Service”. At the same time, Nea Dimocratia, as a diversion, exploited to their benefit the controversy among the members of the Opposition on the timing and cause of their departure. “((You would rather)) Agree things amongst yourselves first, and then come to Parliament...”, they were commenting.

During the discussion, 117 parliamentary deputies spoke and harsh words were exchanged between members of both parties, putting an end to the consensus – which was achieved on the day before yesterday, for the election of Papoulias ((as the President of the Hellenic Republic)) – which lasted but a few hours. [...]

(Archakis & Tsakona 2011: p.147)

After the title and subtitle functioning as an abstract, the article begins with two paragraphs which do not present the events of the complicating action in chronological order, but present the resolution first (*Yesterday, PASOK MPs ... commenting*), followed by a detailed account of what happened (*During the discussion ... hours*). Bell's observations (1991) are thus confirmed: Labov's structural components (1972) are indeed identified in newspaper articles, but in a different position and with a different function since the elements considered important are given precedence.

Interestingly, even though one would expect the outcome of the vote to be the main topic of this news bulletin, this narrative excerpt from the article emphasises the departure of PASOK from the Greek Parliament and the charges fired against the conservative government of Nea Dimocratia. Reference is also made to the comments offered by government MPs. It seems that, while constructing his/her individual identity, the journalist aligns him/herself with the newspaper's ideological and political

<sup>9</sup> Proper name of a Greek film character, which stands metonymically for ‘favoritism’.

positioning, which at the time was pro-socialist and addressed a significant portion of the PASOK electorate (see Archakis & Tsakona 2011: pp.147-148, p.150).

### **Conclusions: the main points for a four-part model of narrative genres and identities**

In this study I have attempted to present a typology of narrative genres based on Greek data. My starting point was the distinction between the narrative and the non-narrative mode. Whereas the latter emphasises various forms of information management, the former emphasises the sequence of events through an evaluative perspective. I then exploited the distinction between dialogue and monologue as a continuum intersected by an orality/literacy continuum. Using the four resulting parts that map the universe of discourse, I classified and analysed the following narrative genres from a textual, interactive and functional perspective:

- In *oral monologue* I discussed monological narratives emerging in interview settings and presenting the complicating action as well as the other components identified by Labov (1972).
- In *oral dialogue* I referred to narratives jointly performed by the interlocutors, especially when the narratives refer to common experiences of the past or to future plans.
- As part of the *written dialogue* I highlighted the opportunities for interactive communication offered by new technologies. I identified some interactive opportunities in the online news bulletin examined here. However, the most interesting feature of this genre is that it allows the real-time transmission of unfolding events.
- Last, in *written monologue*, where the recipient cannot interact with the author, I discussed monological narratives in the form of news articles. It appears that news articles present the most important information at their beginning in order to attract readers.

With regard to the potential for identity construction in the context of the narrative genres examined here, the following conclusions could be made: The symmetry of relations between the interlocutors and the absence of social distance between them, mainly in the interactive environments of conversational narratives, offers the opportunity for constructing collective identities. Typical examples are the co-construction of the identity of the collective student-we witnessed in example 2, and the identity of the (dynamic) female claiming her male counterpart in example 3. On the contrary, the construction of primarily individual identities is preferred when the relations between the interlocutors are asymmetrical and social distance exists between them, such as in (oral or written) monological narratives. Typical is the identity Elli Zouroudi constructs in her autobiographical narrative as a member of the Greek resistance in the Second World War (example 1). The same holds for the journalist working for the newspaper *Ta Nea* who promotes specific political views (example 5). It should be noted here that such views might be accepted by, and appeal to, the wider audience, thus contributing to the formation of a collective identity. At websites offering

limited interactive options, identities can also –but not necessarily– be individual, such as the one of the ‘neutral’ journalist as a ‘hasty’ recorder of reality in example 4. However, in sophisticated online environments, such as Facebook, there are extensive interactive opportunities that bring participants closer together and allow for the construction of collective identities.

The following Figure 2 summarizes the above mentioned findings:

**Figure 2: Narrative genres and identities in the proposed four-part model**

<p><b>a) oral monologue;</b> Big, monological, autobiographical narratives Asymmetrical relationships, social distance Individual identities</p>	<p><b>b) oral dialogue;</b> Small/fragmented, conversational co-narratives Symmetrical relationships, absence of social distance Collective identities</p>
<p><b>d) written monologue;</b> Big, monological, newspaper articles Asymmetrical relationships, (absence of) social distance Individual(/Collective) identities</p>	<p><b>c) written dialogue;</b> Small/fragmented, online narratives (e.g. news bulletins, written co- narratives on Facebook) (A)symmetrical relationships, (absence of) social distance Individual(/Collective) identities</p>

Functioning both as an (oral or written) text and as a social-interactive practice, narratives offer interlocutors opportunities for diverse and complex identity positionings. However, the extracts selected for discussion in no way cover all the narrative genres and opportunities for the narrative construction of identities. For example, articles in the press and journalistic written monologues in general exhibit more generic variation than the news articles examined here. Moreover, since the analysed extracts come from Greek narrative data, they might be culturally biased with regards both to their structure (cf. dramaticity, joint performance) and to the opportunities for identity construction. Greek society has an in-group cultural orientation and a tendency for collective identity construction (see Sifianou 1992, Triandis & Vassiliou 1972). Thus, a comparison with societies of different cultural orientation (e.g. with Northern European or North American cultures which present a more individualistic orientation, see Hofstede et al. 2010, Sidiropoulou 2008) could lead to interesting cross-cultural findings as well as to the re-evaluation of the heuristic potential of the proposed four-part model.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, given that the new media is not limited to the oral and written medium but exploits the visual medium as well (see Kress & van Leeuwen 1996), an interesting research question would involve how the proposed four-part model could be further

<sup>10</sup> For instance, Tannen (1980: 54) has found that (North)Americans are more objective in their narrative reporting of events whereas Greeks use a more dramatic style (see also Archakis & Tzanne 2009: 343).

elaborated so as to accommodate multidimensional and filmic storytelling (Hoffmann 2010, Georgakopoulou 2013).

Despite such limitations, I consider that the four-part model introduced here could constitute a first step towards the creation of a flexible and effective heuristics for the investigation of narrative genres and their (textual, interactive and functional) characteristics as resources for identity construction.

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**Argiris Archakis** is Associate Professor of Discourse Analysis and Sociolinguistics in the Department of Philology at the University of Patras in Greece, where he has been working since 1997. He has carried out research and published extensively on the analysis of various discourse genres, such as youth conversational narratives, classroom discourse, parliamentary discourse, and media discourse as well as on (adult) students' literacy. He is co-author of the book *The Narrative Construction of Identities in Critical Education* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) with V. Tsakona.