

1 **Narratives 2.0**

2 **A multi-dimensional approach to semi-public storytelling in**
3 **WhatsApp voice messages¹**

4 *Katharina König*

5 **1 Narrating the private publicly – Practices of digital storytelling**

6 Storytelling has become an almost indispensable part of social
7 media communication. Users post accounts of recent events
8 on networking platforms like Twitter or Facebook, they re-
9 late their experiences in vlogs on YouTube or they publish
10 “stories” on Instagram and Snapchat. Linguistic practices of
11 storytelling are both afforded and shaped by the design of
12 these platforms, the choice of different posting formats and
13 the variety of semiotic resources users have at their disposal.
14 Stories constitute an important communicative genre for
15 sharing personal experiences and disseminating them in me-
16 diatised publics (De Fina/Perrino 2017; Georgakopoulou
17 2017a; Page 2018). Storytellers present momentary perspec-
18 tives on their lived experience to others and thus always re-
19 late aspects of themselves and identity positions they claim.

20 While the growing number of studies of social media story-
21 telling reflects the prominence of narrative formats in com-
22 puter-mediated discourse (De Fina/Perrino 2017; Hoffmann
23 2010; Georgakopoulou 2017b; Page 2018), the full range of re-
24 constructive genres of everyday mediatised communication
25 has not been covered, yet. First, many of these studies deal
26 with public storytelling, that is, stories which can be accessed

1 I would like to thank Susanne Günthner and Florence Oloff for their comments of a first version of this paper. Moreover, I extend my thanks to Rebecca Walsh for her proofreading.

27 by larger and oftentimes anonymous publics. However, there
28 are only few accounts of how users relate personal experi-
29 ences in smaller groups or dyadic constellations in which par-
30 ticipants know each other well and engage in various social
31 activities in their offline lives. Second, most studies look at
32 narrative formats which do not form part of an ongoing dia-
33 logic exchange. Although these stories can trigger comments
34 and other reactions, they are often posted on platforms or
35 sites which are not predominantly designed for continuous,
36 conversational messaging. Narratives which are embedded in
37 sequentially organised quasi-synchronous dialogues (in mes-
38 sengers like WhatsApp, WeChat, Signal and the like) still have
39 to be researched. Third, even though it is generally acknowl-
40 edged that social media narratives are multimodal in nature,
41 research has mainly focussed on “visual narratives”, that is,
42 aggregates of images or videos with written or text-based
43 postings or posting components. Digital narratives in which
44 both visual and audible postings are integrated in one contin-
45 uous string of discourse have yet to be analysed.

46 The aim of the present paper is to expand the emerging field
47 of digital narratology (De Fina/Perrino 2017; Hoffmann 2010;
48 Georgakopoulou 2017b; Page 2018) by presenting a study of
49 narratives in voice messages in WhatsApp group chats. It con-
50 tributes to research on social media storytelling in that it fo-
51 cusses on stories of personal experience which are

- 52 • narrated to well-defined non-anonymous publics in mo-
53 bile messaging,
- 54 • embedded in a communication platform which favours
55 a continuous dialogic exchange,
- 56 • multimodal (comprised of visual and audible posting
57 types).

58 Based on the sequential analysis of a corpus of narratives in
59 text and voice messages in German WhatsApp group chats,
60 the study will discuss how users bring about a shared per-
61 spective on the presented narratives of personal experience
62 and how they thus establish privacy and intimacy within the
63 group-public space of the mobile messaging chat. Section 2
64 reviews previous research in digital narratology, Section 3

65 outlines the parameters by which the framework for narra-
66 tives in mobile messaging differs from the affordances of
67 other social media platforms. Section 4 presents an analysis
68 of two storytelling formats utilising text and voice messages in
69 German WhatsApp group chats. It focusses on the sequential
70 design and the semiotic resources users deploy to narrate
71 personal experiences in messenger dialogues. The concluding
72 section discusses the findings in light of a controlled public-
73 ness in group chats and the implications for future research in
74 digital narratology.

75 **2 Affording narratives in social media: dimensions and parameters**

76 Storytelling is one of the central communicative practices re-
77 alised in social media. Recent studies have identified narra-
78 tive formats in different communication forms such as e-
79 mails (Georgakopoulou 2004), blogs (Eisenlauer/Hoffmann
80 2010), forums or message boards (Arendholz 2010; Bubenho-
81 fer 2018; Heyd 2016), status updates (West 2013; Page et al.
82 2013; Farina 2015), Twitter postings (Page 2015) or Wikipedia
83 entries (Gredel/Mell 2018; Page 2018). Indeed, social net-
84 works and micro-blogging platforms seem to favour or afford
85 narrative stancetaking (Georgakopoulou 2017a; De Fina/Per-
86 rino 2017): Users are often asked to share their experiences
87 with others; postings can be tagged automatically with time
88 stamps or information about the poster's location, which es-
89 tablishes a spatio-temporal frame for each posting. Moreover,
90 some platforms allow users to tag other users, which enables
91 the original posters to choose co-tellers or recipients from a
92 larger audience.

93 Users exploit these technical affordances to realise several
94 forms of storytelling which do not always conform with the
95 "narrative prototype": Drawing on Labov and Waletzky's
96 seminal research of recurrent narrative structures in oral nar-
97 ratives of personal experience (Labov/Waletzky 1967; Labov
98 1972), the analysis of linguistic practices of storytelling has
99 long focused on elaborated single-teller narrations which in-
100 clude an initial orientation, outline the complicating action
101 and offer a resolution before a final coda interspersed with
102 internal and external evaluations indexing the teller's stance

103 towards the reconstructed events. While conversation-ana-
104 lytic studies have helped to identify the co-constructedness
105 of storytelling activities as interactive accomplishments
106 (Becker/Quasthoff 2005; Quasthoff 2001; Selting 2017), they
107 too have mainly focused on sequentially extended “big pack-
108 ages” (Sacks 1995).

109 Although “big” stories can still be found in weblogs or
110 YouTube videos, recent studies point out that major parts of
111 narrative practice in social media will be missed if one only
112 takes those forms into account that adhere to the prototype
113 of a single teller reconstructing past events in a linear and se-
114 quentially self-contained manner. Rather, the small stories
115 research paradigm (Georgakopoulou 2017a, b; Georgalou
116 2015; Page 2010; Page et al. 2013) has identified various other
117 formats in which users take a narrative stance without neces-
118 sarily presenting a complete narrative account afterwards:

119 *Narrative stancetaking* involves posts in which conven-
120 tionalized story framing devices are used to suggest that
121 there is a story in the making, a story that can be told,
122 developed and updated later if requested. More gener-
123 ally, narrative stancetaking indicates that an activity is:

- 124 • being offered or taken up as a story, thereby posi-
125 tioning participants as tellers-recipients-(co)-tellers,
126 etc. and/or,
- 127 • consisting of events and characters in specific spati-
128 otemporal scenarios whose actions and speech are
129 assessable. (Georgakopoulou 2017b: 275)

130 Thus, the small story heuristic casts a wide net over semiotic
131 practices in social media and allows for identifying a larger set
132 of storytelling practices. Instead of solely focussing on com-
133 plete or “full-fledged” stories, studies of this paradigm iden-
134 tify condensed and often fragmentary narrative patterns in
135 Tweets (Page 2015) or selfie postings (Georgakopoulou 2016)
136 in which the textual basis is either restricted by the platform
137 (e.g. 280 characters on Twitter) or secondary to the picture
138 posting (as is the case with selfies). To better grasp the vari-
139 ous features which have been identified as characteristic for

140 digital narrations, the next paragraph will introduce an adap-
141 tation of Ochs and Capps' model of narrative dimensions to
142 the study of social media storytelling (Page 2012).

143 Building on their observation that many of the narratives
144 found in oral conversations actually do not conform with the
145 Labovian default narrative, Ochs and Capps (2001) developed
146 a dimensional model for the study of everyday storytelling.
147 They stipulate that a more differential account of narratives
148 can be given by examining the following five dimensions of
149 storytelling activities – tellability, tellership, embeddedness,
150 linearity and moral stance – which are organised on a contin-
151 uum rather than as binary opposites. Interlocutors treat the
152 reconstruction of an event as more or less tellable (i.e. of in-
153 terest or of significance for the recipients). Speakers can posi-
154 tion themselves as the only or primary teller, or various
155 speakers might contribute to an ongoing telling activity. Sto-
156 ries can respond to a foregoing activity and thus exhibit a
157 high degree of embeddedness, or they can be presented as
158 sequentially detached entities which do not relate to the pre-
159 ceding conversational exchange. Tellers can choose to recon-
160 struct relevant events in a linear or chronological order, or
161 they might relate them in reversed or even non-linear order.
162 Finally, the teller's evaluative or moral stance can be stable or
163 rather flexible and negotiable.

164 While Ochs and Capps' dimensional approach was in-
165 tended for oral and synchronous forms of storytelling, recent
166 studies of computer-mediated discourse argue that the model
167 can also be applied to the analysis of text-based and asyn-
168 chronous narratives in social media (Page 2012; Arendholz
169 2010). Characterising social media storytelling along the five
170 dimensions, these studies contend, helps to adequately grasp
171 and systematise the variety of narrative forms and formats in
172 social media – even though the categories for describing the
173 varying shapes of the narrative dimensions have to be re-
174 worked (Page 2012, 2015). For one thing, the semiotic means
175 tellers can deploy for narrating certain events differ as the
176 model now also encompasses text-based narration (prosodic
177 contextualisation cues vs. typographic variation or emojis).
178 Particularly, studies in the small stories paradigm have out-
179 lined further distinctive features of narratives in social media.
180 The following summary relates their main findings to the five
181 narrative dimensions:

- 182
- 183
- 184
- 185
- 186
- 187
- 188
- 189
- 190
- 191
- 192
- 193
- 194
- 195
- 196
- 197
- 198
- 199
- 200
- 201
- 202
- 203
- 204
- 205
- 206
- 207
- 208
- 209
- 210
- 211
- 212
- 213
- 214
- 215
- 216
- 217
- 218
- **Tellability:** Social media favour the reconstruction of recent and sometimes still ongoing events or of past and future events which are linked to aspects of the current situation (Page 2015; Dayter/Mühleisen 2016). Moreover, users predominantly narrate their self: Their own mundane everyday experiences are treated as relevant to other users (Georgakopoulou 2017a).
 - **Tellership:** Social media narratives are often realised by multiple tellers. This occurs either within one communication form (e.g. by inviting others to comment on a selfie; Georgakopoulou 2016), through collaborative writing practices on Wikipedia (Gredel/Mell 2018) or by sharing and further commenting on narrative content across different platforms (Page 2018).
 - **Embeddedness:** Social media narratives are persistent (boyd 2011). They can be forwarded and shared with other users and on other communication platforms, i.e. they are taken from their original communicative contexts and embedded or recontextualised in a different sequential framework (De Fina 2016; De Fina/Gore 2017; Georgakopoulou 2015; Page 2018; Tienken 2013).
 - **Linearity:** Hypertextual features (links to webpages, postings or hashtags) turn social media narratives into networked, non-linear polymedial configurations (West 2013; Eisenlauer/Hoffmann 2010). Some social media platforms actually display postings in counter-chronological order (Page 2015), which impedes a posting-by-posting development of narratives. Moreover, social media narratives often do not constitute clearly delimited or closed-off formats; they are rather emergent, fragmented and potentially open-ended (Georgakopoulou 2017b).
 - **Moral stance:**² In the context of emergent storytelling, which often begins without a predetermined teleological endpoint, users can shift their evaluative stances (Deppermann 2018). Also, the multiple voices involved in the collaborative storytelling activities, which are

2 In contrast to Ochs and Capps (2001: 45), my understanding of the term “moral” is a rather broad one, which is not restricted to the contextualisation of “what is good or valuable and how one ought to live in the world” but rather captures the evaluative of affective stances that tellers take in their stories.

219 shared and reconfigured (or rescripted, see Geor-
220 gakopoulou 2015), often produce variable and some-
221 times conflicting moral or affective stances vis-à-vis the
222 narrative subject (De Fina/Gore 2017).

223 Whereas the aforementioned features can adequately charac-
224 terise narrative practices on platforms such as Facebook (be
225 it in status updates or in selfie postings) or Twitter, they do
226 not document the actual spectrum of storytelling in social
227 media. While the small stories paradigm has clearly helped to
228 identify the wide range of – what is often referred to as “a-
229 typical” – communicative practices in which users relate
230 event structures in web 2.0 contexts, one should not lose
231 sight of the linear, elaborate forms of narration which can
232 also be found in social media contexts. Blogs, vlogs, message
233 boards and internet forums, as well as Wikipedia entries, offer
234 sites for user-generated narratives which are tilted towards
235 the other end of the dimensional scale. These “big” stories of-
236 ten relate non-recent and life-changing events (such as child-
237 birth, cf. Bubenhofer 2018, or a biographical crisis, cf. Ar-
238 endholz 2010); they are told in a coherent, linear and teleo-
239 logic fashion by a single teller with a straightforward, non-
240 flexible evaluative stance. According to De Fina it is not the
241 actual shape of the stories told in social media that distin-
242 guishes them from their familiar counterparts in oral commu-
243 nication (Herring 2013) but rather their potential to be shared
244 in a wider audience or networked public (and thus their
245 open-endedness) across different media and their multimodal
246 design:

247 [W]hat is most distinctive about storytelling in social
248 media is precisely the way narratives are shared, recon-
249 textualized, commented upon, and subject to continu-
250 ous reconfigurations and reinterpretations, how they are
251 embedded within different media, how they are often
252 recounted through multimodal resources, and how their
253 production and circulation are as much a focus of atten-
254 tion as their content. (De Fina 2016: 477–478)

255 Thus, to apply the dimensional model of narratives to social
256 media storytelling requires more than just a reworking of the
257 parameters (Page 2012): It must recognise the different modes

258 of contribution and participation which have developed (sin-
259 gle teller and multiple voices); it must also recognise that cer-
260 tain platforms (Twitter and Facebook) and postings types
261 (selfies) favour recency while others afford retrospection
262 (blogs, forums). Due to their mediated and networked nature,
263 I argue that further dimensions have to be added to the di-
264 mensional model, which was originally developed to capture
265 the specificities of ephemeral and synchronous oral storytell-
266 ing. With the production, retention and distribution of stories
267 via different media and platforms, other affordances and re-
268 sources are available to users for taking a narrative stance.
269 Rather than subsuming them under the five dimensions de-
270 veloped by Ochs and Capps, I suggest expanding the model
271 by adding the following three dimensions:

- 272 • **Publicness:** In addition to having multiple tellers, the
273 publics can be quite dispersed in social media storytell-
274 ing. Users can select particular recipients to receive
275 their stories or post them on platforms accessible to a
276 wider, often anonymous networked public (De Fina
277 2016; De Fina/Gore 2017). Mediated story postings are
278 also persistent; they can be shared with a wider audi-
279 ence for which the original story was not designed in
280 the first place (alluded to as “context collapse” by
281 Baym/boyd 2012). In a communicative framework char-
282 acterised by polymedia (Madianou 2014; Androutsou-
283 poulos/Staehr 2018) users can navigate and control (at
284 least to a certain extent) publicness by choosing particu-
285 lar platforms, communication forms (such as group
286 chats) or privacy settings (Georgalou 2016).
- 287 • **Multimodality:** Even though many studies in digital
288 narratology take text-based material as their starting
289 point, they also always stress the fact that social media
290 storytelling is essentially multimodal in nature (Eisen-
291 lauer/Hoffmann 2010; Farina 2015). Different platforms
292 afford different semiotic resources to users for telling a
293 story. They can choose to relate their experiences in a
294 text-based manner, exploiting typographic or other
295 structuring resources afforded by the platforms (story
296 abstracts might be given in headers so that the actual
297 posting can start with the complicating action; see Ar-
298 endholz 2010) or combinations of text and images can

299 be used as multimodal aggregates of narration (Eisen-
300 lauer/Hoffmann 2010). Also, different posting types
301 might be used for different story components (image
302 postings might be used as invitations for others to re-
303 quest more elaborate narrations in the form of text mes-
304 sages; Georgakopoulou 2016) which brings about a
305 “transmodal interaction” (Androutsopoulos/Staehr 2018:
306 124). As users can often choose to design their stories as
307 more or less multimodal, this aspect should be added to
308 the dimensional model of social media storytelling.

309 • **Sequencing:** In addition to the dimension of embed-
310 dedness, which captures the relation of the story to the
311 current communicative context, the dimension of se-
312 quencing helps to differentiate variation in the sequen-
313 tial design of stories in social media. Stories can be
314 made up of one single posting or of multiple postings
315 which chunk the telling of the story into several larger
316 or smaller units (what Page 2012: 193 refers to as “narra-
317 tive sequencing”).

318 Naturally, digital narratology has acknowledged the varying
319 groups of recipients and audiences and differences in the se-
320 quential and multimodal design of stories in social media for
321 some time. Yet, explicitly anchoring them as additional di-
322 mensions helps to highlight and systematise the particularities
323 of social media storytelling. The analyses in Section 4 will
324 outline how the expanded dimensional model (see Table 1)
325 can be applied to the study of multimodal storytelling in mo-
326 bile messenger chats (more specific: storytelling with text and
327 voice messages in WhatsApp group chats). The next section
328 will give a brief outline of the affordances of WhatsApp com-
329 munication in general and of storytelling in group chats in
330 particular.

331 **3 Affording narratives in WhatsApp group chats**

332 Similar to internet-based communication platforms, which al-
333 low users to connect and share different forms of user-gener-
334 ated content with each other, messengers like Signal, Tele-
335 gram, WeChat or WhatsApp form part of the ever-growing

336 social media infrastructure (Marx/Weidacher 2014; Androut-
337 sopoulos 2010). These messengers, typically used on mobile
338 devices, often consist of several communication modules
339 (such as status information, stories, chats etc.). The following
340 analyses will focus on WhatsApp, which is the most popular
341 messenger app in Germany. Its chat interface enables dyadic
342 chats (one-to-one), broadcast lists (one-to-many) and group
343 chats (many-to-many). Despite its increasing popularity, lin-
344 guistic research of user practices in these different set-ups is
345 still scarce.

346 WhatsApp communication is dialogical and multimodal in
347 nature. Studies indicate that text messaging is used in a chat-
348 like manner especially when users are oriented to the device
349 at the same time (Dürscheid/Frick 2016). Like in computer-
350 based chats, chunking is applied as one method to manage
351 the rapid or quasi-synchronous exchange of messages (Imo
352 2015; König 2015, *forthc.*; Wyss/Hug 2016). In addition to
353 emoticons, emojis are used widely e.g. as contextualisation
354 cues or economic forms of communication (Dürscheid/Siever
355 2017; Pappert 2017). While these features all work in the vis-
356 ual modality, with voice messages user-generated auditory
357 postings can also be integrated into the continuous thread of
358 messages. These audio postings, which can be easily recorded
359 on the surface of the chat interface, do not replace text mes-
360 sages but rather complement the existing practices of mobile
361 messaging by providing additional semiotic resources that us-
362 ers can exploit for their communicative purposes. Users often
363 stage “dramas to an audience” (Goffman 1974: 508) in voice
364 messages by relating particular prosodic stylisations or by re-
365 cording elements of the poster’s soundscape (König/Hector
366 2017). They display different degrees of embeddedness as
367 they are designed as “monologic” contributions, which do not
368 relate to the foregoing discourse, or as “dialogic” postings,
369 which respond to a foregoing posting and hence make an-
370 other user’s response relevant (König/Hector 2019). Because
371 most of previous studies of WhatsApp deal with dyadic chats,
372 little is known about the dynamics of WhatsApp group chats
373 (but see König 2019) let alone the practices of storytelling that

374 have evolved in this communication form.³ Yet, the multi-
375 modal and semi-public character of group chats make them
376 an interesting subject for digital narratology.

377 Note, however, that their affordances do not particularly
378 favour narratives like other social media platforms (Geor-
379 gakopoulou 2017a; see also Section 2). Although WhatsApp
380 postings are also always tagged with time-stamps, there is no
381 particular prompt or invitation to reconstruct past or recent
382 events. Instead, the quasi-synchronous flow of messages ex-
383 changed between multiple chatters might even hinder the re-
384 alisation of rather complex narrative projects. Indeed, some
385 studies find that it is unlikely for users to try to convey an
386 elongated narrative in a chat-like interface (Hoffmann 2004;
387 Arendholz 2010).⁴ Thus, the WhatsApp group chat interface
388 does not prioritise narratives in the same way as other social
389 media platforms or communication forms. However, with the
390 introduction of voice messages, a posting type has entered
391 the communicative realm of messenger chats which can af-
392 ford longer contributions that are easy to produce.⁵ How us-
393 ers exploit this resource for storytelling in group chats will be
394 analysed in the following section.

395 Also, unlike in other forms of social media storytelling, in
396 WhatsApp group chats narrative contributions are particu-
397 larly designed for a non-anonymous semi-public audience
398 made up of the group chat members.⁶ At the same time, post-
399 ers are not anonymous; they are at least identifiable by their
400 mobile phone number. Building on the extended dimensional
401 model for narratives, the analyses in Section 4 have to deter-
402 mine the methods users prototypically apply to tell stories in
403 multi-party and multimodal mobile messenger chats. Moreo-
404 ver, the analyses will also illustrate how chatters make use of,

3 For an analysis of patterns of storytelling in dyadic WhatsApp chats see Hector (forthc.).

4 Even in e-mails, which can have a more “monologic”, letter-like form, larger narrations are often postponed to face-to-face encounters, see Georgakopoulou 2004.

5 The lock-option introduced in 2018 makes longer recordings even easier.

6 Note, however, that WhatsApp chat content is persistent: it can be forwarded to others and shared on additional platforms or in face-to-face encounters. Future studies have to determine for which purposes chatters make use of this practice, in which cases it is deemed as a breach of privacy and in which cases it is deemed acceptable.

405 integrate and allude to the networked semi-public of the
406 group chat for their storytelling activities.

407 **4 Storytelling with voice messages in WhatsApp group chats**

408 The following analyses are based on a corpus of 28 German
409 WhatsApp group chats consisting of 585 text messages, 98
410 voice messages and 17 image postings which were collected in
411 the research project “Dialogicality of Voice Messages”.⁷ In
412 this corpus 19 dialogues containing narratives were identified
413 (consisting of 164 text messages, 46 voice messages and 7 im-
414 age postings); this collection was analysed for the current pa-
415 per. The chats took place between 2016 and 2018. They com-
416 prise dialogues between family members and groups of
417 friends (mostly students) with four to five group members on
418 average. All in all, group chats with 28 different users, aged 22
419 to 58 years, were gathered. Text messages including time
420 stamps are available as logfile data or screenshots. Voice mes-
421 sages have been transcribed using the GAT 2 conventions
422 (Selting et al. 2009). All names and place references have
423 been replaced by pseudonyms. I will present two excerpts
424 which capture the prototypical features of storytelling activi-
425 ties in the given collection.

426 4.1 Placing “big packages” in group chats

427 As was argued in Section 3, the continuous and quasi-syn-
428 chronous exchange of messages in multi-party group chats
429 does not offer ideal conditions for producing longer narrative
430 sequences. The following excerpt, taken from a group chat of
431 four female friends in their twenties, illustrates how users
432 nevertheless manage to place narrations in mobile instant
433 messaging. First of all, in the given collection narratives are
434 typically placed as a posting initiating a new dialogue, i.e. a
435 new thread of thematically-related messages.⁸ Users thus
436 avoid the risk of sequentially non-related contributions by

7 For more information see <https://www.uni-muenster.de/Germanistik/Projekte/WhatsApp/index.html>.

8 For narratives in dyadic chats, Hector (forthc.) finds a greater variability in the embeddedness of narratives. He also finds patterns in which users ‘ask’ for a ticket, in which other users elicit stories or in which they are embedded as second stories.

437 other users.⁹ Characteristically, there are no ‘overlapping’ or
 438 parallel activities. In posting 1, Beate (BE) starts a new dia-
 439 logical unit at 01:47 am, a time at which group members were
 440 not simultaneously oriented to the messenger. It is in such a
 441 context that WhatsApp users treat their reconstruction of re-
 442 cent events as tellable right away. That is, they do not elicit a
 443 prompt to tell their stories, they do not ask for a ‘ticket’ or
 444 permission to start storytelling (Sacks 1974). Second, the
 445 choice to use voice messages as a posting type also enables
 446 users to place extended single-teller narrations in messenger
 447 chats. In the given example, Beate first takes a narrative
 448 stance by posting an abstract of the event setting so far (post-
 449 ing #1) before switching to an audio posting to deliver a full-
 450 blown account of the following events (posting #2).

451 **Excerpt 1: lost purse and keys**

1 BE 01:47 Gerade beim feiern im Amp hab ich mein Portemonnaie und mei-
 nen Schlüssel verloren 🎉🐱🐱 richtig geiler Abend

**Lost my purse and my keys while partying at the Amp 🎉🐱🐱 re-
 ally cool evening**

2 BE 01:50 *Voice message duration 02:34*

001 AN: wir ham dann HALT-
we then
 002 (0.2) geWARTet,
waited
 003 bis ähm (0.1) alle WEG waren aus dem
 lAden-
until everyone had left the club
 004 ham den ganzen <<lachend>lAden>
 durchgeSU:CHT-
we searched the whole club
 005 und halt NACHgefragt-=
and asked around
 006 =und besSCHEID gesagt-
and told everyone
 007 °hh aber es wurd natürlich !NICHTS!
 abgegEben:-
but of course nothing was returned
 [...]
 024 wir ham alles durchSU:CHT-
we looked everywhere
 025 und immer NACHgefra:gt-
and always asked around
 026 und WAR halt nix-
but to no avail

⁹ Phenomena like split adjacency and phantom adjacency which are typical for text-based quasi-synchronous chats (Beißwenger 2016; Garcia/Baker Jacobs 1999) are thus averted by design.

027 dann haben wir (halt) quasi gewartet
bis de:r scheid laden ZU macht
endlich,
then we waited until the fucking club closed

028 °hh (0.2) ((schlucken))
((gulping))

029 und wir halt den leeren (0.1) lAden
durchsuchen KÖNnen:-
so that we could search the empty club

030 ÄHM:-
ehm

031 (0.6) und da haben wir dann aber
leider <<h>!AUCH! nichts gefunden:->
and unfortunately we did not find anything

032 dann kam irgendwann einer der da
geARbeitet hat-
after some time one of the employees
approached me

033 hat meinen PERso gefunden?
found my ID

034 °hh also mein pErso der im portmonNAIE
war-
that is my ID which had been in my purse

035 is auf <<lachend>jeden fall>
AUFgetau:cht?
has turned up

[...]

060 (1.1) also das geld ist mir jetzt auch
(.) richtig eGAL,
I don't care about the money

061 (0.6) aber ähm (.) schlüssel is halt
SCHEIße;
but having lost my keys sucks

062 °hhh (vielleicht) hat ja irgendwer
besOffen den schlüssel eingESTECKT;
maybe someone took my keys drunk

063 und ähm: MERKT dann morgen früh==
and will realise tomorrow morning

064 =oh das is gar nicht MEIner;
oh that's not mine

065 °hh <<gähnend, h>und gibt ihn
viel!LEICHT! bei der polizeI ab;>
and maybe returns them to the police

066 deshalb telefonIER ich morgen nochmal
mit meinen netten freunden von der
polIZEI:;>;
that is why I will call my dear friends from
the police tomorrow

067 hh° <<creaky>JA;>
yeah

068 °hh <<creaky>war auf jeden fall ein
schöner Abend>;=ne?
it was a really nice evening anyway, right?

069 <<t>hat sich richtig geLOHNT;>
it really was worth it

070 (0.6) ordentlich auf die KACke
gehauen:;
really had a blast

071 °h_ACHTzig euro-
eighty euros

072 wat SOLLS;
why do I care?

073 (0.5) SCH:LÜSsel no_hinterhErgeworfen-
throwing the keys away
 074 (0.3) °hh <<verstellt>alles RAUS;>
everything must go
 075 h°((schnalzen)) gute nAcht ihr süßen
 SCH:ÄTzis-
good night you sweet darlings
 076 (0.1) SCHM:ATzi:s-
kisses
 077 °hh gut dass ihr: ((schlucken)) brav
 zu hause SITZT=
how good that you sit at home well-behaved
 078 =und HAUSarbeiten schreibt-
writing your papers
 079 und nach INdien jette:t-
that you are jetting to India
 080 °h und äh morgen früh ARbeiten mü:stt-
and have to work tomorrow morning
 081 und SCHLAFen geh:t-
and that you go to sleep
 082 (0.3) un:d nicht FEIern geh:t-
and don't go partying
 083 mItten in der WOche:-
in the middle of the week
 084 das ist die <<creaky>STRAfe dafü::r;>
that is my rightful punishment
 085 °hh wer geht denn auch schon dIEnstags
 FEIern;
who goes to a party on Tuesday anyway
 086 (1.5)

- 3 IS 04:05 Ach fuck 😞
Oh fuck 😞
- 4 IS 04:05 Hoffe du fährst mit dem Rad ohne Licht zu deinen Freunden von
 der Polizei 😂
**I hope you take your bike without lights to your dear friends from
 the police**
- 5 IS 04:06 Wer war denn mit?
Who was with you?
- 6 JA 06:56 Oh nein :/ wie blöd!
Oh no :/ how awful
- 7 JA 06:57 Vor allem was wollen die mit Schlüsseln?!
After all what do they want with the keys?
- 8 JA 06:58 Jaa..fuck ey. Teuerlicher Abend
Yeah fuck ey. Expensive evening
- 9 BE 08:25 Ja versteh ich auch nicht
Yeah I don't understand either
- 10 BE 08:35 Gut angekommen Isi?
Are you there yet Isi?
- 11 NI 09:57 Ach kacke! Zum glück hast du deinen perso. Hoffentlich gibt echt
 noch jemand den schlüssel ab. Blööööd 🤔🤔🤔🤔
**Ah shit! Fortunately you have your ID. Hopefully someone returns
 the keys. Awwwwwwful** 🤔🤔🤔🤔

452 Beate uses a voice message to give a complete and linear nar-
453 rative account of the events which unfolded after she discov-
454 ered that she had lost her purse and her apartment keys.
455 While some narrations are first announced with a preceding
456 text message (such as in the given excerpt), users usually do
457 not chunk the narrative core,¹⁰ which in itself is characterised
458 as a temporally emergent structure. In just one audio posting,
459 she presents the complicating actions (searching for the miss-
460 ing objects, finding her ID), a resolution (she plans to contact
461 the police) and a coda containing a lesson to be learned from
462 her experience (one should not party on a Tuesday). Alt-
463 hough it would have been technically possible to stop record-
464 ing after each of these story units to enable recipient reac-
465 tions, WhatsApp users typically present voice message narra-
466 tions in a closed-off format. The lengths of the audio postings
467 in the given collection range from 20 seconds to 2.5 minutes,
468 with a mean length of 49.5 seconds. So, the actual telling of
469 the story is a monologic act by a single teller who hinders
470 others from influencing the story's trajectory. By choosing not
471 to split the story into several postings, tellers can present a
472 complete account of the event structure and their evaluation.
473 The narration is interspersed with various explicit and im-
474 plicit evaluations exhibiting a fluctuating evaluative stance.
475 While Beate starts off by relating the events in a serious tone,
476 she later switches to a more humorous and ironic stance (in-
477 dicated by various cues like shifts in pitch and voice quality,
478 use of vulgarism).

479 In terms of tellability, we can see parallels to narrations
480 found on platforms like Twitter and Facebook: WhatsApp
481 group chats are treated as sites where personal experiences
482 (be they positive or self-deprecating) can be shared with oth-
483 ers. In this way, users present performances of themselves;
484 they position themselves in these narrative accounts and thus
485 construct personal identities. Also, all of the events related in
486 the collection can be characterised as rather recent events
487 which happened only a few days or even minutes before
488 their narrative reconstruction in the group chats and which
489 are still unfolding – like in the given excerpt in which Beate
490 has not yet determined what happened to her purse and her

10 This is also the case for narratives in dyadic WhatsApp chats, see Hector (forthc.).

491 keys. These breaking news stories reduce the temporal dis-
492 tance between the taleworld and the telling world (Geor-
493 gakopoulou 2013). Recipients are thus invited to take part in
494 the teller's experiences as they emerge despite being in dif-
495 ferent locations.

496 Concerning the narrative dimension of publicness, the ex-
497cerpt exhibits two features characteristic of multimodal sto-
498 rytelling in WhatsApp group chats: First, the narration itself is
499 explicitly designed to address all members of the group.
500 While there are no forms of address at the posting's begin-
501 ning, Beate closes her story by referring to her friends as
502 "SCH:ÄTzis" (075, the diminutive plural form of *Schatz*
503 'sweetheart'), which expresses closeness and familiarity
504 (Günthner/Zhu 2015). She then enumerates activities that she
505 knows the other group members did instead of partying (writ-
506 ing a paper, going to work, flying to India) and thus connects
507 her experience with the other group members.

508 Second, the recipients' reactions in this excerpt are char-
509 acteristic in their design: They are typically cast in text mes-
510 sages rather than in audio postings. Moreover, they assess or
511 evaluate the narrated events with rather conventionalised
512 and similar expressions. All group members contextualise
513 their evaluative stances with swearing interjections ("ach
514 fuck", #3, "fuck ey", #8, "Ach kacke!", #11). Responses to
515 selfie postings exhibit similar patterns; they are referred to as
516 "ritual appreciation" (Georgakopoulou 2016), i.e. generic ways
517 of displaying one's alignment with the first-poster's stance.
518 What is also striking is that the users do not react to one an-
519 other; rather, their postings are designed as responses to the
520 initial story. Even though there are postings which could have
521 been expanded upon by Beate (a humorous fictionalisation of
522 future events in #4, a follow-up question in #5), she does not
523 develop the story further. Instead, she displays her general ir-
524 ritation (her response to posting #7) before she initiates a
525 change of subject by addressing Isi with a question not re-
526 lated to her story. It is a general tendency for narrations in
527 the given collection to not develop into rather extended fol-
528 low-up sequences. This again highlights the fact that multi-
529 modal storytelling in group chats constitutes a rather confined
530 activity which is set off from the more chat-like or conversa-
531 tional to and fro of messaging.

532 Note that all group members respond to Beate's story, even
533 though they basically express the same affiliative stances,
534 even though some time has passed since Beate's original
535 postings and – as is the case of Nina's posting #11 – even
536 though Beate has already moved on to another thematic
537 strand. This points to the particular function of storytelling in
538 the controlled semi-publicness of group chats: Users do more
539 than just inform other group members about what happened
540 in their lives; they share their perspective and their interpretation
541 of their everyday experiences with a particular pre-set
542 group of people, thus treating them as friends and re-establishing
543 the sociality of a friendship. This 'sharing' framework
544 explains why recipients post similar responses even if they
545 are repetitive in form and content. In this controlled public,
546 they reaffirm that they all hold the same views.

547 While the analysis of the group chat story in excerpt 1 can
548 make use of Ochs and Capp's (2001) narrative dimensions
549 (tellability is treated as a given, the story is not embedded in
550 an ongoing interaction but constitutes the first move, a single
551 teller reconstructs a personal experience in a linear order and
552 takes various evaluative stances towards the event), it cannot
553 fully grasp all the choices or resources that tellers in social
554 media can exploit for their communicative purposes. The
555 overall aim of the dimensional modelling of narratives was to
556 give an account of the varying parameters that conversational
557 narratives exhibit. Social media afford new "narrative possibilities"
558 (Ochs/Capps 2001: 20) and the dimensions of publicness,
559 multimodality and sequencing help to capture these additional
560 possibilities of story design. In excerpt 1, Beate sequences
561 her story into two units: She first posts a rather short
562 abstract before relating the events in more detail with a separate
563 posting. For this, she mode-switches from a text to an
564 audio posting; subsequently, the other group members respond
565 with text messages. The story and its subsequent responses
566 thus constitute a "transmodal interaction" (Androutsopoulos/Staehr
567 2018). Moreover, Beate chooses a particular audience by posting
568 her messages in the semi-public chat with her friends making an
569 affiliative reaction by all of them relevant. While all of the other
570 group chat members take on the role of recipients rather than co-tellers,
571 the following analysis will further explore how group chat members
572 can take on different participant roles.
573

574 4.1 Managing participation roles

575 The previous analyses have demonstrated that the prototype
 576 of storytelling with voice messages in group chats is based on
 577 recent personal experiences; it is related by a single teller as
 578 an initial, sequentially non-embedded and linearly organised
 579 “big package” story (in a single voice message sometimes in-
 580 troduced by a text message containing an abstract); other
 581 group members document their affiliative evaluative stances
 582 in rather conventionalised text message responses in the
 583 semi-public group space. The following excerpt, taken from
 584 the same group chat, illustrates that other forms of participa-
 585 tion are possible. In this case, the “deviation” from the proto-
 586 typical structure can be explained by the story itself, which
 587 identifies the group member Isi as an object of playful ridi-
 588 cule.

589 Again, Beate’s narration is the initial, non-embedded post-
 590 ing in a new dialogue. It specifically addresses all group mem-
 591 bers (001) and relates recent events as tellable objects (she
 592 has just arrived in Munich and reconstructs her activities and
 593 the thoughts she had on her journey there). However, the
 594 narrative’s trajectory differs from the prototype particularly
 595 with regard to its multimodal design and the participant roles
 596 of teller, recipient and audience.

597 **Excerpt 2: Isi is the "Sams"**

1 BE 15:31 *Voice message duration: 00:52*

001 BE: ello ihr Süße:::n-
ello sweethearts

002 ich bin gerade in MUnich angekommen
 beim prImmu:s-
I have just arrived in MUnich at the
prImmu:s-

003 °hh mache später ein <<h>video von der
 UNterkun:ft->
I will send a video of my accommodation later

004 und kurz muss ich erZÄHlen,
I have to tell shortly

005 °hh auf der <<lachend>he_HINfahrt,>
on my way in

006 °h <:->hab ich das SAMS gehört,
I listened to the Sams

007 <<lachend>hh° he °h>
((laughing))

008 (0.3)und musste mich m:ega
 kaPUTTlachen die ganze ze:i:t,>
and was laughing really hard all the time

009 dass ich mittlerweile schon so_n
 bisschen an mir ZWEIfle:,

010 **so that I now question myself**
 (0.1) aber (0.1) ich find halt das
 sind auch so witze für er↑WACHsene;
but I think the jokes are suitable for adults,
too

011 das ist gar kein kIndeR (0.1) BUCH;
it is no children's book

012 (0.3) EIgentlich;
actually

013 °hhh <<f>auf JEden fall,
anyway

014 sagen dIE: (0.1) NÄMlich,
they say

015 °h sagt das <<lachend>SAMS immer,>
the Sams always says,

016 °hh es hat aus versehen alles
 <<lachend>AUFgeessen,>
that it accidentally ate everything

017 °hh <<-)>und dann ist mir
 EINGefallen,=
and then I realised

018 =dass die Isi das SAMS is;
that Isi is the Sams

019 weil die ja auch aus versehen meinen
 MÜSliriegel Aufisst-
because she accidentally eats my cereal bars

020 und anscheinend schon diverse ANDere
 sachen-
and apparently many other things as well

021 ich hoffe nicht äh: den FENstergriff==
I hope she did not eat the window handle

022 =wie das SAMS-
like the Sams

023 oder aus versehen die anzüge oder so
 von (0.2) JENnybär-
or Jennybear's suits by accident

024 oder: (0.2) °h STEfan oder so;
or Stefan or something like that;

025 °h naja das wollt ich nur kurz
 <<-)>MITteilen;>
anyways I just wanted to impart that

2 IS 15:36 *Voice message duration: 00:21*

001 IS: (0.6) JA;;
yeah

002 voll GEIL;
totally cool

003 ich hab ja AUCH-
I also have

004 naja Rotes haar nich,
well I don't have red hair

005 aber auch BLOND-
but also blond

006 und °h auch SOMmersprossen wie das
 sAms,
and also freckles like the Sams

007 <<creaky>das sind auch alles
 WUNSCHpunkte nämlich,>
all of them also are wishing spots

008 °h und ich pass eigentlich au_nur
 in_nen TAUcheranzug-
and a diving suit is the only thing that I fit in to

			009	und alles <<creaky>andere PLATZT bei mI::r;> and everything else I wear bursts
			010	(0.3)ich hab AUCH immer das sams sehr gern gehört; I have also always liked to listen to the Sams
			011	jetzt <<behaucht>weiß ich> auch waRUM; and now I know why
			012	(0.3) ich hatte immer ne ausrede für meinen ähm überdrehten ↑ESSenskonsum; I have always had an excuse for my excessive food consumption
			013	he he- ((laughter))
			014	(0.4)
3	JA	15:37	Primmus	
4	JA	15:37	Süß dass du das Sams gehört hast 🍷	
			How sweet that you listened to the Sams 🍷	
5	JA	15:39	Franz Sams	
6	BE	15:39	Ab in den Taucheranzug Off into the diving suit	
7	JA	15:39	Framz	
8	IS	15:40	Frams 🤪	
9	JA	15:40	Gefällt Like	
10	NI	15:43	Das Frams 😂😂😂😂😂	
			The Frams 😂😂😂😂😂	
11	NI	15:43	Love it	

598 In her story Beate identifies the group member Isi as the
599 Sams, a fictional character from a German children's books
600 series known to be impudent and hoggish. Framing this iden-
601 tification as humorous with smile voice and various bursts of
602 laughter, she takes a *laughing at*-stance to Isi, identifying her
603 as the butt of the other users' laughter (Glenn 2003; König
604 2019). However, Isi changes this possible trajectory before
605 the other two group members react to Beate's story posting.
606 Unlike in excerpt 1, Isi chooses the same modality or posting
607 type for her response. In her voice message she comments on
608 Beate's taleworld thoughts by accepting her joke and even
609 elaborating on it – turning it into a playful fictionalisation
610 (Kotthoff 2009) contextualised by various prosodic resources
611 (creaky voice, lengthening, pitch jumps). Taking on Beate's
612 mocking remarks, Isi keys the sequence in a *laughing-with*
613 frame. So, rather than closing off the initial narration by post-
614 ing a conventionalised text, as is prototypically the case, Isi
615 expands the storyline, treating it as potentially open-ended.
616 Jana continues Beate's and Isi's playful banter; she refers to Isi

617 by her nickname *Franz* and the character's name *Sams* (#5),
618 and later blends the names to create *Frams* (#7). This sponta-
619 neous wordplay is mirrored by Isi (#8) and Nina (#10). Their
620 verbal comments “gefällt” (‘like’, #9) and “Love it” (#11) con-
621 stitute conventionalised methods of “ritualised appreciation”
622 reminiscent of other forms of approval in social media such
623 as Facebook’s like-button (Marx 2018). Moreover, they close
624 the fictionalisation’s trajectory.

625 Beate’s story clearly focusses on Isi, however, she never-
626 theless chooses to post it in the semi-public group chat
627 thereby treating the story as relevant or tellable to all group
628 members (who are addressed collectively at the beginning of
629 the posting). It would have been possible for Isi to relate her
630 response in a dyadic chat with Beate. Yet, she also chooses
631 the group chat as the site in which she comments on her like-
632 ness with the Sams with Jana and Nina as the audience of this
633 exchange. Thus, the semi-publicness of the group chat is
634 chosen as the configuration under which their story telling
635 can take place. Moreover, this excerpt documents an instance
636 in which the boundaries between teller, audience and recipi-
637 ent are blurred by the collaborative effort of all group mem-
638 bers: Isi, Jana and Nina do not simply affiliate with the initial
639 teller’s stance by posting short and ritualised comments.
640 Thus, their responses do not accord with the participant roles
641 of recipient or audience. Rather, Isi and Jana assume co-tell-
642 ership by establishing and expanding a playful fictional
643 framework. Beate’s comment in #6, a response to Isi’s voice
644 message #2, explicitly affirms this participant status. Nina, on
645 the other hand, positions herself as a recipient of the story by
646 appreciating its humorous outcome. In contrast to her re-
647 sponse in the first excerpt, here she does not comment on the
648 initial story posting but on its following trajectory. She thus
649 takes a metareflexive stance towards the storytelling activity
650 (De Fina 2016). Even though WhatsApp group chats do not
651 afford narratives in the same way as platforms like Twitter
652 and Facebook do, this example illustrates that it is neverthe-
653 less possible to bring about storytelling collaboratively in
654 multimodal mobile messaging – even if a dialogue is com-
655 prised of only a few individual postings.

656 Just like in face-to-face encounters, the collaborative ac-
657 tivity of playful fictionalisation in WhatsApp group chats is
658 essential for reaffirming the group’s identity and sociality as a

659 close-knit group of friends who share a sense of humour.
660 Even though the story in the first posting only concerns Isi,
661 Beate treats her experience as relevant and tellable to the
662 whole group. As this activity might comprise *laughing at-*
663 *stances*, which can be too sensitive to post on platforms like
664 Facebook, group chats with a controllable selection of mem-
665 bers can offer a more regulated audience selection. The sto-
666 ries are thus treated as intimate activities which are only
667 shared between the members of the group.

668 **5 Conclusion: Stories in a controlled publicness**

669 Mobile messenger chats like WhatsApp are said to favour ra-
670 ther short and often chunked contributions (Imo 2015; König
671 2015, forthc.; Wyss/Hug 2016). Thus, reconstructing an event
672 structure and relating one's own evaluative stance towards it
673 in the continuous flow of multi-party messaging can be a chal-
674 lenging communicative endeavour. Yet, the foregoing analyses
675 of a corpus of multimodal WhatsApp group chats illustrate that
676 digitised storytelling is indeed part of its users' communicative
677 repertoire. Voice messaging lies at the heart of this practice as
678 audio postings allow users to contribute extended but still easy
679 to produce narrations.

680 Many of the stories' features can be characterised with
681 Ochs and Capp's narrative dimensions: Prototypically, they
682 involve single tellers who choose to place their stories in con-
683 texts where there is no continuous exchange of messages be-
684 tween several users. Despite their placement in a chat inter-
685 face designed for a dialogic exchange, tellers usually do not
686 elicit story prompts or use other methods for negotiating tell-
687 ership or tellability.¹¹ Rather, in group chats stories are rou-
688 tinely embedded as first actions which have not been made
689 relevant by the foregoing context. Events are prototypically
690 reconstructed in a linear order but tellers can take varying
691 stances even within a single posting.

692 However, tellers have more "narrative possibilities" which
693 they can make use of in mobile messaging: Users have to
694 choose in which posting type (multimodality) and in how

11 Note, however, that in dyadic chats, Hector (forthc.) finds grater variability concerning the embeddedness of stories.

695 many postings (sequencing) they want to reconstruct their
696 personal experiences. In the given collection, stories can be
697 preceded by a text message containing an abstract, yet the
698 core structural components are realised in an audio posting.
699 While many social media platforms favour rather small story
700 formats, voice message stories are presented as “big pack-
701 ages” in terms of the audio posting’s length. Tellers relate
702 their story in a single extended audio posting, which pre-
703 cludes others from changing the story’s trajectory. What is
704 small, however, is the sequencing of responses to these sto-
705 ries: Users regularly reply with repetitive and ritualised ex-
706 pressions to contextualise an affiliative stance – often without
707 reacting to one another. Only in particular settings (e.g. one of
708 the group members is primarily addressed) do we find a con-
709 tinuation of the story.¹² So rather than working in the service
710 of other actions (such as explanations, examples, arguments
711 etc.), it is the activity of telling a story that is the focus of
712 chatters.

713 Moreover, users can choose the degree of publicness their
714 narrative accounts should have. Stories can be posted in dy-
715 adic chats or group chats to a non-anonymous audience or
716 on other platforms like Facebook or Twitter which enable a
717 more public discourse. Practices of addressing users individu-
718 ally or collectively also play an important role in managing
719 audience participation. At the same time the fact that users
720 only share their immediate experiences in the controlled
721 semi-public of a group chat can index intimacy. Storytelling
722 in group chats thus becomes an essential a tool for building
723 and sustaining the group’s sociality.

724 The linguistic forms used by WhatsApp chatters to relate
725 their personal experiences are reminiscent of oral storytelling
726 in face-to-face interactions. Users do not develop completely
727 new narrative genres in mobile messenger chats; instead, they
728 transfer preestablished linguistic patterns of storytelling and
729 reconfigure them according to the messenger’s affordances
730 (Herring 2013). While various studies in the emerging field of
731 digital narratology have pointed out that social media priori-
732 tise episodic, non-linear and open-ended narrative accounts,
733 the small stories paradigm should not be the only heuristic

12 Again, there is greater variability in dyadic chats: Here, Hector (fortc.) also found second stories as a possible response format.

734 net to be cast over the broad range of narrative practices in
 735 computer-mediated discourse. Particularly in the case of
 736 voice messages in group chats, users have adopted a posting
 737 format for recounting linearly organised “big package” narra-
 738 tions in mobile messaging. Rather than focussing on just one
 739 default narrative format, a multidimensional perspective that
 740 can capture the various facets of social media storytelling
 741 should be developed. Indeed, Ochs and Capps’ (2001) ac-
 742 count of everyday oral storytelling, with its dimensions of tel-
 743 lability, tellership, embeddedness, linearity and moral stance,
 744 has proved to be applicable to the analysis of digitised mess-
 745 enger dialogues. However, the analysis also shows that a
 746 focus on these five dimensions does not cover all the aspects
 747 which are relevant for characterising and distinguishing the
 748 different narrative configurations in social media storytelling.
 749 Expanding the model to include the dimensions of
 750 publicness, multimodality and sequencing can help to work
 751 out the characteristics more adequately. Table 1 exemplifies
 752 the typical parameters on both ends of the respective conti-
 753 num.

Narrative dimension	Subjects and parameters
Tellability	<p><i>How tellable or relevant do users treat the story? What is treated as more or less tellable?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High degree of tellability – low degree of tellability • Retrospection – recency • Everyday experiences – biographical crises or turning points
Tellership	<p><i>How many tellers are involved in actively reconstructing the story’s events? Do users quote or rescript the stories of other users?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single tellers – multiplicity of voices
Publicness	<p><i>How many people have (potential) access to the story? To what extent do users distinguish between audience and recipients? How much control do users have over the selection of recipients? Which degree of sharedness does the story accrue?</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selected recipients, non-public posting – public display, larger audiences and collapsed contexts
Embedded-ness	<p><i>To what extent does the sequential context make a story relevant? Is storytelling afforded by the platform's configuration? Does the story form part of a larger communicative project? How detached is the story from its surrounding context? How are online and of-line contexts merged?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stand-alone narrations – stories in the service of other actions
Sequencing	<p><i>How many postings do tellers require to relate their story? How extended is the story's trajectory?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fragmentary and small episodes – “full-fledged” narrations in a single posting
Linearity	<p><i>Does the telling of the story proceed linearly? Where does the storytelling take place, i.e. which platforms, sites etc.? Which/how many forms of hypertextuality are used?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Closed chronological order – non-linear open trajectories, hyperlinks, hashtags
Multi-modality	<p><i>Which modes are dominant in telling the story? How many different semiotic resources do users select for telling their story? Do they use particular resources for particular steps in the story?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making use of just one posting type – multi-modal configurations, mode switching in transmodal communication
Moral stance	<p><i>How stable is the moral or evaluative stance contextualised in the narration? How contested are stances taken in the dissemination and rescripting of stories?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coherent and stable stancetaking – contradictory and flexible construction of a moral stance

754 **Table 1:** Expanded model of narrative dimensions in social media
 755 story telling (based on Ochs/Capps 2001)

756 The adjusted dimensional model enables a more comprehen-
 757 sive perspective of the broad and emerging spectrum of social

758 media storytelling. By identifying which features are specific
759 to which kinds of storytelling activities, digital narratology
760 can set out to investigate the actual repertoire and configura-
761 tions of user-generated online storytelling. Only when they
762 are understood as complementary parts of a narrative reper-
763 toire can the true communicative potential of small stories as
764 compared to big stories be determined.

765 The present study has investigated social media narratives
766 in semi-public messenger chats which are available only to
767 pre-selected non-anonymous users. Of course, the group chat
768 data analysed here represent only a small fragment of the ac-
769 tual narrative repertoire of mobile messenger communica-
770 tion. Future research has yet to determine how users com-
771 bine and link text, audio, image and video postings. Moreo-
772 ver, studies of polymedial repertoires can help to shed a light
773 on how users exploit the different degrees of publicness ena-
774 bled by different social media platforms for narrating their
775 personal experiences.

776 References

- 777 Androutsopoulos, Jannis (2010): Localizing the Global on the
778 Participatory Web. In: Coupland, Nikolas (ed.): *The Hand-*
779 *book of Language and Globalization*. Malden: Wiley, 203–
780 231.
- 781 Androutsopoulos, Jannis/Staehr, Andreas (2018): Moving
782 methods online. Researching digital language practices. In:
783 Creese, Angela/Blackledge, Adrian (Hg.): *The Routledge*
784 *Handbook of Language and Superdiversity*. London, New
785 York: Routledge, 118–132.
- 786 Arendholz, Jenny (2010): “Need to put this out there (My
787 Story)”. Narratives in message boards. In: Hoffmann, Chris-
788 tian R. (ed.): *Narrative Revisited. Telling a Story in the Age*
789 *of New Media*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 109–142.
- 790 Baym, Nancy K./boyd, danah (2012): Socially mediated pub-
791 licness: An introduction. In: *Journal of Broadcasting &*
792 *Electronic Media* 56 (3), 320–329.
- 793 Becker, Tabea/Quasthoff, Uta (2005): Different dimensions in
794 the field of narrative interaction. In: Quasthoff, Uta/Becker,
795 Tabea (Hg.): *Narrative Interaction*. Amsterdam, New York:
796 Benjamins, 1–11.

- 797 Beißwenger, Michael (2016): Praktiken in der internetbasier-
798 ten Kommunikation. In: Deppermann, Arnulf/Feilke, Hel-
799 muth/Linke, Angelika (Hg.): *Sprachliche und kommunika-*
800 *tive Praktiken*. Berlin, Boston: de Gruyter, 279–309.
- 801 boyd, danah (2011): Social network sites as networked pub-
802 lics. Affordances, dynamics, and implications. In: Papacha-
803 rissi, Zizi (ed.): *A Networked Self. Identity, Community, and*
804 *Culture on Social Network Sites*. New York and London:
805 Routledge, 39–58.
- 806 Bubenhofer, Noah (2018): Serialität der Singularität. Kor-
807 pusanalyse narrativer Muster in Geburtsberichten. In: *Zeit-*
808 *schrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 48, 357–
809 388.
- 810 Dayter, Daria/Mühleisen, Susanne (2016): Telling stories
811 about self in digital contexts: Same, same, but different? In:
812 *Open Linguistics* 2 (1), 572–576.
- 813 De Fina, Anna (2016): Storytelling and audience reactions in
814 social media. In: *Language in Society* 45 (4), 473–498.
- 815 De Fina, Anna/Gore, Brittany Toscano (2017): Online retell-
816 ings and the viral transformation of a twitter breakup story.
817 In: *Narrative Inquiry* 27 (2), 235–260.
- 818 De Fina, Anna/Perrino, Sabina (2017): Storytelling in the digi-
819 tal age. In: *Narrative Inquiry* 27 (2), 209–216.
- 820 Deppermann, Arnulf (2018): Multimediale Narration im Ange-
821 sichts des Todes. In: Mauz, Andreas/ Peng-Keller, Simon
822 (Hg.): *Sterbenarrative. Hermeneutische Erkundungen des*
823 *Erzählens am und vom Lebensende*. Berlin, Boston: de
824 Gruyter, 115–138.
- 825 Dürscheid, Christa/Frick, Karina (2016): *Schreiben digital.*
826 *Wie das Internet unsere Alltagskommunikation verändert*.
827 Stuttgart: Kröner.
- 828 Dürscheid, Christa/Siever, Christina Margrit (2017): Jenseits
829 des Alphabets – Kommunikation mit Emojis. In: *Zeitschrift*
830 *für germanistische Linguistik* 45 (2), 256–285.
- 831 Eisenlauer, Volker/Hoffmann, Christian R. (2010): Once upon
832 a blog ... Storytelling in weblogs. In: Hoffmann, Christian R.
833 (ed.): *Narrative Revisited. Telling a Story in the Age of*
834 *New Media*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 79–108.
- 835 Farina, Matteo (2015): Facebook first post telling. In: *Journal*
836 *of Pragmatics* 90, 1–11.
- 837 Garcia, Angela Cora/Baker Jacobs, Jennifer (1999): The eyes
838 of the beholder. Understanding the turn-taking system in

- 839 quasi-synchronous computer-mediated communication.
840 In: *Research on Language and Social Interaction* 32 (4),
841 337–367.
- 842 Georgakopoulou, Alexandra (2004): Email stories between
843 on- and off-line interactions. In: *Language@Internet* 1.
844 URL: <http://www.languageatinternet.org/articles/2004/36>.
- 845 Georgakopoulou, Alexandra (2013): Storytelling on the go. In:
846 Hyvärinen, Matti (ed.): *The Travelling Concepts of Narrative*.
847 Amsterdam: Benjamins, 201–224.
- 848 Georgakopoulou, Alexandra (2015): Sharing as rescripting:
849 Place manipulations on YouTube between narrative and
850 social media affordances. In: *Discourse, Context & Media*
851 9, 64–72.
- 852 Georgakopoulou, Alexandra (2016): From Narrating the Self
853 to Posting Self(ies): A Small Stories Approach to Selfies. In:
854 *Open Linguistics* 2 (1), 300–317.
- 855 Georgakopoulou, Alexandra (2017a): Sharing the moment as
856 small stories. The interplay between practices & af-
857 fordances in the social media-curation of lives. In: *Narra-*
858 *tive Inquiry* 27 (2), 311–333.
- 859 Georgakopoulou, Alexandra (2017b): Small stories research: A
860 narrative paradigm for the analysis of social media. In:
861 Sloan, Luke/Quan-Haase, Anabel (Hg.): *The Sage Hand-*
862 *book of Social Media Research Methods*. Los Angeles, Lon-
863 don: Sage, 266–281.
- 864 Georgalou, Mariza (2015): Small Stories of the Greek Crisis on
865 Facebook. In: *Social Media + Society* 1 (2), 1-15.
- 866 Georgalou, Mariza (2016): ‘I make the rules on my Wall’: Pri-
867 vacy and identity management practices on Facebook. In:
868 *Discourse & Communication* 10 (1), 40–64.
- 869 Glenn, Philip (2003): *Laughter in Interaction*. Cambridge:
870 Cambridge University Press.
- 871 Goffman, Erving (1974): *Frame Analysis. An Essay on the Or-*
872 *ganization of Experience*. Boston: Northeastern University
873 Press.
- 874 Gredel, Eva; Mell, Ruth M. (2018): Narrative – diskursiv und
875 digital. In: *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Lingui-*
876 *stik* 48, 331–355.
- 877 Günthner, Susanne/Zhu, Qiang (2015): Formen ‚verbaler Fell-
878 pflge‘: Kosende Anredepraktiken in chinesischen und
879 deutschen SMS-Dialogen. In: *Deutsche Sprache* 43 (1), 42–
880 73.

- 881 Hector, Tim Moritz (forthc.) Narrative Strukturen in dyadi-
882 schen WhatsApp-Sprachnachrichten. In: *StudSPiN*.
- 883 Herring, Susan (2013): Discourse in web 2.0: Familiar, recon-
884 figured, and emergent. In: Tannen, Deborah/Trester, Anna
885 Marie (Hg.): *Discourse 2.0. Language and New Media*.
886 Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1–25.
- 887 Heyd, Theresa (2016): Narratives of belonging in the digital
888 diaspora: Corpus approaches to a cultural concept. In:
889 *Open Linguistics* 2 (1), 287–299.
- 890 Hoffmann, Christian R. (ed.) (2010): *Narrative Revisited. Tell-*
891 *ing a Story in the Age of New Media*. Amsterdam: Benja-
892 mins.
- 893 Hoffmann, Ludger (2004): Chat und Thema. In: *OBST* 68,
894 103–122.
- 895 Imo, Wolfgang (2015): Vom Happen zum Häppchen ... Die
896 Präferenz für inkrementelle Äußerungsproduktion in inter-
897 netbasierten Messengerdiensten. In: *Networx* 69. URL:
898 [http://www.mediensprache.net/de/networx/networx-](http://www.mediensprache.net/de/networx/networx-69.aspx)
899 [69.aspx](http://www.mediensprache.net/de/networx/networx-69.aspx).
- 900 König, Katharina (2019): Stance taking with ‘laugh’ particles
901 and emojis – Sequential and functional patterns of ‘laugh-
902 ter’ in a corpus of German WhatsApp chats. In: *Journal of*
903 *Pragmatics* 142, 156–170.
- 904 König, Katharina (2015): Dialogkonstitution und Sequenzmus-
905 ter in der SMS- und WhatsApp-Kommunikation. In: *Tra-*
906 *vauux neuchâtelois de linguistique* 63, 87–107. URL:
907 <https://www2.unine.ch/files/content/sites/islc/files/Tra->
908 [nel/63/87-107_k%C3%B6nig_corr.pdf](https://www2.unine.ch/files/content/sites/islc/files/Tra-).
- 909 König, Katharina (forthc.): Sequential patterns in SMS and
910 WhatsApp dialogues. Practices for coordinating actions
911 and managing topics. In: *Discourse & Communication*.
- 912 König, Katharina/Hector, Tim Moritz (2017): Zur Theatralität
913 von WhatsApp-Sprachnachrichten. Nutzungskontexte von
914 Audio-Postings in der mobilen Messenger-Kommunika-
915 tion. In: *Networx* 79. URL: [https://www.medienspra-](https://www.mediensprache.net/de/networx/networx-79.aspx)
916 [che.net/de/networx/networx-79.aspx](https://www.mediensprache.net/de/networx/networx-79.aspx).
- 917 König, Katharina/Hector, Tim Moritz (2019): Neue Medien –
918 neue Mündlichkeit? Zur Dialogizität von WhatsApp-
919 Sprachnachrichten. In: Marx, Konstanze/Schmidt, Axel
920 (Hg.): *Interaktion und Medien*. Heidelberg: Winter, 59–84.
- 921 Kotthoff, Helga (2009): Joint constructions of humorous fic-
922 tions in conversation. An unnamed narrative activity in a

- 923 playful keying. In: *Journal of Literary Theory* 3 (2), 195–
924 218.
- 925 Labov, William (1972): *Language in the Inner City. Studies in*
926 *the Black English Vernacular*. Philadelphia: University of
927 Pennsylvania Press.
- 928 Labov, William/Waletzky, Joshua (1967): Narrative Analysis:
929 Oral versions of personal experience. In: Helm, June (ed.):
930 *Essays on the Verbal and Visual Arts*. Seattle, London:
931 University of Washington Press, 12–44.
- 932 Madianou, Mirca (2014): Smartphones as Polymedia. In: *Jour-*
933 *nal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 19 (3), 667–
934 680.
- 935 Marx, Konstanze (2018): „Gefällt mir“ – Eine Facebookformel
936 goes kognitiv. In: Marx, Konstanze/Meier, Simon (Hg.):
937 *Sprachliches Handeln und Kognition. Theoretische Grund-*
938 *lagen und empirische Analysen*. Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter,
939 113–132.
- 940 Marx, Konstanze/Weidacher, Georg (2014): *Internetlinguistik.*
941 *Ein Lehr- und Arbeitsbuch*. Tübingen: Narr.
- 942 Ochs, Elinor/Capps, Lisa (2001): *Living Narrative. Creating*
943 *Lives in Everyday Storytelling*. Cambridge: Harvard Uni-
944 versity Press.
- 945 Page, Ruth (2010): Re-examining narrativity: small stories in
946 status updates. In: *Text & Talk* 30 (4), 423–444.
- 947 Page, Ruth (2012): *Stories and Social Media. Identities and*
948 *Interaction*. New York: Routledge.
- 949 Page, Ruth (2015): The narrative dimensions of social media
950 storytelling. In: De Fina, Anna/ Georgakopoulou, Alexan-
951 dra (Hg.): *The Handbook of Narrative Analysis*. Chiches-
952 ter: Wiley Blackwell, 329–347.
- 953 Page, Ruth (2018): *Narratives Online. Shared Stories in Social*
954 *Media*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 955 Page, Ruth/Harper, Richard/Frobenius, Maximiliane (2013):
956 From small stories to networked narrative: The evolution
957 of personal narratives in Facebook status updates. In: *Nar-*
958 *rative Inquiry* 23 (1), 192–213.
- 959 Pappert, Steffen (2017): Zu kommunikativen Funktionen von
960 Emojis in der WhatsApp-Kommunikation. In: Beißwenger,
961 Michael (ed.): *Empirische Erforschung internetbasierter*
962 *Kommunikation*. Berlin: de Gruyter, 175–211.

- 963 Quasthoff, Uta (2001): Erzählen als interaktive Gesprächs-
964 struktur. In: Brinker, Klaus/Antos, Gerd/Heinemann, Wolf-
965 gang/Sager, Sven F. (Hg.): *Text- und Gesprächslinguistik.*
966 *Ein internationales Handbuch zeitgenössischer Forschung.*
967 Bd. 16.2. Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 1293–1309.
- 968 Sacks, Harvey (1974): An analysis of the course of a joke's tell-
969 ing in conversation. In: Bauman, Richard/Sherzer, Joel
970 Hg.): *Explorations in the Ethnography of Speaking.* Lon-
971 don: Cambridge University Press, 337–353.
- 972 Sacks, Harvey (1995): *Lectures on Conversation.* Oxford:
973 Wiley-Blackwell.
- 974 Selting, Margret (2017): The display and management of af-
975 fectivity in climaxes of amusing stories. In: *Journal of Prag-*
976 *matics* 111, 1–32.
- 977 Selting, Margret/Auer, Peter/Barth-Weingarten, Dagmar et al.
978 (2009): Gesprächsanalytisches Transkriptionssystem 2
979 (GAT 2). In: *Gesprächsforschung. Online-Zeitschrift zur*
980 *verbalen Interaktion* 10, 353–402.
- 981 Tienken, Susanne (2013): Sharing. Zum Teilen von Erzählun-
982 gen in Onlineforen. In: Álvarez López, Laura/Brylla, Char-
983 lotta/Shaw, Philip (Hg.): *Computer Mediated Discourse*
984 *Across Languages.* Stockholm: Stockholm University, 17–
985 43.
- 986 West, Laura E. (2013): Facebook sharing: A sociolinguistic
987 analysis of computer-mediated storytelling. In: *Discourse,*
988 *Context & Media* 2 (1), 1–13.
- 989 Wyss, Eva Lia/Hug, Barbara (2016): WhatsApp-Chats. Neue
990 Formen der Turn-Koordination bei räumlich-visueller Be-
991 grenzung. In: Spiegel, Carmen/Gysin, Daniel (Hg.): *Jugend-*
992 *sprache in Schule, Medien und Alltag.* Frankfurt am Main:
993 Lang, 259–274.