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Multimodal life history narrative: embodied identity, discursive transitions and uncomfortable silences

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I draw together multimodal and creative art practices with sociological and discursive research frameworks to detail how multimodal interviewing facilitates communication of individual narratives. I offer a route for researching how embodied self-production emerges by asking: What can be learnt from analysing the context and process of narrative accounts rather than the content?

Consideration is given to how a drawn visual line influences the narrative progress by inviting diverse, active and embodied engagement, while highlighting issues that participants prioritise. Attention is also given to how self-recognition and the production of identity become apparent in moments that punctuate a narrator's story-telling. These moments are identified as discursive transitions and include switches in style or topic of conversation, expressions of emotion, pauses and extended silences. These transitions are conceptualised as examples of a 'structuring presence' within a narrative, and I explore how these are central to the embodied production of self-identity.

Keywords: multimodal narratives; discursive transitions; silence; embodied identity

Author Biography

Having completed a first degree, a masters and a PGCE, Clare Woolhouse worked in two Secondary Schools and a PCET college before moving into HE. While studying for a PhD at Lancaster University she taught undergraduate students for five years. In 2007 she moved to Edge Hill University, where she is currently a Senior Research Fellow in the Faculty of Education. Dr Woolhouse conducts research relating to inclusion and social justice and teacher professional development, with a particular focus on inclusive practice and SEND education. She delivers face to face and on-line sessions at UG and PG level relating to education, inclusion, qualitative research methodologies and academic writing.

Introduction

In this article I explore how the bringing together of different methods from different disciplines can reframe approaches to narrative research. I outline a creative narrative interview technique, which is informed by the field of arts practice and study the resulting data using a combination of sociological, semiotic and discursive research frameworks. To explore in more depth this process, in this article I detail how a multimodal adaptation of life history interviewing can enhance understandings of individual narratives and highlight what can be learnt from the context and process of undertaking this cross-disciplinary form of narrative interviewing.

The life history narrative (LHN) research project to be discussed, investigates the career progression, professional and personal experiences of sixteen qualified teachers who specialise in Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) all of whom are working in England. The narrative methodology employed involves participants producing a drawn life history line while recounting a series of stories or narratives. Two papers have already been published that report upon the characteristics of the sixteen interviews in terms of the similarities in the lives of the individuals and how this frames them as belonging to an SEND community of practice, the importance of reflecting upon past educational experiences, the tensions they experience and the discourses they engage with (Woolhouse, 2012; 2015).

In order to critically reflect upon the specifics of the method employed and reinterpret the sixteen interviews conducted, consideration is given to how multi-modal interviews facilitate non-linguistic forms of communication. In particular, inspiration is drawn from the work of Carter (2004), Douglas et al. (2014) and Ingold (2007) who explore how art practices are forms of embodied self-expression involving "active recollection of what is past, an activity of concurrent actual (self) production" (Carter, 2004, p. 191). I combine this work with ideas

from the fields of semiotics and discourse analysis (Dicks et al., 2011; Kress, 2011; Pink, 2011) and with ethnographic/autobiographic, multisensory interpretations of silence and emotion (Gemignani, 2014; Rosiek & Heffernan, 2014; Suárez-Ortega, 2013). My intention is to produce a different form of multi-disciplinary analysis whereby what can be learnt from the context and process of multimodal narrative interviews is critically reflected upon. The aim of analysing the form and style of communication within narrative, rather than the content of the stories, is to think through the 'how' of narrative story-telling (Etherington, 2007a; Hampshire et al., 2014, p. 215) rather than the content and topic of the stories told.

Framing life history narrative research

In-depth, qualitative narrative interviews can be understood to draw upon ethnographic and autobiographic traditions of research; they are "world making" (Bruner, 2004, p. 691) and produce situated stories that contextualise and communicate the narrator's values, beliefs and self-understanding as they construct stories about their experiences, offer opinions and express emotions. These narratives do not exist in isolation, but are influenced by the context within which they are told, they are a "form of knowledge creation and inquiry … produced and created within social relationships and between (the) storytellers and their audiences" (Etherington, 2007a, p. 600).

Narrative interviews are particularly effective because they are person-centred, focusing on stories of life events that are chosen to be shared, which encourages the sharing of a person's thoughts and experiences, rather than just an account of an event. Such storytelling can become habitual and comfortable, a way for experience to be structured and understood and a possibility for 'laying down routes into memory" (Bruner, 2004, p. 708)

and so guiding future experiences and interpretations. The act of story-telling can be viewed as an invitation for the narrator to evaluate happenings and express personal significance (Jovic, 2014), and so has the "capacity to render life experiences, both personal and social, in relevant and meaningful ways" (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990, p. 10), enabling a researcher to collect together different, rich, emotive and contradictory narratives.

Narrative research draws upon a wide range of oral and autobiographical storytelling from around the globe, which transcend national and cultural boundaries and provides a route for understanding diverse lives (Chinyamurindi, 2016; Coetzee & Nuttall, 1998; Cortazzi & Jin, 2006; Hinojosa & Carney, 2016; Lessard, Caine & Clandinin, 2015; Trahar, 2006). Located within this field is a small, but growing number, of researchers who are adopting a more multimodal and multisensory approach by focusing upon embodied, active or emotional engagements that occur during storytelling. This includes Suárez-Ortega's (2013, p. 191, 194) work with forty women living in rural Spain, that leads her to argue that participants in narrative interviews are "social actors involved in (re)creating their own histories, as they construct and reconstruct reality" who are involved in "continuous direct involvement and active participation". Such a view is echoed by Gemignani (2014) in his research with Kosovan and Nepali refugees, whereby he notes the need to reflect on how particular events are recounted to position researchers as witnesses to painful stories.

Narrative research enables an investigation of how individuals draw upon embodied, discursive and narrative resources to tell particular stories at certain moments in time (Blomberg & Börjesson, 2013; Burns and Bell, 2011; Caine, Estefan & Clandinin, 2013; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Helsig, 2010; Johnson, 2008; Jovic, 2014). These stories can simultaneously be considered real and constructed, as Campbell and McNamara (2007, p. 100) frame it: "(*stories are*) reconstructed in the sense that there are real people with lived experiences and identities that replicate and authenticate the narrative accounts of the

characters who inhabit the apocryphal tales". Such tales can be drawn together chronologically to create a life history narrative that is generative and positioning. The narrator determines which stories are shared and which are left out, influenced by how they want to position themselves in relation to the researcher (the witness) who they are speaking with. Accordingly, there is a need to foster and maintain transparent ethical relationships because only by working in a respectful way, may it be possible for narrators to feel comfortable in sharing their stories. In order to revisit the process of conducting narrative interviews in a more embodied way, I critically reflect upon my use of a multimodal approach that involves drawing or art making, I also develop a way of theoretically and discursively analysing non-verbal forms of communication.

Multimodal Interviews

The life history narrative (LHN) method is open and flexible, requiring participants (the narrators) to guide the interview process by recalling experiences, telling the researcher stories about events that may have happened many years ago, which can be demanding. Therefore I aimed to access a more embodied form of memory by adapting the traditional narrative interview, utilising a multimodal format to facilitate recollection and active engagement during the process of storytelling. My aim is to undertake "research through art" (Coessens et al., 2009, p. 46) in order that the act of art making can provide a route to understand experiences and access new knowledge by providing a tangible format within which such experiences can be shared. To enact this process during narrative interviews I ask participants to draw a 'life history' line on paper and to temporally mark out the events or experiences they are recounting in whatever way they choose. This line requires physical, embodied engagement in addition to thinking and talking; it guides the discussion, acts as a

memory aid and involves narrator and researcher in tactile and visual as well as oral / aural forms of communication. The intention is that while the stories may not be told in a particular order, they will be temporally placed on a visual line in order to develop a new or deeper understanding of personal experiences for those involved. This is possible because from the perspective of the field of art practice, the act of drawing a line 'of oneself' on paper is an embodied practice, an active moment of 'material thinking' that can "loosen positions that have been fixed" (Carter, 2004, p. 179). The act of putting pen to paper to mark ones thinking provides space for revisiting memories of past experiences and provides opportunity for rethinking and reimagining the self.

The drawing of the line can provide richer data, but as a researcher I needed a way to access the meanings conveyed through different forms of communication. Accordingly, to develop a deeper understanding I adopted a multimodal analysis that considered the art practice, the verbal and non-verbal forms of communication within the storytelling. Key advocators of a multimodal approach in terms of research practice are Kress and van Leeuwen (2001, p. 111), who argue that processes that go beyond the linguistic can encompass images, spatiality and tactile experience. As Kress (2011, p. 237) notes: "multimodality focuses on the material means for representation, on the process of sign making; on the resources for making texts (and thus meaning) … that go beyond (verbal) language". Thus, multimodality focuses on the diversity and complexity of communication between individuals and attends to the agency of the narrators. Taking a similar stance, Dicks et al. (2011, p. 231) point out that asking someone to draw or write as well as verbalise enables communication to "take on a profoundly different shape with changes in modal materialisation and representation", which can produce different forms of engagement with the stories told. This different form is made possible by the embodied act of putting pen to paper, a co-creative act that reroutes "artistic experience into the grounds of material

processes" (Douglas et al., 2014 p. 121). A space is created to reimagine the research as a humane and productive experience of meaning creation within which the interior self is merged with the acts of the physical exterior; the self as subject becomes entwined with the body as object (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 248-250).

Multimodality has been utilised in a wide variety of ways and Dicks (2014) provides an insightful comparison of development within three paradigms: sensory ethnography, ethnomethodology and social semiotics, considering the benefits and challenges of each form of research and highlighting influential works in each field. The summary tables of epistemological and methodological differences provided by Dicks (2014, p. 665-666) enables a researcher to determine which approach their research aligns with. In terms of my own work, it highlights that although I engage with the social semiotic approach in that I am interested in the co-construction of meaning making; what people say and how they say it, I am uncomfortable with the language of 'signs, modes of communication and sign makers' as utilised by writers such as Dicks et al. (2011) and Kress (2011). I feel semiotics concentrates on words and text, which can objectify individuals and frame communication as almost disembodied. As an antidote I integrate a more feminist and sensory approach, as utilised by Pink (2011), concentrating on the lived, embodied experience and emotional expressions that punctuate verbal communication. Simultaneously, I heed Dicks's (2014, p. 668) warning not to prioritise my own interpretations or 'over-read' the empathy I experience during my research encounters and accept that data collection involves "a complex transaction between researcher and evidence, the ends of which are provisional and fallible" (Coulter & Smith, 2009, p. 586).

In particular, I draw on the work of Butler (1990) and consider how non-verbal, embodied expressions can be understood as a change or transition within the discourse that can structure the meaning and the stories told. I conceptualise these moments as 'discursive

transitions'; as moments within narratives where the topic or style of talk is altered (i.e. a switch from first to third person), often accompanied by explicit and expressed moments of discomfort or tension, physically embodied through displays of emotion, pauses or extended occurrences of silence. In doing so I attend to the richness, intensity and emotion of data; to understand silence by locating "what is marginal in an analysis of empirical materials—in other words, what is not spoken" (Mazzei, 2004, p. 26) and taking seriously "the lessons concealed in the thoughts, ideas, and hesitations", while avoiding "privileging presence over absence and voice over silence" (Rosiek & Heffernan, 2014, p. 727).

My aim in drawing inspiration from the literature concerning embodied art practice and combining it with multimodal and discursive approaches is to reframe how the stories that emerge within narrative interviews might be understood. The intention is to enhance and expand my understanding of the ways in which individuals produce narratives using multi-sensory, expressive forms. This is necessary because these forms are ones that can subvert distinctions between past-present-future, inside/outside self and enrich the linguistic form of communication within narrative methods disrupting linear, binaristic interpretation. They are also moments that can 'speak out' to a researcher, demanding attention that goes beyond a purely content or semiotic analysis of the narrative.

The participants, data collection and analysis

In 2010, a short postal survey was sent out to around 600 teachers who were working as Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs),[1] all of whom were registered at a North-West England University and undertaking post-graduate study in an area of SEND.

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[1] In England and Wales SENCOs have responsibility for organising the support of pupils who are identified as having a range of special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) (DfES, 2013), including, multiple learning difficulties, behaviour, emotional and social difficulties, single or multisensory impairment and physical disability.

239 people responded to the survey and 46 volunteered to be interviewed about their own educational experiences and life choices relating to following a teaching career. 25 people were invited to interview, selected to include urban / rural locations, and employment in different education settings. Between 2011 and 2013 sixteen interviews were conducted with fourteen women and two men. During the interviews four women and one man self-identified as having dyslexia and memory difficulties, the second man to be interviewed stated he had Attention Deficit, Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). Two women stated they struggled at school for health reasons and four struggled for other reasons, three had children or family members who were identified as having dyslexia (a short biography is provided for each narrator in Appendix 1). I provide this information to acknowledge that the narrators might have a vested interest, volunteering because they had a particular personal as well as professional commitment to issues related to SEND.

I transcribed the interviews from the audio-recordings and included brief researcher notes, short pauses recorded as **…** or longer pauses of over 5 seconds noted in brackets. An anonymised copy was provided to the narrator for approval before analysis. Pseudonyms have been used throughout this paper and in Appendix 1 (I am recorded as CW).

A constructivist stance to analysis is utilised in this paper, which is framed by the recommendation of Silverman (2011, p. 182) that data collected through discussion can be treated as a topic in its own right in which "participants actively create meaning" and make sense of their world. Accordingly, consideration needs to be given to how individuals position themselves by utilising particular narrative resources to "negotiate and express identit(y) and acquire a sense of self" (Blomberg & Börjesson, 2013, p. 246). To accomplish this, the first section of the analysis is a study of how aspects of the drawn life history line facilitate embodied story-telling. The second section focuses on moments that involve a 'discursive transition'.

The form of analysis chosen draws together a range of research disciplines by engaging with recent work that explores the importance of: aesthetic, creative and artistic practices (Carter, 2004; Coessens et al., 2009; Douglas et al, 2014); ethnographic and narrative methodologies for accessing embodied memories (Gemignani, 2014; Smorti, 2011; Suárez-Ortega, 2013); and different multimodal frameworks of analysis (Butler, 1990; Kress, 2011; Pink, 2011) that can encouraging reflexivity in terms of the meaningfulness of storytelling.

Constructing identity in multimodal narrative interviews

Visuality and bodily engagement: "This is sort of me. One line of me"

When conducting LHN interviews a visual drawn line can be utilised to facilitate participant led discussion, since the researcher does not need to interject and events can be placed chronologically as experiences are recalled. In the sixteen interviews conducted, narrators were given an A2 size piece of paper and several marker pens and the instruction to create a life history line noting down whatever they felt was relevant so that I could follow their stories. Some drew a line and made dot marks or wrote down dates as they created their narratives, others provided brief or lengthier notes and some included drawings. All were able to adapt the lines creatively as they chose, and all focused on their education and careers, with most also including notes relating to their personal lives, including Kerry (Figure 1) and Mari (Figure 2), demonstrating how the personal and professional inform each other:
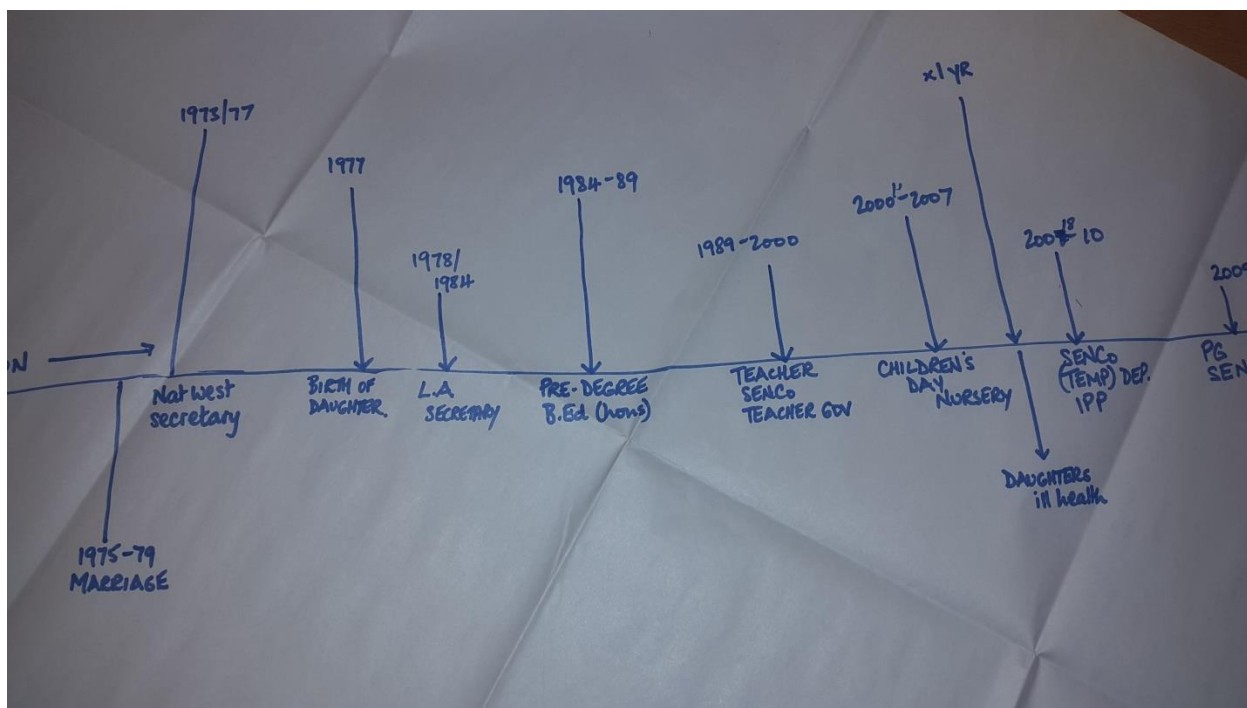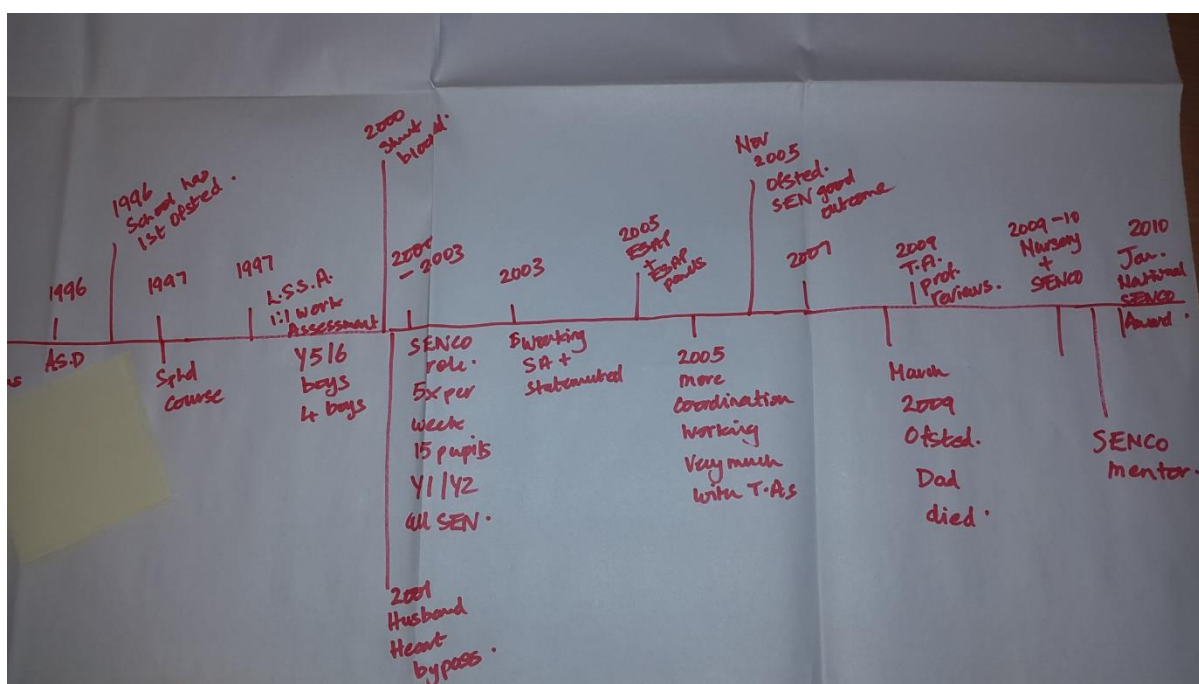
Figure 1. Kerry's drawn Life History Line

Figure 2. Mari's drawn Life History Line[2]

The visual cues marked on the narrative lines assisted the narrators in remembering and recounting stories, so were integral to understanding the developing accounts. The sharing of the drawn line was an effective way for the storytellers to show how they felt their experiences framed who they are, as demonstrated by Amy and Adam's comments:

Amy: "It's quite nice to map it all out like this (*indicates line*) and talk about it, I mean, you don't like to go too self-indulgent, in these experiences, but they have shaped who I am …"

Adam: "So this is sort of me. One line of me (*indicates line*), with lots of bits coming off it. … But I think my life wouldn't be very exciting if it was just that one line.

Although the initial instruction was to "draw a life history line", a number of narrators adapted the line as they wished. The lines became flowing rather than linear, multidirectional and pictorial; Frances added smiley and sad faces (see Figure 3). These different styles of 'line' grew with the stories being told. In each case, the narrators, like the architects described by Ingold (2007, p. 162), "draw as they think and think as they draw, leaving a trace or trail both in memory and in paper". Of course, using a drawn line requires visual engagement, involving the body in tactile remembering. This act is not merely a recounting of stories, but alters how the unfolding narrative is remembered and negotiated, because the making of marks is an aesthetic and creative joint activity (Douglas et al., 2014) which can change with each iteration.

Figure 3. Frances' drawn Life History Line[3]

It is argued by Kress (2011, p. 237, 238) that taking a multimodal approach "provides tools for the recognition of all the modes through which meaning is made". This demonstrates how narration is not just a form of verbal communication, but also an embodied experience that invites the narrator to "imagine and recognise (their) sensory embodied responses to other people and objects" (Pink, 2011, p. 266). In addition to the actual discussion, it is through the creation of, and engagement with, life history lines that the narrators (and the researcher) can come to understand more fully the narratives told. As Carter (2004) and Douglas et al. (2014) argue, thinking through and with the body is an interrogation of memory that can enable self-knowledge. In the case of Naomi, the tactile, embodied (re)remembering seems to assist in organising her experiences into a coherent narrative of self:

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[3] Post it notes have been used to cover identifying comments.

"Well if I do my timeline then I can put it all in order (*laughs*) so do you want it right from the beginning?"

"….. So I was teaching children, and it was the one to one that made me think. Umm, I need to write it down … (*Naomi makes a note, reaches edge of paper with her line, she turns over and continues on other side*)".

"Why did I become a SENCO ….. Not sure where to put things on this line (*Naomi returns to earlier section of line and adds note*). So (for me) it was always about appreciating my children having lots of talents".

The use of a drawn line to facilitate discussion can provide a freedom for individuals to express themselves creatively, it involves a process of active meaning making within a narrative account which is not limited to the verbal realm. In Naomi's case the line is actively utilised to enable self-authoring; she rethinks her career choices moving physically back and forth along her line as she moves conceptually back and forth through her recent and more distant memories. This process can be termed re-authoring because the stories told are not rigid, they can change over time and depend on the setting in which they are told, but they do indicate how someone would like to present themselves in that context at that time. The richness of this re-authoring becomes particularly apparent because of the unexpected ways in which the line can be engaged with to suit individual preferences. The narrators can adapt the line: writing as much or as little as they want; drawing new lines branching from the main one; adding happy and sad faces or images to illustrate events. Chris drew his line as a road with multi-directional arrows, while Amy added a rich extra layer to her stories by illustrating her narrative saying:

Amy: "What (I) write will be like a lighthouse in all this darkness, there will be

this light, and it will really affect these young people what (I) write about. … I'll

do a little lighthouse on the diagram for you.

Figure 4. Lighthouse image used when Amy describes how she feels about

studying

Amy: "Now I'm literally at the top of the mountain … (*draws a mountain*).

Having spent all that time climbing and it's a bit of a … disbelief still. And that is

where I am at now".

Figure 5. Completing a PhD is like being at the top of a mountain
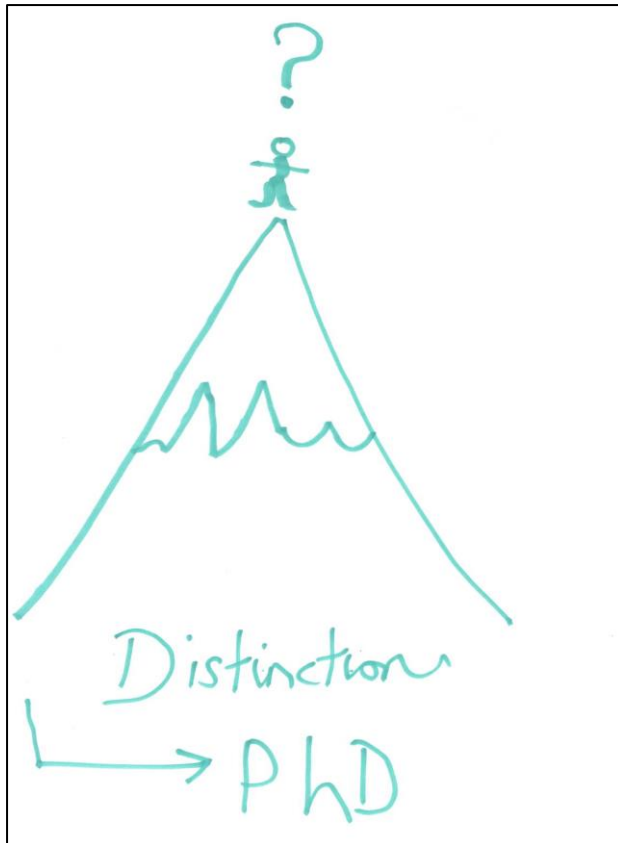
Through the moments of engagement with the line, disparate events in a life can be drawn together metaphorically and literally, creating a temporal anchor for the account and the production of self. It provides space for the narrator and witness to gain new insight through reflection on how the annotated and/or illustrated line connects with the verbal account and 'paints a picture' of how each individual presents themselves to the outside world through their storytelling. The drawn line can also be interpreted as expressing a need for individuals to feel that their narratives are not just heard, but also understood by those who receive the stories (Carter, 2004; Douglas et al., 2014; Ingold, 2007). This visual, embodied narrating of the self is complex, but is a way for individuals to reimagine themselves and invite others to understand them, because the stories they tell "frame meanings that allow complex events, feelings and experiences to be captured, recounted, authored and re-authored" (Gaudilli & Ousley, 2009, p. 933).

It has been suggested that any narrator will be "aware that s/he is actively involved in deciding which story – which self – to convey and how to formulate it" (Holstein & Gubrium, 2000, p. 112). This awareness does not diminish the research, as the process of self-authoring requires an audience (a researcher) to act as "witness" (Gemignani, 2014, p. 130), who "acknowledges the life experiences and stories of the person at the centre; their values, commitments, hopes and dreams" (Etherington, 2007b, p. 91). Indeed, I feel that it is the sharing of the process of drawing 'one line of me' as Adam put it, that makes the self-authoring that occurs all the more visceral, providing an embodied engagement with the stories and offering an opportunity for each narrator to reflect on how they appear to others, claim ownership of their narratives and open spaces for alternative expressions of the self to be imagined. In so doing, this is a transformative act, enabling the narrator to imaginatively explore by "thinking of-and-by-the-body" (Coessens et al., 2009, p. 127) as they physically engage with their narratives. To explore these ideas further, in the next section I consider the multimodal ways in which embodiment is involved in *how* individuals recount a narrative, by utilising pauses, expressing emotion, taking on another's voice and changing direction in their stories.

Discursive transitions; emotion and the importance of what is not said

Alongside the explicit self-construction involved in the drawing of a line, there are cues that involve the body in self-expression and signal a transitory moment in the stories told. I have identified these cues as 'discursive transitions' and they include moments during discourse in which a narrator swaps the topic and/or style of their talk, which can be accompanied by spaces in the verbal narrative, such as displays of emotion and/or instances of silence, as explored below.

18

During the sixteen interviews, nine of the women became noticeably upset, their voices waivered and/or they became teary. Such moments can be disquieting and need to be handled as delicately as possible so individuals express themselves as they want. Previous research by Romano and Cuenca (2013, p. 347, 355) has found that emotional moments in narratives can be signalled by "digressions, flashbacks or flashforwards" by "pause or hesitation and reformulation or re-elaboration" as narrators re-orientate themselves. In making my analysis, I note that such emotional moments accompany distinctive shifts in the topic and style of conversation. For example, Danni becomes emotional while talking about working for the police, she pauses, then switches to a more personal topic that she is comfortable with (talking about her children and voluntary work):

Danni: "I became a police cadet and within that post it used to really upset me that people with SEN … how they were treated … from time to time, because no one really looked at them any differently, but there are ways and means of working with people who can't communicate in the same way as everyone else. So that really used to upset me. *(Participant gets a little emotional, voice waivers).* …
(*long pause*)
Anyway, I got married, I had two children and when they started school I started helping in that school and I really enjoyed it".

A similar shift is made by Emma, although she manages her emotion by switching from talking about her daughter's difficulties to describing the difficulties her pupils face.

Emma: "I think 'why didn't I see this, why didn't I pick it up *(that her daughter had dyslexia).* I mean, she was very slow to read, but she was … she had

meningitis when she was 5 months and that sort of influenced a lot of things and we put a lot of things down to that. So she didn't walk as quickly, she didn't talk as quickly, … but she could do whatever she wanted. She could make herself understood, so it never seemed to be a problem, …, but yeah, she got there … (*Participant gets emotional and teary, voice waivers*) … (*long pause*).

I mean it has been very, very interesting being on the course, and I've seen just how hard it is for a lot of children. I mean I've been working with one young boy who you can see the frustrations just bubbling over and it causes quite a lot of issues with his behaviour".

It is in these emotionally charged moments that the role of the researcher is so important, I was tempted to jump in and 'rescue' the situation. However, when it is the narrators who determine how to continue, a choice is made to make a transition in the discussion, making a break from one narrated event and starting another, albeit related, one. I do not interpret such discursive transitions as indicating a lack of remembering. I identify them as a 'structuring presence' (Butler, 1990, p. 113) that orders and frames the story being told, instantiating the tensions experienced by individuals when they speak about challenging events in their lives. These transitions are moves made in talk that can be unconscious and which enable individuals to manage the intense emotional response they are experiencing as they recount an event. They are transitions rather than breaks because there is an identifiable train of thought. This is notable in Linda's account when she describes the problems arising from a lack of understanding shown to her by her teachers, before refocusing on how she enacts understanding as a teacher:

Linda: "I look back now and my daughter certainly had some learning difficulties. I mean, before I did my degree, trying to teach her how to tell the time or doing

times tables, and I was thinking 'she's got it' and the next day 'gone'. And I

didn't understand why. … Now this is before I did my degree, and I, … when I

think about it I was so angry when I found that out, she was frightened of telling

me in case I would be cross that she hadn't done well. (*long pause*).

I struggled at school, I needed additional tuition, private tuition. When I was ten

my spelling was atrocious, but my teachers put that down to 'well (*name*) can't

spell, she doesn't listen, she doesn't pay attention, she's not interested' (*stern*

voice) (*long pause*). So, I am pushy (*about getting support for children*)".

Discursive transitions highlight that the stories being told are in the process of construction.

The narratives are not necessarily fully formed, but are being produced in a process of

negotiation, where links between past and present, personal and professional are being

actively forged. They are not smooth narratives that are well rehearsed, but stories under

negotiation in the telling. As Bruner (2006, p. 131) argues "narrative gives us the power to

structure perceptual experience, to organise memory, to segment and purpose build the very

events of a life". Such a process of building is highlighted when those constructing the stories

switch as they arrive at a point that they are not ready to explore further, sometimes because

it is emotionally uncomfortable. A moment of difficulty is further highlighted by Linda's

example when she switches to talking about herself in the third person, in the voice of her

former teacher (underlined in the quote above).

I am framing such switches of topic and style as discursive transitions in a particular

way. They are transitions that occur during discourse between individuals through which

meanings are shared, but also through which people position themselves as discursive

subjects in a Foucauldian sense. In the moment of transition the individual can be viewed as

narrating themselves into existence, it is a process by which "the individual constitutes and

recognises him(or her) self qua subject" (Foucault, 1992, p. 6). At this moment, the individual may see themselves through another's eyes and become uncomfortable in their narration. Uncomfortable because it may be a moment of explicit self-awareness, that highlights how the experience makes them feel, or aware of how their account might reveal something deeply personal about who they believe they are as an individual, beyond the current storytelling situation. It is a moment of tension in the telling of a story whereby the impact of an experience on the self becomes tangible to those involved, performatively positioning them within discourse (Bamberg, 1997; 2011). This tension is then diffused through a display of emotion and/or a switch into more comfortable or familiar territory. It is within such an emotional display that what is interior to the individual (thoughts and feelings) become externalised and communicated to the researcher.

This embodied sharing of the story may be particularly facilitated by the use of the drawn line. The narrator is already physically engaged through the tracing of their life artistically as well as verbally, and so the act of marking out the line 'penetrates the interiority of the body' and the self (Ingold, 2007, p. 60), enticing a physical reaction to the story. This physical engagement offers an opportunity for the individual to express themselves as never before, to 'become' the self (Butler, 1990; Douglas, 2014) that is authored into existence via the telling of a story.

The moments of tension within a narrative account that work to 'bring into being' identity, are also made translucent by what is not said, particularly by the pauses within the stories being told. In one example, Danni does not discuss her relationship with her father directly, but this aspect of her story can be inferred by the way she mimics her father's voice (underlined), pauses and expresses emotion at a number of points in her interview. For example:

Danni: "I went to a grammar school and decided I was going to go to university, we discussed it one night at the tea table and my dad said '<u>no you're not cause we can't afford it. You are going to have a career</u>' (*in stern voice*). *(Participant gets emotional and teary, voice waivers & long pause)*. Therefore he <u>made</u> me apply to the police service.

(*Later on*) I got a part-time job, well I'd had several going nowhere, so I went to night school to do the A levels that I hadn't done at Grammar school (*voice waivers & long pause*).

Then I applied to (*name*) university at the end of August one year, and they actually accepted me for that year (*sounds surprised*). … So I got my interview, got accepted, became a qualified teacher (*sounds proud*) and I worked at the same school for about 15 years.

The use of emphasised third person speech, expressions of emotion and long pauses in stories like Danni's demonstrate her evaluation of the events as having personal significance (Jovic, 2014). This evaluation adds richness to the account, guiding the researcher in understanding it and indicates the tensions that occur as individuals share very personal experiences. These discursive moments might indicate that someone is thinking carefully about how to phrase what is going to be said next. The pause is the moment that enables them to step outside of themselves, observe and reflect on the process of how they are authoring a self, becoming that self, through their storytelling. What is important in terms of thinking about narrative research methods, is that the pauses illustrate that during discussion the stories told, and by implication the identities presented, are under (re)construction, rather than being pre-determined "cover stories" (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996, p. 25). The silent punctuation of the narrative highlights the discomfort and tensions being experienced within this moment of

self-expression making apparent the entwining of the interior self (memory and feeling) with the physical body. Again, it demonstrates a merging of self/subject with body/object (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 248-250) as reflection upon experience involves embodied expression, subverting binaristic interpretations of mind/body, inside/outside self.

By understanding tension and silence as having a distinct effect, I am also trying to subvert the conceptualising of absence and presence as binary opposites. I frame silence as meaningful, and the absence of language, not as nothingness, but as a 'structuring presence' (Butler, 1990, p. 113) that situates and personifies the narrator. Moments of silence within storytelling can constitute meaning in relation to the individual and their narrative, signalling the difficulty of speaking about some experiences, but also the importance of them. Shared silence can be eloquent and emotive; sometimes it is the only way to express experiences authentically and maintain open communication. Rosiek and Heffernan (2014) warn against coding moments of quiet as inarticulateness and instead recommend attending to moments that cannot be easily categorised as integral to communication (see also Beck, 2009; Mazzei, 2004; Nagar-Ron & Motzafi-Haller, 2011). So, I attend specifically to moments within narratives that are deemed relevant by participants through their (in)articulation. Rather than viewing silences as non-events or as moments of resistance as discussed by Hyam (2004) and McClure et al. (2010) they can be understood as absences that have a structuring presence for narratives. They are moments during which the construction of coherent stories, and the identity work that is involved in this, is made tangible as narrators pause to reflect upon their narratives, the feelings this invokes and their engagement with the researcher.

Silence can be interpreted as performatively positioning the narrator (Bamberg, 1997) and signalling the unspeakable that is too difficult to express in words. This possibility is noted by Nagar-Ron and Motzafi-Haller (2011) in their life history narrative research with Israeli Mizrahi immigrant women. They argue that "fragmented speech and multiple silences

… should be read as a complex act of forging a new sense of self" within which dominant cultural narratives "are adopted and resisted and appropriated and refashioned" because there is no legitimised narrative within which these individuals can relate their life experiences (Nagar-Ron & Motzafi-Haller, 2011, p. 654, 660). As such, silence should "no longer be considered as secondary to speech, but considered as an integral part of speech" (Mazzei, 2007, p. 641) that "hints at places where something unanalyzable might be interrupted into the precarious order of the research encounter" and understood as "productive of action, interpretation and consequence" (MacLure et al., 2010, p. 495, 498).

The moments which I identify as discursive transitions have an integral role to play in the production of a narrative, and it is essential to consider how they interrupt, but also inform, the process of constructing a meaningful story. The growing body of work in which moments of non-speech are studied attests to the importance of addressing emotional expressions and silences as moments that can crystalise for individuals the (re)construction of self-identity. Within silences that punctuate the narratives offered, discursive identity work is undertaken and the self is instantiated and negotiated, but this is not a disembodied experience. Narrators' adaption of a drawn life history line, emotional expression, the tone and voices used, attest to how they physically and performatively position themselves as the past and present, professional and personal, interior self and physical body are interwoven in their stories.

Conclusion

In this paper I have produced an analysis that engages with the work of Butler (1990) to conceptualise and identify discursive transitions within storytelling as a structuring presence.

In doing so, a different way of studying the embodied self-production that can emerge through narrative is offered. This has been possible because three distinct research disciplines have been drawn together: creative and art practices as research methods; multimodal approaches; and ethnographic/autobiographic interpretations that enable the study of emotional embodiment. By considering how the field of narrative research can better involve "active recollection of what is past, (as) an activity of concurrent actual (self) production" (Carter, 2004, p. 191), I have demonstrated that it is important to utilise art making and analyse non-verbal cues such as switches in talk, emotion and silences. Identifying these cues as discursive transitions that are a structuring presence provides a route for an alternative interpretation of how multimodal narrative interviews 'work' as a research tool. Conducting such interviews can be thought of as a situated form of embodiment through which individuals construct the moral universe they inhabit and justify the opinions they hold.

It is the combining of approaches from different research fields that has enabled a critical analyse of these moments theoretically and practically, providing a chance to reflect upon what can be learnt from the context and process of narrative production. This cross-disciplinary approach also highlights how the adoption of a creative, visual aspect can enhance and illustrate a participant's storytelling and make visceral their reflections on the process of engaging in such research. Indeed, the utilisation of a drawn line to facilitate storytelling provides an expanded space for physicality and emotional expression to entwine with verbal communication. There is freedom for the narrator to reimagine 'who they are' as they materialise embodied self-construction because they can utilise art making and verbal storytelling as co-related routes for self expression. "It can reflect a personal inscription or intervention in the world ... by a process of assembling thought, body and material in a specific ecological context" (Coessens et al., 2009, p. 95).

The embodied narrative interview process can also become a transformative experience it and of itself, inviting the narrator to move around their line creatively, reflecting and rethinking how they interpret their past experiences. Simultaneously the researcher is enabled to access "perspectives, sensibilities and issues for the research community that have not previously been accessible, including the acknowledgement of the ambiguity that lies within experience" (Coessens et al., 2009, p. 72). In particular, the switches in style or topic and moments of emotional expression, often accompanied by verbal pauses or extended silences, crystalise moments of self-knowledge and are examples of a structuring presence. These moments are central to the production of narratives that situate and personify the storyteller, performatively and discursively positioning them as individuals (Bamberg, 2011; Foucault, 1992).

Displays of emotion within narrative research are particularly important because these are moments that call attention to the diverse issues individuals face in their lives, offering a challenge to institutions, practices and ideologies that can be experienced as challenging. While uncomfortable silences and displays of emotion can be awkward for researchers, they attest to the difficulties people face in their lives and indicate changes that might need to be made locally, nationally and globally, making explicit "broader social and transformative goals" (King & Stahl, 2015, p. 199). This is important because as a narrative researcher I need to do justice to the often emotionally impactful stories that are shared. To stand as a witness and reflect on what can be learnt about, amongst other things, which goals of equality of opportunity and social justice might be pursued. I feel this is essential because individuals may choose to share particular stories because they hope the researcher as witness can engage a wider audience in listening and responding to such difficult accounts.

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Appendix 1 – Narrator Biographies

Pseudonym	Biography
Adam	A man in his 30s, based in Merseyside who was training to be a SENCo while working in a Primary Special school. He self-identified as having dyslexia.
Amy	A woman from Kent in her 30s who struggled at school for health reasons. At the time of interview she worked as an associate tutor in a HEI and had just completed her doctorate.
Belinda	A SENCo based in Merseyside. Progressed well in education until her A Levels, and then ran away from difficult circumstances at home. Re-entered education in

	early 30s and trained as a teacher and SENCo. She has 4 sons, 2 of who have SEN.
Chari	Struggled at school, but did not realise this was because she had dyslexia. Her daughter is also identified as having dyslexia and has struggled educationally. She is working in a primary school in East Lancashire.
Chris	Struggled at school for a variety of reasons including ADHD. Returned to education in his late 20s. He has been a teacher for 3 years and is currently working in a Pupil Referral Unit, specialising in primary aged children.
Danni	A woman with over 20 years' experience as a teacher and SENCo. Danni said she struggled at school for a range of reasons. She worked for the Police for a number of years and entered the teaching profession after having children.
Emma	Had 20 years' experience as a maths teacher based in East Lancashire. Emma felt she progressed well through their academic career, but discussed educational issues in relation to experiences relating to her daughter who has dyslexia.
Frances	A SENCo in Lancashire in her 30s, who felt she struggled at school due to a range of issues at home which 'dented' her self-confidence.
Guilia	Is a music specialist from Yorkshire who is in her 40s. She progressed well with her own academic career and has been a SENCo in a primary school since 2001.
Harriet	A Deputy Head and SENCo in a primary school in Lancashire. She progressed well in school and went straight into teaching from school.
Jenny	Struggled at school but did not realise she had dyslexia until she was diagnosed aged 21 while studying in FE. She felt the diagnosis changed her life, she trained in adult literacy and has spent 10 years working for the Prison service. She believes, her father, nephew and niece all have dyslexia.
Kerry	A SENCo with 25 years' experience of working in Early Years and Primary settings across Lancashire. She was brought up by her grandparents after her mother left home and feels this contributed to her struggling at school.
Linda	Struggled at school, but did not realise this was because she had dyslexia. Her father, and daughter have dyslexia too. She became a teacher as a second career in 2002 and has always been based in East Lancashire.
Mari	A SENCo with over 20 years' teaching experience based in Staffordshire. She described herself as 'average' student who struggled at school for health reasons but passed her O Levels at a Grammar school.
Naomi	A primary SENCo with over 30 years' experience of working with children in a Pennines town. She progressed well in her own education and wanted other children to share the same positive experience.
Penny	Lancashire based woman in her early 30s who struggled at school and during her teacher training because she has dyslexia. She specialises in art based work with primary aged children who have SEND.