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Small stories as a new perspective in narrative and identity analysis

[Michael Bamberg](#) / [Alexandra Georgakopoulou](#)

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Abstract

In this article, we depart from our recent work on 'small stories', which we propose as an antidote to canonical narrative studies, and we advance our argumentation by sketching out a five-step analytical operation for tapping into small stories as sites of identity work. These steps grow out of the model of positioning (as put forward by Bamberg 1997, and elaborated in Bamberg 2004a; cf. also Georgakopoulou 2000) that succeeds in navigating between the two extreme ends of fine-grained micro analysis and macro accounts. We will work with positioning in the close analysis of a small story event (as part of a moderated group discussion involving ten-year-old boys in an American school) in which we will show how the teller's announcement of the story, the subsequent withdrawal, and the pre-telling negotiation with the interlocutors are as integral parts of our analysis as the actual telling. We will also demonstrate how viewing story content as a function of interactional engagement opens up new insights into identity constructions of sameness in the face of adversative conditions and constant change.

Keywords:: [small stories](#); [positioning](#); [identity analysis](#); [author](#); [animator](#); [principal](#); [identity dilemma](#)

About the article

Department of Psychology, Clark University, Worcester, MA 01610, USA. 

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