Standardized relational pairs in interviews with former slaves: construction, negotiation and alignment

Dorien Van De Mieroop (University of Leuven)¹

Jonathan Clifton (University of Lille 3)

Abstract

We investigate the use of standardized relational pairs (SRPs) and the way narrators align with these in two interviews with former slaves which were conducted in the 1940s. In particular, we look at stories in which slaves are compared to animals, thus not only invoking the SRP master/slave, but also the SRP owner/property. On the one hand, the interviewees negotiate their alignment with the ‘slave-property’-part of the SRP depending on the type of story that is told, which is based on the narrator’s personal involvement. On the other hand, the slave owners remain noticeably absent throughout these stories and by rendering this part of the SRP almost invisible, the development of another SRP, namely that of perpetrator/victim, is avoided. As such, through these SRPs, the hegemonic order of the slave system is (re)constructed in these stories, while the interviewees’ shifting alignment with them shows an orientation to personal face concerns.

Keywords: standardized relational pairs, narrative, interviews, slaves, identity, moral order

¹ Requests for further information should be directed to Dorien Van De Mieroop, University of Leuven, Faculty of Arts, Blijde Inkomststraat 21 P.O. Box 3308, BE-3000 Leuven, Belgium. E-Mail: Dorien.VanDeMieroop@arts.kuleuven.be

Introduction

Sacks (1972a, p.37) points out that categories-in-talk often come in standardized relational pairs (SRPs) such as teacher/student, cop/robber, master/slave and that such pairs constitute “a locus for a set of rights and obligations”. Thus, whilst Sacks’ (1972b) seminal article on categories, *‘The baby cried. The mommy picked it up’*, does not specifically talk about SRPs, nevertheless, it is the mother of the crying baby who picks it up because she has the moral obligation and right to do so. By defining the relationships between categories, a moral order becomes apparent since who can do what to whom, when and where is defined through the operation of such SRPs: teachers can correct students but not vice versa, cops can arrest robbers but not vice versa and so on. Moreover, refining Sacks’ notion of SRPs, Jayyusi (1984, p.123) points out that SRPs can be asymmetrical which occasions a contrastive organization of rights, obligations and duties. Such SRPs are pervasive and can be seen in operation as they are constructed in talk.

More specifically, this article looks at the way SRPs function in narratives of slavery. The SRP master/slave is, of course, an obvious example of an asymmetrical SRP because the slave has no rights at all in relation to the master. Even though the exact legal definition of slaves and slavery during the ante-bellum period depended from state to state, this asymmetrical SRP is nicely reflected in Goodwell’s definition, since he summed it up as the “fundamental idea of modern slaveholding, namely the assumed principle of human chattlehood, or property in man; casting the relation of owner and property – of master and slave” (Goodwell 1853: 23). This quote thus invokes two SRPs, namely owner/property and master/slave, which define the essentials of the ante-bellum chattel system of slavery. Within this system, slaves were reduced to property, were treated like animals rather than humans, were bought and sold, and exploited as ‘beasts of burden’. The moral philosophy that propped

up this social system therefore reflected the Aristotelian creed that slaves were not much different from domestic animals and thus 'by nature' lesser humans should be under the rule of a master (Aristotle 2000).

The purpose of this article is thus to analyze how these SRPs master/slave and owner/property are negotiated in slave narratives. In order to do that, we focused on two interviews with former slaves (see data description below) in which one particular way of presenting the slave is salient, namely that of the slave-as-animal. We chose to focus on this comparison because it clearly foregrounds the 'inhuman' nature of the slaves, who, just as domestic animals, were regarded as property. So by using this comparison, the narrators implicitly invoke the SRP owner/property. Moreover, it could also invoke a third SRP, namely that of the perpetrator/victim, since by stressing that they were treated as animals, the narrators may foreground the bad treatment they received, thus qualifying themselves as victims and the slave owners as 'bad masters', or perpetrators. This would thus put the SRP on a moral axis between right and wrong (cf Schiffrin, 2002, p.342), which would be in line with slave narratives that were used in the abolitionist movement to support political goals (cf Whooley, 2006). Of course, whether or not this third SRP is foregrounded depends to a large extent on the way these SRPs are formulated and negotiated in the data under study. So in this article we take a rigorously discursive perspective, thus we do not seek to perpetuate or argue with concepts of 'natural moral orders' which are used to support or counter social orders, and in which language is considered to be little more than a resource for articulating knowledge of pre-existing social structures. Instead, we take a social constructionist perspective, which gives language a much more central position, i.e. "language is not a transparent medium for conveying thought, but actually constructs the world and the self in the course of its use" (Wetherell and Maybin, 1996, p.220).

So we are concerned with the discursive construction and negotiation of these SRPs in relation to the identity work of the narrator, who, as a former slave, is of course an involved party in the construction of these SRPs. Also here, we take a broadly social constructionist view to identity which, rather than focusing on an essentialist version of the self, focuses on the way in which identities are negotiated within a particular social practice and are “talked into being” thus resulting in “a number of contextual selves” (Wetherell and Maybin, 1996, p.223). So in our analyses, we not only look at the way these slave-as-animal comparisons are introduced in the stories and how they are interactively constructed, foregrounded, or downplayed, but we also focus on the way the narrators negotiate their alignment with the group of slaves, particularly when the slave-as-animal comparison is talked into being. Furthermore, attention is paid to the way the other pair part, namely that of the master-owner, is being set up and how it is talked into being, potentially as an antagonistic party which would then construct a dichotomous world view (cf Leudar et al., 2004).

Next to that, and returning to the fact that our data consist of narratives obtained through interviews, we not only focus on the way these SRPs are constructed by the interviewee, but also on how these are interactively constructed and negotiated by all the interlocutors. As such, we clearly take an interactional view on these narratives (cf De Fina, 2009, p.237), in which the interviewers are regarded as “active co-tellers” (Ochs and Capps, 2001, p.21) who contribute significantly to the construction of meaning (cf Holstein and Gubrium, 2003). Such an interactional approach has two significant consequences. First, as Bamberg (2004, p.365) points out, interviews “are no innocent windows into participants’ interiors” and therefore they do not consist of a process of asocially accessing memory that is ‘in there somewhere’ and which will give a ‘truthful’ account of a social system that was ‘out there somewhere’. And second, people do not “*have* a sense of self as first located in the person and subsequently locatable in their stories” (Bamberg, 2008, p.184) but rather

narratives provide a situated space in which identity work is carried out. This is also the case in big stories, which are defined as “narratives, often derived from interviews (...), that entail a significant measure of reflection on either an event or experience, a significant portion of a life, or the whole of it” (Freeman, 2006a, p.132). This characteristic of reflection of course “creates the occasion for self-regard and editing” (Linde, 1993, p.105) and potentially results in a relatively ordered account (partially) blurring the chaotic nature of life (Freeman, 2007), but since a big story’s main aim is “not to reproduce reality but to actualize and explicate it” (Freeman, 2006b, p.136), our aim is thus to look at the identity work that is done in the here-and-now of narrating the story and interacting with the interviewers.

Finally, such identity work in the narrative process discursively constructs a particular moral order that is made up of rights and obligations of the characters in the stories vis-à-vis each other and so the narrative process (re)constructs a recognizable social order. The social order it (re)constructs in the here and now of the interview is not (re)created in a social vacuum and is best understood by contextualizing it in the historical milieu in which it arises. In short, as Whooley (2006, p.312) states, “stories speak not just to the past; they are also directed toward the political context of the present in which they are told”. Therefore the social order enacted in the narrative is not a ‘truthful’ version of slavery ‘as it was’ but it is a historically and socially situated (re)construction of slavery as viewed from the present (cf Van De Mieroop et al., 2007). Returning then to the issue of SRPs; through analyzing the identity work of former slaves, and their interviewers, and the SRPs that such identity work makes relevant, we can begin to understand how slavery as a moral and social order is (re)constructed in talk.

Data

Slave narratives in the form of written accounts of slave life were a popular and recognizable genre of ante-bellum literature. However, Phillips' (1918; 1929) influential, yet apologist, histories of slavery ignored these accounts on the grounds that "ex-slave narratives in general (...) were issued with so much abolitionist editing that as a class their authenticity is doubtful" (Phillips 1963: 219). However, as Yetman (1967) points out, after the First World War, a convergence of several intellectual trends such as the rise of interest in Negro culture and the increasing popularity of social sciences such as anthropology and sociology "fostered a climate receptive to efforts to obtain personal testimonies concerning ante-bellum slave life" (1967, p. 540). Consequently, from the late 20s to the 40s, several projects (see Yetman (1967) for a detailed description of these projects) set out to obtain testimonies of slave life. The most famous of these was the Federal Writers Project which between 1936 and 1938 carried out over 2,000 interviews. However, due to the complexities of audio-recording at that time, many of these interviews exist only as transcripts. Consequently, as various researchers observe (e.g. Blassingame, 1975; Covey and Lockman, 1996; Vann Woodward, 1991), they were open to manipulation and editorial changes. Moreover, their reliability and accuracy has also been questioned. Yetman (1984) sums up these criticisms as follows: First, the interviewees' age and distance from events may have affected their ability to accurately recall the events they described. Second, the interviews were collected at a time of abject poverty for the black community and this could have meant that slavery was, from the perspective of depression, recast as 'the good times'. Third, the fact that the former slaves were interviewed (often by whites) in a racially divided Deep South in which institutional racism was enacted in law meant that the interviewees' responses might have been less than candid and the former slaves might have simply told the (predominately) white interviewers what they wanted to hear (see also Escott, 1991, p.41-42). Consequently, the use of such interview data as a 'truthful' account of slavery is open to debate.

However, from a linguistic perspective, we are not concerned with probing the data in the hopes that it will reveal some kind of prediscursive ‘truth’ (cf Atkinson and Delamont, 2006) about what it is like to be a slave. We are concerned with how the interview is enacted as an interactional event and how stories of slavery are dialogically constructed to present situated versions of slave society and the people who inhabited it. In order to gain access to the in situ construction of these stories, it was therefore necessary to have access to audio-recorded data rather than potentially unreliable and edited transcripts. Therefore, the data for this article comes from narratives held in the American Folklife Center’s Archive of Folk Cultureⁱ which fulfilled the criteria of both being audio-recorded and making reference to chattel slavery by comparing slaves to cattle or animals. More specifically, we perused the entire corpus of approximately seven hours of audio-recorded interviews with over twenty former slaves and then selected two interviews for analysis that made frequent reference to slave-as-animal.

The first interview, which is about 29 minutes long, was recorded in Baltimore, Maryland in 1949. Fountain Hughes, an ex-slave, is interviewed by Hermond Norwood, his nephew. Hermond Norwood is described as working as an engineer for the Library of Congress at the time of the interview but the purpose of the recording remains obscure. The second interview analyzed in this paper, lasting about 50 minutes, was recorded in Hampstead, Texas, in 1941. John Henry Faulk (referred to as IR1) and an unknown female interviewer (referred to as IR2) speak to Laura Smalley, an ex-slave. Faulk was a lecturer at the University of Texas who had an interest in African American folklore and who thus made recordings for his research purposesⁱⁱ. So as mentioned above, in both interviews frequent comparisons between slaves and animals occur and thus these interviews provide a good corpus for gaining insight into the emic construction of the SRPs master/slave and owner/property.

Before starting our analyses, we refined the transcripts available online by adding notation symbols typical of conversation analytic studies (cf Antaki, 2002) in order to render the interviews more amenable to fine-grained analysis. Thus we tried to capture as many paralinguistic features of the interviews as possible in order to obtain a close record of these two pieces of interaction so that we could gain a thorough insight into the way these narratives were constructed and performed in collaboration with the interviewers.

Analyses

We divided the analyses of the fragments in which the slaves are compared with animals and the SRP master/slave is talked into being, in three parts based on the degree of personal involvement of the interviewee in the stories that are being narrated. We mainly decided to use this way of structuring the analyses because this element typically has implications regarding the interviewees' alignments and identification with the groups that are being talked about. As such, it is also easier to draw comparisons within and between the fragments that are being discussed here.

Stories with limited or no personal involvement

We start our analyses by focusing on a number of stories in which the interviewees were not involved in the action that is described. Instead, they know the stories because of hearsay or because they were a witness to the events. The first two extracts concern the selling of slaves, which neither interviewees underwent themselves. The first fragment is taken from the interview with Fountain Hughes.

Fragment 1 (Hughes)

- 211 IE We were ↑slaves. We belonged to people.
- 212 They'd sell us like they sell horses and
- 213 cows (.) and hogs and all like that. Have
- 214 er a auction bench (.) and er put you on (.)
- 215 up on the bench and bid on you just same
- 216 as you bidding on cattle you know.
- 217 IR Was that in Charlottes that you were a slave?
- 218 IE ↑ uh
- 219 IR Was that in Charlottes (.) or Charlottesville?
- 220 IE That was in Charlottesville
- 221 IR Charlottesville Virginia?
- 222 IE Selling women and selling menⁱⁱⁱ

In response to the interviewer's question 'When you were a slave, who did you work for', Hughes gives an extended reply which covers several aspects of slave life and then towards the end of his turn, he shifts to the topic 'what it was like being a slave'. In line 211, the interviewee uses the 'we'-form to foreground his self-identification with the slaves thus generalising the experience and stressing collectivity. He then makes the SRP master/slave explicit by stating that 'we belonged to people' (line 211) and so the story evoking the SRP master/slave talks-into-being a storyworld based on the dichotomy of master and slave identities whose relation is immediately qualified in terms of property. Whilst the interviewee aligns with the identity slave, the masters, forming the other part of the SRP, are described as 'people'. On the one hand, this is a vague reference, while on the other hand, through the opposition within the SRP, the implication is that the slaves' identity is dehumanized. And in the following lines, through the use of the third person plural pronoun *they*, the owners are

still left vague ('They'd sell us like they sell horses', lines 212). Moreover, in the following lines the agent is obscured by the fact that the subject is dropped before the verbs 'have', 'put', and 'bid' ('have er a auction bench (.) and er put you on (.) up on the bench and bid', lines 213 ff.). And then a generic 'you' is used ('you bidding on cattle', line 216) which further fudges the issue of who the agents are.

On the other hand the slaves, and the interviewees' identification with the slaves, is made explicit through pronoun use ('we', line 211 and 'us', line 212) as they are equated to animals: 'horses, cows, hogs and all like that' (lines 212-213). However, even though the interviewee initially aligns with the identification of slaves-as-animals, this later becomes more nuanced. First, the interviewee shifts from the 'us' - and 'we'-pronouns and moves to a second person 'you' ('put you on (.) up on the bench ad bid on you', lines 214-215). The interviewee thus distances himself directly from the identity slave by showing that the 'you' is a universal generic person. Significantly, in the following ('just same as you bidding on cattle', lines 215-216), he uses the generic 'you' to refer to the bidders which not only sidesteps the issue of who was doing the bidding but the SRP 'sold and seller' is merged through the use of this second person pronoun which "can have an indefinite reading - and thus, does not generally include the speaker in its scope" (Schiffrin, 2000, p.16), thus blunting the operation of the SRP slave-as-animal and master. The interviewer then introduces a new question which presents a stepwise topic shift away from the selling of slaves to a geographically oriented discussion of the interviewee's personal life as a slave. After a repeated question (line 219), the interviewee answers this question thus ratifying the topic change, but after the interviewer's follow-up question (line 221), the interviewee provides an irrelevant response in which he returns abruptly to the previous topic, in which he reframes the slaves in the story as people ('selling women and selling men', line 222). By maintaining the storyline of selling slaves but substituting humans for animals, the interviewee

foregrounds the problematic nature of this action, since selling animals can be morally justified whereas selling human beings cannot.

A highly similar story occurs in the interview with Laura Smalley:

Fragment 2 (Smalley)

- 242 IR1 Well, do you remember=remember
243 any of the slaves being sold? Do you
242 remember any slave sellers, you
243 know, men that would just buy and
244 sell slaves?
- 255 IE No, sir. I never did see it. Why I
256 never, us children never did know
257 that, you know. We heard talk of it,
258 but then I reckon that was after
259 (.3) after slavery I reckon.
- 260 IR1 °uhum°
- 261 IE °We heard talk of it° (.) I used to hear
262 them talk about, you know, you
263 putting them on stumps, you know.
264 Or something high, you know and
265 bidding them off like you did cattle.
- 266 IR1 uhum
- 267 IE Bid them off like you did cattle.

In line 242, the interviewer initiates a story about slavemarkets. In this story the interviewee distances herself from the slaves being sold and identified as animals. First, she does this by the use of second-hand knowledge and her lack of direct knowledge is emphasised by the repetitions of 'never' ('never did see it, why I never, us children never did know that', line 255 ff.). On the other hand, she states that 'we heard talk of it' (line 257) which clearly presents her information as hearsay. This distance in access to information is further underlined by the epistemic modifier 'I reckon' and the temporal indication suggesting an important time lapse between the events and the stories ('after slavery', line 259).

Significantly, the interviewee identifies with children ('us children', line 256) rather than the slaves. In lines 262 ff., she describes the sale of slaves and, as with Fountain Hughes, the agent is left vague. First the agent is a generic 'you' which keeps the first part of the SRP master/slave vague and thus neutralises responsibility for the action ('you putting them on stumps', line 262-263 and 'like you did cattle', line 265 and line 267). Second, through a process of nominalisation, ('bidding them off', line 265), the agent is removed from the act. Third, the subject is dropped before the verb ('bid them off like you did cattle', line 267). Thus, as with Fountain Hughes, strategies for obscuring the master identity of the SRP master/slave are employed. Consequently, whilst the interviewee constructs the identities of slaves as animals, she distances herself from this (1) temporally, (2) by downgrading her knowledge to hearsay and belief rather than first-hand knowledge, and (3) by aligning with the group of children rather than that of the slaves who are being sold.

The similarities in the formulation of these two stories indicate that they are shared stories commonly told among the slaves, as is also explicitly referred to by the second interviewee. Since both interviewees were not personally involved, it is not very surprising that they both negotiate their personal alignment with the group of slaves, but it is interesting that the explicit identification of the master-part of the SRP is left vague. The third fragment

is similar to the previous ones since it also presents a story in which the interviewee was not involved personally. Interestingly, it is now the interviewer who introduces the comparison between slaves as chattel which can be bought, bred and sold.

Fragment 3 (Smalley)

- 967 IR2 What about er, joining that er (.5)
968 business of er er taking=hiring some
969 of the Negroes, the good hands, you
970 know. Good women, good men,
971 going off and breeding them like
972 cattle. Do you remember anything
973 about that?
- 974 IE No. I didn't know, you see, they
975 wouldn't let children know of that,
976 you know. But I heard it after. [After]
- 977 IR2 [uhu]
- 978 IE that they'd do that. >But you see when
979 we was coming up they wouldn't let
980 know nothing about nothing like that,
981 but they say that was sure so <(.) You
982 know, just like a big, fine, looking
983 woman, big, fine, looking man, you
984 know. Old boss wants (.) you know,
985 children's farm, you know. They just
986 (.) fasten them up in a house or

987 somewhere. You know, go on off,
 988 leave them in there. Want to breed
 989 them like they was hogs or horses,
 989 something like that, I say.
 990 (.5)
 991 IR1 That sounds like it.
 992 IE Yes, sir.
 993 IR2 °°Sure does sound like it all right°°.
 994 IE And they say that's the way they used
 995 to do (.5) °in slavery time°.

In line 967, the interviewer introduces the frame of slave-as-animal. However, her identity work is slightly nuanced in terms of constructing the slaves as animals. On the one hand the interviewer describes the slaves in human terms ('good women, good men', line 970) but on the other hand the verbs ('taking and hiring', line 968) stress the position of the slaves as a commodity who are qualified on the basis of their usefulness ('the good hands', line 969). This is reinforced by the use of the verb 'breeding', which typically collocates with animals, and this is also explicitly expressed by the interviewer ('cattle', line 972). Furthermore, the noun phrase 'the business of' (line 968) again stresses the slaves' position as commodities. The interviewee's response to this question is also somewhat nuanced and cannot be seen as complete alignment with the animal comparison within the SRP master/slave. First, as seen in the previous extract, the interviewee uses a distancing device, that of hearsay, to distance herself from the story. This is achieved through prefacing her turn with an epistemic downgrade ('I don't know', line 974) and then identifying herself with the group of children ('we was coming up', line 979) and not with the slaves that were being bred. She also states:

‘I heard it after’ (line 976) and ‘they say that was sure so’ (line 981) which clearly puts the story in the realm of hearsay rather than personal experience and this further distances herself, also temporally, from alignment with the slaves in the story and constructs the interviewee as an uncommitted bystander (cf Schifffrin, 2002).

The story of breeding the slaves, as in the previous two extracts, sets up the slave-part of the SRP master/slave but the master-part initially remains vague. In the first part of the story, there is only one vague reference to the slave owners by means of the third person plural pronoun (‘they’d do that’, line 978). The slave-as-animal identity is further explored since, in lines 982 and following, she describes the slaves as ‘just like a big, fine, looking woman, big, fine, looking man’. This on the one hand seems to reflect a positive evaluation of these slaves and it seems to construct identities that are human instead of animal, while on the other hand, within this local context, it also presents a qualification of the slaves regarding their sexual compatibility (woman, man) and their features (big, fine, looking) interesting for their breeding potential. Then in line 984, the first part of the SRP master/slave is explicitly mentioned (‘old boss’) which foregrounds the master as the initiator of the action and volitional agent (as expressed by means of the volitional verb ‘want’). However, in the subsequent lines, this part of the SRP is immediately obscured again by using the same strategies as discussed before. Thus, in line 985, ‘they’ is used to obscure the agent and in line 987, the agent is dropped three times from the utterance (‘go on off, leave them in there, want to breed them’, line 987-989). As a conclusion of this topic, the interviewee then finally mirrors the interviewer’s construction of the slave-as-animal identity by drawing the comparison with hogs and horses (line 989). Interestingly, although no subject is made explicit, the volitional modal auxiliary verb ‘want’ is retained in the utterance thus clearly expressing that it was the slave master’s will to breed the slaves and, in this particular context, to dehumanize the slaves to animals. This thus mirrors the only utterance with an explicit

reference to the master-part of the SRP (line 984-985). This construction of the slave-as-animal is then mitigated, first by means of a hedge in the subsequent line ('something like that', line 989) and then, after two topical conclusions by the two interviewers (lines 991 and 993), of which the first is corroborated by the interviewee ('and they say that's the way they used to do', line 992), by means of another reference to the limited epistemic access the interviewee had to the story by repeating that she knows it only by hearsay.

So, as in the previous two extracts, the interviewee distances herself from the identity slave-as-animal and the other pair part (master) remains mainly obscure except for one explicit reference. The first observation is not so surprising given the limited role of the interviewees in the stories, which was maximally that of a witness. We now go into the discussion of the way these identities are negotiated when the personal involvement of the interviewee increases.

Collective involvement in post-Civil War stories

When discussing the early post-Civil War period, both interviewees refer to the way the slaves were set free by means of a highly similar animal comparison that is part of a collocation with the verb 'to turn out'. The first example comes from the middle of a turn by the interviewee in which he is talking about the living conditions of the slaves who had just been freed.

Fragment 4 (Hughes)

- 316 IE We didn't have nothing only just er
317 like your cattle, we were just turned out
318 (.) and e:r get along the best you could.

319 Nobody to look after us.
320 Well, we been slaves all our lives.
321 My mother was a slave, my sisters was slaves,
322 father was a slave.

The fragment starts with a statement about the slaves' lack of personal property in which the interviewee identifies with the group of slaves, as is shown by means of the first person plural pronoun 'we' (line 316) that stresses collectivity. After a short hesitation, the interviewee links this to the way the slaves were freed, without marking this relation explicitly as causal. This liberation is described by the introduction of an animal comparison, which is formulated in a generic way, as the second person pronoun 'your' indicates ('like your cattle', line 317), but which is also immediately linked the interviewee's in-group of slaves ('we', line 317). This animal comparison is then further elaborated upon by describing the action of liberating the slaves by means of the verb 'to turn out', which not only typically collocates with animals, but which also highlights the passive role of the slaves in the process, thus implicitly foregrounding their role as property within the SRP owner/property. By using the passive voice in this sentence, all reference to the agents of this action is avoided and the patients, and, more particularly, their qualification as cattle, is foregrounded. So, through use of the passive, the master-owner implicit in the use of the slave-part of the SRP is noticeably absent. After a brief pause, the interviewee then provides an and-prefaced continuation, which is thus constructed as relevant and coherent in the given context (Heritage and Sorjonen, 1994). After another hesitation, the interviewee then shifts to a general perspective again, as indicated by the use of the generic 'you'-form (line 318) to describe the post-Civil War period's living conditions in which a certain amount of agency is attributed to the slaves. In the next line, however, the interviewee repairs this footing shift by using first person plural references again

(‘us’ in line 319, ‘we’, ‘our’ in line 320) and he presents this group of slaves as passive recipients of potential help again, thus reframing his utterance back into the structure of the slave system and implicitly also evaluating the latter in a positive light. However, the master-owner is still absent from this implied SRP since ‘nobody to look after us’ leaves the agent vague. As the presence of the coherence building discourse marker ‘well’ (Schiffrin, 1987, p.126) in the beginning of the subsequent utterance indicates, line 319 is then linked to, or even accounted for by means of, an explicit collective categorization of the interviewee as a former slave. As a way of closing this topic, the category incumbents other than the interviewee are then explicitly listed which thus frames the referent of this collective group as family based. So in this fragment, the interviewee presents the liberation of the slaves in terms of ‘cattle that is turned out’ and aligns with the slave-part of the SRP, of which the collective referent in the end turns out to be family based. A fairly similar use of this animal comparison occurs in the liberation story by Laura Smalley, as the following fragment illustrates.

Fragment 5 (Smalley)

266 IE We didn’t know where to ↑go
 267 >Mama and them didn’t know where
 268 to go, you see after freedom broke.
 269 Just turned= just like you turn
 270 something out, you know<
 271 Didn’t know where to go (.)
 272 That’s just where they stayed
 273 IR2 Uh huh. [°°That’s right°°].
 274 IE [erm]

275 °Didn't know where to go° (.)
 276 Turned us out just like, you know,
 277 you turn out cattle. ((*laugh*)) £I'd say£.
 278 Didn't know where ta go.

In this fragment, the interviewee accounts for her family staying on the plantation even after the Civil War ended and the slaves were liberated. The interviewee initiates this account by stressing the slaves' lack of knowledge by using a collective footing ('we', line 266), but then repairs this in-group pronoun to the explicit referents ('Mama and them', line 267), thus downplaying her personal involvement with the slave-part of the SRP and implicitly constructing her role as a bystander. The interviewee continues by introducing the verb 'to turn out', which, as observed before, typically collocates with animals. As such, an implicit animal comparison is constructed already in line 269, but that is initially framed as a depersonalization of the slaves, who are compared to objects ('something', line 270), thus clearly setting up the SRP owner/property. In the rest of this turn, the interviewee maintains an impersonal footing by means of an agentless sentence (line 271) and the distancing third person plural reference 'they' (line 272). After the interviewer's minimal response, the interlocutors briefly overlap, but the interviewee continues with a silently produced repetition of the previous subjectless utterance of line 271. After a brief pause, she re-initiates the description of the liberation by means of the verb to turn out, but now she aligns with the group of slaves again, as the first person plural pronoun 'us' (line 276) indicates and, since the verb phrase 'turned us out' has no subject, the first part (i.e. master) of the SRP master/slave is not explicitly referred to. Furthermore, she elaborates on the characterization of the patient of this verb as 'cattle' (line 277), which is thus linked to the in-group of slaves as it was implicitly established in the previous line. This is immediately hedged by means of laughter

and the downplaying statement ‘I’d say’ (line 277), which is also spoken in a laughing voice. Finally, the interviewee repeats the subjectless version of her opening statement, thus again repairing her alignment of line 276. It is interesting to observe that throughout this fragment the interviewee’s reference to and alignment with the group of slaves is negotiated, while the other part of the SRP, namely the slave owners, who are present here as the agents of the activity of freeing the slaves, is, in a way, absent since these are consistently being referred to by the impersonal ‘you’-form (lines 269 and 277) or they are simply deleted from the sentence (‘turned us out’, line 276). Both the interviewee’s negotiation regarding her partial alignment with the group of slaves, the many reformulations before actually voicing the animal comparison and the subsequent laughter and hedge, indicate the problematic, face threatening nature of the construction of a relation between the interviewee, slaves and animals.

So in this section, the highly similar formulation of the animal comparison and collocation with the verb ‘to turn out’ underlines the shared nature of these stories and implicitly sets up the master-owner/slave-property SRP. Furthermore, the slave owners are noticeably absent in both fragments, while there is a bit of variation in the way the slaves are presented as a collective group and how and to what extent the interviewees align with this group.

Negotiating involvement in narratives of highly individual personal experience

There are also some fragments in the two interviews in which animal comparisons appear in stories in which the interviewees play a significant role on a personal level. The following excerpt is an example of such a story that emerges within a lengthy turn by the interviewee which initially focused on the names of the slave owners of the interviewee’s grandfather, but

then, by means of stepwise topic shifts, gradually moved to the discussion of the interviewee's daily life as a slave.

Fragment 6 (Hughes)

351 IE Now (.5) if er (.2) if my master
352 wanted send me (.5) he never say (.)
353 you couldn't get a horse and ride (.)
354 You walk, you know, you walk. And
355 you be barefooted (.) and (cold).
356 That didn't make no difference.
357 You wasn't no more than a dog to some of
358 them in them days. You wasn't treated
359 as good as they treat dogs now (.)
360 But still I didn't like to talk about it.
361 Because it makes (.) makes people feel bad
362 °you know° (.) We:ll, I, I could say a whole lot
363 I don't like to say.
364 And I won't say a whole lot more.

In the two initial lines of the story, the two protagonists of the story are foregrounded: on the one hand, the master is explicitly mentioned (line 351), while on the other hand, the interviewee refers to himself ('me', line 352). By the addition of the first person possessive pronoun 'my' to 'master' in line 351, and the personal reference in line 352, the interviewee links himself to the slave owner and thus explicitly sets up the two parts of the SRP master/slave. Furthermore, this initial sentence is quite emblematic for the type of relation

between these two protagonists: while the master is the agent of the sentence who expresses his own will through the volitional verb ‘wanted’ (line 352), the slave is presented as the passive recipient of the agent’s volition. Interestingly, this initial part of the story is characterized by a personal footing and as such, the story is explicitly framed as a narrative of personal experience which is presented in a direct, first hand, way. This directness seems to be retained since after a brief pause, the introductory “pronoun and a *verbum dicendi*” (Clift and Holt, 2007, p.5) seems to lead to the insertion of direct reported speech – in this case of the type that is ‘never’ formulated, which is not at all atypical (cf Tannen, 1989). However, after another pause, the projected “constructed dialogue” (Tannen, 1989) is not initiated and instead, the interviewee changes footing to an impersonal perspective, as the use of the generic ‘you’-form illustrates (cf Timor and Landau, 1998).

By using this form, the interviewee not only distances himself from the events, but he also gives them a generalized character, “from personal experience to experience which is both personal and shared” and this is further underlined by means of the switch in verb tense from a “generalized past to a generalized present”, as such constructing a “habitual narrative” (Carranza, 1998, p.302). The effect of such habitual narratives is described as building “a holistic picture of the past that speaks for itself” (Carranza, 1998, p.305). So by describing the slave’s inability to solve the problem (‘couldn’t get a horse’, line 353) and by relating the circumstances of the problematic events, namely their duration and frequency, which is implicitly stressed by means of the repetition (2x ‘you walk’, line 354) and their conditions both relating to the slave’s state (‘barefooted’, line 355) and to external factors (‘cold’, line 355), a general image of the harsh life as a slave is drawn. In the subsequent line, the interviewee shifts back to the past time frame and evaluates this situation as irrelevant (line 356) in a very general and impersonal way, thus erasing any reference to the agents of this indifferent reaction. However, these agents are inserted in the next utterance, but in a very

mitigated way: on the one hand, by means of the formulation of the sentence, they are not presented as the active agent of the evaluation, while on the other hand, the formulation ‘some of them’ is not only vague regarding the exact referent, as is typical of the deictic pronominal marker ‘them’, but also regarding the prevalence of this type of masters, by means of the quantity hedge ‘some’. So instead of focusing on the slave owners as agents of the action, who are implicit rather than explicit in the SRP master/slave, as was done in the initial part of this fragment, the interviewee foregrounds the slaves but in a generalized, rather than a personal way, as the use of the generic ‘you’-form illustrates. In this sentence, a general comparison to a dog is initiated (line 357) and next to the downplaying of the role of the slave owners, this is also explicitly placed in a past time frame (‘in them days’, line 358). This comparison is then further qualified as regarding the treatment of the slaves (line 358-359), thus limiting its general scope of the previous utterance, and reframing it as an argument by means of the insertion of a comparative time frame. As such, the general relation between slaves and animals as it was initially presented in lines 357-358, is downplayed in this second sentence. After a brief pause, the interviewee explicitly closes this topic by changing footing and topic, since he shifts to a metacomment regarding this topic which not only expresses his dislike of this discussion (lines 360 and 363), in spite of his ability (line 362), but also his explicit refusal to say more about it (line 364). The interviewee relates this explicit topic closure to recipient design, since he explicitly voices his “awareness of and sensitivity to the perspective of ‘the other’” (Malone, 1995, p.148) in line 361, thus really taking a metaperspective on the discussion. As such, the interviewee implicitly signals this discussion of the harsh conditions of slave life and its comparison to the life of an animal as problematic, which is constructed as applying to all potential listeners, as the mitigation of both parts of the SRP master/slave demonstrates. This explicit topic closure proves to be successful from an

emic point of view, since the interviewer abruptly shifts topic in the next turn by introducing the topic of the Civil War.

So the fragment above clearly illustrated that the relation between slaves and animals and the agentive role of the slave owners is quite elaborately negotiated. This negotiation can also occur in interaction with the interviewer, who may even initiate animal comparison on a personal basis as the following fragment illustrates.

Fragment 7 (Smalley)

- 21 IE And they had tra:ys, I don't know
22 where you see a tray. (.) Wooden tra:y.
23 Dug out, you know, all about that,
24 that long. And all of them you know
25 would get around that tray with
26 spoons, and just eat. I can recollect
27 that because I ate out the tray.
28 (.3)
29 IR1 Hmm.
30 IE With spoons, you know, and eat, treat
31 you like mush or soup or something
32 like that. But feed them, you know,
33 before twelve o'clock (.) And all
34 them children get around there and
35 just eat, eat, eat, eat out that thing.
36 And that old woman, you know, she
37 would tend to them. Her name, Aunt
38 Tishe (.) Yeah, I know what happen

39 to her. Old woman, name Aunt Tishe.
 40 And sh[e]
 41 → IR1 [Just like slopping ↑hogs ↓wasn't it?
 42 IE IT, JUST LIKE A TRAY, YOU KNOW, JUST LIKE
 43 A TRAY, YOU KNOW, YOU HAVE, it's made
 44 just like a hog pit=a hog ↑trough, you know?

This fragment emerges in the interviewee's discussion of how the slave children were tended to. The initial lines of the fragment (lines 21-26) start with an impersonal description of the way the children ate. Interestingly, the particularities of the tray from which they ate is foregrounded in the beginning (lines 21-24) and then the children are introduced by means of a neutral third person plural pronominal reference that clearly suggests non-involvement by the interviewee ('all of them', line 24). Again, the use of the verb 'would get' suggests habitual action (Carranza, 1998, p.299), thus underlining that this was a typical feature of daily slave life. The interviewee then shifts to a personal footing which not only accounts for the truth value of the story based on the presence of the interviewee as a participant in the described action, but it also reframes the general story to a story of personal experience. After a short pause and a continuer by the interviewer, the interviewee further describes the particular characteristics regarding kitchenware ('spoon', line 30 and 'that thing', line 35), type of food (line 31) and timing (line 33). These are again related by means of an impersonal footing, as the reference to the children non-disclosing the interviewee's membership of this group ('them', line 32 and 'all them children', lines 33-34), indicates. By means of a stepwise topic shift, the story moves into the description of the slave who watched over the children (line 36-40). This topic shift is not ratified by the interviewer, who interrupts the interviewee

by overlapping his question right after the start of a new sentence ('and she', line 40) by the interviewee.

In this question, the interviewer introduces a comparison between the slave children's eating habits and the way hogs eat. By means of the collocation with the verb 'to slop', the image is made more vivid and more bestial, mainly because of this verb's connotation of filth and making a mess. Interestingly, the interviewer's comparison constructs a shift in focus, since instead of foregrounding the technical characteristics of the eating activity, as the interviewee had mainly done in the previous lines, the agents of the activity (i.e. the slave children) are emphasized here by being presented as hogs, as such setting up the slave-as-animal identity and introducing the SRP master/slave. By means of the tag question in the end, the interviewer is explicitly handing over the turn to the interviewee (Sacks et al., 1974) and its falling intonation typically "seeks confirmation" (Jucker and Smith, 1996, p.9). However, instead of eliciting corroboration by the interviewee, the interviewer's comparison is resisted. This is done most explicitly by the marked prosody of the interviewee's reaction, which seems to shout the interviewer down. But also in the formulation, the interviewee resists the comparison between the agents of the eating activity and animals by immediately shifting the focus back to the description of the object (2x 'tray', line 42 and 43) rather than the agents who form the latter part of the SRP master/slave. The addition of the comparative introductory phrase 'just like', which is initially repeated twice (lines 42 and 43), mirrors the previous utterance and marks this utterance as a correction of the preceding turn. This is further elaborated upon in line 44, in which the comparison with hogs is ratified in a limited sense by drawing a comparison with the tray to a hog trough but *not* comparing the slaves to animals. As such, the interviewer's shift in focus to the agents of the action is repaired and the comparison of the slave children, thus including the interviewee herself, with hogs is resisted^{iv}.

So in this section, we illustrated the way animal comparisons are inserted in narratives of personal experience in which the interviewees expressed their individual involvement by means of a personal footing. In spite the differences between the fragments, both demonstrate that personal involvement in these animal comparisons setting up the SRP master-owner/slave-property is heavily negotiated, either by distancing from and generalizing the story (see fragment 6) or by resisting the orientation to agents rather than objects (see fragment 7).

Discussion and conclusions

In the analyses, different types of stories were discussed, within which the two parts of the SRP master/slave and, because of the explicit comparison with animals, owner/property were constructed in diverse ways. On the one hand, concerning the construction of the second part of the SRP, namely the slave-property, there was significant variance. First of all, we looked at stories in which the interviewees were not actively involved and in which they had – at most – a bystander role. Firstly, the topic of slave markets was discussed. This topic is either initiated by the interviewee (fragment 1) or by the interviewer (fragment 2), but the comparison between selling slaves and bidding on cattle is introduced by the interviewees in both extracts. Secondly, the topic of breeding slaves is introduced by the interviewer, who immediately compares it with breeding cattle (fragment 3) and this comparison is then ratified by the interviewee. In all three fragments, the interviewees refer to the slaves by means of generic you-forms or third person plural references when these identities of slaves-as-animals are constructed and – sometimes explicitly – put themselves in the uncommitted bystander role, but this is not surprising given the fact that they were not personally involved in the selling or breeding activities. This is quite different in the rest of the analyses, in which we first discussed the way the interviewees recounted the way they were liberated. In both

fragments, the interviewees constructed a collective group of slaves whose liberation is compared to ‘turning out cattle’, thus stressing the passive role of the slaves in this event and implicitly comparing them to property. Their personal alignment with the group is constructed in differing ways: while collectivity is quite explicitly constructed in fragment 4, this is much more mitigated in fragment 5. Finally, we focussed on animal comparisons in stories in which the personal involvement of the interviewee is explicitly talked into being in the lines preceding these comparisons. Interestingly, both interviewees minimize their personal involvement in the activities, either by using generalizing formulations (fragment 6) or by explicitly resisting the comparison as it is initiated by the interviewer (fragment 7).

On the other hand, the first part of the SRP, namely that of the master-owner, is hardly ever explicitly expressed. There are only two explicit references in the data, namely in fragment 3 (‘old boss’) and fragment 6 (‘my master’). In both cases we only found this single reference, without much elaboration of this role in an agentive way. Instead, many types of agentless constructions are used, such as the use of ungrammatical subjectless sentences, passive voices, generic ‘you’-forms, third person plural pronominal forms etc. These formulations are typical ways of “neutralizing responsibility” (cf Timor and Landau, 1998, p.368) and these references do not change along with the degree of personal involvement by the interviewees, but instead, their impersonal character remains constant. However, even though the master-part of the pair is mainly absent from the interaction, it remains implicit since the commonsense cultural knowledge that the second part of a pair (‘slave’) tacitly makes relevant renders the action understandable. In other words, ‘slave’ cannot be a category-in-use that makes sense of what is happening unless ‘master’ is minimally implicit in the story.

Next to the differing degrees of personal involvement, these stories differed also in other respects. First of all, the role of the interviewers was quite dissimilar, since in the

interview with Hughes, no animal comparisons are initiated by the interviewer, while in the interview with Smalley, this occurs twice (fragment 3 and 7). This of course has implications regarding the way these identities of slaves-as-animals are negotiated and potentially resisted (cf fragment 7) in the interviews. Secondly, the similarity between the formulations between fragments 1 - 2 and 4 - 5 clearly indicates that these are shared stories, which were commonly told among slaves, as was also explicitly voiced in the Smalley interview, both in fragments 2 and 3. These stories of course contain typical themes relating to slavery and thus it is not surprising that these stories are prevalent in our data. But, and more importantly, also on a content level, it is fairly logical that the qualification of slaves as animals within the SRP of master/slave and that of the implied SRP owner/property is typical of these shared stories presenting the major themes relating to the circle of life in the slavery system, namely breeding, buying, selling and finally liberating slaves. As such, these fragments are constructed as emblematic illustrations of these key moments in the hegemonic structure of the slave system, within which slaves are normatively cast as chattel which can be bought, bred and sold. As far as they were personally involved, the interviewees also – more or less – align with this collective identity of slaves-as-animals (fragments 4 and 5). However, this changes when less emblematic stories are narrated, as was the case in fragments 6 and 7, in which a personal categorization within the slave-as-animal pair part is downplayed or even resisted. We argue that this is due to the different story genre: (1) while talking about others or the collective group of slaves, the slave-as-animal comparison ‘does’ acquiescence to the slave system as a societal system; (2) while in narratives of personal experience, this results in a highly face threatening variant of self- (in fragment 6) or other-categorization (in fragment 7, categorization is initiated by the interviewer). It is thus not surprising that this is mitigated on a continuum of personal involvement: in collective, shared narratives of personal experience, there are cases in which personal alignment is constructed, while this is resisted in

highly individual narratives of personal experience. The first ones reflect the social system and the collective groups within it of which the interviewees were a part, while the second ones are much more face threatening because of the high degree of personal involvement.

The way these SRPs are constructed, plays a crucial role in the acquiescence work that is being done through them, since it is mainly because of the noticeable absence of the first part of the SRP, namely the master-owner, that another SRP, namely that of perpetrator/victim, is not developed. The construction of the latter SRP, however, would have been a fairly logical consequence of the construction of the part 'slave' as 'animal', which potentially evokes the connotation of 'victim', as discussed in the introduction. However, by making the master-part of the SRP almost invisible, the attribution of an explicit perpetrator identity to the slave owner is avoided. So by obscuring the role of the perpetrator, no explicit victimization of the slaves is constructed, but instead, this remains limited to dehumanization. As such, the way the SRPs are formulated in these interviews reconstructs the hegemonic view on slavery, or master narrative, as defined by Goodwell (1853; see above) which highlights the role of slaves as property. However, the interviewees resist foregrounding their individual position in this system and narratives of personal experience thus show that "speakers position themselves as constructive and interactive agents (...) vis-à-vis dominant discourses and master narratives" (De Fina et al., 2006, p.7). So by a relatively high amount of distancing, the interviewees avoid the construction of a personal identity as chattel, which can of course be related to the highly face threatening nature of such an identity.

So, on the one hand, this article provided an insight into the way former slaves position themselves in relation to the complicating action and to other characters in their stories through the use of SRPs and how they co-construct and negotiate this with the interviewers. On the other hand, and in spite of the limitations due to its specific scope, this article demonstrated on a more general level that SRPs can be used not only to (re)construct a

hegemonic world view, but also to construct implicit acquiescence to this societal system, in this case by downplaying the 'master-owner'-part of the SRP. Furthermore, the way the animal comparisons are mitigated or resisted is indicative of personal face concerns that come into play when the individual, instead of the collective group, is foregrounded. As such, the analysis of the way these SRPs are constructed, formulated, mitigated and interactionally negotiated provided an interesting route that allowed us to gain insight into the way these narratives interact with macro-contextual elements, namely the master narratives concerning slave life, as well as with more local contextual elements, such as the face concerns of the interviewees in a particular interviewing context.

References

- Antaki, C. (2002). *An introductory tutorial in conversation analysis*. Available at: <http://www-staff.lboro.ac.uk/ssca1/notation.htm>. Last accessed on 3 March 2011.
- Aristotle (2000). *Politics*. Dover Publications: New York.
- Atkinson, P., & Delamont, S. (2006). Rescuing narrative from qualitative research. *Narrative Inquiry*, 16(1), 164-172.
- Bamberg, M. (2004). Considering counter narratives. In M. Bamberg & M. Andrews (Eds.), *Considering counter narratives: Narrating, resisting, making sense* (pp. 351-371). Amsteram: John Benjamins.
- Bamberg, M. (2008). Twice-told-tales: Small story analysis and the process of identity formation. In T. Sugiman, K.J. Gergen, W. Wagner & Y. Yamada (Eds.), *Meaning in action: Constructions, narratives and representations* (pp. 183-204). New York: Springer.

- Blassingame, J.W. (1975). Using the testimony of ex-slaves: Approaches and problems. *The Journal of Southern History*, 41(4), 473-492.
- Carranza, I.E. (1998). Low-narrativity narratives and argumentation. *Narrative Inquiry*, 8(2), 287-317.
- Clift, R., & Holt, E. (2007). Introduction. In E. Holt & R. Clift (Eds.), *Reporting talk: Reported speech in interaction* (pp. 1-15). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Covey, H.C., & Lockman, P., T. (1996). Narrative references to older African Americans living under slavery. *The Social Science Journal*, 33(1), 23-37.
- De Fina, A. (2009). Narratives in interview - The case of accounts: For an interactional approach to narrative genres. *Narrative Inquiry*, 19(2), 233-258.
- De Fina, A., Schiffrin, D., & Bamberg, M. (2006). Introduction. In A. De Fina, D. Schiffrin & M. Bamberg (Eds.), *Discourse and identity, Studies in interactional sociolinguistics 23* (pp. 1-23). Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Escott, P.D. (1991). The art and science of reading WPA slave narratives. In C.T. Davis & H.L.J. Gates (Eds.), *The slave's narrative* (pp. 40-47). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Freeman, M. (2006a). Life "on holiday"? In defense of big stories. *Narrative Inquiry*, 16(1), 131-138.
- Freeman, M. (2006b). Autobiographical understanding and narrative inquiry. In J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology* (pp. 120-145). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Freeman, M. (2007). Life and literature: Continuities and discontinuities. *Interchange*, 38(3), 223-243.

- Goodwell, W. (1853). *The American slave code in theory and practice. Its distinctive features shown by its statutes, judicial decisions and illustrative facts*. American and Foreign Anti-slavery Society: New York.
- Heritage, J., & Sorjonen, M.-L. (1994). Constituting and maintaining activities across sequences: And-prefacing as a feature of question design. *Language in Society*, 23(1), 1-29.
- Holstein, J.A., & Gubrium, J.F. (2003). Active interviewing. In J.A. Holstein & J.F. Gubrium (Eds.), *Postmodern interviewing* (pp. 67-80). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Jayyusi, L. (1984). *Categorization and the moral order*. Routledge: Boston.
- Jucker, A.H., & Smith, S.W. (1996). Explicit and implicit ways of enhancing common ground in conversation. *Pragmatics*, 6(1), 1-18.
- Leudar, I., Marsland, V., & Nekvapil, J. (2004). On membership categorization: 'us', 'them' and 'doing violence' in political discourse. *Discourse & Society*, 15(2-3), 243-266.
- Linde, C. (1993). *Life stories: The creation of coherence*. Oxford University Press: New York / Oxford.
- Malone, M.J. (1995). How to do things with friends: Altercasting and recipient design. *Research on Language and Social Interaction*, 28(2), 147-170.
- Ochs, E., & Capps, L. (2001). *Living narrative: Creating Lives in Everyday Storytelling*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Phillips, U. B. (1929/1963). *Life and labor in the Old South*. Little, Brown and Company: Boston.
- Phillips, U. B. (1918/1966). *American negro slavery: A survey of the supply, employment, and control of negro labor, as determined by the plantation regime*. Louisiana State University Press: Baton Rouge.

- Sacks, H. (1972 a). An initial investigation of the usability of conversational data for doing sociology. In: D. Sudnow (Ed.), *Studies in social interaction* (pp.31-74). Free Press: New York.
- Sacks, H. (1972 b). On the analyzability of stories by children. In: J.J. Gumperz & D. Hymes (Eds.), *Directions in sociolinguistics: The ethnography of communication* (pp. 325-345). Rinehart & Winston: New York.
- Sacks, H., Schegloff, E.A., & Jefferson, G. (1974). A simplest systematics for the organization of turn-taking for conversation. *Language*, 50(4), 696-735.
- Schiffrin, D. (1987). *Discourse markers*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Schiffrin, D. (2000). Mother/daughter discourse in a holocaust oral history: "Because then you admit that you're guilty". *Narrative Inquiry*, 10(1), 1-44.
- Schiffrin, D. (2002). Mother and friends in a Holocaust life story. *Language and Society*, 31(3), 309-353.
- Tannen, D. (1989). *Talking voices: Repetition, dialogue, and imagery in conversational discourse*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Timor, U., & Landau, R. (1998). Discourse characteristics in the sociolect of repentant criminals. *Discourse & Society*, 9(3), 363-386.
- Van De Mierop, D., Bruyninckx, K., Leysen, K., & Vanwesenbeeck, W. (2007). Implicit and explicit identity constructions in the life story of one of Hitler's elite soldiers. *Discourse Studies*, 9(3), 385-405.
- Vann Woodward, C. (1991). History from slave sources. In C.T. Davis & H.L.J. Gates (Eds.), *The slave's narrative* (pp. 48-59). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Wetherell, M., & Maybin, J. (1996). The distributed self: A social constructionist perspective. In R. Stevens (Ed.), *Understanding the self* (pp. 219-279). Sage: London.

Whooley, O. (2006). The political work of narratives: A dialogic analysis of two slave narratives. *Narrative Inquiry*, 16(2), 295–318.

Yetman, N.R. (1967). The background of the slave narrative collection. *American Quarterly*, 19(3), 534-553.

Yetman, N. (1984). Ex-slave interviews and the historiography of slavery. *American Quarterly*, 36/2, 181-210.

Appendix: transcription symbols (based on and taken from Antaki, 2002)

Transcription symbols in examples taken from the fragments	Explanation
(.)	Brief pause
(.5)	Timed pause
↑ uh, ↓wasn't	Onset of noticeable pitch rise or fall
273 IR2 Uh huh. [°°That's right°°]. 274 IE [erm]	Square brackets '[' aligned across adjacent lines denote the start of overlapping talk. Other square brackets ']' show where the overlap stops
We:ll	Colons show that the speaker has stretched the preceding sound
(cold)	Uncertain transcription due to audio-problems
taking=hiring	The equals sign shows an example of latching, which means that there is no

	discernible pause between a speaker's or two speakers' turn(s)
<u>trough</u> , JUST, <u>LIKE</u>	Underlined sounds are louder, capitals louder still and underlined capitals are the loudest
°Didn't know where to go°, °°That's right°°	Words between degree signs are quieter, words between double degree signs are even quieter
>But you see when we was coming up they wouldn't let know nothing about nothing like that, but they say that was sure so <	Inwards arrows show faster speech
£I'd say£	The words between £-signs are spoken in a 'smile voice' which has a markedly higher pitch and an intonational contour comparable to laughing during speaking but without any laughter tokens
((laugh))	Representation of something hard, or impossible, to write phonetically

Notes

ⁱ The authors would like to thank the Library of Congress for making these recordings and transcripts available online at: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/voices/index.html> (last accessed on 1 June 2011).

ⁱⁱ Unfortunately, no more information is available regarding the interview, the interviewers and their positions towards the issue of slavery, ethnicity and the purpose of these interviews, or the interviewees and the particularities of their past as slaves.

ⁱⁱⁱ The notation symbols are based on the ‘Jefferson system’ as explained in the appendix.

^{iv} The use of the discourse marker ‘you know’ seems typical of the narrating style of the interviewee and thus no specific meaning is attributed to its use in this section.