

Narrative Style-Shifting in Self-Recorded Audio Diaries

Millie Hacker

Michigan State University

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 - **Attention paid to speech:** narrative telling draws attention away from the present moment / present self → reduces filters
- Narrative speech is frequently shown to promote vernacular features (Edwards 1985; Labov 2002; Bailey 2024; Wright 1989; etc)

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Examples:

- Have you had any awkward dating experiences?
- Tell us about a time you found a clever way to skirt the rules.
- Has anyone ever flaked on you?

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- Does the absence of a discourse partner **denaturalize** the act of story-telling?
- Do people tell **different kinds of stories** (or tell stories in a different manner) during self-recording?
- Could the inherent agency of self-recording make people focus more on the fact that they're being recorded, increasing attention paid to speech?

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 - Identified 9 MI Diaries speakers variable for *ING*
 - 2 Gen Z, 3 Millennials, 2 Gen X, 2 Boomer
 - 4 identified as women, 5 as men
 - 8 identified as white, 1 as hispanic

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 - Ordered series of **complicating actions**

Not much was going on, but it was starting -- looked like it was going to rain and **my father said, "Oh, I'll just go out and I'll cook some hot dogs on the grill."** ¹ And **my mom said, "Well, you better hurry up 'cause I think it's gonna rain."** ² Well, **my dad took lighter fluid out to the grill** ³ and **doused the charcoal with, with lighter fluid** ⁴, **stuck part of the newspaper on top of it** ⁵, and **lit the match** ⁶. **It kind of exploded** ⁷. **He bounced back very quickly** ⁸ and he was not hurt, thank heaven.

Methods: Narrative coding

- Non-narrative example

But we had this fantastic garden and we always grew, like, way more zucchinis than we could eat and there'd always be these giant zucchinis that would just grow to just prodigious size in the garden. So I would sometimes pick one and then I would take -- I'd be out with Brandy, that's the dog, and we would play kind of like this combination of sorta fetch and keep away and football with the zucchini. So, like, I'd throw the zucchini and she'd grab it in her mouth and be running with it.

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 - All actions are past habitual, not specific moments that are ordered with respect to one another

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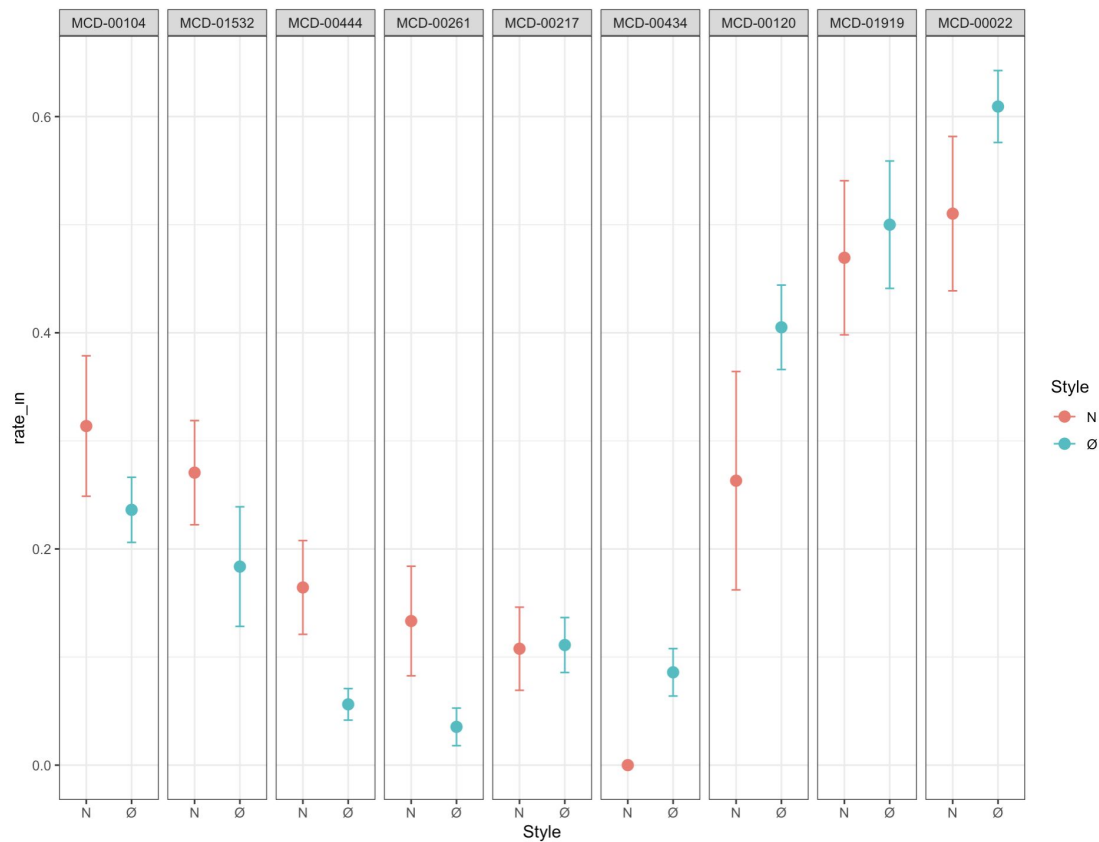
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- Phonological environment is recorded automatically by the Handcoder
- Coded 1761 tokens total
 - 448/1761 were in narrative speech
 - 438/1761 coded as [ɪn]

Results: general

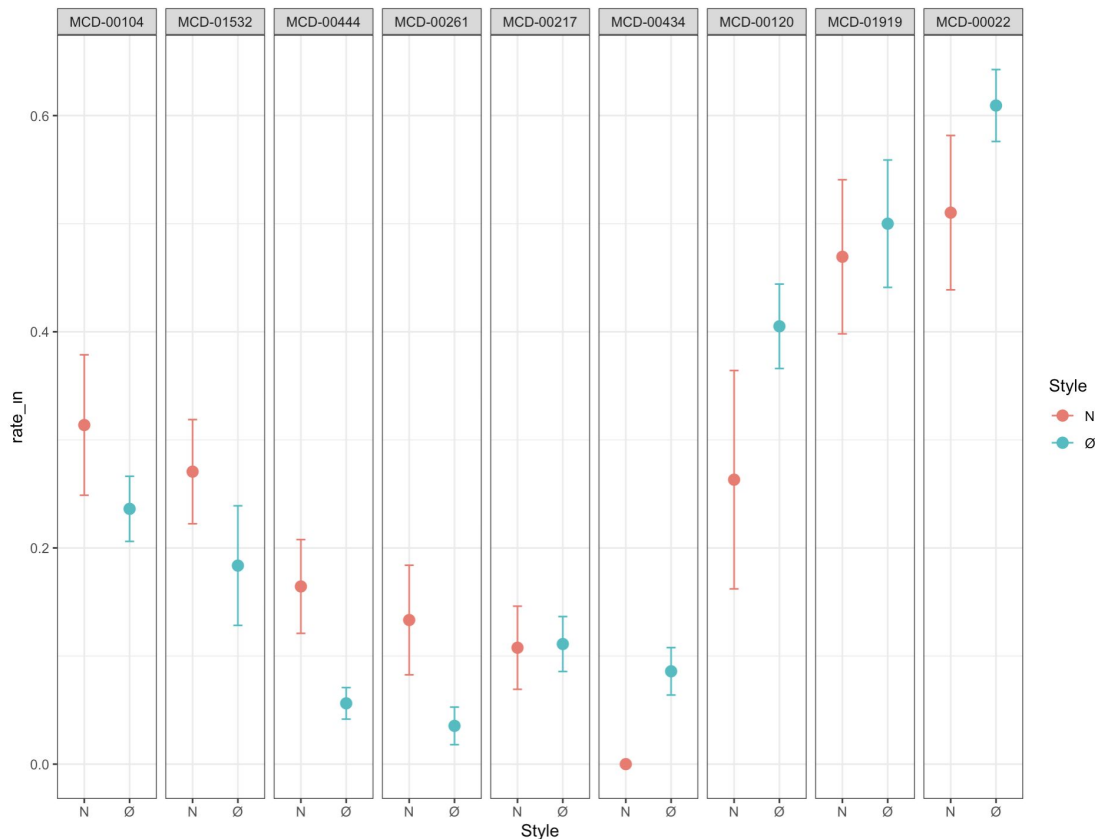
- Part of speech effect
 - Reference level: verb
 - Lower in adjectives and nouns
 - Lower (but less so) in -thing words (something, nothing)
- Preceding segment effect
 - Increased [ɪn] following non-coronals (dissimilation)
- No effect of speech rate (taken automatically by Handcoder as VPS)
 - replicated attested properties of ING

<i>Predictors</i>	<i>Estimate [ɪn]</i>	<i>CI</i>	<i>p</i>
(Intercept)	0.18	0.04 – 0.32	0.011
Narrative			
Adjective	-0.15	-0.20 – -0.09	<0.001
Function word	-0.33	-0.50 – -0.16	<0.001
Noun	-0.23	-0.29 – -0.16	<0.001
-thing	-0.13	-0.19 – -0.07	<0.001
[-coronal] ____	0.14	0.10 – 0.18	<0.001
Vowels per Second	0.01	-0.00 – 0.02	0.065

Results: narrative style-shifting

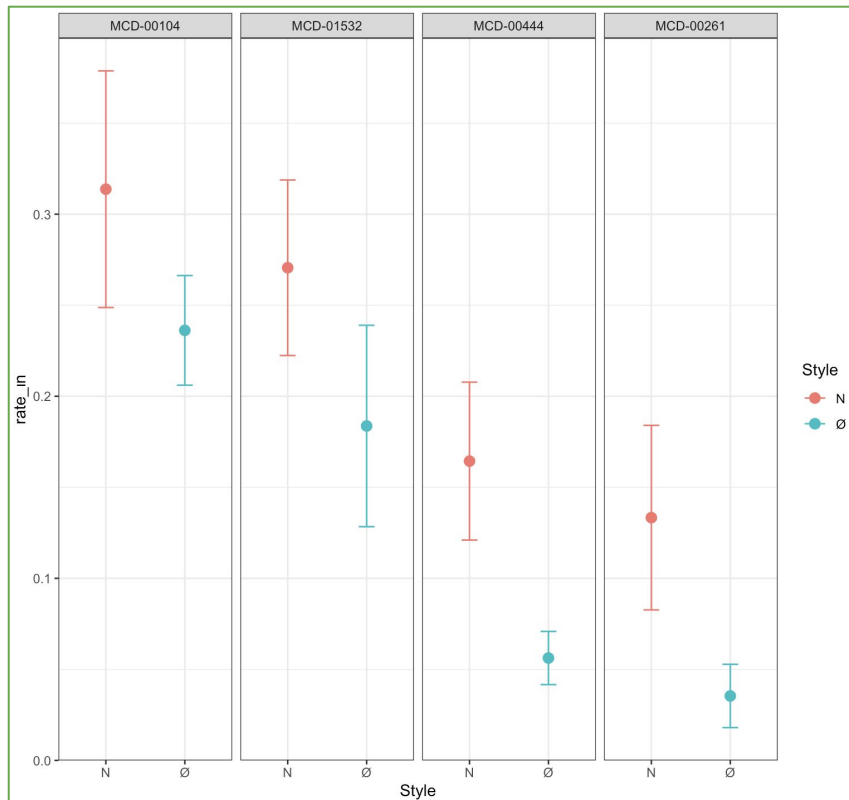


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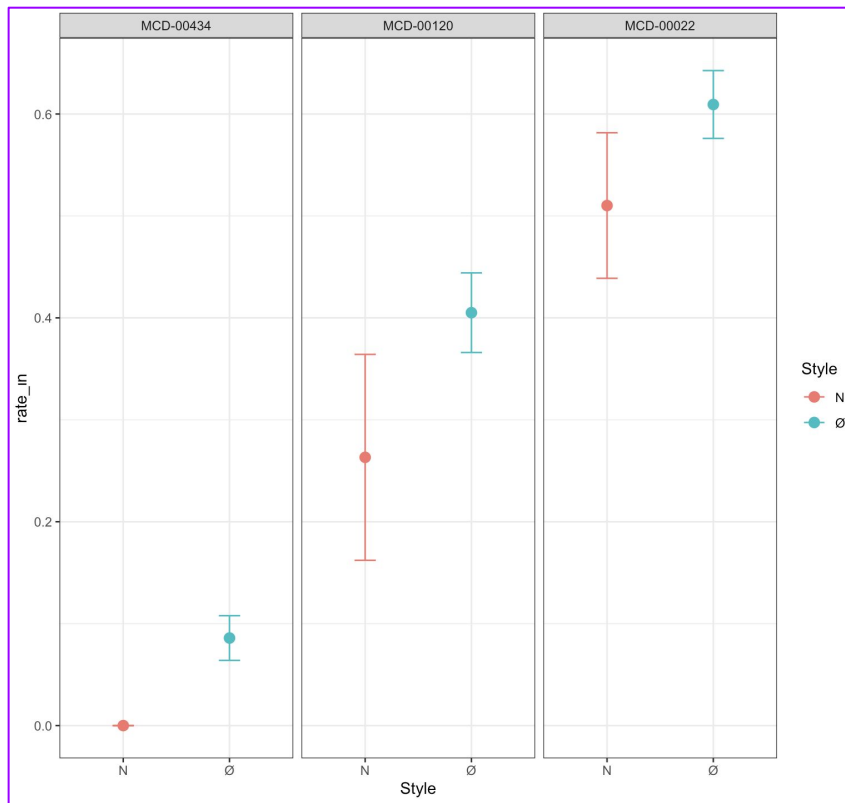
Predictors	Estimate [m]	CI	p
(Intercept)	0.18	0.04 – 0.32	0.011
Narrative	0.02	-0.02 – 0.06	0.352
Adjective	-0.15	-0.20 – -0.09	<0.001
Function word	-0.33	-0.50 – -0.16	<0.001
Noun	-0.23	-0.29 – -0.16	<0.001
-thing	-0.13	-0.19 – -0.07	<0.001
[-coronal] ____	0.14	0.10 – 0.18	<0.001
Vowels per Second	0.01	-0.00 – 0.02	0.065
Random Effects			
σ^2	0.14		
τ_{00} Speaker	0.04		
ICC	0.21		
N Speaker	9		
Observations	1761		
Marginal R ² / Conditional R ²	0.067 / 0.258		

Results: narrative style-shifting



Predictors	Estimate [m]	CI	p
(Intercept)	0.03	-0.09 – 0.15	0.608
Narrative	0.09	0.04 – 0.15	0.001
Adjective	-0.11	-0.18 – -0.04	0.002
Function word	-0.25	-0.42 – -0.08	0.004
Noun	-0.13	-0.23 – -0.04	0.007
-thing	-0.15	-0.23 – -0.07	<0.001
[-coronal] ____	0.13	0.08 – 0.19	<0.001
Vowels per Second	0.01	-0.00 – 0.03	0.062
Random Effects			
σ^2	0.12		
τ_{00} Speaker	0.01		
ICC	0.06		
N Speaker	4		
Observations	807		
Marginal R^2 / Conditional R^2	0.075 / 0.134		

“Reverse” style-shifting?



Predictors	Estimate [m]	CI	p
(Intercept)	0.38	0.07 – 0.69	0.015
Narrative	-0.11	-0.21 – -0.02	0.019
Adjective	-0.22	-0.33 – -0.11	<0.001
Function word	-0.73	-1.20 – -0.25	0.003
Noun	-0.35	-0.47 – -0.23	<0.001
-thing word	-0.11	-0.21 – 0.00	0.051
[-coronal] ____	0.12	0.05 – 0.20	0.001
Vowels per Second	-0.00	-0.02 – 0.01	0.667

Random Effects

σ^2	0.17
τ_{00} Speaker	0.07
ICC	0.28
N Speaker	3
Observations	619
Marginal R ² / Conditional R ²	0.085 / 0.340

Discussion

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 - H1.** Speakers are telling narratives on different **topics**
 - H2.** Speakers are telling **structurally distinct** types of narratives
 - H3.** Speakers are using **ING** differently

H1. Speakers are telling narratives on different topics

- The breadth of narrative genre makes narrative as a whole a weak predictor for many style-shifting behaviors (Labov 2002)

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MCD-00120 (uses *less* [In] in narrative)

I caught up with these guys like a year or two ago ... I think I'd caught up back up with [name] on uh, Twitter or Stack Overflow or something. And he just messaged me like "Hey, dude, you're Boogins, right?" I was like "Jesus Christ, I haven't heard that name in a long time." He's like, "Hey, yeah, we have a Discord. You can come check it out."

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MCD-00444 (uses *more* [In] in narrative)

So, um, they tried to stay within my line of sight, but they were kind of leaving me behind. And it was just me on the side of that mountain ... when you felt those, snow squalls come through with that like thirty mile per hour wind gust ... I had to start asking myself questions, like -- I don't know. Can I technically die up here?

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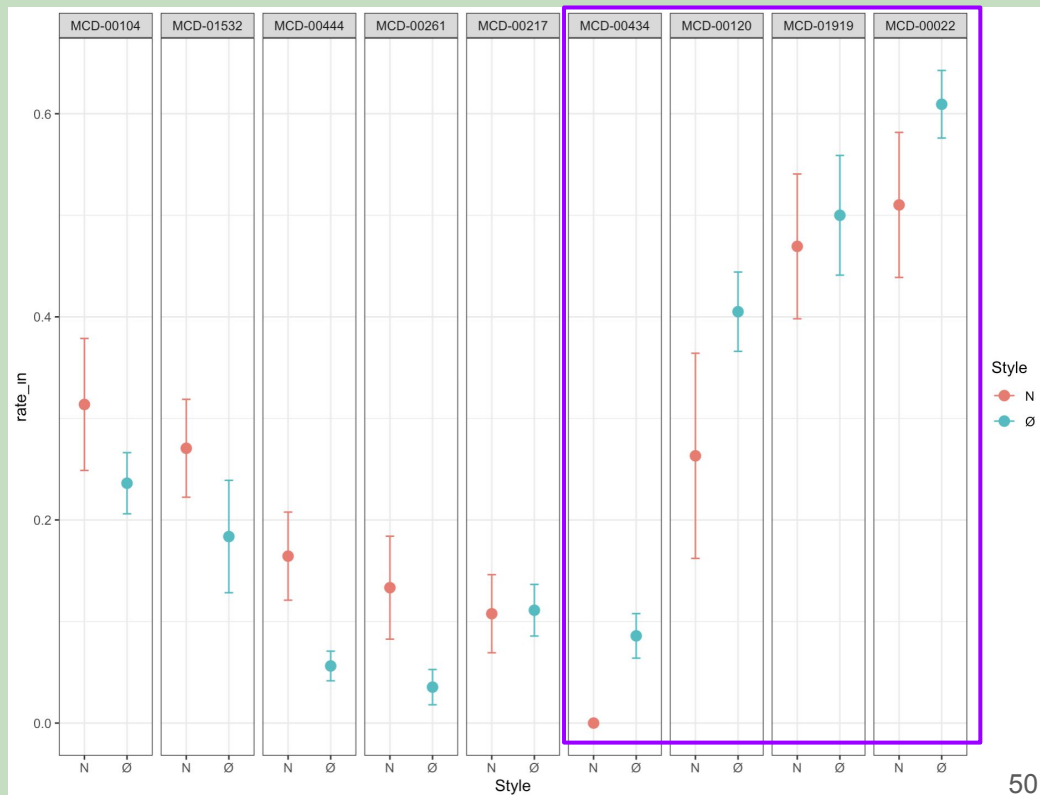
we're sitt[ɪŋ] there, and this guy who was read[ɪŋ] a book or read[ɪŋ] someth[ɪn] was look[ɪn] down, and he walked right into the window or the the the the -- the door, where the door goes outside

H3. Speakers are using ING differently

- In these data, the “reverse” style-shifting speakers tended to have higher [In] rates overall

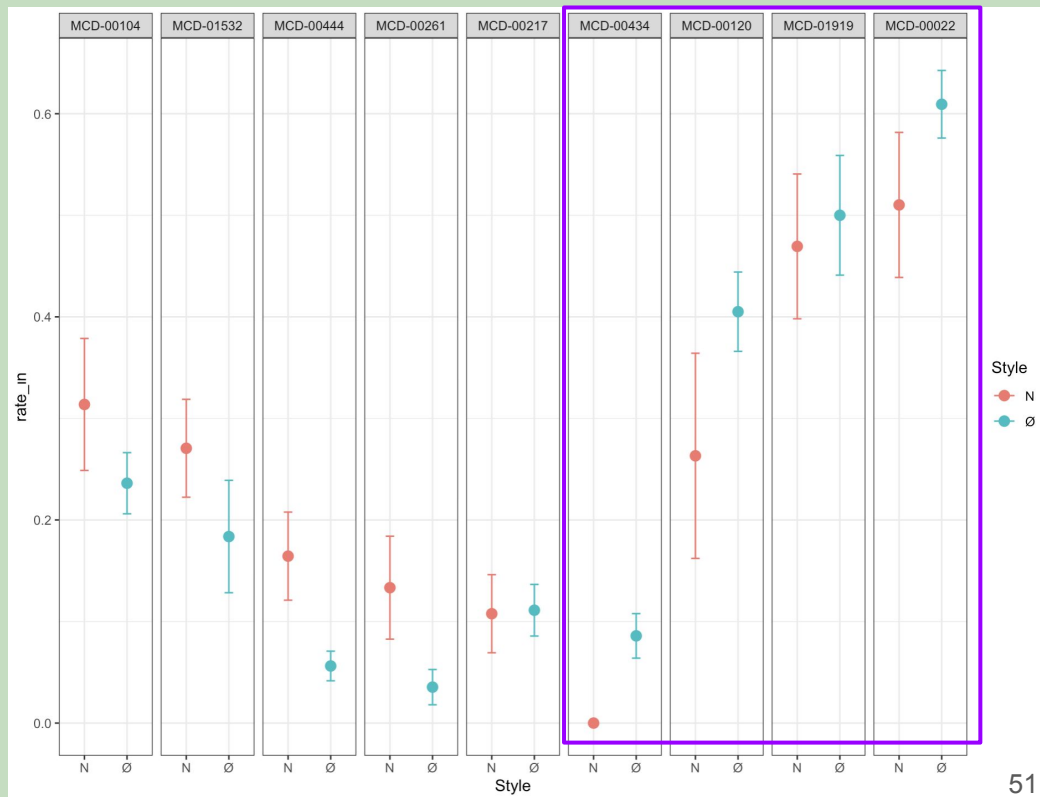
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- If a speaker has a different “default variant”, they may be making different use of the variable



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MCD-00104

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MCD-00104

Uh, so that's kinda disturbing with the **[laughs]**
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Put a s- put a freak**[ɪn]** sock in it. I'm so tired of
people and their whin**[ɪn]** ... and cry**[ɪn]**

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Put a s- put a freak**[ɪn]** sock in it. I'm so tired of people and their whin**[ɪn]** ... and cry**[ɪn]**

I have been try**[ɪŋ]** to not read a lot into it because I feel like be**[ɪŋ]** a Republican and be**[ɪŋ]** where I was with it, that a lot of people, specifically the Democrats, were kind of act**[ɪŋ]** very childish

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- What is the **underlying mechanism** of narrative as a sociolinguistic tool? Does narrative decrease attention paid to speech *innately*, or *via* its structural and topical correlates?
 - The next phase of this project will involve coding for topic and structure to investigate how overlapping domains of style-shifting interact with the binary narrative/non-narrative scheme

Acknowledgments

Michigan State Sociolinguistics Lab

Dr. Leah Nodar, Keira Wesley, & Connor Mason (fellow narrative analysts)

Thank you

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